

LESSONS LEARNED FROM UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING EXPERIENCES IN SIERRA LEONE



**Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit
Department of Peacekeeping Operations
September 2003**

The United Nations logo, featuring a world map centered on the Atlantic Ocean, surrounded by a laurel wreath, is faintly visible in the background.

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“Conflict in Africa poses a major challenge to United Nations efforts designed to ensure global peace, prosperity and human rights for all. Although the United Nations was intended to deal with inter-State warfare, it is being required more and more often to respond to intra-State instability and conflict. In those conflicts the main aim, increasingly, is the destruction not just of armies but of civilians and entire ethnic groups. Preventing such wars is no longer a matter of defending States or protecting allies. It is a matter of defending humanity itself.”

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the
Organization: The causes of conflict and the promotion
of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa
(A/52/871-S/1998/318)



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POLITICAL

Introduction

Three years ago the United Nations (UN) involvement in Sierra Leone was under attack, literally and figuratively. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was being humiliated by a rebel army of young thugs called the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Corporal Foday Sankoh. Hundreds of UN peacekeepers were taken hostage, disarmed and even disrobed by the RUF. The international and local press carried daily condemnations of the UN and its inability to stop the rampage of the RUF through the country and all the way to its capital, Freetown. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's Government, which had been unable to exercise any real authority since its election in 1996, was expressing extreme disappointment at UNAMSIL's capitulation to the rebels. In 2003, the picture is quite different. Hostilities have ceased and several thousand ex-combatants have been disarmed and demobilized. The Government and people view the downsizing and eventual departure of UNAMSIL with trepidation as regional instability continues to threaten the hard-won peace in Sierra Leone.

The UN peacekeeping experience in Sierra Leone offers invaluable lessons, not only because of the later successes of the Organization, but particularly because of the trials encountered in the early stages of involvement. The command and control challenges UNAMSIL faced, as well as the problems in transitioning from a sub-regional peacekeeping operation to a UN force, the lack of adequate preparation and an attempt to implement an ambitious mandate without adequate resources resulted in a costly crisis in May 2000.

Lessons were learned from that experience. The Security Council, troop contributors, regional partners and individual Member States took swift, concerted remedial action. The assessment and adjustments made by the mission in mid-course resulted in important reforms in the management of the peacekeeping operation and a recommitment to the goals and objectives set out in its mandate by the international community. Innovative measures to enhance the operational and logistics capabilities of contingents and the training provided under bilateral agreements also contributed to the building of a robust force capable of being a credible military deterrent.

Today, there is a democratic Government in power in Freetown as a result of peaceful and fair elections that were held with UN support in May 2002. Freedom of movement has been re-established throughout the country and the Government is expanding its control over the entire territory of the country, albeit slowly. New Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) have been created and deployed to protect the country's borders. A new police force is also being trained and deployed throughout the country with international assistance. Much remains to be done, however, to ensure a lasting and sustainable peace in Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, the transformation of the country over the last three years has been a major achievement of the international community.

This report will review some of what has been achieved, despite the early problems, and recommend how they can be replicated in other peacekeeping missions. It will also try and identify what were the causes of the problems and how they can be avoided in the future.

Background to Conflict

The roots of the conflict in Sierra Leone can be found in its history, from the time the country gained independence in 1961. A brief experience in democracy in the early 1960s quickly gave way to thirty years of one-party civilian rule alternating with periods of military rule. The conflict in Sierra Leone began in March 1991, when the RUF forces launched attacks from Liberian territory into Sierra Leone to overthrow the Government of the All People's Congress (APC), headed by former President Joseph S. Momoh. This was followed in 1992 by a coup, which installed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) in power. Under international pressure and following popular uprisings calling for elections, a civilian Government was elected in March 1996 headed by President Kabbah.

The euphoria was short-lived, however, as the conflict continued giving rise to new paramilitary forces and militias, such as the Civil Defence Force (CDF), a loose coalition of traditional hunters who banded together to fight the RUF, initially in self-defence. It also spawned a new lexicon, with terms like “sobels” for soldier-rebels, rank and file of the former Sierra Leone Army (SLA) who turned into rebels. President Kabbah was displaced by a military coup led by Johnny Paul Koroma in May 1997. Koroma's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) included RUF elements in its power-sharing. The international community condemned the coup, imposed sanctions against the AFRC and called for a return to power of the democratically elected President, who was in exile in Guinea. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), already playing a military role in neighbouring Liberia, decided to extend that role to Sierra Leone and forced the AFRC/RUF out of Freetown in February 1998, reinstating President Kabbah. The international community visibly increased its support for the reinstated Government and the peace process by establishing a UN military observer mission, the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), in July 1998 with a mandate to monitor the military and security situation in the country and the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants and assist in monitoring respect for international humanitarian law. The mission was to work closely with the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the sub-regional military force led by Nigeria that was enforcing the peace.

Unlike some other conflicts, provoked by inter-ethnic or religious strife, the crisis in Sierra Leone was a product of a complex combination of internal and external factors: the nepotism and rampant corruption of those in power, erosion of State institutions, competition between various factions within the Government for control of the country's natural wealth, and external interest in destabilizing the country. The last continued to be a factor as the country plunged back into civil war as the RUF, together with the AFRC, attempted to retake Freetown in January 1999 leaving thousands dead and many more mutilated and traumatized. In May, a ceasefire was signed leading to a dialogue between

the Government and the RUF culminating in a peace agreement in Lomé. Unfortunately, Lomé's promise of peace did not materialize and the hostilities continued.

In December 1999, feeling peacekeeping fatigue, ECOMOG decided to downsize and hand over to a UN peacekeeping operation. UNAMSIL was established initially to work alongside ECOMOG, but it soon became apparent that ECOMOG would withdraw entirely and UNAMSIL would inherit its tasks. The Security Council authorized successive enlargements of UNAMSIL from an initial 6,000 troops to a final strength of 17,500. With ECOMOG gone and UNAMSIL still not up to full strength, a security vacuum was created, which the rebels exploited. New and unsure peacekeepers, reluctant to use deadly force, were taken hostage or stripped of their weapons. RUF attacks grew in boldness and frequency, culminating in the taking of up to 500 UN hostages by May 2000. Following a critical examination of what went wrong and why, the mission regrouped under new military leadership and with a revised structure and larger force. Troop contributors and key members of the Security Council rallied behind the mission, bringing pressure to bear on the rebels and their external supporters. The results were remarkable.

Peace Process and Peace Agreements

Lesson 1: The parties to a conflict must demonstrate a commitment to implementing peace accords in good faith. If good faith is absent, the response of the international community must be to act in unison with a comprehensive and coordinated effort aimed at tackling the factors contributing to the conflict.

Throughout the conflict in Sierra Leone a number of peace agreements were concluded, beginning with the Abidjan Accord of 30 November 1996 between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF following the election of President Kabbah in 1996; the Conakry Agreement of 23 October 1997 between ECOWAS and the military *junta*, the AFRC/RUF (the ECOWAS six-month peace plan); the Lomé Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999 between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF; the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement of 10 November 2000 (Abuja I) and the Abuja Ceasefire Review Agreement of 2 May 2001 (Abuja II) both between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF.

The Lomé Peace Agreement, by far the most comprehensive of the agreements that had been concluded until then, was a unique opportunity for Sierra Leone to bring an end to the conflict. The Agreement provided for a permanent cessation of hostilities; transformation of the RUF into a political party; the creation of a broad-based government of national unity; the appointment of Foday Sankoh as head of a commission for the management of strategic resources, national reconstruction and development with the status of Vice President of Sierra Leone; national elections; encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all combatants, with particular attention to the special needs of child combatants; and provisions on humanitarian, human rights and socio-economic issues, including release of prisoners and abductees, and establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission to address impunity and human rights violations. The Agreement, however, also provided for a blanket amnesty for all

combatants and collaborators, which was difficult to reconcile with the goal of ending impunity. The UN, therefore, signed the Agreement with a reservation that the amnesty could not cover international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Despite the very generous provisions, the RUF had limited intentions of honouring their commitments under Lomé. It was not until a series of military reversals and concerted political pressure of the international community acting in unison that the “spoilers” were reigned in. The RUF complied with the Abuja I and II Agreements only after it had been forced to do so, both politically and militarily, by a strengthened UNAMSIL, the Government’s restructured armed forces and the military threat posed by the “over-the-horizon” forces of the United Kingdom (UK). Ill-advised RUF attacks against Guinean territory provoked a blistering reaction from the Guineans that hurt the RUF strength and morale. Sanctions against Liberian President Charles Taylor and the international ban on “blood diamonds” also cut off sources of revenue and support to the rebels.

Lesson 2: A coordinated strategy in support of a peace process by the international community is vital for its success. The coordinated strategy should be developed through mechanisms such as a “contact group” or “group of friends”. A key Member State, particularly a permanent member of the Security Council, can play a useful lead role in developing the strategy.

The international response to the crisis in Sierra Leone, particularly after May 2000, benefited from close coordination among key Member States, such as the ECOWAS States, United Kingdom (UK), United States (US) and the UN. This coordination was facilitated by the establishment in 1998 of a Contact Group on Sierra Leone, which functioned both in New York and in Freetown. The Group provided a forum to bring together representatives of ECOWAS, UN, donors and troop contributing countries (TCCs) to set priorities, identify common objectives and develop a coordinated strategy to support the peace process. This Group regularly shared information and exchanged ideas on how best to support UNAMSIL in the implementation of its mandate and gave coherence to the international efforts in Sierra Leone.

The lead role played by the UK in focussing the Council’s attention on the crisis in Sierra Leone cannot be underestimated. In contrast to the peace process in Liberia, which had no godfathers in the Security Council, Sierra Leone received attention, support and resources from key Member States. Since it had an active engagement on the ground, the UK understood the realities of the fluid conflict environment and was able to encourage Security Council consideration and approval of increased UNAMSIL force strength and other key elements of its mandate. The UK worked together with ECOWAS on political resolution of the conflict, promoted international support for sanctions against Liberia and facilitated action by other countries against international arms traffickers.

Lesson 3: Targeted sanctions are an important means of applying pressure on “spoilers” of peace processes and could be instrumental in facilitating the search for

a peaceful settlement. Targeted sanctions should be part of the coordinated international strategy.

Following the military coup in May 1997 that brought the AFRC to power, ECOWAS imposed sanctions against the military *junta* restricting petroleum products, arms imports and international travel of AFRC and RUF leaders. The ECOWAS sanctions were supported by the Security Council, which on 8 October 1997, imposed an international embargo on weapons and other military equipment and petroleum and petroleum products bound for Sierra Leone, authorizing ECOWAS to enforce the embargo. On 7 March 2001, noting the role played by the Government of President Charles Taylor of Liberia in actively supporting armed rebel groups in neighbouring countries, particularly the RUF in Sierra Leone, the Security Council imposed targeted sanctions against him and his top associates. The sanctions against Liberia included an arms embargo, a ban on import of all rough diamonds from Liberia and on foreign travel of senior members of the Liberian Government. The sanctions were renewed in 2003 and expanded to include a ban on timber from Liberia, which had also been shown to fuel arms purchases and support for mercenary groups in neighbouring countries. The sanctions undoubtedly hurt Taylor's regime and his ability to support insurrection in the region.

The Security Council also expressed its readiness to consider ways of getting other States in the region to cease military support for armed groups in neighbouring countries, to prevent armed individuals and groups from using their territory to prepare and commit attacks on neighbouring countries, and to refrain from any actions that might contribute to further destabilization of the situation in the region. In 2000, the Security Council established a panel of experts to study the linkages between the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the conflicts in the West African region. The panel reported to the Council that the conflicts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire had regional dimensions with refugees and armed fighters spilling across borders. Armed youths from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and now Côte d'Ivoire, accustomed to a life of conflict, banditry and lawlessness, had joined armed groups in Liberia and in western Côte d'Ivoire, with intentions of moving on to other regional countries. Combined, they pose new risks of a vicious cycle of violence in the region. In its analysis, the panel also concluded that the Liberian Government had obtained weapons, in violation of the embargo, in Serbia in 2002 and suspected that preparations were ongoing for trans-shipment of 50 tons of Serbian military equipment from Belgrade to Liberia via Kinshasa, using an end-user certificate from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the longer term, curbing the illegal traffic in arms, particularly small arms, in West Africa needs support from the international community, which should include measures to help reinforce the ECOWAS adopted moratorium on small arms.

Lesson 4: In a conflict with a regional dimension, a regional strategy should be adopted from the start. The establishment of consultative mechanisms between the Security Council, the regional or sub-regional organization, troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat, the peacekeeping operation and the national authorities can facilitate the definition and implementation of the strategy.

From the start, when the RUF launched their attacks from Liberian territory with support from Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), the conflict in Sierra Leone had a regional dimension. Recognizing this, ECOWAS played a major political, military and diplomatic role to prevent further destabilization of the sub-region. Efforts by ECOWAS were supported by the Security Council and the Secretary-General. On the ground, the peacekeeping mission's senior leadership maintained close contacts with ECOWAS ambassadors in Freetown. All three special envoys/representative of the Secretary-General maintained personal contacts with regional leaders to ensure commonality of purpose and strategy. To foster cooperation and intensify the dialogue between the Government of Sierra Leone, ECOWAS and the UN, a coordination mechanism on Sierra Leone was established in July 2000, which would operate on both political and operational levels. ECOWAS also appointed a Special Representative for Sierra Leone resident in Freetown, who remained in close contact with the peacekeeping operation.

The Security Council's endorsement and strong support for the measures proposed by ECOWAS for Sierra Leone, particularly ECOMOG, were an important contribution to the development of a joint strategy. A Security Council mission, comprising all the members of the Council, which visited Sierra Leone and a number of countries in the sub-region from 9 to 14 October 2000 also enhanced the development of a coordinated strategy. The mission concluded that the highest priority should be given to the coordination of a comprehensive strategy with clear objectives to address the different aspects of the crisis in Sierra Leone and its underlying causes. The mission also stressed that no lasting progress could be made in Sierra Leone without comprehensive action to tackle the instability in the West African sub-region, particularly in the Mano River basin.

Throughout the Sierra Leone crisis, ECOWAS demonstrated its political willingness to participate in peacekeeping in the sub-region, both through ECOMOG and the UN peacekeeping operation. In December 2000, ECOWAS decided to deploy an interposition force of 1,796 troops along the borders of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia to monitor the border areas, neutralize irregular armed groups, facilitate movement of persons, goods and services, ensuring security of refugees and displaced persons and creating an environment propitious for humanitarian assistance. Despite endorsement by the Security Council, the force was never deployed due to lack of resources.

Lesson 5: In a “failed” State, there is a direct link between the illegal exploitation of valuable mineral resources and the conflict. Such exploitation fuels illegal weapons supplies and provides an incentive for “spoilers” of peace processes to continue the conflict. Tackling this phenomenon requires innovative global measures.

Although control over the diamond producing areas may not have been a primary objective of the RUF, initially, illegal mining of diamonds and gold soon became the chief source of income for the rebel force. Control over resource-rich areas became a

central element of the RUF's strategy and the illegal exploitation of gold and diamonds continued to fuel the conflict. The panel of experts studying the linkages between illegal exploitation of Sierra Leone diamonds and arms, which was established by the Security Council in 2000, concluded that diamonds were a primary source of income for the RUF and that the bulk of the RUF diamonds were smuggled from Sierra Leone through Liberia with the knowledge and involvement of key government officials. Diamonds were also smuggled out of the country by other paramilitary groups. The panel also concluded that weapons supplied to some neighbouring countries had been systematically diverted for use in the conflict in Sierra Leone.

Dealing effectively with illegal diamonds and weapons smuggling required innovative measures, both regional and international. The involvement of diamond mining and processing countries as well as stricter controls over the international supply of weapons was necessary. The launching of the Kimberley Process (a certification scheme for internationally traded rough diamonds that established a voluntary system of controlling the sale of diamonds from conflict areas) is an example of such an innovative approach. The Kimberley process sets international standards for national certification schemes to be implemented by each participant country through national legislation. The process requires the commitment of both Governments and industry and is aimed at protecting the interests of the legitimate diamond trade and producing countries that rely heavily on such income for national development. By effectively controlling the trade in rough diamonds through national certification schemes, the trade in polished diamonds will be more transparent and secure, thereby giving consumers the confidence that the diamonds they buy are clean. The initial focus of the Kimberley process is to ensure that the certification scheme is implemented in full at the national level by each participant. This will pave the way for systematic monitoring of adherence to the scheme by all participants.

Very rough estimates of the volume of RUF diamonds, as assessed by the expert panel, varied widely from \$25 million per annum to \$125 million. Since the introduction of the Kimberley certification scheme aimed at curbing the illegal trade in diamonds mined in rebel-held areas, Sierra Leone exported a total of 132,394 carats earning \$17.34 million between October 2000 and May 2001. Under the scheme, all diamonds exported have to be accompanied by a certificate of origin signed by officials of the mineral resources ministry and the central bank. Regaining full control of the diamond mining industry is key to a sustainable peace in Sierra Leone. UNAMSIL's deployment to diamond-producing areas was a priority for this reason. Although UNAMSIL provided security in the diamond-producing areas, it did not have a mandate to intervene in any way in economic activity, whether legal or illegal. This remains the responsibility of the Government. Yet, the Government has not been able to bring diamond-mining activities under its full control, although efforts are being made to develop a commercial licensing system.

Lesson 6: In dealing with parties to a peace processes, the strategy for success may be a dual-track approach combining dialogue and negotiation on the one hand with

credible military deterrence to close off the option of war on the other. The international community must be unanimous in its condemnation of “spoilers”.

After the crisis in May 2000, UNAMSIL implemented a well-conceived strategy of negotiation and the progressive demonstration of deterrence, gradually deploying throughout the country. UNAMSIL’s deployment in strength gave concrete meaning to the concept of robust peacekeeping, which was intended not to wage war, but to close the option of war. A clear message was sent that the use of force was no longer a viable strategy for the “spoilers” of the peace process. A robust peacekeeping deployment is an effective deterrent to parties who might otherwise return to fighting.

In addition to credible military deterrence, it is important to maintain continuous dialogue with all parties to the conflict and gain their confidence and trust. This proved essential to getting the RUF to adhere to the ceasefire agreements and subsequent disarmament and demobilization. Despite the RUF’s hostile attitude, UNAMSIL worked hard to keep open the lines of communication with the rebels through “contact groups”, consisting of UNAMSIL military and civilian representatives and the RUF, to build confidence. Five regions were identified for such contact group meetings, which were instrumental in building trust at different levels of the RUF. UNAMSIL also built confidence with the CDF, who were also targeted for disarmament and demobilization.

The mission also used the tripartite mechanism, which comprised the Government, RUF and UNAMSIL, as a forum for resolving outstanding issues. Although the mechanism was established to resolve DDR related issues, it developed into a useful mechanism to discuss all issues of concern. The mission also held biweekly meetings with the Government at the highest levels. Securing the support and taking advantage of the potential of all national political actors, civil society movements, supported by robust public information programmes, countering often critical and sometimes misinformed international media were all important elements in promoting the peace process.

Mandate and Means

Lesson 7: The mandate of a multidimensional peacekeeping operation should be clear, realistic and robust, when necessary, and be supported by adequate means for its implementation. The Security Council should maintain sufficient flexibility in its approach to respond to changing circumstances on the ground and be willing to adjust a mission’s mandate accordingly.

The initial concept of operations for UNAMSIL was to cooperate with ECOMOG in providing support for the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement. A troop strength of 6,000 was authorized by Security Council resolution 1270 of 22 October 1999 to assist in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) plan and to monitor adherence to the ceasefire. It was also to encourage the parties to create confidence-building mechanisms and support their functioning. It was to ensure the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to provide support, as requested, for elections. In paragraph

14 of the resolution, the Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, authorized UNAMSIL to take necessary measures to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel, and, within its capabilities, to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, taking into account the responsibilities of the Government of Sierra Leone and ECOMOG.

It was soon apparent that the UN forces would have to take on far more than they initially expected as ECOMOG downsizing turned into ECOMOG withdrawal. The authorized strength of a force of 6,000 would clearly be insufficient for the tasks. It is also widely recognized that the pressure exercised by key members of the Security Council to speed up UNAMSIL's deployment in late 1999, early 2000 proved to be counter-productive, as the mission found itself spread thin on the ground and unable to meet emerging challenges, in particular, RUF attacks and intransigence. In one instance, RUF seized a large number of weapons, ammunition and vehicles from an UNAMSIL contingent without any active resistance. RUF also impeded the freedom of movement of UNAMSIL personnel and refused to cooperate with the mission. In addition, rebels continued to detain UN peacekeepers or take them hostage and shot at UNAMSIL patrols.

UNAMSIL's negative experience of the first few months made it necessary to introduce a number of revisions to the mandate, beginning with the strength of the force. In its resolution 1289 of 7 February 2000, the Security Council authorized a force of 11,100. Acting explicitly under Chapter VII, it also authorized the mission to provide security at key locations and Government buildings, in particular Freetown, important intersections and major airports, including Lungi airport and to facilitate the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian assistance along specified thoroughfares. It was to provide security at DDR sites and to guard weapons, ammunition and other military equipment collected from ex-combatants and to assist in their subsequent disposal or destruction. It affirmed that UNAMSIL could take necessary action to discharge its mandate.

Responding to a rapidly deteriorating situation in May 2000, the Security Council increased the force strength to 13,000 by resolution 1299 of 19 May and called upon all States in a position to do so to provide further support to UNAMSIL. Following the crisis of May 2000, the Council by its resolution 1313 of 4 August 2000 further redefined and strengthened UNAMSIL's mandate by authorizing the mission "to deter and where necessary, decisively counter the threat of RUF attacks by responding robustly to any hostile action or threat of imminent and direct use of force." Subsequently, the Council's resolution 1346 of 30 March 2001 increased UNAMSIL's authorized strength to 17,500.

By its prompt actions, the Security Council demonstrated the necessary flexibility to revise UNAMSIL's mandate as needed, when needed.

Exit Strategy

Lesson 8: A peacekeeping mission needs an exit strategy linked to fulfilling the core objectives of its mandate. If the core objective is the restoration of a secure

environment, then benchmarks ensuring the sustainability of a secure environment can be set as an indication of exit. A national electoral process may not be an exit point if security is still unsustainable.

The Sierra Leone experience was educated and informed by the lessons from previous UN engagements in peacekeeping, where elections marked the end of the UN peacekeeping engagement whether or not they indeed led to long-term stability. Most obvious was the lesson from Liberia where the UN had overseen an election that led to Charles Taylor assuming power, who had little intention of respecting principles of democratic governance. For UNAMSIL, the UN devised an exit strategy linked closely to the core reasons for its deployment: the cessation of conflict, the extension of State authority throughout the country, national control over revenue sources such as diamond and gold mining, etc. The exit strategy is also closely connected to the security situation in the sub-region, particularly developments in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The objective of the phased drawdown is to conduct a gradual and deliberate transfer of responsibility for security in Sierra Leone from UNAMSIL to the Government in a manner that gives the latter the opportunity to build its capacity and enables it to sustain the prevailing stable conditions. The benchmarks for exit include building the capacity of the national army and police to maintain security; the completion of the reintegration of ex-combatants; restoration of Government control over diamond mining; consolidation of State authority; and regional security-related developments.

ROLE OF KEY STATES

Lead Nation Role

Lesson 1: A lead nation with adequate resources and political will, as well as the capacity to deploy well-equipped and prepared military forces quickly and convincingly, can be crucial for the credibility of a peace process.

In Sierra Leone two countries have played a lead role, politically and militarily, in support of the Sierra Leone peace process. Nigeria and the UK, individually and in concert, have been primarily responsible for moving ahead the peace process, especially in times of crisis. Nigeria played a lead role in the ECOMOG engagement in Sierra Leone. Without the political and military support of Nigeria there may have been no such ECOMOG involvement. Nigeria lost men and money in Sierra Leone but stayed engaged, even though the involvement was increasingly unpopular at home. ECOMOG, which was predominantly Nigerian, succeeded in holding back rebel advances in several places, including Freetown, and was a credible and feared military force.

Similarly, the UK has been a high profile advocate of international action in Sierra Leone and has backed its words with money and military forces. During the crisis of May 2000, UK forces mounted a muscular and successful military operation deploying a battalion plus naval and other assets to Freetown to ensure the evacuation of British citizens, to secure Lungi Airport (allowing UNAMSIL to bring in reinforcements) and to assist UNAMSIL in creating a security cordon around Freetown. The operation built confidence among the people that the international community and the UN were serious about helping them. It also successfully instilled fear in the hearts of the RUF at a time when their attacks against the UN were becoming increasingly brazen.

The UK has also provided short-term training and equipment for 14,000 members of the new RSLAF, including 2,000 former RUF and CDF combatants and arranged for RSLAF units deployment to border areas to counter external threats. The UK has provided military advice to President Kabbah, established democratically accountable command and control structures for the RSLAF and the reformed Ministry of Defence. The UK maintained a reduced military presence (some 130 personnel) for a military assistance and training project, which provided follow-on training and advice for the RSLAF. The UK also launched a comprehensive assistance programme for the Sierra Leone police force and helped it deploy to previously rebel-held areas as soon as they were secured by UNAMSIL, as a first step towards re-establishing State authority and rule of law.

The UK intervention gave UNAMSIL breathing space to regroup, recover credibility and reassert its presence. UK military forces also conducted a rescue operation to free colleagues kidnapped by ex-SLA elements. After the intervention in May 2000, UK promised a deterrent “over-the horizon” military option and demonstrated that commitment through highly visible “muscle flexing” military exercises that acted as a potent reminder of British capability to “spoilers”. The UK also seconded military staff officers to key positions in UNAMSIL’s military structure to improve the coordination

between UNAMSIL and the UK military. Politically, the UK Government was instrumental in lobbying troop contributors for more and better prepared troops. High profile visits by the British Government, particularly the Foreign Secretary and other senior officials reflected their determination to intervene and to help bring peace to Sierra Leone. The UK also provided crucial financial and technical support for the DDR programme, elections, governance (they helped set up an independent anti-corruption commission), transitional justice issues and support for the rule of law.

However, there are some drawbacks to having a lead nation play a vital role, especially if it is operating outside of the UN peacekeeping mission. If the perspective of the lead nation differs from that of the UN mission, it may lead to unilateral action being taken by the lead nation without coordination with the UN mission. In Sierra Leone, the UK perspective, especially regarding the strategy to be used to influence the rebels and the use of military force against them, differed from that of UNAMSIL. This sometimes led to conflicting messages being sent to the Government of Sierra Leone and detracted from the common, coordinated international approach that was vital to the peace process.

Role of ECOWAS

Lesson 2: Regional and sub-regional mechanisms and arrangements for conflict resolution and security can play a critical role in peace processes by developing a coordinated regional strategy and leading the international response. These mechanisms should be developed and supported, both with material and technical support, as an effective means of dealing with crises.

The role of ECOWAS in the resolution of the Sierra Leone crisis and in the development of a regional strategy for achieving peace has already been highlighted earlier in this report. From the outset, the peace process in Sierra Leone was led by ECOWAS. In addition to deploying ECOMOG, ECOWAS imposed sanctions against the military *junta* after the 1997 coup. It established a Committee of Four on Sierra Leone, consisting of Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, to assist with the reinstatement of the democratically elected Government. Following the elections in Liberia, President Taylor asked to join and it became a Committee of Five. The inclusion of the Taylor Government, who was actively engaged in supporting the rebels, demonstrated some of the limitations to developing a unified strategy within the Committee of Five. During the tenure of Togo as Chairman of ECOWAS, the Committee included Togo and became the Committee of Six.

ECOWAS negotiated a six-month peace plan with the AFRC for the return of President Kabbah to power and when the AFRC did not respect its obligations under that plan, used military force to reinstate him. President Kabbah returned to Freetown accompanied by ECOWAS leaders to demonstrate the sub-regional community's support for democracy in Sierra Leone. Following the May 2000 crisis, ECOWAS again led the effort to jumpstart the peace process. ECOWAS leaders intervened personally to secure the release of UN hostages taken by the RUF. ECOWAS political pressure on the RUF

convinced the rebel group to replace Foday Sankoh as their leader, since he had lost credibility as a reliable interlocutor in peace negotiations.

ECOWAS also took the lead in encouraging cooperation among the countries of the Mano River Union when it was obvious that tensions were high among the members. In April 2001, a mediation committee was set up comprising the Presidents of Mali, Nigeria and Togo to encourage the dialogue between the Heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Abuja II agreement included the so-called “Kambia formula”, under which the RUF agreed to withdraw from Kambia district on the border with Guinea and allowing the RSLAF to deploy along the border to stop cross-border attacks. This stabilized a potentially volatile area and allowed UNAMSIL to exploit the formula to get DDR restarted in Kambia.

Nigeria’s peacekeeping commitment in Sierra Leone was a serious drain on its resources that the country could ill afford. Despite repeated requests by Nigeria to the international community for logistical, financial and other support for ECOMOG to continue its peacekeeping effort in Sierra Leone, this assistance was limited and slow in coming. The international community did not respond quickly and effectively to support ECOMOG’s operations in Sierra Leone. As a result, Nigeria’s peacekeeping fatigue contributed to the ECOWAS decision to withdraw from Sierra Leone earlier than planned and without a phased handover to UNAMSIL.

CIVIL AFFAIRS

Extension of State Authority

Lesson 1: In rebuilding a “failed” State, the extension of State authority throughout the national territory is a crucial element for the establishment of sustainable peace. Recognition of and support for this objective should be provided from an early stage of the international involvement.

Extension of State authority is a crucial short-term and long-term objective in a peace process. In Sierra Leone, it was necessary for the holding of national elections, for reliable interlocutors to deal with donors and other partners in the implementation of reintegration and other assistance programmes and to build confidence among the population in the peace process.

A civil affairs component was established in UNOMSIL with the intention of assisting with the phased reintegration of the members of the RUF, ex-SLA and CDF into civil society and to liaise with local and provincial authorities on matters relating to economic reconstruction and investment and to monitor compliance with international law governing compensation for incapacitated war victims. These provisions were part of the implementation and monitoring of the Lomé Peace Agreement. It soon became obvious that the Lomé accord would not hold and security would remain a paramount concern. The Government had little control outside of Freetown and the ability of the civil affairs component to deploy was limited to areas that were secure. With the increased deployment of UNAMSIL and the growing return of security throughout the country, the civil affairs component shifted its focus to assisting the Government in its efforts to reinstate its authority throughout the country. Progress was hampered by the complete collapse of infrastructure to support State administration. The civil service, too, was almost completely decimated, with former civil servants seeking employment outside the country or with international bodies or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Extension of State authority includes the functioning of an effective judicial system run on democratic principles. The Sierra Leone judicial system continues to be in need of considerable support, both in terms of infrastructure and human resources.

The civil affairs component focussed on assisting in the restoration of state authority through advocacy, advice and guidance to government officials and traditional leaders to enhance the rule of law throughout the country. It also identified projects for reconstruction and rehabilitation of public infrastructure using UNDP resources and managed the UNAMSIL Trust Fund, pre-screening and approving projects and monitoring their implementation. It collaborated with various national bodies for DDR, rehabilitation and reconstruction and peace consolidation. It also supported civil society organizations involved in peacemaking and peace-building and provided assistance for the conduct of national and local elections.

Deployment of civil affairs staff outside of Freetown was not very well coordinated with the military component. Since the deployment of civil affairs staff was dependent on the security situation, the military and civilian deployments could have been better coordinated and developed, allowing for quick deployments of multidisciplinary civil affairs teams alongside military deployments. This may have facilitated the eventual return of State authority to the hinterland. The multidisciplinary civilian teams would have provided a temporary UN presence in the newly accessible areas, encouraging a return to normal life. As it happened, the UN military presence acted as the de facto regional administrators, maintaining law and order and providing basic services.

Good Governance

Lesson 2: Accountability and transparency by national authorities are hallmarks of good governance. State authorities should be encouraged to demonstrate their capacity for such accountability and international support for the peace process should be pegged to demonstrable benchmarks of good governance.

Corruption and nepotism have plagued successive Sierra Leone administrations for decades. The lack of mechanisms to address governance issues in the country as a whole is a matter of concern. District administrators and local government representatives lack necessary managerial skills and commitment to their functions. There is little accountability for revenue collected and together with widespread corruption and lack of transparency in functioning of State affairs constitute major challenges to the restoration and extension of State authority in Sierra Leone. The rebuilding and professionalization of the civil service needs urgent attention.

The international community can assist in building capacity for good governance and in demanding it of elected officials. The UK Government, which is providing budgetary support to the Sierra Leone Government, has stipulated such benchmarks for good governance in a framework agreement. In theory, the budgetary support will not be released if the benchmarks are not met. The UK has also assisted in the establishment of an anti-corruption commission to help root out endemic corruption. The international community should support such initiatives.

Role of Civil Society

Lesson 3: The involvement of civil society in demanding accountability and in decision-making is also important and efforts should be made to encourage it. Various elements of civil society should be encouraged to broaden their participation in the peace process.

Sierra Leone has a strong tradition of civil society involvement in political processes. Women's organizations and networks have played an important role in demanding democratic and fair government and are active in national reconciliation. These groups have great potential to advance the peace-building process, through community initiatives. The recent emergence of youth groups, which are being seen as a threat to

stability and security, is another example of a vocal and active civil society. While the youth groups do pose a potential security threat, they could also be used for productive community development and reconciliation projects. A generation of young people in Sierra Leone have seen nothing but war and misery and have had little or no educational opportunities. It is important that their needs are addressed and their voices heard.

DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

Background

The legal framework for DDR in Sierra Leone was based on successive peace agreements and Security Council resolutions. Although both the Abidjan (1996) and Conakry (1997) peace agreements contained provisions for DDR, they were not implemented as the hostilities continued. The turning point for the DDR process was in 1998 after ECOMOG overthrew the military regime of the AFRC in February 1998 and restored the Government of President Kabbah to power. The first DDR programme was established to demobilize combatants and elements of the SLA who surrendered to ECOMOG. The Government of Sierra Leone also decided to establish a National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) as the institutional arrangement through which the programme would be managed.

The international community demonstrated its support by establishing a UN military observer mission, UNOMSIL, to assist in the disarmament process. This phase (Phase I) of the DDR was short-lived, however, as the rebels continued hostilities, launching a major offensive in December 1998 to retake Freetown. The disarmed rebels who had surrendered were camped at Lungi and were moved to the prison in Freetown as the security situation deteriorated. This added to the rebels distaste for disarmament and many rejoined the rebels when Freetown fell on 6 January.

The Lomé Peace Agreement, signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF on 7 July 1999, also contained a number of provisions on DDR:

- Disarmament and demobilization of combatants of the RUF, CDF, the SLA and paramilitary groups was to commence within six weeks of the signing of the agreement;
- The SLA was to be restricted to their barracks and their arms to be stored under the surveillance of a neutral peacekeeping force comprising UNOMSIL and ECOMOG who was to monitor the DDR process and provide security guarantees to all combatants;
- The international community was requested to provide the necessary financial and technical resources for DDR; and
- Particular attention was to be accorded to the issue of child soldiers, with resources to be mobilized to address their special needs.

Since ECOMOG had been part of the fighting, the RUF no longer trusted them to act as a neutral force and were unwilling to disarm to them. To assist in the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement, the Security Council established UNAMSIL, as the neutral peacekeeping force. The UN was to be more actively monitoring the disarmament process, with ECOMOG providing security. The UN mission was to assist the Government in the implementation of the DDR plan by establishing a monitoring presence at key locations throughout Sierra Leone, including at disarmament/reception centres and demobilization centres. After a delay of several months (the six-week

timeframe was clearly unrealistic), the DDR process finally started again (Phase II) in November 1999 with joint support from the World Bank and DFID. This phase was designed to collect and destroy voluntarily surrendered weapons and to demobilize ex-combatants prior to reintegration into civilian life.

However, the departure of ECOMOG troops even before UNAMSIL was able to deploy fully created a security vacuum that the RUF exploited fully. UNAMSIL troops were spread thinly across the country leaving them vulnerable to attack, which occurred at the reception centres in Magburaka and Makeni in the northern sector of the country. The DDR process stalled again, although Phase II succeeded in demobilizing 18,000 combatants before hostilities broke out again in April 2000. Only after Foday Sankoh was removed as a player in the peace process did the process move forward resulting in the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement of November 2000. The May 2001 review of the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement initiated the resumption of the DDR programme (Phase III). A joint committee, comprising the Government, RUF and UNAMSIL was established to oversee the process. Modalities for the implementation of the disarmament and demobilization components were worked out by a tripartite meeting held on 15 May 2001 in Freetown.

The implementation of this final phase of the DDR plan was bolstered by the support of the international community and a reinvigorated and strengthened UNAMSIL. With an expanded (17,500 authorized strength) and motivated force, the mission was able to deploy across the country, provide security and a credible military deterrent in support of the DDR process. The strategy of closing off the military option, while maintaining a dialogue with the rebels led to a successful disarmament and demobilization process which ended in January 2002.

Over three phases and four years, 72,500 combatants were disarmed and demobilized, and 42,500 weapons were collected and destroyed.

DDR in the Peace Process

Lesson 1: DDR is a vital catalyst in a peace process, but it can only be successful if the parties to the conflict demonstrate their desire to respect the terms of a ceasefire and a peace agreement. The deployment of a neutral military force with credible deterrent capabilities is necessary to provide security and build confidence in the DDR process.

Lesson 2: A peace agreement, involving all warring parties, should spell out as clearly as possible the details of the DDR process and the respective obligations and responsibilities of all those involved. The international community must support the peace agreement and the DDR programme from the outset, particularly the political, financial and technical needs of the programme.

The main reason for success of the disarmament and demobilization process in Sierra Leone throughout the checkered course of its implementation was the political will by all parties to see it succeed. When the political will was absent, the process stalled. The

deployment of a strengthened and determined UNAMSIL force was also a factor in encouraging disarmament and demobilization by providing security and discouraging a resumption of hostilities.

The engagement of the international community was vital, both at the political and technical level. The Abuja Ceasefire Agreement contained compliance benchmarks that also brought pressure to bear on the parties to respect their obligations. The UK provided political clout, military muscle and financial support to keep the DDR process on track. The political pressure was most effective when the international community was speaking with one voice. On the financial side, the World Bank took the lead in formulating a common framework for DDR nationwide, spelling out the links between the different phases of DDR and within which all the stakeholders were to work. The World Bank also established the Multi-Donor Trust Fund in late 1999 designed to facilitate broad participation of partner countries in the DDR programme, although the actual fund-raising and disbursement of funds were more laborious and costly than expected. The Financial Management and Procurement Unit established by the World Bank provided accountability and transparency with regard to financial transactions, which was necessary to encourage donors to contribute.

Planning and Coordination for DDR

Lesson 3: Planning for DDR must take into account the technical, human resources and, above all, financial implications of the entire process and must be flexible enough to adapt to a changing political environment.

Lesson 4: All parties must be fully involved in the design and implementation of DDR so there is a national ownership of the process. There must be a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders.

The Government established the NCDDR as an independent body to govern the DDR process. This institutional arrangement was key to the success of the process as it provided national policy guidance and strategy on various technical matters, coordinated all government institutions in support of the programme and provided national ownership of the process. The Executive Secretariat of NCDDR, which actually managed the DDR process, was responsible for overall programme planning, coordination and implementation. In addition, to the main office in Freetown, the Executive Secretariat established five regional reintegration offices that were responsible for information-sharing and counselling, administration of reintegration assistance, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination with the National Commission for Social Action (NACSA), which was responsible for reintegration assistance programmes. The Executive Secretariat used a set of guiding principles to encourage the participation of combatants in the DDR process, including: “We commit to deliver if you agree to participate.” The NCDDR was most effective when it was truly national and all parties – the Government, RUF and UN – took an active part in the working committees.

Lesson 5: A national policy supported by a common framework and institutional arrangement is essential to have all actors work in a coordinated fashion towards common goals and objectives of the DDR process. The development of an integrated operational plan for DDR is a prerequisite for effective implementation.

UNAMSIL assisted in drafting a detailed joint operational plan for disarmament and demobilization, which outlined the implementation framework and included a manual for the disarmament and demobilization of adult and child combatants. As a significant part of the DDR programme implementation was to be contracted out, a list of criteria was established for participation. Participants included local and international NGOs as well as UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies, line ministries and private sector institutions. All were required to demonstrate a good track record of technical and functional expertise and to demonstrate a proven record of sound financial management. In addition, they were to obtain security clearance from UNAMSIL.

Lesson 6: Information campaigns should accompany the planning of a DDR programme so that information can be communicated to all parties on eligibility criteria, encampment, reinsertion benefits, military reintegration and other reintegration options.

Lesson 7: Reliable data on numbers of combatants is essential for good planning, therefore, there should be an emphasis on early data collection capacity to avoid potentially disastrous demands on the programme at a later stage.

Disarmament

Lesson 8: Security for disarmament sites and disarmed ex-combatants is essential to build confidence and encourage disarmament to take place. Personnel providing security to such sites must be fully briefed on what is expected.

Lesson 9: A precise timetable specifying sites and dates needs to be developed to ensure an appropriate balance between logistical and political/security considerations.

Initially, disarmament sites in Sierra Leone were not only highly centralized but also poorly secured which made them unattractive both to combatants and personnel manning them. Over time, the increased UN military presence helped to improve the security conditions of the sites. This allowed for the establishment of additional disarmament sites closer to beneficiary concentrations, which shortened the time span for the disarmament process. By all accounts, the presence of peacekeeping troops to secure the disarmament sites as well as the presence of neutral UN military observers to oversee the disarmament process was critical to the success of the disarmament phase.

Lesson 10: Eligibility criteria for disarmament must balance operational realities with the need to collect as many weapons as possible.

The initial eligibility criteria for combatants to enter into the programme were based on the principle of “one person, one gun”, except for child combatants, who were always exempted from the gun requirement. The policy was intended to help individuals rather than groups of ex-combatants. This policy did not succeed as it was seen by the RUF commanders as being too exclusive, and concessions were made for crew weapons, radio operators and auxiliary groups. This policy of group disarmament proved more effective and efficient in disarming significant numbers of combatants, but allowed rebel commanders a certain level of discretion as to whom they included in a group. As numbers of disarmed people no longer had to match numbers of weapons handed in, the DDR programme was forced to include more than the probable number of combatants. It also allowed for a large number of weapons to remain potentially in circulation, particularly the weapons that were seized from UN peacekeepers, ECOMOG and weapons provided by the UK to the Government of Sierra Leone, most of which were not recovered.

Lesson 11: Disarmament must take place before combatants enter demobilization areas. There must be a weapon/ammunition expert at every disarmament point to oversee handling of often poorly maintained weapons, their disablement and storage/destruction. Weapons preferably should be destroyed on the spot for psychological effect and improved security.

The psychological importance of combatants dismantling and destroying their own weapons under their own commander was a visible sign of the end of the conflict and added to the growing confidence of the population in the peace process. Delays in the destruction of confiscated weapons in earlier phases of the disarmament process allowed for their recapture and recycling.

Demobilization

Lesson 12: Length of stay at encampment sites should be determined by balancing the need for short-term encampment and adequate preparation for reintegration. Programme assistance provided during encampment must not reinforce command structures.

Lesson 13: Reinsertion benefits provide a strong incentive to disarm and demobilize but also create expectations, which must be managed appropriately. Reinsertion benefits should be given after the demobilization process is complete and as close to reinsertion as possible to avoid the weapons-for-cash perception.

The nature of the demobilization in Sierra Leone changed over time in line with the evolving peace agreements. The demobilization sites in the first phase were set up as encampments to hold surrendered AFRC. Those conceived and constructed under Phase II were designed as medium-term rehabilitation camps to house large number of RUF ex-combatants for extended periods and to provide extensive services. Many of these facilities were overrun by the rebels during the resumed hostilities. Those that survived

the resumed hostilities ended up holding beneficiaries for much longer periods, as they could not return to their home areas still controlled by the RUF.

The acceptance of the Abuja II Agreement and the subsequent expanded deployment of UNAMSIL across the country allowed for a radical change in approach to demobilization. Rapid “rolling” disarmament and the presence of UNAMSIL throughout the country allowed ex-combatants to return to their areas of origin in safety almost immediately following disarmament. On this basis, encampment became voluntary and was reduced to a minimum to complete the administrative procedures, essentially registration and issuing ID cards. This not only put all ex-combatants on an equal footing, it also greatly reduced the cost. Another benefit was that the reinsertion grant given to ex-combatants, which had proved unpopular with donors, was now given upon returning home and was not seen as a cash-for-weapons exchange.

The downside of the rapid reinsertion of large numbers of ex-combatants meant that the reintegration programmes, although they were entirely voluntary, were overloaded and unable to accommodate all ex-combatants at once. Communities of return were also not well prepared for the return of ex-combatants. The fast-track demobilization also did not allow time for medical screening, counselling and education of ex-combatants. There was little effort spent on breaking up command structures, which persisted after demobilization, with many rebels continuing to live together and report periodically to their former commanders. They retained their communications equipment, since that was not required to be turned in during disarmament, using it to maintain contact with each other.

The role of the Executive Secretariat of the NCDDR in maintaining and managing the Management Information System and identity card production proved critical for the success of demobilization of individual ex-combatants and the programme’s ability to monitor and manage all of the programme benefits. Adequate provision of support material, such as food for ex-combatants and their dependants, can be an important factor in building confidence in the process.

Reintegration

In Sierra Leone, the main objectives of the reintegration component of the DDR programme were as follows:

- To facilitate and support the return of ex-combatants to their home communities or preferred communities of return;
- To assist the ex-combatants become productive members of their communities;
- To utilize the potential of ex-combatants for social and economic reconstruction;
- To promote social acceptance and reconciliation; and
- To reduce the fiscal impact of large defence budgets by providing alternative employment support options for demobilized ex-combatants.

Lesson 14: Commitments made under peace agreements for reinsertion benefits should be fulfilled to safeguard the credibility of the peace process. However, a balance needs to be maintained between benefits for ex-combatants and benefits to communities to encourage reconciliation.

Following the disarmament and demobilization, the registered ex-combatants received reinsertion and resettlement support. The reinsertion benefits, although controversial with some donors, served three primary objectives:

- To facilitate the return of ex-combatants to their communities by providing them with transport allowance;
- To meet the basic household needs of ex-combatants upon return to their communities; and
- To provide the NCDDR with lead-time to identify and engage agencies with the capacity to deliver reintegration programme assistance.

The ex-combatants were confronted with resentment from the host communities for their actions during the conflict. The targeted reinsertion benefits were sometimes perceived as rewarding perpetrators of violence and atrocities and often led to increased tensions between host communities and ex-combatants rather than an investment in peace and reconciliation. The Government tried to overcome these negative perceptions through community development programmes of the NACSA (formerly the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation) with funding from the World Bank and other donors. Community-based vocational training facilities run by NGOs also benefited dependents of ex-combatants, abductees, child mothers and other vulnerable groups who had not qualified for reintegration benefits.

Lesson 15: Adequate funding for reintegration programmes is vital and should be planned for and secured as early as possible to avoid delays in implementation. Resources up front will also allow for needed investments in logistics and administrative support for reintegration that can cause costly delays later on if not already in place.

Lesson 16: Viable economic opportunities for ex-combatants are the key to longer-term stability. It is important, therefore, that the Government develop and implement a national recovery strategy as early as possible in close consultation with all other partners. The international community should assist in this regard.

The NCDDR was also faced with problems related to the absorption capacity of the reintegration programme due to lack of consistent funding through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and capacity of implementing partners, which delayed the reintegration programmes considerably and left many ex-combatants waiting to be admitted. The months immediately following demobilization were the most critical for ex-combatants. Having lost their source of livelihood, there was an immediate need to assist them in their transition into a normal life. Delays in providing economic reintegration opportunities through training and options for employment are detrimental to the peace process and

disenchanted ex-combatant can present a potential threat to stability. Many remained in the areas where they were demobilized, staying with their former comrades and their commanders posing a significant security threat.

Challenges to successful reintegration were also of an economic nature. Without any significant access to micro-credit schemes and few job opportunities, any skills development training will lose its potential value to ex-combatants. The vocational training being offered by the NCDDR focused on carpentry, hairdressing, tailoring, metal-working, etc. There were limited employment opportunities for such trades. Observers in the Kono district estimated that the number of men mining for diamonds had increased threefold since demobilization began in the area. The reinsertion benefits reportedly were being used to buy basic diamond mining equipment.

UNAMSIL, UNDP and several donor governments supported stopgap projects to occupy some of the ex-combatants until long-term reintegration opportunities became available. These quick impact projects were focussed in potentially volatile areas so that a peace dividend could be seen immediately. NCDDR was also encouraged to ensure a balanced geographical spread of reintegration opportunities and to particularly target volatile areas, such as Kailahun. However, broader reintegration was severely under resourced, with several thousand registered ex-combatants still awaiting reintegration assistance. Reintegration occurred in fits and starts as the resources became available.

To deal with national recovery in a coherent manner, the UN assisted the Government in formulating a comprehensive framework and strategy for peace-building and national recovery. The strategy also provided a basis for dialogue within the UN itself during the transition phase to ensure that the achievements of UNAMSIL were sustained through longer-term programmes of capacity-building.

Special Groups

Lesson 17: Peace agreements and DDR programmes should plan for and help address the needs of vulnerable groups, such as child combatants, girls/women among the fighting forces, dependants of combatants, camp followers and abductees. The specific process applicable to each of these vulnerable groups should be clearly defined. There must be a clear definition and screening of beneficiaries for such vulnerabilities and interim care facilities for health care and psychosocial support may also be necessary. Reintegration programmes should be targeted specifically for them.

Lesson 18: All personnel involved in DDR should be trained to deal with vulnerable groups in an appropriate manner and the process for their demobilization and reintegration should be speeded up.

Lesson 19: Commanders of fighting forces also constitute a special group that need attention and programmes addressing their needs should be developed.

The Sierra Leone conflict was characterized by a high level of brutality against civilians, particularly children. Many were forcibly recruited into the fighting forces or abducted to perform other functions for the combatants. Children were used as human shields on the front lines and were indoctrinated and manipulated, including into taking intoxicating substances such as marijuana, cocaine and heroin. During the disarmament and demobilization phase, many of the children were disqualified for reinsertion benefits, either by the criteria established or by the rebel commanders themselves.

A special DDR programme for child ex-combatants was established under the leadership of UNICEF and implemented by several humanitarian organizations, including Caritas, the International Rescue Committee and Save the Children UK. Demobilized children were immediately transferred to interim care centres, where they were provided with health care services and psychosocial counselling, as well as educational and recreational activities, while family tracing and reunification was in progress. Routine health checks were undertaken, which showed that most children suffered from ailments reflecting difficult living conditions, including malaria, respiratory tract infections, skin infections and sexually transmitted infections. Many of these children suffered enormously in coming to terms with their actions in the bush. Children in the interim care centres also participated in a Rapid Response Education Programme, designed as a catch-up programme for 10-14 year olds, the primary age group of child ex-combatants. The syllabus was comprised of six modules taught over six months, after which children were able to enrol once again in formal schooling. In addition, they participated in sports, cultural and group activities.

A major challenge was to ensure that care in these centres was indeed interim and did not lead to institutional arrangements. The tracing of the families of child ex-combatants and their reunification was therefore undertaken as rapidly as possible, with tracing agencies in every district. Based on the information provided by the child, families were traced and contacts established. Families and communities were sensitised concerning the experiences of the child, and the child was brought back to the family and community. In some cases, the reunification was supported by traditional cleansing ceremonies. The core elements of the community-based reintegration programme was the provision of opportunities for education or skills training, as well as regular follow-up visits from social workers of the child protection agencies to ensure the well-being of the child. Under a community education investment programme, schools that accepted child ex-combatants received packages of learning materials benefiting all students.

The rebel commanders, too, constituted a special group. Since they had the potential to derail the process at any time, reintegration opportunities that had a higher social status had to be specifically targeted at them, including computer and entrepreneurial skills training.

MILITARY ISSUES

Background to ECOMOG and UNOMSIL

In November 1994, Chairman Valentin Strasser of the NPRC requested the Secretary-General to provide his good offices to facilitate negotiations with the RUF. In response, the Secretary-General appointed his special envoy for Sierra Leone in early 1995 to be based in Freetown who would pursue efforts to initiate a dialogue between the Government and the rebels. With the elections of 1996 and later the signing of the Abidjan Accord, which was facilitated by the UN, OAU and the Commonwealth in addition to Côte d'Ivoire, the prospects for peace in Sierra Leone looked good. The UN developed a provisional concept of operations for a small, multidimensional peacekeeping operation to support the implementation of the Abidjan Accord, which was presented to the Security Council in January 1997. Following the coup in May 1997 and the strong ECOWAS reaction to it, no action was taken on the provisional concept. At the OAU summit in Harare in June 1997 it was agreed that ECOWAS would take the lead in bringing peace to Sierra Leone. All future UN commitments in Sierra Leone followed the ECOWAS lead.

Nigerian, Guinean and Ghanaian forces were already active in Sierra Leone when ECOWAS decided, in August 1997, to officially extend ECOMOG's mandate to Sierra Leone. A total of 18 battalions and supporting units of 15,000 all ranks were projected for ECOMOG operations in Sierra Leone. Nigeria sent 11 battalions, 3 naval assets and 1 air force detachment. The Guinean contingent consisted of 2 battalions, deployed mostly along the border between Guinea and Sierra Leone. These battalions did not have their full complement of logistics units. The total strength was less than 10,000 all ranks. In addition, the air force detachment, originally provided by Ghana and located in Lungi airport, was pulled out in mid-1998. Several other ECOWAS countries were willing to participate in ECOMOG but faced financial constraints and lacked sponsorship from donors, preventing their participation in ECOMOG. The dominance of Nigeria within ECOMOG was used as a pretext by the rebels not to honour the peace accords.

The original mandate for ECOMOG was the implementation of the sanctions and embargo on the movements of members of the *junta* and on the supply of petroleum and petroleum products, military hardware and related materials. ECOMOG was also to monitor and supervise all ceasefire violations. ECOMOG's enforcement of the embargo was limited by resources available to control all land, sea and air routes into the country. After the Conakry Agreement, the role of ECOMOG was changed dramatically to further the implementation of the peace plan, which required cooperating with the *junta*. This was complicated by the lack of trust between *junta* members and ECOMOG and became irrelevant after the hostilities of early 1998 leading to the full-scale offensive by ECOMOG in February 1998. Following the restoration of the legitimate Government and the decision to deploy UNOMSIL in July 1998, ECOMOG's role changed again. The force was now tasked to establish security in the country by flushing out the remnants of the AFRC/RUF and conducting disarmament and demobilization.

The principal achievement of ECOMOG was robust action that allowed it to bring a sense of relative security to the country and to restore the legitimate Government in March 1998. ECOMOG provided a credible military deterrent and was also responsible for starting the disarmament and demobilization process in the country. Yet, ECOMOG's mission was never easy and during its two years it faced many difficulties: inadequate logistical support and no common or central logistics administration system; language differences among troops affecting command and control; no standardization of equipment, arms and ammunition; differing standards of training, doctrine and staff procedures; poor sea and airlift capabilities; and absence of vital air-to-ground support assets, particularly ground attack helicopters. In addition, command and control problems, already affected by language differences, were exacerbated by national control over contingents. Troops received instructions from national capitals that conflicted with operational instructions in-theatre. Rules of engagement also varied from one contingent to another. The logistical and financial constraints were overwhelming.

By 1999, frustrated by the lack of logistical and financial commitment from the international community in support of its peacekeeping activities in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and other ECOMOG troop contributors were feeling the strain of bearing the burden alone. At every occasion – donor conferences, political forums and bilateral meetings – the Nigeria Government underlined the logistics and other support that ECOMOG required, to little avail. In addition, ECOMOG troops on the ground were also facing an uphill military task. ECOMOG took heavy casualties in the fierce fighting of January 1999 and were able to push AFRC/RUF out of Freetown, but did not win an outright military victory against the rebels throughout the country. ECOMOG soldiers were killed and taken hostage in confrontations with the rebels. For Nigeria, the burden had become too heavy to bear politically, financially and militarily. Following the change in Government in Nigeria in 1999, the decision was made to withdraw ECOMOG.

UN-ECOMOG Cooperation

Lesson 1: As part of the initiative to build African peacekeeping capacity, the UN should seek innovative ways to actively assist a regional or sub-regional organization willing to undertake a peacekeeping effort but lacking the technical or logistical capacity to do so. The measures could include technical logistical assistance, identifying bilateral partnerships or other contractual arrangements to bridge the capacity gap.

At the political level, the UN fully supported the ECOWAS peace efforts in Sierra Leone and assisted in trying to raise funds for ECOMOG to overcome known logistical constraints. The Secretary-General convened a high-level conference to mobilize assistance for DDR, urgent humanitarian needs and logistical support for ECOMOG. However, from the military perspective, no specific mechanism was put in place for the UN to help ECOMOG in overcoming its logistical problems. The support provided by the international community was limited and ultimately led to the withdrawal of ECOMOG from Sierra Leone in late 1999-early 2000.

Lesson 2: When a UN military presence is deployed in an area where a regional or sub-regional peacekeeping force already exists, an effective liaison mechanism should be created between the two forces to ensure coordination at all levels and coherence of activities. The creation of a joint operations centre at the force headquarters, which would comprise military staff of both organizations, is recommended as well as the exchange of liaison staff.

UNOMSIL was deployed to demonstrate the support of the international community for the return of the democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone in March 1998, the ECOWAS peacekeeping initiatives, both political and military, and support for the peace process in Sierra Leone following the Abidjan and Conakry accords. The deployment was to give a much-needed impetus to the fragile peace process and to encourage disarmament of combatants by presenting a neutral observer presence, since ECOMOG was seen by the rebels as an enemy and was in fact a target of their reprisals.

Cooperation between ECOMOG and UNOMSIL was hampered by the lack of a proper mechanism for liaison and coordination, which was never put in place. In addition, differences concerning the relative status of military officers, assignment of specific tasks, ways of conducting military operations, all gave rise to unhealthy comparisons and were a source of tension. Cooperation between ECOMOG and UNOMSIL was never optimal. The relationship may also have been coloured by the past experience of ECOMOG in Liberia with the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), where a similar tension existed between the two entities.

Lesson 3: The UN must be able to provide adequate security for the safety of UN personnel, property and equipment in a conflict area, particularly if the national authorities have no capacity to provide such protection. The provision of such security should be under UN authority and should not be dependent on external forces that may not be willing or able to provide it, particularly during times of crisis.

ECOMOG forces, in addition to current tasks, were ordered to provide overall security to UNOMSIL's unarmed military observers. ECOMOG emphasized that this additional task would require additional resources and logistical support, since its primary focus was on establishing a secure environment in the country and effecting disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants. As far back as June 1998, the Secretary-General recognized that although ECOMOG was willing to provide security to UN personnel, ECOMOG itself was a potential target of attacks by the remnants of the *junta* and this could jeopardize the safety of unarmed UN personnel under its protection. He, therefore, envisaged the possibility of deploying a highly mobile unit of armed UN troops, operating in close cooperation with ECOMOG but independent of it, to protect observers in locations where they were at risk.

Transition to UNAMSIL

Lesson 4: Transition between a regional force and a UN force should be properly planned and timed. To facilitate an orderly handover process, pre-deployment planning should be undertaken in advance, ideally with integrated teams to be sent for reconnaissance to the area of operation. If possible, a small “liaison and coordination team” should be deployed to the headquarters of the regional force to enhance the planning process at the strategic level. At the operational level, contacts should be established between military planners at the headquarters of both organizations. At the tactical level, detailed procedures for handover of responsibilities should be implemented for each unit and sub-unit to ensure a seamless transition.

The initial concept of operations for UNAMSIL was based on the understanding that ECOMOG, although downsized, would remain in Sierra Leone. The 6,000 strong UNAMSIL force was to be part of a neutral observer force comprising UN and ECOMOG, as called for by the Lomé accord. Although announcing its intention to downsize, Nigeria indicated that ECOMOG would continue to provide national security and assist with the disarmament and demobilization process. When ECOMOG decided to withdraw entirely, there was little time to plan an orderly handover or transition. In the first half of 2000, the UN was forced to manage the deployment of the new UNAMSIL force, while simultaneously taking on the responsibilities of withdrawing ECOMOG troops. The UN had considerable experience in handing over and taking over peacekeeping tasks from regional organizations and had done so in the former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Central Africa and other places. In Sierra Leone, however, there was no time for a planned and phased handover, resulting in considerable lack of coordination and confusion. There were several reasons for this hasty and uncoordinated transition. Nigeria believed that the UN was not paying sufficient attention to its requests for logistical and financial support to continue its military operations in Sierra Leone. The UN Secretariat, on the other hand, encountered reluctance on the part of Security Council members to provide the needed support. This contributed significantly to the ECOWAS decision to withdraw earlier than planned.

Unlike the handover of responsibilities in the former Yugoslavia from the United Nations Protection Force to the NATO-led Implementation Force in December 1995 or even the transition from the multinational force in Haiti to the United Nations Mission in Haiti, which were both conducted successfully, the ECOMOG withdrawal and subsequent assumption of its task by UNAMSIL was not properly planned. Given the sudden change in ECOMOG withdrawal deadlines, the entire plan for troop deployments had to be revised quickly. The rotations of incoming and outgoing units were conducted concurrently, with inherent coordination problems.

Since ECOMOG was supposed to provide security, some UNAMSIL contingents were faced with serious security threats immediately upon deployment for which they were not prepared. Their lack of familiarity with the terrain and the causes of the conflict made them even more vulnerable. A security vacuum was created in several parts of the

country, as withdrawing ECOMOG did not hand over to an incoming UNAMSIL contingent. With the urgent need for reinforcements, UN forces were deployed without adequate preparation and training for the conflict environment in Sierra Leone. The deployment itself was very costly as all troops and equipment had to be airlifted to save deployment time. Contingents were deployed without information on what their tasks would be and some contingents had no maps of their areas of responsibility. In some cases, UN troops were unaware of mission standard operating procedures and rules of engagement.

Lesson 5: “Re-hatting” of units from a regional force to a UN peacekeeping force can be recommended only under very specific conditions. There is an advantage in obtaining experienced troops on short notice to help establish the UN mission. However, problems may be encountered when units serving under a regional command structure with a different mandate and rules have to conform, without adequate preparation, to a UN mandate, rules and standards. A solution could be that troop contributors to a regional force that are to participate in a UN force rotate their contingents, so that fresh and adequately prepared contingents are deployed in the UN force. Alternatively, contingents that will not be rotated must receive intensive mission-focussed briefings on their new role, functions and the standards they will be expected to uphold, including the UN Code of Conduct for Blue Helmets.

The integration of some of the ECOMOG contingents into UNAMSIL – “re-hatting” of troops – initially seen as a useful way of retaining valuable Sierra Leone experience in the UN force and saving deployment time, eventually caused greater confusion. ECOMOG units re-hatted for UNAMSIL were not fully aware of their new mandate or their new tasks. The units were also facing severe logistical constraints.

Command and Control

Lesson 6: It is essential that UN internal command and control procedures be known and followed by all military contingents in a peacekeeping operation. Coordination with troop contributors on the use of troops should be ongoing and frequent to ensure a common understanding and approach. Within the mission, the Force Commander, as the head of the military component, should be recognized as responsible for the implementation of those procedures.

Command and control in an international force made up of military contingents from many different countries with varying military systems is always a challenge. ECOMOG already faced serious command and control problems, partially because contributing Governments exercised considerable control over their troops in ECOMOG. When some of those contingents were re-hatted as UN troops, those problems carried over to UNAMSIL. This was in contrast to the non-ECOMOG contributors, who were well informed of UN procedures in this regard and had agreed to participation under those conditions. During the May 2000 crisis, however, command and control within

UNAMSIL was near collapse, partly because of the unexpectedly hostile environment and a lack of consultation and coordination at strategic, operational and tactical levels.

After the events of May 2000, all parties involved – the mission, troop contributors and UN Headquarters – took immediate steps to remedy the situation. Regular contacts were established with TCCs, the Security Council and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to develop a common approach.

Rules of Engagement

Lesson 7: Rules of engagement must be well understood by all military contingents and interpretation of the rules must be consistent across contingents. The Force Commander and contingent commanders must ensure that all personnel are fully aware of the rules of engagement through extensive briefings both before deployment and following deployment.

Rules of engagement for armed military contingents in each peacekeeping operation are issued by UN Headquarters in New York and derive from the mandate authorized by the Security Council. These rules provide the parameters within which armed military personnel assigned to a peacekeeping operation may use different levels of force. They ensure that the use of force by UN military personnel is undertaken in accordance with the purposes of the UN Charter, the Security Council mandate and the relevant principles of international law, including the laws on armed conflict. The implementation of the rules of engagement is a command responsibility. The rules of engagement are addressed to the Force Commander, who is responsible for issuing them to all subordinate commanders.

In UNAMSIL, especially just after the transition from ECOMOG, some contingents were not made fully aware of the mission's rules of engagement. Some did not seem to be aware that the rules of engagement had changed from those of the ECOMOG operation. Other troop contributors had differing interpretations of UNAMSIL's mandate under resolution 1270 (1999), particularly operative paragraph 14, which authorized the mission to take necessary measures to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and, within its capabilities, to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. Following the crisis of May 2000 and the strengthening of the UNAMSIL force and its mandate, one troop contributing country felt that the difference between the revised mandate and its interpretation of the original mandate and the rules of engagement fundamentally altered the nature of the mission. This change affected its willingness to remain involved in the mission and ultimately contributed to its withdrawal from UNAMSIL.

Equipment and Preparedness

Lesson 8: Contingents contributed for a UN peacekeeping operation must have the trained personnel and equipment needed to fulfil the tasks of the mandate. It is the

responsibility of contributing nations to ensure that their contingents are adequately equipped, trained, led and motivated for service with a UN peacekeeping operation.

On several occasions, particularly during the tragic events of May 2000, it was obvious that not all troops in UNAMSIL were adequately equipped and trained for their tasks. The primary responsibility to ensure that units are properly equipped, trained and prepared for a peacekeeping mission rests with the contributing nation. DPKO provides advice and guidance to TCCs on equipment, training and preparedness, but the ultimate responsibility rests with the country itself. This covers individual equipment (individual weapon and protective devices, clothing, etc.) and collective equipment (transportation, collective weapons, communications equipment, general stores, rations, office equipment, generators, medical support equipment, etc.) and all logistics support elements. Several options exist to assist a contributing country obtain necessary equipment.

Lesson 9: Communications means are essential for all military units to fulfil their operational tasks. TCCs should ensure that communications personnel are properly trained and that communications equipment is workable upon deployment.

UNAMSIL initially encountered problems with communications when contingents arrived without necessary communications equipment. Under the reimbursement arrangements set up for UNAMSIL, the “wet lease” system, contingents were expected to arrive fully equipped and supported, including communications equipment. During the crisis of May 2000, the force headquarters was totally cut off from the units in the field. This situation was finally remedied with the deployment of a full signals battalion.

Lesson 10: The best cartographic information of the mission area should be made available before deployment. A geographic information system cell should be established as early as the mission planning stage to ensure such coverage from the very beginning.

Updated maps of the area of operations are essential tools for soldiers to conduct their operational activities on the ground. UNAMSIL experienced many operational setbacks initially because there were no topographical maps for accurate operational planning or orders. Locations of hostile incidents were difficult to report, deployments of troops and patrols were hard to plan and operational tasks were made much more difficult because of a lack of good maps. During the hostage crisis of 2000, the mission was able to obtain detailed maps of the area including satellite imagery. UNAMSIL now has a geographic information systems cell as do the UN missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia-Eritrea and DPKO Headquarters. DPKO is also able to commercially purchase satellite imagery for use by its peacekeeping missions.

Lesson 11: Contingents should be encouraged to conduct pre-deployment visits by assessment teams to their future areas of operation, when possible. Teams should include experts on logistics and operations.

Some TCCs carried out pre-deployment reconnaissance visits to their future areas of responsibility to understand the situation on the ground and better prepare their troops. This initiative had very good results in terms of preparation of contingents prior to deployment.

Lesson 12: Mission-specific pre-deployment training must be conducted to prepare all contingents for peacekeeping duty. This training should include the following topics: mandate of the mission, background to the conflict and the security environment in general, mission rules of engagement and other standard operating procedures, Code of Conduct and personal behaviour, health and hygiene, drivers' education, mission working language, weapons and equipment and, if possible, crowd control techniques. Upon deployment, all contingents should receive an induction briefing to refresh their knowledge of the same topics. Contingents should also continue their own training programmes to ensure preparedness.

One of the causes of the May 2000 crisis was the lack of proper pre-deployment training for incoming contingents. For many there was simply no time for preparation as their deployment plans had to be speeded up. Some contingents were ignorant of the conflict situation and were mentally not prepared to be in the midst of an ongoing conflict. Poor knowledge of the mandate and the rules of engagement further contributed to their uncertainty when faced with hostile actions.

Contingents contributed for UN peacekeeping must be prepared to undertake the full range of tasks expected in these operations, including robust deterrence. The majority of troops provided for UNAMSIL at the beginning of 2000 were not ready to face the kind of crisis they encountered. They were not prepared to act under a Chapter VII mandate, and tended to be much more reactive than proactive. Their presence on the ground was limited, with not enough patrols or contacts with the population. Information and intelligence was also not very well developed. Instead of being prepared for a worst-case scenario, they expected a best-case scenario.

Lesson 13: Mission training cells should be encouraged to conduct refresher training courses in addition to the induction training/briefings they already conduct for contingents and staff officers. In multidimensional missions they can also be used for conducting specialized training or integrated training with other mission components.

Since its establishment in 2001, the UNAMSIL military training cell has played an essential role in the induction, specialized and ongoing training of all force headquarters and sector headquarters staff and incoming contingents. Prior to the elections in Sierra Leone in May 2002, the cell conducted refresher training on rules of engagement for all contingents and staff officers. This was designed to prepare troops to take appropriate action in case of violence during the elections. It also played a coordinating role in the conversion training for troops that would be using unfamiliar equipment (armoured personnel carriers and trucks) that was provided by other States, such as Ukraine. The cell also assisted in the induction training of civilian staff, on request. It also maintained

cooperative working relations with partner offices, agencies and NGOs to further integrated training.

Senior Military Appointments

Lesson 14: Senior military leaders, such as the Force Commander, Deputy Force Commander, Chief Military Observer, should be selected not only for their extensive military experience, but also their ability to work in a multinational and multicultural environment. They must have excellent political and diplomatic skills and demonstrate the ability to build a team. They must be able to command the respect of both their own forces as well as that of the parties to the conflict. As far as possible, they should be involved in the initial planning of the mission and the development of the concept of operations.

The success of a peacekeeping operation relies heavily on the individual and collective skills of its personnel, particularly its leadership. In UNAMSIL, personal differences between the mission's leadership during the crisis of early 2000 detracted from the spirit of cohesion that was essential. The appointment of an African Force Commander and Deputy Force Commander was cited by many as a critical element in winning the confidence and trust of the parties to the conflict.

Information Analysis and Intelligence

Lesson 15: A military information cell should be established and integrated in the force headquarters. The cell should be part of the joint operations centre.

Lesson 16: Since the UN has no intelligence and information gathering capabilities of its own, it should make arrangements for the provision of such vital information from countries with the capability to gather it. A memorandum of understanding could be developed for such products that would include accurate maps, air or satellite photos, city plans, etc.

The lack of a well prepared "enemy assessment" to be provided to troops joining the UN force in the first months of 2000 was one of the main causes of the May crisis. New contingents were hurriedly dispatched to trouble spots without any information explaining what kind of enemy they may have to face. With no knowledge of the terrain and unfamiliar with the rebels' military tactics, type of equipment or intentions, these troops were taken by surprise. The need was addressed later with the creation of the Military Information Cell at the force headquarters, which was manned partly by British military officers, who had access to their own national sources of information and intelligence. The Cell established a network of information sources using contingents, military observers, civilian personnel and public information officers deployed all around the country to gather reliable information. The Cell was integrated into the Joint Operations Centre of the mission, which was the central point of contact for all operational matters and for information exchanges.

Winning Hearts and Minds

Lesson 17: Projects undertaken by military contingents to improve the life of the local population where they are deployed are essential for building a positive relationship with the local population. They serve also as an important confidence building and peace-building measure that has important political benefits. However, humanitarian interventions by peacekeepers should be limited to essential, rapid and logistically intensive interventions that cannot otherwise be performed by traditional humanitarian actors; they should be coordinated with the ongoing work of traditional humanitarian actors through the UN humanitarian coordinator and should meet established criteria of good aid practice. A civil-military coordination cell could be established to coordinate such activities.

The logistical capability of the military makes it well suited to perform certain kinds of assistance interventions, such as road repair and other reconstruction activities. UNAMSIL contingents undertook many humanitarian projects, which benefited the local population immensely. These projects were all funded from the contingents' own resources. Many also paid political and security dividends beyond the initial humanitarian purpose. Resurfaced and rebuilt roads improved security and access, encouraging refugee returns and increased commerce. Rehabilitated market facilities and schools provided opportunities for ex-combatants to return to civilian life. Soccer fields and balls donated by UNAMSIL contingents occupied young people who otherwise had nothing to do. Most projects were undertaken in consultation with the local communities.

However, the military has little experience in designing and implementing impartial needs-based humanitarian work beyond short-term responses to rapid-onset crisis. Where crises are protracted and local structures are complex, meeting humanitarian needs is a specialized skill, which requires institutional experience and a long-term view of a situation. On occasion, assistance activities carried out by a peacekeeping force may inadvertently do more harm than good to a given community. To ensure that humanitarian interventions by the military do not have an unintended negative effect and are sustainable in the long term, the activities should be coordinated with the designated UN humanitarian coordinator or resident coordinator.

“Over-the-Horizon” Forces

Lesson 18: An “over-the-horizon” force in support of a UN peacekeeping mandate can be an effective deterrent to “spoilers” of peace processes, particularly if the UN mission itself does not have such a deterrent capability. The “over-the-horizon” force must be credible and capable of robust enforcement action when necessary. If not under UN command, the force must act in close cooperation with the UN force.

In May 2000, the UK launched Operation Palliser to assist in the evacuation of British nationals from Freetown, but stayed on to secure Lungi airport and assist in security for the Freetown peninsula. They also provided training for members of the RSLAF. The show of force allowed UNAMSIL to bring in reinforcements and to regroup and instilled

fear in the rebels. In August 2000, when a rebel group known as the West Side Boys kidnapped 11 British military personnel, the UK forces launched a rescue operation to free them, again using overwhelming force.

This robust use of military force was very useful to restoring public confidence in the role of the international community in the peace process. However, the use of force by the UK was never under the control of UNAMSIL and was not always in coordination with the mission. The mission felt that it would have been preferable if UNAMSIL itself had been provided with the necessary capabilities and assets.

Relations with TCCs

Lesson 19: Regular contacts and consultations with TCCs are vital for the success of UN peacekeeping operations. The consultations should be frank and open and must include an honest assessment of the situation on the ground and what conditions troops are likely to face. There should be a common understanding on what has to be achieved and how.

In September and October 2000, two major UNAMSIL TCCs decided to withdraw their contingents, citing various differences as reasons for their withdrawal, including differences in interpretation of the mandate. In the aftermath of the May 2000 events, TCCs and the Secretariat worked together to resolve the issues that had led to the crisis. TCCs also responded to the call for well-prepared and trained troops willing to demonstrate a credible deterrent capability. Robust actions were taken by UNAMSIL troops in rescuing hostages from rebel strongholds and in removing unauthorized roadblocks and checkpoints. The muscular response was supported by TCCs who were now fully aware of what was at stake.

Lack of Involvement of Forces from Developed Countries

Lesson 20: The UN should explore ways in which developed countries can provide logistics and other support to troops from developing countries for UN peacekeeping operations through bilateral assistance. Developed countries can also be encouraged to provide “enabling support units” for UN peacekeeping operations.

Developed countries were unwilling to contribute large numbers of troops for UNAMSIL and this is likely to be the trend for UN peacekeeping missions. Part of the reason is that many national armies in the developed world are being downsized and the capacity for peacekeeping deployment does not exist. Another factor is the experiences in Rwanda, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, which continue to deter many developed countries from engaging in complex, internecine conflicts. ECOMOG’s success in Liberia was seized upon as a model of regional involvement and the future of peacekeeping in Africa, where African countries would take care of their own problems, with the international community providing support. The US, UK, France and other donor countries began bilateral assistance programmes to build African peacekeeping and crisis response capacity.

ECOMOG's operations in Liberia received logistics and other support from donors and bilateral partners. Nigeria was hopeful that the same would be the case for Sierra Leone. That was not the case and the Nigerian decision to withdraw ECOMOG from Sierra Leone was as much a political signal as a matter of practical reality. It was a gesture of frustration with the international community that had not come through in any meaningful way with the assistance and support that was so desperately needed by ECOWAS to continue their military operation in Sierra Leone. Yet it took the events of May 2000 for the international community, led by the UK, to recognize what was needed in Sierra Leone and then to make the troops available to the UN to put the mission back on track.

Crisis of May 2000

Lesson 21: In a crisis situation, coordinated and decisive action by all stakeholders – the Security Council, TCCs, the Secretary-General, States of the region and other guarantors of the peace process – can turn the situation around.

The crisis situation of May 2000 was stabilized only after coordinated action taken by the Security Council, TCCs, regional leaders, the mission and the Secretariat. This included an increase in the mission's force strength, the immediate deployment of UK military assets in Freetown and Lungi and the mobilization of pro-government forces. Political negotiations were then pursued by the UN, ECOWAS, the Government of Sierra Leone and others concerned to bring the peace process back on track.

The Security Council took immediate action and authorized an increase in UNAMSIL's troop strength to 13,000 military personnel (resolution 1299 of 19 May 2000). On 4 August, the Security Council decided to further strengthen the mandate of UNAMSIL authorizing it to "to deter and, where necessary, decisively counter the threat of RUF attack by responding robustly to any hostile actions or threat of imminent and direct use of force" (resolution 1313). In addition, the Security Council dispatched a mission comprising all members of the Council to the region in October 2000 to assess the situation and to make recommendations aimed at enhancing the operations of UNAMSIL. Council members came back convinced of the need for a regional strategy and a few months later imposed sanctions against President Taylor of Liberia for his support for the RUF.

The Secretary-General proactively approached Libya and Liberia to assist in negotiations for the release of the abducted UN peacekeepers. To assess the causes of UNAMSIL's poor functioning, an assessment mission led by General Manfred Eisele, former Assistant Secretary-General of DPKO, was sent to UNAMSIL from 31 May to 8 June. This mission made a series of recommendations aimed at addressing the deficiencies in UNAMSIL's operations. Coordination mechanisms were also put in place between the UN-ECOWAS, the Government of Sierra Leone and key Member States.

ECOWAS took the lead in efforts to restart the peace process after the May crisis. ECOWAS leaders exerted pressure on RUF to release the UN hostages. Later, a concerted effort by ECOWAS and UNAMSIL to persuade RUF to disarm in Kambia district bore fruit.

An expanded UNAMSIL took steps to prove its military credibility. Operation Khukri launched by the Indian contingent in July 2000 to break the RUF siege around 222 UN troops held hostage at Kailahun was one such action. As UNAMSIL regrouped and deployed gradually throughout the country, it became apparent that the mission would indeed take robust action against attacks and provocations. It also launched a media campaign highlighting efforts being made and challenges encountered by the mission. Internally, the mission was restructured and two additional senior-level appointments were made. A deputy special representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) for administration and management and another for governance and stabilization were appointed.



LOGISTICS

Wet-lease Arrangements

Lesson 1: Given the problems encountered with the “wet lease” arrangement, innovative logistics support arrangements will need to be considered in order to enable Member States to participate fully in peacekeeping operations. Alternative arrangements could include bilateral arrangements through a partner, UN-arranged specialist enabling units under a memorandum of understanding (for transport, logistics, communications units), UN-owned equipment or commercial contracts.

Lesson 2: Stand-by arrangements for personnel (military and civilian), equipment and materiel need to be finalized to enable rapid deployment, timely logistics support and resource accountability. Enhanced cooperation and coordination between DPKO, the defence authorities of TCCs as well as their representatives in New York and the mission leadership is necessary.

UNAMSIL was the first peacekeeping operation to use the “wet lease” arrangement for reimbursement of all contingents contributed to serve with the mission. Under this arrangement, TCCs were reimbursed on the understanding that the contributing country was to provide, men, all major equipment, support supplies and everything needed to be completely self-sufficient and self-sustained in all relevant categories (such as food, shelter, maintenance, transport and communications). The arrangement included the “re-hatted” already deployed contingents of ECOMOG. In practice, the arrangement did not work very well, particularly in the first half of 2000, as several contingents were not structured for self-sustainability and did not bring with them all they were required to under the “wet lease” system. UNAMSIL had to step in and provide logistics, which should have been provided by the TCCs and for which the mission did not have a budget.

To cut down on such problems, DPKO started conducting pre-deployment visits to TCCs to assess equipment and stores. These visits allowed the UN to answer the queries and concerns of troop contributors prior to deployment and to accurately adjust memoranda of understanding to reflect the troop contributor’s capabilities and reduce the logistics shortfalls, thus enhancing the operational capability of the mission. Taking into account the magnitude of expenditures involved, as well as the need to promote efficiency and reduce operational costs, the development of benchmarks and detailed verification guidelines is important to ensure consistency and a uniform approach across all missions. The pre-deployment visits are a crucial component of the new contingent-owned equipment (COE) methodology. It is also necessary to train personnel to perform the verification functions.

Despite the numerous difficulties faced in the management of COE issues, UNAMSIL was able to assist TCCs in logistics support through such initiatives as pre-deployment inspections and follow-up actions to remedy identified weaknesses. The accompanying

table illustrates DPKO's initiatives to overcome COE and self-sustainment deficiencies in UNAMSIL.

Table: Solutions to COE and Self-Sustainment Deficiencies in UNAMSIL

	Problem	Solution
1.	In early 2000, former ECOMOG and other contingents proved unable to provide, replace or maintain the required COE, particularly vehicles, or to provide essential support to their troops in the areas of communications, electrical power generation and distribution, water supply, fuel storage, minor engineering and other areas.	Letter of Assist (LOA) established with a Member State to provide temporary support in the form of vehicles and self-sustainment services. UN-owned equipment (UNOE) was issued to supplement the LOA. After several extensions of the LOA, contingents were able to obtain their own equipment.
2.	In early 2000, former ECOMOG and other contingents proved unable to deploy sufficient armoured personnel carriers or heavy trucks to the mission.	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a Member State established, which provided over 200 armoured personnel carriers and 200 heavy trucks that were distributed to contingents. The Member State provided training in vehicle use and full maintenance support (wet-lease). 100 trucks retained by the Member State contingent to form general support transport company for third-line mission requirements. MOU established with a Member State to provide a logistics battalion, which included a transport company, to further reduce deficiency in transport assets.
3.	Several contingents proved unable to provide sufficient communications assets.	In addition to LOA and UNOE provided on loan, a MOU was established with a Member State to provide a complete communications battalion to support contingents and general mission operations.
4.	The Office of Mission support (OMS) identified a shortfall in contingent's abilities to provide field defence stores to construct protective fortifications. Field defence stores included barbed wire, timber, sandbags, metal stakes and sheets and associated construction	The UN assumed the responsibility for providing field defence stores for a number of deployed contingents and extended it to all new contingents. It is now a UN responsibility.

	Problem	Solution
	supplies.	
5.	Several contingents were unable to provide or maintain adequate tentage.	The UN acquired 385 tents from a Member State on donation and purchased 400 tents from another Member State to make up the shortfall.
6.	Contingents were unable to provide sufficient basic furniture, catering facilities and laundry/dry cleaning capabilities to meet the standards detailed in the <i>COE Manual</i> .	The <i>COE Manual</i> standards were amended to allow contingents to receive full reimbursement, provided national standards were met and essential health and safety criteria were not compromised (e.g. catering arrangements for some African contingents, while not strictly complying with the <i>Manual</i> , were the norm for their field operations).
7.	Contingents were found to be deficient in their ability to provide satisfactory medical support.	The UN sought donation of (Level 1) medical equipment from a Member State. A donation was arranged of Swedish Level 2 medical equipment to be operated by the Ghanaian contingent, with the UN providing medical consumables.
8.	A TCC offered a sector headquarters and a Level 2 hospital, but could provide only the personnel.	The UN accepted the offer and provided all COE and self-sustainment support to both units.
9.	A Member State offered a battalion but could only partly meet the COE requirements and needed assistance with communications and some other self-sustainment support.	The UN accepted the offer and provided required equipment through a mix of UNOE and third-party contributions of armoured personnel carriers, trucks and other support. A Member State donated funds to procure 12 additional light vehicles as UNOE to be used by the battalion. Another Member State donated communications equipment to the UN for use by the battalion.
10.	Several contingents were unable to provide sufficient night vision goggles, either because of the high cost or because of issues concerning high-technology transfer by other Member States.	UN provided the needed equipment as UNOE.

	Problem	Solution
11.	Several contingents requested help with transportation of COE, spare parts and self-sustainment supplies from their home countries to the mission area.	The UN permitted TCCs to utilize rotation flights for this purpose to the maximum of the aircraft's otherwise unused cargo capacity. This allowed small quantities in the order of 2-3 tonnes per aircraft to be transported at no additional cost to the UN.

As a result of the UNAMSIL experience, DPKO put in place several measures to improve cooperation between TCCs, DPKO and the mission on logistics and support issues. These helped to ensure that troop contributors deployed with appropriate and adequate equipment and self-sustainment ability and that TCCs fully understood the implications of the wet-lease arrangement:

- TCC representatives in New York were briefed on the contingent-owned equipment methodology and responsibilities;
- During MOU negotiations, DPKO explained in detail the requirements according to contingent-owned equipment standards and the specific requirements of the mission and provided relevant manuals to representatives of TCCs;
- Pre-deployment visits were undertaken by joint UN Headquarters and UNAMSIL teams to troop contributors to brief contingents about the requirements of the COE system, answer queries of troop contributors, assess the capacity of troop contributors to meet the “wet lease” requirements, determine capability, equipment serviceability and ability to self-sustain according to COE standards and the needs of the mission;
- Reconnaissance visits to the mission by planning staff of TCCs were encouraged to ensure that contributors fully understood the requirements of the mission and the terms of the memorandum of understanding; and
- UNAMSIL briefed incoming units on the requirements of the COE system and provided relevant manuals to them.

By 2002, UNAMSIL had an effective integrated logistics and communications infrastructure to coordinate all logistics support in a mission and to ensure that it was correctly channelled and planned at the highest level. This reduced duplication, pooled expertise, simplified procedures and offered necessary responsiveness and flexibility.

Mission Start-up

Lesson 3: “Start-up” teams of civilian personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge of UN procedures in critical areas, such as logistics and administration, should be established. Early identification of staff for senior, core posts will shorten recruitment time and provide continuity to mission start-up. Prior training will be

essential to maintain skills and to provide familiarity with field procedures and process.

Lesson 4: Standard operating procedures, guidelines and logistics templates, which are a valuable tool for administrative and logistics activities, should be prepared in advance. These can be adapted, as required, during mission start-up.

During mission start-up, the logistics capacity of UNAMSIL had several shortcomings, including slow build-up of the civilian administrative infrastructure, selection of inexperienced staff, slow recruitment of senior staff and delayed positioning of essential logistics staff. In addition, troops transitioning from ECOMOG to UNAMSIL lacked sufficient assets for self-sustainment, which required UN augmentation. Their inability to sustain themselves meant that scarce UN stores and equipment had to be diverted for their use, which was not envisioned in the mission's budget. The absence of force (third line) mission military capabilities -- an amphibious/boat capability, air traffic control, logistics unit and a force signals unit -- also affected mission start-up and operations. Further, there was a slow build-up of essential UN-owned material and delays in service and supply contracts and procurement action.

Several initiatives have begun in DPKO to address the problems faced by UNAMSIL in its early stages. A civilian rapid-deployment roster is being developed, which will include staff with administration and logistics expertise, and which should assist in mission start-up. Training is also being provided to administration and logistics personnel to improve their knowledge of UN procedures in all the administrative and support areas. The Strategic Deployment Stocks (SDS) initiative, which includes maintaining mission start-up kits at the UN Logistics Base in Brindisi, will also facilitate rapid deployment within the 30/90-day timeframe.

The separation of the *Manual on Policies and Procedures Concerning Reimbursement and Control of Contingent-Owned Equipment of Troop-Contributors Participating in Peacekeeping Missions* (COE Manual) into two parts, one dealing with policy (as determined by Member States) and the other with procedures and guidelines for inspection, asset management and reimbursement, should be considered.



CIVILIAN POLICE

Mandates and Resources

Lesson 1: The mandate of the civilian police component in a peacekeeping mission must be practical and feasible. A mandate for reform of national police services must be pursued within the broader framework of the reform of rule of law institutions, particularly the judiciary, the correctional and penal systems and other public administration systems. Rule of law and governance issues should be integrated and explicitly included in the mandate of the mission.

Lesson 2: The civilian police component must receive adequate resources to implement its mandate.

The mandate for civilian police with UNOMSIL was to advise the Government of Sierra Leone on the planning and coordination of the rehabilitation and reform of the police force of Sierra Leone and in particular on its training, re-equipment and restructuring and on the promotion of the awareness of human rights and the rule of law. They were also to report on violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in Sierra Leone and to assist the Government in its efforts to address the country's human rights needs. With only five officers, the component's ability to implement this mandate was limited.

In UNAMSIL, the mandate was expanded to include deployment at DDR sites and population centres to provide advice on the maintenance of law and order and to coordinate with and assist the Sierra Leone law enforcement authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities. The mandate focused on capacity-building for local law enforcement. One of the core issues of the mandate, to advise and assist the Government of Sierra Leone and local police officers on the restructuring and training of the Sierra Leone Police Force (SLPF), was far too broad and ambiguous. The mandate raised expectations of material support to the local police from the beginning, which was not the case. This had a negative effect on the credibility of the UN police component with the local police and the Government. Lack of financial and material resources further hampered practical implementation of the mandate.

The UNAMSIL mandate to advise on reform and restructuring of the police force was not accompanied by an equal emphasis on the other elements of a sound criminal justice system, such as judges, courts and correctional facilities. Police reform is one part of the rule of law reform. In Sierra Leone, there was no strategy for an integrated development of rule of law institutions. Court and prison reforms in Sierra Leone were far behind initiatives for police reform. While the Special Court for Sierra Leone did receive some international support, it may have drawn resources away from the development of the regular justice system. The weakness of the justice system could undermine good governance in the long term. Poor infrastructure, lack of skilled and trained personnel, poor pay and service conditions are some of the core problems associated with the other pillars of the rule of law in Sierra Leone. Deficiencies in the system contributed to the civil war and the system requires fundamental restructuring and reform to ensure respect

for the rule of law in Sierra Leone. Support must be provided to the entities both in Freetown and in the provinces to ensure a more decentralised, accessible and responsive justice system. In that context, the reform and revamping of chiefdom law enforcement mechanisms must also be addressed.

If the peace in Sierra Leone is to be sustainable, the efforts aimed at building rule of law institutions must also be sustainable. There has to be a realistic assessment of what the Government can achieve and what responsibilities it can take over. Issues of security, development and governance are all linked and need equal attention.

International Support for Police Reform

Lesson 3: International support for reform of local law enforcement agencies must be more generous and consistent. Focus should also be on betterment of the conditions of service for local police; this is fundamental for establishing strong, incorruptible police institutions.

The conditions of service of the Sierra Leone police are deplorable. If issues such as regular salaries, housing, educational and other benefits policemen and their families are not addressed, corruption will continue to threaten professional integrity. Police do not need only professional training, they also need basic amenities, particularly if they have to be encouraged to deploy all over the country. UNAMSIL's experience shows that the UN should assist in the identification of financial resources for police support. This can contribute substantially to building confidence between the mission and the local police.

The UK has provided long-term support for the SLPF through the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force, which is funded through the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The Task Force has assisted in the development of the SLPF under the Community Safety and Security Project. The Commonwealth police team had substantial funds available to support its developmental efforts and had outlined a comprehensive plan for local police capacity-building.

Mission Planning

Lesson 4: If a civilian police element is envisaged in a peacekeeping operation, a police expert must be part of the planning team and must contribute to the development of the concept of operations. This will ensure that the need for civilian police expertise is based on an actual technical requirement. The concept must support activities that aim at sustainable, effective institution-building.

For UNAMSIL, the lack of a well-defined concept of operations for the police component was a reflection of poor planning. Instead of a well-devised plan of activities towards strategic objectives, functions were ad hoc and improvised as the situation changed and needs arose. An experienced police officer on the planning team would have been able to provide expert advice on police matters and assisted in the development of a police concept of operations that was realistic. The mandate for the police component

could then have been reviewed periodically and revised in light of changing circumstances.

Quality of Civilian Police Advisers

Lesson 5: Based on the operational plan for the police component, DPKO must develop the requisite professional profile required for the mission and must select officers on the basis of that profile. Professional competence, communication skills and the ability to mentor and assist local police forces must be properly evaluated. Preferably, police officers selected should come from a police system similar to that of the host country.

Lesson 6: DPKO must assist police contributing countries (PCCs) in preparing their officers for peacekeeping duties and improve the exchange of information with PCCs to ensure that the best are selected for UN peacekeeping assignments.

Lesson 7: Selections for senior posts, such as Police Commissioner, should be on the basis of managerial competence, professional experience, knowledge of and familiarity with the UN system, initiative and drive.

The quality of the civilian police advisers deployed in the mission was a serious concern. Most had little knowledge of international norms and standards for democratic policing and some had less professional experience and competence than the local police they were supposed to be advising. Senior officers unfamiliarity with the UN system and its rules and procedures left the component poorly resourced.

Delays in the deployment of police officers to the mission also had a negative impact on the operational effectiveness of the component. Another drawback was that it took two years before the post of Police Commissioner could be established in UNAMSIL.

Training and Preparedness

Lesson 8: All incoming civilian police advisers must receive thorough induction and orientation briefings to prepare them for their tasks. This should include familiarization with mission standard operating procedures that should be developed, with support from DPKO, and issued at the start-up of the mission.

Police advisers arriving in Sierra Leone did not always receive an induction briefing or orientation about their tasks, responsibilities and the strategic objectives of the mission. Introduction and briefings about local counterparts and other key players was also not provided. Some police advisers left the mission never knowing the location of police headquarters and never meeting key members of the SLPF. Mission standard operating procedures were not developed, which further hampered the effective functioning of the police advisers. Support and guidance from Headquarters in New York was also limited.

Specialized Functions

Lesson 9: The civilian police component can play a critical role in restoring public confidence in the police service through training and mentoring of local police and helping them perform specialized functions, such as security during electoral processes, in an impartial and effective manner.

The experience in Sierra Leone demonstrated the importance of the involvement of international police advisers in the recruitment and training of local police forces from the early stages of the process. UNAMSIL contributed to the improved training of the SLPF and played an important mentoring role.

In particular, UNAMSIL civilian police advisers played a key role in preparing the SLPF for elections related tasks and responsibilities. The civilian police component of UNAMSIL provided training and orientations to the SLPF in preparation for the elections. UNAMSIL police advisers sensitised the local police to remain apolitical during the electoral period and to perform their duties in a professional and neutral manner. They also assisted in the development of a plan of operation for the police for election day. Handbooks and guidelines on the role of police in specialized tasks, such as during electoral processes, could be developed for use in other missions.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting

Lesson 1: Monitoring of human rights is a valuable confidence-building measure for the peacekeeping mission and for the peace process in general. A human rights perspective should be integrated into all aspects and activities of the mission.

The Human Rights Section in UNOMSIL and later in UNAMSIL played a crucial role in the peace process in Sierra Leone. Its monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation in Sierra Leone helped define the consequences of the conflict in human terms. The civil conflict has resulted in brutal rights violations and terror campaigns directed at unarmed civilians. The work of the component has been a valuable confidence builder for the peace process. Victims of human rights abuses felt that the international community did care about them and what had happened to them. Concern over the egregious human rights violations committed by the RUF prompted the UN to introduce a reservation to the blanket amnesty for the rebels that was provided under the Lomé Peace Agreement. Advice on this issue was provided by the human rights adviser who accompanied the UN representative to the Lomé peace talks. Human rights monitoring has assisted and added credibility to the peace process in Sierra Leone.

Yet, the benefits of activities in the human rights area tend to be in the longer term. In the short term, there may be times when reporting human rights violations may be perceived to be counter-productive to pushing the peace process forward or even contrary to the interests of the mission. The Human Rights Section of UNAMSIL had its share of those moments when there was considerable scepticism, even within the mission, about the usefulness of its tasks.

Lesson 2: Human rights monitoring teams should be deployed throughout the mission area to ensure wide reach and to build local capacity for monitoring. In addition, an effort should be made to ensure that the monitoring teams are gender balanced.

One of the primary functions of the human rights component in both UNOMSIL and UNAMSIL was to monitor and report on human rights violations and abuses of international humanitarian law throughout the country. In Sierra Leone, the situation in Freetown is not representative of the rest of the country. To get wider geographic coverage, four regional offices were also established. Monitoring teams, as far as possible, were gender balanced to encourage reports from both male and female victims of abuse.

Lesson 3: Generic guidance and procedures for monitoring and reporting human rights in a peacekeeping context should be developed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in consultation with DPKO. Guidance should include best and worst practices and be relevant to field mission contexts.

To assist human rights officers monitor and report human rights violations, OHCHR did provide guidelines and advice to the UNAMSIL Human Rights Section. However, the manual on monitoring and investigation of human rights violations that was provided was not very relevant to the realities of the situation in Sierra Leone. The component also lacked a standardized reporting format and methodology for the collection and validation of information. Although this was not a serious handicap to the performance of the Section's mandate, such guidance could have assisted monitors and improved reporting.

Capacity Building and Technical Cooperation

Lesson 4: One of the functions of a human rights component is to build local capacity for sustained rights monitoring. To this end, the human rights section should identify potential problems and help design solutions, in close consultation with local partners, before the closure of the mission.

A Human Rights Manifesto was signed by the Government of Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL and the local human rights community in June 1999. This document represented the commitment of all signatories to human rights and acted as a confidence-building measure for the human rights community. The Manifesto provided a framework for human rights activities in Sierra Leone.

As part of its capacity-building and technical cooperation mandate, the Section organized regular meetings with representatives of local rights groups to exchange information, coordinate strategy and identify problem areas. It also reached out to civil society organizations and national institutions.

Lesson 5: Respect for human rights standards is essential for building a democratic society based on the rule of law. To promote respect for human rights, the human rights component must be innovative and creative to raise awareness and increase knowledge of human rights issues.

UNAMSIL's Human Rights Section provided training to human rights activists, the police, the army, government officials as well as UN peacekeepers, military observers and civilian police. Not only did this training build internal mission capacity on human rights issues, it also resulted in improved monitoring by police officers and military observers who used the training to guide their own work. A measurable result of the training provided to local human rights groups was the manner in which they were able to continue operating and reporting during the hostilities of January 1999, when the mission was evacuated. To reach illiterate populations, UNAMSIL human rights officers used innovative approaches, such as media campaigns, traditional theatre and plays to raise awareness of such issues as truth and redress, women's rights, justice for war crimes and other human rights issues.

To correct misconceptions about the truth and reconciliation process, the Human Rights Section, in cooperation with the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission

(TRC) working group and the National Forum for Human Rights, organized regional workshops, published and distributed an illustrated information leaflet on the TRC and another leaflet with 20 questions and answers about the process. Weekly radio programmes were produced in five of the local languages and T-shirts, stickers and banners were also distributed. A compilation of articles on the Sierra Leone TRC was put together by the Human Rights Section and published by the mission. For the elections, the Section produced brochures and leaflets entitled *Elections and Human Rights, A Guide for the Sierra Leone Police* and *Sierra Leone National Elections 2002, Election Responsibilities for All Police Officers*.

The Section co-sponsored a study, which outlined the prevalence and impact of sexual violence during the conflict. UNAMSIL and the Physician for Human Rights also conducted a data-gathering project on war-related sexual violence in Sierra Leone. Until these two projects were undertaken, the extent of these human rights abuses had been under-reported. Projects and studies such as these served as an important tool for advocacy on the issue of violence and abuse against women.

Thematic Rights

Lesson 6: Designation of focal points for thematic/critical areas within a human rights component can provide an increased focus on groups with particular vulnerabilities, including women, children and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

To provide specific attention to vulnerable groups, the Human Rights Section had posts dedicated to thematic rights. The use of specialists by the Human Rights Section proved to be a useful experience for UNAMSIL. Mission specialists in areas such as gender and child rights brought greater attention to those issues across the mission. For example, having a gender specialist as part of the Human Rights Section gave the issue of gender mainstreaming and women's rights institutional support, resources and critical mass. The situation of women in Sierra Leone was one of grave concern. A large section of the female population were victims of sexual violence during the conflict. The level of domestic violence was high. Even though Sierra Leone has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, legislation exists that supports discrimination against women, for example, women are not allowed to vote for paramount chiefs, town chiefs etc. and in some parts of Sierra Leone, women are not eligible to be elected chief.

During the disarmament and demobilization process, female ex-combatants benefited from the presence of human rights officers in the DDR camps, where joint teams of military observers and human rights officers interviewed ex-combatants and their dependants to determine specific needs and vulnerabilities. Induction trainings and briefings for UNAMSIL troops included modules on the special needs of women and children. A gender perspective was included in the quick impact projects undertaken by the human rights component. In addition to building capacity for mainstreaming a gender perspective within the mission, the gender specialist in the Human Rights Section worked with women's groups and civil society organizations to highlight the specific needs of

women. More recently, the gender specialist developed, in close collaboration with other mission components, a mission-wide plan for the implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Children, too, were a vulnerable group in the Sierra Leone conflict as many of them had been victims and perpetrators of violence. A child rights specialist was designated within the Human Rights Section as a resource person and who was responsible for looking at child rights issues as part of the Section's monitoring activities. UNMASIL was the first peacekeeping mission to have a dedicated post for a Child Protection Adviser, which was located not in the Human Rights Section, but in the Office of the SRSG. The Child Protection Adviser was responsible for the overall mainstreaming of child rights, protection and welfare issues within the mission, advising the SRSG on these issues and acting as a liaison with other UN agencies and civil society. Although the Child Protection Adviser was separate from the Human Rights Section, the Child Protection Adviser and the child rights specialist of the Human Rights section worked well together and collectively raised the profile of children's rights and protection issues within the mission.

The arrangement, however, seemed duplicative and confusing. To ensure coherence in the future and to avoid duplication, the respective roles and functions of the Child Protection Adviser and a child rights specialist in the Human Rights Section should be clearly defined, as should their relationship with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, OHCHR and DPKO. Alternatively, in missions where Child Protection Advisers exist, it may not be necessary to also have a child rights specialist in the Human Rights Section.

Justice, Truth and Reconciliation

Lesson 7: Mechanisms for transitional justice to address impunity and human rights violations may be at odds with a national reconciliation process. If either is to succeed, they should have assured funding.

An immediate challenge for Sierra Leone is to reconcile its war-torn society and to bring to justice to those responsible for the atrocities committed during the conflict. In an attempt to tackle this challenge, two bodies were established to address issues of truth and justice related to the conflict: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Special Court. Both bodies were to address impunity and will be critical for peace and national reconciliation, but in different ways. The TRC was a national institution set up to create an impartial record of the atrocities that took place in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 1999. Anyone could be summoned to testify, but it was not a judicial body and appearing before it would not lead to prosecution or imprisonment. The Special Court, however, was a hybrid entity of mixed composition, both national and international, and subject to both Sierra Leonean law and international law. It would only try those bearing the greatest responsibility for abuses during the period of 30 November 1996 until 7 July 1999. Those found guilty could receive a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Due to continued violence in 2000 and lack of funds, it took over two years to set up the TRC. Funding was an ongoing struggle, and though the Sierra Leone Government should have provided for TRC offices in all regions of Sierra Leone, it was difficult to find appropriate facilities. The Special Court faced similar funding difficulties, but received more international assistance. The Special Court was also seen by many as an institution that was foisted on the country by the international community. There was confusion among the public as to the role of each entity and the relationship between them. It was not planned that the Special Court and the TRC would coincide with each other. Whether their co-existence will have a long-term positive or negative impact, remains to be seen.



ELECTIONS

Mandates for Electoral Support

Lesson 1: To ensure a successful electoral process and build confidence, the UN may have to provide logistics and technical assistance and establish a safe and secure environment during the preparations for and conduct of elections. A truly participatory, free and fair election can be a powerful catalyst for peace consolidation.

In May 2001, the Sierra Leone National Electoral Commission (NEC) requested UN logistical, technical and security support for the conduct of the 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections, particularly support for transportation, communication and storage. The NEC also requested international observation to certify the credibility and transparency of the electoral process. Security Council resolution 1270 (1999) had already mandated UNAMSIL to provide support for elections, as needed, and resolution 1389 (2002) outlined the specific tasks it would undertake. An electoral component was established within the mission to coordinate these tasks. Although the elections were conducted primarily by the NEC, with support from the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), an international NGO dedicated to electoral support, the UN provided logistical support for the transportation of electoral material and personnel by land, air and by boat. It provided storage and distribution of election materials before the elections and the movement of ballot papers after the elections. It allowed the NEC to make use of its communications facilities in the provinces. It assisted in the registration of more than 2.3 million voters and conducted mass voters education campaigns through its public information component to prepare the electorate. It provided logistical and technical support to the registration process and for the elections.

Most importantly, the presence of UNAMSIL troops provided the assurance of security that was fundamental to building confidence in the electoral process. UNAMSIL provided security for political party activities and for the conduct of peaceful elections. On voting day, although UNAMSIL troops stayed in the background and away from polling stations, with the Sierra Leone police being responsible for law and order at polling stations and in the country in general, they remained ready to take action as needed. Civilian police observers of UNAMSIL also helped train and prepare the SLPF for their election related tasks and together with them provided a police presence at polling stations. The elections were not marred by violence and the results were accepted by all political parties without reservation.

Lesson 2: In developing mandates for electoral support, new and innovative formulas and mechanisms should be explored. The Electoral Assistance Division of Department of Political Affairs should play a central role in this process.

In Sierra Leone, the decision that the UN would not play the role of an electoral observer, instead concentrate on providing technical assistance and logistical support allowed the

mission to assist the NEC more effectively. It facilitated a constructive partnership between UNAMSIL's electoral component and the NEC, allowing the NEC to take full advantage of the mission's resources and allowing UNAMSIL to criticize constructively the NEC's operational decisions without a political backlash.

Planning

Lesson 3: The extent and type of electoral support required from the UN, including delivery time, should be known, negotiated and approved as early as possible. This will facilitate planning, management and implementation of the electoral support and create realistic expectations of the assistance that will be provided.

Until early 2002, the source of the Sierra Leone electoral laws were the 1991 Constitution, multiple military decrees and Acts of Parliament, electoral regulations and procedures. The new Electoral Laws Act 2002 and the National Election Commission Act 2002, establishing a solid legal framework for the electoral process, were promulgated only on 7 February 2002. This meant that the bulk of the preparations for the elections were delayed until three months prior to the elections. Given the tremendous logistical constraints and the lack of infrastructure, it seemed impossible that the elections would be held on schedule in May. A total of 5,256 polling stations were established in 3,873 different locations, but site locations were not definitively determined until quite late. This made logistical support planning quite difficult and operational plans could not be finalized until the last minute. Establishing an electoral component of the mission in such a short timeframe resulted in a number of shortcomings, including the late recruitment and deployment of electoral officers and field coordinators. It also resulted in a cumbersome negotiation with the national authorities over the resources required for the electoral support UNAMSIL was asked to provide.

Lesson 4: Appropriate training/briefings should be provided to all components of the mission that will support the electoral process to prepare them adequately for their election related tasks.

Many components of UNAMSIL provided support to the electoral process: military, civilian police, civilian components, public information etc. Military observers and civil affairs officers deployed in all sectors of the country became key contact points for the NEC and UNAMSIL in their area of responsibility. Since the electoral component was deployed only months before the actual elections, the longer serving personnel of the mission were called upon to do election related tasks. Adequate preparation and training or briefings on the many tasks associated with elections would have improved coordination during the registration process and the elections.

Raising Awareness

Lesson 5: Each phase of the electoral process should be preceded by an intensive publicity and education programme.

A public information campaign is a critical aspect of the electoral process. It should be designed to inform, educate, and motivate the people to participate in the electoral process. Traditional means of mass communication, such as drama and travelling theatre troupes, can supplement modern media to reach the largest numbers of people. Public education remained one of the weakest areas of NEC performance throughout the process. To overcome NEC's deficiencies in this regard, an NEC/UNAMSIL Public Information Committee was created to design strategies and outreach programmes. Consequently, an election unit within the Public Information Section of UNAMSIL was established to sensitize the electorate on all aspects of the elections. The NEC and UNAMSIL developed pictorial posters, handouts, stickers and radio jingles on the process, and sponsored performing artists who travelled the country bringing the message to the people in the local languages. Radio UNAMSIL developed special election related programmes, including party broadcasts and interviews with party leaders and opinion-makers.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Planning

Lesson 1: It is essential to establish a robust, well-resourced public information component from the start-up phase of a peacekeeping mission. The component should be on the ground as early as possible to explain the mandate of the mission to the parties to the conflict, the local population, the local and international media. This is essential to establish the credibility of the mission early on and shape realistic expectations among the local population.

Lesson 2: Public information experts must be part of the technical assessment mission that visits a potential mission area to assess information resources and structures (local media landscape, availability of broadcasting facilities, dissemination plan, etc.) and must be fully involved in the mission planning process to make recommendations on the configuration of the information component. The role public information will play to support the concept of operations must be clearly defined.

During the planning phase of UNOMSIL and UNAMSIL, public information was not given adequate consideration as a key component of the mission and was not sufficiently resourced. The absence of a functioning and adequately staffed public information component to raise awareness and sensitize local and international public opinion about the UN and the mission's mandate and its activities resulted in a lack of understanding of the mandate and the role of the UN. During the crisis of May 2000, the lack of a strong public information component proved near fatal to the credibility of the mission. Not only was the mission unable to generate strong media messages in support of its policies and activities, it seemed powerless to correct negative perceptions in both the local and international media.

UNOMSIL had a very modest public information component that was Freetown-based and consisted of one international public information officer, assisted by a local information assistant. It did some outreach and information dissemination and produced short radio programmes and spots for broadcast by local broadcast facilities. Following the signing of the Lomé accord, it became apparent that a strengthening of the public information capacity would be required, given the importance of informing the public of the role of UNOMSIL in the peace process. In November 1999, a media relations officer and a radio producer began a public information campaign explaining the transition from UNOMSIL to UNAMSIL and targeting local and international media. It was not until March 2000 that an assessment team of the Department of Public Information (DPI) was sent to Freetown and recommended an immediate expansion of the capacity of the public information component to meet the increasing demands for a comprehensive public information programme in support of UNAMSIL activities and the peace process.. It was not until 2001 that this was done in an effective manner.

Public Information Strategy

Lesson 3: A comprehensive and clear public information strategy in support of mission objectives and aimed at reaching out to the widest possible audience should be developed from the outset. Mission leadership must provide guidance to the public information component on overall strategy and objectives and must ensure that the component is well integrated in the mission.

In January 2001, the mission began to effectively address the deficiencies in its public information activities by appointing a new chief of public information, who would also act as spokesperson for the mission. A comprehensive proactive information strategy to counter negative perceptions about the mission and to improve public understanding of the UNAMSIL role, mandate and objectives were developed. The strategy was to project the accomplishments of UNAMSIL civilian and military components in facilitating the peace process in Sierra Leone and vigorously publicize successes achieved in the implementation of the various phases of the concept of operations (the gradual deployments and progressive control of RUF-held areas, achievements in disarmament and demobilization, etc.) using print and local broadcast media as well as UNAMSIL troops and military observers. This strategy was carried out in close coordination and with the support of the Head of Mission. Through active participation in all senior management meetings, the Spokesperson ensured that the mission leadership was advised and kept abreast of public information plans and activities.

Role of Mission Spokesperson

Lesson 4: The mission spokesperson must have a proactive approach in dealing with local and international media and providing them with accurate and timely information. The spokesperson also plays a key role in countering hostile media reports and rectifying erroneous information that would be detrimental to the image of the mission.

From early 2001, a series of good practices in countering hostile media reports were implemented by UNAMSIL. The plan to repair the mission's image was two-fold: targeting the local media by aggressively countering negative and erroneous reporting with facts; and improving the visibility and participation of the mission's leaders in local radio and television programmes. Journalists tours to the sectors were also facilitated to allow them to get a feel for the situation outside of Freetown. The Spokesperson also cultivated key editors and journalists explaining and clarifying UNAMSIL's position on specific events or activities. In addition, the Spokesperson reached out to the international media by facilitating their visits to the sectors to cover UNAMSIL operations, initiating interviews and briefings on stories of interest and setting up interviews with UNAMSIL civilian and military leadership.

Cooperation with Other Components

Lesson 5: To foster effective collaboration between the public information component and other specialized public information personnel in a mission (such as a military or police spokesperson), a coordination mechanism has to be established to ensure that the mission speaks with one voice. The designated mission spokesperson is the focal point for all media/information activities. Specialized information personnel must coordinate their media activities with that focal point.

Cooperation between the public information component and the UNAMSIL military, which had suffered during the events of May 2000, improved following the appointment of the new Spokesperson in 2001. Coordination with the military public information office was strengthened by developing a strategy based on mutual exchange and confirmation of information. The two also coordinated their public information/outreach activities and strategies to ensure congruency. The availability of military commanders for interviews with local and international media prevented speculative reporting about the mission and the military press officers in the sectors and the battalions facilitated the speedy dissemination of information to local communities. The military public information officers also significantly contributed to the mission's media products with press releases, articles and radio programmes.

UNAMSIL's public information component developed its collaboration with other UN entities and partner organizations in the mission area by organizing joint events to mark World AIDS Day or Human Rights Day. A cooperative relationship with UN system agencies, funds and programmes was maintained through frequent information exchanges.

Lesson 6: Public information can assist the mission in the implementation of its strategic objectives by supporting all activities and programmes with appropriate media messages and information products. To be effective, however, the public information component must work in close coordination with all other components.

In addition to the military, the public information component worked in close cooperation with other mission components to support their activities and strategic objectives. For example, during the preparations for the elections the Elections Information Unit was established within the Public Information Section of UNAMSIL to sensitise the electorate on all aspects of the elections. The Unit assisted the NEC with design and production of posters, handouts, press kits and stickers and provided performing artists who travelled around the country to explain the registration exercise to the electorate. Radio UNAMSIL integrated election information in all its programming and devoted extensive airtime to special election programmes, including party broadcasts, interviews with party leaders and opinion makers. As the only radio station with nationwide reach, people relied on Radio UNAMSIL for information on the electoral process, registration, voting procedures and the election results.

Community Outreach

Lesson 7: Innovative methods can be used to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information about the mission. A community outreach element, as part of the public information component, can be useful, particularly in countries with low literacy rates and where a substantial segment of the population has no access to modern mass media.

Lesson 8: Information material produced by the public information component, particularly broadcast programmes, should be produced in the major local languages, as appropriate. Public information planning should take into consideration the early recruitment of skilled local staff (translators, reporters, presenters) who are key people in the news production team.

In a country with an illiteracy rate of 80 per cent, an effective sensitisation campaign about the mission required an innovative approach. In order to reach out to communities in the hinterland, especially in RUF areas, the mission established a Community Liaison and Public Outreach Unit within the public information component. The Unit hired popular, local theatre groups on a contractual basis to perform dramas and comedies in local languages across the country, targeting specific audiences, such as ex-combatants. During the performances, information was provided on UNAMSIL's mandate, deployment areas and critical information about the disarmament and demobilization process, among others.

Through this Unit, regular meetings with various civil society groups such as teachers, trade unions, women's groups, health workers, lawyers, IDPs were initiated allowing them to address their concerns to the public information component and other components of the mission dealing with civil affairs, human rights, DDR, etc. This interaction proved highly effective in sensitising a substantial segment of the population out of reach of conventional means of communication. In addition, the Unit organized women's groups at the community level into a network for information sharing and outreach to the rest of the population. By forming and educating this women's network and channelling information through them, a wider audience could be sensitised and mobilized on peace and reconciliation efforts.

Radio

Lesson 9: A mission radio operation can be critical to the success of a public information strategy as it is a fast, effective and economical medium for disseminating information over a large geographical area. Through accurate and reliable reporting, it can also be an excellent means of establishing the credibility of the mission.

In Sierra Leone, radio was the most popular medium by far. In UNOMSIL, short radio programmes were produced for broadcast on local facilities with unsatisfactory results.

With the expanded mandate of the mission, the option to establish and run an independent UN radio station with nationwide reach was adopted. It was expected to play a significant role in disarmament and demobilization by disseminating information to all parts of the country, including rebel-held areas, and in providing airtime to UN entities operating in Sierra Leone. The local broadcasting landscape consisted of three Freetown-based FM stations and two FM stations in Bo and Kenema, all with limited reach. The Government-owned broadcasting service had a short-wave service, which was only partly functional. UNAMSIL radio equipment was donated by Denmark for use in peacekeeping operations and had been used by the UN mission in the Central African Republic prior to it being shipped to Freetown in mid-May 2000.

From an initial 8 hours a day of programming, Radio UNAMSIL developed into a 24-hour operation covering 90 per cent of the country with regular newscasts broadcasting in local Krio, Mende, Temne, Limba languages and became one of the leading radio stations in Sierra Leone. Radio UNAMSIL maintained a permanent presence in the different provinces with local staff filing regular reports. Coverage included all core UNAMSIL activities together with news and current affairs and activities of UN agencies and partner organizations in Sierra Leone. It also supported government agencies and programmes by producing public service announcements and was instrumental in promoting DDR by airing a weekly one-hour programme entitled “Time for Reintegration”.

Radio UNAMSIL was an effective tool for informing and educating the people of Sierra Leone about the peace process all over the country. It earned the respect of local and international media, which used it as a reliable source of information on the peace process. It also had a positive impact on the local media. As Radio UNAMSIL's popularity increased due to its impartial and accurate coverage of events and its live reports from the provinces, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service was forced to improve transmission capabilities and quality of programmes to keep listenership.

Lesson 10: To be effective, reach of the mission radio should be as extensive as possible including to communities in the hinterland and even refugee concentrations in neighbouring countries.

The mission planned for FM and short-wave broadcasts for Radio UNAMSIL. When Radio UNAMSIL was launched, its signal reached not only the Freetown peninsula, but also up to the Guinean border and in the north-east of the country. Given the mountainous topography of Sierra Leone, additional transmitters were progressively installed as UNAMSIL gradually deployed throughout the country. With the expansion of Radio UNAMSIL transmission capacities, the mission's DDR section was able to reach out to ex-combatants in the volatile districts in the northern and eastern parts of the country and to disseminate critical and accurate information about the DDR process.

MANAGEMENT

Mission Structure

Lesson 1: A unified, cohesive mission structure is essential from the outset of a mission. If the mission structure is changed to reflect mandate revisions or enlargements, every effort should be made to rationalize the structure as a cohesive whole. The head of mission must provide timely guidance to all components and effectively direct the mission's activities to implement the mandate.

Table: Authorized Staffing Levels for UNOMSIL, UNAMSIL

Period	International Staff	Local Staff	UNVs
1 Jul 99 -19 Aug 99	50	48	0
20 Aug 99 - 22 Oct 99	110	69	0
23 Oct 99 - 7 Feb 00	228	282	72
8 Feb 00 - 30 Jun 00	245	306	79
1 Jul 00 - 31 Mar 01	245	306	79
1 Apr 01 - 30 Jun 01	333	585	130
1 July 01 - 30 Sept 01	380	611	168

The table provides an indicative summary of the authorized staffing levels of the UN presence in Sierra Leone. The table indicates an almost continuous revision of the authorized staffing levels from 1 July 1999 onwards until the drawdown, which began in 2002. This was a consequence of constant mandate revisions and increasing tasks that the mission was expected to perform. This led to an “add-on” effect, where personnel and components were added on without clear thought given to their integration into the mission and the mission's activities as a whole.

A major structural revision came with the appointment of two DSRSGs, one for operations and management and the other for governance and stabilization. The DSRSG for Operations and Management was appointed in July 2000 to assist the SRSG in the overall political leadership, operations and management of the mission following the crisis of May 2000 and the recommendations of the Eisele assessment mission. The DSRSG was responsible for developing policies and procedures to establish an efficient interface between the civilian and military components of the mission, in particular as regards the translation of the political objectives of the mission into military concepts and plans, as well as to ensure the smooth functioning of an integrated civilian/military administrative and logistical support structure.

In keeping with the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Security Council mission to Sierra Leone of October 2000, a position of DSRSG for governance and stabilization was established in March 2001 to strengthen the

coordination of the missions activities in the economic, social and governance fields with UN agencies, donors, international financial institutions and various international stakeholders. The DSRSG also functioned as the UNDP Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sierra Leone. This appointment was useful in bridging the gap between UNAMSIL and other UN agencies.

The appointments of the two DSRSGs provided some rationale to the mission structure, although confusion remained as to why certain components reported directly to the SRSG, while others went through the two DSRSGs. An office for Integrated and Administrative Support Services was created to facilitate closer integration of the military and civilian components, particularly for administration and logistics issues.

Cooperation and Coordination with Peacekeeping Partners

Lesson 2: To ensure holistic and clear guidance for a mission, cooperation and coordination within the different components of the mission as well as with external partners (such as TCCs, other entities of the UN system) must be institutionalized. This should preferably be at all three important levels of operations and planning: strategic (political decision-making bodies and secretariats); operational (political and military mission headquarters in theatre); and tactical (subordinate field level headquarters/regional administration).

Lesson 3: Various mechanisms to improve information flows within a mission should be considered, including sharing senior management decisions among all staff, regular town hall meetings should also be held to allow all mission personnel an opportunity to raise issues of concern and obtain information from senior management.

The Eisele assessment mission to UNAMSIL in early June 2000 found a peacekeeping operation with little cohesion among the various components of the mission. There was limited cooperation or coordination on planning or operations and information flows within the mission were extremely poor. There was no mechanism for integrated information gathering or distribution. The cooperation between the military component and the civilian side of the mission was also extremely poor. Within the military component, the different national contingents had different interpretations and understanding of the mandate and the rules of engagement.

The Eisele report made several recommendations to improve cooperation and coordination among the different components in the mission and to improve the flow of information. The report also recommended the establishment of a deputy SRSG post to assist the SRSG with the general management of the mission.

The mission made changes in integrated planning and decision-making to put the recommendations into effect and improve the flow of information within the mission. Coordination with Headquarters in New York was facilitated by regular video teleconferences in which issues could be discussed on a daily basis, if necessary.

Although information flows improved over time, there was still some confusion caused by various lines of communication between the Headquarters in New York and the mission. On the other hand, the use of code cables to convey routine administrative and other information was found to be counter-productive, centralizing authority for the exchange of such routine information in only top management. Guidelines for communication could be developed by DPKO, including guidance on the use of code cables and other forms of communication with Headquarters.

In the area of finance, several good practices for improving cooperation were identified. Relations between UNAMSIL and Headquarters in New York on financial issue was considered good and the recent delegation of authority for the petty cash approval system and the write-off responsibilities were considered excellent initiatives and a step in the right direction. The new results based budgeting system had encouraged a more consultative approach to mission budgeting, and provided the CAO with the necessary flexibility to exercise control over the day-to-day management of mission funds. Budget templates provided by Headquarters in New York had aided the standardization of reporting, inputs, data collection and presentation of budgets.

Coordination with external partners was also vital. UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors and international NGOs were all present in Sierra Leone, each acting with their own mandate, priorities and goals. The lack of a coordinated approach from the beginning, even from UNOMSIL days, resulted in strained relations between the peacekeeping mission and the humanitarian community. The appointment of a DSRSG who was also the Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator created an institutional mechanism for cooperation and allowed greater access by the humanitarian community to the peacekeeping mission.

From late 2000, NGOs and humanitarian organizations were using UNAMSIL transportation assets for the distribution of assistance. This potentially fostered closer cooperation between the peacekeeping mission and the humanitarian agencies. Another example of cooperation was when accusations surfaced of sexual exploitation of women and children beneficiaries of assistance in West Africa in 2001. A collaborative effort was made to address the concerns that were raised. As a result of this joint effort, a UNAMSIL Personnel Conduct Committee was established to raise awareness among UN personnel of their obligations and responsibilities vis a vis the host population. The Committee also monitored behaviour of personnel in cooperation with humanitarian partners. The creation of similar monitoring mechanisms can be considered for other missions.

Cooperation with TCCs was vital for UNAMSIL. In the early stages of UNAMSIL deployment, there was a perception among TCCs that they were risking the lives of their personnel on the ground, but were being excluded from the policy-making process at Headquarters in New York. It was not until coordination and cooperation was improved between the Security Council, TCCs and DPKO through various mechanisms, such as regular briefings by the President of the Security Council with TCCs and DPKO, that coordination with the TCCs improved, which was reflected in the overall strengthening

of the mission. The planning for the downsizing of UNAMSIL benefited from this experience and was an integrated process involving all necessary components of the mission, the Secretariat and Member States.

Integration and Coordination in Humanitarian Assistance

Lesson 4: The appointment of a DSRSG, who also has responsibility for the coordination of humanitarian assistance, can be an advantage to humanitarian programmes, the peacekeeping operation and long-term recovery.

UNAMSIL was mandated to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, where as UNOMSIL only had an obligation to monitor adherence to international humanitarian law. In fact, relations between UNOMSIL and the wider humanitarian community had been poor, and had included allegations by the humanitarian community of dissembling by the mission on security matters. Initially, UNAMSIL's relationship with the humanitarian community was no better. UN agencies thought the mission was not sufficiently transparent regarding its planning and knowledge of political developments.

In October 2000, the Security Council mission that visited Sierra Leone recommended that UNAMSIL should be restructured to include a senior official with responsibility for coordinating humanitarian assistance and overseeing a wide range of other assistance activities. In January 2001, the post of DSRSG for Governance and Stabilization was created. The appointee was to be UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative, UN Humanitarian Coordinator and also assume responsibility for managing a number of other related initiatives, including rehabilitation of the justice system.

The UN Country Team – member agencies most of which had been in Sierra Leone long before the mission was established – reacted positively to the appointment. It offered, in their view, clear and dedicated access to the peacekeeping operation and to political and security discussions at the highest levels of the mission. The personal style of the appointee, which emphasized inclusion and free exchange of information, was also welcome. The new DSRSG was able to bring together a wide range of assistance actors to address issues that would have otherwise been approached piecemeal. The result was the creation of efficiencies and greater cohesion within different components of the assistance effort. The DSRSG post also presented a clear focal point to which donor Governments could address their queries and concerns.

The humanitarian community recognized the value added by the humanitarian coordinator's involvement with UNAMSIL and his full access to its assets and capacities. It was in fact only after UNAMSIL deployed into RUF areas in early 2001 that widespread access became possible. Having suffered material losses in May 2000, most NGOs and UN agencies were only willing to enter RUF territory under the security umbrella provided by UNAMSIL.

Strategic Planning

Lesson 5: To assist in strategic planning and to achieve component coordination, resourcing and clarity of roles, the development of a mission mandate implementation plan is recommended. The mandate implementation plan should identify overall strategic objectives of the mandate within a given timeframe and the activities that the mission will undertake to achieve them. The plan must be reviewed and revised regularly to keep it relevant to the situation on the ground. Each mission component should be able to develop its own implementation plan to fit into the mission's overall plan. This will also assist in identifying resource requirements, responsibilities, relationships and benchmarks for performance and assist in integration of all components.

A vital element in coordinating activities is to clearly define common goals and objectives. These provide all mission components of a peacekeeping operation with a coherent framework for their activities. Initially, no such holistic plan combining all aspects of peace, security, relief and recovery was laid out for the mission in Sierra Leone. Several components felt they were not fully integrated into the mission and its activities and were isolated from political developments and decision-making. There was also a perception that not all activities of the mission received the attention from the mission's leadership that they deserved. The lack of adequate attention to maintaining a robust public information capacity, for example, was in part responsible for the growing negative image the mission was developing in early 2000. Roles and responsibilities were not always clarified, particularly in areas where two or more components had overlapping responsibilities.

Several substantive components also raised concerns with the provision of timely administrative support for their activities. In part, this was attributed to the lack of understanding by the administration and support elements of the substantive role and responsibilities of each component. Another factor was probably inadequate mandate implementation planning by the components themselves reflected in inadequate planning for projected activities and associated resource requirements. Each component must also be encouraged to participate in the budget process for the mission. This would ensure their operational costs are identified within the mission budget or through funding available from various trust funds.

Mandate implementation planning should be parallel with the results based budgeting process that also demands the definition of clear objectives for the mission as a whole and individual components. Further, it should assist with periodic evaluations of performance based on identified benchmarks or indicators of success.

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

Recruitment

Lesson 1: It is essential to select and appoint international staff with the necessary professional skills and experience for key positions from the start of a mission.

The recruitment process for both UNOMSIL and UNAMSIL was slow, resulting in many key functions being under-manned or unmanned, which had a negative effect on the mission's operations. During the early phase of UNOMSIL, the official vacancy rate for international staff was at 32 per cent¹ and sometimes as high as 68 per cent². During the UNAMSIL period, the vacancy rate remained between 11 to 28 per cent³, with certain key senior posts vacant for long periods of time. Without adequate systems in place for the rapid identification and recruitment of suitable candidates, in the rush to fill spots, inexperienced or unsuitable individuals were selected to serve with the mission. Many of the recruitment decisions were also made with no input from the mission.

The establishment of mission “start-up” teams and the early identification of staff for key posts should speed up the recruitment process. In addition, DPKO should improve cooperation with other UN agencies in developing a roster of candidates for field missions. Candidates for posts requiring specific or technical expertise, such as public information officers, human rights monitors and child protection advisers, should be reviewed in consultation with the department or office that has the relevant substantive expertise, such as the DPI, OHCHR, UNICEF, respectively. The substantive offices should ensure that selected candidates are adequately briefed on their functions in the mission before deployment. Institutionalized cooperative arrangements, such as the MOU between DPKO and OHCHR, can contribute to such cooperation and coordination in staff selection and preparation.

Based on the DPKO's recruitment reforms, all vacancies at the professional level are now widely advertised, internally and externally. Once PMSS has reviewed the candidates, a short list of at least three candidates is forwarded to the mission for selection. Though the reforms are an improvement in the recruitment process, it will probably take some time before they make a substantial difference in recruitment for the field. It was estimated that it still takes an average of six to eight months to fill a vacant post. Delays are also caused by limited resources in PMSS, where one recruitment officer is responsible for staffing more than one mission at a time.

Lesson 2: An effort should be made to integrate the three existing databases for personnel information or to ensure that they are compatible and updated on a regular basis. The information in the databases must be accessible to the missions and the mission staff must receive appropriate training in using the databases.

¹ A/54/778, Table 2, p. 6

² A/55/853, Table 2, p. 8

³ A/56/833, Table 3, p. 8; A/56/621, p.1 & para 13.

The use of multiple databases hampered the execution of personnel related actions in UNAMSIL. There were three personnel databases: the Field Personnel Management System (FPMS), the Peacekeeping Database (PKDB) and the Integrated Mission Information System (IMIS). Each database had its own personnel functions, such as salary payments, administration information and staffing tables. FPMS tracked the structure of the mission based on its budget submissions. PKDB was a similar database but based its structure on the New York Headquarters' budget submission. IMIS processed salary payments for all UN staff members. These three databases are not linked to each other and since they are not simultaneously updated, personnel information in these three databases does not always match.

Until recently, UNAMSIL did not have access to all three of the databases. As a result, the mission had little opportunity to control its own personnel issues. Steps were taken to rectify the problem by training an UNAMSIL administrative assistant on the IMIS database, which needs specific training for optimal use. If such training had been conducted from the beginning, on a regular basis and for a larger number of staff, UNAMSIL would have been able to manage personnel issues more effectively on its own, rather than having to rely on New York for executing personnel requests, such as home leave.

Lesson 3: To better understand the needs of the mission, the recruitment officer responsible for a mission should be encouraged to visit the mission area regularly or be assigned to the mission for a short period.

In June 2002, a team from PMSS visited UNAMSIL to assess the personnel situation and to brief the staff on the ongoing recruitment reforms. The team included the UNAMSIL recruitment officer. This visit, though late in the mission's life, was welcomed by UNAMSIL staff and considered a positive development. It gave staff an opportunity to raise their concerns with the recruitment officer responsible for the mission and to obtain information. The visit improved relations between the mission and PMSS and similar, regular visits should be encouraged.

Lesson 4: UN requirement for gender balance, especially at senior levels, must be met and managers held accountable. Designation of Focal Points for Women should be considered, with the staff members so designated being at an appropriately senior level facilitating access to senior management.

Recruitment for UNOMSIL or UNAMSIL did not reflect adequate consideration of gender balance in the civilian component of the mission. Lack of gender balance at the senior management levels was particularly evident.

To promote the equal participation and treatment of men and women in peacekeeping operations, DPKO suggested to all missions in 2000 that they consider appointing a Focal Point for Women to assist the head of mission in promoting gender awareness and a supportive work environment for all staff. UNAMSIL did appoint a Focal Point for

Women. However, the Focal Point was ineffective due to a variety of reasons. Most staff were not aware that such an appointment had been made or that they had the option to seek guidance and support from her on conditions of service. The Focal Point was also not at a level where she had access to mission leadership and was not fully aware of the terms of reference for Secretariat Focal Points for Women. Given the size of the mission, the function of Focal Point for Women should have been shared with more than one individual and the designations should have been at a senior enough level to have access to the senior managers.

Morale of Staff

Lesson 5: To encourage greater cohesiveness within a mission, a staff welfare committee should be established to organize staff activities to promote informal interaction between staff in different areas of the mission, hence, improving working relations.

In general, team spirit was not a strong point in UNAMSIL. Though there was a sense of camaraderie within some components, the mission as a whole lacked a sense of cohesiveness. There were few extra curricular activities organized by and for staff. Yet, longevity of staff was one of the strengths of UNAMSIL, with many staff members serving with the mission for several years. Regular staff activities could have encouraged an *esprit de corps*.

Lesson 6: There is a need for qualified stress management personnel to counsel staff in peacekeeping operations. Part of the checkout process for staff should include a session with such a counsellor.

The environment in Sierra Leone was highly stressful for all staff. Yet, neither UNOMSIL nor UNAMSIL staff had access to a stress counsellor. One of the military contingents had a psychologist, and many civilian staff members sought informal counselling from him whenever he was in Freetown. Staff members of the mission should have had an opportunity to share experiences and talk about their personal lessons learned in the mission. Such opportunities were not formally provided.

Training and Preparedness

Lesson 7: All heads of components should be fully briefed in New York before taking up their field assignments. They should also be encouraged to visit Headquarters on an annual basis to encourage familiarity with UN rules, procedures and processes and to establish personal contacts with key personnel in the various offices and departments that support the mission.

Some mission senior managers were not familiar with UN rules, regulations and procedures. This resulted in poor decisions, which could have been avoided if senior managers were fully aware of UN rules and procedures and the decision-making process

at Headquarters in New York. Poor management decisions not only hurt the effectiveness of the mission but was detrimental to staff morale as well.

Lesson 8: Upon arrival in a mission area, all staff members should receive a proper induction. The induction course should cover all relevant subjects, including background information on the mission, its mandate, the history of the conflict, information on local cultural and religious practices, the obligations and responsibilities of UN personnel in the host country, standards of personal conduct, etc. Each component should also create specific induction packages for their new staff members, explaining tasks and functions.

UNAMSIL had no induction programme for incoming staff. This left staff to find their own way. Some UNAMSIL staff had no prior experience working with the UN or in a peacekeeping mission and were not well prepared for their field assignments. This affected their ability to be operational on deployment. Although the Personnel Management and Support Service (PMSS) had prepared Mission Briefing Notes for new staff, not all staff received them. The Notes were often out of date and lacked critical information, such as information on insurance coverage. The Civilian Training Section of PMSS, which is responsible for assisting in training of field staff, should consider the development of standardized induction briefing modules that can be used by all missions, with some tailoring to the specific mission circumstances.

Lesson 9: UN Staff rules, regulations and other administrative issuances governing conduct and behaviour of staff should be well understood by all mission personnel. Staff should be made aware of the need for them to respect the highest standards of integrity and personal behaviour expected of personnel associated with the UN. Mission leadership should be responsible and accountable for the maintenance of good order and discipline in the mission area.

The attitude and behaviour of UN troops and civilian staff have a direct bearing on the image and credibility of a mission. Allegations of misconduct by members of the mission at strained relations with the local community. It was particularly demoralizing when accusations of sexual misconduct received widespread media attention. In response to those allegations, UNAMSIL leadership took several measures to raise awareness of UN standards of conduct and established improved monitoring mechanisms. A good practice adopted in UNAMSIL was the establishment of the Personnel Conduct Committee, which developed mass awareness programmes targeting civilian and military personnel on the rules and regulations for UN personnel, including the monitoring the conduct of all mission personnel.

Health Issues

Lesson 10: Adequate medical facilities should be provided for civilian staff from the beginning of the mission. The facilities should be easily accessible and should include a gynaecologist. It should also include a tropical diseases specialist, as

appropriate. An option could be a joint medical facility of all UN entities present in the mission area.

Lesson 11: A multi-pronged preventive and treatment strategy for serious health hazards, such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, should be adopted in peacekeeping missions.

Until the autumn of 2002, UNAMSIL had a Level 2 medical facility provided by a TCC. Female civilian staff found this inadequate. Many complained that the medical staff did not speak English, there was a general lack of hygiene and there were no female doctors available, no gynaecologist and no tropical diseases specialist on the medical team. A Sierra Leone Level 3 hospital existed in Freetown, however, there was a general lack of confidence in the facility. In 2002, a new civilian Level 3 medical facility was established for UNAMSIL staff.

Malaria was one of the serious health hazards in Sierra Leone, yet there seemed to be a general lack of awareness of malaria prevention and many chose to ignore the recommended malaria prophylaxis regime. There was also no well-developed strategy for HIV/AIDS awareness training and free condoms were not provided.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

APC	All People's Congress
CDF	Civil Defence Force
COE	Contingent-owned equipment
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DSRSG	Deputy special representative of the Secretary-General
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FPMS	Field Personnel Management System
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
IMIS	Integrated Mission Information System
LOA	Letter of Assist
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NACSA	National Commission for Social Action
NCDDR	National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMS	Office of Mission Support
PCC	Police contributing country
PKDB	Peacekeeping Database
PMSS	Personnel Management and Support Service
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SDS	Strategic Deployment Stocks
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLPF	Sierra Leone Police Force
TCC	Troop contributing country
TRC	Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOE	UN-owned equipment
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
US	United States