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U.S. Ambassador Encouraged by Salone’s Election Preparations

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE – Following his road trip to Makeni, Kenema, and Kono from October 30 to November 2, the U.S Ambassador to Sierra Leone Michael Owen said he was encouraged with the preparations for the elections on November 17. The ambassador’s visit to the towns was to get firsthand information on elections preparations and also visit some U.S. funded projects. Ambassador Owen met with some political and community leaders including the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) in Kono.

Ambassador Owen commended all for the smooth and peaceful process of the elections so far. He expressed optimism that the election itself will go on smoothly. He highlighted the importance of a peaceful election. He called on all Sierra Leoneans to “Stay the course and be mindful that these elections are crucially important for the future of Sierra Leone.”

Among U.S. Government funded projects the ambassador visited was the new school building in Panlap which currently benefits about 198 pupils. The school received support from the U.S. Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Fund. The ambassador also met with cassava farmers in Kenema where U.S. support has allowed community people to develop processing capabilities, generate revenue, decrease spoilage, and provide employment opportunities. He visited Fambul Tok, an organization that is conducting peace-building and reconciliation activities in remote areas of the country thanks to a grant from the U.S. government. Since 2008, Fambul Tok has embraced a community-led approach to post-war reconstruction and has established a corps of 56 Community Peace Ambassadors in Kono and Kailahun districts.

Ambassador Owen’s recent trip was the last of four embassy trips undertaken to all of the country’s regions in advance of Sierra Leone’s elections.