



Transition and Peace-building in Sierra Leone: the UN Country Team Approach

A background statement for the UN assessment mission

1. Throughout the transition from peace-keeping to peace-building and from relief to recovery and development, the principal objective of the UN country team (UNCT)¹ has been to assist the Government, together with its partners, to address, in a coherent manner, both the causes and consequences of the ten-year war in Sierra Leone. We are doing so in close collaboration with UNAMSIL using the comparative advantages and resources of the whole UN community in Sierra Leone to confront and tackle the many needs and demands of a country emerging from a devastating conflict.

Cooperation in Practice

2. The UNCT has welcomed and encouraged the cooperation that has been progressively built up between the various components of UNAMSIL and the UN agencies, funds and programmes represented in Sierra Leone. This cooperation is based on a mutual recognition of the respective roles and mandates of individual UN organizations under the overarching leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary General.

3. There are numerous examples of successful collaboration and joint initiatives between UNAMSIL and the UNCT, among the more prominent:

- Resettlement of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and assistance to refugees
- De-mobilization and Reintegration of ex-combatants
- Restoration of State Authority and support to the national recovery process
- Creation and support to the District Recovery Committees (DRC)
- Elections – national and local
- Rehabilitation of judicial institutions and the administration of justice
- Police Training and Deployment
- Small arms collection
- Child protection
- Human Rights Monitoring and Capacity Building
- Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
- Immunization campaigns and health outreach

4. As UNAMSIL draws down, the UNCT will continue to work with the Mission to consolidate peace and prevent the recurrence of conflict using the strategies that we elaborated jointly when Sierra Leone was beginning to emerge from the decade long civil war.

¹ FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCHA, WFP, WHO, World Bank

Preparing for Transition

5. The UNCT in cooperation with UNAMSIL started early to prepare for the transition from peace-keeping to peace-building and from relief to recovery and sustainable development. As disarmament moved forward, the UNCT and UNAMSIL assisted the National Recovery Committee (NRC) - created to direct the nation-wide restoration of civil authority - to undertake needs assessments in previously rebel held areas. These assessments constituted the basis for the **National Recovery Strategy (NRS)**, which mapped out the most immediate requirements for recovery assistance. In close collaboration with UNAMSIL, the UNCT has also prepared yearly appeals that address both emergency relief needs and immediate recovery requirements.

6. At the same time, the UNCT and UNAMSIL prepared a **Peace-building and Recovery Strategy (PBR)**, which recognized that peace-building required concerted political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights interventions. The PBR outlined how the various arms of the UN could contribute in a coherent fashion to these objectives and ensure that the achievements of UNAMSIL were sustained through longer-term programmes of capacity-building.

7. Subsequently, the UNCT drafted with Government a **UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)**, which, based on the Millennium Development Goals, translated the key dimensions of the PBR into a longer-term action framework upon which the individual UN agencies, funds and programmes are formulating their programmes and activities for 2004-2007.

Assessing Progress

8. The Government and its partners, including the UNCT, have continuously monitored the progress in post conflict recovery using two yardsticks: the set of benchmarks contained in the NRS and the "Results Framework" established at the November 2002 meeting of the Consultative Group for Sierra Leone. This framework is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. In addition, at the end of 2003, an independent team assessed the overall progress made towards achieving the recovery benchmarks, the impact of the recovery process as well as any adjustments needed to sustain recovery and the transition to longer-term strategies and policies.

9. Judged against these benchmarks, the UNCT believes that significant progress had been made in the recovery process. According to the NRS assessment, more than fifty percent of the benchmarks have been achieved with clear gains in health, education, agriculture and the resettlement of displaced populations. Hundreds of thousands of people have returned home and begun to rebuild their lives and communities. Similar progress is evident from the Results Framework, which includes security and governance related benchmarks. There has been neither widespread breakdown of law and order nor any return to the egregious violations of human rights that characterized the war years.

Moving the transition forward

10. While we are encouraged by this progress, many challenges lie ahead. These must be tackled with determination and energy if the progress achieved since the conflict ended is to be continued and the country set firmly on the path to sustainable development.

11. The long-term stability of Sierra Leone will depend to a great extent on the political will and the commitment of resources by the Government and its partners to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development. This requires an integrated approach, one that maintains security, reinforces good governance, encourages economic growth and promotes human development. The Development Partnership Committee, composed of government, donor and NGO representatives, has been set up to facilitate such an approach.

12. **Security and Stability** are the indispensable foundations for current peace-building efforts and for future prosperity and democratic development. The UNCT therefore underlines the need to ensure

that the draw down and departure of UNAMSIL be accomplished in a manner that does not put at risk the hard won gains achieved in recent times. The UNCT recognizes that the primary responsibility for national security must revert to the Government and we acknowledge that the security forces need to have the essential resources they require to fulfill those responsibilities. However, as they resume their nation-wide responsibilities, we urge the security agencies to do so in a manner that is fully consistent with accepted norms of human rights. We see improvements in this regard but this remains an enduring concern for the people of Sierra Leone and one that the UN must continue to monitor closely. We recommend that the United Nations continue to assist the security services with capacity building beyond the expected draw down of UNAMSIL to help consolidate the achievements to date and urge that the post UNAMSIL security arrangements allow the UN to assist the Government to deal with any illegitimate, armed threats to its authority.

13. **Democratic, accountable and transparent governance** is equally vital for the future well-being of the country. Poor governance over many years, allied to widespread corruption, was undoubtedly one of the principal causes of the conflict. A failure to make visible progress on this front would again put peace at risk and lead to a marked reduction in donor support. This is why the UNCT has identified this as a priority area for its support, which includes assistance for public sector management, curbing corruption, decentralization, electoral reform, and the re-establishment of local government. The UN must use its voice and resources to support the vigorous implementation of these on-going reforms.

14. In a country where it is estimated that up to eighty percent of the population lives below the poverty line, **Poverty Reduction** is an objective of enormous importance. Sierra Leone is still at the bottom of the Human Development Index. The UNCT places a high priority therefore on the timely completion of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which will lay out the Government policy and programme for dealing with the massive problem of poverty in Sierra Leone and is considered an important stepping stone for making progress towards the MDGs.

15. The UNCT is focusing much of its work directly on poverty reduction. Our aim is to assist, through advocacy and assistance, the poorest and most vulnerable in society. For that purpose we will closely monitor and assist national efforts to improve service delivery - especially in health, education and agriculture - to those most in need. Since the conflict ended, considerable progress has been made in rehabilitating the basic social infrastructure. However, severe capacity constraints - staff shortages and basic supplies are the most evident - are already compromising the impact of this effort and need urgent attention and resources. Lack of or insufficient service delivery to the poorest is a potential source of popular dissatisfaction.

16. We recognize that poverty reduction will not be achieved without **Economic Growth**. After many years of decline and stagnation, the economy is again growing. However, the productive base is quite narrow and severely inhibited by infrastructural deficiencies such as poor roads and power shortages. To expand the economy, the UNCT, along with other partners, is assisting Government through technical assistance, training and microfinance to put in place the conditions that will encourage investment and trade by the private sector and community based organisations. However, a predictable measure of stability is indispensable to investment led growth. The draw down of UNAMSIL is therefore being closely watched by private sector operators who are concerned that it may create a security vacuum. This concern should be factored into the planning for the post UNAMSIL era.

17. The progressive collapse of the judicial system and the erosion of the **Rule of Law**, accompanied by the widespread abuse of **Human Rights**, were both a cause and consequence of the war. The UNCT believes that the United Nations must continue to maintain a strong and visible profile on human rights allied to technical assistance initiatives to improve the quality and timeliness of the administration of justice. UNAMSIL's work in human rights in association with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is highly appreciated and respected. The UNCT strongly recommends therefore that substantial UN support for human rights (and the nascent National Human Rights Commission) be extended after UNAMSIL closes and welcome the OHCHR's active

participation in the UNCT. We note also that the absence of an effective system of justice is a serious impediment to development. The UNCT will therefore build on its initial support for the rehabilitation of the justice system so as to improve judicial coverage and quality especially in the rural areas.

18. The corollary of justice is **Reconciliation**. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Special Court through their respective mandates are both dealing with the legacy of the conflict. While the proceedings of the Court are likely to continue for some time, the TRC has concluded its work and will shortly publish its report. This will provide an opportunity to highlight the necessity of promoting a “culture of reconciliation”. There have been no reports of post war reprisals but the trauma of the war years runs deep. Many ex-combatants have not returned home for fear of recriminations or worse. Many young women and girls abducted and abused by the fighting forces are stigmatized and have not gone back to their families. We believe, therefore, that reconciliation is a theme of continuing importance that must be encouraged at all levels of Sierra Leone society.

19. As we look to the future, we are deeply conscious of the problems of **Youth**. Considerable attention (and funding) has been focused on the reintegration of ex-combatants. This was an essential contribution to the stabilisation of the country in the immediate aftermath of the war. However, ex-combatants are only part of a far larger problem – the crisis of youth. Every day thousands of young people are coming on to the labour market with limited or no education, few if any skills and scant opportunity for employment of any kind. The Government’s Youth Policy recognizes the magnitude of the problem. Indeed throughout West Africa, governments face comparable difficulties for which there are no easy or quick solutions. Structural deficiencies in education and training will have to be addressed and the environment made more conducive for job creation through private sector investment. But this will take time. Some of the pressure may be relieved by well targeted livelihoods programmes and micro-credit initiatives, which the UNCT and other partners will support. Youth must also be given a voice and brought into the political mainstream. Young, unemployed people are particularly susceptible to incitement and prey to outbreaks of violent disorder, especially in crowded urban areas, which may undermine the country’s ability to attract the investment that is needed to produce employment for them.

Managing the Transition

20. We have outlined above the priorities for the UNCT as the transition moves forward as well as areas where we believe that continuing support will be needed from the United Nations. We have also identified some residual activities can be transferred to individual UN organisations in the UNCT (see annex) as UNAMSIL draws down. We consider that the coordination arrangements put in place to ensure a productive and harmonious relationship between UNAMSIL and the UNCT have worked well. We recommend therefore that such arrangements be continued with any successor UN mission that may be put in place after the closure of UNAMSIL in order to ensure that the coordination of transitional planning and implementation is effected in a seamless manner.

*The UN Country Team in Sierra Leone
Freetown, February 2004*

Annex: Residual Post-UNAMSIL Tasks and Suggested Transition UN Agencies

	RESIDUAL POST-UNAMSIL TASKS	GOSL	SUGGESTED TRANSITION UN AGENCY
CIVIL AUTHORITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity-building and technical support to district offices and local councils 	Ministry of Local Government	TST ² supported by UNDP together with donors and NGOs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and support District Council activities and the decentralization process as a whole. 	Ministry of Local Government together with other Ministries.	TST as well as FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and WB in terms of sectoral decentralization and together with donors, including DFID and EU.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and facilitate peaceful resolution of community disputes, including inter-chiefdom disputes over the demarcation of boundaries. 	Ministry of Local Government and peace and confidence building committees.	TST supported by UNDP together with donors and NGOs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen civil society and grassroots participation, including women and youth groups. 	Ministries of Gender, Children and Social Welfare and Youth and Sports.	TST, supported by UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA together with NGOs and donors.
EX-COMBATANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote community-based reintegration programmes with focus on youth engagement and employment. 	National Commission for Social Action and Ministry of Youth and Sports.	TST supported by FAO, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, WHO and UNDP together with NGOs and donors.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess and monitor impact of the reintegration programme on ex-combatants and communities as a whole 	National Commission for Social Action	TST supported by UNDP and UNICEF together with NGOs and donors.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the proliferation of small arms and light weapons 	Ministry of Internal Affairs Sierra Leone Police	UNDP's Arms for Development Programme together with NGOs and donors.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the reintegration of ex-combatants returning from Liberia. 	Sierra Leone Police	UNHCR and IOM.
HUMAN RIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to national institutions 	National Commission for Human Rights	UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP and FAO together with donors and NGOs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen and monitor the effective functioning of the justice system, including judiciary and prisons administration. 	Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs.	UNDP together with donors and NGOs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and monitor the application of right-based policies. 	National Commission for Human Rights	UNCT together with donors and NGOs.
CHILD PROTECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical support and advise to national institutions. 	National Commission for War Affected Children (NACWAC) and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare	UNICEF's Child Protection Programme together with NGOs and donors.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy and outreach. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to relevant legislations 		
PUB. INFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of information and programmes aimed at promotion and consolidation of peace. 	Ministry of Information	UNCT together with donors and NGOs.

² The UN country team created the Transitional Support Team (TST), managed by UNDP, as a part of the 4Rs approach (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction) to support the Government in its efforts to take the lead in the recovery and transition process and to make the shift from relief to community-driven and participatory efforts in areas with large resettling populations. TST draws its resources from individual UN agencies.