



West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

PRESS RELEASE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE ON 21ST SEPTEMBER 2010

Time of Release – Immediate

On the occasion of the celebration of the International day of Peace, 21st September 2010, in light of the year of Peace and Security in Africa, following our participation at the recent high level peace and security consultative meeting organised by African Union in Cairo - Egypt, as the Regional initiator of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), joins the African community of Civil Society Organizations, the African Union and ECOWAS to advocate and appeal for Peace and justice in West Africa and Africa at large. Within the broader context of West Africa, this appeal particularly focuses on all the countries in the sub region going through or preparing towards elections and transition for a non-violent and peaceful general election. While everyday indeed is a day of peace, the symbolism of the International Day of Peace provides a unique platform to highlight the work of justice and peace in our collective efforts to build a democratic and non violence culture in West Africa where the respect for basic human rights, social justice, peace, freedom and prosperity will sustain peaceful coexistence in our communities and in our Nations.

Throughout the past two decades, the West African sub-region has suffered from destructive violent conflicts that have produced profound human tragedies requiring massive humanitarian and peacekeeping interventions. WANEP is convinced that more than ever before, we must be working towards the prevention of the escalation of violence and destruction rather than reacting to outbreaks of such violence. It is in this regard that the incidences of violence in expressing electioneering grievances in Guinea, the political tension in Niger, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria and other pockets of electoral related violence across the sub region is regrettable and demands a concerted effort to ensure that the processes are peaceful in order that they can also be credible and reflective of the political will of the citizens.

Ultimately, preventing violent conflicts requires addressing underlying issues and conditions that create ground for such violence to fester. In the immediate however, urgent actions are required to minimize mistrust and build confidence towards the electoral processes. Beyond the numerous appeals for peace and various peace campaigns, restoring public confidence that the pursuance of Justice shall be firm and fair to all with professionalism and impartiality is also critical.

On this International Day of Peace, WANEP also re-echoes and fully shares in the message of the African Union – **MAKE PEACE HAPPEN** and the commitment of our leaders when they declared *“We are determined to deal once and for all with the scourge of conflict and violence on our continent acknowledging our shortcomings and errors ,committing our resources and our best people and missing no opportunity to push forward the agenda of conflict prevention, peace-making, peace-keeping and post-conflict reconstruction. We, as leaders, simply cannot bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans”.* “

The West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP) will deploy all efforts to support this noble cause. The challenge of attaining peace, security stability across the entire African continent is clearly an undertaking that should be sustained for many years. The year of Peace and Security offers an unprecedented opportunity for African citizen, as well as African institutions, civil society organizations in partnership with governments and the international community, to celebrate our accomplishments and to review current efforts to peacebuilding on the continent, with a view to strengthening these and where appropriate launching concrete new initiatives for peace and security

We will continue to build relationship for peace and ultimately **MAKE PEACE HAPPEN**

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