



WANEP News

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ECOWAS, WANEP SIGN ANOTHER 5-YEAR MOU

WANEP 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) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signed another five-year Memorandum of Understanding, MOU for the sustenance of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network, ECOWARN on August 2014. The MOU was formalized in a symbolic signing ceremony at a press conference held to mark the event on September 4, 2014 at the WANEP Regional office in Accra, Ghana.

The press conference was attended by key partners including Ms. Sena Boateng, Director of Regional Integration in the Ghana Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Levinia Addae Mensah, Director of Plans, Programmes, Monitoring and Evaluation at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre (KAIPTC), members of the print and electronic media as well as management and staff of WANEP.

Ms. Boateng speaking on behalf of the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Hannah Tetteh, congratulated WANEP on the renewal of the MOU which she said was in recognition of the organizations' giant strides in the promotion of peace and security in the region. Based on this recognition, Ms. Boateng urged WANEP to take the lead in the development of a national early warning system for Ghana following on the approval by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS for the development and implementation of a National Early Warning Mechanism (NEWMS) in all member states.

Speaking in the same vein, Mrs. Levinia Addae-Mensah, Director of Plans and Programmes, KAIPTC who represented the Commandant of KAIPTC also stated that the renewal of the MOU was a reflection of the hard work and relevance of WANEP's role in the promotion of cooperative responses to conflicts and collaborative approach to peacebuilding in West Africa.

In 2002, WANEP entered into a historic partnership with ECOWAS, which culminated in the signing of an MOU between the two institutions in 2004 on the operationalization of the ECOWAS early warning response network, ECOWARN and has been consistently renewed over the years. This current MOU, which is coming on the heels of the approval of National Early Warning Mechanisms (NEWMS) for all ECOWAS member states by the Authority of States and Governments, has once again demonstrated WANEP and ECOWAS commitment to the operationalization and sustenance of early warning and response systems in West Africa for another five years.



Images from the MOU signing: Picture above left, Mr. Bombande displays the signed MOU for the press. WANEP Executive Director, Mr. Emmanuel Bombande performing the symbolic signing of the MOU supported by WANEP Program Director, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze. Above right, WANEP staff with invited guests at the event

“Global Architecture not Responsive Enough to Current Challenges” - Bombande

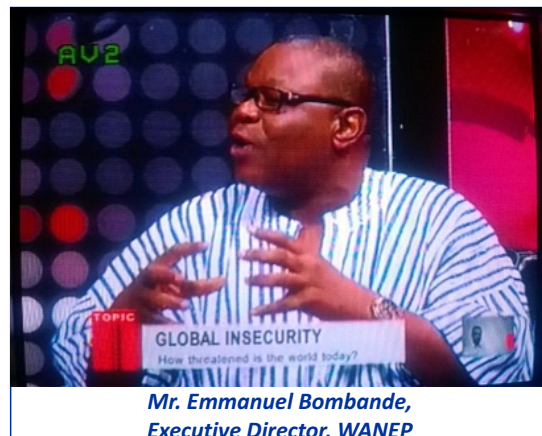
The Executive Director, WANEP, Mr. Emmanuel Bombande has stated that the global architecture made up of the IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other pillars, are not responsive enough to meet the challenges of today. This he said at a panel discussion on Global Security featured on Multi TV on August 19, 2014 where he was a panelist with other notable experts including international relations expert, Dr Vladimir Antwi Danso and Mr. Irbard Ibrahim, an International security analyst to discuss global security including threats to peace and security in the region.

Evidence of this lack of responsiveness by the global architecture according to Mr Bombande can be seen in “the growing relegation of the UN system in the background and the increasing role of regional organisations such as ECOWAS in tackling insecurity in various forms.”

Mr Bombande said the current situation can be traced to a global systemic problem resulting from slave trade, colonialism, imperialism, the cold war, post cold war which has been protracted over decades saying; “there is a lack of global political will to ensure equity to enable people to rise up despite whatever suppresses them.” He also attributed current global conflicts to violent extremism which is often premised on religion, sectarian divisions, whether ethnic or geographical.

Speaking in the belief that “African problems require African solutions”, Mr. Bombande called on African countries to employ preventive diplomacy in potential conflict situations and set up the architecture to deal with national and regional security, as well as chronic developmental challenges for economic growth and job creation.

He commended former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, for his reformation agenda which he said provided a blueprint for the UN in spite of the challenges in dealing with the post 9/11 unprecedented crisis.



“Shutting Borders Won’t Bar Ebola from Re-entering Nigeria”



The Program Director, West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), Chukwuemeka Eze, has said that any plan by Nigeria or other West African countries, to close borders, as a means of reducing its exposure to the Ebola Virus Disease, would be ineffective.

The Ebola Virus Disease, he said, has reinforced the “fact that borders in West Africa are mere artificial and what that means is that, even if you close your borders, there are a lot of people who do not understand what it means to close your borders.”

Making reference to a border town between Togo and Ghana, Eze, noted that many residents are not conscious of their nationality as they have lived together, without restrictions, for many years.

“People go to school, on daily basis, either in Togo or in Ghana, or vice versa, and therefore when you are telling them about borders and passports, they do not understand what it means,” he said.

He disclosed that discussions at the ECOWAS meeting focused on providing a “collective response to Ebola virus”.

“The President of Nigeria said Nigeria is now free of Ebola virus but that does not mean that Nigeria is off the hook, because there is still Ebola virus in Guinea, there is still Ebola virus in Liberia, there is still Ebola virus in Sierra Leone” he said noting that

“that tells us is that once somebody, even if it is a hunter, or a fisherman from Ghana goes (to his) next door neighbour to fish, anything could happen in Ghana and that can come to Togo, and that Benin and Nigeria is back again with the virus.” He further argued that a decision to close borders would be ineffective as there are several unofficial and unguarded entry points. “So, if we don’t provide a community response and ensure that everything about Ebola, within the region, is off, (so long as you keep saying and assuming that it is in Liberia), then I don’t think we are solving the problem.”

He also said that the rejection of the closure of borders was also because ECOWAS does not want any impediment to trade and integration. “We want free movement of people; free movement of goods and services within the region”, he said, noting that “even if countries, where they are asking for resident permit, ECOWAS is saying no to that, so that the community becomes one community.

Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze was a guest on Channels Television’s breakfast programme, Sunrise Daily aired on September 18, 2014



WANEP VISITS INEC CHAIR

The Board and Management of WANEP-Nigeria paid a courtesy visit to the Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Professor Attahiru Jega in his office at INEC Headquarters, Abuja Nigeria.

The visit is in line with WANEP's mandate of engaging with relevant stakeholders in promoting peace and security in the region and followed on the heels of the seminar on Managing Electoral Disputes in 2015 General Elections organised by WANEP-Nigeria in partnership with USIP. INEC is the body charged with conducting the elections.

As the implementing partner of ECOWAS in the operationalization of the ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism (ECOWARN), WANEP has been monitoring and analyzing elections and electoral processes in West Africa for nearly a decade and has worked closely with various stakeholders to support free and fair elections. Through this experience, WANEP has come to realize that electoral dispute mechanisms are a sine qua non in the struggle to promote free, fair and transparent elections.



NEW PUBLICATION ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

A new publication entitled "Stretching the Truth: The Uncertain Promise of TRC's in Africa's Transitional Justice", authored by George Wachira with Prisca Kamungi and Kalie Sillah was launched at a seminar on Truth and



Reconciliation Commissions in Africa held on August 7, 2014 at the Desmond Tutu Conference center, Nairobi, Kenya.

The seminar aptly tagged; "Roles, Lessons and Challenges of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Africa's Transitional Justice," was organized by the Nairobi Peace Initiative – Africa (NPI-Africa) in partnership with WANEP and supported by the International Development Research Centre, IDRC and was attended by high level participants drawn from civil society, academia, development partners among others.

Speaking at the occasion, WANEP Program Director, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze acknowledged that the partnership between WANEP and NPI-Africa has culminated into the formation of the African Alliance for Peacebuilding and ultimately resulted to the publication being launched at the seminar.



WANEP Executive Director, Mr. Emmanuel Bombande presenting a plaque to outgoing Peace and Development Adviser, UNDP Ghana, Mr. Lawrence Lachmansingh. The plaque was a symbol of WANEP's appreciation of his invaluable support to peace & security and as a partner of WANEP

KEY PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS COMMEND WANEP ON PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP has once again received resounding commendations from development partners and relevant stakeholders for its commitment to peace and security in the region. The organization was highly recognized at the ECOWAS Annual Partners Forum held in Abuja from September 15 to 17, 2014 where key partners commended WANEP's contribution to peacebuilding.

The meeting created opportunities to explore new openings with potential partners as well as strengthen existing relationships. WANEP is the leading peacebuilding civil society organization in the region with the mandate to promote cooperative responses to violent conflicts and continues to work in collaboration with diverse actors to complement efforts at ensuring sustainable peace in the region.



WANEP recognizes that the primary role for ensuring human security rests with governments; however, recent crises being experienced in the West African region has shown that some threats are beyond the control of any individual Government or Governments. These threats have highlighted the need for greater collaboration among Governments, international and regional organizations and civil society and community-based actors. In this wise, WANEP strategically partners with governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations towards ensuring a holistic response to the peace and security threats in the region.

.....AND GOVERNMENTS TOO

The Ivorian government also joined the ranks of major stakeholders to recognize and applaud WANEP's contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Cote d'Ivoire and the region as a whole. Speaking at the 68th Special Session of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 8, 2014, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire to the UN His Excellency Monsieur Youssoufou Bamba said;

"...it is appropriate to congratulate the Ivorian Civil Society actors, which are very dynamic in their efforts at contributing to conflict prevention initiatives in the country. In this regard, let me take this opportunity to mention the outstanding work done by the Ivorian chapter of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP-CI..., The NGO (WANEP-CI) should be better supported with substantial resources to increase its effectiveness." The occasion was an interactive discussion on the theme "Fulfilling our collective responsibility: International Assistance and Responsibility to Protect." The Ambassador specifically commended the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) which he said has provided an effective platform for preventing conflict and promoting peace in Cote d'Ivoire through the collation of appropriate data and dissemination of quality reports on human security.

MANAGING ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN WEST AFRICA

Lack of independence and professionalism, inefficient funding and logistics and overbearing influence of 'political gladiators,' are some of the key challenges to the effective management of electoral processes in West Africa. This was disclosed by Professor Abubakar Momoh, Director General, The Electoral Institute, Abuja in a Keynote address titled; Challenges of managing Electoral Processes in West Africa: The Role of INEC.

The erudite Professor was speaking at the third phase of capacity building training on dispute management for Election Management Bodies, EMBs organized by WANEP and held at the Nike Lake resort Hotel, Enugu, Nigeria on July 1 to 3, 2014. Professor Momoh stated that a key characteristic of Election Management Bodies is to serve as umpires, with a measure of independence, neutrality and impartiality, efficiency and professionalism. "They should be transparent, non-partisan and should maintain great integrity." However, this is not the case. The EMBs, he said are being run with 'civil service' mentality and therefore cannot work.

He cited the nature of appointment of EMB Commissioners, issues of professionalism vs civil service, as well as core values and ethics as further challenges on the electoral process adding; "Election time for some people is time to get returns on dividends." The paper submitted that the narrow focus on electoral cycle comprising events that take place before, during and after elections are major triggers of violence if not well planned and well managed. It identified internal and external factors influencing electoral dispute resolutions and proffered options for redress, including the ADR process.



WANEP NATIONAL NETWORKS UNITE AGAINST EBOLA

As the Ebola virus continues to ravage the African continent with devastating consequences on the peace and security of the region, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP through the Women in Peacebuilding program (WIPNET) supported the national networks across the ECOWAS member states to carry out series of sensitization activities as part of its contributions to the fight against Ebola.

The radio discussion and phone-in programmes as well as the public sensitization outreaches have greatly contributed to ensuring that the public have the right information to prevent and respond to the Ebola outbreak. It is hoped that the IEC materials distributed at the events shall contribute to ensuring that individuals and communities had the information required to protect themselves and their families from the virus.



A major challenge in responding to and preventing the spread of the Ebola virus is the lack of access to basic commodities and the requisite resources for preventing and responding to the pandemic. Thus, the provision of hand washing items and sanitizers is to promote sanitation measures and to enable the populace to practice healthy practices that shall keep them Ebola free.

LIBERIAN WOMEN HOLD DOOR-TO-DOOR SENSITIZATION

Concerned with the growing threat of the Ebola virus and given the fact that women are worst affected, Liberian women well known for their boldness and tenacity in the face of calamity carried out a door to door campaign to enlighten the populace on the dangers of the virus and its attendant consequences. The door-to-door campaign was also an attempt to dispel the myths and misconceptions surrounding the virus in order to prevent new infections and curtail its spread.

The sensitization campaign was spear-headed by WANEP-Liberia through the women in peacebuilding program (WIPNET) and with support from WANEP Regional office, Accra. At the peak of the epidemic, the women held open inter-religious prayer and fasting sessions across the country from August 1st to 14, 2014. The prayer sessions were conducted at the James Springs Payne Airport and at the various peace huts in the counties to seek divine intervention for the virus which has so far claimed a total of 598 according to the Liberia Ebola situation report No 96 released on August 19, 2014. A situation which led to a government directive for an increased awareness on the existence, spread and prevention of the virus.

WANEP through the WIPNET Programme is also collaborating with the Civil Society Task Force on Ebola to create awareness on the virus and managing the Ebola situation room where current data on the outbreak is analysed and disseminated. These efforts have been highly endorsed by the citizenry. For instance, during the Ebola 'vigils,' members of the public demonstrated their appreciation by laying flowers in memory of the dead and also made donations in support of the women's initiative.

The invasion of Ebola has claimed scores of lives in Liberia, wiping out entire families and communities with the death toll highest among health workers and women, who are the primary care-givers. Already and following years of civil war, the country is grappling with increasing number of widows and orphans in addition to issues of trauma faced by surviving family members and stigmatization of victims. However, there are still a lot of myths and misconceptions and denial surrounding the existence of the virus leading to increased hostilities and violence in host communities where the isolation centers are established.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the following colleagues who marked their birthdays this quarter;

Vincent Azumah

July 22

Dina Rose Gbeblewoo-Manyo

July 25

Bismark Beglah

September 15

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.