

KEYNOTE ADDRESS FOR WAPI OPENING: 04 September 2005

By Major General John Attipoe, The Commandant of The Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre.

Mr. Emmanuel Bombande, Executive Director of the West African Network for Peace-building (WANEP)

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I take the opportunity to welcome you all to the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and to the first West African Peace-building Institute to be hosted at the Centre.

The term peace-building has been used to describe all the activities undertaken by both local and international actors to bring peace to a country after years of war and conflict. The KAIPTC has been recognized as a West African centre of excellence for operational level training and education on all aspects of Peace Support Operations. ***PSO are multifunctional operations in which impartial military activities are designed to create a secure environment and to facilitate the efforts of the civilian elements of the mission to create a self sustaining peace.*** PSO may include Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement as well as conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace building and humanitarian operations. It is safe to say that all of the courses that KAIPTC offers – from IPSO to DDR and Civilian Police – have a post-conflict or peace-building component.

The reality is that all contemporary multifunctional PSO are mandated for and geared towards facilitating transitions from war to peace – and thus post-conflict activities. Peace-building was originally presented in *An Agenda for Peace* as a post-conflict process, or set of activities that are now commonly accepted and incorporated in the mandates of most multidimensional UN peace operations -

disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; the restoration of law and order; election monitoring; efforts to protect and promote human rights; etc. It is logical to reflect this in our design and presentation of operational-level of training in a range of course specializations as reflected in the Centre's 2005 programme of activities.

Moreover, our research department (CPMRD) engages in policy-level debates involving the full spectrum of PSO actors and activities, through its research and conferencing agenda. From mid-2004 onwards, we have convened a series of seminars and workshops, bringing together KAIPTC stakeholders such as the ECOWAS Secretariat & Member States; Donor representatives; UN DPKO and senior mission personnel; Regional and international scholars, and Regional and local Civil Society Organizations. Past events have included a three-day workshop on ***Mainstreaming Gender in West African Peace Operations***, and one on ***Lessons Learned from DDR Experiences in Africa***. Last week, we hosted, in partnership with ASDR, an **AU-Civil Society Consultative Workshop** aimed at improving the contributions of African CSOs to the African Union's peace and security agenda, and next month we shall be hosting a strategic planning meeting for the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF). In November, we shall be presenting, together with the UN DPKO, a seminar of **Strengthening the Rule of Law: Judicial and Legal Systems in Peacekeeping Operations**, and in December there will be a high-level conference with the theme: ***Post-conflict Peace-building and National 'Ownership': Lessons from the Sierra Leone Peace Process***.

There is also the potential to increase or amend our present portfolio of training courses, to address a different or broader variety of training requirements for peacekeeping and peace-building tasks. However, it is not in our best interests or those of the region to try and do the kind of training that civil society based organizations such as WANEP are doing, and are doing extremely well.

WANEP's mission is to promote a local culture of peace, strengthen the capacity of peace building practitioners and institutions, develop conflict prevention networks and mechanisms, and advocate for just socio-politico-economic structures. WANEP has national offices in 10 West African countries, and its wider network consists of 300 member organizations, in 15 countries in Central and West Africa. The long-term objective of WANEP is to create a large pool of strategically positioned intervenors across West Africa, to professionalize the process of peacebuilding, and to improve regional intervention strategies.

The KAIPTC and WANEP share the same broad vision – a peaceful and stable (West) African region, characterized by adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights – including women's rights and the rights of the child. We are therefore delighted to have partners in Accra, such as WANEP, who are willing to utilize our campus for an initiative such as WAPI, and to bring together here such a rich cross section of Africans for this three-week training. The course, I understand, will cover contemporary issues on peace, conflict, security, gender and development. Participants include representatives of national governments, religious and relief organizations, and others concerned with peace and the development of the West Africa sub-region. I am convinced that the rich and diverse nature of course participants and facilitators will lead to fruitful discussions and outcomes on peacebuilding processes in Africa.

I congratulate WANEP for this initiative and express appreciation to all the organisations that have sponsored the participants on the course. We hope that the Peace-building Institute will grow from strength to strength, and that this year's WAPI will be a further catalyst to enhanced collaboration between KAIPTC and WANEP in pursuit of the broad human security agenda in West Africa.

I therefore declare the 2005 West Africa Peacebuilding Institute opened.

Thank you.