ANEP News is a quarterly E-Newsletter of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, (WANEP). It provides substantive information on our work in a breezy yet informative style, detailing the communities we serve, the principles underpinning our work and our key achievements. **WANEP News** is a platform to keep our key partners and major stakeholders abreast with our intervention strategies towards promoting a peaceful environment in the region and beyond and the key lessons from the field.

As always with our tradition and in the spirit of partnership, networking and community ownership, **WANEP News** will also feature collaborative efforts with tactical partners in achieving peaceful co-existence as an avenue for experience sharing and best practices. We will also highlight WANEP’s social events and Teambuilding strategies in both narrative and pictorial formats.

In a nutshell, **WANEP News** is telling our story our own way! Happy Reading!

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP has put modalities in place to reposition the organization from project-based to vision-driven in the coming years. As a key step towards actualizing this goal, WANEP developed a new Strategic Action Plan covering the period 2015 to 2020. The new plan is the fourth in the life of the organization and is the first plan to bring all parts of the network together under the same development objectives, vision and goal. The plan will consolidate the current plan (2010 – 2014) which is focused on the establishment of national early warning systems in the 15 ECOWAS member states as well as ensure that WANEP remains relevant to ECOWAS, AU and member states in the peacebuilding continuum.

Our focus in the coming years is to become a capacity building, Think Tank and a research-based advocacy organization in addition to our traditional competence as a professional and implementing partner to ECOWAS in the ECOWAS early warning and early response mechanism.

WANEP has also instituted a succession and transition plan aimed at strengthening the institution and providing benchmark for good governance within CSOs. The succession plan has a roadmap of growth from within the organization and the sustenance of institutional memory. In this wise, Mr. Emmanuel Bombande has handed over the reins of leadership to Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze, former Program Director who now assumes the post of Executive Director from January 1, 2015 while Ms Levinia Addae-Mensah becomes the new Program Director.

**Change of Baton**

Mr. Emmanuel Bombande, *(left)* co-founder of WANEP and Executive Director in the last 10 years hands over the mantle of leadership to Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze, current Program Director, WANEP.

Incoming ED, Mr. Eze comes with a wealth of experience spanning over 15 years in the peacebuilding arena.

Prior to assuming the position of Program Director, Mr. Eze served as the National Network Coordinator of WANEP-Nigeria for 7 years.

Mr. Eze hands over the baton of Program Director to Ms Levinia Addae-Mensah erst-while Director Plans and Programs at the Kofi Anan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, (KAIPTC).

Ms Mensah worked for 5 years in WANEP where she served as the Regional Coordinator, Active Non-violence and Peace Education Programme before joining KAIPTC.
“My Stewardship!”

Mr. Emmanuel Bombande, Outgoing Executive Director, WANEP

fter over a decade of team leadership as the Executive Director of WANEP, it is now most appropriate as the time has come for me to step aside and provide my support to a new leadership that will bring to fusion the vision of WANEP and take it to a higher level.

At a personal level, this report undergirds the significance of the WANEP Story in West Africa. It is also the report that marks the transition of leadership from the time of the founding of WANEP to next generation of leadership. Looking back at the efforts in 1996 and 1998 when WANEP was conceived and formally started operations respectively, I can say with all sense of humility that I am gratified and indeed delighted with our contributions to reshaping the landscape of peace and security in West Africa, in Africa and at the international level. It all started as an idea to take ownership and responsibility of responding to West Africa’s challenges following the vicious civil wars that plagued the region in the early 90s. That seed that was sown has now emerged into a brand that all could vouch for its professionalism and expertise in peace and security.

It has truly been a privilege to serve in the role of co-founding, first Director of Programs and the second Executive Director of WANEP. I am most grateful to the Board of WANEP for the opportunity and great support in service to the contributions to the peace and stability of West Africa through WANEP. I have always believed in collegial leadership and that is why I am truly grateful to my colleagues on the management and all staff for incredible support, encouragement and confidence in my leadership. The last 15 years at the helm of affairs in WANEP have truly been fulfilling. The best environment for learning in peacebuilding practice and international cooperation with the valuable experience thereof has been provided by WANEP. I will forever cherish this.

Just as in many institutions experiencing growth, we have had to deal with institutional challenges over the past years, in which a number of important events and challenges occurred. From the various crises in the region to the very many challenges of nurturing a young African institution amidst perceptions of ineptitude, lack of transparency and unprofessionalism, we have responded to these challenges and used every challenge as an experience to strengthen our resolve for African Solutions to African Problems, while providing the impetus and platform to become stronger and with the conviction that we can make the difference. I commend all the member organizations, national networks, staff at all levels, the national boards and the Regional Board of WANEP. I salute the tenacity of our partners who have stood by us all these years, and I ask for continued support for WANEP. The strategic position of WANEP today in West Africa is significant in overcoming the challenges of strife, instability, extremism and hatred.

This is also the time to appreciate colleagues as I look back to my leadership in WANEP and what we have accomplished together. I mention my former colleague and co-founder who served as first Executive Director, Mr. Sam Doe in much appreciation of our collective efforts that has brought WANEP to where it is today. I owe a large debt of gratitude to my mentor, great teacher and inspiration who is humble but stands very tall in the peacebuilding community globally; Professor John Paul Lederach. He opened the doors for us in academics, the entry into the field and grant making to establish WANEP. It will be difficult to list all the names we must appreciate. I must however express much appreciation to Professor Hizkias Assefa, Cynthia Sampson, Lisa Shirch and the great people of the Centre for Justice and Peacebuilding of the Eastern Mennonite University. I pay tribute to the high quality and professionalism of WANEP staff. Their depth of knowledge, initiative and understanding has always been impressive.

Let me use this opportunity to wish my brother and good friend – Chukwuemeka Eze a very successful and exciting career as the Executive Director of WANEP. I know him very well and his capabilities as WANEP-Nigeria National Network Coordinator and later Director of Programs. I have no doubt in my mind that together with his team, upholding our principles, the sky is the limit of WANEP. Finally, let me thank all of you for your friendship and the honour of having worked with you. As for me, one part of a very challenging and illuminating experience is coming to an end, one that I will treasure for the rest of my life. In closing, let me echo Saint Paul that "I have run with perseverance and have finished the race". Whether I have finished the race successfully or not is not for me to say.

Happy New Year and God bless Africa!
Our Milestones

WANEP Program Director Becomes Fellow of ICMC

The Program Director of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Mr. Chukwuemeka B. Eze was recently inducted into the mediators’ hall of fame with his elevation as a Fellow of the Institute of Chattered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC) of Nigeria, at the Institute’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Induction Ceremony in Abuja on November 25, 2014. The award is in recognition of Mr. Eze’s active practice and sterling qualities as a Mediator and Conciliator for over a decade; as well as his contributions to the Institute as the Pioneer Deputy Registrar and member of the Governing Council.

As a Fellow of the Institute, Mr. Eze is charged with the responsibility of mentoring upcoming mediators, especially members of the Institute; advocate for the chattered status of mediation across the West African region and support the National Infrastructure for Peace in Nigeria. He is also expected to create awareness and instill public confidence in mediation as a tool for resolving disputes among others.

ICMC is a professional body responsible for training, regulation and development of the practice of Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR), especially Mediation and Conciliation in Nigeria. Established in 1999 from the Nigeria Association of Mediator, ICMC has grown from strength to strength, with physical presence in almost all parts of Nigeria, and has trained more than 2500 persons on skills of mediation and conciliation.

...More Laurels For WANEP

As a growing institution repositioning for greater efficiency, WANEP has in place a professional board comprised of credible professionals drawn from different sectors of the society who contribute their time and resources to elevate WANEP to the heights it has reached today. Their policy direction, guidance and oversight service has transformed WANEP into a brand much sought after at the regional, national and global levels. Recently, a number of WANEP Regional Board members were elevated in their different fields of endeavor. These external endorsements are a living testimony to the fact that WANEP worked with the best and will continue to work with the brightest in the West African region. These eminent personalities are shown below;

Prof. Isaac Olawale Albert: was given the Peace and Security award of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana in June 2013, appointed a Federal Delegate to the 2014 National Conference of Nigeria in April 2014 and also appointed as a member of the Presidential Committee to Review Nigeria’s Defence Policy in November 2014. Prof Albert crowned it all with the prestigious Fellow of the Society for Peace Studies and Practice of the University of Ibadan.

Dr. Lydia Umar: Appointed a Member of the Governing Council of the Kaduna State University in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Mr. William Awinador-Kanyirge: was the Deputy Representative of Ghana to the UN and now the Ghanaian Ambassador to Nigeria.

Dr. Christiana Thorpe: Successfully completed her tenure as the Chair of Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone and Chair of the ECOWAS Election Managers Network. She won the 2014 Joe Baxter Award of IFES. More laurels and more grease to all your elbows for making WANEP proud!
Peacebuilding in Practice

In the face of daunting challenges facing Africa ranging from human security challenges to violent extremism, WANEP continued its peacebuilding work undaunted in 2014. WANEP took initiated and took strategic actions in complementarity with relevant stakeholders including ECOWAS in fulfilment of its mandate of ensuring sustainable peace in the region. These strides were highly appreciated by our key partners and relevant stakeholders and earned WANEP enormous recognition regionally and internationally.

Undoubtedly, these challenges made very significant impact on WANEP plans and programming, causing the organization to re-strategize in its thinking and direction.

Capacity building remains the cornerstone of WANEP’s effective response to the growing threats to peace and security in the region. Some of the strides recorded in this direction included the training and re-training of Community Monitors and National Analysts from the 15 national networks to ensure timely and quality data collation and effective analysis of early warning products through the NEWS platform.

With over a decade experience in monitoring and analyzing elections and electoral processes in West Africa, WANEP established Election Situation rooms in Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso in preparation for the 2015 upcoming elections in those countries, developed indicators for monitoring violent extremism that usually escalates during the electioneering processes and participated in the AU Election Monitoring team to Mozambique.

WANEP’s mandate in promoting cooperative responses to violent conflicts and building sustainable peace in the region in collaboration with diverse actors received much attention. WANEP in collaboration with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC) of which WANEP is the West Africa Regional Representative and the Human Security Collective (HSC) is currently implementing a project on Human Security in Mali and working with diverse partners across other national networks in implementing various peacebuilding projects.
The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP have successfully conducted a two-day experts meeting under the theme “Experts Meeting to Develop Strategies for Incorporating Countering Violent Extremism Approaches into Peace Education Curriculum in West Africa” in Accra, Ghana on December 10 to 11, 2014. The meeting had 15 participants including 5 women in attendance from the academia and civil society organisations.

The meeting was in response to the emerging issues relating to terrorism, via countering the pull of terrorist recruitment and influence by building resilience among the youths, which are vulnerable population to radicalization. Specifically, the objectives of the meeting were to interrogate the causes of violent extremism and their consequences on youths in the region; brainstorm on ways to inculcate strategies on countering violent extremism into peace education curricular; and share experiences as well as knowledge on adopting collective strategies on addressing effects of violent terrorism on the youth and proffer options for response.

The Program Director of WANEP, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze in his opening remarks highlighted that terrorism given its enormous linkages has taken a toll on the ECOWAS integration agenda, economic advancement and other developmental strides. He added that in the last couple of years, the attention of community leaders, government, CSOs and international community has been focused at understanding the rational behind citizen’s mobilisation in support of violent extremism and terrorism, and possibilities for mitigating and preventing insurgencies. The meeting he reiterated is in line with this thinking but with special focus on the nexus between the environment and the tendencies for radicalization or de-radicalization and the important role of schools, its curriculum and the families and communities in efforts to counter violent extremism. In his closing remarks, the Executive Director of WANEP, Mr Emmanuel Bombande appreciated the experts for their participation in the “stimulating reflection that enhances our work as peacebuilders towards promoting peace and security in West Africa.” He underscored the importance of collective efforts to address insurgency not only as a problem in Nigeria or the Sahel but also as a regional threat to human security.

Forging Strategic Partnerships for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding

In its capacity as a member of the Mediation Support Network (MSN) WANEP through its Executive Director, Mr Emmanuel Bombande, participated and made significant contributions in the MSN meeting which took place in November in Mexico. The meeting focused on inclusion and participation in mediation processes.

These meetings provide the needed platform for WANEP to share case studies on local level mediation efforts using a bottom-up approach at transforming relationships between the communities and creating policy framework for structural change. Experience garnered at the MSN meeting is contributing to the nature of support WANEP is giving to the newly established Mediation Facilitation Division of ECOWAS and the recommendation to the AU Panel of the Wise during the 10th anniversary of the PSC.

... Commend Efforts of ECOWAS, AU, UNOWA on Burkina Faso

As part of contributions to peace and stability in the region, WANEP in a press release on the political situation in Burkina Faso, commended the Authority of Heads of State of ECOWAS, the UN Special Representative for West Africa and Head of the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and the Africa Union for an effective coordinated effort in facilitating the Transitional Government in Burkina Faso. In a press release widely published in all the media platforms, WANEP stated; “we observe that unlike in other experiences of managing conflicts and crises where duplication of efforts and uncoordinated activities of key Actors and Institutions have prevailed, the release further commended particularly the President of Ghana and Chair of the Authority of Heads of States of ECOWAS, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, and his peers, and urged that ECOWAS continues to support Burkina Faso during the Transitional period to ensure peaceful, fair and credible elections in November 2015.
It was a night of fun, thrills and frills at the WANEP Regional staff end of year party which was celebrated on December 12, 2014 at the Bamboo Chinese restaurant in Accra. Staff wined, dined, exchanged gifts and danced the night away in celebration of a good programming year. The high point of this year’s event was the award ceremony where deserving staff carted away several prizes in recognition and celebration of hard-work, commitment, initiative and excellence.

The categories were; most inspirational (Mr. Emmanuel Bombande, WANEP ED), most pragmatic (Vincent Azumah, Regional Coordinator, M & E), Most dependable staff (Edwige Mensah, PO-PMC), most punctual (Raymond Darko, Accountant), Most friendly (Mfrekeobong Ukpanah (PA-PMC)). WANEP Program Director took the star award as the Best Staff of 2014 and also won in the following categories; most resourceful, best dressed and most pragmatic staff! The awards were handed over to the winners by friends and family members of staff who were present at the occasion. A hearty congratulation to all the winners.

The WANEP blue star award 2014 goes to Mr. Mahamadi Togola, the national network coordinator (NNC), Mali. Mr. Togola, although only joined WANEP in the middle of the year has already exhibited star quality and professionalism in the discharge of his duties. As a new staff, Togola took the initiative to familiarize himself with the new WANEP strategic plan and commenced engagement with key partners and major stakeholders in order to explore new partnership opportunities and maintain existing ones in line with WANEP mandate of collaborative approaches to peacebuilding.

For adding value to WANEP, Togola is being recognized for his drive, tenacity, proactiveness and leadership qualities.

We wish him a very fruitful time in WANEP!
FAREWELL!

It was a time to say good bye for Ms Nompu Ntsele (left), after a 4-month internship with WANEP under the WIPNET Desk. Nompu as she is fondly called, says: "My time in West Africa has come to an end. Thank you for the fond memories, the laughers and friendships built. I'll forever be grateful for the last four months and the opportunity given to me. I go home with good story to tell about Ghana and its people!"

Similarly, The Mitchel Group (TMG), who was hosted by WANEP in the past one year also bid farewell as they relocate to the Kofi Anan International Peacekeeping Centre. Below, left, the program team of TMG, Mrs. Gifty Yanky and Gulda Afidegnon express appreciation to WANEP for their hospitality and collegiality accorded them during their stay!

WANEP End of Year Party.. Gifts Galore!
Hurrah, Our PD Is 40!
WANEP current Program Director and incoming Executive Director attained the “age of wisdom” on October 9, 2014 when he turned 40. We wish him more wisdom, God’s guidance and direction in the years ahead!

BIRTHDAY FELICITATIONS to the following colleagues who marked their birthdays in the quarter;

- Chukwuemeka Eze Oct 9
- Bijoue Kesia-Onam Birch Nov 16
- Francis Acquah-Aikins Dec 16
- Mfrekeobong Ukpanah Dec 31

WHO WE ARE
The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) was conceived in 1996 but formally launched in 1998. Unlike other activist organisations, WANEP strategically chose to engage major actors, particularly government actors in a bid to establish a platform for dialogue, experience sharing and learning, thereby, complementing efforts at ensuring sustainable peace and development. WANEP is a member of the Peace and Security cluster of the African Union’s (AU) Economic and Social Council –ECOSOCC representing West Africa and also has a Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). WANEP is the Regional Initiator and the current Chair of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC).

OUR GOAL
WANEP’s cardinal goal is to build sustainable peace, thereby creating an enabling environment for development in West Africa.

WHAT WE DO
WANEP work covers eight critical areas of intervention including;

- The West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI)
- West Africa Early Warning and Response Network, (WARN)
- Women in Peacebuilding (WIPNET)
- Non-violence and Peace Education, (NAPE)
- Civil Society Coordination and Democratic Governance Program, (CSDG)
- Responding to Conflicts through Dialogue

WHERE WE WORK
WANEP’s growth and influence has been phenomenal. After 15 years of peacebuilding practice, WANEP has grown to become a household name in West Africa with national offices in all the ECOWAS Member countries, and over 500 member organisations spread all over WA.