



# WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES

JANUARY - MARCH 2015



***A Group Photo at the 13th General Assembly held in Accra from January 20 to 22, 2015***

*WANEP is a leading Regional Peacebuilding organization founded in 1998 in response to civil wars that plagued West Africa in the late 1980s. We place special focus on collaborative approach, working alongside major actors, particularly governments, intergovernmental bodies and women in a bid to establish a platform for dialogue, experience sharing and learning, thereby complementing efforts at ensuring sustainable peace and development.*

## OVERVIEW OF PEACE AND SECURITY OF WEST AFRICA:

**Sierra Leone:** Political tensions over the dismissal of Vice President Alhaji Samuel Sam Sumana from the ruling All People's Congress (APC) and expulsion from government for "orchestrating political violence," trying to form a new party and alleged 'unethical practices.' However, the opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and other groups says the dismissal is "unconstitutional" citing the constitutional provisions, which allows for the dismissal of a vice president for misconduct or incapacity only by two-thirds vote of the majority in parliament.

**Liberia:** Tensions have grown in the country following on the proposition popularly called 'Count 24' by a Christian Heritage Group that Liberia be legislated as a Christian Nation.<sup>1</sup> The Muslim community of Bong Country have staged demonstrations and shut down business activities demanding for the removal of Count 24. The situation is worrisome and calls for decisive action to prevent the country from plunging into religious violence.

**Nigeria:** On March 28, Nigerians voted to elect a president and members of the national parliament in an adjudged credible election by most international and local observers, despite minimal violence and irregularities. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's unanimous acceptance of the results and conceding defeat to President-elect, General Muhammad Buhari helped to douse tensions across the country and prompted a peaceful consolidation of democratic governance. President Jonathan's action has garnered enormous commendation from Nigerians and the international community for saving the country from political crisis.

**Guinea:** the Guinean opposition parties boycotted parliament in March following accusations that President Alpha Conde was using the Ebola epidemic as an excuse to change the election timetable and postpone the presidential elections from March to October 11. The opposition also refused to take part in the government

organized dialogue but rather called for demonstrations against the Electoral Commission's decision to push the local elections to March 2016. There are fears that the political tensions could rekindle violence in the country as witnessed in the 2013 Legislative elections, thereby compounding a complex humanitarian emergency occasioned by Ebola.

**Togo:** The presidential elections which was initially scheduled for April 15 was postponed to April 25th following allegations by the opposition parties and civil society that the election lists included numerous duplicates aimed at favoring President Faure Gnassingbe. In this regard, ECOWAS facilitated the revision of the electoral list and all the presidential candidates have reached a consensus on the updated list in order to minimize tensions ahead of the polls.

<sup>1</sup> [allafrica.com/stories](http://allafrica.com/stories)



## 1.0. CAPACITY BUILDING AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



### 1.1. General Assembly

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) held its 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly from January 20 to 22, 2015 in Accra, Ghana under the theme: “WANEP Transition from Programming to Visioning in support of ECOWAS and African Union Peace Architecture.”

Significant outcome of the General Assembly include the adoption of the 2015 to 2020 Strategic Plan, successful leadership transition of both the Executive Directors and Regional Board, and review of the organizations constitution among others.

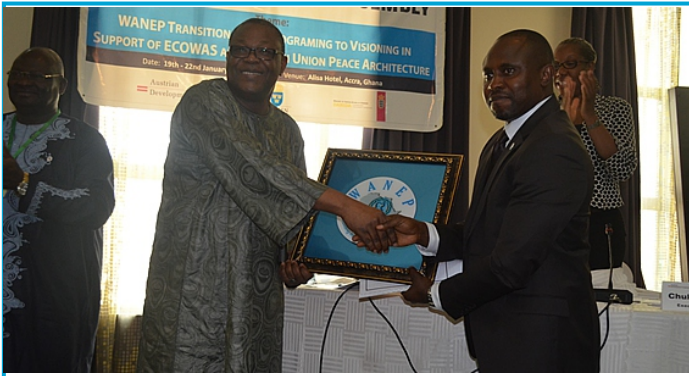
WANEP strategic partners namely; the Governments of Sweden, Denmark and Austria were honoured at this meeting for their sustained partnership with the organisation over the years in the promotion of peace and security in the region. The General Assembly was attended by representatives of WANEP's national networks, strategic partners, the Governments of Sweden, Denmark and Austria; ECOWAS, Africa Union (AU), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ghana, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). A historic moment during the meeting was the presence of Dr Sam Doe, WANEP's first Executive Director.



*Above: Immediate Past Executive Director of WANEP delivering his welcome address at the opening of the General Assembly  
Below: representatives of ADA and SIDA*







**Top;** WANEP New Executive Director Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze, receives the symbol of Leadership from outgoing Executive Director, Mr. Emmanuel Bombande.

**Above centre:** New Regional Board takes Oath of Office and **Above;** new Executive Director flanked by outgoing Executive Director and Dr. Sam Doe first WANEP Executive Director

## 1.2. West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI)

In partnership with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), WANEP held the 13th session of the West Africa Peacebuilding Institute, WAPI from March 2nd to 26th, 2015 with 46 participants (22 females and 24 males) across Africa including the ECOWAS Commission and the African Union. WAPI is designed to provide specialized, intensive, and culturally sensitive training in conflict transformation and peacebuilding to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and



Opening Ceremony of WAPI 2015



WAPI in session

relevant actors from West Africa and beyond through its wide range of courses. It provides a platform for the cross fertilization of ideas across the globe, in support of a paradigm shift in managing regional conflicts through local capacities, bearing on collective responsibility.

## 1.3. Building and Sustaining National Capacities for Peace

WANEP's key strategy for building and sustaining national capacities is to ensure that appropriate systems are put in place for the efficient running of the networks. In the review period, the following activities took place towards achieving this mandate;

- WANEP Benin and Cote d'Ivoire held their General Assembly and elected new board members, while WANEP Guinea developed a 5-year Strategic Plan in line with WANEP Regional Secretariat's five-year strategic plan covering the period 2015 to 2020.
- WANEP-Liberia enhanced trained community-based organizations (CBOs) on technical skills

especially in managing small grants which resulted to the opening of a community college in in Zwedru, the construction of a senior high school and a market in River Gee County. Furthermore two of the mentees organizations have secured grants of US\$139,000.00 and US\$200,000.00 respectively for effective program implementation.

- WANEP Liberia with support from the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) successfully built the skills and knowledge base of 375 communicators for social mobilization within 113 communities through the Ebola Community Action platform
- WANEP Burkina held trainings on the tools and methodologies for election observation and a training workshop to develop modalities for the establishment of an election situation room as part of its support to the electoral process.
- WANEP Sierra Leone trained eight CBOs in community mediation; three on women empowerment and five on peacebuilding, conflict transformation and development. The CBOs have signed Letters of Agreement with WANEP to facilitate community-based disputes in their respective districts.
- WANEP Benin under the “11000 homes against the Ebola viral disease” project supported by GIZ, carried out a house-to-house sensitization campaigns on Ebola the preventive measures. A total of 70,859 persons of whom 34,434 were women, from 11,099 households in 7 districts of the country were reached

## 2.0. EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RESPONSE NETWORK (WARN)

### 2.1. USAID and WANEP Sign Historic Partnership

WANEP and the United States Agency for International Development, USAID entered into a unique partnership on February 23, 2015 with the signing of a five-year contract for the implementation of a project on electoral violence. The direct partnership between the two institutions is the first of its kind in the region and attracted high-level interest from the US government including Counsellor to the US State



WANEP Executive Director & USAID West Africa Mission Director

Department, Thomas A. Shannon who was represented by Mr. Alexander Deprez, the USAID, West Africa Mission Director. The project “Mitigating Electoral Violence in West Africa” aims to mitigate electoral violence in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger and Sierra Leone through WANEP National Early Warning Systems, NEWS. The symbolic ceremony took place in WANEP Regional office Accra, Ghana in the presence of strategic partners including the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, KAPITC, representatives of USAID and the media.

### 2.2. Early Warning Products

In the quarter under review, the following early warning outputs were produced;

- *Twists and Turns in the 2015 Nigeria Elections: The Postponement Scenarios*
- *The Ghana “Dumsor” Energy Setbacks and Sensitivities: From Confrontation to Collaboration*
- A press release was issued on the political situation in Sierra Leone
- WANEP Nigeria produced and disseminated a Situation Track Analysis report, Monthly Country Early Warning Report, Conflict census and The Election Situation Brief.
- WANEP Guinea Bissau produced a policy brief titled “Premature Legislative Elections in Guinea Bissau”
- WANEP Benin printed and distributed 300 copies of the new electoral code across the country bringing the number of printed copies of the new electoral code by the network to 2050 since 2014.



## 2.3. Training of Early Warning Monitors and coordination meetings

### 2.3.1. ECOWARN Focal Point Training Workshop

As the civil society implementation partner for the operationalization of the ECOWAS Early Warning System (ECOWARN), WANEP staff participated as resource persons in a series of training workshops organised by the ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate for identified field monitors across the region. The workshop, which held in strategic locations of Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Senegal in February and March 2015 was designed to build and enhance the capacity of the field monitors on data collection and analysis with focus on threats to peace and security in member states. In attendance at the training workshop were the ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate Analysts, WANEP/ECOWAS Liaison Officer and the field monitors, which comprises of WANEP Focal persons in each country and representatives from Research Institutions and Think Tanks across the region.

### 2.3.2. Other Trainings included;

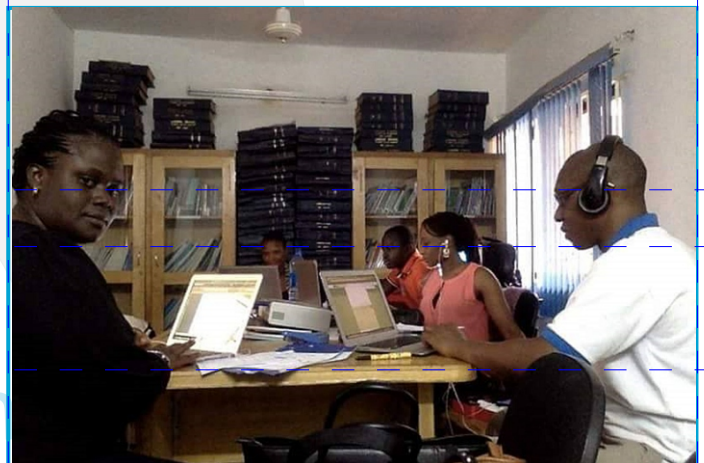
- WANEP-Ghana held a review meeting for the Community Monitoring Teams (CMTs) and selected relevant stakeholders to discuss performance, agree on indicators and identify areas of needed improvements. Through these regular updates, the tensions identified between chieftaincy factions and tribes in the Northern, Volta, Upper East and Brong-Ahafo regions are reportedly lower due to the constant monitoring and peace awareness activities.
- WANEP-Liberia trained 28 early warning monitors in four counties on policy advocacy engagements. As a result, there is a notable and gradual reduction in some of the conflict issues such as land disputes, mob violence, armed robbery, and Ebola outbreak.
- WANEP-Nigeria held a one day Media Roundtable with Editors of selected electronic and print media houses as part of activities to enhance public awareness about ongoing risk factors likely to exacerbate violence during and after the 2015 general elections. This platform has improved WANEP's relationship with the media and led to a wide dissemination of WANEP-Nigeria violence free election

campaign in Nigeria.

- WANEP, The Gambia met with NEWS monitors on February 12, 2015 at the Secretariat to evaluate their work, provide updates and discuss the way forward towards ensuring sustainability of the system. The network also trained the new monitor of North Bank Region and the NEWS Manager on inputting data into the NEWS platform
- WANEP Cote d'Ivoire under the Cote d'Ivoire Transition Initiative 2 (CITI 2) supported by USAID has established early warning mechanisms in Yopougon and Abobo municipality. Subsequently a capacity building workshop was organised for 35 new community monitors for Abobo from March 16 to 20, 2015.
- WANEP Sierra Leone held Community Early Warning Campaigns across the 149 Chiefdoms of the country. Two Ebola Governance Alert bulletins were generated from these campaigns. The bulletins were launched and disseminated widely.

### 2.4. Election Situation Room

In the quarter under review WANEP-Nigeria ran an Election Situation Room, which served as a real life analysis and communication hub for monitoring the



threats and flashpoints that could hinder peaceful election. The Situation Room was fed by monitors/observers deployed in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and was linked directly to the ECOWAS Situation Room and other similar platforms. Regular updates from the Situation Room on Election Day contributed immensely to the success

of the ECOWAS Situation Room.

WANEP-Nigeria's contribution in this regard was highly acknowledged in the ECOWAS Declaration on Nigeria's election released in the aftermath of the election. In the statement signed by the Head of the ECOWAS Mission, His Excellency John Kuffuor, Former President of the Republic of Ghana, ECOWAS applauded WANEP for its invaluable role and support on accurate data collation and analysis.

### 3.0. WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING (WIPNET)

#### 3.1. Dialogue and Mediation Training for Women Leaders from the North East Zone

In the quarter under review, WANEP in collaboration with ECOWAS and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Nigeria held a dialogue and mediation training



for 30 women from January 27 to 30, 2015. The women were drawn from Ministries of Women Affairs, Gender and CBOs in North East Nigeria. The training was to equip women from the North East zone with the skills for effective participation in peace processes especially in the areas of dialogue, mediation and other preventive mechanisms and equip them with practical skills, strategies and techniques necessary for competent mediation and dialogue. At the end of the four-day highly interactive training, participants commended WANEP for the rich content of the

training and facilitation skills of the trainers. A significant outcome of the meeting was the development of an action plan including advocacy strategies by the participants.

#### 3.2. International Women's Day (IWD)

Worried by the growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa and its grave impact on women, WANEP held a roundtable discussion to



Participants during the Roundtable Discussion held at WANEP regional office, Accra-Ghana

commemorate the 2015 International Women's Day under the theme: "Make it Happen!" The round table discussion titled; "Women Unite against Violent Extremism in West Africa" was part of strategies to highlight women's contribution to countering violent extremism from a preventive perspective. A Press release on the 2015 IWD was also presented at this occasion.

WANEP national networks commemorated the yearly International Women's Day on March 8 with press releases and seminars to draw attention to the plight of women reiterating the critical role of women in peace and security. The releases were widely circulated on various media outlets including the print, electronic and social media. WANEP Niger and other gender based organizations including the wife of the Prime Minister issued a communiqué condemning the Boko Haram attacks in the Diffa region urging Government to put in place the necessary response measures against violent extremism in the country.

#### 3.3. Combatting violence against women and girls

3.3.1. WANEP Niger in collaboration with other sister



organisations held a seminar on violence against women and conflict prevention for 100 participants in four regions from March 10 to 13.

**3.3.2. WANEP Cote d'Ivoire** organised 24 mass sensitizations campaigns on gender based violence in the District of Bangolo under the Livelihood improvement and combatting violence against women project supported by the Government of Australia. The network collaborated with Conciliation Resources (CR) to hold a seminar themed Policy dialogue on violence and cross-border security in the Mano River Union. The discussions were largely based on two research reports produced with WANEP Cote d'Ivoire on the Liberia/Cote d'Ivoire common border.

**3.3.3. WANEP Sierra Leone** held three community radio discussions and phone-in programs in Kono District to raise awareness on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Violence against Women (VAW) especially in the face of the Ebola scourge and its impacts on women and children.

### 3.4. Increasing Women's Inclusion and Participation in Peacebuilding

As part of an overall media engagement strategy

aimed at supporting the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related peace and security resolutions and women's agenda, WANEP Nigeria engaged the media in raising awareness on the role of women in peace building. This deliberate media engagement led to increased publicity for the WIPNET programme and helped to put women's issues on the front burner in the reporting period.

**3.4.1. WANEF Liberia** in collaboration with the United Nation Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), has been conducting a number of awareness creation in the communities against rape. This has resulted in the increase in the number of rape cases being reported unlike in the past when victims and families were afraid to report due to stigma. Similarly, the advocacy for increased women into the security agencies most especially the military and the police has led to increasing the number of female recruits.

**3.4.2. WANEP Cote d'Ivoire** under its economic self-empowerment project supported by UNWOMEN, provided funding to support income generating activities of 208 women from 17 multi-ethnic groupings in the districts of Duékoué, Bangolo et Logoualé.

**3.4.3. WANEP Benin** collaborated with GIZ to support 99 women from 35 income generating associations with funds to enhance their income generating activities and held two radio discussions focused on the role of women in national politics, economic empowerment and self-reliance.



#### 4.0. ACTIVE NON-VIOLENCE AND PEACE EDUCATION

#### **4.1. Peace Clubs and Mediation activities**

WANEP Cote d'Ivoire visited six peace clubs in the three municipalities to help review their activities, identify the challenges facing them and determine the type of support needed.



**4.1.1.** Students from the Peace Club of Brikama Upper Basic School visited WANEP – The Gambia on February 24 2015 to enrich their knowledge on WANEP's areas of intervention and learn strategies to strengthen and sustain the club. The students were guided through the mediation process and were urged to document conflicts for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation and received brochures and peace education manuals from the network.

**4.1.2.** WANEP Benin trained 15 leaders of peace clubs on strategies for fighting sexual harassment in schools. The training held on March 19 to 20, 2015 and had participants drawn from 12 districts across the country.

**4.2.** As a follow up to the training of trainers for teachers and students in selected schools in the country in November 2014, peer mediation trainings were organised in the first quarter for schools in Grand Yoff and Parcelles Assainies in Senegal. In addition, WANEP Senegal facilitated the establishment of Peace



clubs in Grand Yoff basic school 2 B and Parcelles Assainies PAT.

## 5.0. CIVIL SOCIETY DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

### 5.1. Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships

#### 5.1.1. Civil Society for a Human Security Strategy in Mali

As part of the implementation of the Civil Society for a Human Security Strategy in Mali project initiated by a consortium of WANEP, the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC) and Human



Security Collective (HSC), met to appraise the implementation and achievements of the project so far.

Under this project, WANEP Mali has been holding series of civil society consultations in Bamako on the human security challenges in Northern Mali. As outcomes of the consultations, an analysis of the social and political context was done including a mapping of key stakeholders and critical human security issues were identified. Furthermore, regional human security networks were set up to implement the recommendations from the consultations.

Following on this, an international tier group met from March 31 to April 1, 2015 to discuss the five priority areas the project has identified for a human security strategy for Mali. The contributions from the meeting would be incorporated into a five-chapter publication on human security to be released towards the end of 2015.

#### 5.1.2. Tana-WANEP Regional Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue Forum

The Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) of the University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and WANEP

organised a multi stakeholders dialogue forum on the theme “Secularism and Politicized Faith”. The meeting aimed at brainstorming on the impact of religion and politics on the division of societies in Africa. The outcome of the meeting will be presented at the main Tana forum in Ethiopia in April 2015. Participants at the meeting were drawn from CSOs and religious organisations in West Africa and Ethiopia.

### **5.1.3. British Ambassador to Senegal hosts WANEP Senegal**

The Board, Management and staff of WANEP Senegal were hosted by the British Ambassador to Senegal, H.E. John Marshall in January 2015. It was an opportunity to increase the network's visibility and publicize the work of the organization. The Ambassador commended the network and expressed his Government's support for the consolidation of peace and democracy in the country.

### **5.1.4. WANEP Benin pays a courtesy call at the US Embassy in Benin**

On 20th February, the first counselor at the US Embassy in Benin, Mr. Todd R. Whatley, hosted WANEP Benin to discuss the threat of violent extremism and measures needed to involve local communities in the fight against the threats. This meeting was a result of the declaration WANEP Benin issued on 6th February 2015 titled, “Understanding and supporting our collective security in the face of Boko Haram's menace” in solidarity with the people of Nigeria on the Boko Haram menace.

### **5.1. 5. WANEP-The Gambia and UNDP sign new partnership**

WANEP The Gambia and the UNDP signed a new partnership geared towards “Strengthening Women's participation in Decision Making at Grassroots Level within the Framework of United Nations Electoral Assistance”. In this regard, nine trained enumerators including a team from WANEP, NCCE and ACDHRS commenced a 10 day baseline survey in 60 communities in North Bank Region (NBR) and 30 in Lower River Region (LRR) from March 24 to April to determine the gender composition of the local government structures in those communities. Findings from the survey will inform the capacity building exercises and serve as a tool for monitoring

the impact of the project.

### **5.1.6. The Consultant to the UN Special Envoy for the Sahel calls on WANEP Mali**

The Consultant at the Office of the UN Special Envoy to the Sahel region called on WANEP Mali as part of plans to support the network in its efforts at enhancing the capacity of women in peace and security. The discussions revolved around the role that women can play with regards to the UN strategy for conflict prevention and transformation in the Sahel region.

## **5.2. Democratic Governance and Election Mitigation**

### **5.2.1. WANEP Trains staff of Cote d'Ivoire Electoral Commission**

The Independent Electoral Commission of Cote d'Ivoire formally solicited WANEP to train its staff on election dispute management in the quarter under review. The training was held on March 25 – 27, 2015 at Grand Bassam with a total of 20 EMB staff including the four Vice Presidents and all the Central



*A cross section of participants*

Commissioners. The President of the Electoral Commission in his opening statement appreciated the continuous support from WANEP towards achieving the Commission's mandate in a peaceful way.

### **5.2.3. Election Barometer for peaceful and democratic election in Cote d'Ivoire**

WANEP Cote d'Ivoire with support from OSIWA



introduced the election barometer project for a peaceful and democratic election in 2015 to key stakeholders including the political parties, relevant ministries and state institutions, the Independent National Electoral Commission and the media. In a related development, two capacity building training workshops on the function and role of an election situation room were organized to enhance the capacity of WANEP members and partners in the establishment of election situation rooms that will provide timely data and analysis during the electoral process.

### **5.2.4. Engaging local communities for peaceful and democratic election in 2015**

In the reporting quarter, WANEP Cote d'Ivoire met with youth leaders, local authorities, the local Independent Electoral Commission and other stakeholders in the Yopougon, Agboville and Bonon communities, which are the flashpoints of election violence. The working visit was part of securing local ownership for the project on "Engaging local communities for peaceful and democratic elections in 2015," supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The project is aimed at empowering grassroots communities particularly the youth to actively engage in the democratic process in Cote d'Ivoire with regards to the 2015 presidential elections. The community members expressed their commitment to support the initiative during the visit.

### **5.2.5. WANEP Guinea trains youth on Electoral Dispute Management**

WANEP Guinea facilitated the training of 250 youth in a series of trainings spanning from March 20 to 30, 2015 on Election Dispute Management. The training which utilized the WANEP training manual on Election Dispute Management with support of NGO UDEC. The youth participants to the training were drawn from all the regions of the country.

### **5.2.6. WANEP Sierra Leone sues for peace**

As a result of the growing political tension over the expulsion and dismissal of Vice President H.E. Samuel Sam-Sumana, WANEP partners in collaboration with the Inter-Religious Council and the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies of the University of Sierra Leone issued a press release on 25th March 2015 calling for peaceful resolution of the conflict. Ten selected media houses published the press release and feedback broadcast programme was also done during a popular radio talk show on Radio Democracy 98.1 Fm.

Building Relationships for Peace

**For more Information log on to [www.wanep.org](http://www.wanep.org)**