

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The Honourable Albert Kan Dapaah, Minister for the Interior, opens the West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI) 2006.**

Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup> was the official launch of the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI 2006). The keynote Speaker, Honourable Albert Kan Dapaah, the Minister for the Interior of Ghana, congratulated the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) for its noble work in building sustainable peace as a foundation for development in the Sub region. The Minister acknowledged that the issue of peace and security should not be the responsibility of the United Nations (UN) and individual governments alone, but an obligation for everyone. He commended WANEP for its effective networking and collaborative approaches and called for multi-level collaboration between the UN, Inter-governmental Organizations, CSOs and communities for the effective prevention of violent conflicts. The Minister reiterated that Ghana could benefit from the enormous experience of WANEP and expressed his desire to learn more from WANEP's indigenous approach to conflict resolution. He also highlighted the establishment of a National Peace Architecture within the Ghanaian government to institutionalize conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The Minister applauded WANEP for establishing WAPI as a platform for the exchange of information and lessons learned for CSOs in West Africa and beyond through intensive courses in participatory and integrated methodologies along contemporary and emerging peacebuilding issues in the sub region.

Also in attendance at the opening ceremony, were the Commandant and Deputy Commandant of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), the British High Commissioner, the Representative of the Catholic Relief Services-West Africa Regional Office (CRS-WARO), Members of the Diplomatic Corps and other partners of WANEP. The Commandant of KAIPTC expressed his appreciation for the continuous collaboration between WANEP and KAIPTC in enhancing peace and security in the sub region.

For his part, Mr. Emmanuel H. Bombande, the Executive Director of WANEP, thanked all the partners for their continuous support and commitment to WANEP and urged them to remain focused on their collective vision for the sub region. Mr. Bombande insisted that without peace, development will remain elusive in the sub region and called on CSOs to uphold transparency and accountability as core values in peacebuilding.

This year, WAPI drew participants from 15 countries from West and Central Africa, and faculty from West and East Africa and the United States. During the three-week training, the following thematic issues will be covered: Peacebuilding Paradigms, Justice-Building and Conflict Resolution, Youth and Peace Education, Conflict, Population Movement and Development, Early Warning and Early Response, and Women in Peacebuilding.