

Election Situation Room — Key Stakeholders Endorse WANEP's Initiative

WANEP News is a quarterly E-Newsletter of the West Africa

Network for Peacebuilding, (WANEP). It provides substantive information on our work in a breezy yet informative style, detailing the communities we serve, the principles underpinning our work and our key achievements. **WANEP News** is a platform to keep our key partners and major stakeholders abreast with our intervention strategies towards promoting a peaceful environment in the region and beyond and the key lessons from the field.

As always with our tradition and in the spirit of partnership, networking and community ownership, **WANEP News** will also feature collaborative efforts with tactical partners in achieving peaceful co-existence as an avenue for experience sharing and best practices. We will also highlight WANEP's social events and Teambuilding strategies in both narrative and pictorial formats.

In a nutshell, **WANEP News** is telling our story our own way! Happy Reading!

Critical stakeholders and major partners have endorsed the WANEP initiative of establishing an Election Situation Room (ESR) in preparation for the November 2016 elections in Ghana.

The ESR is part of WANEP's **Election Situational Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM) Project**: Platform for Mitigating Electoral Violence in the 2016 General Elections in Ghana. The project was launched by Honorable Prosper Bani, Ghana's Minister for Interior at a consultative meeting held on May 17 and 18, 2016 in Accra, Ghana to discuss modalities for the operationalization of the Situation Room. The Project is designed to monitor, interpret and communicate risks that have implication for the peaceful conduct of elections during the November polls in Ghana.

The stakeholders including representatives of government and intergovernmental organizations, Development Partners, civil society and the media in their goodwill messages at the occasion, expressed support and commitment to peaceful elections in Ghana and commended WANEP for taking the lead.

Below are excerpts from the goodwill messages;

"I have confidence in the people of this country, who, more than once, have demonstrated their commitment to democracy and peace, and have on many occasions confirmed Ghana's reputation for holding truly democratic elections." - **Dr. Ibn Chamas, Special Representative to UNOWAS**

"I am fully convinced that the output of the Election Situational Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation Project, will play a very critical role in our collective efforts at identifying and rapidly addressing any issues that may have an impact on the peaceful conduct of the November polls in Ghana." - **Dr. Remi Ajibewa Director of Political Affairs, ECOWAS**

More from the link: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&news-releases&Itemid=8



Dr Ibn Chamas, Special Representative to UNOWAS



Hon Prosper Bani, Ghana Minister for Interior



Ms Evans-Klock, UN Resident Coordinator



Rev. Prof Emmanuel Asante, NPC Chairman



Dr. Remi Ajibewa, Director of Political Affairs, ECOWAS



Key stakeholders and major partners with WANEP staff at the launch of the Election Situational Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM) Project

TALKING PEACE

“The quest for Representation and Legitimacy in West Africa has suffered notable setbacks!”

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellences, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. It is my pleasure to officially welcome you to the launching of Ghana 2016 Election Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation Project, otherwise known as the Election Situation Room (ESR). Mr. Chairman, today there is an unfolding paradigm shift in the approach to elections and electioneering processes. A few years ago, politics and elections were seen as the sole preserve of political actors and gladiators; the State and Government agencies but today, the voices of citizens are beginning to echo in the political arena! In some countries, the citizens are asking the right questions and demanding direct and simple answers.

In spite of the notable improvement in the cessation of hostilities in Africa, the diagnosis of the democratic processes – especially in the conduct of elections, functioning of state institutions and wider participation of the citizens in the exercise of their franchise, self-expression and self-determination remains ambivalent. Sometimes we seem to forget that the notion of democracy is “government of the people, for the people and by the people!”

The quest to achieve more representative and legitimate institutions in West Africa, through the holding of national elections, has suffered some notable setbacks in recent years, with violent consequences. It is even more worrisome that in countries like Ghana with a history of electoral decorum and civility, there is now high level of suspicion and lack of confidence in key state institutions that directly or indirectly superintend the electoral process. Allegations of partisan security forces, partiality of the judiciary, and lack of independence of the Electoral Commission among others abound. An important dimension with potentials of heating up the polity is the introduction of identity, ethnicity and religiosity in the body politics of Ghana – a phenomenon I have never witnessed in all the elections I have observed here since 2003 and in my close to seven years residing in the country.

Within the context of the ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism (ECOWARN), WANEP has been monitoring and analyzing elections and electoral processes in West Africa for well over a decade. In monitoring the electioneering processes, WANEP and other civil society has contributed immensely to generating early warning data relating to elections and the potential threats to peace and security in the region as well as responded to low and high intensity conflicts that had the potential to derail the electoral process. It is against this background, that we are gathered here to launch a six month long Situational Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation of the 2016 general elections in Ghana. It involves a real time monitoring, analysis and communication of electoral risks with periodic debriefing of key stakeholders. Our project is inspired by the desire to contribute, to support and to compliment the efforts of the official actors, knowing fully well that every little contribution matters!

Excerpts from the keynote address of WANEP Executive Director, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze at the launch of the Election Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation Project



Supporting Sierra Leone Development, Peace and Security Agenda

The theme for this year’s Annual General meeting is “WANEP transition from programming to visioning in support of the Sierra Leone Peace, Security and Development Agenda”. As peacebuilders, we must be seen to move forward in support of peace, security and development of nations including standing up against the scourge of deadly epidemics such as Ebola which has dire devastating impact on our development agenda. I therefore call on WANEP Sierra Leone and its membership gathered here to move in that direction.

I continue to be encouraged by the work we are doing and the institution we are collectively building even amidst unending challenges. I can confidently say that today in our history as the leading peacebuilding institution in West Africa and I dare say in Africa, WANEP is no longer a pushover in the arena of peace and security. The demand for our expertise in peace and security in our region and continent is increasing. This attainment did not come on a silver platter. It came as a result of the collective efforts through sacrifices and resilience of all of us as board member, staff and member organization across the region among which of course is WANEP Sierra Leone.

I also congratulate all of you specifically for the various efforts and support systems provided to one another by your membership in that direction. We must pick the lessons of the past and build a WANEP Sierra Leone that will continue to thrive not only at the programmatic level but at the institutional development level as well; a WANEP Sierra Leone that is able and resilient to sustain itself even amidst dwindling funding support from our strategic partners. Let me therefore at this point thank the Board for their leadership and also salute the management and staff of the secretariat for their selfless services in the face of hardship.

As you may be aware, in 2015, a new management that for the first time in its history was without any of the founding directors took over the leadership of the organization. Prior to arriving at that stage, many key decisions particularly on the growth and continuous professionalization of the organization were taken and proceeded for implementation. Key amongst them was that in 2010, the General Assembly took a landmark decision to transform the Board both at the national and regional levels from a representative to a Professional Board thus making the Board the second highest decision making organ in the organization. The professionalization was and still is to reinforce the functionality of the organization as a leading CSO in peace and security in West Africa. 12 of the national networks as at today have professionalized their boards with the exception of Burkina Faso, Niger and Sierra Leone.

Excerpts from the address of WANEP Regional presented at the Annual General Meeting of WANEP-Sierra Leone by Mrs. Levinia Addae-Mensah, Program Director



EVENTS! EVENTS! EVENTS!

WANEP Regional Board Tour New Office



The WANEP-Regional Board led by the Chair Professor Isaac Albert held their first meeting in the new office and took time off to tour the office during the meeting.

Prior to the Board meeting, Prof Albert in his capacity as the Board Chair paid a one-day working visit to ascertain level of preparedness for the official opening of the office scheduled for early 2017. The WANEP Regional Secretariat recently moved to its new office on April 18, 2016.



Board Chair; Prof Isaac Albert meeting with Management staff (Above Left). Board members visit the WANEP Finance Unit during the tour (Above Rt)

NEW ECOWAS PAPS COMMISSIONER COMMENDS WANEP

The newly appointed Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security (PAPS) of the ECOWAS Commission, Honourable Halima Ahmed, has commended the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) for its longstanding partnership with ECOWAS within the framework of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture. The Commissioner said this when a high-level delegation from WANEP led by its Executive Director, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze visited her at the ECOWAS Commission on June 17, 2016. The delegation included Professor Patricia Donli, WANEP Regional Board Member and Mr. Alimou Diallo, the Coordinator, WANEP/ECOWAS Liaison Office.



During the visit, Mr. Eze congratulated the Honourable Commissioner on her appointment as the Head of the Political Affairs Peace and Security Department of ECOWAS and assured her of WANEP's unflinching support. He underscored the opportunity given to civil society to input into the ECOWAS peace and security agenda through WANEP. Prof. Donli on the other hand, commended the Commissioner on the milestones ECOWAS has made in its effort to stabilize the region and guarantee economic integration and development.

Honourable Halima entreated WANEP to continue to explore more opportunities for further collaboration with ECOWAS as a means of sustaining the ECOWAS Vision 2020 towards actualizing an ECOWAS of the People. Speaking in the same vein, Dr. Remi Ajibewa, the Director of Political Affairs appreciated the fruitful relationship between ECOWAS and WANEP citing concrete collaborative engagements between the two institutions.



...Executive Director Applauds Leadership Change

The Executive Director of WANEP, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze has described the 49th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of States and Government of ECOWAS "as a step towards the actualization of the ECOWAS of the peoples," in a press interview shortly after the summit. Mr. Eze was a delegate at the Summit which held on June 4, 2016 at the King Fahd Hotel, Dakar, Senegal on the invitation of the President of the ECOWAS Commission.

A key highlight of the Summit was the change of leadership of the Authority from, President Macky Sall of Senegal to Liberia's President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson as the new Chair of the Authority and the swearing in of H.E. Marcel Alain de Souza as the President of the Commission.

Speaking further, Mr. Eze expressed appreciation to the Commission for the invitation of WANEP to the Summit and urged the new leadership to ensure it embarks on reforms that will continue to stabilize the commission and community. He also appreciated the efforts of the Commission and the Authority in supporting the electoral processes in West Africa particularly, in the improvement witnessed in the conduct of elections in the region in recent time. He therefore appealed for the same level of determination in the upcoming elections especially in Ghana and The Gambia.



Moving from an ECOWAS of State to an ECOWAS of people

From the field... from the field...

13 WANEP National Offices now have Professional Boards



Thirteen out of the Fifteen WANEP National Offices have so far instituted a Professional Board in place in accordance with the 2010 General Assembly resolutions which approved the transformation of the Board from representative to a professional board. On May 20 2016, Sierra Leone became the latest addition with the inauguration of a five-member Professional Board. The newly constituted Professional Board comprised three males and two females made up of an academician, a Social policy analyst /OD Expert and other experts in gender, the media, youth and human rights.

WANEP Executive Director, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze described the institutionalization of the professional Board for WANEP Sierra Leone as another milestone for WANEP. In a goodwill message delivered on his behalf by the WANEP Program Director, Mrs. Levinia Addae-Mensah, Mr. Eze said; "on behalf of the Regional Management and the entire WANEP family, I commend WANEP Sierra Leone for a successful General Assembly while wishing the new Board a productive and exciting tenure. We thank the outgoing Board for their selfless service and for all the time they offered WANEP freely. WANEP is on the path to greatness and we should all be happy that we are part of this big story."

In his response, the National Network Coordinator (NNC) WANEP-Sierra Leone, Mr. Edward Jombla expressed appreciation to WANEP Management for their continuous support to the network and applauded the Executive Director saying; "Your efforts in the management of our network have been truly outstanding and we deeply appreciate your leadership. We pray for divine wisdom and direction as you stir us to new levels of success in the coming years." The member organizations of WANEP Sierra Leone during the General Assembly where the new Board was presented and approved, also expressed their support and utmost confidence in the new Board to steer the affairs of the organization.



Picture above (Left) WANEP Program Director, Mrs. Levinia Addae-Mensah with the newly inaugurated Professional Board of WANEP-Sierra Leone. Below Left; Mrs. Addae-Mensah receives a plaque from ... on behalf of WANEP-Regional management. Above right, Mrs. Addae-Mensah being decorated with a chieftaincy title.

Malian Commissioner for Security Reform lauds WANEP

The Commissioner for Security Reforms at the Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Mali, Inspector General Ibrahima Diallo, has joined the league of key stakeholders to commend WANEP's work in peace and security in the region. The commendation was made at a one-day regional consultative meeting on Human security hosted by WANEP-Mali in collaboration with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the Human Security Collective (HSC) in Bamako.

Mr. Diallo, who was the guest speaker at the meeting congratulated WANEP for the initiatives they have taken in contributing to responding to the challenges of human security in Mali and in the region. He reiterated his continuous support to the process as well as supporting WANEP Mali in its engagement with the State.



The regional consultative meeting with the theme; "Defining Regional Approaches for the Promotion of Human Security; collective actions to deal with common threats" brought together major stakeholders in peace and security, development partners, Malian civil society as well as representatives of WANEP from Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Niger and from GPPAC. The meeting deliberated on the important role civil society can play in the fight against violent extremism, and in seeking appropriate solutions to the human security threats in Mali and its neighbors.

Mr. Francis Acquah-Aikins, WANEP Regional Coordinator Network Development (first Left) and Mahamady Togola, National Network Coordinator, WANEP-Mali pose with Inspector General Diallo (middle) and others

WANEP is implementing a Human Security Project in Mali in collaboration with GPPAC and the Human Security Collective (HSC) funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC).

Through this project, WANEP has been engaging stakeholders (both at regional and global levels) including intergovernmental organizations such as AU and ECOWAS to support the civil society's accompaniment of peace support operations in Mali.

From the field... from the field...

Stories of change

Breaking Cultural Bondage:

COMMUNITY WOMEN STAND UP FOR THEIR RIGHT

Abobo, Duekoué and Danané are three big communities in Cote d'Ivoire which host a cross multi-ethnic populations from across Cote d'Ivoire, and Africa as a whole. Abobo is located in Abidjan while Duekoué and Danané are located on the outskirts of the city in the Western Region of Cote d'Ivoire. These three communities were particularly affected by the protracted election crises in Cote d'Ivoire which led to the ousting of Alassane Ouattara and a complete breakdown of law and order. The communities lack basic infrastructures. The two district hospitals of Duekoué and Danané were operational during the crises but had no medicines while schools and other educational institutions in the communities were attacked thus preventing children and teachers from going to school.

As is the case in other parts of Africa, women in these communities are regarded as the weaker sex and face all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence in the form of rape, denial of their rights to owning lands and inheriting their deceased husbands or parents estates/properties and forced marriages. Violence against women is a regular occurrence in these communities and the suffering increases with the rise in political tensions. This was the situation until the intervention of WANEP-CI through the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) program of WANEP. The network under the Restoration of the Rights of Women project stirred the women into ac-

tion through massive sensitization programs and facilitated capacity building sessions. This project is aimed at empowering women and young girls to change their conditions by protecting and promoting their rights.

The project in partnership with the Association of Women Lawyers adopted a holistic approach to get the women back on track and restore a sense of dignity in them. The Women Lawyers took charge of the legal aspect of the victims' stories and the International Rescue Committee was in charge of their psychosocial and medical needs.

"In Danané, with the increased awareness about their rights, women such as Ms Diallo Oumou and her three sisters have taken possession of the shop which was the source of their livelihood from their uncle who forcefully took over the shop at the death of his brother, their father..."

Apart from sensitization activities, WANEP-CI also facilitated the establishment of a peace hut in the three communities and trained a pool of women to coordinate the activities under the huts. The experiences of the Liberia Women Peace Huts were harnessed through cross sharing which allowed for a good replication of the concept taking into consideration the context and immensely contributing to the success of the peace huts. The women are determined to continue the fight for their rights. Through the peace huts, women have been empowered to report to the police or gendamerie issues bothering on violation of their rights and gradually, they are gaining grounds in deconstructing this systemic violation of rights in different forms. With the increased awareness about their



Women in Danané doing a drama sketch on violence against women during a sensitization activity. Below; peace hut coordinator (2nd left) with other women in front of one of the peace huts



rights, Ms Diallo Oumou and her three sisters were able to repossess their father's shop which was forcefully taken by their uncle. The uncle took over the shop, which was their only source of livelihood, immediately after their father's death. He also threatened to marry off two of the sisters to men they did not know and even withdrew them from school. They achieved this feat with the help of the Mayor who is also championing a community radio program on gender-based violence.

It is worthy to note that this awareness efforts is yielding very positive results as many women have been able to retrieve their properties, demand for the return of their estranged husbands and many women who have been victims of domestic violence have reconciled with their family. Through their determination to lower sexual violence and rape, over 500 women went on a peaceful march to protest the rape of seven girls in the community. The march was widely covered by the media and had a single message: **NO to rape!**

MILESTONE!



Above Left: WANEP Regional Board members pose in front of the new office

Above Right: WANEP staff all packed and ready to go!

Below left: Prayer session in the new office led by Rev John Nkum, WANEP Regional Board member

WANEP Historic Move In Pictures

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) officially relocated its offices from Ashiakle street, Abelemkpe to Trinity Avenue, off Mile 7 Rd. Achimota. The office will be officially opened in January 2017.

Picture Left (above and below) Board Members taking a tour of the office led by Executive Director, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze and Administrative Manager, Mrs Esther Gordon-Mensah. Below (right) WANEP staff with UNDP representatives and members of the Women Situation Room, some of the first visitors to the new office



WANEP Socials



Raymond - May 7



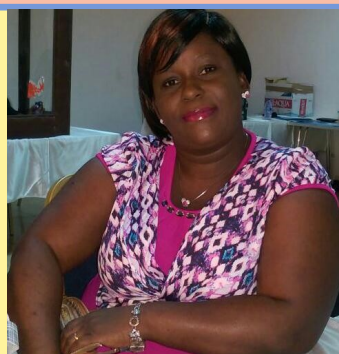
Gisele - May 8



Michael - May 8



Elizabeth - May 20



Diana - June 11



Ifeanyi - May 19

WHO WE ARE

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) was conceived in 1996 but formally launched in 1998. Unlike other activist organizations, WANEP strategically chose to engage major actors, particularly government actors in a bid to establish a platform for dialogue, experience sharing and learning, thereby, complementing efforts at ensuring sustainable peace and development. WANEP is a member of the Peace and Security cluster of the African Union's (AU) Economic and Social Council –ECOSOCC representing West Africa and also has a Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). WANEP is the Regional Secretariat of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC).

OUR GOAL

WANEP's cardinal goal is to build sustainable peace, thereby creating an enabling environment for development in West Africa.

WHAT WE DO

WANEP work covers eight critical areas of intervention including;

- ◆ The West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI)
- ◆ West Africa Early Warning and Response Network, (WARN)
- ◆ Women in Peacebuilding (WIPNET)
- ◆ Non-violence and Peace Education, (NAPE)
- ◆ Civil Society Coordination and Democratic Governance Program, (CSDG)
- ◆ Responding to Conflicts through Dialogue

WHERE WE WORK

WANEP's growth and influence has been phenomenal. After 15 years of peacebuilding practice, WANEP has grown to become a household name in West Africa with national offices in all the ECOWAS Member countries, and over 500 member organizations spread all over WA.