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SRSG HANDS OVER MOKOBO BRIDGE IN MOYAMBA DISTRICT

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1 December 2005— The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago, recently handed over the 110 feet Mokobo Bridge constructed by the Pakistan Engineers IV (PAK ENGR) of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to the people of the southern Moyamba district.

Work on the Mokobo Bridge started in 23 October 2005 and with its completion, the travel distance between those parts of the country to Freetown has now been reduced by 35 kilometers.

At the handing over, Ambassador Mwakawago noted that the ceremony symbolized the gifting of all the bridges that have been installed in the country since UNAMSIL came to town. He said that the bridges are being gifted by the UN to the people of Sierra Leone,” adding that, “UNAMSIL, with cooperation and in coordination with its various engineering contingents has worked hard to improve road conditions in the provinces in order to facilitate movement of people and goods.”

The SRSG paid tribute to the people and government of Sierra Leone for their unqualified support to the work of UNAMSIL “without which our mandate and mission would have been completed at great cost and delays.” He assured that the departure of UNAMSIL did not mean the closure of the UN engagement in the country and informed his audience about the follow-on mission called UNIOSIL.

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Afzal, the Commanding Officer of PAK ENGR IV, said the project was a substantial contribution [of the PAK ENGR] to the socio-economic enhancement of the country by improving physical infrastructure and providing ample opportunity for the locals to enhance their trade. “I’m sanguine that the projects completed by PAK Engineers IV will keep reverberating in the minds of Sierra Leoneans for a long time to come.”

Also speaking, the Deputy Defence Minister, Mr. Joe Blell noted that the bridge “is a big saviour for the people as it will now make it easier for them to take their produce to Freetown.” He thanked UNAMSIL on behalf of Government and the people of Moyamba District for all it had done for the country.

On his part, the Internal Affairs Minister, Mr. Pascal Egbenda averred the people of Sierra Leone

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will ever remain grateful for the development UNAMSIL has brought to this country. He reminded the gathering that just last week, UNAMSIL handed over office facilities and vehicles to the government. “This gesture”, he said, “is done to help develop the peace.”

Since its deployment, the Mission has launched a number of bridges throughout Sierra Leone. These bridges comprise eight Bailey bridges of which three were installed in 2000. In November 2001, UNAMSIL installed a 40 feet Bailey bridge in Beudu in the eastern Kailahun district, and in November 2004 it installed a 110 feet bridge in the capital Freetown. And in February 2005, UNAMSIL installed a 60 feet bridge in the southern Pujehun district.