

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Tuesday, 10 February 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

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SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE LEGACY PROJECT

The Special Court for Sierra Leone will be having a Public Lecture and Panel Discussion. See below for details:

Date: Wednesday 11, February 2009
Time: 9:30 AM
Venue: Hill Valley Hotel, Signal Hill Road

Public Lecture and Panel Discussion:

Morning Session

Chairman: Hon. Justice Abel Stronge, Speaker of Parliament
Guest Speaker: Solomon E. Berewa, Former Vice-President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
Topic: Pursuing Justice and Peace in Post-conflict Sierra Leone- Examining the Challenges
Speaker: Renate Winter, President Special Court for Sierra Leone
Topic: What are the priorities for International Justice? How can International Justice promote peace more broadly?

Afternoon Session-Panel Discussion-2:00PM-5:30PM

Topic: What role can domestic courts, civil society and international tribunals play in securing justice?
Moderator: Hon. Justice George Gelaga-King
Panelists: Charles Margai, Esq.
Mrs. Sakordie-Mensah, Master & Registrar Consultant
Dr. Osman Gbla, Dean, Social Sciences & Law, FBC
Mrs. Eileen Hanciles, FAWE
Joseph F. Kamara, Deputy Prosecutor, SCSL

UN News

Monday, 9 February 2009

Sierra Leone: Building Peace Requires Both Patience And Urgency - UN Envoy

The daunting challenges that still face Sierra Leone, seven years after a brutal civil war, require both urgent action and patience on the part of the international community, the head of the United Nations operations in the West African country told the Security Council today.

"Finding the right balance may largely determine our success in peacebuilding," Michael von der Schulenburg, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Executive Representative for the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) said, as he introduced the first report on the office since its October opening.

UNIPSIL represents the latest in a series of UN missions over the past 10 years that have helped the country get back on its feet from a horrific 10-year war that killed tens of thousands of people and injured countless others, many of whom had their limbs amputated by rebel forces.

Mr. von der Schulenburg said that since 2002, when the war ended, the use of arms in political and ethnic disputes has almost completely disappeared, there have been several peaceful, democratic elections, Governmental institutions are developing well and poverty has declined.

However, youth unemployment, poverty and illicit drugs threaten to unravel those gains, and Sierra Leone remained one of the poorest countries in the world, at the bottom of the Human Development Index of the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

"Despite all the progress that has been made, many Sierra Leoneans do not yet fully benefit from any peace dividend; this is especially the case for many rural poor and the country's youth," Mr von der Schulenburg said.

In overcoming such problems, he said he sees UNIPSIL as the nexus of the partnership between the Government of Sierra Leone, elected a year and a half ago, and the UN, particularly the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council.

"In this spirit, we see ourselves at the forefront of developing and testing a new and, above all, practical concept of effective peacebuilding," he said, pointing to a common vision of the road ahead recently agreed upon between all UN agencies.

He said that expectations that the new Government will deliver are still high among Sierra Leoneans, and it is important that momentum is not lost.

For that reason, international development partners should stay the course and fulfil their commitments, even during the global financial crisis, to make Sierra Leone a success story and "turn it into a beacon for democracy, stability and economic progress," he maintained.

Reliefweb

Monday, 9 February 2009

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/>

Sierra Leone has made great strides in seven years since peace agreement, but Government still faces daunting challenges, Security Council told

Source: United Nations Security Council

6080th Meeting (AM)

Head of New Office Says 'Peacebuilding Will Not Be Achieved Overnight'; Corruption, Drug Trafficking, Youth Unemployment Imminent Threats to Stability

The head of the new United Nations Office in Sierra Leone today told the Security Council that the country had made great strides in the seven years since a peace agreement had been signed, including several elections and a peaceful democratic transition, but he warned that "peacebuilding will not be achieved overnight" and the young Government still faced daunting challenges and needed sustained political and financial support from the international community.

"We see ourselves at the forefront of developing and testing a new and, above all, practical concept of effective peacebuilding," said Michael von der Schulenburg, the Secretary-General's Executive Representative, and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). The Office was "the vehicle for partnership" between the United Nations, including the Peacebuilding Commission, and the Council itself, and the democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone.

"It will be our primary task to assist the country and its Government through the difficult process of consolidating peace," he added. Much smaller, but more substantive than the previous mission, the new Office had been able to develop a stronger integrated approach between the political mandate given to UNIPSIL and the development and humanitarian mandates given to its sister United Nations agencies. The result of that new approach was the Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone, a common strategy that had been endorsed by the Peacebuilding Commission.

He added that, as the country advanced towards greater stability and economic progress, it was necessary to be fully aware of the risks. For that reason, it had been of the utmost importance that President Ernest Bai Koroma, in his Agenda for Change issued in December, laid out priorities for the next three years and reiterated his determination to combat the country's three most imminent threats: corruption, illicit drug trafficking and youth unemployment. The newly structured Anti-Corruption Commission had made a credible start, although old habits died slowly and would require time and perseverance to overcome. On drugs, the problem was at the prevention stage and hadn't yet penetrated society and undermined institutions. However, the resources of the drug cartels dwarfed that of a country like Sierra Leone and international help was needed. On youth employment, up to 1 million young men and women were either underemployed or unemployed. A national commission was being established, but concrete programmes and a well-coordinated approach by the Government and its international partners was needed.

Addressing the Council in his capacity as Chair of the Sierra Leone Country Specific Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the representative of the Netherlands said that the creation of UNIPSIL had been a groundbreaking innovation for the United Nations family, which was taking critical steps in creating a truly integrated approach to peacebuilding. The Joint Vision for the United Nations Family -- adopted following extensive consultations among the world body's agencies, programmes and funds -- was a critical achievement and must be well-resourced and implemented.

UNIPSIL must be fully staffed and work in close partnership with other bilateral and multilateral partners, he continued. Support from the Organization was especially needed in the areas of youth unemployment and empowerment; addressing drug trafficking and organized crime; and further good governance reforms, including support to the constitutional review process and the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The peace consolidation agenda in Sierra Leone was not yet finished, he said, warning against shifting limited resources from a relatively stable Sierra Leone to other urgent crises. It was necessary to maintain and even expand existing levels of donor support in order not to reverse the gains made. The Peacebuilding Commission would redouble its efforts to mobilize additional resources for Sierra Leone, especially through broadening the donor base and strengthening partnerships with the private sector. The integrated structure of UNIPSIL would continue to be important for effective United Nations support to peacebuilding there.

The representative of Sierra Leone echoed the call of the Executive Representative for a steady hand and patience, as peacebuilding in his country could be nurtured and needed time. Sierra Leone was entering her eighth year of peace and stability and, by any yardstick, had been a success story in United Nations peacebuilding efforts. The establishment of UNIPSIL had been a significant step and was the "fourth generational" phase of the United Nations presence in the country.

Despite the progress, the challenges facing the Government were daunting, he stressed. Though internal revenue generation was improving, the Government's capacity to fulfil the commitments of the Cooperation Framework remained grossly inadequate; much-needed budget support to the Government was waning; and security in the subregion was cause for concern. Sierra Leone, like other members of the Mano River Union, required, more than ever, greater international attention in order to become a haven of peace, security and stability, and to achieve meaningful growth and development. He, therefore, urged the Peacebuilding Commission and all partners to rally behind President Koroma's Agenda for Change and the United Nations Joint Vision.

Speakers in the ensuing discussion welcomed the progress achieved in Sierra Leone, including the peaceful transition of power from one elected Government to another following the elections in 2007. At the same time, they expressed concern that continuing political divisions, poverty and youth unemployment, as well as emerging threats of piracy and illicit drug trafficking, could hamper peace consolidation, unless managed carefully.

Several speakers also emphasized the importance of regional cooperation to address the problems of corruption, drug trafficking and youth unemployment and supported the idea of holding a special session of the Peacebuilding Commission, either in Freetown or New York, to rally international assistance for the building of peace in Sierra Leone.

Taking the floor were representatives of Libya, Uganda, Viet Nam, Turkey, Burkina Faso, France, United States, Russian Federation, China, United Kingdom, Mexico, Costa Rica, Austria, Croatia and Japan.

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. and adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

Background

The Security Council met today to consider the Secretary-General's first report on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) (document S/2009/59), which covers the activities of the four-month-old mission, its structure, and the developments in that West African country from 1 October 2008 to 31 January 2009. In it, he notes that the transition from the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) to UNIPSIL proceeded as planned, with extensive consultations among the world body's agencies, programmes and funds, culminating in the adoption of a Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone.

According to the report, the vision reflects a strategic framework that outlines common priority areas, as well as joint United Nations operational and logistical arrangements. Accordingly, UNIPSIL brings together the political, development and humanitarian mandates of the United Nations family in Sierra Leone so as to provide integrated support to the Government in fostering peace and stability and advancing social and economic development. The new mission has a total strength of 73, including both international and national staff.

The Office is headed by the Secretary-General's Executive Representative in Sierra Leone, Michael von der Schulenburg. The mission has a small office to support the work of the Executive Representative and five substantive units, namely, a Political Affairs and Peace Consolidation Section; a Human Rights and Rule of Law Section; a Democratic Institutions Section; a Police and Security Section; and a Joint Strategic Planning Unit.

On the situation in Sierra Leone, the Secretary-General charts the progress made and the challenges that still lie ahead, highlighting the need for all segments of the country, including the Government, political parties and civil society to work together to enhance national cohesion and political reconciliation and the urgency of making greater efforts to meet crucial socio-economic demands, including poor infrastructure and an extremely low revenue base.

He also notes that, although that country has continued its progress in consolidating peace six years after a devastating civil war, more remains to be done to make the achievements irreversible, with international drug trafficking posing a critical threat to stability in the impoverished West African country and the region at large.

The report goes on to say that illicit drug trafficking, a new phenomenon with huge potential for disrupting the security and socio-economic stability of the country, and indeed the region, must be addressed before it takes root and poses even greater dangers. Noting the increasing use of Sierra Leone for transshipment of drugs from South America to Europe, he also says that cocaine trafficking represents the biggest single threat to Sierra Leone, especially since drug trafficking tends to be accompanied by arms and human trafficking, corruption and the subversion of legitimate State institutions.

It is "critical" that the international community continue to support the country in combating the menace, as well as in fighting sea piracy and supporting the overall process of peacebuilding, he stresses, and adds that various United Nations agencies are currently helping the operations of the national drug interdiction force.

Among other issues, the report stresses that urgent action is vital to combat youth unemployment, which remains "the most acute concern" in a country where the young constitute the largest proportion of the population, while calling on both the Government and the international community to ensure that the victims of the war receive the care and rehabilitation they need.

On the plus side, he notes that the Government has made the fight against corruption a key element of its reform plan, with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and that infant, child and maternal mortality rates have declined sharply, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Major security institutions have continued to improve, with UNIPSIL providing substantial input in developing appropriate policing standards, while armed forces reform has advanced. The country continued to register a consistent trend towards respect for civil and political rights, and, for the first time in its history, there appears to be a change of attitude about female genital mutilation, with some traditional chiefs pledging not to subject anyone under 18 to the practice.

Meanwhile, overall economic performance has been mixed. Gross domestic product grew at an encouraging 6 per cent in 2008. Yet, there have been a number of economic risks in 2009, including a decline in official development assistance, the high cost of food and fuel, a reduction in export revenues due to a slowdown in mining activities, and a decline in remittances from abroad due to the global recession.

The report also notes that Sierra Leone is one of the first two countries, along with Burundi, to receive support from the Peacebuilding Commission, established in 2005 to help post-conflict countries avoid slipping back into chaos and to determine the priority areas for rebuilding out of the vast array of challenges they face. More than 90 per cent of the \$35 million granted to Sierra Leone from the Peacebuilding Fund has been used on 14 projects, ranging from anti-corruption, decentralization and local governance to the development of an independent national broadcasting service.

Briefings

MICHAEL VON DER SCHULENBURG, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, said that the country had made great strides during the seven years since the declaration of peace following 11 years of an often very brutal war. Today, there were no longer any armed opposition groups in Sierra Leone and the use of arms in political or ethnic disputes had almost completely disappeared. Over the last seven years, there had been a number of democratic elections and the peaceful transition from one elected Government to another. Among other things, there were also promising signs that non-governmental associations were increasingly engaging in free and fair elections to select or replace their

leaders and poverty levels had dropped since 2003. Despite those encouraging achievements, however, much remained to be done and Sierra Leone's young democracy continued to face daunting challenges. The country remained one of the poorest countries in the world and was at the bottom of UNDP's Human Development Index.

Almost a year and a half into the tenure of the new Government, expectations among many Sierra Leoneans remained high that it would deliver on the promises made during the elections, he continued. For the Government, it was now very important not to lose the momentum and to stay the course in the implementation of the reforms and plans it had set out to do. The President's Agenda for Change provided an excellent policy document to lead and focus the work over the coming years. Also, international development partners for Sierra Leone should stay the course and fulfil their commitments, even at the difficult times of the global financial crisis. Many donors had come to the support of Sierra Leone, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and African Development Bank, the European Commission, the Governments of the United Kingdom, China, Ireland, Germany, the United States, Japan, Italy and such regional partners as Nigeria. Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and India had also joined those supporting Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, it was necessary to continue all efforts to expand the donor base even further.

As the country travelled towards greater stability and economic progress, it was necessary to be fully aware of the risks ahead, he said. Therefore, he believed it was of the utmost importance that President Koroma in his Agenda for Change had so clearly reiterated his Government's determination to combat the country's three most imminent threats: corruption, illicit drug trafficking and youth unemployment. The newly structured Anti-Corruption Commission had made a credible start and a recently approved anti-corruption law gave the legal basis for decisive actions. However, old habits died slowly and required more time and perseverance to overcome. UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team stood ready to continue to work with the Anti-Corruption Commission. He also welcomed the work that UNDP, together with other development partners, did in supporting the Government's civil service reforms, with the aim of creating a more transparent and effective Government. He also welcomed the recently established Presidential Committee to review all mining contracts that had been a source of so much conflict in the past.

As for illicit drugs, he said that the country was at the prevention stage: the threat had reached the shores of Sierra Leone, but illicit drugs had not yet penetrated the society and undermined its institutions. Decisive actions taken by the President following the seizure of the plane loaded with illicit drugs in July of last year were particularly commendable. But the financial and logistical powers of international drug cartels largely surpassed the resources available to such countries as Sierra Leone; the street value of the recently seized cocaine was estimated to exceed the entire Government's budget for that year. Therefore, the country would need strong and reliable international support.

Turning to youth employment, he said that up to 1 million young men and women were either underemployed or simply unemployed in Sierra Leone. To deal with the problem, the Government was in the process of setting up a national youth commission, and it was important that that action was followed up with a number of concrete programmes. That would require a focused, well-coordinated approach by the Government and its international development partners.

As stipulated by the Council, the new United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone had been established, he said. The essential groundwork had been laid, but more still needed to be done. He saw the new Office as the vehicle for partnership between the United Nations, including the Peacebuilding Commission, and indeed the Council, and the democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone. "It will be our primary task to assist the country and its Government through the difficult process of consolidating peace," he said. "In this spirit, we see ourselves at the forefront of developing and testing a new and, above all, practical concept of effective peacebuilding." Compared to the previous mission, the new office was much smaller, but much more substantive, enabling it to deal professionally with the important mandate given to it. The Office had been able to develop a stronger integrated approach between the political mandate given to UNIPSIL and the development and humanitarian mandates given to its sister United Nations agencies. The result of that new approach was the Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone, a document that had recently received the endorsement from the Peacebuilding Commission.

Stressing the need for sustained political and financial support from the international community, he said the Office continued to rely on the vital support it had received from the Peacebuilding Commission. "We intend to further

strengthen the important relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission in New York and the United Nations Peacebuilding Office in Freetown," he said. The possibility was being discussed of holding, together with the Government, either here in New York or in Freetown, a special session of the Peacebuilding Commission to rally international support behind the President's Agenda for Change and the United Nations Joint Vision.

"Peacebuilding will not be achieved overnight," he added, emphasizing the importance of finding the right balance between patience and perseverance on the one hand and the need to act urgently on the other.

FRANK MAJOOR (Netherlands), Chair of the Sierra Leone Country Specific Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, said impressive achievements in the areas of peace and security had not yet resulted in concrete peace dividends for the population, and the country continued to face difficult socio-economic challenges. Youth unemployment and marginalization represented one of the greatest threats to stability, which was particularly worrying in light of the increased use of the country as a transit point for drug trafficking. A youth population with few opportunities was vulnerable to becoming foot soldiers and victims of a drug culture. The global food and financial crises undermined the efforts of the Government to meet the high expectations of the population.

He said the Government of Sierra Leone was taking steps to address the challenges and emerging threats. The President's Agenda for Change represented a comprehensive road map for reform, and established key priorities and assistance modalities for the country. Having charted a clear path towards reform, the Government must now show the resolve to act and deliver on its promises. To do so, it would need the sustained support of its national and international partners. The Peacebuilding Commission had called on all stakeholders to rally behind the Agenda for Change and provide adequate support.

The United Nations must continue to play an important role in supporting the country's efforts for peace consolidation. The creation of UNIPSIL had been a groundbreaking innovation for the United Nations system, and the United Nations family in Sierra Leone was taking critical steps in creating a truly integrated approach to peacebuilding. The Joint Vision for the United Nations Family in Sierra Leone was a critical achievement and must be well-resourced and implemented. UNIPSIL must be fully staffed and work in close partnership with other bilateral and multilateral partners. Support from the Organization was especially needed in the areas of youth unemployment and empowerment; addressing drug trafficking and organized crime; and further good governance reforms, including support to the constitutional review process and the Anti-Corruption Commission.

He warned against shifting limited resources from a relatively stable country such as Sierra Leone to other regions where urgent crises occurred. He said the peace consolidation agenda in Sierra Leone was not yet finished and there was a continuing need to maintain and even expand existing levels of donor support in order not to reverse the gains made to date. The Peacebuilding Commission would redouble its efforts to mobilize additional resources for peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, especially through broadening of the donor base and the strengthening of partnerships with the private sector. The integrated structure of UNIPSIL would continue to be important for effective United Nations support to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone.

Statements

SHEKOU MOMODOU TOURAY (Sierra Leone) echoed the call of the Executive Representative for a steady hand and patience, as peacebuilding in his country could be nurtured and needed time. Sierra Leone was entering her eighth year of peace and stability and, by any yardstick, had been a success story in United Nations peacebuilding efforts. There were, however, still serious challenges to grapple with. "It is true that we cannot afford to sacrifice the gains we have scored over the last eight years of peace in Sierra Leone for the sake of inertia and self-satisfaction." The establishment of UNIPSIL had been a significant step and was the "fourth generational" phase of the United Nations presence in the country.

He said the second biannual review of progress of the implementation of the Cooperation Framework had been conducted on 15 December 2008. That review had acknowledged the strides Sierra Leone had made since the end of the war in 2002. There had been two highly acclaimed democratic electoral processes. The Human Rights Commission was fully operational. The most important phase of the constitutional review process — identifying the pitfalls and shortcoming of the 1991 constitution — had been completed. Addressing the political concerns of the populace and their basic socio-economic needs, however, were inextricably linked.

A number of gender-related legislations had been enacted and the judiciary, police and the military had all undergone significant reforms. Security and stability had improved considerably and the climate was now conducive for investment. Stringent laws had been enacted to tackle corruption and the emerging threat of drug trafficking in the subregion. The independent Anti-Corruption Commission had demonstrated sufficient muscle and determination in the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy.

He said that, despite the progress, the challenges facing the Government "are daunting". Though internal revenue generation was improving, the Government's capacity to fulfil the commitments of the Cooperation Framework remained grossly inadequate. The much-needed budget support to the Government was waning. Security in the subregion was cause for concern. Sierra Leone, like other members of the Mano River Union, required more than ever greater international attention in order to become a haven of peace, security and stability, as well as achieving meaningful growth and development. He, therefore, urged the Peacebuilding Commission and all partners to rally behind the President's Agenda for Change and the United Nations Joint Vision. The biannual review of the Peacebuilding Commission had reaffirmed the need for all parties -- the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations, bilateral and multilateral partners and other stakeholders -- to remain focused and promptly forthcoming in addressing their respective commitments.

IBRAHIM O.A. DABBASHI (Libya) said that it was important to continue consolidated international and United Nations efforts to further promote peace in Sierra Leone, establish stable democratic institutions and begin the process of development and consolidation of peace in all parts of the country. Great challenges were still facing the country. There was still a lack of trust between the country's two principle parties, but what gave hope for the future was the cordial and constructive interaction between them, with the encouragement of UNIPSIL. Despite the fact that economic performance had been encouraging in 2008, there were still some concerns, including the decline of external remittances and the possibility that official assistance would decline in 2009. Therefore, he supported the proposal concerning holding a special session of the Peacebuilding Commission to encourage more donations and assistance.

Libya considered the President's Agenda for Change and the United Nations Joint Vision as two very important documents to accelerate the building of peace in Sierra Leone, he continued. He agreed with the main priorities determined by the Agenda, including corruption, illicit trafficking in drugs and youth unemployment. As for the Joint Vision, it aimed at assisting the Government in consolidating peace and determined the main programmatic priorities, including economic integration of rural areas, participation of unemployed youth and promoting good governance. He hoped United Nations bodies and donors would provide generous support to the implementation of both programmes.

Illegal trafficking in drugs must be confronted as a matter of priority, he said. There was no doubt that promoting security sector reform and cooperation with the countries of the region would better address that problem, but it was also important to obtain the support of UNIPSIL and donors in that area. In that connection, he commended the UNIPSIL initiative for setting up an action plan to deal with the illegal trafficking of drugs and organized crime. Libya also agreed with the Secretary-General that one of the main cornerstones of post-conflict peacebuilding was dealing with injustices that had occurred during the civil war. It was very important to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and start the work of the reparations committee for victims as quickly as possible. He welcomed the readiness of UNIPSIL to provide technical and advisory assistance to that process. For its part, Libya had provided assistance to Sierra Leone in the form of grants and investment projects and urged the financial institutions it participated in to provide assistance to the country.

RUHAKANA RUGUNDA (Uganda) noted a generally positive assessment of the situation in Sierra Leone, as well as the role of UNIPSIL through the Joint Vision of the United Nations Family. In particular, he commended the Government and people of Sierra Leone on the ongoing consolidation of stability and security following the peaceful transfer of power to President Koroma through the general elections of 2007, as well as the successful holding of local elections in July 2008. It was encouraging that the country had been able to achieve a gross domestic product growth rate of 6 per cent in 2008, underpinned by the expansion of the agricultural, construction and service sectors. However, the country still faced a number of socio-economic challenges that required a holistic approach. The President's Agenda for Change laid out the basic policies and key priorities for the Government for the next three years in such critical areas as economic growth, delivery of social services and infrastructure development.

Uganda appreciated the commitment of the Government and its development partners to raise \$1.2 billion, out of the total \$2.1 billion required, in the medium-term to achieve the objectives of the Agenda for Change, he continued. He noted that there was a funding gap of about \$1 billion for full implementation. Given the critical importance of having sufficient funding, his delegation wanted to know the progress made so far in the establishment of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and the mobilization of resources to be administered by UNDP. He called upon UNIPSIL to work with all the stakeholders to mobilize the required funds. Despite the global financial and economic crisis, he requested the development partners to ensure timely disbursement of the pledged funds. It was also a shared responsibility of the Government and development partners to ensure that the funds were utilized on core activities and projects that would spur economic growth, create employment and improve the standards of living in the country.

He added that the implementation of the decentralization and devolution of authority process needed to be expedited, because it would enhance service delivery. He urged the Government and UNIPSIL to continue strengthening the capacity of national institutions to address such challenges as corruption, drug and human trafficking and piracy. Peacebuilding was a fundamental component of the three pillars that formed the mandate of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. It required reinforcing contributions from a wide range of sectors and actors. The progress achieved in Sierra Leone so far was a good example of what could be achieved through an integrated and collaborative approach among the Government, United Nations agencies and development partners.

LE LUONG MINH (Viet Nam) was pleased at Sierra Leone's continued progress in implementing its peace consolidation and socio-economic agenda, notably its enhanced dialogue in countries of the Mano River Union and successful conduct of local council polls last July. He also noted with satisfaction the continued cooperation between Sierra Leone and the United Nations country team, the Peacebuilding Commission and other development partners to strengthen principles of national ownership, among other things. At the same time, he shared concerns at such issues as the unresolved political tension along ethnic and regional lines, the emerging threat of piracy, illicit drug trafficking, the marginalization of both rural and urban communities and the high number of unemployed youth. If not managed carefully, those issues could derail the peace consolidation process.

Commending efforts by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone to proceed with its mandate outlined in resolution 1829 (2008), he said that coordination among United Nations agencies, regional organizations and international donors was essential to avoid duplication of work. He supported the Government's efforts to sustain peace and stability, address the root causes of conflict and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. He called on the United Nations, the Peacebuilding Commission, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the global community to continue to assist the Government in those efforts.

BAKI ILKIN (Turkey) said that, over the past two decades, African nations had seen their fair share of turmoil, and Sierra Leone had not been an exception. Today, however, Sierra Leone stood as an example of how nations could change their destiny. There was now sustained peace and stability. He applauded the people of Sierra Leone for having the courage and vision to move beyond past grievances.

He said the task of fighting corruption, drug trafficking and youth unemployment could not be taken lightly, but, with the support of UNIPSIL and the international community, efforts could be successful. That would also prove that the international community could bring about change for the better. In moving forward, he had every confidence that the Executive Representative and UNIPSIL could continue to contribute to peace and prosperity.

MICHEL KAFANDO (Burkina Faso) said there was no doubt that enormous progress had been achieved. Positive developments had been marked by the commitment shown by all actors and the clear will of Sierra Leone to promote national reconciliation and ensure economic progress. He welcomed the establishment of UNIPSIL, as well as the efforts and dynamism shown, together with other stakeholders, in efforts to consolidate peace. Challenges faced included the socio-economic fabric, which was vulnerable because of the global crisis, unemployment among youth and an increase in drug trafficking and organized crime. The Agenda for Change recognized the fact that corruption, drug trafficking and youth unemployment were major risks to peace and stability.

He urged the Peacebuilding Commission to support the implementation of the Agenda for Change and encouraged all stakeholders to support strengthening good governance, the rule of law and reform of the public sector. The Peacebuilding Fund should continue to provide support and he urged, in that regard, all partners, despite the global crisis, to continue supporting the Fund. The Joint Vision of the United Nations Family and the Agenda for Change aimed at linking economic growth to human development. He hoped the Joint Vision could bring together the political mandate of UNIPSIL with the activities of funds, programmes and United Nations bodies. A special session of the Peacebuilding Commission was to be held and, in that regard, it was essential to underscore greater efficiency and close cooperation between UNIPSIL, ECOWAS and the Mano River Union. The focus should remain on support for economic recovery programmes, strengthening of institutions, combating drug trafficking and organized crime, support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as support for good governance and strengthening institutions.

PIERRE LACROIX (France) said that the statements today confirmed that the situation in Sierra Leone was getting better, but significant difficulties still remained. He welcomed the progress achieved, including the proper conduct of elections in 2007. However, there were challenges in the socio-economic areas, which were exacerbated by the crisis in the global economy. He was also concerned regarding the development of the drug trade in the region and its destabilizing effect. In that connection, he welcomed the ECOWAS conference last October, which had prepared a political statement for combating drugs in West Africa. France was counting on regional cooperation to address the problem and was prepared to support the provision of international expertise and technical assistance in that regard.

The strategic framework for peacebuilding in Sierra Leone must continue, he said, welcoming the cooperation between the Government and the Peacebuilding Commission. He encouraged the Government to continue implementing the strategic framework. France was pleased with the good pace of the start-up of UNIPSIL and supported the replacement of the old mission. In particular, he welcomed the innovation of providing support for the deliberations of the Peacebuilding Support Fund. Supporting the efforts of United Nations agencies and other international bodies to work together, he said that integration was needed to support peace and make a contribution to the sustainable development of the country. He looked forward to UNIPSIL continuing along all those lines.

SUSAN RICE (United States) commended UNIPSIL for its support to Sierra Leone in making the transition to durable peace. She also commended President Koroma for his Agenda for Change, appointing a strong Anti-Corruption Commission and strengthening the efforts to promote the rule of law. UNIPSIL would play an important role in supporting those initiatives. In general, the United Nations had come a long way in helping nations rebuild after conflict. The Office was a new instrument in supporting a critical transition from insecurity and violence to peace. It was necessary to follow its progress to ensure the necessary support and ensure the new Office had the impact that the international community sought. She saw a real potential for value added and hoped the Office would soon prove the utility of an integrated approach to peacebuilding. It was an important next step in the common strategy to assist Sierra Leone. She was concerned, however, that UNIPSIL was not yet at full strength.

As a supporter of the Peacebuilding Commission, the United States was encouraged that the Commission had facilitated national dialogue on important issues, she continued. Among other things, the United States applauded the work of United Nations radio, which had reached out to people across the country to provide vital information regarding elections, women's rights and other important issues. She supported the transfer of that service to the national corporation and supported further development of the national broadcasting service.

Continuing, she expressed concern regarding the illegal transshipment of drugs through Sierra Leone and welcomed UNIPSIL's cooperation with the national authorities in that regard, saying that the United States supported those efforts. She also encouraged a regional approach to addressing the issues of narco-trafficking and piracy. Despite progress, Sierra Leone was still facing important challenges, including youth unemployment and poverty, which was a reminder of the need to work together within and beyond the international community to address them. Sierra Leone was not only an example of a difficult post-conflict transition, it also demonstrated the promise of the United Nations and the international community as they assisted people in building a better future. The United States would assist Sierra Leone in building lasting peace and achieving development and democracy.

KONSTANTIN DOLGOV (Russian Federation) said the current political stability allowed Sierra Leone to move forward on reconstruction. In spite of positive developments, however, Sierra Leone faced tremendous transitional challenges, including a number of socio-economic issues. Their resolution was complicated by new challenges,

such as the global financial crisis, cross-border organized crime and the growing threat of becoming a transition point of drug trafficking. The last threat was a problem for the entire subregion.

He said that, in order to address those threats, national institutions must be strengthened and a regional approach was necessary, including through the action plan of ECOWAS. He was also concerned by reports of piracy. The ongoing challenges confirmed the need for further support by the international community. Of significance was the coordinating work to be done by UNIPSIL and interactions between UNIPSIL and the United Nations Office for West Africa. UNIPSIL should focus on helping to implement the leadership's three-year programme. Cooperation between the Government and the Peacebuilding Commission on the priority areas was of urgent importance.

LIU ZHENMIN (China) said that, over the past year, the political situation in Sierra Leone had remained stable, the security situation had been moving in a good direction and some headway had been made in economic development. The Agenda for Change had set the priority areas of the Government to develop its economy. The Joint Vision of the United Nations Family spelled out the priorities for international assistance. The focus of the next phase must be to ensure that their implementation would achieve the expected results.

He said the Government of Sierra Leone should make full use of the current stability in order to achieve conciliation and development, and international assistance to Sierra Leone should continue. Through the establishment of UNIPSIL, the peacebuilding process had entered a new phase. The impact of the global crises presented new challenges and the peacebuilding process, therefore, faced new challenges, including such issues as combating corruption and piracy. In combating drug trafficking, it was important to draw upon lessons learned, which indicated that prevention was key. Efforts in combating drug trafficking should be linked to improvements in the rule of law and the economy.

KAREN PIERCE (United Kingdom) said that UNIPSIL was a very important integrated mission and an experiment in that respect, and she would follow its progress with great interest. The Council had heard much of what she wanted to say, and she would keep her statement short, but her brevity should not be taken for lack of interest. Sierra Leone was an important partner of the United Kingdom, and there was great support in her country for Sierra Leone and its people. She welcomed the peaceful transition to the new Government following the elections of 2007 and urged the Government to invigorate coordination with the development partners for the Agenda for Change. The United Nations had an important role to play, and full use of UNIPSIL should be made, in that regard.

The Office had done some important work already for the country's journey to effective development, she continued. She hoped UNIPSIL would continue its high-level advocacy against drugs, corruption and youth unemployment. Without progress in those areas, it would be hard to deliver in others.

In conclusion, she posed several questions in connection with the Office, asking about UNIPSIL's objectives for this year, and wondering what indicators of success should be followed and what other objectives added for 2009. She also wanted to know more regarding the impact of the military coup in Guinea on Sierra Leone, and wanted assurance that outputs and indicators of success would be included in the next report, so that the mission be evaluated properly. Proper monitoring was a key to success. She was disappointed that it had taken so long to reach the current stage of UNIPSIL's deployment. Some positions were still not filled. In a country like Sierra Leone that was not a tenable way to proceed, and she wanted to know how the United Nations could change its processes in that regard.

CLAUDE HELLER (Mexico) welcomed the first report of UNIPSIL and underscored the positive developments in the country following many years of conflict. In Sierra Leone, the United Nations had been able to encourage reform to further promote development. It was now essential to train local human resources and avoid a situation of long-term dependence. The Security Council and other United Nations bodies must not attempt to work alone; they must encourage the initiatives of countries in the region, which had a better understanding of local realities and were in the best possible position to promote cooperation and development. The United Nations needed to promote support and planning capacity in Sierra Leone. Among other things, he supported the efforts to promote national dialogue, consolidate political institutions, and strengthen the national human resources commission. Consolidation of those efforts was a priority for UNIPSIL.

He welcomed other developments, including the work to enact the law on the rights of the child and gender justice, as well as the efforts to achieve justice during the transitional period. He expressed concern, however, regarding the role of organized crime and the increasing use of the country for drug and arms trafficking, as well as the instances of piracy and disputes among tribes. It was essential for UNIPSIL, with support of the international community, to assist the Government in promoting dialogue and cooperation with the countries of the region to combat drug and arms trafficking, since those phenomena threatened peace and stability in the region. He also welcomed the work by the Peacebuilding Commission within the Sierra Leone country configuration and its work to mobilize resources. It was also encouraging to see work to promote dialogue with other actors.

In conclusion, he supported the efforts of the Commission to broaden the donor base, so the people of Sierra Leone could benefit from peace benefits. That was particularly important against the backdrop of the current global financial situation. It was important to ensure the solid presence of the United Nations in the country to continue promoting cooperation among all partners through the Joint Vision. Further, the President's Agenda for Change deserved solid support.

ANA VILLALOBOS (Costa Rica) said reconciliation and national unity in Sierra Leone remained of the highest priority and required participation of all sectors of society. Ethnic and regional divisions must be overcome, a task to be undertaken by Parliament. Compliance with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was also important. Of similar urgency was institutional consolidation. Institution building and the rule of law required an all out attack against corruption, which included transparency and combating impunity. The Anti-Corruption Commission's work should be strengthened.

She said the Council must pay attention to the growing threat of drug trafficking, which also threatened other countries in the region, including through implementation of the ECOWAS plan of action and supporting the strengthening of subregional organizations. Challenges confronting the Government of Sierra Leone in its efforts to consolidate progress included reform of the security and justice sectors and integration of the country's youth, efforts which needed international support.

THOMAS MAYR-HARTING (Austria) said the progress in moving peacekeeping efforts forward could provide an example for other cases. He welcomed the support of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in facing the challenges posed by organized crime and drug trafficking. Cooperation with the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission was essential. In confronting other challenges, it was essential that the World Bank and IMF put more emphasis on poverty reduction. Progress in the economic performance, however, could be jeopardized by high youth unemployment. Efforts to address youth unemployment in the Mano River Basin region should be strengthened.

He said organized crime, drug trafficking, corruption and the proliferation of small arms must be high on the agenda and be addressed by regional processes, including through the ECOWAS convention against small arms and light weapons and implementation of the ECOWAS plan of action against drugs and organized crime. The Joint Vision of the United Nations Family document was a sound basis for coordinated support to efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking. Two activities were crucial for national reconciliations: follow-up to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the procedures of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Special Court's activities had provided capacity-building opportunities for national professionals. A brain drain of those skills should be avoided.

VICE SKRACIC (Croatia) said that he was pleased by the successful transition to UNIPSIL, which brought together the whole United Nations family. The model had already started to bear fruit. The new climate in the country contributed to the further consolidation of peace, but Sierra Leone was still divided along ethnic and geographical lines and more remained to be done. He commended the Government for making the fight against corruption a key element of its platform, and welcomed the work of the Anti-Corruption Commission and development of the action plan to address illicit drug and arms trafficking. He also welcomed the first State human rights report and encouraged the Government to continue implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He strongly supported security reform and commended UNIPSIL for its input to the development of policing standards.

Among the Government's main remaining challenges, he mentioned the youth unemployment and poverty, saying that they posed serious threats to the progress achieved. The way those obstacles were confronted would define

further progress. Agenda for Change identified the Government's main priorities and represented a major change from aid dependence to growth and development. There was no doubt that firm political leadership and international support would be needed. In that connection, he welcomed the development of the United Nations Joint Vision and hoped that, together with the Agenda, it would accelerate the recovery of the country and ensure permanent stabilization. He also commended the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in Sierra Leone.

Council President YUKIO TAKASU (Japan), speaking in his national capacity, said it was important that UNIPSIL reach its full operational capacity. Sierra Leone represented a model of a transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, but major peacebuilding challenges remained in good governance and creating development opportunities. The following areas should receive focused attention and priority: strengthening good governance and the core democratic institutions; dialogue for national cohesion and reconciliation; accountability in public services; controlling drug trafficking and piracy; and improving the livelihood of the people. Urgent support was needed for efforts to create job opportunities for youth and to reduce the high dependence on food imports, in order to achieve self-sufficiency by 2010. The supply of electricity and basic transportation infrastructure were also essential.

He said those priorities were well reflected in the Agenda for Change, the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework and the United Nations Joint Vision. The United Nations Joint Vision represented a conscious effort to address priority areas in a fully coordinated and integrated manner by the United Nations system, the World Bank, IMF and the African Development Bank. Implementation was what most mattered. The international community should strengthen political, economical and technical support. Japan had extended assistance in the energy sector and for youth employment and was now considering assistance for rice production through the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD).

Concluding Remarks

Responding to questions and comments, Mr. SCHULENBURG, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, thanking all members of the Council for their words of support, said a peacebuilding mission was a new type of mission that raised many conceptual issues, such as the difference between an Executive Representative and a Resident Coordinator and the relationship between UNIPSIL and the Peacebuilding Commission. Another issue was how to integrate a political mandate with a development mandate. The Joint Vision document had been adopted in order to combine the two visions, and was supported by 15 United Nations agencies.

He said UNIPSIL had provided Sierra Leone's President with a five page note on what could be done to address youth unemployment, including a recommendation to create a youth commission. It had also offered an advisory note on the drug issue. He hoped that a special session of the Peacebuilding Commission could help provide general directions for establishing programmatic areas with concrete benchmarks.

Regarding Uganda's question on the multi-donor trust fund, he said that, having learned from past experiences with the Peacebuilding Fund, he intended first to present a development framework to the Peacebuilding Commission, before opening a multi-donor trust fund.

Guinea was a matter of concern, he said to another comment. Guinea shared a long border with Sierra Leone, parts of which were in dispute. As there were many cultural and ethnic relationships, whatever happened in Sierra Leone would have an impact on Guinea. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had agreed to monitor the border for unusual movements. Neighbouring countries also could easily become destinations of flight for Sierra Leonean criminals.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 9 February 2009

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]

Newspaper Summary

Labour Minister Says Political Will against Cronies Needed to Fight Corruption

(New Democrat, The News, The Inquirer)

- Labor Minister Samuel Kofi Woods has declared that Liberia has sunk in corruption, thus President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf must muster the courage to punish corrupt public officials.
- “We must recognize that this nation has sunk in corrupt and twisted values, leaders must act against friends and allies who violate public trust,” Mr. Woods told students during a keynote address at the University of Liberia student government induction ceremony Friday.
- He implored government to “use the anti corruption web to catch, capture and punish the big fishes and set example on those perceived to be untouchable”
- He noted that looting state resources and self aggrandizement have brought shame to the nation and that current political leaders continue to maintain those values that have undermined the growth of democracy here.
- “Those who lead today continue to maintain values that undermine the growth of our democracy. In this country, we applaud greed and glorify dishonesty. In this country, we are self- centred and lack nationalism and patriotism, and in the combination of all, we are just becoming extremely corrupt,” the Labour Minister, once a rights activist, declared.
- Minister Woods: “Leaders must have the political will and courage to lead and not be led. Leaders must take responsibility and not shift responsibility. Leaders of this country must act against friends and allies who break the law and violate the public trust”.

Monrovia’s New Mayor Vows Tougher Measures to Restore Cleanliness

(The News, New Democrat, The Inquirer, The Informer)

- The newly appointed Mayor of the City of Monrovia stormed the city’s derelict streets of impoverished people Saturday kicking down market tables of petty traders and vowing to unleash bulldozers to wipe out the capital’s spreading slums.
- Ms. Mary Broh, a deputy managing director at the port, also ordered storeowners not to allow petty traders to sell in front of their stores.
- “We will fight it. We will break down makeshift structures. We will start to bulldoze them,” she declared as she kicked the goods of street peddlers common in African cities. The mayor met no resistance.
- “We will break down makeshift structures that are not supposed to be there. We will start using bulldozers to move them to give Monrovia a facelift,” she said amidst laughter from passersby.

Illicit Miners Plunder Sapo Park

(Public Agenda)

- The Environmental Protection Agency or (EPA) here has confirmed a broad occupation of the reserved Sapo National Park (SNP) in south-eastern Liberia by foreigners. The EPA in its fact findings done on the Park recently established that Malians, Ghanaian, Senegalese, Ivoirians, Sierra Leoneans have stormed the Park in search of gold and diamond. The EPA said the foreigners have likewise turned the environment of the Park into a well fixed market place that is now serving as an attraction to more intruders. EPA’s Executive Director Ben Donie, told a news conference Friday that findings carried out at the Park by the EPA and partners also established that as a result of low consideration for communities neighbouring the Park

ranging from Grand Gedeh and River Gee, the Park has become a 'colossal corridor' for invaders who enter there without any remorse. The EPA's fact findings explained that there are little or no consideration for the local government administrations and traditional leaders in the management system of the Park. According to the EPA, people living around the Park do not see themselves involved in the management system of the Park and as a result, they live with the belief that the Park was only a mere Forestry Development Agency and or government's business and therefore, they do not care about what goes wrong there. The EPA Executive Director Ben Donie said there are over 20,000 people currently in the Park and demonstrating illicit activities which include gold and diamond mining and similarly, shooting dead, protected animals.

Radio Summary

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

President Sirleaf Dedicates Old Road Project

- The Liberian leader, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf over the weekend dedicated the first successfully completed community road projects currently being undertaken by the Liberian Government from tax payers' money.
- President Sirleaf cut the ribbon marking the official opening of the road in the Sinkor Oldroad Community. The road segment, which is 4.2 kilometres long, has been refurbished by CHICO, a Chinese road construction company. The refurbished stretch of road covers the Nigeria House junction, Oldroad market and Kailondo hotel suburbs of the community.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

New Appointments in Government

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on Friday appointed Mary Broh, Mayor of the City of Monrovia, replacing Ophelia Hoff-Saytumah.
- Also appointed Friday was Madam Laetitia Reeves, Mayor-Paynesville City Corporation. Appointments were also made at the Ministry of National Defense. Mr. Robert E. Cooper becomes the Assistant Minister for Plans, Policy & Operations while Mrs. Olga R. C. Jallah has been named Assistant Minister for Personnel Administration and Resource Management.
- According to an Executive Mansion release, the President has also effected changes at the Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy. Mr. Carlton Miller was appointed Assistant Minister for Mineral Exploration & Research; Mr. Walter McCarthy, Assistant Minister for Mines; and Mr. James Zawolo, Assistant Minister for Energy.
- Florence Dukuly goes to Ministry of Internal Affairs as Assistant Minister for Administration while Mr. Ekeema A. Witherspoon becomes Assistant Minister for Technical Services also at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Mr. Henry B. Yonton, Assistant Minister for Administration, Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

star Radio *(News monitored today at 9:00 am)*

Education materials for schools arrive

- A consignment of textbooks and boxes of assorted toys valued over US\$24,000 has arrived in the country. The over three thousand books and toys were donated by 14-year-old Casey Robins and parents based in California.
- The donation which is a second consignment followed an interview with Deputy Information Minister Gabriel Williams in the United States.
- Minister Williams said Casey and parents were touched when he highlighted the plight of Liberian students in an interview on Public Radio.
- Minister Williams assured the books would be turned over to the Education Ministry and the MCSS to help update libraries at Public schools. He also assured the toys would be distributed to children in orphanages and other communities.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 6 February 2009

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]

Newspaper Summary

UNMIL FC Says Ex-Combatants No Threat To Liberia

(Public Agenda, The Patriot)

- The Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Lt. Gen. Zahirul Alam has disclosed that ex- Liberian combatants who fought along side their Ivorian counterparts do not in anyway pose threat to Liberia.
- Lt. Gen. Alam made the disclosure this week at the Mission's headquarter in Sinkor when Force Commanders from the UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI), the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and a representative from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) at the UN headquarter in New York met with journalists at the just ended Regional Force Commanders Conference.
- The UNMIL Force Commander said, the presence of ex-Liberian combatants in neighbouring Ivory Coast are not currently a threat to Liberia yet, adding, " if situations in that West African state do not go the way it should, there could be some trouble." According to him, "they (ex-combatants) are demanding some CFA 500,000, equivalent to US\$1000 compensation from the Ivorian Government and if they do not get it and become frustrated, there could be some trouble there and not in Liberia."
- He noted that there are some other terms and conditions set up by the ex-combatants before disarmament but they will not be taken into consideration. Lt. Gen. Alam stated that in view of the current global economic down turn and the complexity of the DDRR program, coupled with the complexity of the ex-combatants' compensation package, two things could happen. He did not elaborate further.

Court Acquits Senator Kaine, Six others in Murder Case

(The News, National Chronicle, Daily Observer, The Analyst, Public Agenda, The Inquirer)

- Seven defendants in the Kolleh Town massacre case including Senator Roland Kaine have been acquitted.
- The grand jury that heard the facts of the murder case brought a not guilty verdict in favour of the seven defendants although another defendant A.Y. Kollie got a hung verdict.
- The seven defendants including Senator Kaine were amongst 15 accused of the murder of more than 14 young men in a bloody land dispute. Subsequent reports put the number of men killed at over 20.
- Reports say the verdict sparked angry reaction from relatives of those massacred threatening to take to the streets to protest the ruling. However, officers of the Liberia National Police were deployed at strategic locations in the city to prevent the demonstration.
- Most media outlets portrayed the verdict as a 'blow' to the State even though the prosecution has the legal right to request a review of the case by a higher court, preferably the Supreme Court of Liberia.

Chinese Rebuilds Jallah Town Road – US\$1M Tax Payers' Money in Breeze

(Public Agenda)

- [sic:] Once again, the image of the Ellen Johnson Government has come under the microscope with the dumping of US\$1million of tax payers' monies into the drainage at the time hundreds of thousands of Liberians are going hungry daily and can not afford to pay their children schools' fees. The Jallah Town Road which was given massive publicity as one of the first major projects of the UP Government using United States one million dollars of tax payers' funds, has been crushed and is being rebuilt by a Chinese Company.
- The Jallah Town Road was one year ago dedicated by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who also raised the question of the unprofessional way the road was constructed by engineers from the Ministry of Public Works.
- Despite the President's concern about the unprofessional work carried out by the Public Works Ministry, she did not punish anyone for the economic waste at the time the country is recovering from years of destruction.
- Insider at the Ministry of Public Works put the cost of the project at US\$1 million but reliable sources said a good chunk of the funds intended for the construction of the road was actually siphoned.
- The construction of roads in the country is part of government's poverty reduction program, but with the remaking of the Jallah Town Road, and the wasting of such huge amount of money, it is not clear how the government intends to reduce poverty.

Radio Summary

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

Senator Kaine, Six others Acquitted

(Also reported on Star Radio, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

US\$30m rice Concession Starts in Lofa

- The US\$30 million concession agreement signed between Government and African Development Agency (ADA) last year has formally started in Foya, Lofa County.
- The multi-million dollar rice project, which started last month, is covering an initial 2,500 hectares of land.
- Speaking at a news conference Thursday, the General Manager of ADA-LAP, Elvis Morris said a total of 10,000 hectares of land would be targeted in all.
- Last year ADA and the Liberian Government signed a US\$30 million rice concession agreement to be produced rice in Lofa, Nimba and Bong.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Tours Parts of Monrovia

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf yesterday visited several commercial centres in parts of Monrovia and expressed dismay at the sanitary conditions of the areas visited.
- The President also frowned on the erection of makeshift structures in residential areas and advised owners of the structures that Government will demolish the structures to give the city a facelift.
- Thursday's visit by President Sirleaf covered Mamba Point, Johnson Street, the Gabriel Tucker Bridge, and Duala Market on the Bushrod Island.

Star Radio *(News monitored today at 9:00 am)*

Today Is International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has issued a proclamation declaring today 6 February as International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation.
- A Foreign Ministry release said the day will be observed under the theme "Political Will at the Centre of Achieving Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation".

(Also reported on Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

House of Representative to Investigate "Controversies" at TRC

- The House Committee on Peace and Reconciliation has announced an investigation into the unfolding development ensuing at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC).
- The Chairman of the Committee, Wesseh Blamo said the investigation will focus on the accusation linking TRC Commissioner, Sheikh Kafumba Konneh to the war and disagreements among the commissioners over the TRC's first report.

Truth F.M. *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*

President Orders Halt to Production of Locally Produce Beverage

- President Johnson Sirleaf has ordered a halt to the sale of plastic alcoholic drinks, referred to locally as 'drip.'
- The drink, produced by a local distillery, NICOM distilleries, is reportedly being consumed by under-aged youth.
- Commerce Ministry officials have been directed to ensure that the company halts the production of the drink or risk closure.

Trial of Rwandan accused of manufacturing evidence starts at UN tribunal

The trial of a Rwandan investigator accused of trying to fabricate evidence for the appeal of a former minister of higher education convicted of genocide started today at the United Nations tribunal set up to deal with the mass killings that engulfed the small African nation in 1994.

Léonidas Nshogoza has been charged with two counts of contempt of the Tribunal and two counts of attempting to commit acts punishable as contempt against the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania.

The indictment accuses Mr. Nshogoza of intending to fabricate evidence and procure false statements for use in the appeal of the conviction and sentencing of former Minister Jean de Dieu Kamuhanda. It also accuses him of interfering in the administration of justice.

Mr. Nshogoza, who was the investigator for the defence in the case of Prosecutor v. Jean de Dieu Kamuhanda, voluntarily surrendered to the ICTR in February 2008 after an international warrant was issued for his arrest.

In its opening statement today in Trial Chamber III, the prosecution said that the charges were very serious because they involved an attempt to pervert justice in a genocide case, adding that it had evidence to support the evidence fabrication charges and intent to procure false evidence.

Former Minister Kamuhanda is serving concurrent life sentences after being convicted of genocide and extermination by the ICTR, which found that he had supervised the killings in his native Gikomero commune in the Kigali-Rural prefecture.

He distributed firearms, grenades and machetes to the Hutu Interahamwe militia and led attacks at the parish church and adjoining school in Gikomero, where several thousand Tutsi civilians were killed.

Beginning in April 1994 in Rwanda, more than 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and Hutu moderates were massacred, mostly by machete, during a period of less than 100 days.

Capital News

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<http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news>



Hague beckons for Kenya poll financiers

BY ANNE KIGUTA and GEORGE MUNYORI

NAIROBI, Kenya, Feb 10 - A crucial vote that was due on Tuesday afternoon on a Bill that seeks to entrench the proposed Special Tribunal in the Constitution was put off to allow more consultations after gruelling lobbying by Members of Parliament late on Monday night.

President Mwai Kibaki was however still expected to chair a meeting of Ministers and Assistant Ministers on Tuesday morning to whip up support for the Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Bill 2009.

“The government says it wants to lobby support for the Bill but I believe most MPs have already decided how they will vote. Further consultations won’t help,” Imenti Central legislator Gitobu Imanyara told Capital News.

Mr Imanyara was first to raise objections to the Bill and has marshalled support among MPs in a bid to frustrate its passage.

Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and Party of National Unity (PNU) lawmakers were expected to hold separate meetings to build consensus on the Bill and it appeared likely a vote on it would be taken on Wednesday.

The Bill was withdrawn after defeat seemed inevitable. It has drawn sharp divisions even within government circles and the required two thirds majority ‘yes’ vote appeared unlikely.

If put to vote and defeated, the Bill can only be brought back to Parliament after six months.

MPs for the Special Tribunal argued that it would preserve Kenya's sovereignty while those who favour trials at The Hague said local courts were susceptible to manipulation.

International Jurisprudence

If the Bill fails, The Special Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) would have to order a fresh inquiry into post poll violence.

Constitutional lawyer Paul Muite explained that the ICC Prosecutor would typically deal with the names contained in a list of post election violence suspects presented by the Justice Philip Waki Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence (CIPEV).

“Once he issues a warrant against Mr X, it is the duty of all the countries which are signatory to the Rome

Statute which created the ICC to arrest Mr X and send him to The Hague. Take for instance the case of Mr Bashir (the Sudanese President)... if he were to step into Nairobi, it is our duty to arrest him and take him to The Hague because we are signatories to the treaty,” Mr Muite told Capital News.

The ICC was set up by the Statute of Rome sponsored by the United Nations to create international standards of jurisprudence.

“It was sponsored on the basis that the world has now become a global village and that it is not right for one to commit atrocities thinking that because you are in power none can reach you. It gives international jurisdiction to the International Criminal Court to investigate and issue warrants in countries that are not even signatories to the treaty,” he said.

The city lawyer and one time legislator said the crimes contained in the Waki report fit the ICC's jurisdiction: “Kofi Annan is not just any other individual on the street; he is the former Secretary General of the United Nations. The International Criminal Court was created up by the UN when he was in office. So if he hands over that envelope, I cannot see the Prosecutor just ignoring it. It will be taken very seriously.”

Mr Annan chaired the Panel of Eminent African Personalities who - at the behest of the African Union - mediated Kenya's political crisis in 2008 resulting in the coalition government of President's PNU and Prime Minister Raila Odinga's ODM.

The Sierra Leone Example

But the Chief Investigator of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission Howard Varney said from his experience, the post poll violence in Kenya though disastrous may not necessarily warrant The Hague's attention.

Capital News spoke to Mr Varney who told of the Sierra Leone example, a country which had its own Special Courts set up after 11 years of bitter civil conflict and the blood diamonds ordeal that involved neighbouring Liberia.

“I don't want to belittle the elections violence but the fact of the matter is that the ICC is seized with matters in Central Africa and elsewhere whose magnitude far outweighs what happened here. It is entirely possible for the ICC to say Kenyan cases are not a priority,”

Mr Varney who is now the Director of the International Centre for Transitional Justice advised Kenya to opt for a local tribunal which he said was likely to yield better results.

“If you are calling for amendments to the tribunal Bill then you can't at the same time be advocating for The Hague. Right now we believe it is appropriate and strategic to be pushing for the inclusion of the necessary amendments to make the statute on the Special Tribunal the best possible,”

Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission completed its work in 2007 however The Hague still took up the matter of civil war atrocities in that country.

It has since put on trial the former president of neighbouring Liberia Charles Taylor, for backing the insurgency in Sierra Leone providing arms and training in exchange for diamonds.