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**Sierra Leone Book Trust and American Partners Provide
Thousands of Books to U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers**

In a March 7 ceremony at the U.S. Peace Corps Office in Signal Hill, representatives of the Sierra Leone Book Trust (SALBOT) officially handed over more than 5,000 volumes to Peace Corps staff. SALBOT coordinated the donation in partnership with the U.S.-based organizations Books for Africa, Schools for Salone, Books without Borders, and Friends of Sierra Leone. The books are for use in junior and senior secondary schools across the country, where more than 80 Peace Corps volunteers are teaching English, mathematics, and science.

Representing the United States Embassy, Chargé d’Affaires a.i. Mitchell P. Benedict – himself a former Peace Corps volunteer -- stressed the importance of books in the educational process. “As well as being valuable classroom teaching aids, they provide opportunities for independent study and research. They nurture young minds and open doors to new worlds,” he said. “So today, as we receive these books from our colleagues at SALBOT – and as we prepare to send them out to Peace Corps sites in every region of Sierra Leone – we are sharing more than just objects, or pieces of paper. We are sharing ideas. We are opening new horizons for the future leaders of this country. And we are re-affirming the fundamental truth that knowledge is power.”

SALBOT was founded in 2002 by Sallieu Turay as an indigenous non-governmental organization with the aim of providing books to help increase the literacy rate in Sierra Leone. The partnership between the U.S. Embassy and SALBOT began over 10 years ago and has resulted in tens of thousands of books being distributed by the Embassy to schools, libraries, and partner organizations throughout the country.

From 2009-2012, SALBOT and Books for Africa have arranged delivery of three 40-foot shipping containers full of books for nationwide distribution. Books For Africa is the world's largest shipper of donated books to the African continent. Since 1988, Books For Africa has shipped over 24 million high-quality text and library books to children and adults in 46 African countries. For more information, please see www.booksforafrica.org.

The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1960, when then-Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. From that inspiration grew an agency of the U. S. federal government devoted to world peace and friendship. Since that time, 200,000+ Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries to work on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation. Peace Corps Volunteers continue to help countless individuals who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

The Peace Corps' mission has three simple goals:

- Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
- Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

For more information, please see www.peacecorps.gov.