

Statement by Mr. E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs, in the Security Council Meeting on Sierra Leone, on October 09, 2012

Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me begin by thanking the Guatemalan delegation for organizing today's briefing on the special court for Sierra Leone. Having started my career as an advocate, the topic under discussion is of special interest to me.

2. I would also like to thank the President of the Special Court, Hon. Justice Shireen Avis Fisher, for presenting the report on the activities and achievements of the Court since the last briefing to the Security Council on 16 July 2009.

3. Mr. President, the Special Court was established in the year 2000 by Security Council resolution 1315 at the request of the Government of Sierra Leone. Since its establishment, the Court has successfully carried out its mandate set out in the Statute of the Court. Three of the four main cases have been completed, and the last case is in the final stages of judgment at the Appeals Chamber.

4. Keeping in view its track record, we hope that the Special Court would successfully accomplish its mandate by 30 September 2013 when the Appeals Chamber is expected to give its verdict in the Charles Taylor case. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and the international community to assist States, upon their request, in restoring peace and stability, including through the fight against impunity.

5. Mr. President, the enforcement of sentences with the assistance of the Government of Rwanda is a good example of international cooperation in furthering the cause of justice. We have also taken note of the Court's outreach activities, witness protection, and archive development programme, including through the capacity building initiatives that will strengthen national judicial institutions in Sierra Leone. We also appreciate the creation of a Peace Museum that would contribute to the efforts aimed at national reconciliation in the country.

6. As the Special Court prepares for closure, focusing on the residual issues such as enforcement of sentences, protection of witnesses, and preservation of archives of the Special Court assume great importance. In this regard, there is a need to continue support to the Special Court as well as to the Residual Special Court.

7. Mr. President, India has a long history of cordial relationship with Sierra Leone. India played a major role in the UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) till 2001. Since then, India has continued to partner with the Government of Sierra Leone in its reconstruction efforts. India has extended loans and credit lines worth US\$ 94.45 million during the last few years to enable Sierra Leone procure agricultural equipment, and modernize and expand its National Telecommunications Network (SIERRATEL). Our partnership has included the restoration and rehabilitation of six potable water and solar street lighting projects. As part of our bilateral cooperation

programme, India is providing 45 training slots to Sierra Leone this year. India has also offered to set up an India-Africa Information and Communication Technology Centre in Sierra Leone.

8. Before I conclude, Mr. President, let me convey our best wishes to the Government and people of Sierra Leone as they prepare for national elections next month. The successful conduct of the elections will be a major milestone in post-conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, which should help in the process of national reconciliation and further consolidation of democracy in the country. India remains committed to continue its partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone, particularly in capacity building and human resources development.

I thank you.

BACK TO SECURITY COUNCIL