

**Special Court for Sierra Leone**  
Press and Public Affairs Office

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Freetown, Sierra Leone, 21 July 2003**

### **Donors Announce Winner of Court House Design**

Representatives of donor states funding the Special Court on Thursday announced that the architectural firm of Norman and Dawbarn has been awarded the design of the court house. The company is based in the United Kingdom with offices in Nigeria, Tanzania, Malawi and Uganda and has experience in constructing court buildings.

The court house will have a translation booth, the capacity to record proceedings and public galleries for around 150 people.

In its proposal, Norman and Dawbarn showed that it is capable of designing the court house according to international standards and within the necessary time frame. The firm will now be called on to submit plans showing the final form of the building. The design must meet the functional needs of the Court while also expressing the uniqueness of the independent international criminal body.

"History will be made inside these walls," said Ms. Deborah Chatsis, chairperson of the Special Court's management committee at a press conference at the Court's New England site, where the court house is to be built. "The structure will remain after the Court has finished its work and be a landmark for Sierra Leoneans marking the end of an era of impunity."

Also participating in the press conference were Mr. Ralph Zacklin, Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs and Ambassador Alieu Kanu from the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations who helped draft the original agreement that established the Court. They, together with representatives of Governments that are funding the Court, form the management committee which oversees its non-judicial operations. They have been visiting Sierra Leone to evaluate the Court's progress.

Proposals by numerous architectural firms for the design of court house were considered, said Lamin Jobe, who is project manager of the site and who helped devise the criteria by which the designs were evaluated. Thirty-six firms from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America were asked if they were interested in submitting a detailed proposal stating how they planned to design the court house, what it would cost and how they would supervise its construction.

The court house will be the last phase of construction of the 11.5 acre site. Prefabricated office blocks have already been erected and existing buildings are currently being renovated for a detention centre. The design for these phases was awarded last September to the Sierra Leone firm Ideal Partnerships. Another local company Sierra Construction Systems was awarded the construction contract.

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The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.