This chapter moves on to look at the specific example of Sierra Leone and the period immediately after 2002 when the peace had finally been signed. In particular it looks in detail at the effect of this on the programmes that were run on the ground and addresses the issue of differences between reforms undertaken during war and just after conflict. It looks specifically at the re-establishment of the police force, the rebuilding of a military, expansion of civilian control and the development of a Security Sector Review to involve civil society in security issues following the advent of peace in 2002 and maps the development of the concept of security sector reform and the linkages between security and development activities that began to form throughout this period.

The year 2002 was pivotal for Sierra Leone. Officially the conflict ended in January, but it would be misleading to say that peace had descended over the entire country. There were still significant areas of the countryside where conflict continued and many areas remained beyond the direct control of the government in Freetown. To all intents and purposes Sierra Leone was still engaged in a conflict and the troops of UNAMSIL, supported by the British military viewed themselves as existing in a conflict situation.

Despite the uncertain situation in the countryside, Sierra Leone managed to hold presidential and parliamentary elections, which the SLPP won comfortably. The margin of around 70% of the vote gave President Kabbah an electoral triumph and also a powerful political mandate to enact much of the planning that had been taking place in exile in Conakry. In short, Kabbah was seen as the man who had brought peace to the country and had managed to persuade the international authorities, particularly the UK and the UN, to intervene in
the conflict. Indeed, the election itself took place within the context of a deployment of the biggest UN peacekeeping force in history (some 17,000 international troops). However, within this overall context, the day to day policing of the elections was carried out by the revamped SLP.

The set of agencies and programmes that had started before or during the war were something of a hotchpotch of different activities with some part completed and some ongoing. The uncertainty around the end of the war, the limitation of control in some areas and the difficult security situation in the countryside produced a set of challenges beyond the emergency planning that had already taken place in 2002. The rivalry between some agencies and ministries, the balance between command and advising faced by the UK military, the lack of development of many security agencies, including a non-functioning military and a partially developed SLP, were all exacerbated by continuing uncertainty and also the arrival of large numbers of armed former combatants.

By early 2004, findings of the Security Sector Review being produced at the time noted that the economy – as opposed to more traditional security threats – was a key threat to achieving the future vision for the country.¹ This is still true today. As the outgoing Commander IMATT noted in late 2003:

Within Sierra Leone, although the current situation is calm, the failure of the Government to stimulate the economy and address the resultant levels of unemployment and under-employment are of great concern [...] Without this, and despite security sector reforms, neither long-term stability for the country nor the foreign investment necessary for economic recovery can be assured.²

Even at this early stage, therefore, it was becoming obvious that the key issue that would affect long-term security was the lack of economic development. In particular, the lack of economic alternatives available to former combatants and to large numbers of disaffected youth posed a significant security threat even if the security agencies could be developed into effective organisations. In addition, the only available agency capable of developing economic planning on that scale was the state, hence direct budgetary support and a programme of rehabilitation of the economic infrastructure supported by the international community was integral to the development of security in the long term.