



Johann Jenson
2074 Haultain St.
Victoria, BC V8R 2L7

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sierra Leone: War's over, now what?

Victoria- January 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 community organizations involved in Sierra Leone, three short documentary films and stimulating discussion. The event will be held in room 159 of the Fraser Building (Law) at the University of Victoria.

The evening is meant to celebrate the beauty of Sierra Leone while raising awareness about issues of violence, extreme poverty and biodiversity loss in the country. The first 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. The second documentary, *Cry Freetown*, is an account of the devastating civil war that just recently ended in 2002, while the third short documentary, *Return Freetown*, offers a compelling look at Sierra Leone's struggle for peace and reconstruction following the war.

Event organizer, Johann Jenson, who will be interning 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 North American media coverage. UVic Master of Dispute Resolution candidate and co-organizer, Pearl Gottschalk will also spend 8 weeks in Freetown doing field research with war affected and disabled children that she contends have been all but forgotten during the UN's five year peacekeeping mission in the country (UNAMSIL).

Sierra Leone is ranked as the second poorest country in the world according to the United Nation's most recent human development index. The country's wealth in natural resources has made democratic stability very difficult. Jenson believes that by diversifying their economy and by promoting Sierra Leone as a tourist destination, the country may once again regain its reputation as the *Gem of Africa*.

The event will be both entertaining and informative for community members and students concerned about the violence and extreme poverty that plagues much of the West African region. An Evening for Sierra Leone, organized by *Working to Empower*, *Amnesty*

International, the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, and the Undergraduate Politics Society runs from 7pm to 10pm on January 8th, 2007 in the auditorium (room 159) of the Fraser Building (Law) at the University of Victoria.

For More Information Contact:

Johann Jenson

digigami@gmail.com 250-686-9168

2074 Haultain St.

Victoria, BC V8R 2L7

www.tacugama.com

www.workingtoempower.org