10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE “WAR DON DON” IN SIERRA LEONE

PRESS RELEASE

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Today, 18\textsuperscript{th} January 2012, marks the 10\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the ‘war don don’ (end of war) in Sierra Leone. It is to be recalled that, former President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabba officially declared the end of the bloody civil war on this day thereby ushering in an era of post-conflict reconstruction and development while mechanisms were put in place to deal with the atrocities committed during the war. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court of Sierra Leone were established to address human rights violations and end impunity in a bid to reconcile the nation.

The formal announcement of the end of the war was received by Sierra Leoneans with a sense of relief and a yearning for a better future marked by peace, social cohesion and development. There is no gainsaying that 10 years down the road, Sierra Leone has chalked up successes particularly in maintaining the hard earned peace and by laying the foundation of a vibrant democracy. The country held two successful Presidential and Parliamentary elections with the ruling party handing over power peacefully to the opposition in 2007.

WANEP as a peacebuilding organization take pride in the peace and security strides already achieved but the current political situation in the build up to the 2012 general elections raises a lot of concerns regarding the stability of the country. Reported incidents of violence across the country are worrisome signs.

WANEP bemoans the North–Sought geo-political division of the country along ethnic lines. This hinders the ability of electorates to vote on the basis of the soundness of political party manifestoes. The attitude of ‘we must win at all cost’ is a dangerous way to go and must be condemned by all.

To ensure peaceful 2012 elections and consolidate the peace of the last ten years, WANEP calls on the collective, timely and appropriate intervention of the Government and its institutions such as the Office of the National Security (ONS), Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), National Electoral Commission (NEC) as well as the traditional and religious institutions, moral guarantors of the peace, ECOWAS, the International Community, Civil Society Organizations and the Media to diffuse the heightening political tension.

WANEP further calls on peace-loving Sierra Leoneans, especially the youth, that in the exercise of their civic duty in the forthcoming 2012 elections, to eschew violence and vote wisely. Participation in all political activities must be peaceful, respectful of the law, and tolerant of the different views of others.

In congratulating Sierra Leone for 10 years of uninterrupted peace, WANEP wishes to assure all and sundry that it will continue to monitor electoral activities and work towards supporting the relevant stakeholders in ensuring that the outcome of the 2012 elections will consolidate peace, democracy and promote development in the country. Happy Anniversary!

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