

Box 3.3.1 UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

The first fully integrated mission of the UN Department of Political Affairs, the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), completed its initial year of operation in September 2009. UNIPSIL works with the UN Country Team, the Peacebuilding Commission, and the Peacebuilding Fund to help consolidate the peace and restore democracy in Sierra Leone by providing support to national and local efforts for identifying and resolving tensions and threats of potential conflict.

In helping Sierra Leone further consolidate its postconflict recovery, UNIPSIL serves to implement the UN's "Joint Vision" integrated peacebuilding strategy under the consolidated leadership of an Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, Michael von der Schulenburg, who also serves as the UN Country Team resident coordinator and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative. UNIPSIL has a light footprint, with a staff ceiling limited to seventy-three individuals, thirty-two of whom are locally recruited, and with about 75 percent of staff devoted to programmatic rather than administrative tasks. UNIPSIL had eight

regional field offices at the end of 2009—three in the provincial centers of Makeni, Bo, and Kenema, and five in the local district centers of Koidu, Kabala, Kailahun, Pujehun, and Port Loko.

Following politically motivated violence in March 2009, the two main political parties in Sierra Leone issued a joint communiqué on 2 April, pledging their commitment to strengthening the peace consolidation process. The UN's Joint Vision was developed as its contribution to the government of Sierra Leone's strategic framework for 2009–2012, known as the Agenda for Change. The initiative was endorsed by the UN Peacebuilding Commission on 10 June at a high-level special session.

Ultimately, the Joint Vision serves to streamline the various UN and international peace consolidation and development efforts through joint planning, implementation, and coordination mechanisms. The UN has identified the following four programmatic priorities: economic integration of rural areas, economic and social integration of youth, equitable access to health services, and accessible and credible public service.

The total resources required for implementing the Joint Vision for the four-year period is estimated to be \$345 million, which would require \$204 million in new funding. The Joint Vision has established a multidonor trust fund to address this financing gap, with the UNDP administering the fund for all UN agencies. The trust fund is designed to attract donors that have no representation in Sierra Leone and that intend to channel funds through the UN's infrastructure.

On 15 September 2009, the Security Council passed a resolution to extend UNIPSIL's mandate another year. The resolution authorizes the mission to assist the government with the 2012 election process, constitutional reform, building police capacity, tackling corruption, illicit drug trafficking, and organized crime, and addressing youth unemployment. It is anticipated that, following the 2012 presidential election, the UN presence in Sierra Leone will be able to begin its transition into a UNDP-led Country Team. Until then, UNIPSIL will continue to play its crucial supporting and coordinating role.