

**Statement given by H.E. Mr. Paul Heinbecker
to the U.N. Security Council Open Briefing
on Sierra Leone
Thursday, June 28, 2001.**

Monsieur le Président,

Merci d'avoir organisé cette réunion publique.

Nous sommes satisfaits que tous les membres puissent s'exprimer sur le dixième rapport, très utile, du Secrétaire général sur la Mission des Nations Unies en Sierra Leone (MINUSIL).

Nous sommes particulièrement heureux d'avoir pu prendre connaissance des informations communiquées par le Représentant spécial Adeniji et par le commandant de la force de la MINUSIL, le lieutenant général Opande.

En sa qualité de membre du Conseil en 1999 et en l'an 2000, ma délégation est d'avis que le Conseil de sécurité devrait être automatiquement tenu au courant des informations militaires fournies par le personnel de l'ONU en uniforme, qu'il s'agisse du Conseiller militaire ou des commandants des forces, en plus des excellents comptes-rendus que lui fournissent les membres civils du Secrétariat.

In Canada, the Cabinet would never deploy military personnel without receiving assurance from military personnel that the mission they were undertaking was militarily feasible.

Nor would our Cabinet fail to avail itself of military advice to satisfy itself that the mandates given to the Forces were, and remained, realistic.

This Council also should also have access to military information, for the same reasons.

Mr President,

We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's conclusion that significant progress has been achieved in the Sierra Leone peace process.

The release by the RUF of large numbers of child combatants, is especially welcome.

Combatting impunity and promoting and protection human rights are essential for the establishment, on a sustainable basis, of a democratic and peaceful society in Sierra Leone.

The Special Court is urgently needed to end the spiral of violence.

Canada and others are working closely with the UN Legal Adviser and interested Member States to make it a reality, and we expect soon to be in a position to specify the support that Canada will make available.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will complement the Court in bringing closure to the thousands and millions of people in Sierra Leone who have suffered so much.

The Secretary-General and this Council are to be commended for examining the situation in Sierra Leone in its regional context; so, too, are the leaders of ECOWAS.

The increase in refugee flows and in internal displacement in the area around Sierra Leone poses a dire challenge for the countries concerned and for the international community as a whole.

We urge the countries that have signed the 1951 Convention to keep their borders open.

We applaud the continued efforts by UNHCR to evacuate refugees away from dangerous border areas, to provide greater protection and to arrange for voluntary repatriation.

And we applaud the outstanding work done by UN personnel, including members of UNAMSIL, in difficult and dangerous circumstances.

Thank you, Mr President.