

The issue of the flow of arms into Sierra Leone should be examined seriously since it will continue to have a major impact on the peace and stability of that country. In this connection, I would recommend that you explore how arms control initiatives, such as the Mali experiment on small arms, could be applied to Sierra Leone.

I would be most interested in your candid assessment of the efficacy of current UN involvement, including the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis Okelo, in promoting a negotiated settlement among all parties, as well as the overall effectiveness of the UN mission, UNOMSIL. Moreover, I would ask you to assess how best to integrate the protection of children and children's rights in all efforts to restore peace and security in Sierra Leone, including peacemaking and peace-support operations. I also hope you are able to gain a sense of how ECOMOG forces are managing, and how they are viewed by the local population.

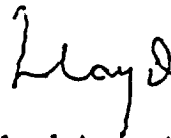
As you know, I am interested in exploring options for a Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) role in peacebuilding for Sierra Leone. The information and insights you gather will therefore be of particular relevance for my participation in the CMAG meeting at the end of April. For example, are there neglected areas or opportunities for peacebuilding where CMAG or the Commonwealth could play a useful role?

Another area that you may want to explore is how the current UN sanctions regime might be strengthened. What are the views of international staff based in the country in this regard?

In light of the objectives outlined above, short time lines, and, may I say, budgetary constraints, I would see your subsequent visit limited to Accra, Conakry, and Freetown with a possible stop in London for meetings with the Commonwealth Secretariat. I would propose that two officials from this Department accompany you on your trip - an officer familiar with regional security issues and a political advisor.

Thank you again for sharing your concerns with me.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Axworthy