

NEWS RELEASE

Date: January 30th, 2006
Subject: WANEP ENDS SUCCESSFUL AGM

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) held its 8th Annual General Meeting (AGM) from January 23 - 27, 2006 at the New Coco Beach Hotel in Accra, Ghana, under the theme, "Consolidating and Sustaining WANEP Institutional Structures." The AGM brought together over forty delegates from over 12 countries of the sub-region.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the election of a 7-member Board of Directors for the next 2 years. The new professional board replaces a 12-member representative board, which 2-year term just ended.

The new Regional Board is composed¹ of 3 women and 4 men, with Ms. Etweda Cooper as the new Board Chairperson. Ms Cooper took over from Rev. Pr. Emmanuel Anyambod, who is now the Vice Chairperson. WANEP's first Executive Director, Sam Doe was also elected as a member of the Board.

In the post-election euphoria, Ms. Cooper said, *"I am particularly honoured to stand before you as the first female chairperson of WANEP's Board. I thank you all on behalf of my colleagues and myself for having elected us as members of this professional board... We accept this mantle of leadership that you have given to us. We promise you that we will faithfully serve you all, in ensuring that WANEP reaches its peak."*

Etweda Cooper is the first woman to chair this leading sub-regional network of over 430 member organizations.

The new board pledged to continue working with, and supporting the Executive Director to further strengthen WANEP's structures and ensure that it continues to effectively carry out its mandate.

Welcoming the new regional board, the Executive Director, Mr. Emmanuel Bombande congratulated them and equally assured them of the cooperation of his team both at the regional and national secretariats.

¹ Board Chairperson: Ms. Etweda Cooper; Vice-Chairperson: Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Anyambod; Others: Ms. Pauline Yameogo, Dr. Lydia Umar, Mr. Michel Mian, Mr. Sam Doe and Fr. Joseph Gomis.

Mr. Bombande recapitulated the successes and challenges of 2005 and wished for WANEP a *"renew energy and strength in 2006 to work even harder for peace in West Africa."*

Closing the 5-day long meeting, the Vice Chairperson of the outgoing board, Mr. Zewuze Abotsi recalled all the journey of the staff both at the national and regional secretariats in 2005. He reminded us that WANEP's place in West Africa is undeniable in sustaining peace. He emphasized that the distinguishing awards conferred on WANEP's Executive Director, M. Emmanuel Bombande is a testimony of our commitment and dedication for our beloved sub-region.

The election of the new board, the adoption and internalization of the Strategic Plan for 2006-2008 completed WANEP's restructuring process. A donor's meeting to fundraise for the implementation of the Strategic Plan is scheduled for February 24, 2006, at The Hague in The Netherlands.

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