

***[Extracted from WANEP Annual Report, 2011]***

This is the third official statement I would be making since I was appointed the Board Chairman of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). Last year, I commended the great efforts that WANEP was making at restoring peace to the West African sub-region and the larger world. I expressed the hope that with efforts like ours and the support of all other stakeholders, the sub-region would ultimately become a haven of peace. On hindsight I underestimated the volume of water in the many rivers we have to cross as a peacebuilding institution with limited resources operating in a sub-region under constant peace and security challenges. The ongoing post conflict peacebuilding efforts in Cote d'Ivoire and the escalating Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria all suggest that our best might not be good enough; the world expects more from us as an institution known for excellence in peacebuilding. It is therefore difficult for us to rest on our oars. We have greater tasks ahead of us and we must take on the challenges.

That said, we have come a long way, achieved what some thought was unachievable and we remain in sight of our objective of creating a West African sub-region in which sustainable peace will prevail irrespective of the countervailing agents around us. I must thank all those that have identified with our aspirations and efforts: the government and people of Ghana that have provided us a clement environment within which to operate; our funders who have continued to provide more resources irrespective of the ongoing financial crisis around the world; and the management of WANEP under the leadership of Emmanuel Bombande (*fspsp*). We also have to specially thank the good people of West Africa who have not only accepted WANEP as a household name but are also making significant contributions to peacebuilding at local level by taking our message of peace to the remotest communities.

The Board of WANEP is made of eminent global citizens who more than ever before have decided to fully take charge of the organization. This is not because the organization was not doing well but largely because of our feeling that the more professional and active we are the better the chances of WANEP becoming a stronger organization. Under the new dispensation, the Board has increased its visits to the headquarters to provide oversight. In this respect, I must thankfully acknowledge the cooperation of the Management. A resistance from the team could have slowed down our resolve to take WANEP to the next height in its evolution.

The results of our efforts are now beginning to manifest in terms of the improved confidence of funders in what we do. In the year 2011, the University of Ibadan (Nigeria) which runs a

Master's and doctoral degree programmes in Peace and Conflict Studies enlisted the support of WANEP for running its annual one-week capacity building training programme which took off in 2000; WANEP produced a world class practice guide for managing electoral disputes in West Africa and the Executive Director was made the Fellow of the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP) in Nigeria. At various national networks, WANEP is playing very important roles in national dialogue and reconciliation efforts, and providing support to the African Union and ECOWAS peace and security initiatives. We expect the leadership role of our organization to improve in the years to come but this would require more hard work from all and sundry