

humanitarian agencies have reorganized themselves and devised an alternative humanitarian assistance programme that has sought to protect both the aid recipients and distributors, and to ensure the effective distribution of supplies before they are lost through looting. This change of strategy has occurred in collaboration with the UN and the exiled Kabbah government.

### **Peacebuilding Training and Trainers:**

Specific peacebuilding training initiatives were limited and the extent to which training did occur was the result of practical experience, as national agencies learned through working with international agencies. One example of this occurred in January 1997 when the WFP and CRS undertook a joint mission to sensitise the Regional Food Aid Technical Committee and other interested parties to the 1997 food aid strategy. Similarly training has occurred in the health and agriculture sectors with aid workers being trained as health facilities were expanded, and farmers were trained in new planting techniques and fertilizer use.

### **Civilian Participation in Peacekeeping Operations:**

There was no UN peacekeeping mission deployed into Sierra Leone. The UN was making plans to do so in order to monitor the demobilization and disarmament of the RUF. The May coup has effectively put this proposed deployment on the back shelf.

The ECOMOG deployment following the coup has sought to reinstall the Kabbah government, and the work of civilian international aid agencies has continued with this deployment. The international aid agencies operate independently of the ECOMOG force.

### **Evaluation:**

In assessing the variety of peacebuilding initiatives which have recently been undertaken in Sierra Leone it would be all too easy to suggest that they have all been ineffective given the breakdown of the peace process and the current chaos in the country. Such an assessment however ignores certain initiatives which were extremely effective in getting the peace process on track up until the ouster of the Kabbah government.

The **conflict resolution efforts** were instrumental in reaching a political settlement between the Kabbah government and the RUF. Much of this initiative came from the people of Sierra Leone who had expressed their desire for an end to the war both under the NPRC regime and also during the national elections. This resulted in the Kabbah government pursuing talks with the RUF. This desire for peace was supplemented by the international efforts at conflict resolution which facilitated communication between the parties and ensured that the momentum towards peace was not lost.

Similarly, the **early warning initiatives** undertaken by International Alert were crucial in getting the political process underway. IA ensured contact was made between the parties and a variety of international actors, each of which played a role in the later stages of the peace process. The Commonwealth, for example, not only observed the early rounds of the negotiations on the Peace Accord, but also played an effective role in monitoring the conduct of the national elections.

In terms of **Physical Security Initiatives**, this is perhaps where the weakness lay in the peace process. Although the general security situation improved following the signing of