



Peacebuilding Commission

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I. Context

1. Countries emerging from conflict face immense challenges. While the international community provides significant assistance to these countries after the immediate end of hostilities, this often recedes before peace becomes irreversible. The Peacebuilding Commission was created to address this gap in the international system's support between peace operations and longer term development assistance. Established by the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, the Commission is a new intergovernmental advisory body to help countries emerging from conflict consolidate peace and prevent the relapse back into violence. At the request of the Security Council and the countries concerned, Sierra Leone and Burundi were selected the first countries for consideration by the Peacebuilding Commission through the organization of country specific meetings.

2. At the meeting of the Organizational Committee on 13 July 2006 and the Informal Briefing of 19 July 2006, member states requested background papers for these country specific meetings. This paper is a resource document that provides an overview of the background of Sierra Leone, existing strategic frameworks, critical peacebuilding issues and international support to Sierra Leone. As a background paper, it aims to be informative, but it does not present all the issues, nor does it analyse potential dynamics in the peacebuilding process.¹ It aims to provide a basis for deliberations by members of the PBC on key priorities that require international support to keep the post-conflict peace process moving forward.

II. Background to Sierra Leone

3. In the 2004 UNDP Human Development Index, Sierra Leone ranked 177 out of 177 countries or bottom of the table. By 1990, Sierra Leone had been weakened by chronic

¹ This paper does not discuss the UN presence and role in Sierra Leone. UNAMSIL was established in 1999 and departed in December 2005, while the new integrated office UNIOSIL became operational on 1 January 2006 with a mandate on key areas of peace and governance, human rights and the rule of law. The UN Country Team of agencies, funds and programmes is also active on the ground.

political instability including a one-party state system and five military coups, while the economy was near collapse and 82% of the population were living in extreme poverty. The deteriorating situation in Sierra Leone worsened with the beginning of what would become a 10 year civil war.

4. The war began in 1991 when a small group of rebels, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), supported by Charles Taylor, attacked from Liberia. The civil war lasted until successive peace agreements ended hostilities in 2001. While external elements precipitated and aided the war, there were several internal factors that prolonged and transformed it. Decades of poor governance, corruption, poverty, illegal exploitation of diamonds and other natural resources, youth alienation across different sections of society, ethnic tensions, factionalism within the security sector and the use of violence by politicians all contributed to the emergence and brutal character of the war. The causes of the conflict and the conditions that facilitated it were complex, deep-rooted and long-standing.

5. The consequences were devastating. Through ten years of war 200,000 people were killed and many more died as a result of the impact of war on livelihoods and the destruction of health services, 2 million people were displaced, civil and political authority collapsed, armed groups and militia proliferated, much of the country's infrastructure was destroyed, agricultural production was severely disrupted and the economy nearly destroyed. At war's end, there were over 70,000 combatants, including some 7000 child soldiers. The war also created millions of victims who were traumatised, maimed, raped, orphaned and made homeless.

6. Peace negotiations between the RUF and the Government produced the Abidjan Agreement in 1996 and the ECOWAS peace plan of 1997, but both agreements collapsed. Following renewed talks, the two sides agreed a ceasefire and plan for the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of combatants, a transitional political process and national elections with the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999, but peace was only formally declared in January 2002.

7. The transitional period initiated by the Lomé Agreement ended on 14 May 2002 when national presidential and parliamentary elections were held and declared by international observers to be free, transparent and generally violence-free. The results were accepted by all parties: Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah won the presidency and his party, the Sierra Leone People's Party, won the majority of seats in parliament. Of the 11 parties who fielded candidates, two other opposition parties also gained seats in parliament, the All People's Congress and the Peace and Liberation Party, while the RUF effectively disappeared.

8. The government, the people of Sierra Leone and international partners have been confronting the enormous challenges of rebuilding the country and consolidating the peace. The security situation has vastly improved after the demobilisation and disarmament of thousands of former combatants, and tremendous international assistance has gone towards

restructuring and strengthening the security forces and the national police.² Nevertheless, some of the conditions that preceded the conflict remain. It is estimated that 70% of the population continue to live below the poverty line, with the heaviest concentration in rural areas outside Freetown. As long as Sierra Leone remains susceptible to a possible resumption of violence, it is in need of sustained international attention and support to the peacebuilding process that can be provided through the Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission has an important role to play in supporting national actors consolidate peace. Peacebuilding has to be supported and sustained by visible achievements in social and economic development and democratisation. However, peace is not just an end result that is achieved through activities; peace is built by national actors through the process of working through challenges and obstacles that builds national confidence and trust. Peace is a process that is institutionalised and deepened through new ways of interacting and engaging within the population, between the population and leaders, and between different elites.

III. Existing Strategic Frameworks

9. Since entering office, the government has embarked on a series of planning and consultation processes for preparing development strategies to move Sierra Leone from an emergency situation to more normal development circumstances. While Vision 2025 and the Recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission emerged from national processes, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Peace Consolidation Strategy and the UN Development Assistance Framework were jointly developed by the government and international partners. The development of strategic peacebuilding interventions must take into account these frameworks that are based on extensive consultative processes.

Vision 2025 **Sweet Salone Vision 2025**, launched in 2001 by the Government, is Sierra Leone's national vision for long-term development, and provides direction for medium term strategies such as the PRSP. Nationwide consultations were organised in 2000 through a participatory approach to ensure national ownership, to strengthen democratic culture and to support more local involvement in the development process. This process included former combatants, including from the Revolutionary United Front.

Vision 2025 offers strategies for national transformation based on dialogue and consensus-building. It also recognises the importance of an intergenerational dialogue between youth and older generations, and that youth must be empowered to take a lead role in the achievement of the national vision.

- The national vision of Sierra Leone is a *united people, progressive nation and attractive country*.

² Since UNAMSIL transferred responsibility for security to the Sierra Leonean government in November 2004, not a single security incident required the involvement of UNAMSIL or other external forces.

- The vision has six strategic priorities:
 - (1) how to attain a competitive private-sector led economy with effective indigenous participation;
 - (2) how to create a high quality of life for all Sierra Leoneans;
 - (3) how to build a well educated and enlightened society;
 - (4) how to create a tolerant, stable, secure and well managed society based on democratic values;
 - (5) how to ensure sustainable exploitation and effective utilization of natural resources, while maintaining a healthy environment and;
 - (6) how to become a science and technology driven nation.
- It outlines the necessary actions and institutional arrangements needed to implement each priority and the challenges in implementation.
- As part of the visioning exercise, different scenarios were envisaged that preview which conditions would create a secure and peaceful Sierra Leone, and which would lead to a recurrence of military coups and civil war.

TRC

Established on 5 July 2002, as stipulated in the Lomé Peace Agreement, the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** was mandated to create an impartial historical record of violations and abuses of human rights, to address impunity, to respond to the needs of the victims, to promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered. The Commission concluded its consultations, investigation and research, and issued its final report in 2004. The final report provides a significant number of recommendations, submitted to the government for immediate implementation as required in the Lomé Agreement.

- The Commission explored the historical antecedents to the conflict, the history of governance, the military and political history of the conflict, the nature of the conflict, and the role of mineral resources and external actors in the conflict. Establishing an impartial record of the past, and reconciling with the past, are necessary for Sierra Leone to address the issues that led to conflict in order to move forward peacefully.
- While recognizing the achievements towards restoration of peace, the Report underscores that most of the challenges that led to the conflict still remain unaddressed. To that end, it contains extensive recommendations regarding the protection of human rights, establishing the rule of law, security services, promoting good governance, fighting corruption, youth, women and children, external actors, mineral resources, the TRC and Special Court, reparations, reconciliation and a national vision for Sierra Leone, as well as a follow-up to the Commission's work.

- Among the many recommendations are the following:
 - Enshrine human dignity as a fundamental right in the constitution; creation of a National Human Rights Commission; compulsory human rights education in schools, army, police and judicial services
 - Creation of an autonomous judiciary with budgetary independence; binding code of conduct for judges and magistrates
 - Adopt new principles of National Security and enshrine them in the Constitution
 - Parliament to promulgate code of ethics for senior members of executive and leading public sector officials; disclosure of financial interests for senior public officials
 - Publish a regular and detailed account of how government spends proceeds generated from diamonds.
 - All political parties required to ensure that at least 10% of their candidates for all public elections are youth, and 30% are women
 - Implement a Reparations Programme dealing with the needs of victims in the areas of health, pensions, education, skills training and micro-credit, community and symbolic reparations.

PRSP

Following the development of an Interim-PRSP in 2001, the **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper** was approved in February 2005 to serve as the key development framework between the government and its international donor partners. The PRSP has 3 main pillars or strategic objectives:

- (1) Good governance, security and peace;
- (2) Pro-poor sustainable economic growth for food security and jobs creation
- (3) Human resource development.

Pillar One groups the programmes that ensure an enabling environment of good governance and secure, stable living conditions, so that the basic poverty reduction objectives can be attained. These include programmes for:

- (a) good governance through public sector reform, decentralisation of governance, capacity building in public management and measures to fight corruption
- (b) consolidating peace through the TRC and the Special Court, judicial reform to improve the administration of justice and access to justice for the poor, reforming laws, countering violations of human rights, improving the legal environment for private sector development
- (c) national security through the restructuring of the armed forces and upgrading the police force.

Pillar Two groups programmes related to income and production for food security and job creation through pro-poor sustainable growth, infrastructure development, improving the climate for private sector development, and strategies relating to the mining sector.

Pillar Three focuses on promoting human development to meet the priorities of the poor in education, health care, water and sanitation, housing, the promotion of youth employment and development, HIV/AIDs, gender equality and empowerment and the environment.

The PRSP is set within Vision 2025 and is closely aligned with the MDGs.³ The cost for implementing the PRSP is approximately \$1.72 billion, with a financing gap between the projected expenditures and resources of \$941 million. Implementation of the PRSP also assumes substantial assistance for institutional strengthening. The first results from the PRSP are expected in 2007-08.

PCS

The **Peace Consolidation Strategy** was developed by the Government of Sierra Leone, UNIOSIL and the UN Country Team. It aims to create the conditions within which the PRSP and other longer-term national development frameworks can be implemented by consolidating peace and strengthening national institutions of democratic governance. It analyses six categories of threat to Sierra Leone that could lead to heightened insecurity in the short to medium-term:

- (1) challenges to internal security, as well as insecurity emanating from the sub-region;
- (2) challenges to a national dynamic of reconciliation;
- (3) lack of a momentum for accountability;
- (4) lack of respect for human rights and the rule of law;
- (5) a widespread sense of economic disempowerment;
- (6) lack of a national infrastructure for peace.

It focuses on national capacities for conflict prevention and the management of conflicts, proposes specific programme interventions and emphasises a conflict sensitive development programming approach.

UNDAF

The **UN Development Assistance Framework** is the common strategic action plan developed by the UN Country Team in partnership with the Government

³ The first Millennium Development Goals Report for Sierra Leone in 2005 analyses the status of accomplishing the MDGs by 2015, as well as the challenges that obstruct this goal.

of Sierra Leone. The Revised UNDAF 2006-2007 “Peace Consolidation and Transition to Development” integrates conflict prevention and peacebuilding into transitional development cooperation. The UNDAF outlines five outcomes to be achieved, three of which are related to peacebuilding:

- (1) Transparent, accountable, democratic governance advanced at national and local levels, with strengthened decentralisation process and capacity built for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP;
- (2) Increased production, availability, accessibility and utilization of food with improved employment opportunities for youth and;
- (5) Capacity for reconciliation, security, improved governance and respect for human rights of key national and local institutions strengthened, especially through protection and promotion of the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups.

Each outcome is aligned to the pillars of the PRSP, as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

10. The different development and peace consolidation strategies complement each other and converge in a number of areas related to the consolidation of peace: governance and transparency, human rights and the rule of law, employment generation and economic growth, youth, anti-corruption efforts and the security sector as critical to the consolidation of peace. In addition to programmatic activities, successful peacebuilding must pay equal attention to the process of realising such activities and outcomes.

IV. Consolidating Peace – Critical Issues

11. Despite significant progress in stabilising Sierra Leone and taking steps towards normal development as evidenced by the preparation and endorsement of traditional development strategies such as the PRSP, living conditions in Sierra Leone have not significantly improved and the root causes of the past conflict have yet to be properly addressed. According to the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, “many ex-combatants testified that the conditions that caused them to join the conflict persist in the country, and if given the opportunity, they would fight again.”⁴

12. Former combatants and the large youth population lack employment opportunities, there continues to be a proliferation of small arms, state institutions lack capacity, stability in the region remains precarious, corruption and the perception of corruption as well as poor governance are all cause for discontent and possible mobilisation for violence. However, violence is unlikely to be precipitated by any single issue, but is possible when several issues become contentious and overlap making segments in the population more susceptible to manipulation by leaders who seek to achieve their goals through violence rather than political processes.

⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Final Report, Executive Summary, p. 5, item 20.

Challenges in the Political Process⁵

13. Peace exists when political disputes and competition are managed through institutions, processes and mechanisms without recourse to violence. Since multiparty elections in 2002, peace has deepened in Sierra Leone as the institutions and practices of democracy have become more institutionalised, with a growing civil society, and an active media (with 49 newspapers and 39 radio stations). However, challenges persist. The participation of women in the political process is still low. Parliament faces constraints, such as inadequate human resources and technical capacity. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that no culture of tolerance or inclusion in political discourse had emerged. As national elections approach, the discourse from political parties is showing signs of growing intolerance and parties are still striving to become credible vehicles for political expression.

14. The National Electoral Commission announced that national elections are scheduled for 28 July 2007 and preparations are underway. A national referendum on amendments to the constitution will also take place during the elections, following a constitutional review by the Law Reform Commission to ensure the constitution reflects the new political, social and economic reality in the country. The elections are expected to cost \$26 million, with the government committed to providing one third or \$8.3 million.⁶ Donor pledges thus far have been insufficient and there is a gap of \$8-9 million in the electoral budget. In addition, the capacity of the National Electoral Commission is still limited, while there is uncertainty about police preparedness in dealing with cases of violent demonstrations during the elections.

15. There is some concern that the electoral system itself is becoming a source of tension between the ruling and opposition parties. The 2002 elections adopted a system of proportional representation on an interim basis, but Sierra Leone has traditionally used a constituency based first past the post system as mandated in the constitution. Given the complaints raised by opposition parties and the early manifestation of confrontational politics in the country, the international community has been urging tolerance and constructive dialogue on all sides in the lead up to the elections.

Key initiatives by national, local and international actors

- The National Electoral Commission is beginning preparations for the 2007 election.
- The Political Parties' Registration Commission is finalizing a code of conduct for political parties for the elections to facilitate constructive political engagement.
- The Government established Provincial and District Security Committees to function as local-level early warning and conflict management mechanisms
- Civil society organisations held consultations with policy makers, UNIOSIL and other international partners on peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction challenge.

⁵ These issues are not presented in any particular order.

⁶ First report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, 28 April 2006, S/2006/269, p. 6, item 32.

- The University of Sierra Leone created curriculum on conflict prevention, conflict management and mediation
- UNIOSIL and UNDP are promoting inter-party dialogue, public consultation and public education on the electoral system and on political party conduct during the elections, as well as assisting the government in mobilising resources to meet the funding gap for the elections

Outstanding questions related to consolidating peace

1. What support can be provided by the international community to build national confidence in the electoral process and institutions?
2. To what extent are political engagement, dialogue and civil society activity focused on Freetown and how successfully are they engaging local and rural communities in other provinces to reach the rural poor?
3. What measures can be taken to build trust and confidence between the government and civil society, and to ensure buy-in from civil society and the general public to the post-conflict reconstruction challenges?
4. How can mechanisms and institutions for managing conflicts and disputes be strengthened?

Governance and State Building

16. Until recently, Sierra Leone was called a failed state, a collapsed state, and a shadow state. Through decades of poor governance and economic decline, the state in Sierra Leone had limited authority and legitimacy throughout the country, lacked control over the monopoly of violence, could not execute its administrative jurisdiction throughout the country, could not meet the needs of the population, nor protect the borders of the country. The Government has begun the long term task of strengthening state institutions and enhancing state capacity but the challenges are enormous at all levels.

17. There is a perception of low government responsiveness to the needs of the population, while the government faces considerable challenges in meeting public expectations.⁷ Sierra Leone lacks the resources to create a disciplined bureaucracy. The poor quality of public service delivery reinforces the general perception that public institutions are failing to deliver services because of corruption⁸, but the low salaries of civil service staff with mid-level servants earning \$80 per month (which is below a living wage) is demoralising to staff and creates the conditions for corruption. With over 60% of Sierra Leone's public expenditure spent on the procurement of goods and services, this is an urgent problem⁹ The government

⁷ Twenty-seventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, 12 December 2005, S/2005/777, p. 1, item 3.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 9, item 42.

⁹ *Op. cit.* S/2006/695, p. 8, item 36.

has responded by establishing the Anti-Corruption Commission, developed a Public Procurement Act and is developing an Anti-Corruption Strategy. However, it is perceived that more robust action could be taken by the government, including in the prosecution of high profile cases.

18. Administrative and fiscal decentralization to local district councils has been a key platform of the government to enable greater accountability. The government handed over responsibility for many administrative services in education, health and agriculture to local councils, but the capacity of local councils to deliver services to the local population is also hampered by lack of qualified personnel, financial and logistical constraints and poor communications infrastructure. While decentralisation is supported by the international donor community, it has also been perceived as a mechanism for reducing the authority of the traditional chiefdom system which is viewed by the rural poor as a defence against the abuse of bureaucratic power. Harmonisation of the distribution of responsibilities between local councils and the chiefdom system may not be enough to address the concerns of the rural population.¹⁰

19. The ability of the Government to generate and disseminate comprehensive information to the general public to encourage greater participation in political and development processes particularly among major groups such as youth, women and the rural population is another integral component of building peace.

20. The Sierra Leone Police is considered to be a credible if weak institution. Many ranks lack experience, particularly in crowd control and corruption remains a concern; more resources and capacity are needed. Similarly, the Sierra Leone Armed Forces have also undergone downsizing, training and upgrading in order to become a professional force that protects the citizens of Sierra Leone. However, the living conditions of armed forces personnel remain poor, contributing to low morale and making it more difficult to create a sense of professionalism and dedication. Rationalising the security sector and consolidating civilian oversight has also been difficult because of numerous armed formations that emerged during the war, including rebel groups, criminal gangs, civil defence forces (kamajors) and sobels (soldiers by day, rebels by night). While demobilisation and disarmament has been successful, reintegration of the members of these groups so that they no longer pose a threat remains a challenge.

Key initiatives taken by national, local and international actors

- The Government is implementing a road map for the reform of the civil service, including the establishment of a Senior Executive Service (SES).
- The Government embarked on a comprehensive Security Sector Reform programme and undertook a Security Sector Review in March 2005 that maps out a national security direction, and developed a Sierra Leone Police Strategic Plan for 2006-08.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.* S/2005/777, p. 7, item 35-6.

- The Local Government Act was enacted in 2004, while local government elections were held in May 2004.
- The Government, in collaboration with the UN, developed a national communications strategy (NCS) in 2005 to increase the effectiveness of the Government's communication through the media and directly to citizens.
- The Government, UK DFID and UNDP are sponsoring the conduct of an annual survey of public expenditure tracking, which is aimed at enhancing accountability and oversight of public expenditure. The government passed the Public Procurement Act in 2004.
- In July 2006, the Government signed an Improved Governance and Accountability Pact with the ADB, UK DFID, EC and the World Bank focused on 10 critical governance reforms to be implemented by July 2007.
- The Commonwealth has been providing judges, prosecutors, investigators for anti-corruption cases, as well as other assistance to the SL police.
- UNAMSIL and the UK government, IMAT, has provided significant assistance to the Sierra Leone armed forces in training, and assisting deployment along the border.
- With the support of UNAMSIL, UNDP and the Commonwealth, the Government has undertaken a comprehensive programme to strengthen the Sierra Leone police.
- UK DFID funded Justice Sector Development Programme.

Outstanding questions related to consolidating peace

1. Are the structures and conditions that promote corruption at different levels of society being sufficiently targeted through government anti-corruption initiatives?
2. To what extent do criminal elements have an interest in political instability?
3. How well can the police and armed forces professionally manage crisis situations such as violence during next year's elections, incursions along the border, civil unrest?
4. How well will the Government overcome its ineffectiveness in communicating its policies and successes to encourage stronger participation by the general public in political and development processes?

Economic recovery

21. The economy of Sierra Leone was nearly destroyed through years of war and economic mismanagement. Rebuilding it is one of the most difficult and yet urgent tasks facing the government. With 70% of the population still living in poverty, economic growth has not been translated into improvements in the living conditions of the poor majority. Close to 300,000 refugees returned to Sierra Leone and require assistance. The reintegration of formerly displaced persons is also not yet durable. "While overall macro-economic management of the post-war economy has been widely acclaimed for maintaining some level of stability and achieving modest growth, there is overwhelming national consensus in post-conflict Sierra Leone that poverty in all its dimensions is pervasive. Real GDP grew by 7.3% in 2005 and is

expected to grow by 7.4% in 2006 but will taper off to 6.1% in 2008.”¹¹ GDP growth of 6% per annum is needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 1 of halving poverty by 2015.

22. Economic growth is dependent on recovery in the agriculture, mining, construction and services sectors. The dominant sector of the economy is agriculture, mostly subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 40% of GDP on average. Expanding agricultural productivity is a key priority to address the problems that most of the rural working population is underemployed, and productivity and agricultural income are low. In the mining sector, the government has extended its control over the diamond sector, with diamond exports increasing from \$10 million in 2000 to \$130 million in 2004, but by the end of 2005, 50% of diamond mining activities in the country were still unlicensed. Diamond mining rights and boundaries are a major source of disputes among chiefdoms. However, while the mining sector accounts for almost all of the country’s exports and 20% of GDP; it employs only 2% of the population.¹² The service sector which includes transport, communications, insurance, finance and government services, accounts for 40% of GDP.

23. The Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone has pointed to the lack of infrastructure, particularly roads and electricity as major constraints in efforts to stimulate economic recovery. The government of Sierra Leone also remains highly dependent on external revenue; with high levels of external debt and insufficient domestic revenue collection, limiting poverty reduction. The state also lacks the authority to suppress illegal economic activity and harness the country’s abundant natural resources. With the constraints faced by the state, the government adopted a model of private sector led growth for development and poverty reduction but significant institutional, legal, administrative and regulatory measures are needed to create a climate conducive to private sector development and investment.

Key initiatives taken by national, local and international actors

- Sierra Leone met the HIPC conditions in 2002 and began receiving debt relief. The government launched the National Recovery Strategy in October 2002, following the Interim PRSP signed in 2001, and received approval of the complete PRSP in 2005.
- The government economic recovery programme aims to re-establish macroeconomic stability, rehabilitate the economic and social infrastructure, and rebuild capacity for policy formulation and implementation.
- The National Revenue Authority was established to improve domestic revenue generation and tax and non-tax administration

¹¹ *Op. cit.* S/2006/695, p. 9, item 39.

¹² World Bank Country Brief on Sierra Leone August 2006.

Outstanding questions related to consolidating peace

1. Is the informal economy adapting to a peace environment or are there impediments related to the war economy that obstruct economic growth?
2. Is there equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth across the country? Does economic reform encourage monopolistic behaviour?
3. Given the constraints facing the private sector, when will a poverty reduction strategy based on private sector development produce results?

Youth

24. Youth unemployment was identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as one of the root causes of the civil war and is widely considered to be a threat to Sierra Leone's continued stability. The Government defines youth as those persons between the ages of 15 and 35, or almost 2 million of the population including all those who have not made the transition to adulthood due to war, instability or other factors. Like many African countries, Sierra Leone has a very young population with 42% under the age of 15.

25. There is a fear of widespread anger among youth at their low status in society with limited opportunities to advance or perform a meaningful role in their own lives. They have few employable skills and the market has insufficient demand for workers. Without employment prospects, youth are easily mobilised and vulnerable to recruitment by armed or criminal groups who offer money, a sense of belonging and power, and an identity. Traditional support structures for youth have also been severely stretched and cannot meet the level of need. However, youth are not a single monolithic group; they represent different regions, ethnic groups, levels of education and so forth. Nor should youth be seen primarily as a threat. Youth are a resource in their own right; they are activists, heads of households and have become entrepreneurs, such as the motorcycle transportation operators that have become successful businesses in Sierra Leone.

26. Unemployment is also not the only form of youth exclusion. Youth marginalisation or perception of disempowerment also applies to the political system, education, and the chiefdom system. Former combatants have voiced grievances that their leaders were no longer interested in them or their concerns once peace started. There is also strong demand for education and training schemes to improve skills. Youth, as well as women, also perceive the chiefdoms structure as restrictive and that it denies them their rights to land ownership, necessary for marriage.

27. When looking at the youth challenge, the focus tends to be on young men, overshadowing the challenges and problems faced by young women and girls. As a result of war, young women are often heads of households, have little access to education and little access to formal assistance programmes developed by governments and aid agencies. Youth empowerment as a condition for peace includes young women and girls.

Key initiatives taken by national, local and international actors

- The Government launched a National Youth Policy of Sierra Leone that aims to privilege and mainstream youth related activities in the overall process of national reconstruction, as well as empowering youth to become responsible citizens. A Ministry responsible for youth and sports was created, a Minister appointed and a National Youth Advisory Council established.
- The Government is preparing to launch a national youth programme to provide employment opportunities in the short and medium terms.
- UN Country Teams in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire held a conference on youth-related issues in Freetown June 2006. UNDP is developing a programme on youth in Sierra Leone.
- A consortium of the UN, ILO and World Bank formed the Youth Employment Network (YEN)
- UNOWA launched a report on youth unemployment in the region, with several concrete recommendations

Outstanding questions related to consolidating peace

1. In what ways are youth politically mobilised? What are the incentives for youth to participate in or to disengage from the political process?
2. How is youth discontent manifested across different regions in the country? Are there regional, ethnic or socio-economic identities that separate youth and could lead to conflict? What are the issues for youth in urban versus rural areas of the country?
3. How can national job creation be approached in such a way that benefits different groups and does not privilege one over another?
4. What are the obstacles to implementing the national youth programme? Are resources for youth reaching the segments of the youth population most likely to be recruited by armed groups?

Transitional Justice and Human Rights

28. As a central pillar of the state, a fair, effective, transparent and accessible justice system is essential to sustaining peace because it resolves conflicts and disputes, provides an impartial arbiter that upholds the laws of the land, and applies and enforces laws without discrimination. The justice system in Sierra Leone has not served these functions because of structural weaknesses in the form of outdated laws, lack of access to impartial and equitable justice for the poor, insufficient training and human resources, lack of capacity in the judiciary, lack of transparency and accountability, excessive delays in the resolution of cases, prolonged pre-trial detentions, deplorable prison conditions and conflicts between customary and chieftaincy justice. The judicial sector has therefore been perceived by the population as weak, corrupt, politicised, and inaccessible to the majority of citizens, especially to the rural

population. Important steps to extend the judiciary throughout the country, as well as improve the conditions of prison have been taken, but further measures are needed.

29. Many of these problems were presented in the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2004, a report which clearly identified the violation of human rights as one of the root causes of conflict. Even though improvements in the human rights situation have been observed, in terms of the overall institutional framework for strengthening rule of law and the protection of human rights, only a few of the recommendations have been implemented so far. For instance, a binding code of conduct for judges and magistrates was adopted and a system to minimize political interference in the prosecution of corruption cases was instituted. Still, most of the recommendations remain unaddressed.¹³ This includes the National Human Rights Commission, which is not yet operational. While the Commission Act has been promulgated, the candidates' confirmation remains pending before Parliament. The Secretary General has urged the government to develop a comprehensive plan of action for implementing the recommendations and moving forward on their implementation.

Key initiatives taken by national, local and international actors

- A national strategy for reform of the justice sector is in development.
- Magistrates and High Courts have now been operational in the districts and regional capitals.
- The UK DFID Justice Sector Development Programme, in collaboration with the UN and other partners aims to provide assistance to address the structural weaknesses and imbalance in the justice system.
- Several actors are actively involved in the monitoring of human rights and rule of law institutions and are effectively building the human rights capacity of state institutions in the administration of justice.

Outstanding questions related to consolidating peace

1. Is the reform of the justice sector addressing all the relevant areas (including prisons, the magistracy, defence counsel and the prosecutor's office)? Is the reform proceeding evenly across the country? Are there obstacles to strengthening the rule of law that reflect some of the cleavages in society that helped to generate conflict?
2. Is progress in reform of the justice sector translating into greater protection of the rights of women and children and improvement of their living conditions?

Regional instability

30. The sub-region of West Africa has become identified with violent conflict and political volatility due to civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire; political instability in

¹³ *Op. cit.* S/2006/269, p 8, item 41.

Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Togo, as well as border disputes between different countries. Like all countries in the Mano River Union, Sierra Leone is vulnerable to instability which has often led to influxes of refugees; cross border flows of small arms, recruitment by rebel groups, and of criminal influences; as well as political interference and intervention from neighbouring countries. Sierra Leone is still hosting some 36,000 Liberians, and facilitating their return and/or local integration would be an important step forward. Economic conditions are also sub-regional in nature with movements of people in search of employment, the dissatisfaction of youth and insufficient inclusion of youth across the region, as well as political crises stemming from economic decline spilling over boundaries.

31. However, there are positive mitigating factors in the region as well; successful elections were held in Liberia where stability is emerging and the robust fight against corruption initiated by the new president has set a positive precedent in the region. The arrest, detention and subsequent transfer of Charles Taylor to stand trial before the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the Hague has also had a stabilising effect in the region, while stability in Sierra Leone has also been a positive factor in the region.

32. Sierra Leone also has a border dispute with Guinea in the northern and eastern provinces, particularly over the border town of Yenga with bilateral negotiations currently stalled. Periodic incursions onto Sierra Leonean territory by the armed forces of Guinea have resulted in the displacement of villagers and disruption of their livelihoods. Political uncertainty in Guinea could worsen and may lead to the influx of refugees into neighbouring countries including Sierra Leone, putting an additional strain on local communities.

Key initiatives taken by national, local and international actors

- Sierra Leone is a member of ECOWAS, MRU, AU, NEPAD and other mechanisms that foster regional cooperation
- The Sierra Leone Government has engaged in bilateral negotiations with Guinea
- ECOWAS and the AU have undertaken several peace initiatives in the region, including launching peacekeeping operations through ECOMOG.
- ECOWAS established a moratorium on the trafficking of light weapons and small arms
- The ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol of Democracy and Good Governance is an instrument for strengthening peace consolidation in West Africa, by suggesting punitive actions against countries lacking good governance. Similarly, NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism also encourage accountability, peace and security.
- Steps are being taken to revitalise the Mano River Union by strengthening its structures and capacities.
- The UN established an SRSG for West Africa and the UN Office for West Africa, while UN Country Teams in the sub-region meet regularly and on thematic issues
- The Security Council has undertaken two missions to the sub-region in 2003 and 2004 and made several recommendations

Outstanding questions related to consolidating peace

1. What concrete steps can be taken to address the challenges faced by youth across the sub-region?
2. What steps need to be taken to find a lasting solution to the boundary dispute?
3. Are there interests in the sub-region that do not benefit from peace in Sierra Leone?

V. Sustaining International Support to the Peacebuilding Process

33. Aid flows to Sierra Leone increased between the 1999 signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement and the formal declaration of peace in 2002. After a decline in 2002, donor assistance increased in 2003-2005. According to civil society actors, however, donor support is not integrated or sustained, with short term programmes rather than holistic approaches in place. This inconsistency makes it difficult for the government and civil society partners to invest in the long-term process of institution-building. The government is also concerned about lack of transparency of donor funding through non-governmental organisations that create structures parallel to the state, as well as recruiting skilled workers away from the state with higher salaries. National mechanisms are needed to track the flows of development assistance into Sierra Leone, the sectors which are receiving resources, and the impact of such resources, which also help to institutionalise accountability within the state. Integrated coordination mechanisms could also be strengthened to enhance the coherence, complementarities and impact of interventions from international actors.

Key initiatives taken by national, local and international actors

- The government established the joint Development Partnership Committee (DEPAC) in 2003, co-chaired by the Vice President of Sierra Leone, the World Bank, and UNDP, the Committee for monitoring the agreed Consultative Group benchmarks including completion of the full PRSP.
- The first international investment forum was organized by the Government of Sierra Leone in collaboration with the Commonwealth Business council in March 2006.

Outstanding questions related to consolidating peace

1. What measures have been taken by the Government to track aid flows, what support is needed to establish effective mechanisms?
2. What measures are being taken by donors to meet their committed pledges and demonstrate full transparency of where donor assistance is reaching?
3. Are there overlaps, duplication or conflicts amongst international partners?

VI. Conclusion

34. Sierra Leone has made tremendous progress since the war ended. Peace is restored and the process of rebuilding the country is well underway. However, the complexity of the causes that led to the war and the enormity of rebuilding social, human and resource capital renders the consolidation of peace more challenging. Although not every issue can be addressed at once, it is important to identify the key priorities where progress can be made with the support of the PBC, and where lack of progress may obstruct the further consolidation of peace in Sierra Leone. Based on this identification of urgent priorities, international political, financial and technical support should be mobilized in a strategic manner. The unique forum of the PBC, which brings together governments, IFIs, donors, the UN team on the ground, and the whole UN system, must seize this opportunity and mobilize international support to help Sierra Leone lay the foundations for sustainable development and lasting peace.

SIERRA LEONE FACT SHEET

COUNTRY STATISTICS	176	HDI Rank (out of 177 countries)
	0.8 billion	GDP
	149	GDP per capita
	7.4	GDP growth (annual %) ^a
	40.8 years	Life expectancy at birth
	5.1 million	Population
	57.0%	Population living below US\$ 1 a day 1990–2003 HDR
	74.5%	Population living below US\$ 2 a day 1990–2003 HDR
	42.8%	Population under age 15 (% of total)
	38.8%	Urban population
SOCIAL	3.7	Public expenditure on education (% of GDP 2000–2002)
	35.1	Adult literacy rate (% ages 15+) ^a
	1.7	Public health expenditure (% of GDP 2002)
	7	Physicians (per 100,000 people)
	50	Population undernourished (% of total)
	1.6	HIV prevalence (% of population ages 15–49) ^a
	-2.4	Per capita food production (avg. annual growth rate 1990–2003) ^b
DEBT	1.5 billion	Long-term debt (DOD) ^a
	10.9	Total debt service (% of exports of goods, services and income) ^a
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE	304,163,149.90	2005 Total Donor Disbursements (multilateral and bilateral) ^c
	244,027,607.08	2004 Total Donor Disbursements (multilateral and bilateral) ^c
	257,617,819.64	2003 Total Donor Disbursements (multilateral and bilateral) ^c
	55.7	ODA per capita (2003)
	0.4	Net foreign direct investment flows (% of GDP)
	DFID, EU, US	Top 3 donors ^c
21.61	% of total ODA provided by top donor ^c	

All figures are in US dollars.

Sources: Human Development Report 2005, ^aThe World Bank Sierra Leone Data Profile 2006, ^bFAO Compendium of Food and Agriculture Indicators 2005, ^cUNIOSIL figures from DACO.