

[Extracted from WANEP Annual Report, 2006]

The year 2006 is recorded within WANEP as a defining period in redefining its operational structure and corporate image as well as in the protection of its intellectual property. Following the approval of WANEP's restructuring plan by the Annual General Meeting of 2006, the Regional Secretariat was restructured to increase its viability and competitiveness and to guarantee its sustainability as an institution.

Towards this end, the Regional Secretariat was down-sized to maintain a small number of professionals who will provide technical expertise and support to the National Networks towards improving the effective and efficient coordination of WANEP's activities. At the national level, Institutional Development Framework workshops were organised as the first step to strengthen the organizational capacities of WANEP National Networks. On the other hand, the organization was tested when some staff clandestinely registered its women's program, the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) as a separate organization in violation of its intellectual property rights.

During the year under review, the partnership between WANEP and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) grew stronger with the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on 29th June 2006. The main thrust of the MOU is to institutionalize the culture of conflict prevention across the sub-region. Under phase II of the Capacity-Building in Conflict Prevention and Good Governance "Enhanced Conflict Prevention Framework for ECOWAS and Civil Society Organizations in West Africa", WANEP has systematically strengthened the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in conflict prevention and completed the preparatory phase for the launch and Operationalisation of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), an on-line database designed to capture information that will provide early warning to nascent conflicts before they become full-blown. In addition, partnership with the United Nations (UN) was enhanced when the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at its Substantive Session of July 2006 granted Special Consultative Status to WANEP. Besides designating special representatives to the United Nations (UN) Offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna, WANEP together with its national networks will engage regularly with the UN at country and regional levels to implement effectively the provisions of this consultative relationship.

In search of durable peace in West Africa and beyond, WANEP continues to build strong partnerships with international partners. WANEP is the West Africa Regional initiator for the

Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC) and the host of the Africa desk of the Women's Peacemakers Program (WPP) of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR). The complimentary role of this desk with the WIPNET program of WANEP will deepen the engagement of women in peacebuilding not only in West Africa, but Africa as a whole. WANEP has also signed a MOU with the Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa (NPI-Africa) to conduct a joint research project on Transitional Justice experiences in Africa.

The increasing role and impacts of civil society in West Africa in peacebuilding presents the new hope that the transformation of conflicts in the region, the rebuilding of broken communities through healing and reconciliation and the creation of an enabling environment for the promotion of human security and development are within our reach. As the leading civil society network in peacebuilding, WANEP profoundly continues to appreciate the funding and institutional support of its partners. Without such critical support, WANEP's valuable contribution will not be possible. This report highlights the work of WANEP across West Africa. It is the contribution of ordinary men and women who find the courage and the voice everyday to stand up for justice and peace in West Africa.

We mention with gratitude the support of CORDAID who over the years provided core funding support and in 2006 approved WANEP's Strategic Plan (2006-2009). The Ghana Research and Advocacy Program (G-RAP) have contributed to institutional support which enhances our growth and sustainability. We thank sincerely our partners the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the West Africa Mission of USAID for the support to enhance civil society capacity in peacebuilding through the "Enhanced Conflict Prevention Framework for ECOWAS and Civil Society Organizations in West Africa". We are equally grateful to Oxfam Great Britain and Oxfam America, UNDP-Ghana, Urgent Action Fund, Ploughshares, IFOR, Bread for the World and the Community House Church for their generous support in 2006.

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