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GENDERconnect

GENDERConnect is a monthly publication of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) desk of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).

Flashback: A WIPNET member confronts H.E. Abdulsalami Abubakar (head of the 2003 Liberian peace talks, which took place in Accra-Ghana). The Liberian women mass action for peace contributed significantly to ending hostilities and restoring peace in Liberia.

SOURCE: <http://praythdevilbacktohell.com/>



In commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of UN Resolution 1325, this edition is dedicated to WANEP's interventions and significant contributions to the actualization of the WPS agenda across the Region

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UNSCR 1325 @ 20: Celebrating Women's Inclusive and Meaningful Participation

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 passed on October 15, 2000 is a landmark resolution, which specifically addresses women's effective and systematic participation in conflict resolution and peace building process. The



Resolution serves as the international standard to the discussion of gender. Towards ensuring effective implementation of the Resolution, the UN Security Council required all states to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) as a framework for the implementation of practical actions to guide its implementation. The process of developing the NAP helps to create awareness and build capacity of stakeholders to overcome gaps and challenges to the full implementation of the Resolution.

Twenty years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, women's meaningful participation in formal peace treaties, as well as in political and leadership levels still remains minimal; women's specific needs in refugee and IDP camps and in disarmament and reintegration efforts are still largely un-met while sexual and other forms of violence against women and girls is still prevalent during and after armed conflict.

Although significant progress has been made towards the development and implementation of UNSCR 1325 NAP and other related resolutions, there is still a yawning gap in matching words with action!

The Women in Peacebuilding Program, WIPNET, of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP was initiated with the broad goal of building sustainable platforms that ensure the inclusive participation of women to play key roles in peace building and human security built on an ideology called Women's Peace Activism. In realization that women continue to be poorly represented in both formal and informal peace processes despite their contributions to informal peacebuilding at the community level, WANEP over the years has built a critical mass of women with the requisite skills for meaningful participation in peacebuilding at all levels. Commencing from this edition, *GenderConnect* will highlight key progress and showcase key achievements of WANEP in each of

the 1325 pillars viz; Participation, Prevention, Protection, Relief and Recovery as well as its commitment to ensuring meaningful participation of women in leadership and decision-making at all levels.

Increasing women's meaningful participation in leadership and decision-making levels

As part of activities to mark the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, this publication is a throwback memory of key milestones and progress made in efforts to increase women's involvement and participation towards advancing the WPS Agenda.

WANEP through the WIPNET programme mobilized Liberian women as a pressure group to force the warring parties into signing a peace agreement in Accra during the ECOWAS led mediation process in 2003. The outcome of the Liberian peace process and the role of WIPNET have been acknowledged all over the world and led to the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Ms. Leymah Gbowee, who was the former WIPNET Coordinator for WANEP Liberia. In The Gambia, several leadership initiatives including a mentoring process led to significant increase in number of women political aspirants in that country. A beneficiary of the WANEP leadership training, Ms Rohey Lowe, later became the first female Mayoress of Banjul in The Gambia.

Through the West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI), WANEP's flagship capacity building programme, women peacebuilders from regional, national and community have received trainings in early warning, dialogue and mediation, gender-sensitive programming among others. Trained women mediators in Niger, Ghana, Nigeria etc; are playing key roles in peace committees in their localities in settling communal disputes. They have also been included in the mediation rosters of the ECOWAS Mediation and Facilitation Division (MFD).

Consistent advocacy initiatives have seen progress in policy influencing to ensure that women play key roles in politics at all levels. Key achievements in this wise included the quota review in Niger from 10% to 15% for elective positions resulting to 25% women participation in the political process and the attainment of 30% quota for women in Senegal in the 2019 constituted Community Consultative Committee. Cote d'Ivoire passed a landmark Bill on equal political participation of women marking the first time that Côte d'Ivoire adopted a specific bill for women's political participation.

The community radio program initiatives in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Senegal and Liberia have become valuable avenues in reaching out to greater numbers of women engaging in community issues as an invaluable platform for amplifying the voices of women especially at community level.

WANEP places emphasis on community involvement in peacebuilding processes in line with the belief that community holds the key to effective peacebuilding efforts. The organization is building capacities of a pool of women leaders to position them to actively participate in community leadership in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.



WANEP under the WIPNET programme mobilized the Liberian women as a pressure group leading to the signing of a peace agreement to end hostilities in Liberia. source: <http://praythedevilbacktohell.com/>



WANEP recognizes men as allies and engages with traditional authority to ensure women's meaningful participation in community peacebuilding initiatives



Training session for a new crop of women leaders under the WANEP implemented Female Leadership Programme in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger



WANEP continues to build capacity of women community leaders to equip them with the requisite skills for leadership