

Pakistani peacekeepers refurbish school in Liberia

Over 200 Liberian students will benefit from a school recently refurbished by United Nations blue helmets, officials from the world body's peacekeeping mission said this week.

At a dedication ceremony, UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Force Commander Lt.-General Chikadibia Isaac Obiakor said the school project was to the recovery effort in Liberia, which is rebuilding following a brutal civil war.

"You have delivered a very vital instrument of recovery, growth, and development because you have decided not to give fish to the people but rather teach them how to fish," he told the Pakistani contingent which undertook the project.

The newly renovated Moses Vincent Community School, which now hosts 220 students, has an auditorium, three classrooms, a storeroom and a playground.

Funds for the project were procured through voluntary contributions from the peacekeepers, who also undertook the renovation work.

Pakistani Commander Brigadier General Ahmad Nawaz said peacekeeping was not possible without the active backing of the inhabitants of the area.

"Support of the people in an area can only be won by being absolutely impartial, fair, highly upright in one's conduct and doing things beyond the laid-down mandate aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the people," General Nawaz said.

He announced that the dedication marks the start of an initiative under which all units and sub-units of the UNMIL Pakistani contingent, wherever they are located, will each adopt a school.

As part of this project, Pakistani peacekeepers have committed over the next year to providing the Moses Vincent School with safe drinking water, weekly refreshments, lectures, the organisation of sporting events and a monthly medical checkup for the students.

The proprietor of the school, Christine Vincent, voiced appreciation to the Pakistani peacekeepers.

"What you have done will always be in the history of our school and be remembered in the hearts of our children," Ms Vincent said.

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