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STATEMENT BY

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THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON THE SITUATION IN SIERRA LEONE

New York, February 09, 2009

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Mr. President,

Uganda would like to thank the Executive Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the UN Integrated Peace-building Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), Mr. Michael von der Schulenberg, the Permanent Representative of Netherlands, Ambassador Frank Majoor, in his capacity as the Chair of the country-specific configuration of the Peace-building Commission (PBC), and the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, Ambassador Shekou Touray for their Reports.

We are pleased to note that the Reports generally provide a positive assessment of the political and economic situation in Sierra Leone, as well as the role of UNIPSIL through the Joint Vision of the UN Family.

In particular we commend the Government and the people of Sierra Leone on the on-going consolidation of stability and security in Sierra Leone following the peaceful transfer of power to President Ernest Koroma through the general elections of 2007, as well as successfully holding local elections in July 2008.

It is encouraging to further note that Sierra Leone was able to achieve a GDP growth rate of 6% in 2008 underpinned by expansion of the agricultural, construction and service sectors. Although the rate of growth is slightly lower than the 7% attained in 2007, it is significant for a country that experienced a GDP decline of -17.5% in 1997.

As pointed out in the Report, the country still faces a number of socio-economic challenges that require a holistic approach. President Koroma's Agenda for Change significantly lays out the basic policies and key priorities of the Government for the next three years in such critical areas as economic growth, delivery of social services, and infrastructure development.

Mr. President,

Uganda appreciates the commitment by the Government and the Development Partners to raise USD 1.2 billion out of the total USD 2.1 billion required in the medium term to achieve the objectives of the President's Agenda for Change. We note that there is a funding gap of about USD 1 billion to ensure its full implementation.

Given the critical importance of having sufficient funding for this programme, my delegation would like to know the progress so far regarding the establishment of the Multi Donor Trust Fund, and the mobilization of resources to be administered by UNDP. We call upon UNPSIL to work with all the stakeholders to mobilize the requisite funds.

In spite of the current global financial and economic crisis, we request the Development Partners to ensure timely disbursement of the pledged funds which are critical to the sustainability of the peace-building efforts.

It is also a shared responsibility between the Government and the Development Partners to ensure that the funds are utilized on core activities and projects that spur economic growth, create employment opportunities, and improve the standards of living of the Sierra Leonean people.

Implementation of the decentralization and devolution of authority process needs to be expedited because it will enhance service delivery. We urge the Government of Sierra Leone and UNPSIL to continue strengthening the capacity of national institutions to address such challenges as fighting corruption, fighting the increasing cases of drug and human trafficking, as well as piracy.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, peace-building is a fundamental component of the three pillars which form the mandate of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. It requires reinforcing contributions from a wide range of sectors and actors.

The progress so far made in Sierra Leone is a good example of what can be achieved through an integrated and collaborative approach amongst the Government, UN Agencies and the Development Partners.

I thank you.