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Speakers in Security Council Call Sierra Leone ‘Storehouse of Lessons’

As United Nations Mission Nears End of Mandate

Presidential Statement Issued as Foreign Minister Delivers President’s Message

As the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) readied for its final drawdown next week, top officials hailed the country as a “storehouse of lessons” on how to transform war into durable peace, as the Security Council issued a presidential statement on the peacebuilding initiative.

According to the text of presidential statement S/2014/6, the Council recognized the pending completion of the UNIPSIL mandate on 31 March, and commended the country’s “remarkable achievements”.

Welcoming in particular the considerable progress in strengthening the security, justice and governance sectors, the Council stressed that important work remained to further embed peace and to secure equitable prosperity for the benefit of all Sierra Leoneans. It also underscored the importance of continued support as the country embarked on the next stage of its development.

Delivering a statement on behalf of President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone, Samura Kamara, Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that his country was grateful for the help it had received from the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other States. “Today, Sierra Leone is addressing this august United Nations body for the last time as an object for consideration,” he said, noting that his country had moved from an agenda item to a “storehouse of lessons on how to successfully move away from war to peace and development”.

Briefing Council members on the milestones reached along the path towards UNIPSIL’s drawdown, Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, said the country had made great strides in post-conflict recovery, democratic transition and peace consolidation. Still, remaining challenges linked to the war’s root causes required sustained attention and support, he said. Among issues of concern were pervasive poverty and unemployment, especially among youth; endemic corruption; upholding the rule of law; and the need for the authorities to widen the political space.

Guillermo Rishchynski (Canada), Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission Sierra Leone, highlighted the country’s “tremendous achievements”, including the fact that the Special Court for Sierra Leone was the first global tribunal to have successfully concluded its mandate, setting precedents relating to attacks against United Nations peacekeepers, recruitment of child soldiers and forced marriage. It was the first court since Nuremburg to have convicted a former Head of State. “At a time when much policy attention is focused on managing periods of transition,” he said, “Sierra Leone stands as an example of what is possible, with successively smaller peace operations successfully giving way to an integrated peacebuilding office and now a Resident Coordinator-led United Nations country team.”

He recalled that during his visit to Freetown in February, the Government, national stakeholders, diplomatic partners and the United Nations country team had stated the Commission’s usefulness. He said that as Chair, he would maintain close communications with those actors and, in approximately one year, conduct a “light stock-taking exercise”, with the aim of removing Sierra Leone from the Commission’s agenda, if appropriate.

Also delivering statements today were representatives of the United Kingdom, Russian Federation, Jordan, Australia, United States, China, Nigeria, Chile, France, Argentina, Chad, Rwanda, Republic of Korea, Lithuania and Luxembourg.

The meeting began at 10:10 a.m. and ended at 12:08 p.m.

Background

As the Security Council met today to consider the situation in Sierra Leone, it had before it the final report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) (document [S/2014/192](#)).

Briefings

JENS ANDERS TOYBERG-FRANDZEN, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, introduced the Secretary-General's report (document S/2014/192), which took stock of the overall implementation of the UNIPSIL mandate since its creation in 2008, as well as remaining challenges in Sierra Leone after UNIPSIL's drawdown by 31 March. The Secretary-General marked the Mission's formal closure on 5 March, during visit to Sierra Leone. "The country has made remarkable strides in post-conflict recovery, democratic transition and peace consolidation, he said, noting that the general atmosphere of peace was the culmination of more than 15 years of successive Council-mandated peace operations in the country. Still, challenges remained linked to the war's root causes, and those required sustained attention and support. They included pervasive poverty and unemployment, especially for youth; endemic corruption; upholding the rule of law; and the need for the authorities to widen the political space.

He said that the ongoing constitutional review process and implementation of the Government's Agenda for Prosperity were important to tackling the challenges, as were the joint efforts of all Sierra Leoneans to work together and to place the national interest above all others. As UNIPSIL's residual tasks were transferred to the United Nations country team, the Organization would continue to provide support, through the Peacebuilding Fund, for constitutional review, security sector reform, human rights and conflict prevention. Mr. Anders said that, last week, he and Sierra Leone's Minister for Finance signed the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2015-2018 to serve as the Organization's strategy in Sierra Leone in support of the Agenda for Prosperity.

"I believe national authorities and institutions are ready and willing to assume responsibility for their country's peacebuilding and development agenda. Nevertheless, the continued assistance of Sierra Leone's international partners will remain critical," he

said, urging the country's development partners to remain engaged and consolidate the many investments made over the years, including through support for the Agenda for Prosperity and the United Nations Development Framework. Increasing State revenue would be crucial. He commended President Ernest Bai Koroma for his "zero tolerance" approach to corruption as "an important step" towards improving the business climate and attracting responsible investors. The Peacebuilding Commission would continue to monitor Sierra Leone and engage as needed. He underscored the importance of Council support for regional peace and security efforts in the context of the African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union. Its support for implementing the Strategy for Cross-border Security in the Mano River Union was one such opportunity.

GUILLERMO RISHCHYNSKI (Canada), Chair of the Sierra Leone Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, said the country was transitioning from the special attention due post-conflict countries to a more traditional development footing. It had established political stability, restored basic security, reinvigorated democratic processes, built important national institutions and generated economic growth. "These are tremendous achievements," he said. The Special Court for Sierra Leone had brought to justice the perpetrators of horrific crimes and was the first court to have convicted a former Head of State since Nuremburg, Charles Taylor. It set precedents concerning attacks on United Nations peacekeepers, as well as on recruitment of child soldiers and forced marriage, and was the first global tribunal to have successfully concluded its mandate.

Noting Sierra Leone had hosted the world's largest peacekeeping mission 14 years ago, he said "at a time when much policy attention is focused on managing periods of transition, Sierra Leone stands as an example of what is possible, with successively smaller peace operations successfully giving way to an integrated peacebuilding office and now a Resident Coordinator-led UN country team".

Despite such significant progress, Sierra Leone would continue to face several challenges, he said, adding that "the root causes of the original conflict cannot be fully addressed in little more than a decade". Corruption required continued attention and youth unemployment remained high. Security and justice sector institutions would require sustained capacity-building, especially if they were to retain the public trust. Surging investment in natural resources and associated challenges in managing land tenure could cause conflict at the communal level. As time passed, Sierra Leoneans would increasingly expect concrete improvements in health, education, employment and infrastructure. He hailed the Sierra Leonean Government for identifying those various challenges in its Agenda for Prosperity and taking steps to address them. Such realities underscored the need for sustained support. Too often the international community failed to stay the course for the full duration of peace consolidation efforts.

But, initial indications were positive, he said. Bilateral donors were still steadfast in their commitments and some were increasing their funding. The United Nations country team was poised to absorb key residual responsibilities from UNIPSIL, particularly in conflict prevention and security sector reform. United Nations technical aid for the constitutional review process could help strengthen democracy, enshrine human rights, reform land tenure and better manage natural resources. That review must be managed carefully, lest political tensions could arise. The Commission's engagement would continue, albeit scaled down, in the coming year, as it acted as an international advocate and responded to needs as they arose. During his late February visit to Freetown, the Government, national stakeholders, diplomatic partners and the country team had stated the Commission's usefulness. As Chair, he would maintain close communication with those actors. Coordination among a smaller Steering Group of particularly interested Member States would enable a more adaptive approach and less formal configuration meetings. In approximately one year, he would conduct a light stocktaking exercise, with the aim of removing Sierra Leone from the Commission's agenda, if appropriate.

Statements

MARK LYALL GRANT (United Kingdom) said today marked a watershed and a moment of celebration for the people of Sierra Leone and the Security Council. A remarkable transformation in Sierra Leone, from civil war to elections, had led to its success as an example to other countries. "Peacebuilding interventions can improve people's lives," he said. However, the long road ahead towards becoming a middle-income country was fraught with challenges. Tackling corruption was essential to attract investment and the United Nations and other partners would continue to work with the Government in those and other areas. Among key lessons learned was the notion that it was indeed possible to build peace. Political will was required at the national and international levels. Replicating the success of Sierra Leone required examining those and other lessons learned.

PETR V. ILICHEV (Russian Federation) said today's milestone had been marked by a number of successes, including post-conflict stabilization. Experience gained in Sierra Leone would be useful to resolve other similar situations, for which national ownership was key. A multifaceted political process was under way in the country, including in the Government, media and civil society. Those positive strides should be scaled up, and while noting that challenges remained, he voiced support for the Government in its efforts to address them.

MAHMOUD HMOUD (Jordan) said that, as UNIPSIL drew to a close, Sierra Leone's efforts had successfully aimed at overcoming the obstacles of war leading towards a more positive future. United Nations assistance was helpful, he said, also

paying tribute to the Special Tribunal for its establishment of criminal justice. Dialogue was the way to solve conflicts, he said, highlighting that elections, security sector reform and anti-corruption efforts were among effective steps. Good governance and justice would also bolster success and stability. He encouraged the Government to progress along the economic track, with assistance from the United Nations by, among other things, improving public asset management systems. Optimistic that Sierra Leone would continue to make progress in the face of its challenges, he said the work of the Mission should be documented so lessons learned could be shared with other countries.

PHILIPPA KING ([Australia](#)) said UNIPSIL's closing would mark an important transition for Sierra Leone and the United Nations. It was a successful model of how post-conflict countries could address transitional justice in a way that held perpetrators of past crimes to account, while promoting national reconciliation. The Secretariat should draw on lessons and apply them elsewhere. Strengthening Sierra Leone's institutions, particularly in the areas of security sector reform and the judiciary, was vital to tackling current challenges, such as youth unemployment, corruption, drug trafficking and maritime piracy. The recent launch of a security sector reform programme to strengthen the police and other institutions was encouraging. With the increase in investment in extractive industries, it was vital to strengthen transparency and accountability in the natural resources sector and to create robust dispute-resolution mechanisms. He supported the Sierra Leone country configuration's modalities for a lighter, more responsive approach and encouraged the international community to remain engaged. There was great potential for reinvigorating the Mano River Union, which was strengthening subregional stability, by creating cross-border security units along shared borders. The efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to combat piracy were vital. The United Nations Office in West Africa should continue to provide good offices and preventive diplomacy after UNIPSIL's closing.

JEFFREY DELAURENTIS ([United States](#)) said that, while the grizzly images of war that had ravaged Sierra Leone still echoed today, the strength of the people in working towards peace was a stellar example of how a country could successfully work through a crisis and conflict. Seeing Sierra Leone as a troop-contributing country was evidence of that turnaround, he said, underlining several efforts by the Government to rebuild the country. Encouraging its implementation of necessary reform, he said job creation was key to keeping hope alive for future generations, and dialogue should be used to resolve conflict. Corruption must also be stamped out and reforms implemented in the judicial sector. In closing, he stressed that the international community would continue to lend its support.

LIU JIEYI ([China](#)) hailed the overall stable security situation in Sierra Leone and the Government's positive steps to consolidate peace, promote development and ensure human rights. He expressed hope that Sierra Leone would continue to steadily implement steps to increase prosperity, address the roots causes of conflict and

consolidate peacebuilding achievements. He appreciated the outstanding work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The UNIPSIL mandate would come to a close at month's end, marking the transition from conflict to peace, which was a model for other countries in conflict. Sierra Leone's success and lessons learned should be applied to similar situations in order to promote development, address conflict's root causes and build capacity. The country still faced challenges, such as youth employment and poverty, and would need the international community's support to address them.

U. JOY OGWU (Nigeria) noted the progress towards peace, stability and long-term development in Sierra Leone. It was a success story in post-conflict recovery, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. She stressed the need for political dialogue and national inclusiveness, security sector support and strengthening of human rights institutions. Efforts towards that end promoted political understanding and set the foundation for peaceful elections. The transitional organized crime unit and other bodies set up to combat transnational crimes should be strengthened. Human rights mechanisms had helped to create a protective environment. She noted the efforts of the truth and reconciliation commission to fight impunity, stressing that reconciliation was possible after a protracted conflict. She acknowledged the steadfastness of donors and international partners and said that the onus was now on the Government to consolidate gains and encourage further investment.

OCTAVIO ERRÁZURIZ (Chile) said Sierra Leone had become a successful pioneer in multilateralism. A common strategic vision identified the areas in need of cooperation and enabled the country to achieve peace. A crucial stage had been concluded, but challenges remained. The Peacebuilding Commission's country configuration team would continue to support Sierra Leone. The timetable for the constitutional reform process, security sector reform, formation of the rule of law, poverty reduction and combating corruption must continue, in order to ensure that the gains achieved thus far were irreversible. He hailed the Government and people of Sierra Leone for their willingness to achieve peace and development. He would support the draft presidential statement to be issued today by the Council.

PHILIPPE BERTOUX (France) similarly hailed the milestone for Sierra Leone. The closing of UNIPSIL was the happy conclusion of the country's crisis. It also was an example of the Organization's success in stabilization. Sierra Leone had been successful in creating a climate conducive to business, and lessons should be drawn from that and other achievements. The constitutional reform under way was a historic step and could help tackle the root causes of the conflict. All sectors of society should speak and work together. Poor management of natural resources could lead to conflict, and in that connection, corruption must end. He welcomed the presidential statement to be adopted shortly. As the Mission drew down its role, it could still support the country's agenda by helping to bolster prosperity.

MARÍA CRISTINA PERCEVAL (Argentina) said Sierra Leone was a clear example of that it was always possible to overcome the tragedies of war and human rights violations. But, what had happened was not "pure magic", she said, emphasizing that successful results had been due to cooperation among the country, region and international community. Closing the door on pain and suffering had revealed a "promising horizon"; the Government had rebuilt the law, and undertaken reforms and other inroads leading to a 14 per cent growth rate. But, economic growth alone was not enough to ensure a free and egalitarian society, and President Ernest Bai Koroma's efforts should continue to address outstanding challenges and ensure accountability in order to build public trust. The people and Government must continue to fight the causes of the conflict, with strong support from international partners. Combating poverty, eradicating corruption and supporting the Peacebuilding Commission were key to cementing future success, she said, commending UNIPSIL's approach to employment for local staff and echoing the Secretary-General's call to shore up international support for the country.

MAHAMAT ZENE CHERIF (Chad) said the Security Council had extended UNIPSIL's mandate until 31 March and the results had been overwhelmingly positive. During its mandate, the Mission had worked towards reconciliation in order to ensure peace and dialogue. Ending the peacebuilding mandate had been the result of great efforts made by Sierra Leoneans, she said, commending a number of initiatives in that regard. He hailed the country's overall success and said that the experience of the 15-year mission there was an excellent example of a successful partnership that had worked towards common goals.

EUGÈNE-RICHARD GASANA (Rwanda) said the United Nations peacebuilding mission had achieved its goal. Despite the scars of war, great strides had been made. Sustainable security, democratic governance, respect for human rights and regional cooperation were among some of the most significant gains, he said, also commending President Koroma's work. While "political space" was increasingly allotted to women and youth, the Secretary-General's report recognized that more efforts were needed in the area of governance in order to build on the current positive trend and to resolve any tensions through dialogue. He hoped a national infrastructure for peace would be established soon, and he encouraged ongoing anti-corruption initiatives. Experience-sharing among African countries was essential to ensuring peace on the continent, he concluded.

JA SONG NAM (Republic of Korea) said UNIPSIL was an "exemplary case" of the United Nations' effective use of cooperation. The 2012 elections had marked a watershed in Sierra Leone's history and had moved the country forward. He hoped political inclusiveness and cohesion would be furthered strengthened and that the authorities would continue to broaden engagement across the entire social spectrum,

including women and youth. Goals should translate into sustainable development and prosperity, he said, expressing full support for the consolidation of peace and democratic governance in Sierra Leone.

RAIMONDA MURMOKAITĖ (Lithuania) hailed the Government's remarkable progress achieved through post-conflict recovery, peace consolidation, democratic transition, rule of law, human rights, accountability and political tolerance. But, to secure the country's prosperity and economic growth, efforts were needed in the context of peacebuilding, security sector reform and further robust development. She welcomed Sierra Leone's constitutional review process, noting that the European Union had been engaged in that process, with a particular focus on capacity-building and technical aid to the Constitutional Review Committee and other key stakeholders, civic education, communication and consensus-building. He welcomed the recent adoption of the 2013-2017 Agenda for Prosperity, and encouraged the Government and United Nations' entities to continue supporting women's full participation in the political, economic and social spheres. All political parties should empower more women to participate in politics and give them more opportunities to seek parliamentary seats and key parliamentary posts. Currently, they held less than 30 per cent of the 124 parliamentary seats. She noted a proposal to pass the Gender Empowerment Bill in the House to set a 30 per cent quota for women.

SYLVIE LUCAS (Luxembourg) noted the country's remarkable progress and called for efforts to consolidate it. She trusted that elected representatives were ready to prioritize national interests, and said implementation of the prosperity agenda was vital for achieving Sierra Leone's goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2035. To assist that process, the European Union had earmarked €372 million , or more than \$500 million, over the next seven years to bolster civil society, education, agriculture and food security. It would also back the country in its constitutional review and capacity building. Responsible foreign direct investment was needed, and it must be ensured that extraction of natural resources was transparent, in order to ensure that revenue from that sector benefited the people. Mutually beneficial arrangements for the local community and the private sector were needed. She hailed the 4 February signing of a new accountability framework, which was a guarantee of confidence and the cooperation between Sierra Leone and its neighbours in the Mano River Union, as well as their October 2013 security strategy to strengthen the fight against transnational organized crime. She counted on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa to work with the country team to support Sierra Leone in a regional context.

SAMURA KAMARA, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, delivering a statement on behalf of President Koroma, said he was heartened by inspiring words on Sierra Leone's progress in areas including conflict resolution, human rights and building peace and security, which had helped to heal the devastation inflicted upon its people since an 11-year-long civil war broke out

in 1991. His country was grateful for the help of ECOWAS, the United Nations and other States that had helped to stop the carnage and to build a path to peace.

He said UNIPSIL had been pivotal in many processes, including furthering the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court, building civil society capacity and promoting political dialogue. The Mission's final transition next week would crown the successes of all previous ones by United Nations efforts in Sierra Leone. As a result of collaborative efforts, Sierra Leone had transformed itself from a "blood diamond nation" to one that harnessed its natural resources to ensure sustainable development and national prosperity.

"Today, Sierra Leone is addressing this august United Nations body for the last time as an object for consideration," he said. "We have now moved from a country on the agenda of the Security Council to a nation that is a storehouse of lessons on how to successfully move away from war to peace and development."

Resuming her role as Council President, Ms. LUCAS read the presidential statement, which underscores the importance of continued support to Sierra Leone as the country embarked on the next stage of its development. While commending Sierra Leone's "remarkable achievements" and welcoming the considerable progress in strengthening security, justice and governance sectors, the Council, in the text, also stresses that important work ahead to embed peace and secure equitable prosperity for the benefit of all Sierra Leoneans.

Presidential Statement

The full text of presidential statement S/PRST/2014/6 reads as follows:

"As the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Mission in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) completes its mandate on 31 March 2014, the Security Council commends the remarkable achievements made by Sierra Leone over the past decade, as well as its contribution to important regional and global initiatives. The Security Council further commends the effectiveness of the approach of the United Nations, international financial institutions, regional and subregional bodies, and the broader international community to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone.

“The Security Council welcomes the considerable progress that has been made by Sierra Leone in strengthening institutional and human resources capacities of State institutions, including in the security, justice and governance sectors which play crucial roles in safeguarding stability and promoting democracy.

“The Security Council also welcomes the successful presidential and parliamentary elections conducted in 2012 which have helped to consolidate Sierra Leone’s democratic institutions.

“The Security Council recognizes the important contribution of UNIPSIL in promoting peace, stability and development in Sierra Leone, particularly during the 2012 electoral process. The Security Council expresses its appreciation for the efforts of the Mission and the United Nations country team, under the leadership of the Executive Representatives of the Secretary-General.

“The Security Council underscores the importance of continued support to Sierra Leone as it embarks on the next stage of its development, beyond UNIPSIL, including the constitutional review process, and notes the willingness of the United Nations and bilateral and multilateral partners to continue, as requested by the Sierra Leonean authorities, to play a significant role in this regard. In addition, the Security Council urges the international community and development partners to continue to provide coordinated and coherent support to Sierra Leone to meet its peacebuilding and development priorities.

“The Security Council stresses that there is important work ahead to further embed peace and secure equitable prosperity for the benefit of all Sierra Leoneans. The Security Council *welcomes* the adoption by the Government of Sierra Leone of the Agenda for Prosperity covering the period from 2013 to 2018 and notes the importance of the implementation of this programme in accordance with the Mutual Accountability Framework agreed between the Government of Sierra Leone and Sierra Leone’s Development Partners’ Committee in March 2013.

“The Security Council reaffirms the important potential role of extractive industries in Sierra Leone’s economic development, and encourages the Government of Sierra Leone and international partners to strengthen protection of workers’ rights and national capacities for transparent regulation, oversight and revenue collection from such industries, as well as to address issues of land ownership with a view to establishing mutually beneficial arrangements for local communities and the private sector, and calls upon the government to tackle corruption.

“The Security Council stresses the importance for Sierra Leone’s long-term stability of ensuring a peaceful, credible and transparent electoral process in 2017.

“The Security Council reiterates its request in resolution 2097 that the United Nations Office for West Africa make available its good offices to support the Government of Sierra Leone and the new United Nations Resident Coordinator as necessary.

“The Security Council welcomes the work of the Sierra Leone Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Security Council recalls its request in resolution 2097 (2013) for the Peacebuilding Commission to review its engagement with a view to scaling down its role and welcomes the Commission’s shift to a lighter form of engagement for a transitional period over next 12 months, as outlined in its report to the Council (S/2014/211). The Security Council requests that Sierra Leone contributes to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission to gather lessons learnt and best practices.

“The Security Council congratulates the Special Court for Sierra Leone on the completion of its mandate, recalls the strong support it expressed for the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone as it commences its functioning, and reiterates its call in resolution 2097 (2013) for Member States to contribute generously.”

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