



Security Council

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Eleventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1346 (2001) of 30 March 2001, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for a period of six months, ending on 30 September 2001. In paragraph 5 of that resolution, the Council requested me to report at regular intervals on progress made by UNAMSIL in the implementation of key aspects of the Mission's concept of operations. The Council further requested me, in paragraph 15 of the resolution, to provide any additional recommendations, including, if necessary, for a further strengthening of the military component of UNAMSIL. The present report is submitted pursuant to those requests and covers developments since my tenth report on UNAMSIL, dated 25 June 2001 (S/2001/627).

II. Political developments

Implementation of the Abuja Agreement

2. The Sierra Leone peace process continued to make encouraging progress during the period under review. The disarmament of combatants of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) has so far been completed in four districts, including the diamond-producing Kono district. With the exception of skirmishes between the Civil Defence Forces and RUF which marred the initial stages of the disarmament exercise in Kono district, the ceasefire has generally continued to hold. The cross-border fighting between RUF and the Guinean forces

in the northern and eastern border areas has also ceased. In the meantime, the deployment of UNAMSIL now covers a considerable part of the country, including Kabala in the north and Koidu in the east. Consequently, more areas have become accessible to humanitarian workers and the civilian population, and the Government has taken steps, albeit modest, to restore civil authority in some areas formerly controlled by RUF.

3. The joint committee on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration comprising UNAMSIL, the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF held two meetings during the reporting period, the first in Bo on 17 July and the second in Kenema on 10 August. At the meeting in Bo it was agreed that, after the completion of the disarmament exercise in Kambia and Port Loko districts, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme would begin in Kono and Bonthe districts in July, after which the exercise would be conducted in the following order: Koinadugu and Moyamba districts, Bombali and Bo, Tonkolili and Pujehun, and Kailahun and Kenema districts. The parties also agreed on a moratorium on diamond mining in order to facilitate the disarmament process in Kono district. Although the agreement on the moratorium is believed to have facilitated disarmament in that district, the parties have not been able to enforce the moratorium and illegal mining activities have continued.

4. At the meeting held in the town of Bo on 17 July, RUF requested the Government to facilitate its registration as a political party and to release some of the RUF officials detained during the crisis of May 2000. The Government indicated that it had offered RUF a plot of land in Freetown to enable the

movement to establish an office in the capital. It also recalled that 33 RUF detainees had been released on 7 July. RUF however claimed that many of the detainees released were not members of the movement.

5. At the meeting in Kenema on 10 August, the parties decided that disarmament would continue in Kono district until 17 August as there were still pockets of combatants in the district that were yet to disarm. They also decided that the disarmament exercise would start in Moyamba and Koinadugu districts on 15 August and 20 August respectively, and in Bombali and Bo districts in September. The discussion of other issues was facilitated by the Government's release on 9 August of 41 detainees, who included a former RUF-nominated Minister and a former chairman of RUF.

6. The Government and RUF have also taken additional reciprocal confidence-building measures, including the continuing release of abductees and child combatants by RUF, the participation by both sides in joint sensitization and reconciliation campaigns, the enrolment of some RUF ex-combatants in the military reintegration programme, the renewal of the provisional registration of the RUF Party by the National Electoral Commission and an invitation to the party to participate in discussions on the electoral process.

7. However, RUF has yet to return all the weapons and equipment seized from UNAMSIL and the Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); no further items have been returned since the issuance of my last report. While the RUF leadership had indicated that they expected most of the rifles and other weapons to turn up during the disarmament exercise, so far only 31 UNAMSIL weapons and 148 ECOMOG weapons have been recovered during the disarmament process.

8. The Government of Sierra Leone has announced its intention to seek another six-month extension of its term of office as well as that of Parliament. Last February, Parliament had granted six-month extensions of the executive and the legislative branches of Government, which are due to expire on 30 September 2001 and 1 October 2001, respectively. The announcement of the Government's intention to seek a further extension prompted calls by RUF, some opposition and civil society groups and some of the local press for the establishment of an interim

government of national unity to lead the country to the next elections. Some RUF officials also claimed that if an interim government is not established the movement might suspend the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. The Government has however maintained that Sierra Leone's Constitution provides only for an extension of the mandate of the incumbent government. Therefore, in its view, establishing transitional arrangements would be unconstitutional.

Regional aspects

9. The progress made in the Sierra Leone peace process has had a positive impact on the situation in the whole Mano River region. Since the relaunching of the disarmament process in May 2001, no further cross-border fighting between RUF and Guinean armed forces has been reported in either the northern or the eastern border areas.

10. My Special Representative, Oluyemi Adeniji, has continued his regular consultations with regional leaders. On 7 August 2001, he took part in a meeting of Presidents Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Alpha Oumar Konaré of Mali in which Lansana Kouyate, the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, also participated. My Special Representative briefed the three leaders on the ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and on the deployment of UNAMSIL, while Mr. Kouyate informed them of his recent visit to Liberia, the purpose of which was to resolve the conflict in Lofa County and promote national reconciliation in that country. President Kabbah informed his colleagues that he was generally satisfied with the progress of the disarmament process. He also elaborated on his intention to seek a further six-month extension of his Government's term of office.

11. At the end of their consultations, the three Presidents issued a statement in which they welcomed the progress made in the peace process in Sierra Leone. The statement also urged the continued support of the international community for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. On Liberia, the leaders expressed concern at the continued fighting in Lofa County and called on the Government to take further concrete steps towards national reconciliation.

12. At the invitation of President Kabbah, Presidents Konaré and Obasanjo visited Sierra Leone on 3 September. They travelled to Koidu, in Kono district, together with President Kabbah and my Special Representative. In Koidu the three leaders met with the RUF leader, Issa Sesay, as well as traditional leaders, civil society groups and the local populace. The occasion marked the first direct meeting between President Kabbah and Issa Sesay. During the meeting, the RUF leadership reiterated their commitment to the peace process, but repeated the concern of the members of the movement for their personal security after disarmament, and complained that they had not received the necessary assistance from the Government in their efforts to transform RUF into a political party. President Obasanjo offered to provide scholarships for eligible disarmed combatants to study in Nigeria. The two Presidents also called on the Government of Sierra Leone to assist RUF in transforming itself into a political party.

13. Encouraging prospects for direct dialogue between Presidents Conté, Taylor and Kabbah have emerged from a meeting held at Monrovia from 13 to 15 August 2001 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Ministers reaffirmed the will of their respective Governments to make the Mano River Union an organization capable of promoting social and economic integration. They also recommended the early convening of a summit meeting of their heads of State.

14. In preparation for that summit meeting, a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the three Mano River Union countries was held at Freetown on 22 and 23 August 2001 to review the security situation in the Mano River Union subregion. A follow-up meeting of Foreign Ministers is to be held at Conakry on 10 September to prepare the draft agenda and propose a date and venue for the proposed summit meeting.

III. Military and security situation

15. While the overall military and security situation in Sierra Leone remained calm and stable during the reporting period, there were, as indicated earlier, a few skirmishes in Kono district between RUF and elements of the Civil Defence Forces, known as the Donsos, who apparently operate outside the CDF national chain of command. Of 24 reported clashes, 10 have been

investigated by UNAMSIL while the remaining allegations were assessed to be lacking in substance. Of the 10 investigations conducted, 4 incidents were confirmed as attacks initiated by CDF and one by RUF.

16. In order to defuse tension between RUF and the Civil Defence Forces, UNAMSIL, together with the parties and the Paramount Chiefs, initiated a series of visits to the trouble spots in Kono district, where they successfully disarmed RUF and CDF combatants. Similar trouble-shooting efforts were undertaken to address some skirmishes that occurred in the first phase of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration exercise in Koinadugu in August.

17. The Sierra Leone Army continued its short-term training and restructuring with the assistance of the United Kingdom's short-term training team. It is expected that by the end of September 2001, all Sierra Leone Army troops, with the exception of those being recruited under the military reintegration programme, will have completed basic training. While there has been no further deployment of the Sierra Leone Army to the provinces during this reporting period, its area of operations has been expanded, as resupply convoys have travelled from Freetown to Kabala and Bumbuna, with the assistance of UNAMSIL and in coordination with RUF.

IV. Deployment of the Mission

18. Since my last report, UNAMSIL troop strength has increased to 16,664 (as at 5 September 2001). The first battalion from Pakistan was deployed in full to Yengema and Koidu on 5 August, the latter location serving as the headquarters of the Mission's newly established sector V. The battalion relieved two companies of the Bangladeshi battalion who had spearheaded UNAMSIL deployment into that area. At the same time, elements of the Bangladeshi contingent were deployed to Kabala in the Northern Province on 9 August to prepare for the start of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities in that area. At present, UNAMSIL patrols reach most areas of Sierra Leone. More comprehensive coverage will be achieved with the arrival of the Nepalese battalion, the advance elements of which will be deployed by the end of September.

19. UNAMSIL military observers, numbering some 242, have played a crucial role in the disarmament

process by receiving, screening and processing the combatants as well as developing the local disarmament arrangements with the faction commanders. The observer teams have also contributed to the sensitization of combatants and the population on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and reconciliation, and have continued to play an important verification and confidence-building role.

20. Consultations with troop-contributing countries have continued throughout the reporting period with both formal and informal meetings. These have resulted in some tangible efforts to redress shortfalls in contingent-owned equipment with recent arrivals of large quantities of vehicles and other essential materiel, which have increased the capabilities of the contingents concerned.

V. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

21. As indicated above, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process has made remarkable progress. Since the programme resumed on 18 May, a total of 16,097 (6,523 RUF, 9,399 CDF and 175 AFRC/ex-Sierra Leone Army) combatants had been disarmed as at 3 September, out of an estimated 25,000. A total of 6,502 weapons and 728,058 assorted pieces of ammunition have so far been collected.

22. After the disarmament exercise in Kambia and Port Loko districts, the programme was launched simultaneously in Kono and Bonthe districts on 1 July and concluded on 17 August. A total of 5,451 combatants (3,478 RUF and 1,973 CDF) disarmed in the volatile Kono district. The programme was subsequently launched in Moyamba and Koinadugu districts, on 15 and 20 August respectively. If the current pace is sustained, the disarmament process in the remaining six districts could be completed by November/December 2001.

Reintegration

23. The National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration now has four regional reintegration offices, in Freetown, Port Loko, Bo and Kenema, and plans to open two more to facilitate support for demobilized ex-combatants. Through these offices, the Commission has so far

provided reintegration assistance to 10,632 ex-combatants who include those disarmed in previous phases of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. This assistance takes the form of vocational training and apprenticeship schemes, assistance for agricultural production, formal education, and public works activities.

24. The programme provides two types of post-discharge assistance for ex-combatants, namely, a short-term reinsertion package and a medium-term reintegration opportunity. Currently, the provision of the reinsertion package that was accepted by donors at the Paris conference held in June 2001 has been delayed because of insufficient funding. While the newly pledged resources to the Multi-donor Trust Fund of approximately US \$13.9 million are welcome, this amount falls short of the estimated overall programme funding gap of \$32.7 million. Several bilateral development agencies and United Nations agencies are identifying and implementing quick impact projects for ex-combatants until the reinsertion benefits and reintegration opportunities are available. In addition, low-cost, labour-intensive projects are being identified for ex-combatants to be funded through the United Nations Trust Fund for Sierra Leone or the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration.

25. The screening of ex-combatants for the military reintegration programme has been completed for 544 ex-combatants who were disarmed in Kambia and Port Loko districts and 318 of them (150 RUF, 106 CDF and 62 AFRC/ex-Sierra Leone Army) were selected for training, which began on 30 July. The Sierra Leone Army is considering setting up temporary selection centres at locations throughout the country to speed up the process in districts other than Kono.

VI. Extension of State authority

26. A timetable for the progressive restoration of State authority to newly accessible districts is being developed. The extension of the Government's authority following disarmament will initially involve the deployment of the Sierra Leone police and key Government officials, accompanied by a recovery programme to meet urgent humanitarian and rehabilitation requirements. However, because of the extensive damage resulting from the war, as well as an

acute shortage of trained officials, the return to normalcy will not be accomplished quickly.

27. The Government has set up a National Recovery Committee under the chairmanship of the Vice-President, in order to better coordinate the extension activities with all stakeholders and set priorities for humanitarian action and the rehabilitation of government infrastructure in newly accessible areas. The Committee brings together all major partners, including the Ministries of Development and Economic Planning, Finance and Local Government, donor representatives, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. Benchmarks have been defined in order to assist the Committee in measuring progress in the restoration of State authority in newly accessible areas. Such benchmarks will include the presence in the district of recognized Paramount Chiefs; the deployment of the Sierra Leone police; the return of key Government officials; the progressive opening of schools; and the reopening of local courts.

28. As indicated in my last report, the Sierra Leone police force has now successfully deployed to Lunsar and areas of Kambia district. A deployment to Makeni had also been coordinated with RUF, but has been delayed to allow further sensitization of RUF rank and file as disarmament has not yet started there.

29. The deployment of the Sierra Leone police in Kono district is now being prepared with the assistance of UNAMSIL. This is an important task and will constitute a substantial challenge, given the lack of infrastructure and more importantly the need to regulate diamond mining activities. UNAMSIL continues to encourage the Government to develop a comprehensive plan for the management of the diamond mines. The Government is currently reviewing various options for the management of mining concessions.

30. Other initiatives aimed at supporting State services are gradually developing in newly accessible areas, supported by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, supported by UNICEF, is exploring ways to re-establish education in Kambia and Kono districts. UNICEF is also supporting district education teams in Bombali, Tonkolili and Kono districts. The World Food Programme continues to provide emergency food aid for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

Reconciliation process

31. In July 2001, UNAMSIL facilitated the first consultative meeting organized by the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace in Kambia district. The meeting underlined the importance of community reconciliation and the reintegration of ex-combatants and returnees. In Lunsar, housing committees have been established to settle, in an amicable way, disputes arising from the illegal occupation of properties.

Rehabilitation

32. The improved security situation has allowed a gradual return of the displaced population and a revival of economic activity, especially in the towns in areas where UNAMSIL has deployed. Bilateral donors and United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and UNAMSIL are supporting rehabilitation of health, education and local administration structures, skills training, human rights-related activities and other activities targeted at ex-combatants and returnees. Faced with the influx of displaced populations returning to their areas of origin, UNAMSIL troops have often had to strain their own resources to meet some of the immediate needs of the populations in their areas of deployment. New resources are urgently required for the Trust Fund to support a renewed effort through short-term quick impact projects that will assist, in coordination with humanitarian and development agencies, the restoration of civil authority, the reintegration of ex-combatants into society, the resettlement of war-affected populations and the resumption of economic activities.

HIV/AIDS

33. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1308 (2000), a focal point for HIV/AIDS was appointed within UNAMSIL. To date, UNAMSIL has conducted a sensitization campaign, which has reached several thousand troops in the Freetown area and several field sites. In addition, the campaign unit has started condom distribution to both military and civilian personnel of the Mission. UNAMSIL is also in the process of designing a programme that will target the civilian population.

VII. Public information

34. During the reporting period, UNAMSIL public information activities continued with a view to sensitizing the population to the mandate and operations of the Mission, while focusing on the promotion of the disarmament and the truth and reconciliation processes. To help convey these messages, UNAMSIL sponsored performances by local theatre groups and musicians for ex-combatants. The Mission also sponsored a two-week training workshop for media practitioners. Radio UNAMSIL has further expanded its FM and short-wave programming in local languages and its production facilities.

VIII. Elections

35. As indicated in my last report, Sierra Leone's National Electoral Commission had drawn up a strategic plan and an electoral timetable which envisaged the holding of elections in December 2001. However, on 5 September the Government announced that the parliamentary and presidential elections will now be held on 14 May 2002. Consultations with parliamentarians and political parties on the electoral system for the elections are still ongoing.

United Nations role in support of elections

36. On 10 June, the National Electoral Commission addressed a letter to my Special Representative, requesting the United Nations to provide technical and logistical assistance in support of the elections. Subsequently, I dispatched a high-level electoral needs assessment mission to Sierra Leone, which visited the country from 18 to 28 August. After the findings and recommendations of the assessment mission have been considered, an operational plan for the role of UNAMSIL in supporting the elections will be developed.

37. It is already obvious, however, that the pre- and post-electoral period will require effective security arrangements and coordination among all entities involved in the electoral process. The capacity of national security agencies to perform these functions will have to be further assessed and supported as much as possible. In this context, the UNAMSIL military

component will be expected to provide robust umbrella security throughout the country during the electoral period, while the United Nations civilian police may be required to provide expanded support by monitoring and advising the Sierra Leone police.

38. In order to enable UNAMSIL to carry out the tasks of providing security and logistical assistance for the elections, the force requirements are being further reviewed. It will then be necessary to determine whether the military strength of the Mission needs to exceed the current established ceiling of 17,500 troops. If it does, any increase is likely to be mainly for the purpose of adding the much needed specialist support capabilities, primarily for operations in the provinces for a limited period of time. Most likely, these would include logistical assets, especially construction engineering to facilitate the access and deployment of UNAMSIL and transportation, including helicopter support, for the movement of election observers and electoral materials. Any such assets will have to be deployed by the beginning of 2002. I will revert to the Council with appropriate recommendations once the comprehensive operational plan has been drawn up. The plan will include clear delineation of security responsibilities between UNAMSIL and Sierra Leone's law enforcement agencies.

39. It is also expected that UNAMSIL will establish an electoral component with long-term observers. The tasks of the electoral component will also be clearly defined in the operational plan to be prepared on the basis of the report of the electoral needs assessment mission.

IX. Human rights

40. Investigations conducted by the Human Rights Section of UNAMSIL during the reporting period revealed attacks against the civilian population by both RUF and the Civil Defence Forces in several villages in the Kono and Koinadugu districts. On 17 June 2001, a CDF group attacked the village of Yaraia. Corroborating witness accounts revealed that 24 people were killed in the attack. Following that incident, RUF combatants attacked the village of Henekuma on 19 July, killing at least 19 people. The RUF leadership attributed this attack to an unauthorized act by a renegade commander, and undertook to apprehend him.

41. The prolonged detention of persons in Freetown Central Prison under the state of emergency, some of whom have been in custody without charge or access to legal counsel since May 2000, has continued during the reporting period. There have been cases of deaths in custody, including the death of a former RUF secretary-general on 21 July. According to prison officials, these deaths have been due to natural causes, although detainees claim that poor medical treatment has contributed to such deaths. UNAMSIL continues to monitor the conditions in the detention facilities and to draw the attention of the Government to areas that need to be improved. Human rights officers recently visited Bonthe Island prison, where some RUF detainees have been transferred, and found conditions at the facility to be satisfactory.

Women's rights

42. UNAMSIL and an international non-governmental organization have sponsored a study on the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in Sierra Leone. It is of grave concern that, of the 733 randomly selected women interviewed during the research, 345 reported having been raped. The participation of these women in the reconciliation process and their reintegration into their communities constitute some of the challenges to be addressed. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Radhika Coomaraswamy, visited Sierra Leone from 22 to 31 August.

Child protection

43. Child combatants, abductees and other separated children continued to be released to UNAMSIL by RUF. From May to 31 July, 1,169 children were released in Makeni, Kailahun and Tongo. A total of 1,214 children have been demobilized by RUF and 646 children by the Civil Defence Forces. So far, less than 8 per cent of the children released or directly entering the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme are girls. UNICEF and the child protection agencies have therefore developed a special information programme for the release of girls and women. All released children and demobilized child combatants enter UNICEF-supported child protection programmes, which provide emergency interim care, family tracing and reunification, and also community-based reintegration.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

44. UNAMSIL continued to engage the RUF leadership on the issue of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A sensitization campaign in the Northern Province was launched at Makeni on 2 August 2001. In general, RUF appears receptive to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Nevertheless, they express concern over the independence of the Commission and the relationship between it and the Special Court.

45. On 1 August 2001, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed a letter to potential donors with a preliminary budget and information on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. According to the initial estimates, the first year of operation of the Commission would cost approximately \$10 million. Currently, the Office of the High Commissioner is working with UNAMSIL to revise the preliminary budget prior to the formal launching of a special appeal by the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner is also considering the establishment of an interim secretariat for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which will initially function under the auspices of UNAMSIL. In the meantime, the selection process of international commissioners has made progress. The High Commissioner will soon forward her recommendations to the selection panel. Regarding the national commissioners, the Advisory Committee to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General met recently and submitted a shortlist of nominees for his consideration.

Special Court

46. Following the exchange of communications between the Secretary-General and the Security Council (S/2001/693 and S/2001/722), in which the Council concurred with the recommendation to commence the operation of the Special Court, the Secretariat, on 23 July 2001, sent a letter to the countries that had made pledges for the first year of operation of the Special Court, and requested that they deposit their contributions with the United Nations within 30 days. Of a total amount pledged of \$15,492,500, only a third had been received by the end of the 30-day period.

47. When sufficient contributions have been received to permit the operation of the Trust Fund, the

Secretariat will dispatch a planning mission to Sierra Leone to discuss with the Government the practical arrangements for the establishment of the Special Court. The mission will be expected to assess more accurately the needs of the Prosecutor's Office and the Registry, the state of the investigations, the local capacity and the Government's contribution in premises and personnel. The mission will also be expected to draft, in consultation with UNAMSIL and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, general guidelines regarding the relationship between the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

48. The Revolutionary United Front has indicated that, while it will not stand in the way of the Court's establishment, it expects that the Court will be impartial and that it will try all those who have been accused of atrocities during the period in question, not only members of RUF. The Government, for its part, has continued to express its full support for the Court. However, on 20 August the Government sent a letter to the Legal Counsel of the United Nations in which it requested that the temporal jurisdiction of the Court be extended to cover the period since March 1991, when the conflict started. The draft statute and the draft agreement had provided that the temporal jurisdiction would begin on 30 November 1996.

X. Humanitarian aspects

49. Access to people in need has improved greatly because of current progress in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The deployment of the Sierra Leone Army in Kambia and UNAMSIL troops in Koinadugu and Kono districts has enabled United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to initiate programmes in the most critical sectors, in particular health, education, food security and water and sanitation, in close collaboration with the National Recovery Committee. The Government and the agencies are also planning needs assessment missions in the Kono and Kailahun districts.

50. It is estimated that nearly 200,000 Sierra Leonean refugees remain in asylum countries in the subregion. The number of refugees returning from Guinea on the ship chartered by the International Organization for Migration has significantly declined following the recent stabilization of the security situation in Guinea.

However, close to 6,000 refugees from Guinea and Liberia have made their way overland, through RUF-controlled areas, to Daru. A total of 6,000 additional spontaneous returnees have crossed into Kambia from the Forecariah region of Guinea during August. Over 80 per cent of registered returnees have become internally displaced and have been accommodated in temporary settlements until their areas of origin become safe for resettlement.

51. New influxes of Liberian refugees, estimated in the thousands, have continued from Lofa County into Kailahun district. Some of the most vulnerable refugees have been evacuated by UNHCR and UNAMSIL directly from the RUF-held areas of Kailahun, while others who had made their own way to Daru have been transported to areas in Kenema district. Some 734 newly arrived Liberian refugees are currently in temporary settlement camps for returnees in Bo district. Some Liberian refugees have made their way to safer areas in southern Liberia, in the hope of finding assistance in camps for internally displaced persons. During the reporting period, UNHCR and UNAMSIL negotiated the release and repatriation of over 120 displaced Guinean civilians who had been abducted by RUF.

52. Despite increased access and a higher demand for assistance, the Sierra Leone consolidated appeal for 2001 remains underfunded, at just over 40 per cent by mid-year. The limited capacities of both Government and humanitarian agencies at this time of need could undermine the current peace process. Donors' positive and prompt response to the 2001 appeal would be indispensable to enable agencies to effectively address the needs of populations in the newly accessible areas, and initiate transitional programmes towards longer-term development.

XI. Economic developments

53. The continuing improvement in the security situation, combined with sound macroeconomic policies and large external aid flows, has stimulated the beginning of economic recovery and price stability, following years of depression and high inflation. Inflation was slightly negative in 2000, while real GDP expanded almost 4 per cent. Exports were up sharply in the first quarter of the year, owing to a nine-fold increase in the value of official diamond exports. With the increase in economic activity, Government

domestic revenues rose 15 per cent during the same period. Government spending increased sharply from the depressed level of recent years, as larger external aid flows enabled the authorities to step up resettlement and reconstruction activities and to begin to reintroduce public services in previously inaccessible areas.

54. Nonetheless, the country's overall economic and financial situation remains very fragile. The factors affecting economic recovery, presented in my ninth report, have not changed. The country's external debt continues to severely constrain the capacity of the Government to channel additional resources into growth-enhancing and poverty-reducing activities. At the end of 2000, the net present value of the country's external debt was equivalent to 707 per cent of GDP, while external debt service due equalled 48 per cent of exports and about 70 per cent of government revenues, making Sierra Leone eligible for debt relief under the Enhanced Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

XII. Financial aspects

55. The General Assembly, by its resolution 55/251 B of 14 June 2001, authorized me to enter into commitments for the Mission in the amount of \$275 million for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2001, pending submission of my proposed budget for UNAMSIL for the full 2001-2002 financial period during the main part of the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly. Should the Council approve my recommendation set out in paragraph 62 below as to the extension of the mandate of UNAMSIL, the Mission's initial resource requirements for the 2001-2002 financial period would be met from within the commitment authority granted to me by the Assembly. With regard to the role of UNAMSIL in support of elections in Sierra Leone, I shall seek additional resources from the General Assembly, once the operational plan for the support to be extended by the Mission has been finalized and resource requirements determined.

56. Since its establishment in March 1998, the Trust Fund to support United Nations peacekeeping-related efforts in Sierra Leone has received voluntary contributions amounting to \$2.4 million, with expenditures authorized to date in the amount of \$1.6 million. As at 15 August 2001, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNAMSIL

amounted to \$367 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to \$3,466.9 million.

XIII. Observations

57. The continued progress achieved during the period under review, in particular in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and the deployment of UNAMSIL eastward, including the diamond-producing areas, gives grounds for cautious optimism regarding the consolidation of the peace process in Sierra Leone. The potentially destabilizing clashes between the RUF and CDF elements in the east have been addressed in a timely manner by UNAMSIL and the parties. At the same time, these incidents are a clear reminder that many more challenges may be encountered in the coming crucial months. In particular, the months leading up to the elections could be fraught with tensions that could adversely affect the recent impressive gains in the peace process.

58. The shortfalls in the budget for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme under the World Bank-managed Multi-donor Trust Fund, some \$5 million for 2001 alone, remain a particular source of concern. I strongly urge donor countries to support the programme, especially at this juncture, and to meet the requirements presented to them at the donors conference held in Paris on 11 and 12 June 2001.

59. Furthermore, the long-term needs of the reintegration aspect of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme remain crucial to the success of the entire process. Considering the general instability that has prevailed in the subregion for so long, it is a source of deep concern that demobilized combatants who remain idle for too long or begin to feel that they are not directly benefiting from disarmament could resort to activities that might undermine not only the peace process in Sierra Leone but also the stability of the subregion. It is also important to assist RUF to transform itself into a genuine political party that can participate in the coming elections. I appeal to countries in the West African subregion, as well as donor countries, to extend technical and other appropriate assistance to RUF in this regard.

60. Another crucial challenge facing Sierra Leone is the restoration of State authority and the preparations

for elections. I urge the Government of Sierra Leone to accelerate its efforts to restore civil authority throughout the country, and welcome the establishment of the National Recovery Committee, which should intensify its activities aimed at restoring essential government services to the long-neglected communities in the countryside of Sierra Leone. I also call on the Government to further strengthen and deploy the police and the army, and to increase its capacity to better regulate the diamond mining industry, with the assistance of donor countries.

61. I welcome the efforts made by the National Electoral Commission in providing a strategic planning framework for the presidential and parliamentary elections, as well as its work on a proposal for a new electoral system in Sierra Leone. It is clear, however, that elections should be held only after certain benchmarks have been achieved. These should include the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the transformation of RUF into a political party, the restoration of civil authority throughout the country, the deployment of UNAMSIL and the guarantee of freedom of movement throughout the country. Furthermore, issues such as the resettlement of returning refugees and internally displaced persons must be taken into account. I hope, therefore, that all parties will accept the recently announced postponement of the elections.

62. In this context, I recommend the extension of the Mission's mandate for a further period of six months. During this period, UNAMSIL will seek to complete the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, continue to assist in the implementation of the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement and to support the preparations for the forthcoming national elections. With regard to the role of UNAMSIL in elections, after considering the report of the electoral needs assessment mission, which visited Sierra Leone in August, I shall revert to the Security Council regarding the additional resources needed to enable UNAMSIL to support the Government in the electoral process, including, if necessary, a temporary increase in the military strength of the Mission.

63. The recent progress in the peace process, in particular the advancement of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and the release of child soldiers and abductees by the armed groups, has meant that UNAMSIL had to take on previously unforeseen support tasks — such as the

provision of transport for those children and additional logistical assistance to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. In view of the fact that UNAMSIL is expected to continue to provide such assistance, any additional requirements will be reflected in the Mission's next budget.

64. A durable solution to the conflict in Sierra Leone can be based only on restoration of government authority throughout the country, tangible progress towards economic recovery, full reintegration of ex-combatants, national reconciliation and participatory democracy. It will also be necessary to continue to strengthen Sierra Leone's security forces to safeguard the country's own stability. Once sufficient progress has been made towards these objectives, the involvement of the United Nations in Sierra Leone could be adjusted accordingly.

65. For the first time in many years, thousands of Sierra Leoneans who have been displaced by the war may finally have a chance to return home, rebuild their communities and resume a normal existence. At the same time, I continue to be concerned about the precarious humanitarian situation in many areas of the country, some of which are only now becoming accessible to humanitarian agencies. The large-scale violence against women found to be pervasive in Sierra Leone also remains a source of major concern. I urge all parties to respect human rights, and those of women and children in particular. The Government must step up its effort to improve prison conditions that may have led to unnecessary suffering of inmates in its custody.

66. I appreciate the pledges made by Member States to the United Nations Trust Fund established for the Special Court for Sierra Leone and trust that the amounts pledged will materialize soon, which will allow the earliest possible beginning of this important initiative. I also hope that donors will respond positively to the appeal by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and contribute generously to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These two institutions are mutually reinforcing instruments through which impunity will be brought to an end and long-term reconciliation may be achieved.

67. The recent efforts by the members of the Mano River Union to resume political dialogue, especially the rising prospects for a summit meeting of Mano

River Union Presidents, are a welcome step forward. The meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs at Monrovia, followed by the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security at Freetown in August were long-overdue steps towards the objective of regional peace and stability. I commend the leaders of the Mano River Union for taking this initiative, and encourage them to resolutely pursue the process of dialogue. I also applaud the efforts of the Mano River Union Women's Peace Network for its contribution to this important regional initiative.

68. In conclusion, I should like to commend the parties, my Special Representative, and the UNAMSIL military and civilian personnel for the progress accomplished during the period under review. I would also like to once again express my appreciation to the countries contributing troops to this very important Mission, as well as to the ECOWAS subregion and donors for their support for the peace process in Sierra Leone.
