



# CONSOLIDATING THE GAINS

— The United Nations Joint Vision at Work in Sierra Leone —

The United Nations Joint Vision is a part of the international community's response to the needs set out in Sierra Leone's national recovery strategy, the Agenda for Change. The UN Joint Vision for Sierra Leone aims to enhance the UN's contribution to the recovery strategy by fully integrating all of its available assets and resources in the country into the following five key areas:

- Consolidation of peace and stability
- Integration of rural areas into the national economy
- Economic and social integration of the youth
- Equitable and affordable access to health
- Accessible and credible public services

## UN Support to Consolidating Peace and Security

Along with our many partners the United Nations in Sierra Leone continues to consolidate peace and security through the following:

- multi-party dialogue and other forums for conflict prevention and resolution aimed at enhancing political and ethnic tolerance and free and fair elections in 2012,
- the promotion of national cohesion and the observance of human rights,
- the building of core democratic institutions such as the Parliament, the National Electoral Commission, the Political Party Registration Commission, the Decentralization Secretariat and the Independent Media Commission,
- the fight against corruption through the building of the Anti-Corruption Commission's capacity
- the growth in professionalism for the Sierra Leonean police force, army and other law enforcement agencies in their fight against illicit drug trafficking and international organized crime



A volleyball tournament for police and military personnel  
Photo: Per Bjalkander

## Hearing the voice of the Youth



Photo: Olivier Bilder

Young people under the age of 25 make up 55% of the population in Sierra Leone. The way they chose to channel their energy will shape the nation's future direction. The views below on peace and security were gathered at a meeting in Makeni, Sierra Leone, during June 2011.

"I am longing for the elections – to be able to make a change. Now that the country has reached its 50th anniversary we all start to feel like a nation – we are all Sierra Leoneans"

"During the previous elections, the military worked a lot on security. I felt very safe voting and expressed my views."

I have noticed that the military takes more part in community work now; they are out cleaning the streets and markets and arranging many sports activities. It makes me feel hopeful".

**"People are taking cases to court now, instead of ignoring abuse or trying to resolve it in the family. They have developed the Family Support Unit which is great, so that all issues concerning families such as sexual and gender-based violence are handled in a separate unit. As girls, this makes us feel safer..."**

### Indicators of progress

- As of June 2011, 66.4 % (21,317) of the registered war victims have received reparation benefits (Source: Reparation Directorate National Commission for Social Action 2009)
- From 2008 to 2010, the number of cases investigated by the Anti Corruption Commission increased by 34% (Source: ACC annual report 2009/2010)
- In 2010 the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone handled 492 cases of human rights violations, with a steady increase since 2007 (40 cases) through 2008 (201) and 2009 (330). (Source Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, July 2011)
- In 2010, the number of SGBV cases convicted increased by 80,7% since 2007 (Source Status report of FSU-SLP on SGBV Cases 2007/2010)

"Zero tolerance for corruption and firm commitment to better management of state resource sin Sierra Leone...we know how high your expectations are and that you have suffered for too long"

President Hernest Bai Koroma

## Building capacities to consolidate peace, ensure stability and protect human rights

Almost ten years after a decade-long violent conflict, Sierra Leone is progressing towards a path of economic and social development and moving away from a post-conflict reconstruction phase. At the same time, it remains crucial to secure the gains already made and to continue consolidating peace and security in the country. Along with other programmatic interventions in support of key democratic institutions, the UN continues to assist efforts to improve the human rights situation in Sierra Leone.



From 24 to 27 May 2011, the Human Rights Section of UNIPSIL and the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) jointly organized in Bo the Second National Consultative Conference for District Human Rights Committees (DHRC). The Conference gathered 50 participants from all 13 DHRCs as well as members of the Regional Offices of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone. The objective was to reach a consensus on a common strategy of the Committees in responding to human rights issues and in strengthening their capacity. The meeting resolved to strengthen collaboration between the HRCSL and DHRCs and concretized strategies and collaboration mechanisms through a Communiqué and a strategy document which also called on UNIPSIL to strengthen this collaboration during the remaining time of its presence in Sierra Leone. The Conference was combined with trainings in Human Rights Monitoring of Elections and treaty body shadow reporting and interaction with special mechanisms.

UNIPSIL provides training in electoral monitoring and shadow reporting. Photo: UNIPSIL

This training aimed at equipping DHRCs to effectively monitor human rights in the upcoming elections and build their capacity in human rights treaty body reporting. Civil society has indeed the opportunity to submit independent information – generally called shadow reports – to the UN treaty monitoring bodies to complement the reports submitted by the government. This training came at a time when the UNIPSIL Human Rights Section was also providing technical support to the Human Rights Secretariat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in the area of treaty reporting.

## Strategizing for the implementation of the Universal Periodic Review recommendations

In November 2011, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, in collaboration with the office of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with support from UNIPSIL/OHCHR held a National Conference to review the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Sierra Leone.

The Conference, with the theme “Developing a roadmap and strategies for the implementation of the UPR recommendations”, attracted over 200 participants and was opened by the President of Sierra Leone Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma who delivered the keynote address. The President expressed continued commitment to the implementation of the recommendations and underlined treaty body reporting, and the review of legislation to comply with human rights standards as recommendations to be implemented urgently. Also present were cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, other personalities in government, civil society, and international development partners. In his statement, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, who led the UPR process, highlighted key recommendations and the challenges ahead, and proposed a mid-term review in 2013.

The Conference reviewed the UPR recommendations in 4 different thematic areas: treaty body reporting and interaction with UN human rights mechanisms; constitutional and legal reform; policy formulation and strategies to address women, girls and other rights; and measures and institutional mechanisms, economic, social and cultural rights, poverty eradication. Recommendations were discussed and a link with the implementation of recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was drawn. Participants agreed on priorities, strategies, lead ministries and participating stakeholders.

The Universal Periodic Review is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States once every four years. The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfill their human rights obligations. The UPR was created by the UN General Assembly resolution 60/251 on 15 March 2006, which established the Human Rights Council itself. The first



H.E. President Koroma addressing the Conference. Also seating at the high table, the AG, the ERSG and the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission (IRC) Photo: UNIPSIL

cycle concluded in late 2011 and every member state has had its human rights records reviewed.

The final UPR report for Sierra Leone was adopted at the 18th session of the Human Rights Council on the 22nd September 2011 and the UPR process for Sierra Leone had government's and other stakeholders' commitment. It advanced 129 recommendations some of which are either under implementation or already implemented. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, with support of UNIPSIL Human Rights Section and OHCHR actively participated in the process. UNIPSIL HRS/ OHCHR will continue to work with the HRCSL to mainstream UPR recommendations in the overall development process of government.

### Story from cover page:

Following a civil war, tension between the army and police often lingers and can lead to a lack of trust and sudden outbreaks of internal conflict. When called to work together, say in the case of a refugee problem at the country's border or in response to a natural disaster, it is vital that these two elements of the security system combine well and follow a unified chain of command. To help remove barriers to army – police collaboration the UN, with other partners, offers training, equipment, overseas exchanges and sports activities to build up mutual respect and trust. The national Army Police volleyball tournament is just one example of how the UN operates in this important multi-disciplinary area to overcome barriers to cooperation across the uniformed services.

## About Sierra Leone

Whilst many country level indicators are slowly improving, it is important to remember where the country was a decade ago in order to put its recovery into perspective. The eleven year civil war (1991 – 2002) devastated Sierra Leone; over 50,000 people died, the country's infrastructure was destroyed and about one third of its people displaced. Today, celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year of independence, Sierra Leone has experienced peace for just a decade. Safety and security in the country grows and, for a post conflict country, crime is relatively low. In September 2010 the UN Security Council

lifted the arms embargo and the last remaining sanctions imposed on the country since the war because the Government had fully re-established control over its territory and all former rebel fighters were disarmed and demobilized. Investor confidence is gradually growing and the country is moving forward to another round of free and fair elections. From a country that received UN Peacekeeping troops to a country that now deploys Peacekeeping troops (to Darfur under UNAMID) Sierra Leone has made remarkable progress.



- population: **5.4 million**
- life expectancy at birth: **48 years**
- % population female: **51**
- % of adults literate: **40**
- % of women with no education: **65**
- % of women aged 15-49 having undergone Female genital cutting: **94**
- % of women married before 18: **62**
- % of population under 15: **42**
- % of population in urban areas: **40**
- % of urbanization per year: **3**
- % of undernourished people: **47**
- % of children underweight: **30**
- % of children stunted: **40**
- % births attended by skilled health personnel: **42**
- maternal mortality rate: **857** per 100,000 live births
- Under five child mortality rate (per 100 live births): **192**
- teenage pregnancy rate: **34%**
- Contraceptive prevalence rate: **7%**

## Remaining Challenges:

→ **Poverty and unemployment.** Unemployment is particularly high among youths and ex-combatants. About two thirds of the population engages in subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 52% of national income. Rural to urban drift is a problem as youths seek work in the cities.

→ **International crime, drugs and corruption.** Drugs cartels, many from Columbia, increasingly try to use Sierra Leone as transit point to ship drugs to Europe fueling corruption and undermining earlier security and transparency gains.

→ **Management of natural resources:** Political stability has attracted back investment in mining and the country is seeing a revival in many areas, notably in bauxite, rutile and iron ore. Off shore oil discoveries were recently confirmed. Minerals are a blessing for any economy, but managed badly they can also be a curse.

## Investing in Success



Sierra Leone is a successful example of a multi-lateral approach to conflict resolution. Under the general guidance of the UN Security Council, ECOWAS, Nigeria, the EU and the UK played important roles in bringing peace to the country. The focus today is shifting from peace and security and humanitarian operations to recovery activities and long term development.

"As a remarkable success story for post conflict reconstruction of Sierra Leone is taking tremendous strides forward. But sustained assistance is still needed to complete this process and consolidate the gains the country has made"

*Ambassador McNee, Canada's Permanent Representative to the UN and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Configuration for Sierra Leone*

Whilst many institutions are back on their feet, progress is not uniform and many challenges remain. Donor commitment must not ease off now, since it is crucial to invest in the success achieved, maintain positive momentum and complete what is almost a great triumph for peace in the West Coast of Africa. The shift from peacekeeping to peacebuilding is complete. The UN Joint Vision signifies the start of the next shift from peacebuilding to ongoing recovery and further development. Traditionally this second shift is problematic and difficult to fund. The UN Joint Vision offers 20 well established and Government approved programmes that make a strong contribution to the peace dividend and continued development. Be part of the success through investing your country's voluntary contributions in the UN's Joint Vision for Sierra Leone!



This brochure is a series of five describing how the United Nations Joint Vision priorities 1-5 are working in Sierra Leone. To obtain more copies of this brochure, or a full set, or more information on the actual programmes within the Joint Vision please contact: **The Strategic Planning Unit, United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, Hotel Cabenda, 14 Signal Hill, Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone.**

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