

July to September, 2017 Report

OVERVIEW OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE REGION

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY: In the quarter under review, most West African countries experienced flooding with varying degrees of damages and casualties. On August 14, 2017, heavy rainfall and mudslides in Freetown killed over 312 residents, mostly women and children. In Guinea, heavy rainfalls in August claimed 55 people, mainly women and children in Conakry and its environs. In Nigeria, massive flooding rendered over 15,000 people, mostly women and children homeless in Makurdi, the Benue state capital and submerged over 2,000 houses in Makurdi and its environs. It has become a trend every year between July and September for countries in West Africa to experience flooding which oftentimes culminate in loss of lives, forced displacement and destruction of properties.

CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM: Reports from the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) and ECOWAS Early Warning System (ECOWARN) recorded 51 terror attacks with 272 fatalities in the reporting quarter in West Africa and Sahel countries. The Sahel region is one of the regions most affected by terrorism with Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Nusrat Al-Islam and Al- Mourabitoun extremist activities taking a deadly toll on human lives, destruction of properties including business enterprises, schools, food and livestock, thus increasing the humanitarian situation in the region. Also reported were organized crimes including armed robbery, assassinations, gangs, cults, abduction and kidnapping for ransom and other economic and financial crimes recorded in countries like Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. These are growing threats that require equally diligent counter-actions in the region.

GOVERNANCE ISSUES: The ongoing political crisis in Togo marked a significant governance issue in the reporting period. The political demonstrations of August 19, 2017, arising from the proliferation of calls for tenure change, have escalated into pockets of violence and palpable tensions in the country. The ongoing situation is a testimony to the fact that Togo is not immune to political instability, especially with the rising popularity of the opposition Pan-African National Party (PNP) and proliferation of calls for change by the Togolese people against a regime that has governed the country since 1967. As the crisis continues unabated and the Government is cracking down on demonstrators, concerned stakeholders are calling for respect for human right. The ongoing crisis brings to fore the relevance of the ECOWAS protocol on tenure limitation for member states.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

1.0. ENHANCING AND SUSTAINING ELECTORAL SUPPORT THROUGH NEWS

1.1. Establishment and Launch of LEEWARG in Liberia: As part of its contributions to a peaceful electoral process, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in collaboration with relevant stakeholders facilitated the establishment of the Liberia Elections Early Warning and Response Group (LEEWARG) under the leadership of the ECOWAS Special Representative in Liberia, Ambassador Tunde Ajisomo. The inaugural meeting of LEEWARG held on September 5, 2017 in collaboration with the ECOWAS Liaison Office of the ECOWAS Commission in Liberia. The primary objective of LEEWARG is to coordinate and recommend strategies to mitigate threats to the peaceful conduct of the 2017 general elections. Membership of LEWAERG comprises of representatives of civil society organizations (including faith-based groups, the media, women and youth groups), government and non-governmental institutions, security agencies as well as development partners. The ECOWAS Special Representative was elected by members to chair the group while HE Rev. William Tolbert, National Peace Ambassador in Liberia serves as the Vice Chair. The Group has the mandate to monitor, deliberate and recommend response strategies to violent threats to the general elections based on the bi-weekly situational and weekly reports from the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) platform.



1.2. Retraining of WANEP NEWS Managers: The WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS)



Managers across the 15 national offices were retrained as part of strategies to equip them with the necessary skills to handle emerging conflict trends and dynamics in the region. The training workshop held in Accra, Ghana from August 7 to 9, 2017 and included representatives of the ECOWAS Commission and the Africa Union Commission (AUC) as the aim of the training was also to introduce the NEWS Managers to the usage of the African Reporter of the AU. Regular capacity building of the NEWS Managers through training, research, data collection, analysis and reporting is crucial for the success of NEWS at the national

and community levels. Some of the key issues tackled during the training included irregularities on the system, sub-standard reports, and lack of skills for analysis, quality control and timely submission of reports. Arising from the training, the WANEP NEWS Managers have commenced submission of reports to the AU African Reporter platform.

1.3. Enhancing Capacities of Conflict Analysts: In its quest to further professionalize conflict monitoring, analysis and reporting, WANEP in partnership with ECOWAS held a training for conflict Analysts from July 17 to 20, 2017 at the Sunlodge Hotel, Accra. The training workshop themed 'Enhancing Capacities of

WANEP and ECOWAS Analysts on Thematic Conflict Analysis' was specifically organized to enhance the capacity of ECOWAS and WANEP analysts responsible for the new ECOWAS thematic areas of Crime, Security, Political, Health and Environment. The essence of the training was to ensure that the ECOWAS and WANEP Analysts have the requisite knowledge and skills to deliver on the new thematic areas listed above. It was also a platform for exchange of ideas on effective working modalities that ensure synergy of purpose between the two institutions. It is expected that the requisite skills acquired from the training would enhance the quality and quantities of early warning output, as well as ensure that participants are in tune with the current dynamics and trends in peace and security in the region. Participants to the training comprised the three Analysts from the WANEP Regional office, Program Officer Early Warning, WANEP Liaison Coordinator at ECOWAS and two analysts from the ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate. Three interns from the WANEP Regional office were also present at the training.

1.4. Sierra Leone National Election Response Group (NERG) Meeting: On July 31, 2017, the National Election Response Group (NERG) held its inaugural meeting at Radisson Blu Hotel, Aberdeen Freetown. The meeting was organized specifically to discuss the membership, structure and roles of the Group at the national and the district levels towards the prevention or mitigation of identified threats to the upcoming elections. It also provided the opportunity to validate the draft Terms of Reference to guide their operations. Fifteen (15) core members of the Group comprising state agencies and Civil Society Organizations participated in the meeting. The NERG is chaired by Rev. Alimamay Papsu Kargbo of the Inter Religious Council and co-chaired by Valnora Edwin of the Campaign for Good Governance. The Chair of the District Election Response Group (DERG) for the proposed platform in Kono, also attended the meeting, which offered him opportunity to understand the operational structure of the Group and the working relationship between NERG and DERG. The meeting was a platform to clarify the linkage between the USAID/WANEP NEWS project and the REWARD project, and the role of NERG and DERG in responding to the expected monthly situational threat analysis report in the lead up to the general elections. Members of the core group will receive additional capacity building to improve their effectiveness for communication, networking and interventions. A WhatsApp and closed email group was created to facilitate discussions, information sharing and planning for meeting amongst members.

1.5. Training of Community Monitors in Sierra Leone: Towards improving the skills of data gathering and reporting on election violence risks in the lead up to the March 2017 general elections in Sierra Leone, WANEP trained 55 community monitors drawn from the 14 districts in Sierra Leone at Golden Tulip Hotel, Aberdeen from July 3-6, 2017. These monitors were selected from civil society organizations across the districts and were trained in batches of two due to the number of participants. The training was under the WANEP Project on Mitigating Electoral Violence through the National Early Warning System (NEWS) supported by the USAID. A major outcome of the training was that it enhanced the Monitors knowledge of the pre-determined 40 indicators for effective monitoring of the elections. In addition, the monitors received mobile phones and tablets to facilitate data input and analysis. As a result of this training, the monitors will ensure regular collating and submission of weekly highlights of prioritized reports, administer the respective WhatsApp platforms, provide information and regularly debrief the District Security Committees (DISEC) as well as provide feedback to the National Election Response Group (NERG).

1.6. Production and dissemination of Early Warning Outputs: WANEP continued to generate high quality, evidenced-based data from its National Early Warning System (NEWS) through the highly equipped Peace Monitoring Center (PMC). The data from the System informed very intuitive analysis leading to the production of various Early Warning outputs in the form of reports and policy briefs. These products with succinct policy recommendations for leaders, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders to consider in conflict prevention and mitigation were widely disseminated to a variety of stakeholders across the continent and beyond. A key Policy Brief titled “Boko Haram, Women and Terrorism: Emergent threat of Female Suicide Bombers in Nigeria’s Northeast region” was produced by WANEP-Nigeria and has been an important reference document among peace and security stakeholders.

2.0. STRENGTHENING CITIZEN CAPACITY IN PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

2.1. BUILDING CITIZENS’ CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE CONFLICT PREVENTION



2.1.1. WAPI 16th Session Trains 53 Peace Actors: WANEP through the West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI) continues to develop action-oriented capacity for conflict transformation and peace building geared towards increasing the number of competent, informed and active peacebuilding practitioners in West Africa and beyond. To this end, 53 peace actors comprising 23 males and 30 females further disaggregated into 27 Francophones and 26 Anglophones participated in the 16th Session of WAPI from September 4 to 22, 2017. WAPI is the flagship capacity-building program of WANEP, which is organized annually in partnership with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). Since its establishment in 2002, WAPI has provided specialized, intensive, and culturally sensitive training in conflict transformation and peacebuilding to over 650 participants. Specifically, WAPI provides the platform to bridge the gap between

policy and practice in peacebuilding, provides quality training in peacebuilding and helps develop context specific and indigenous models of conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

The 16th Session participants came from Civil Society Organizations, corporate institutions, governments and Inter-Governmental Organizations including ECOWAS, AU and UN. The highlight of this year’s session was the introduction of the Youth, Peace and Security module for the first time. One participant, **Cecile van Manen** had this to say, *“The training has immediately proven useful, when I was asked to review my Department’s results framework. I have been thinking a lot about defining targets for programming in conflict settings, which I hope to start working more on, once we start developing the*

Gender Unit's 2018 work plan. I have in particular enjoyed the training thanks to both trainers, whose combined impressive experience was a perfect fit with the subject of the training!"

2.1.2. Peace Education Conference on UNSCR 2250: Under its Peace Education program, WANEP in partnership with ECOWAS organized a conference themed "UN Security Council Resolution 2250 Discourse: Opportunities and Challenges for rethinking Peace Education in West Africa". This conference took place from July 27 to 28 2017 at the Sunlodge Hotel in Accra and brought together participants from the ECOWAS Commission, UEMOA (West Africa Economic and Monetary Union), representatives from all the Ministries of Education in West Africa, the Academia, WANEP National Peace Education Program Officers and staff of the WANEP Headquarters. Representatives from the ECOWAS Commission, the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), WANEP and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) facilitated the conference.

At the end of the conference, participants came up with action plans to solicit support for Peace Education agenda, particularly from the private sector and including multinational companies. A key recommendation from the Conference was the need for all developmental policies of states to be 'youth sensitive' and to involve young people in political processes. At the end of the meeting, participants recommended the establishment of a national consultation platform in all member states by the relevant ministries in partnership with WANEP and other CSOs and the development of a regional framework to be led by ECOWAS, WANEP and other stakeholders.

2.1.3. Stakeholders Conference on Peace and Conflict Studies: WANEP on July 25, 2017 provided support to the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State Eastern Nigeria to organize a Stakeholders conference on the establishment of a Peace and Conflict Studies Program. The conference brought together relevant stakeholders from the education sector, including education regulators and members of the academia, to fashion out workable modalities for the effective commencement of Peace and Conflict studies program in the institution. WANEP's support for the establishment of a peace and conflict studies program in ESUT was borne out of the need to build the capacity of peace actors across the region for effective delivery of practice-oriented peace studies at the tertiary level. The next steps in this process will be a follow up consultative workshop by ESUT faculty to design the curriculum and harmonize agreed actions from the conference.

2.1.3. Other capacity building activities in the quarter included;

WANEP-Nigeria trained 157 members of the Nigerian Police, ex-combatants and Non-Governmental Organizations in a series of trainings on reintegration and rehabilitation in Bauchi state. The training was to facilitate the reintegration and rehabilitation process in the State. Furthermore, 15 Women Election observers/Analyst's capacities were enhanced for effective monitoring of gender-based violence during elections in the State.

WANEP-Benin in collaboration with RIFONGA – Benin (the Network for the integration of women, non-governmental organizations and African associations in Benin) trained 140 on dialogue, analysis and peaceful management of conflicts. Towards ensuring greater efficiency of member organizations, 32 representatives of WANEP member organizations were trained on resolution UNSCR 2250.

WANEP-Ghana trained 390 Frontline Peace Actors (FPA) on land-use and conflict management in 16 districts in Ghana.

WANEP-Guinea: in the review period, WANEP-Guinea trained 40 traditional communicators, including 11 women in community mediation techniques. 52 elected and appointed authorities (45 men, 7

women) were also trained in seven regions of Upper Guinea and Conakry on conflict analysis, advocacy and social and political mobilization; and 280 young peace ambassadors, including 94 girls trained on Education for Peace and Non-Violence and deployed in Upper Guinea and Conakry to sensitize their peers on culture of non-violence.

2.3. PEACE EDUCATION AWARENESS AND SENSITIZATION ACTIVITIES

WANEP reaffirms the conviction that a culture of non-violence is imperative for sustainable peace in the West African region. WANEP remains committed within the mandate of its work to the philosophy of non-violence through its Peace Education Program, which is in tandem with the ECOWAS Peace Education policy. In this regard, the organization joined the global community to commemorate the 2017 International Day of Peace on September 21, and the International Youth Day celebrated on August 12. The activities as captured below were geared towards developing a critical mass of peacebuilders capable of making significant impact in their communities as active citizens.

2.3.1. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE AND YOUTH DAY ACTIVITIES

 **Media Interactions:** Activities marking the two global events in the quarter viz; International Day of Peace (IDP) and the International Youth Day (IYD) generated a media blitz both at the regional and national levels. WANEP released a Press statement highlighting ongoing peace efforts and calling attention to the new security threats such as the hurricanes, flooding and mudslides experienced throughout the world in the quarter. Nigeria issued a press release to draw the attention of relevant stakeholders and the international community to the calls for secessions in Nigeria and proffer recommendations to ending the upsurge for peaceful co-existence. All the statements received wide coverage in the media¹.

 **Sensitization/awareness activities:** Various sensitization and awareness activities were carried out across the networks to commemorate the global events; In The Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, the networks working with several stakeholders held sensitization activities in the form



of debates, quizzes and drama advocating for peaceful co-existence. Over 4,700 students were sensitized in Sierra Leone, while Benin reached 70 students with sensitization messages on peace. In Guinea Bissau, WANEP co-organized a peace march and produced T-shirts worn by the participants bearing messages of peace. The march was presided over by the President of the

¹ http://www.wanepnigeria.org/images/phocadownload/Press_Release_-_Violent_Clashes_across_Nigeria.pdf;
http://www.wanep.org/wanep/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1122:press-release-21st-september-2017-peace-day-2017-wanep-affirms-respect-safety-and-dignity-for-all&catid=25:news-releases&Itemid=8

Republic as honorary president and attended by religious groups, women and youth leaders, the military and civil society organizations.

 **Panel discussions:** Nigeria and Togo held discussions with youths from different Civil Society Organizations on their understanding of peace and the UNSCR 2250, and their possible contributions to peaceful living. In Cote d'Ivoire, members of Civil Society Organizations shared their understanding of peace and how their interventions could bring about lasting peace in the country. Sierra Leone participated in a radio panel discussion on "Enhancing Peace and Togetherness Amongst Young People in Sierra Leone."

 **Advocacy Visits:** WANEP – The Gambia visited the Ministry of Education to commence discussions on the proposed National Action Plan on UNSCR 2250 and the introduction of a peace curriculum in schools.

2.4. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

WANEP undertakes special interventions in promoting inter and intra communal dialogue and peaceful coexistence as well as enhance the mediating capacities of communities. In addition, WANEP is a strong advocate for National Peace Architectures as a national and decentralized mechanism for responding to conflicts and mitigating its effects on civilians. In the review quarter, several interventions were carried out at the national and community levels to ensure greater involvement of local communities in peace processes;

Peace infrastructure for Côte d'Ivoire: WANEP-CI is leading the process for the establishment of the Infrastructure for Peace. In this wise, the network held talks with the Director General of the Observatory of Solidarity and Social Cohesion and the Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Solidarity on reopening the process. The meeting focused mainly on the action plans and the budget for establishing the Infrastructure for Peace.

National dialogue on Voluntary Principles: WANEP-Ghana continued with the National dialogue on Voluntary Principles. Twenty participants comprising representatives from Oil and Gas companies, mining companies, media, Petroleum Commission, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Minerals Commission, Embassies and Small Scale Mining Associations took part in the dialogue.

Town Hall Meetings: WANEP-The Gambia facilitated town hall meetings in seven identified hot spot areas bringing together women and youth as a way of diffusing the tension that prevailed before, during and after the National Assembly Elections and collectively make meaningful recommendations for national development. The meetings led to the creation of a Community Development Association to promote peacebuilding and improve social cohesion.

Advocacy: WANEP-Togo led efforts to ease the socio-political crisis that engulfed the country since August 19, 2017 by issuing statements to the conflicting parties and to the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection. The network also advocated to the President of the National Assembly inviting him to schedule a special session on the draft bill on constitutional reforms, an issue which has been at the root of the current spate of violence across the country.

Conflict Sensitive Reporting: The CSO-Coalition on Elections spearheaded and coordinated by WANEP – The Gambia, with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the 'Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Initiative in the Fonis' Project organized a Training of Trainers (TOT) for

journalists on Conflict Sensitive Reporting and Transitional Justice. The training was specifically to equip the journalists with the requisite skills to improve their news reportage, reduce sensationalism and yellow journalism and provide the public with clear, factual and concise information to ensure reconciliation, peace and stability is sustained in the country. The training was timely as the country is still reeling from the political crisis of the 2016 elections, which led to the ousting of President Yahya Jammeh. The training also provided a platform to contribute to the development of a roadmap for the reconciliation process in the Gambia. WANEP-The Gambia is part of the champions of the

Security Sector Reforms: WANEP-Mali and its member organizations held a workshop on the role of civil society in security sector reform under the WOSCAP research project from August 14 to 15, 2017. A key outcome of this workshop is that WANEP-Mali through its focal point in Timbuktu has contributed to the establishment of an Ad-hoc committee to conduct dialogue between the security forces and the populations of the City of Diré. Through this project, the network held about 40 capacity-building sessions in conflict prevention and peace education to promote human security, reaching 120 direct beneficiaries. These sessions are expected to strengthen the resilience of communities to tackle the security challenges in their communities.

Justice and Security Dialogue: WANEP-Nigeria facilitated dialogue sessions in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria on eradicating Drug and Substance Abuse in the LGA. The series of dialogues under the Justice and Security Project is part of efforts to ensure collaborative approach to problem solving between the community and security actors. In another development, policemen from five selected Police Divisions in the LGA received training on security and human rights. This training was necessary to equip the security personnel with the necessary skills for effective response and coordination and the capacity for effective engagement with relevant policy makers for strategic change. Key results from the capacity building exercise included; the sensitization of 600 students on the dangers of Drug and Substance Abuse; Enhanced knowledge and skills of 19 Police Officers on National and International Human Rights instruments and laws; and improved capacity of 20 community members on collaborative problem solving skills.

Participatory Community Training: WANEP-Niger trained 21 members of the Peace and Security Committee. The training took place from August 18 to 21, 2017 and comprised 12 women and 9 men from the various zones in the country. The training focused on the concept of Human Security and the Early Warning System, conflict analysis including understanding conflict and communication. The training was attended by members of the peace and security committees of each commune, communal authorities, religious and traditional leaders, women and youth organizations as well as defense and security forces. The training has been stepped down to other communities in Niger.

2.4.1. Dialogue and Mediation Efforts

 **WANEP-Nigeria** through one of its member organizations, held Peace Dialogue sessions with women from Okpolo Enhwen and Igbide Communities at Oleh, Isoko South LGA, Delta State. The dialogue was a platform to openly discuss the threats to peace within their community and collectively seek for solutions. Through this meeting, two community women groups who have been in conflict were reconciled and the members committed to peace.

 **Engagement with stakeholders in the Bimbilla dispute:** WANEP-Ghana continued to engage with relevant stakeholders as part of strategies to find lasting peace to the lingering Bimbilla dispute. In the reporting quarter, the network facilitated several consultations and follow-up

meetings with representatives of the conflicting parties. As a result, an inclusive stakeholder supported and coordinated Peace Committee is to be set up in collaboration with the National Peace Council. The Committee will comprise representatives of WANEP-Ghana, equal representatives from the conflicting factions and National Peace Council representatives. Prior to the set-up of the Committee, the following mitigating strategies are being adopted: representatives from both factions, termed 'six wise men' have initiated regular meetings; religious bodies have initiated regular prayers for peace in Bimbilla while elders and kingmakers from the two factions have started exchanging visits.

3.0. PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY THROUGH RESEARCH

3.1. Validation Workshop on dynamics of violent extremism in the Sahel: Worried by the spate of violent extremism especially in the Sahel, WANEP commissioned a research on the trends and dynamics of violent extremism in Nigeria, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso with a view to contributing to the debate, knowledge and response strategies to tackle the identified threats. Outcomes of the year-long research work were presented to relevant stakeholders on September 28, 2017 at the WANEP Regional Secretariat for validation. The validation meeting was also an opportunity to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of insurgency and extremism in the West African region and proffer strategies for addressing them. In his welcome address at the meeting, WANEP Executive Director, Dr. Chukwuemeka Eze said the meeting gives credence to the fact that CSOs and academia can indeed play an important role in peace and security and that collaborative effort is needed in addressing terrorism and violent extremism.



3.2. New Publication on Thematic Report: WANEP recently produced a new publication titled; “Violent Extremism: Armed Violence and Human Security in West Africa.” The publication is a special thematic report of the WANEP Early Warning Network and Response (WARN) Program, which provides specific analysis and interpretation of violent extremism and organized crime for the period January to June 2017. It relied on data collated from the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) with inputs from the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN). The online publication can be accessed from the Resource page on the WANEP website.

3.3. Utilizing Research Reports for Conflict Management

WANEP-Benin developed the teaching Guide for Peace and Non-violence Education in primary schools. When validated, the Guide will serve as the resource for teaching Peace Education in the schools while new teachers will be trained on the use of the Guide.

WANEP-Guinea shared the interim report of the study on Cultural Cohesion carried out under the Peace and Prosperity project (2C2P). The findings of the study have guided the planning of activities for the second year of the 2C2P project. The network also provided support to ECOWAS in conducting a study on risks and vulnerabilities in early warning and rapid response.

WANEP-Mali participated in a research project on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding under the WOSCAP project at the initiative of the European Union. The research was in partnership with the University of Legal and Political Sciences of Bamako.

WANEP-Nigeria brought together 66 stakeholders from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Budget and Planning, Kebbi State University, CSO's, Nigeria Incentive Based Risks Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NISRAL) and the National Cereal Research Institute in Kebbi State to validate the findings of the research on Food and Climate Justice in Nigeria.

WANEP-Togo launched a study on gender-based violence in the university setting and its implications for development under the WIPNET program. The study is specifically to provide an objective analysis of the phenomenon and its effects on the victims in the academic environment.

4.0. ENHANCING GENDER/WOMEN CAPACITY IN PEACEBUILDING

4.1. INCREASING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

4.1.1. Symposium on preventing violent Extremism: Three WANEP national networks; Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger jointly conducted a Symposium for 26 women religious preachers for a better understanding of their roles in combating radicalism and violent extremism. The symposium took place in Burkina Faso with member organizations also in attendance and aimed at deepening their knowledge in order to position them to contribute to the efforts of peace and security in the Sahel. The symposium provided a platform for the preachers to share their experiences on violent extremism and the religious radicalization of women in the Sahel and collectively proffer strategies for the promotion of a culture of peace in the region.

4.1.2. Awareness-raising action on radio-Lomé: On July 25, 2017, WANEP-Togo, through the WIPNET program hosted a live discussion on Radio-Lomé on the theme "Gender: a tool for development". The aim of this program was to generate awareness on the importance of gender mainstreaming in policy and programming for sustainable development in Togo. The network also marked the Day of the African Woman with a series of capacity building initiatives aimed at empowering women living with disabilities. In this wise, 171 women with disabilities acquired new knowledge about leadership, self-esteem and their role in conflict prevention.

4.1.3. Campaign Against Rape: Worried by the increasing spate of rape in markets in Warri, Delta State of Nigeria, WANEP-Nigeria held a sensitization exercise for 50 Market women on sexual violence and rape. Market women leaders and the Local Government Chairman pledged to mobilize support for the bill on Violence Against Women before the State House Assembly. The network also held refresher training for Young Women in Uhogua IDP Camp, Benin City to empower them with Vocational Skills for Sustainable Development and to prepare them for self-employment.

5.0. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1. CAPACITY AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

5.1.1. General Assembly: The institution of a professional Board charged with providing oversight, guidance and direction to the organization is a mandatory requirement. In the reporting quarter, five



National Networks successfully held their General Assemblies. These were WANEP-Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo and Benin. The General Assembly provides opportunity to elect new Board members, review progress of the network, validate policies and procedures and strategize on how to move the organization forward. With this development, WANEP-Burkina has joined other networks to put in place a professional Board. The Board is the second highest decision making organ of WANEP after the General

Assembly and is charged with the responsibility of providing governance and general oversight on behalf of the General Assembly and in line with the principles of transparency and accountability. The professional Board is to ensure the organization performs in all areas including in the effective management of resources, safeguarding the mission, vision, and direction of the organization as enshrined in the WANEP Constitution.

5.1.2. Visit to WANEP Sierra Leone: The Executive Director of WANEP, Dr. Chukwuemeka Eze continued his tour of the national networks with a visit to WANEP-Sierra Leone on August 14. This visit was significant as it afforded the Executive Director the opportunity to meet with the new leadership of the network as well as key partners and major stakeholders. During the visit, the Director in the company of the National Network Coordinator met with representatives of UNWomen to explore areas of future collaboration especially, in the establishment of an Election Situation Room (ESR) for the upcoming elections in March 2018.

5.2. BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

5.2.1. WANEP/ECOWAS Partnership: In recognition of WANEP's expertise in the implementation of Peace Education in West Africa, the organization was invited by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to make a presentation at the meeting of Ministers of Education of Member States held in Lomé from September 28 to 29, 2017. The meeting was themed "For better harmonization of the educational system of the region and development of the human capital based on knowledge economy." WANEP's participation afforded the opportunity to deepen the engagement with the Ministers at the meeting and get their commitment to engage with the WANEP National Offices across West Africa in institutionalizing Peace Education in West Africa. A key outcome of WANEP's participation at this meeting was the commitment of Member States to support WANEP's plan to integrate the eradication of violent extremism into Peace Education within Member States, particularly through the African Centres of Excellence in West Africa.

WANEP's participation in this high-level Ministerial meeting was a major outcome from the Conference themed "UN Security Council Resolution 2250 Discourse: Opportunities and Challenges for rethinking Peace Education in West Africa" which was organized in July 2017 by WANEP in collaboration with ECOWAS. WANEP seized the opportunity of its participation to present the recommendations of the conference to the ministers in attendance.

5.2.2. WANEP/ECCAS-ECOWAS Partnership: WANEP Executive Director, Dr. Chukwuemeka Eze participated in the ECCAS-ECOWAS Inter-regional workshop held in Abuja from September 11 to 13, 2017, where he shared experiences and good practices on early warning and conflict prevention, including the gender perspectives of early warning. In his presentation, the Executive Director stressed the importance of ensuring early warning and conflict prevention initiatives are human security focused and people-centered, and inclusive of Civil Society Organizations. WANEP is providing technical support to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in the strengthening of collaboration between CSOs and ECCAS, specifically within the context of Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC).

5.2.3. Meeting with ACSC/US Embassy Delegates: Delegates from the Africa Center for Security and Counter-Terrorism (ACSC) and the United States Embassy in Ghana met with WANEP Executive Director at the WANEP regional Office on July 7, 2017. The meeting was to discuss a possible partnership between the three organizations on a project to fight cybercrime, drug trafficking as well as human and sex trafficking in the West African region, especially in Ghana and Nigeria. ACSC is interested in partnering with WANEP on the proposed project in recognition of WANEP's role as a leading organization in peace and security in the region. ACSC is working with WANEP to develop a concept note on the project.

5.3. STAFF RECRUITMENT, REASSIGNMENT AND RESIGNATION

As the leading Civil Society Organization for peacebuilding in the region, WANEP has carved a niche for itself as the go-to-organization for those wishing to bridge the gap between theory and practical peacebuilding. WANEP fellowship and internship programs continue to be well sought after and attract participants desiring to enhance their skills in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. In the reporting quarter, WANEP hosted four interns and welcomed two members under the Ghana National Service Scheme. Also, a new Executive Assistant, Mrs. Gloria Owusu joined the WANEP family while the ICT Officer, Mr. Kwesi Enchill, resigned during the reporting period.

6.0. CONCLUSION

In the reporting quarter, WANEP made significant strides in achieving its planned goals and objectives. Based on its mandate of collaborative approach to peacebuilding, WANEP collaborated with key partners and major stakeholders to carry out several interventions as part of its contributions to the promotion of peace and stability in the region. In this wise, WANEP supported the electoral processes in Liberia and Sierra Leone. WANEP strengthened relationship with old partners and forged new partnerships geared towards increasing its scope of operations. Publicity and visibility was maintained in the public domain both at the regional and national levels leading to heightened interest in the organization.

Despite the strides, evidence-based data from the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) continued to reveal fragile security situations across the region and beyond. Torrential rainfall resulting to massive flooding and mudslides claimed scores of lives and destroyed properties in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Guinea causing forced displacements with devastating consequences on food security. Activities of extremists in West Africa and the Sahel countries took a deadly toll on the region in the reporting quarter, thus increasing the humanitarian situation in the region. The human security situation

in the quarter was further exacerbated with the ongoing political crisis in Togo following demonstrations by the opposition calling for change against a regime that has governed the country for the past 50 years.

At the programmatic level, a number of planned activities were either stalled or postponed indefinitely due to the late disbursement of funds experienced early in the year and the fragile security situation especially at the national levels.