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NATIONS**

**SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON THE
SITUATION IN SIERRA LEONE**

New York, June 08, 2009

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Mr. President,

Let me start by welcoming Madam Zainab Bangura, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone to the Council and thank her for her briefing. We also thank the Executive Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peace-building Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), Mr. Michael von der Schulenberg for presenting the Report of the Secretary General, and Representative of Canada, Ambassador John McNee as the Chair of the country-specific configuration of the Peace-building Commission (PBC) for his briefing.

Mr. President,

Uganda commends UNIPSIL, the UN Country Team, and the PBC for their efforts and support, towards the implementation of the mandate of the peacebuilding Mission in Sierra Leone, in an integrated and coherent manner. We are particularly pleased to note that the United Nations peacebuilding strategy has been finalized, and that all the twenty projects, financed by the Peacebuilding Fund amounting to USD 35 million are expected to be fully implemented by the end of this year.

The establishment of two regional offices in Kono and Bombali districts, and the pending creation of six others, will further enhance effective

coordination amongst UN Agencies, Programmes, Funds, and development partners, operating from one location in each district.

Mr. President,

We welcome the initiatives and tremendous progress made by the Government of Sierra Leone, under the leadership of President Ernest Bai Koroma, in the political, economic, and social sectors, during the period under review.

In particular, we note that the overall security situation in the country has remained largely calm.

We are encouraged that, following the unfortunate incidents of political violence in March 2009, inter-party dialogue between the ruling All People's Congress (APC), and the main opposition party, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), culminated in the signing of a Joint Communiqué by their leaders.

We call upon all political leaders to resolve any misunderstandings through dialogue, and to desist from all acts of political intolerance and inciting violence.

We further call upon them to ensure wide publicity and expeditious implementation of the Joint Communiqué, which lays a foundation for

reconciliation and constructive bi-partisan consensus on important national policies and institutions.

Mr. President,

We commend the Government for making agriculture and national food production its top priority, as well as initiating innovative programmes, including food-and-cash for work. This focus on the agriculture sector is critical for the country's economic growth, food security, and provision of employment for a big number of unemployed youths. In this regard, we appreciate the support extended by the African Development Bank, the European Union, FAO, WFP and other NGOs towards the implementation of these key initiatives.

We call upon the government, UNIPSIL, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and international partners to intensify efforts in mobilizing national and international funding needed for consolidation of Sierra Leone's recovery, economic growth and development.

The implementation of priority programmes such as the Joint Vision and peacebuilding strategy for Sierra Leone, the President's Agenda for

Change, and the Private Sector Development Strategy, requires substantial funding.

We welcome the on-going plans by the Government to utilize and harness the country's natural resources, for strategic investments that will spur economic growth and development.

My delegation supports the proposed launching of the joint United Nations, Multi-donor Trust Fund, at the forthcoming Special Session of the Peacebuilding Commission, slated for June 10, 2009. We also call for further commitment of support, in the subsequent consultative Group Meeting scheduled for November 2009, in London.

Mr. President,

Sierra Leone still faces a number of challenges in consolidating peace, stability, economic growth and development. The capacities of national institutions, including the civil service, judiciary, and police require substantial enhancement. We are therefore encouraged by the commitment by UNIPSIL and development partners to support the Government's efforts in strengthening their capacity. Massive youth unemployment also remains a significant problem.

We are encouraged to learn from the Foreign Minister that consideration of the constitutional review report is now on course. It is

imperative that the Government ensures expeditious resumption of the process, with wider public participation, as recommended by the Lome Agreement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Finally, we commend the recent steps taken by the Government in fighting drug trafficking, which should be sustained.

Thank you.