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SECURITY COUNCIL ESTABLISHES UN INTEGRATED OFFICE IN SIERRA LEONE TO FURTHER ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT

- **SECURITY COUNCIL**

PRESS RELEASE

5254th Meeting (PM)*

SECURITY COUNCIL ESTABLISHES UN INTEGRATED OFFICE IN SIERRA LEONE

TO FURTHER ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Emphasizing the importance of the continued support of the United Nations and the international community for the long-term security and development of Sierra Leone after withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone by the end of 2005, the Security Council this afternoon requested the Secretary-General to establish the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone for an initial period of 12 months, beginning on 1 January 2006.

Unanimously adopting resolution 1620 (2005) and following the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in document S/2005/273/Add.2, the Council requested that the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) be mandated with assisting the Government in,

among other things: building the capacity of State institutions to develop and implement a strategy for addressing the root causes of the conflict and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals; developing a national plan of action for human rights and establishing a national human rights commission; enhancing good governance, transparency and accountability; building the capacity of the National Electoral Commission to conduct a free, fair and credible electoral process in 2007; strengthening the security sector; and developing initiatives for the protection and well-being of youth, women and children.

The UNIOSIL should also be mandated with coordinating United Nations missions and offices and regional organization in West Africa in dealing with cross-border challenges such as the illicit movement of small arms, human trafficking and smuggling and illegal trade in natural resources, as well as coordinating with the Special Court for Sierra Leone, according to the resolution.

The Council, by the text, also requested the Secretary-General to continue planning for security for the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The meeting, which started at 1 p.m., was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Resolution

The full text of resolution 1620 (2005) reads as follows:

“The Security Council,

"Recalling its previous resolutions and the statements of its President concerning the situation in Sierra Leone,

"Commending the valuable contribution the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has made to the recovery of Sierra Leone from conflict and to the country's peace, security and development,

"Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 26 April 2005 (S/2005/273), and its addendum of 28 July 2005 (S/2005/273/Add.2), and welcoming his recommendation that a United Nations integrated office be established in Sierra Leone, after the withdrawal of UNAMSIL at the end of 2005, in order to continue to assist the Government of Sierra Leone to consolidate peace by enhancing political and economic governance, building the national capacity for conflict prevention, and preparing for elections in 2007,

"Noting the letter of 21 June 2005 from the President of Sierra Leone to the Secretary-General (S/2005/419), that likewise emphasizes the need for an integrated United Nations office to support the above objectives,

"Emphasizing the importance of a smooth transition between UNAMSIL and the new United Nations integrated office, and of the effective and efficient operation of the office,

"Emphasizing the importance of the continued support of the United Nations and the international community for the long-term security and development of Sierra Leone, particularly in building the capacity of the Government of Sierra Leone,

"Reiterating its appreciation for the essential work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and its vital contribution to the establishment of rule of law in Sierra Leone and the subregion, underlining its expectation that the Court will finish its work in accordance with its Completion Strategy, and in this regard encouraging all States to cooperate fully with the Court and to provide it with the necessary financial resources,

"Welcoming the publication of the report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission and encouraging the Government of Sierra Leone to take further steps to implement its recommendations,

"1. Requests the Secretary-General to establish the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), as recommended in the addendum to his report (S/2005/273/Add.2), for an initial period of 12 months beginning on 1 January 2006, with the following key tasks:

(a) to assist the Government of Sierra Leone in:

(i) building the capacity of State institutions to address further the root causes of the conflict, provide basic services and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals through poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth, including through the creation of an enabling framework for private investment and systematic efforts to address HIV/AIDS;

(ii) developing a national action plan for human rights and establishing the national human rights commission;

(iii) building the capacity of the National Electoral Commission to conduct a free, fair and credible electoral process in 2007;

(iv) enhancing good governance, transparency and accountability of public institutions, including through anti-corruption measures and improved fiscal management;

(v) strengthening the rule of law, including by developing the independence and capacity of the justice system and the capacity of the police and corrections system;

(vi) strengthening the Sierra Leonean security sector, in cooperation with the International Military Advisory and Training Team and other partners;

(vii) promoting a culture of peace, dialogue, and participation in critical national issues through a strategic approach to public information and communication, including through building an independent and capable public radio capacity;

(viii) developing initiatives for the protection and well-being of youth, women and children;

(b) to liaise with the Sierra Leonean security sector and other partners, to report on the security situation and make recommendations concerning external and internal security threats;

(c) to coordinate with United Nations missions and offices and regional organizations in West Africa in dealing with cross-border challenges such as the illicit movement of small arms, human trafficking and smuggling and illegal trade in natural resources;

(d) to coordinate with the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

“2. *Emphasizes* the primary responsibility of the Government of Sierra Leone for the consolidation of peace and security in the country, and urges continued support from international donors for the Government’s efforts in this regard;

“3. *Underlines* the importance of establishing a fully integrated office with effective coordination of strategy and programmes between the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Sierra Leone, between the United Nations and other international donors, and between the integrated office, the Economic Community of West African States and other United Nations missions in the region;

“4. *Welcomes* the Secretary-General’s recommendation in the addendum to his report (S/2005/273/Add.2) that the integrated office should be headed by an Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and his intention that he/she should also serve as the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Resident Coordinator;

“5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue planning for security for the Special Court for Sierra Leone on the basis outlined in paragraphs 15 to 24 of the addendum to his report (S.2005/273/Add.2), and *looks forward* to further details on the proposed arrangements;

“6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the Council regularly informed of progress with establishing the United Nations integrated office in Sierra Leone, and thereafter with the implementation of this resolution;

“7. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.”

Background

The Security Council had before it the twenty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (document S/2005/273, dated 26 April, and Addenda 1 and 2), which states that the generally calm political and security situation in Sierra Leone has allowed for further progress to be made towards consolidating peace in the country. With the support of UNAMSIL and development partners, the Government of Sierra Leone has advanced towards accomplishing the benchmarks for stabilization in the country and for the withdrawal of the residual UNAMSIL presence. In particular, the Sierra Leone armed forces and police have both continued to build up their capacities to ensure effective responsibility for the security of the country.

It has been encouraging to note that there have been no security incidents requiring UNAMSIL support since the Mission handed over primary responsibility for security throughout the country to the Government in September 2004. Also, with regard to the benchmarks, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has now consolidated its deployment throughout Liberia, including in the areas bordering Sierra Leone. This, coupled with the continued deployment of UNAMSIL in the Eastern Province, has contributed to an improvement in security in the border areas of the country. It is the general view that currently Sierra Leone is not facing any significant external security threats.

The situation in Sierra Leone remains fragile, however, and much remains to be done to address the underlying causes of the conflict there, in order for the country to achieve durable stability and long-term national recovery. The strengthening of the security sector needs special, long-term attention. Despite assistance from donors, the Sierra Leone armed forces and police are still experiencing serious equipment shortfalls, and full deployment of the police in the provinces has yet

to be attained. In addition, the Government needs to take further steps towards the restoration of the rule of law, including by implementing a comprehensive reform of the penal and judicial systems and building the capacity of an independent and impartial judiciary, which will effectively contribute to peace consolidation and the protection of human rights.

Progress made in protecting human rights, with the assistance of UNAMSIL and other partners, needs to be built on, including through the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission. The Government should be encouraged to follow up on implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which submitted its report in October 2004. Continuous monitoring of the human rights situation and reporting of violations will be a crucial element in consolidating peace in Sierra Leone. Meanwhile, electoral reform issues should be urgently addressed if the 2007 elections are to be free and fair and held in accordance with international standards. At the same time, the work of the Special Court has proceeded satisfactorily.

The economic recovery in the country in the post-conflict period has been limited, and the living standards of the majority of the population remain poor. Poverty, including massive youth unemployment, and public discontent over slow progress made by the Government in the fight against corruption and the improvement of management of State revenues, are issues that urgently need to be addressed in order to sustain stability.

The further stabilization of the situation in Liberia has had a positive impact on the overall situation in the subregion. However, developments in the country before the October elections and during the period leading to the inauguration of the new Government in January 2006 will need to be monitored carefully with regard to any possible spillover effects on Sierra Leone. It is hoped that progress will be made in Côte d'Ivoire towards the full and unconditional implementation of the Pretoria Agreement of 7 April. Clearly, a continuation of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire or instability in Guinea could have a destabilizing effect on the subregion, including Sierra Leone.

Having carefully assessed the situation, the Secretary-General believed that the outstanding challenges in ensuring peace consolidation would be best addressed by the Government with the

support of United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as bilateral donors, which are most suited for post-conflict capacity-building. Therefore, an adjustment in the strategy of the United Nations involvement in Sierra Leone is warranted, and he recommended that the Council extend the UNAMSIL's mandate for a final period of six months, until the end of 2005. The Government should make full use of the unique window of opportunity provided by the continuing presence of UNAMSIL to further consolidate the security sector, in order to ensure effective security throughout the country, supported by the timely provision of the required assistance, and to address other outstanding challenges.

The Secretary-General also recommended that the drawdown of the UNAMSIL presence commence in mid-August 2005 and be essentially completed by 31 December 2005. However, the last infantry battalion and air assets should remain fully operational until the end of November, by which time the results of the elections in Liberia will be known. In order to allow for the timely planning and logistical preparations for an orderly withdrawal of UNAMSIL, an early decision of the Council would be essential. Furthermore, should a serious threat in the subregional or internal security situation in Sierra Leone arise in the coming months, the Secretary-General will revert to the Council with appropriate recommendations, including the possibility of adjustments in the schedule of the Mission's withdrawal.

Addendum 1 to the report, dated 21 June, informs the Council that UNAMSIL's budget for the period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 (document A/59/758), totalling \$107.2 million, is before the General Assembly. The report notes that as at 30 April, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNAMSIL amounted to \$94.5 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to \$2.2 billion.

In Addendum 2, dated 28 July, the Secretary-General recommends establishment of a modestly sized United Nations integrated office in Sierra Leone for an initial period of 12 months, commencing on 1 January 2006 and following withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

By its resolution 1610 (2005) (see Press Release SC/8432 of 30 June), the Council, while extending UNAMSIL's mandate for a final period of six months, requested the Secretary-General to finalize the necessary planning for an appropriate integrated United Nations system presence in the country, with the capacity and expertise to coordinate the activities of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, cooperate with the donor community and continue to support the Government in peace consolidation and long-term development after UNAMSIL's departure.

The Secretary-General proposed that the integrated office would be mandated to assist the Government of Sierra Leone with, among other things: building the capacity of State institutions to develop and implement a strategy for addressing the root causes of the conflict; developing a national plan of action for human rights and establishing a national human rights commission; enhancing good governance and transparency and the accountability of public institutions; building the capacity of the National Electoral Commission to conduct a free, fair and credible electoral process in 2007; developing initiatives for the rights, protection and well-being of war-affected and vulnerable children and adolescents; and coordinating with the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The Secretary-General notes that the Special Court is playing a vital role in bringing to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for crimes committed during the conflict. While it is providing a tangible contribution to the process of national reconciliation, the Court may also serve as a model for ensuring accountability and combating impunity for crimes committed during other conflicts in an expeditious and financially restrained fashion. As it is most important that the Court be provided with effective security, the Secretary-General recommends that a company-size military unit from UNAMSIL be retained in Freetown to continue providing protection for the Court and that the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) assume command and control of that unit.