

WANEP SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES RE-STRUCTURING PROCESS

1.1. Mandate to Restructure

Beginning January 2003, WANEP started a process of organizational rationalization with a study document that was the outcome of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of 2003 entitled; “WANEP: Proposed Organizational Identity, Culture and Structure” During the AGM of 2004, a firm decision was made to restructure WANEP beginning with the outline of an organizational structure. This attempt did not go far enough. In 2005, the AGM took a further step in the restructuring process with the development of a three-year strategic plan. A lot of work and effort went into this planning with high quality human resource input from international organizational development experts. The AGM of 2006 approved the major decisions for the restructuring of WANEP and once the process was completed, the Regional Board at its second meeting held in Accra on 14th June 2006 approved a new structure and mode of operation for the WANEP regional secretariat. The new structure includes clear performance targets and milestones that must be reached over the next three years in implementing the re-structuring process as part of the strategic plan of WANEP for the period 2006-2009.

1.2. Organisational Restructuring in the Strategic Plan of WANEP

The strategic plan of WANEP for the period 2006-2009 point the organisation towards two inter-related strategic directions, namely: a). to coordinate and develop the national networks in peace-building activities; and b). to strengthen the institutional capacity of the regional secretariat to maintain the image of WANEP as a credible regional network in peace-building.

SD. 1: Harmonize peace building activities in West Africa through effective coordination and the development of WANEP National Networks; and

S.D. 2: Strengthen the institutional capacity of WANEP Regional Secretariat to meet the challenges of the rapid growth and increased visibility of its network and the dynamic nature of the West African context while maintaining WANEP’s image as a flexible, credible and respected organization that is able to respond promptly to erupting conflicts.

The strategic plan proceeds to define the following specific Programmes as what will take WANEP in these strategic directions. The principles behind the programme selection and mode of implementation are also spelt out in the strategic plan as follows: “The programs in this strategic plan were selected based on the regional needs in consultations with national networks. Each national network will implement those programs they judge relevant to their national context. The Regional Secretariat will also transfer the leadership responsibility of implementing the programs to the national secretariats. This strategic shift will downsize the regional secretariat by removing all the positions of Regional Program Coordinators. The National Network Coordinators in each country will determine the responsibility of coordination at national level with expert backing from the regional secretariat.” The programmes are:

1. The West Africa Peace-building Training Institute (WAPI);
2. The West Africa Early Warning and Response Network (WARN);
3. The Capacity Building Program (CBP);
4. Women in Peace-building (WIPNET);
5. Youth and Peace Education Program (YPE);
6. The Justice Lens Program (JLP);
7. The Civil Society Policy and Advocacy Program (CSPA); and
8. The Research and Monitoring & Evaluation Program (RM&E).

A careful look at the eight programmes reveals that there is no specific programme of action to guide the intended re-structuring of the regional secretariat. The strategic plan does not clearly indicate how the following declared changes in the regional secretariat will be conducted: transfer of leadership responsibility of implementing to national networks; downsizing of regional secretariat; strengthening of the regional secretariat to maintain the credibility and image of WANEP.

A programme to guide the re-structuring or organisational transformation of WANEP has thus been added to the strategic plan.

2. RESTRUCTURING PROGRAMME IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN

2.1. Objectives of the re-structuring

Over the next three years WANEP seeks to re-structure its regional secretariat in ways that will lead to the achievement of the following objectives:

- a. The Regional Secretariat would focus on its core functions of: (i) building the professional capacity of National Networks in peace-building (based on the expressed needs of the network member organisations), instead of implementing peace-building programmes directly¹; (ii) supporting the organisational development and institutional capacity building of national networks to be able to coordinate the growth of their member organisations; (iii). facilitating platforms of exchange and learning in the sub-region; and (iv) documenting, branding and disseminating best practices in peace-building in the sub-region
- b. The Regional Secretariat will continue to promote and coordinate linkages with international forums, networks, donors and agencies engaged in peace-building for the purpose of enhancing the professional capacity and organisational sustainability of the regional network member organisations

¹ It must be noted that for reasons of technical effectiveness, two programmes (WAPI and WARN) will continue to be managed directly from the regional secretariat, until national networks gain the capacity to set up similar programmes themselves or in collaboration with others in zones.

- c. National Networks will be enabled to strengthen the professional and institutional capacity of their member organisations in programme formulation, fund-raising and programme implementation management, as well as in the organisational and institutional development.
- d. Member organisations in national networks would own programmes and financially support their national networks through the payment of membership dues and fees for services they receive from their national secretariats or regional secretariat in the design and implementation of programmes – thematic programmes as well as institutional / organisational capacity building services
- e. Strong national networks would be able to coordinate member organisations and support the regional secretariat through the payment of dues and services they receive in programme formulation and implementation management.
- f. The Regional Secretariat will down-size from the current 16 personnel to a maximum of 10 (including a maximum of four support staff: a bilingual secretary, a driver, a clerk and an expeditor).
- g. The small number of professionals who will function in the Regional Secretariat will in addition to providing professional guidance, also coordinate the acquisition of technical assistance from professionals within the network, and also from 'Associates and Friends of WANEP' to provide needed assistance to the National networks and member organisations. This will keep the regional secretariat slim, while the national networks and member organisations receive needed services in thematic programmes as well as institutional and organisational development.

2.2. Organisational Structure of Regional Secretariat

The re-structuring of the regional secretariat of WANEP was guided by the popular principle that 'form follows function'. In this vein, the regional secretariat consist of the following positions and functions:

- ◆ An Executive Director with overall management responsibility for WANEP and the regional secretariat activities and programmes.
- ◆ A Director of Programmes with oversight responsibility for all peace-building programmes in the regional secretariat and the national networks. She/he will serve as Deputy Executive Director and work closely with the Executive Director to manage the entire network.
- ◆ A Regional Coordinator (Programmes) responsible for building the capacity of national networks in programming, proposal writing, and coordinating the conceptualisation, design and implementation of peace-building programmes in close collaboration with the national networks. The programmes coordinator will also be responsible for coordinating and collating the results of M & E of programmes undertaken in the

national networks for the purpose of lesson learning and sharing (knowledge management)

- ◆ A Regional Coordinator (Network Development) will be responsible for organisational development and institutional capacity building of the national networks. She/he will support the national networks to set up their administrative procedures, operating systems and other management protocols in line with WANEP's operational criteria for graduating/calibrating National Networks and local organisations (e.g. fund-raising capacity; Board functioning; operating within WANEP defined identity boundaries); including the exclusion / dismissal criteria.
- ◆ A Development Communication Specialist responsible for documentation, branding and publication/dissemination of best practices and innovations introduced by WANEP through its programmes at the regional secretariat and the national networks. The Development Communication Specialist will utilise the products/results of M&E and knowledge management activities, distilling them into publications and dissemination materials in print and electronic forms.
- ◆ An Administrator who will be responsible for the day to day administration of the regional secretariat, including human resource management, office management and logistics. She/he will be assisted by four support staff:
 - 1 Bilingual Secretary
 - 1 Front Desk Clerk
 - 1 Driver
 - 1 Expediter
- ◆ An Accountant who will manage the finances and accounts of the regional secretariat
- ◆ An ICT specialist responsible for the ICT services of the regional secretariat, ensuring effective links with national networks and international clients, partner organisation and knowledge systems relevant to WANEP

2.3. Restructuring of the Regional Board

During the AGM of 2006, the member organizations through their representatives made an effort to put in place a professional board according to a criterion that was outlined by WANEP management and approved by the AGM. They included people to be selected with expertise in organizational development, peacebuilding practice, legal practice, gender background, financial expertise and administrative expertise.

Regrettably, the formation of the board did not meet the standards of the restructuring process. For example, the board is spread out across the region while members have not been able to be available for a crucial meeting even after confirming their participation. Based on the experiences of the working of the Board in 2006 leading up to the Board meeting of June 2006, the current Board will be restructured as one of the key activities in

year one of the implementation of the strategic plan. This will be completed in the AGM of 2007 with a defining and specification of the role of the board with assistance from an organizational expert. The proximity of the Board to the regional secretariat will also be an important factor in order to facilitate the holding of meetings of the Board at manageable cost to WANEP. Another consideration is support to the regional secretariat including fund raising and finally, that the Board is credible and will be a reference of the regional secretariat and supervise the work of the management team.

2.4. Programme of Action for the Next Three Years

In approving the new structure of the regional secretariat, the management team was given the responsibility to implement the following activities under the re-structuring programme as part of the three-year strategic plan of WANEP:

- Finalise job descriptions of the proposed human resources / personnel in the regional secretariat and proceed with the recruitments, re-deployments and retrenchments that are necessary to achieve the approved structures for the regional secretariat. This will include clarifying the roles and functions of the Regional Board, National Network Secretariats, and the existing Zonal coordination offices
- Clearly inform National Networks and secure their understanding that the current Zonal Coordination Offices are structures related to the programme that WANEP is undertaking with ECOWAS, and do not constitute permanent structures of WANEP. The Liaison Office with ECOWAS is a critical function of WANEP, and should continue to be coordinated at the Regional secretariat in ways that maintain the highest competence and profile of WANEP in that position.
- Communicate with all relevant stakeholders that at the end of the programme with ECOWAS (or at any time WANEP decides) the person handling that liaison position in ECOWAS (Mr. Takwa) could return to the Regional Secretariat as Programme Director and Deputy to the ED. Meanwhile the ED will proceed with transitional arrangements to operate the approved structure
- Continue implementing all on-going programmes of WANEP. But ensure that implementation is re-organised in ways that enable the national networks and member organisations to take over ownership and steering from the regional secretariat. Steps should be taken to build the capacity of national networks and their member organisations through the implementation and management of these on-going programmes.
- Continue the implementation of WAPI and WARN in the regional secretariat until national networks and member organisation have acquired the competence and capacity to replicate them in their countries or zones.
- Establish and operationalise a dues collection and service-for-fees system with the national networks such that member organisations in each country finance their national

networks, enabling national networks to financially sustain the regional secretariat. The intention is to build national networks that are professionally and financially strong, and whose member organisations are able to own, direct and financially sustain them. Similarly the regional secretariat will be owned, directed and sustained by the national networks. The regional and national secretariat will have their existence validated by the quality of service and value they add to their membership organisations.

2.5. Specific Performance Targets for the Restructuring Programme

The Regional Board of WANEP defined the following annual targets/milestones over the next three years as what the restructuring programme must achieve under the revised strategic plan:

Targets for year 1:

- ◆ Complete re-structuring at Regional Secretariat (personnel rationalisation) and job descriptions
- ◆ Complete re-structuring of regional board, (roles, availability and selection of new members)
- ◆ Decentralise programme implementation to ensure ownership by National Networks and member organisations
- ◆ Identify needs of National Networks that could be serviced from on-going programmes
- ◆ Support National Networks to develop project proposals, source funding, implement programmes, employ support staff, and buy office facilities
- ◆ Support National Networks to raise funds and promote sound financial management
- ◆ Provide capacity building support to local member organisations in fund-raising, project proposal, etc
- ◆ National Networks bear at least 50% of cost of next AGM
- ◆ Change mentality (mind shift) of member organisations and National Networks from perceiving the Regional Secretariat as a funding facility. Also change the positioning of WANEP in the eyes of the Regional Secretariat such that members organisations gain a shared understanding and appreciation of their responsibilities in a network structure
- ◆ Link up and use available competence within the network (regional and national)
- ◆ Harmonise and operate criteria for graduating/calibrating National Networks and local organisations (e.g. fund-raising capacity; Board functioning; operating within WANEP defined identity boundaries); including exclusion / dismissal criteria

Targets for year 2

- ◆ Build organisational capacity of identified number of national networks to support their member organisations
- ◆ National Networks re-structure from implementing programmes to building capacity of member (local) organisations to undertake programmes
- ◆ Harmonise and operate criteria for graduating/calibrating National Networks and local organisations (e.g. fund-raising capacity; Board functioning; operating within WANEP defined boundaries)
- ◆ Link up and use available competence within the network (regional and national)

Targets for year 3:

- ◆ WANEP nationalised (more National networks graduate to category B)
 - ◆ National networks design and implement programmes
 - ◆ National networks pay for services they receive from Regional Secretariat or outside WANEP from their programme funds
 - ◆ National Networks are able to sustain the Regional Secretariat financially
 - ◆ Link up and use available competence within the network (regional and national)
 - ◆ Explore the shift from inclusive network to exclusive network (full, and associate members) with clear inclusion and exclusion criteria
- The Executive Director was further charged to work out modalities by which WANEP would be able to finance its AGM without depending on donor funding.

3. CONCLUSION

The programme of action and performance targets that have been approved by the Regional Board of WANEP are thus to be incorporated into the three year strategic plan that is to be finalised with various donors of WANEP.