Almost six years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that led to the restoration of peace and stability, Liberia’s Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation (DDRR) programme has been closed.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf announced the formal closure of the programme at the Centennial Pavilion in downtown Monrovia in July. Noting that the success of the DDRR programme is a testimony to the return of peace and security, the Liberian leader acknowledged the contribution of multilateral and bilateral institutions towards the DDRR process and for the consolidation of peace and promotion of democracy.

The programme, funded through a Multi-Donor Trust Fund, succeeded in disarming 103,019 ex-combatants and demobilizing 101,495 ex-combatants who participated in the country’s 14-year divisive civil war. About 98,000 of the demobilized ex-combatants received reintegration assistance in the form of vocational training and formal education.

In her remarks, Deputy Special Representative for Rule of Law Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu reiterated that the end of the DDRR programme is a sign of progress in the peace and recovery process. “Liberia has made substantial strides towards consolidating peace and stability and the time for targeted assistance to ex-combatants has passed,” stressed the deputy UN envoy. She expressed appreciation to all the international partners who supported the Liberian Government and all the relevant stakeholders throughout the process and provided the requisite funds to implement the programme.

Pointing out that all future efforts towards reintegration and reconciliation will be community-based, Mensa-Bonsu said: “It is now time to send a clear message that targeted assistance to ex-combatants has ended and that, from now on, assistance should be extended to the entire community, rather than to a special section.”

The CPA, which was signed in late 2003 in the Ghanaian capital, Accra, called upon the UN to assist Liberia with the DDRR of ex-combatants. Through the framework of a Joint Implementation Unit, the UN family closely collaborated with, supported and assisted the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation in a tremendous logistical, financial and implementation operation that sought to rehabilitate ex-combatants and reintegrate them into society. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has been actively involved with the DDRR process from disarmament to reintegration during which peacekeepers travelled throughout Liberia in an effort to make communities once again safe for all. The Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery (RRR) Section served as the focal point within UNMIL for the DDRR process.

Reminding all that reintegration is a continuous and long-term process, the DRSG cited unemployment as one of the greatest among the remaining challenges which national partners will need to overcome. “Sustained efforts are needed to address unemployment and related factors of insecurity, and to open up more avenues for economic survival and for self-actualization,” said the deputy envoy, assuring the gathering that UNMIL will continue to work with other UN agencies and various national and international partners to help the government towards peace and stability in Liberia.
Ellen Margrethe Løj of a tree planting campaign in Monrovia, the exercise is gaining momentum in the sectors. We bring you stories of UNMIL personnel and local communities embracing the tree planting campaign in Tubmanburg and Kakata.

We head to the sectors to bring you stories of peacekeepers are rendering services to Liberians beyond their call of duty in places like Buchanan, Gbarnga and Ganta, and leaving the shores of Liberia, we check-in with MOVCON in Accra.

How do you deal with a deaf and dumb person who shows up at a police station to report an alleged assault? We bring you the heart warming story of a female UN Police officer adept at sign language who was there to help the victim narrate her story.

Happy reading!

Mathew Elavanalthoduka

The Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme in Liberia has been formally closed. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said the success of the programme is an attestation of the return of total peace and security to Liberia. We bring you the details in our cover story, and we go behind the scenes in the mission’s Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery (RRR) Section which was actively working with the programme.

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Following the recent launch by Special Representative

From the Editor

After serving the UN Mission in Liberia for nearly one year and seven months, Henrik Axel Stiernblad who for most part served as UN Police Commissioner, has said goodbye to Liberia. “It’s been hard work and very rewarding,” he said adding, “I’ve experienced challenges I had thought I would have never experienced, but together with UNMIL colleagues, I believe that we have achieved successes.” He thanked UNPOL colleagues for their tremendous cooperation and all the different sections and pillars - not least the military and the rule of law.

Looking back, Stiernblad said his most important achievement during his tenure was the development of a Strategic Plan for the Liberia National Police (LNP) that has been endorsed and approved by the Government. He hoped that the Plan would continue to play a key role in carving the way forward for the newly restructured LNP.

Stiernblad goes on to take up an assignment at Sweden’s Ministry of Justice during the Swedish Presidency of the European Union. He will be a focal point for issues relating to peacekeeping and EU crisis management.

UNMIL has a new Senior Legal Adviser. He is Manuel Calzada, Spanish by birth but trained in Australia as a lawyer. Calzada first worked for the Australian Government. He later joined a commercial law firm focused on natural resources specifically mining, oil and gas. He moved on to serve as Chief Executive Officer of an Australian Gemstone Mining Company with marketing offices in Hong Kong before returning to commercial legal practice.

In 2000 Calzada joined UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in Legal Civil Administration. In 2001 he was transferred to the European Union (EU) Pillar of UNMIK where he established an EU-funded financial institution to assist former State-owned enterprises. In 2003 he joined the UNMIK Office of The Legal Adviser to the SRSG, and later headed the Legal Services Division for Publicly Owned Enterprises (POEs) of UNMIK’s Kosovo Trust Agency where his office was responsible for the management and administration of Kosovo’s POEs in energy generation and distribution, post & telecommunications, airport, and municipal enterprises in water and irrigation activities. Before his appointment to UNMIL, he was a legal consultant to the EU (TAIEX) on legislative approximation and other clients on UN-related matters. Calzada is happily married and is a father of three.
Language Learners Graduate

By Sulaiman Momodu

For the first time since language courses started in the UN mission in 2005, the Integrated Mission Training Centre (IMTC) in July this year organized a graduation ceremony for French and Arabic learners at Green Building in Monrovia.

Thirty UNMIL personnel – military, civilian and police – graduated after a three-month course and evaluation. Although certificates had always been awarded, the graduation ceremony gave the opportunity to the various language learners to meet and have fun, and featured drama performances by French learners.

Francine M’bangot of IMTC says ongoing language training courses include French beginners and intermediate, Arabic and English. “I am happy to see that people are learning UN languages but I will encourage others to come and learn both for their career and for easy interaction with people from other parts of the world,” says M’bangot, who hails from French speaking Central African Republic.

The language training manager, Teresa Pereira, said the training is very rewarding and encourages UNMIL personal to take advantage of the courses. Some of the colleagues say it had always been their desire to learn other languages and expressed their delight for the courses. “Some people only make it an emergency to learn another language when a job opportunity or travelling to another country knocks on the door. But it is always too little too late,” one colleague remarked. French tutors Boris Korey and Adjo Toussaint are pleased that both national and international staff members are participating. “But we would like to see more national staff in class as only few of them are currently doing so,” says Korey.

Obituary

Pvt. Mozaffar Rahman

Private Mozaffar Rahman of BAN-BATT-16 in Gbarnga, Bong County died at the Level III hospital (JORMED) on 22 July 2009 after a brief illness. Rahman (46) arrived in the mission area on 17 April 2009. He was a member of the Sector Reserve Company of the Bangladeshi contingent located at CARI Complex, near Gbarnga. He was a father of two sons, Shakhawat (18) and Sohel (16). His colleagues remembered him as an efficient, committed soldier and a peacemaker who always tried to maintain the image of UNMIL. “He was an upright, bold and active soldier,” one said. His remains were later airlifted to Bangladesh for burial.

New UNV Programme Manager Arrives

The UNV Support Unit has announced the arrival of the new UNV Programme Manager, Ms. Abigail Willmer, to assume responsibility for UNV volunteers in UNMIL.

Ms. Willmer, who hails from the United Kingdom and the United States of America, arrived in Monrovia on 22 July. She has over two-decades of work experience in development situations and had worked as a UK VSO volunteer and USA Peace Corps volunteer. In addition, she served as UNV Programme Officer in Mongolia, and for the past two-and-a-half years, she worked with UNIFEM in Afghanistan. Ms. Willmer brings a wealth of programme, managerial and administrative expertise to the UNV Programme in Liberia and UNMIL.
GHANBATT-10 Builds Capacity in Grand Bassa

By Frances Alesi

As its contribution towards developing the capacity of the human resource in Grand Bassa County and in Liberia, the Ghanaian Contingent (GHANBATT-10), based in Buchanan City, has been conducting series of capacity building trainings in various disciplines including general medicine and dentistry, and legal affairs. The GHANBATT-10 CIMIC Officer, Maj. Paul Hometowu, said the contingent has trained some local people in various fields to build their capacity and take over the affairs of their country.

At the request of the County administration, the peacekeepers organized an eight-week capacity building training, which ended in July and was conducted in various disciplines: computer training, generator repair and maintenance, educational psychology and teaching skills, road traffic regulations, community radio broadcast, and basic agriculture. A total of 45 participants were trained, of which more than half were women, who also participated in the generator repair and maintenance course. The trainees were drawn from the County administration while others were from civil groups and the youth. The training was conducted in coordination with the County Administrative Office, which also did the selection of the trainees.

Training in road traffic regulations targeted motorcycle riders, given the fact that most motorcycle riders in Buchanan City do not observe traffic regulations, take the law into their hands, and are always in confrontation with the police.

The GHANBATT-10 Commanding Officer, Lt.-Col Samuel Asare congratulated the trainees upon completion of the programme. He said Liberia has a lot of resources and noted that if the human resource is adequately developed, there will be no limit to what the people can achieve. The Grand Bassa County Superintendent, Hon. Julia M. Duncan-Cassell, said the capacity building programme is in line with the County’s goals and plans, and in line with the Government’s Poverty Reduction Strategy. She appealed for more training for the youth to keep them busy and trained in vocational skills, since there is no vocational training school in the county.

Nibatt-20 Plant Trees in Tubmanburg

By Siebo Williams

Nigerian peacekeepers (Nibatt-20) serving in Tubmanburg, Bomi County undertook a tree planting exercise in the county in the first week of July. In pouring rain the Nibatt-20 soldiers were joined in the planting exercise by local dignitaries, UNMIL personnel including the Sector A1 Regional Administrative Officer, Joe Mshindo, and women and youth groups. Several trees were planted in the Fotorma Compound, which houses the headquarters of NIBATT-20 in Tubmanburg. The peacekeepers will end their tour of duty in the county in August and will be replaced by a new company.

The Commanding Officer Col. S. K. Abubakar said the tree planting exercise was in continuation of the tree planting campaign initially launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to plant seven billion trees in the world. He said the exercise by NIBATT-20 was their way of identifying with the people of Bomi County to ensure that their environment is protected from violent storms in future. Col. Abubakar called on the locals to prioritize tree planting in and around their communities to contribute to address climate change. “If Tubmanburg and Bomi County are to be protected from global climate change, every citizen of the county must plant a tree,” he said.

For his part, Superintendent of Bomi County Mohammed Massaley lauded the effort of the peacekeepers, noting that environment is about life, and trees provide life. He disclosed that for the past 20 years the county has not planted trees to replace the damaged ones and consequently violent storms have caused disaster in the communities. He thanked the soldiers for thinking about the county and promised to ensure that district commissioners emulate the peacekeepers’ example by encouraging their communities to engage in tree planting as part of the campaign against climate change. The City Mayor of Tubmanburg, Gbotty Karnley, said the tree planting initiative by the peacekeepers is a legacy to the locals.
Peacekeepers Plant Trees in Kakata

Peacekeepers -- military, civilian and police -- in the Margibi County capital of Kakata have launched a tree planting campaign in close coordination with and involvement of the county authorities.

The campaign is in response to the UNEP Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign that was recently launched by the UN Special Representative in Monrovia. In his remark, Head of Field Office Ivan Kotov recalled that as a child his grandfather once told him to “always keep in mind that a man is a real man only if in his lifetime he has built a house for his family and has planted at least one tree for each member of his family”. He appealed to each and everyone to actively support the campaign.

The Nigerian contingent (NIBATT-21), staff members of the UN Office, the Assistant Superintendent for Development, Land Commissioner, Forestry and Development Authority representatives and other officials together with the Sector “A” Chief of Operations were involved in the planting exercise. Trees were planted at the UN Compound, the County Administrative building, Rennie Hospital, Telecom tower, Youth Street, Football stadium, the correction facilities at Kakata prison and Bondiway and other places. More than 500 seedlings have been planted. The campaign continues.

BANENGR-11 Hits the Ground Running

J. Wesley Washington

The Bangladeshi Engineering Contingent (BANENGR-11) based in Ganta, Nimba County, seems to have hit the ground running since arriving in UNMIL a few months ago.

As the raining season sets in, part of the contingent’s mandate is to ensure that UNMIL’s main and secondary supply routes remain open and passable all year round. So the first task was an assessment of bridges along these routes. Apparently the bridges along these highways, constructed more than 30 years ago, are virtually damaged and are in dire need of repair.

One of the worst affected was the bridge over River Gunu, some 9.2 kilometers along the Ganta-Tappita highway which needed immediate repair. In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works the engineers immediately got into action by launching the construction of a 50-foot Bailey bridge with a 60-ton capacity to enhance mobility through the route even during this rainy season.

Maj. Tarek Chowdhury, BANENGR-11 Platoon Commander responsible for the construction, said if they had not replaced the bridge, it would have likely been washed away and probably caused a bigger problem along the route which also connects Grand Gedeh County and the rest of south-eastern Liberia. “It was necessary to immediately replace this bridge with a Bailey bridge which took us just two days to construct,” he said. Local residents, who also joined in the construction, were quite delighted upon its completion. Drivers plying the route shouted “God bless, God bless; thank you Bangladeshis.”

Other roads currently being rehabilitated include the Ganta-Tappita and the Sanniquellie-Loguatuo roads. Maintenance work on the 101 km Ganta-Tappita highway which also connects Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire is in progress for damaged culverts and the most critical sections of the road. Already, 35 critical spots including 11.8 km critical sections of the road have been repaired. A total of 15 km of side drainage has also been re-excavated on either side of the road with their direct supervision.

Rehabilitation has also begun along the Sanniquellie-Loguatuo highway expected to be carried out in three phases. The first is the construction of three culverts and the repair of the most critical sections. The second is routine maintenance to be carried out during the rainy season and the last phase includes the rehabilitation of the entire road to make it an all weather road.
**Nigerian FPU-10 Builds Church**

By J. Wesley Washington

Christian residents of the Gbeansua community, near Gbarnga City, Bong County, will shortly be proud beneficiaries of a church edifice now under construction in their vicinity thanks to the 10th contingent of the UN Mission’s Nigerian Formed Police Unit (NFPU-10) stationed in Sector B-2.

Because of the distance to Gbarnga City where most churches are located, most Christians in the neighbourhood worship with the officers at the NFPU Christian Fellowship Chapel situated at the old Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC) warehouse, within the compound of the FPU. “Part of our outreach within locales where we operate is to work in collaboration with them and try to impact positively to their lives as much as we can. As such, we decided to re-erect this church structure to make it more solid and concrete for the benefit of the people here and to the glory of God,” said Assistant Commissioner Clement Ezeifebikwa, who is also Commander of the NFPU-10. Members of the contingent (120 officers and men) have contributed generously to ensure the success of the project before the end their mission in September. Ezeifebikwa noted that though it’s the contingent’s initiative, whoever would want to contribute generously to the project is free to do so.

The NFPU-10 Commander stressed that though their deployment in Liberia is to ensure peace, it cannot be done in isolation of the fear of God. “The Bible says the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom,” he said, adding that if God is embraced, lasting peace of God will come to bear on the community and the country as a whole.

James Jende, a resident of the community who is also part of the church construction team, said he was quite delighted with the efforts being made by NFPU-10. “I am motivated to volunteer my services because there is a saying when someone is washing your back you should be washing your stomach,” he said with a smile. Besides this project, the NFPU-10 contingent also undertakes regular free medical outreach to various communities. “We came with enough high quality drugs,” Ezeifebikwa said, noting that since their arrival over four months ago, they have treated over 1,000 locals.

**Peacekeepers Avert “Black Sunday” in Grand Gedeh**

By I. Solo Kelgbeh

The timely rescue intervention of the Ethiopian Battalion (ETHBATT-20) and the Chinese Engineering Battalion 8 during a recent flood in Zwedru City, Grand Gedeh County, prevented a tragedy in the county. Disaster loomed large one early Sunday morning last month when heavy downpour caused the Goonie River and Zwe to burst their banks, trapping over 500 people, many of them women and children.

With lives in danger, Ethbatt 20 was deployed at 0400am to Krahville, Todayville and Enrz - the communities worst hit by the flooding. They were later joined by Chinese Engineering Battalion 8. The peacekeepers braved the rain and flood, rescued the trapped residents and their belongings, and transported them to the Zwedru Youth Center. Additionally, the Ethiopians donated food items including cooking oil, sardines, biscuits, and 12 bags of 25kg rice, to respond to the victims’ cries for food. The Chinese also did likewise with two bags of 25kg rice, biscuits and oil.

Locals have hailed the peacekeepers as “saviours” for their commitment in rescuing the flood victims without any human casualty. Grand Gedeh County Superintendent Christopher Beh Bailey says the peacekeepers are “true peace ambassadors”. For his part, the Liberia Refugees Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) Region Six Field Officer, Alfred Juyne said the presence of the peacekeepers prevented a “Black Sunday” in the County.
“One Family, One Garden”

The Bangladeshi engineering contingent (BANENGR-12) has started a joint venture with the Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) of Liberia located in Gbarnga, Bong County, to encourage local residents to engage in agricultural activities.

Upon their deployment in April this year, the peacekeepers identified non availability of a variety of seeds, fertilizers and equipment as among the reasons why some Liberians are not interested in agriculture. The BANENGR-12 peacekeepers in collaboration with CARI experts brought in hybrid agro products for use by farmers. The theme of the project is “One family, one garden” as it hopes to encourage every Liberian family, especially those working with the project to cultivate at least one garden.

The three-acre pilot project within the CARI complex involves 48 persons who go about their routine business in the morning and make way to the demonstration site in the afternoon to learn about good agricultural practices. A team from the contingent supervises the project; the World Food Programme provides incentives to farmers while CARI experts provide equipment and manpower. During a visit to the pilot project site in July, UNMIL Today saw enthusiastic locals busy at work while a tractor was ploughing acres of a nearby field where those being trained will get plots of land to cultivate. Seeds from the pilot project will be distributed to the farmers and eventually to other parts of Liberia.

BANENGR-12 Trains Electricians

As efforts are underway to provide power in various parts of Liberia, Bangladeshi engineers (BANENGR-12) in Gbarnga, Bong County, have commenced the training of electricians. Sixteen students who were recently selected through an entrance examination have undergone six weeks of training which ended in June. Added to theory, the training was mostly practical.

Regional Administrative Officer Abdul Hakim Hassan, BANENGR-12 Contingent Commander Lt.-Col. Abdul Hamid Sardar and his deputy, Col. Omair Nusrat awarded certificates at a ceremony attended by several distinguished guests. Some of the about 30 women involved with the project lamented that their husbands were killed during the war and were finding it difficult to take care of themselves and their children. They however expressed the hope of better agricultural productivity and a better life with some support and hailed the Bangladeshis and other partners for their assistance.

The BANENGR-12 Contingent Commander, Lt.-Col. Abdul Hamid Sardar, stressed the need to make Liberia food sufficient citing the importance of food for the sustenance of peace.
At one point or the other, most UNMIL personnel, including those coming to assume duty or travelling on RRR, may have gone through the Kotoka International Airport in the Ghanaian capital, Accra, after being disgorged from the belly of a Dash 7 or Boeing 757.

Among the check-in counters at the departure hall, there is the conspicuous five-letter acronym - UNMIL. But how does UNMIL Movement Control (MOVCON) operate in Accra?

“Two of us here are UNMIL staff and we have individual contractors as well. My colleague Rahina Quarcoo is currently on leave,” says Kojo, a MOVCON clerk during a recent interview at the airport.

Explaining their routine job, the Ghanaian national says their responsibility is to attend to their customers (clients) that use the UNMIL flight. “We check them in, pass them through immigration and then we get them on board the flight,” he says.

Kojo says one of the challenges of working at the airport is when colleagues have excess luggage and want to get it on the plane at all cost. “If the luggage exceeds by few kilograms, consideration may be given but some people far exceed the maximum and would not accept to reduce it,” he continues, adding, “To solve such problems, we try to talk to them politely to make them understand the procedure. Some of them know but they just don’t want to take it so we try to educate them.” Usually, if a passenger has excess baggage, he or she is encouraged to leave the excess with the MOVCON office and to prepare a CMR (cargo movement request) upon arrival in Monrovia, which gives authority for it to be sent. From time to time, the MOVCON personnel also make every effort to assist passengers who go to the airport and their names are not even on the manifest.

As for salaries for all their efforts, Kojo says it is sent through ECObank. The MOVCON personnel message to staff is: “Please exercise patience with us while here because we are guided by rules and regulations.”
After almost six years of rendering services to Liberians, the “Triple R” section is winding down and already some personnel have left to continue their career in other UN missions, especially in Sudan.

Ex-combatants, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees were the initial focus of the Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery (RRR) section which closely worked with other sections within the mission, partners, including UN agencies such as WFP, and communities.

“We worked with everybody including the military component of the mission,” says Andrea Tamagnini, the section’s director, adding, “We’ve done the job – RRR is winding down.”

Tamagnini, who arrived in Liberia in July 2005, says his section was the focal point within UNMIL for the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme which officially closed in July. The section handled all matters relating to the reintegration of war-affected populations, employment creation and rehabilitation of vital infrastructure, among others.

With a focus on reintegration and recovery, RRR personnel have been crisscrossing the sometimes challenging terrain of post-war Liberia and engaging in several activities from reclaiming rubber plantations occupied by ex-combatants to working with local populations in urban public works. Liaising with the Ministries of Public Works and Labour and collaborating with WFP on food-for-work programmes, the section has been working with UNMIL engineers and promoting the utilization of labour-intensive methods in the mission’s road repair and rehabilitation works undertaken to keep main supply routes passable.

During the 2007-2008 fiscal year, RRR took over the coordination of the mission’s Quick Impact Projects (QIP) during which UNMIL staff of the project were absorbed into the section.

“Now that we are completing our work, some follow-up should be done on a number of initiatives,” says Tamagnini, stressing that reintegration is a long term process which UNDP and the Liberian society would have to complete, and that emergency employment opportunities need be created for sustainable peace and security.

At its climax, RRR had about 50 personnel but there has been a reduction in staff as the section gradually reorganizes into a unit and will eventually integrate into Civil Affairs together with the Humanitarian Co-ordination Section.

Thanking Doris Kleffner, Eric Perry (a national professional), Bisrat, Sarinurio, Elizabeth Chester, Moshe (now in Sudan) and several other UNMIL colleagues past and present for making RRR a success, and expressing gratitude to donors of Liberia’s DDRR process, Tamagnini, who will be leaving the mission shortly, says he feels satisfied that they have accomplished their job.

But when will RRR cease to exist? “I don’t know, but I don’t want to lose a section before I leave,” says Tamagnini jokingly, reiterating, though, that when an office shuts down, it means the job has been done. “I am very happy and satisfied that our section has been a very good place to work as a team where every day was a pleasure to come to work.”

When a 22-year-old deaf and dumb woman recently went to report to the police that she had been assaulted, who will take down her statement became a great challenge.

Disabled persons usually complain that they are not given access to public services, security, protection and the opportunity to tell their story. Accompanied by three colleagues, also deaf, the woman went to the police at Zone 4 Base in Gardnersville, Monrovia, to file a complaint.

UNPOL advisor Doreen Malambo, a Zambia national, trained in sign language, happened to be there. With her skills and competence, she provided the support needed for the Liberian National Police officers to write down a report as well as a statement.

Well done Doreen!
Colleagues say working with county officials is a bit challenging as most of them are based in Sinje and Bo Waterside because of lack of mobility and office space in Robertsport. Also, like most other counties, the rainy reason renders bad road conditions worse some of which have rickety wooden bridges.

After the hard day’s work in the field, some colleagues stop over in Sinje, along the highway to the border with Sierra Leone where Nigerian peacekeepers are based, in order to compile and send their reports to Monrovia before returning to Robertsport.

For social and de-stressing activities, until recently, colleagues had to travel down to the sector’s Tubmanburg headquarters. With the appointment of the new Regional Administrative Officer Joe Mshindo, mechanisms are now put in place for Robertsport colleagues to have their own staff welfare activities. Already a staff welfare committee has been established. In the interim, the office has a small gym and a staff welfare room but, frustratingly for some, the DSTV in the welfare room has been out of service for over nine months.

For colleagues who would like to visit the coastal town, the Head of Office has a piece of advice: “Robertsport is a very good environment. If you come for sight seeing, you will definitely be attracted but please make sure you come with your food and water.”
A fter four years of “separation” from Monrovia, residents of Royesville Township, 7.5 km from the capital, had every reason to celebrate as UNMIL handed over a long desired bridge to the community. The Quino Bridge in Royesville Township, rural Montserrado County, was damaged in April 2005 cutting off vehicular traffic from 12 villages to the capital. However, with the assistance of the mission’s Pakistani engineers, the residents have now been reconnected with Monrovia.

Prior to the recent launch of the bridge, residents had to delicately walk on a narrow bamboo bridge they erected. Schooling as well as social and economic activities were also hampered due to the absence of a proper bridge.

In April 2006, Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) provided materials for the rehabilitation of the bridge. The Pakistani engineers at the time were requested to help with machinery. After several assessments and challenges, a team of officers comprising representatives of UNMIL Civil Engineering and Force Engineering, as well as UNMIL Pakistan Engineer-10 carried out the reconnaissance of the Quino Bridge once again to find other options available. The bridge, however, could not be transported until April this year. The first task encountered by the bridge launching party was the clearing of the road and tracks so heavy machinery could be transported to the site. After five days of hard work, the bridge was ready much to the delight of the local residents. “We are very grateful to UNMIL for this assistance,” an elder of the community remarked.

National Orator Speaks

A s Liberians marked the country’s 162nd independence anniversary at this year’s official venue, the Bong County capital, Gbarnga, the National Orator for the event, Paramount Chief Flomo Togba Barworor, added his voice to those Liberians who believe UNMIL should stay in Liberia well beyond the 2011 elections.

Speaking to UNMIL Today at his Gbarnga residence shortly before he delivered his speech in the local Kpelle language which was translated into English at the Gbarnga Administrative Building, Barworor, who is also the Chairman of the Traditional Council of Chiefs and Elders of Bong, described the work of the UN mission as “very good”. For Liberians to sustain the hard earned peace, the chief, who is the first traditional leader to serve as orator, noted among other things that the young generation should not tag old people as witches but should instead seek advice from them. During the country’s civil war, Chief Barworor, who cannot read or write, was among the delegation that travelled to Nigeria, Niger and Burkina Faso as Liberia struggled for peace. Born during the presidency of Charles King in the 1920s - 1930s, the paramount chief is a proud father of 40 children and had nine wives.

Note: Please see next edition of UNMIL Today to learn how national staff celebrated the country’s Independence in various parts of the country.

“UNMIL has done Wonderful Work”

T he newly appointed coadjutor archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Monrovia says the UN Mission in Liberia has done a wonderful job and cautions against the withdrawal of all troops even after the 2011 presidential elections. “There are many missions that the United Nations has carried out but Liberia has been a success case for them. They have really done a wonderful work.”

Zeigler said he was concerned that the UN might go away immediately after the 2005 elections. “They remained. They have been with us. We saw where tension was raising its head from different areas; they were there to bring down such tensions,” he said.

Commenting on the gradual drawdown of the mission, he said: “Even if they say after 2011 they are going to be leaving, I think the presence of even a small force will be necessary.”

The former archbishop of the Diocese of Gbarnga went on that it was a mistake in 1997 to let ECOMOG leave just after the elections. “That was a big mistake and we saw what happened. So even after 2011, I will appeal to the UN to still have a small force on the ground,” the archbishop told UNMIL Today in Gbarnga, stressing that a lot of resources have been used in Liberia’s peace process.

Royesville Reconnects with Monrovia

Noted that UNMIL Today to learn how national staff celebrated the country’s Independence in various parts of the country.
**Mamba Point** is noted as the diplomatic enclave. It hosts most NGOs and UN agencies, the United States, French and Egyptian embassies.

**HOTELS**

**Mamba Point Hotel** – UN Drive, Mamba Point – Tel. #s: (231) 6.440.000, 6.441.000, 5.929.292, 5.939.393, 6.544.544, 6.511.202; e-mails: mambapointhotel@yahoo.com, reservations@mambapointhotel.biz; single room at US$135.

**Krystal Oceanview Hotel** – UN Drive, Mamba Point (opposite La Pointe Restaurant) – Tel. #s: (231) 6.510.424, 6.430.099, 77 767.676; e-mail: info@krystaloceanviewhotel.com; website: www.krystaloceanviewhotel.com; Regular room at US$160.

**The Cape Hotel** – UN Drive, Mamba Point (Adjacent Mamba Point Hotel) - Tel. #s: (231) 77.006.633, 6.643.760; e-mail: info@thecapehotel.com; website: www.thecapehotel.com; single room at US$135.

**Park Hotel (Grain Realty Company, Ltd.)** – Carey Street (opposite the Nigerian Contingent Headquarters) – Tel. #s (231) 6.739.224, 6.739.221. Rooms: Negotiable

**Sinkor**

Sinkor is the area between the city center and Congo Town, where the UNMIL HQ is located.

**RLJ Kendeja Resort & Villas** – Kendeja, off the Robertsfield Highway after ELWA in Paynesville. For reservations within the United States, 888-860-0388 and within Monrovia 022-100-100. For additional information and online reservation, please visit: www.rljkendejaroot.com

**Royal Hotel** – Tubman Boulevard (between 14th & 15th Streets), Sinkor – Tel. #s (231) 6.510.006, 6.554.444; single room at US$144

**SUPERMARKETS**

**Abi-Jaoudi Supermarket** – Randall Street (between UN Drive and Benson Street) - City Center

**Stop and Shop Supermarket** – Randall Street (between UN Drive and Benson Street) – City Center

**Monoprix Supermarket** – Benson Street (between Mechlin and Newport Streets) – City Center

**Monoprix Supermarket** – Point-4 Junction (Bushrod Island) enroute to Dualla or Riverview

**Exclusive Superstore** – Center Street (between Benson and Carey Streets) – City Center

**Exclusive Superstore** – Tubman Boulevard (19th Street) Sinkor

**Greenland Supermarket** – Tubman Boulevard (opposite gas station, 7th Street) – Sinkor

**UN Drive Supermarket** – Tubman Boulevard (15th Street)

**Monrovia** has several restaurants, attending to different tastes. Prices vary from US$5 to US$40 a meal.

**RESTAURANTS**

**Bamboo Bar and Restaurant** – European dishes - Corner of Broad/Randall Streets, Central Monrovia (Roof Top, Palm Hotel)- Tel. # 06.585.959

**Beruit Restaurant** – Offers European and Middle Eastern dishes - Center Street (between Broad and Ashmun Streets), City Center; Tel. # - 06.512.051.

**Boulevard Café** – Offers Western dishes – 14th Street, Tubman Boulevard (opposite the St. Peter’s Lutheran Church) Sinkor; Tel. #s (231) 6.969.969, 5.123.456

**Garden Restaurant** – Chinese menu – Paynesville (near S.D. Cooper Junction) Tel. #: (231) 6. 888.067

**Golden Beach** – Pizza, Chinese and Western dishes-Tubman Boulevard, Sinkor. Tel. 06.586.739. Offers take away service

**Groovies** – Western and African dishes. 24 hours service - Tubman Boulevard, Oldest Congo (after COMIUM) Tel. 06.551.506

**Krystal Ocean View Hotel** – Liberian and Western dishes; Sunday brunch - UN Drive, Mamba Point (opposite La Pointe Restaurant) – Tel. #s: (231) 6.510.424, 6.430.099, 77 767.676

**Mamba Point Hotel** – Lebanese, Indian and Western dishes United Nations Drive, Mamba Point; Tel. #: 06.544.544

**Marlin’s Corner** – Seafood, steak and western dishes -Between the TOTAL gas station and St. Paul River). Tel. 06.437.861

**Monaliza Restaurant and Patesserie** – Lebanese and Western dishes including ice cream and other sweets – (Opposite UN Drive Supermarket, 15th Street, Sinkor); Tel. #s: (231) 6.439.439, 5.656.444, 5.656.111.

**Musu’s Spot** - Western cuisine and ice cream - Tubman Boulevard, Oldest Congo Town. Tel. # 06.510.596.

**Royal Hotel** – Lebanese and Western cuisine, Sunday brunch. Offers take away service – Tubman Boulevard (between 14th and 15th Streets, Sinkor) – Tel. 06.566.669/544.444.

**Ruby Bar and Restaurant** – International cuisine. Daily specials – Up Broad Street (below Ducor Palace Hotel) – Tel. 06.510.991, 06.569.263.

**Taaj’s Restaurant** – Indian cuisine; Sunday brunch. Offers delivery and take-away services – (Near Total gas station) 5th Street, Sinkor; Tel. #s: (231) 6.522.190, 6.590.101, 7.777.6666.

This page will be updated from time to time.