

# ECOWAS, WANEP HOLD THEMATIC DEBRIEFING SESSION WITH ECOWAS MEMBER STATES' AMBASSADORS



ABUJA-NIGERIA- The Directorate of Political Affairs, ECOWAS and the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) on November 5, 2019 jointly organized a Thematic Briefing Session with ECOWAS Member States' Ambassadors on the theme, "Elections and Stability In West Africa: 2020 Outlook". The briefing which held in Abuja-Nigeria brought together Ambassadors of ECOWAS Member States to deliberate on forging collective, effective and sustainable mechanisms for mitigating electoral violence and its accompanying effects that together inhibit the region's prospects of growth and development.

Within the framework of ECOWAS' partnership with WANEP and in particular, its role as the civil society implementing partner in the operationalization of the ECOWAS Early Warning mechanism (ECOWARN), WANEP provided a trend analysis of potential threats to peace and planned interventions for countries holding elections in 2019/2021.

The Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (ECOWAS), General Francis Behanzin thanked WANEP for its continuous support to ECOWAS not only in the operationalization of the Early Warning Mechanisms but also its targeted programme on electoral violence monitoring and mitigation.

In his initial remarks, the Executive Director of WANEP, Dr. Chukwuemeka B. Eze extended his appreciation to the ECOWAS for its continued trust and confidence in Civil Society as a vital actor in the implementation of the ECPF and related frameworks. He called on ECOWAS and other relevant key stakeholders to support the institutionalization of systems in the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) to ensure sustainability and resilience of the electoral commissions when the chairpersons are changed or retire.



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Mr. Ifeanyi Okechukwu, Regional Coordinator for Early Warning (WANEP) made a presentation on “The Role of CSOs to Mitigate Election Violence in West Africa: The Experience of WANEP EMAM in Complementing ECOWAS” through its Election Monitoring Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM).

The EMAM is designed to amongst other things to create a platform to access information on risk factors that threaten the conduct of elections; provide avenue for exchange of relevant information to key stakeholders to respond to election violence before, during and after the elections; strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations for effective monitoring and reporting of pre-election, election and post-election violence indicators; Enhance public participation and contribution to the prevention/mitigation of election violence; and support relevant state and intergovernmental actors towards a peaceful and credible election.

With support from the European Union (EU), EMAM is currently implemented in seven countries of West Africa from 2018-2021. The countries of focus include Togo, Senegal, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire.

In wrapping up his session, Mr. Okechukwu stated that “while the primary responsibility for election dispute management lies with the EMBs and local actors, greater ownership and joint approach to preventive mechanisms is likely to result in a more legitimate process with a peaceful and sustainable outcome.”

