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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sierra Leone: War's over, now what?

Victoria- December 8th, 2006- After a decade of bloody civil war that has cost the lives of over 70,000 in the tiny West African state of Sierra Leone, the country now faces a bitter uphill battle to rebuild, forget and forgive. January 8th, 2006 Working to Empower will host an evening for Sierra Leone showcasing a Cultural Dance Performance, and two short documentaries. The event will be held in the Harry Hickman Building at the University of Victoria.

The evening is meant to celebrate the beauty of Sierra Leone while raising awareness about issues of poverty and biodiversity loss in the country. The first documentary, *Cry Freetown*, is an account of the devastating civil war that recently ended in 2002; while, the second documentary, *Forest of Hope*, deals with the plight of Sierra Leone's chimpanzee population which over the past two decades has plummeted from an estimated 20,000 to 2,000.

Event organizer, Johann Jenson, who works for the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary in Regent, Sierra Leone, sees the event as a way to shed light on issues that are often overlooked in media coverage. Sierra Leone is ranked as the second poorest country in the world according to the United Nation's most recent human development index.

The event will be both entertaining and informative for community members and students concerned about the instability that plagues much of the West African region. An Evening for Sierra Leone, organized by Working to Empower, the Taiaima School Project, and the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, runs from 6pm to 9pm on January 8th, 2007 in room auditorium of the Harry Hickman Building at the University of Victoria.

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