

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) continued in 2010 with determined efforts to sustain itself as a viable and credible Civil Society Peacebuilding Organisation in West Africa. These efforts increased WANEP's leverage and capacity to enhance and contribute to Peacebuilding initiatives across the sub-region. In line with WANEP's principle of accountability, I am delighted to present to you, a summary account of our contribution to Peace and Human Security in West Africa in 2010.

At the Regional Secretariat, Chukwuemeka Eze, the former National Coordinator for WANEP-Nigeria replaced Takwa Suifon as Program Director. Mr Suifon joined the African Union Peace and Security Commission at the end of 2009. In 2010, WANEP's strategic plan was revised and rationalised at the regional level while maintaining core program objectives and enhancing their implementation at national levels. The benefits of such reorganisation are remarkable as regional programs have impact in a vertical capability from community to national and regional levels. National Networks are now optimising responses to national specific issues informed by peacebuilding practice experiences of other national networks. Such cross fertilisation and exchange is contributing enormously to the promotion of human security in the sub-region from the generation of local knowledge and practice. There is huge satisfaction of increasing capacity at national level. WANEP's presence is therefore manifested more in local communities and national levels while coordination from the regional level provides professionalism and efficiency. A direct outcome is increasing complimentary support and work with National Governments and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In some countries, WANEP was invited to play intermediary roles and provide mediation in sensitive internal political and inter-communal conflicts.

At the level of National Networks, WANEP expanded with the setting up of national network structures and secretariats in Cape Verde and Mali. Our presence at National level through well-structured national networks has therefore increased to fourteen. WANEP anticipates completing national network structures with the setting up of a national secretariat in Niger in 2011. The WANEP institutional structure and its comparative advantage thereof enabled WANEP's efficient contribution to the promotion of human security at the various levels in the sub region. Through its West Africa Early Warning and Response Network program (WARN), WANEP increased the efficiency of data collection and conflict analysis in its partnership with ECOWAS for the implementation of the Early Warning Mechanism otherwise known as ECOWARN. During the year under review, WANEP started the process of designing the National Early Warning Systems (NEWS) to further enhance early warning for conflict prevention at national levels. This will further improve early warning at the regional level through ECOWARN and inform prompt response actions at both national and regional levels. Under the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), a thorough review of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was undertaken. Women peacebuilding practitioners and representatives of national governments of the 15 ECOWAS member states through a regional

conference in Cote D'Ivoire, added impetus to the role of women in Peacebuilding. The West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI) was successfully organised bringing together participants from up to 17 countries across Africa with the participation of UN staff.

WANEP took another step in its partnership with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) for the implementation of WAPI with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The two institutions will work more closely in designing and implementing quality training in peacebuilding to respond to the need of increasing the number of peacebuilding practitioners in West Africa. Within the framework of the Dialogue and Mediation program, WANEP during the year undertook various initiatives in responding to crises while building synergy with the other programs to sustain conflict prevention efforts.

In Bawku in the Upper East Region of Ghana, WANEP worked with Members of Parliament from the Region and convened Inter-Communal Dialogue sessions that brought together community leaders to the table to talk and to end inter-communal violence and feuding that had reignited in December 2007. These efforts have now been sustained with the reinvigoration of a functional Inter-Communal Peace Committee that meets regularly to deliberate and respond to threats to peace, and other emerging issues that could likely lead to violence. In Jos Plateau State in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, efforts were initiated and will continue next year to engage key stakeholders in a dialogue process to respond to inter-communal violence and killings.

Contributing to peaceful elections featured prominently in WANEP activities in the year under review. In Guinea, beyond engaging in policy influencing through policy briefs, WANEP organised a series of roundtable meetings and working within the framework of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC), the major actors managing the Guinean elections interacted with civil society, political parties, religious leaders and other interests groups to inform one another adequately on measures and common strategies to ensure violence free elections and a peaceful transition. The elections were organised under enormous difficulty and stress but Guinea has pulled through in one of the most contested transitional experiences ever in West Africa. Similar efforts were deployed in Cote D'Ivoire at a much higher scale. WANEP-Cote D'Ivoire was the lead agency for the coordination of civic education within the Electoral Commission (CEI) for peaceful elections. WANEP worked with other Civil Society organisations, ECOWAS and the UNDP all directed at credible and peaceful elections. At the close of the year when the final run-off was conducted, it became apparent that Cote D'Ivoire was heading for a post-election crisis mainly as a result of the refusal of the incumbent President to comply with the outcomes of the elections and concede defeat. WANEP will be unrelenting in its efforts in contributing to the promotion of a peaceful transition in Cote D'Ivoire. All these experiences have informed WANEP's resolve to prioritise and develop a practice guide for responding to electoral crisis in West Africa in 2011.

WANEP-Executive Director in 2010 and continuing in 2011 worked as Chair of GPPAC at the crucial time of the transformation of the Global Platform. WANEP's membership of the Peace and Security Cluster of AU ECOSOCC General Assembly and the GPPAC platform has increasingly provided a wider scope and leverage for engaging continental and global decision makers on promoting peacebuilding and conflict prevention. During the year under review, WANEP entered into a partnership for the first time with the Swedish Development Agency-SIDA towards Enhancing civil society capacity in human security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in West Africa.

Over the years, WANEP has grown and established itself as a key civil society voice and institution contributing to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in West Africa and beyond. This is all possible because WANEP Partners have supported and funded the institution and its program activities. We are indebted to all of them. We make special mention of SIDA for the significant support in enhancing civil society capacity in Human Security, Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in West Africa. We appreciate EWARDS grant support to WANEP funded by USAID. This has improved WANEP's early warning and early response program and particularly WANEP's contribution to the ECOWAS early warning mechanism-ECOWARN. We thank the people and Government of Finland through the Foreign Ministry of Finland for grant support that has contributed enormously to WANEP's response capacity to crisis. We are equally grateful to the Ghana Research and Advocacy Project (G-RAP) for core institutional support, IBIS-West Africa for important interventions and special initiatives around dialogue and mediation as well as monitoring political intimidation and promoting peaceful elections. The German Technical Co-operation-GTZ supported WANEP's West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI), while the MacArthur Foundation provided important support to WANEP's Women in Peacebuilding Network program (WIPNET).

During the year, we worked with partners and appreciated collaboration with them on specific program areas. They include the Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), the National Emergency Management Agency in Nigeria and National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) in Ghana. The others included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Members of Parliament in Ghana, The United States Institute of Peace (USIP), The Nairobi Peace Initiative –Africa (NPI-Africa) and the Africa Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) as well as the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). We are most grateful to all the partners that have supported our national networks and its programs and finally to all those who voluntarily participated in our programs and activities at various levels and times.