



WANEP QUARTER TWO REPORT 2018



April – June 2018

OVERVIEW OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE QUARTER

CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM: The Boko Haram insurgency, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Al-Mourabitoun continued their deadly attacks on soft targets and military installations in the North-East of Nigeria, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. In the review period, increased attacks on farming communities by armed herdsmen claimed the lives of at least 1178¹ people in North West and Middle-Belt zones of Nigeria and nine people including two security personnel in Ghana. These sporadic attacks have destroyed whole villages causing massive displacement of people, especially women and children who are now taking refuge in various Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps within and outside the affected States in Nigeria. Other security threats in the region include food insecurity, illicit drug trafficking and abuse, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, gang violence, community and inter-ethnic clashes, especially in Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, Gambia, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo.

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY: In the period under review, data generated from the WANEP- National Early Warning System (NEWS) revealed that heavy flooding occurred in Nigeria, Guinea, Benin, Senegal and Ghana recording heavy casualties. According to statistics², the poor population who reside mostly in slums and flood-prone areas, especially women suffer the worst casualty in times of flooding. This is because women in rural communities are oftentimes actively involved in poultry, livestock and farming activities for their subsistence and many farm lands, including those owned by women were mostly affected by the floods. In the case of displacement as a result of floods, women, young girls and children are rendered homeless and exposed to all kinds of diseases including waterborne diseases.

GOVERNANCE: The political landscape of The *Gambia* once again witnessed unprecedented levels of intolerance, hate speeches and tribal rhetoric by various political parties in the April and May 2018 Parliamentary elections. The situation was however contained and for the first time a woman was elected as the Mayoress of Banjul. The woman was one of those trained by WANEP-The Gambia on increasing women's role in politics, leadership and decision-making. In June, security forces opened fire on peaceful protesters in Faraba Banta, resulting to three deaths and a dozen injuries, which led to the resignation of the Inspector General of Police.

Mali is currently facing political turmoil as it prepares for its general elections in an atmosphere of political and security instability. The country is embroiled in inter-communal conflict and increasing allegations of gross human rights violations by security operatives. The organization of elections in a climate of insecurity as is the case of Mali increases the risk of electoral violence, which may mar the electoral process in the country.

Togo is still battling with the political stalemate between the incumbent government and the coalition of 14 opposition parties which has defied all peace efforts despite the high-level dialogue process led by the Presidents of Ghana and Guinea. Prior to the resumption of dialogue on June 27, 2018, WANEP met the lead facilitator, President Akufo Addo of Ghana to explore possibilities of reviewing the current mediation team to include Civil Society Organizations with expertise in mediation so as to bring the

¹ WANEP NEWS 2018

² Oxford Analytica brief August 2012: 'Human factors exacerbate West Africa Flood Disasters'

perspectives of civil society into the design and implementation of the dialogue process. WANEP also called for a review of the dialogue process to include a broad category of stakeholders in order to ensure inclusivity and more sustainable outcomes of the process.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

1.0. ENHANCING AND SUSTAINING ELECTORAL SUPPORT THROUGH NEWS

1.1. The Gambia Election Situation Room: In the reporting period, the Civil Society Organization (CSO) Coalition on Elections coordinated by WANEP – The Gambia, operationalized an Election Situation Room (ESR) for the Councillorship and Mayoral Elections held on April 12 and May 12 respectively. The ESR was funded by UNDP and provided timely information to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the Police for rapid response to incidents that needed immediate action. Prior to the elections, the Network trained and deployed 30 conflict monitors and 120 domestic observers. Press statements were issued from the ESR throughout the duration of the elections to keep the public abreast with the electoral process and happenings on the field. The preliminary statement from the ESR were widely disseminated in both the print and electronic as well as on social media platforms. The Minister of Information, Communication and Technology, who is also the Governments’ spokesperson, cited WANEP’s Preliminary Statement during a press briefing on April 18. UNDP continues to value the work of WANEP – The Gambia and has committed funding for the electoral cycle 2021 – 2023.

1.2. Preventing Electoral Violence: As part of WANEP’s collaborative approach to election monitoring and observation, the organization conducted a pre-election mission to Mali ahead of the upcoming July 29 presidential elections. The mission took place from May 7 to 14, 2018 and was specifically to finalize preparations for the establishment of an Election Situation Room (ESR) and to meet with key stakeholders and major partners. In this wise, WANEP with funding support from the Joint Financing Agreement (JFA) partners and in collaboration with the Africa Union Commission conducted stakeholder/hotspot mapping, validated the pre-determined election indicators and trained 11 community monitors on election incident and situation reporting into the National Early Warning System (NEWS) and on other social media platforms.

1.3. Training of Community Monitors

1.3.1. WANEP-Mali: In preparation for the July 29 presidential elections in Mali, WANEP-Mali in collaboration with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), African Union (AU) and the National Center for the Coordination of Early Warning Mechanisms (CNAP), trained an additional 52 community monitors bringing to 60 the number of monitors trained on incident and situation reporting and on the ³SIRA software. The monitors are now well equipped with skills to submit reports using the validated indicators on the SIRA software and also through a WhatsApp group on the security threats before, during and after the elections. DCAF also supported the launch and implementation of a community response platform made up of 18 relevant stakeholders. WANEP and its partners will operate an Election Situation Room (ESR) from July 28 to 31, 2018 in Mali and deploy 300 election observers to monitor the presidential elections in real time and report potential threats to the ESR.

³ SIRA is a comprehensive, fully-integrated fraud prevention and detection solution, which assist organizations to achieve regulatory compliance and reduce loss values.

1.3.2. WANEP-Ghana trained 25 members of the Community Monitoring Team (CMT) comprising 21 men and four women in the reporting period. The training was geared towards enhancing knowledge and understanding of the CMTs on the operationalization of the WANEP NEWS platform and equip them with skills for effective monitoring and reporting of Human Security threats. The trainings are necessary to ensure that the monitors are abreast with current peace and security dynamics in the region.

1.4. Early Warning Outputs: WANEP Regional and National Offices in the quarter generated evidence-based, high quality reports and information from its National Early Warning System (NEWS) platforms. WANEP continued to influence policies with the Early Warning outputs, which were widely disseminated and much sought after by key stakeholders and major partners.

- 🌐 WANEP-The Gambia's press release on the shootings in Faraba Banta received rave reviews. The Network has recently received a request by the Military Joint Operation Center for collaboration in enhancing early response.
- 🌐 Consistent dissemination of evidence-based Early Warning outputs earned WANEP-Guinea Bissau a place in the Peace and Security Group as focal point nominated by UNDP. The Network also participated in the drafting of the national strategy for conflict prevention at the request of the Ministry of National Unity.

2.0. STRENGTHENING CITIZEN CAPACITY IN PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

2.1. PEACE EDUCATION/AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

2.1.1. WANEP Benin: On 16 May 2018, the Network commemorated the International Day of Living Together in Peace (IDLTP) with a press statement urging peaceful co-existence in the country. The Day was officially recognized by the UN General Assembly in December 2017 and first celebrated in May 2018. It aims to uphold the desire to live and act together, united in differences and diversity in order to build a sustainable world of peace, solidarity and harmony. The Network also organized panel discussions on TV and Radio and carried out advocacy visits for the passage of the law on the Right of Access to Public Information.

2.1.2. WANEP-Nigeria organized an awareness walk/show to celebrate the 2018 World Environmental Day on June 5, 2018. The event was specifically to raise community awareness on the hazards of waste in the environment and the importance of recycling. It helped to enhance community understanding on the relevance of sanitation and hygiene as well as actions to be undertaken for the protection of the environment.

2.2. ENHANCING COMMUNITY/LOCAL PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES

2.2.1. WANEP-Senegal through its member organization, Dynamique de Paix, held a "Peace Rally" in Ziguinchor on the theme 'Young People in Action for Peace in Casamance.' The meeting provided a platform for robust discussions and opportunity to chart a road map for finding lasting solution to the Casamance issue. A total of 500 young people from seven counties were reached with peace messages. As a way forward, WANEP-Senegal will provide technical support in the development of action plans on the peace strategy. Also, the Network collaborated with Peace Association of Dahra to conduct sensitization and awareness on non-violence and peaceful co-existence for young people in Dahra community located in the Louga region of Dakar. The Dahra community has been affected by

farmers'/herders' clashes in recent times causing family and community conflicts and is also known for proliferation of drugs.

2.2.2. WANEP-Niger: In its quest to support the Government of Niger's efforts to guarantee peace and stability of the Diffa region, WANEP-Niger is implementing a project tagged 'Integrated Regional Stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin in the Diffa region'. The aim of the project is to prevent conflict and promote lasting peace in the South-East region of Niger, through capacity-building and training of peace committees, opinion leaders and youth groups. Under the project, regular cultural and sporting activities are held in four communes of Diffa Region namely Bosso, Toumour, Kabléwa and Nguigmi to foster peace, unity and togetherness. WANEP-Niger is in collaboration with the Regional Directorate of Youth and Sports of Diffa in the implementation of these activities.

2.2.3. WANEP-Liberia organized community dialogues in 16 communities with 400 participants (25 per community) on strategies to reduce gender based-violence (GBV) within the communities. Recommendations and suggestions reached culminated into action plans for community interventions. They also held meetings with 120 traditional and religious leaders to advocate for change in harmful cultural and traditional practices that reinforce GBV.

2.2.4. WANEP-Nigeria in the review quarter, held training workshop for facilitators in Jos North Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau state, Nigeria under the Justice and Security Dialogue Project and held strategic sessions with 15 members of the security sector. The aim of the workshop was to build capacity of potential facilitators and equip them with the requisite skills for facilitating gender-sensitive trainings in the LGA. Following on this, the Network organized a partnership workshop on Responding to Gender-Based Crime in the LGA for 20 Community members, 10 Divisional Crime Police Officers, 5 civil society groups and 5 Health Officials. The training focused on issues of gender crimes and integrated response to support the victims. The Justice and Security Dialogue project aims to promote constructive interaction between local community and civil society leaders as well as government agents. The dialogue sessions with non-traditional partners and agencies on drug violence/abuse in Jos North LGA sought to explore innovative ways to prevent youth violence. During the sessions, nine former gang members shared their stories on how they were able to kick the drug habit to encourage behavioral change.

2.2.5. WANEP-The Gambia in collaboration with the Search for Common Ground (SfCG), Gambia Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) and Gambia Press launched the Civil Society Organization Transitional Justice Working Group (CSO TJWG) on June 21, 2018. The CSO TJ Working Group, coordinated by the YMCA is a thematic consortium of local civil society groups that seek to support the implementation of the Gambia Transitional Reconciliation platform and to provide an interface between national and international TJ actors. The CSO TJ Working Group will facilitate national discourse and ensure a strengthened civil society voice regarding the establishment and implementation of Transitional Justice processes in the country.

2.2.6. WANEP-Ghana in continuation of its peace efforts collaborated with the Northern Regional Peace Council to hold sensitization workshop on April 23, 2018 prior to the anticipated Supreme Court judgement on May 23, 2018 on the prolonged Bimbilla chieftaincy dispute. The workshop was

supported by the USAID Northern Ghana Governance Activity (NGGA) project and brought together 43 representatives, (including 5 women) from the Local Peace Mediation Committee (LPMC), Nanung Kingmakers and the Women in Agriculture Platform of NGGA. The expectation of the workshop was for these peace actors to disseminate messages on non-violent response before, during and after the Supreme Court verdict. Specifically, the workshop sought to strengthen capacities of local and traditional structures to manage conflicts by utilizing legal means to establish their grievances after the court ruling and to explore local and traditional mechanisms for sustaining peace among others. Participants at the meeting committed to follow the path of peace by using their various platforms to sue for peace. The network also held several dialogue sessions with kingmakers from the two disputing families in collaboration with the Northern Regional Peace Council. This is the first time the rival kingmakers were meeting since the dispute began.

2.3. BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR EFFECTIVE PEACEBUILDING

2.3.1. WANEP–The Gambia in collaboration with the Inter-Party Committee (IPC) organized a three-day capacity building training for members of the Inter-Party Committee and IPC - Regional Sensitization Teams (IPC-RSTs) under the theme ‘Building conflict resolving political parties for constructive engagement and conflict prevention.’ The training held from June 26 – 28 and was funded by the International Republican Institute (IRI), through the US State Department. The training was a platform to equip the IPC and IPC-RSTs with knowledge and skills to promote political tolerance and enhance social cohesion in their communities for a peaceful Gambia. The former Vice President of the Gambia, Her Excellency Fatoumata Jallow Tambajang officially opened the event and commended WANEP – The Gambia for the initiative.

2.3.2. WANEP-Benin trained 111 representatives including 78 women from 78 farmers' organizations on the land use code and held refresher sessions in 13 communities reaching a total of 1,400 people (700 men and 700 women). The Network also carried out media campaigns and paid advocacy visits to 10 political parties to advocate for inclusion and participation of women in politics. The advocacy led to the review of the parties' manifestos to promote the women agenda. The campaigns and advocacy messages reached an estimated 3,800 including 1,900 women in the reporting period.

2.3.3. COTE d'Ivoire trained 26 civil society members on Conflict Management, Prevention and Early Warning on May 7 and 8, 2018. The training was supported by the World Federalist Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP).

2.3.4. WANEP-Liberia conducted the following trainings in the review period; 60 youth trained on Economic Empowerment have established small scale businesses such as local soap production, beads making etc. 240 semi-illiterate community residents in four counties trained on GBV, HTP and masculinity and are spreading the knowledge to other community members. A total of 105 women trained on Ending Gender Based Violence and are currently engaged in campaigns against GBV.

2.3.5. WANEP-Senegal in collaboration with the PIKINE ‘JOGJEFF’ Movement trained 25 young people on entrepreneurship and management skills. This was geared towards equipping them with skills for self-employment and capacity to manage their own small-scale businesses.

2.4. PEACE AND PEER MEDIATORS CLUB ACTIVITIES

2.4.1. WANEP-Benin Conducted a research on sexual violence as it affects girls in selected schools. Report of the research findings was validated by major partners and key stakeholders. The Network further trained 30 school club animators on animation techniques and support.

2.4.2. WANEP-Nigeria, flagged off the Active Non - Violence and Peace Education Project in Lagos state and undertook advocacy visits to Legislators in the State house of Assembly to lobby for the passage of a bill on the introduction of Peace Education into the States' school curriculum. The Network also built capacity of over 1,000 pupils in 18 primary schools in Kosofe LGA on non-violence. The trained pupils will serve as peace ambassadors within their schools and communities.

2.4.3. WANEP-Liberia in the reporting period engaged with the Ministry of Education to solicit for the integration of Peace Education in the Liberian schools national curriculum. These efforts have yielded fruit as the Ministry of Education produced and launched a new curriculum titled "Peace and Religious Education", to be administered to students from grades 1 – 12. Also, the Network supported 30 Youth Animators to organize community outreaches on youth participation in local and national governance and leadership in 60 communities.

2.4.4. WANEP-Guinea organized training workshops for 12 youth clubs on Early Warning, Conflict Analysis and UNSC Resolutions 2250 and 1325. A total of 442 young people, including 205 girls, benefited from these capacity building workshops. A training of Trainers (TOT) was held from April 12 to 16 on conflict management and prevention strategies. The trained trainers will be deployed to step down the training in Conakry, Upper Guinea and the Forest Region. The Network also held cultural activities to disseminate messages of non-violence in Upper Guinea and Conakry.

3.0. PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY THROUGH RESEARCH

3.1. INFLUENCING POLICY THROUGH RESEARCH

3.1.1. National Conflict and Development Analysis: In response to the challenges and opportunities in the context of The Gambia's transitional process, the tripartite of the Ministry of Interior, WANEP – The Gambia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted a survey on Conflict and Development to identify and analyze current responses to conflict drivers and peace engines in The Gambia. The research relied on national consultations with a broad range of stakeholders across various sectors who provided clarity and insight into the challenges faced in various regions and communities, as well as identified pathways for strengthening capacities and platforms for conflict prevention, social cohesion and sustaining peace. Preliminary findings from the study was validated by a cross-section of relevant stakeholders on May 17. The Research report has been shared with various stakeholders including the UN, AU, ECOWAS, amongst others and will serve as a resource for understanding the conflict dynamics in the country.

3.1.2. Media-CSOs Roundtable: In the reporting quarter, WANEP-Nigeria organized a Media roundtable to unveil preliminary findings of the research on the 'Impact of Investments in Agriculture and Climate Change Adaptation on Small Scale Farming in Nigeria.' Participants included Civil Society Organizations, Small-Scale Farmers, OXFAM, Voices of Food Security and the Media. 500 copies of the report were distributed to key stakeholders aimed at increasing awareness of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)

policies in Agriculture among Policy makers, farmers and the public. The CCA project contributes to facilitating the momentum for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 2 on ‘ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture by 2030.’ The report calls on State and local government agencies to become more coordinated in addressing the needs and challenges of small scale farmers (SSF).

4.0. ENHANCING GENDER/WOMEN CAPACITY IN PEACEBUILDING

4.1. INCREASING WOMEN’S INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

4.1.1. WANEP-The Gambia: Two of the women trained by WANEP-The Gambia during the training for Aspiring Female Candidates of Local Government Election 2018 in March contested as Mayoral candidates during the May 12 Local Government Election. One of the two trained women, Rohey Malick Lowe, emerged as winner during the hotly contested election and became the first woman to be elected Mayoress in the Gambia.

4.1.2. WANEP-Cote d’Ivoire facilitated series of meetings with selected women’s organizations from April 2 to May 23, 2018. The meeting was to generate awareness about the 2018 Regional elections and to make the women understand that they can participate actively and vie for leadership positions. A total of 200 women in the Yopougon community were sensitized on the importance of political participation.

4.1.3. WANEP-Liberia continued to utilize the Voices of Women Radio Program to broadcast and draw attention to issues of concern to women. In the quarter, the program focused on strategies for increasing women’s participation in politics, leadership, decision- making and peacebuilding. Further, the Network trained 75 women in leadership and governance, campaign financing for political position and community initiatives in 12 communities of three Counties.

4.2. PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE PEACEBUILDING

4.2.1. Validation of Gender-Sensitive Indicators: In continuation of the EU funded UNWomen Programme on ‘Promoting Women’s Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria’, WANEP and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) organized a two-day Community Dialogue Sessions simultaneously in Gombe, Adamawa and Plateau states from May 15 – 16, 2018. The Sessions were held to validate Gender Sensitive Early Warning Indicators and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for an inclusive and gender sensitive peace architecture. The meeting is a follow up to the stakeholders’ Consultative and Capacity Needs Assessment Workshop held earlier in March, which collated data on security threats and provided a gendered analysis of these threats to human security in the states. Major outcomes of the meeting were; the validation of gender sensitive indicators that will enhance the capacity of the State and other stakeholders in responding to security issues, validation of the SOPs and the organogram of the Peace Architectures. Further, roles and responsibilities were assigned to different stakeholders and plans for the training of Conflict Monitors and Analysts finalized.

4.2.2. Dialogue and Mediation Training: In recognition of the vital role women can play in conflict mediation, WANEP and IPCR, under the auspices of the EU funded program on ‘Promoting Women’s Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria,’ trained community Conflict Monitors and

Analysts in the three project states of Adamawa, Gombe and Plateau on Early Warning, Dialogue and Mediation, Conflict Prevention, Gender among others. The trainings took place simultaneously from June 25 to 29, 2018 bringing together 40 participants from civil society, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), traditional/religious leaders, women groups, and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The training was aimed at strengthening women's role in conflict prevention, peace-making and peacebuilding in order to equip them with the skills for effective participation in peace processes especially in the areas of dialogue, mediation and other preventive mechanisms. The training relied on the new Gender-Sensitive Early Warning and Response Strategies Manual, which was launched at the opening ceremony of the event by the Commissioners for Women Affairs and Social development of the states or their representatives. At the end of the training, participants were acquainted with knowledge and understanding of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions, conflict monitoring processes, Dialogue and Mediation, gender sensitive conflict analysis and how to apply early warning indicators to conflict analysis among others.

4.2.3. Ending Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: WANEP has been carrying out several activities at the national and regional levels geared towards the eradication of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). A key strategy in this wise is the peace hut concept which is operational in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. Under this conceptual framework, the Abobo Peace Hut in Cote d'Ivoire, with technical support from WANEP has completed about 88 cases of gender-based violence since inception. In Liberia, the women are engaged in income generating activities for economic viability. WANEP-Liberia with funding from UNWomen held outreaches to raise awareness on SGBV, Harmful traditional practices (HTP) and Masculinity in six counties reaching about 3000 out of school youth in 24 communities. In addition, a training Module on SGBV, HTP and Masculinity was developed, validated and standardized for training. The module was used to train 12 trainers who have stepped down the training in their communities.

4.2.4. WANEP-Nigeria issued a Press Statement on the resurgence of agro- pastoralist conflict in Plateau State and its impact on women and facilitated the Women for Peace Rally in Lagos State to amplify women's voices against the various killings experienced in Nigeria. The statement called on the federal government and other relevant agencies to expedite action towards finding a lasting solution to the problem.

5.0. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

5.1.1. WANEP/ECOWAS: Within the context of the partnership with ECOWAS, WANEP Executive Director, Dr. Chukwuemeka Eze made a lead presentation on 'the Progress and Retrogression of Democratic Governance and its Implication for Peace and Stability in the Region' at the ECOWAS Commission on May 18, 2018. The occasion was the maiden Thematic Briefing session with the ECOWAS Ambassadors presided over by H.E. Mr Lene Dimban, Ambassador of Togo to Nigeria and Chair of the Mediation and Security Council and attended by the Ambassadors accredited to the ECOWAS Commission, or their representatives, from all the Member States. The presentation highlighted the challenges of democratic transitions in West Africa and its impact to exacerbating the political stability in the region, undermining good governance and providing fertile grounds for extremist groups and/or activities.

5.1.2. WANEP/IPSS Sign MOU: WANEP and the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies (IPSS) of the University of Ibadan (UI), Southwest Nigeria formalized their partnership with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on May 30, 2018. The MOU was signed by the Vice Chancellor of the University Prof. Idowu Olayinka and Dr. Chukwuemeka Eze, WANEP Executive Director at the University in the presence of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Adeyinka Aderinto, WANEP Administrative Manager, Mrs. Esther Gordon-Mensah and the Director IPSS, Professor Isaac Olawale Albert. The formalization of WANEP-UI relationship has paved the way for deepened engagements between the two institutions particularly under the WANEP Peace Education Program.

5.2. ADVOCACY AND OTHER VISITS

5.2.1. Courtesy Call on ECOWAS: WANEP Executive Director, Dr. Chukwuemeka Eze visited the ECOWAS Commission on June 9, 2018 to pay his compliments to H.E. General Francis Awagbe Behanzin as the new Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS). Dr. Eze, who was accompanied by the Coordinator of WANEP Liaison Office in ECOWAS, Mr. Francis Acquah Aikins, used the opportunity to reaffirm WANEP's continued support and unique relationship with the institution. According to him, "this relationship has provided the opportunity to always demonstrate CSOs capacity and capability to contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in Africa". In his response, the ECOWAS Commissioner, PAPS H.E. General Behanzin described WANEP as "a critical stakeholder in achieving ECOWAS' peace and security agenda".

5.2.2. WANEP–The Gambia paid a courtesy visit to the Country's Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence on May 23 to discuss the ratification of treaties relating to arms and gun control. The visit is part of efforts to ensure that the Gambia is on track with the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2020. Other points of discuss included the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Arms Trade treaty. On June 22, 2018 the National Assembly ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions following eight years of consistent advocacy by WANEP–The Gambia. The Network also hosted the new Chief of the Joint Operation Center (JOC), Commissioner Momodou Gaye, and members of JOC, who visited the secretariat on June 13 to explore areas of collaboration and partnership to enhance quick response to security threats. In another development, the US Ambassador, C. Patricia Alsup with guests from Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) visited WANEP-The Gambia on June 14 to get first hand insight into WANEP's work and Peacebuilding initiatives in the Gambia.

5.1.3. WANEP-Niger hosted representatives of Danish Refugee Council/Danish Demining Group (DRC DDG) on May 5, 2018 to discuss its continued support to the activities of the WIPNET program of WANEP-Niger along the border axis of the three G5 Sahel countries of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. The high permeability of the borders, limited presence and capacity of security forces and its impact on the local economies dominated discussions at this meeting. The meeting also discussed plans to expand areas of coverage into Téra in North-West Niger. The Network also met with representatives from two Dutch NGOs viz; FREE Press and the PAX on May 30 to explore opportunities for future collaboration. The organizations are currently working on a regional approach to security in partnership with the media as mechanisms for regulating information on security in the G5 Sahel countries.

5.2. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPMENT

5.2.1. WANEP @ 20 Celebrations: Beginning this quarter, WANEP commenced activities for the celebration of its 20th Anniversary with a mix of special events across WANEP Regional and National Networks. WANEP was established in September 1998 to promote a culture of peace, strengthen the capacity of peacebuilding practitioners and institutions, and develop conflict prevention networks among others. The 20th anniversary creates an opportunity to look back at many learning, emotional and spectacular moments that continue to characterize the WANEP Brand! The anniversary is an all-inclusive affair geared towards bringing together all the component parts of WANEP and utilizing existing events and activities as part of the anniversary as recorded below;

WANEP-Senegal held open day discussions with key partners and major stakeholders as part of activities to mark the WANEP @ 20 celebrations. The event provided opportunity to keep the public informed and updated on WANEP and its role in the peace and security landscape in the region and was attended by a cross section of stakeholders drawn from civil society, government, media including defense and security forces from the Center for Advanced Studies of Defense and Security (CHEDS).

WANEP-Nigeria: In recognition of WANEP's 20 years contribution to peace and stability in Nigeria, the National Association of Peace Studies Student (NAPSS), presented an award of excellence to the National Network Coordinator, Ms. Bridget Osakwe and the entire Management and Staff of WANEP-Nigeria for "demonstrating unequalled zeal, zest and dexterity in their immense contributions and practical development to social cohesion, social development and promotion of human security". The award was presented on June 22, 2018, at the WANEP-Nigeria Secretariat. NAPSS is an umbrella body for all Nigeria peace Loving Students started in 2010 at LAWNA Theological Seminary Jos, is an Affiliate of University of Jos, Plateau State Nigeria.

6.0. CONCLUSION

In the reporting period, the West African Region continued to grapple with the multi-faceted challenges of increased insurgency attacks, natural and man-made disasters and other human security threats. Many countries in the region experienced the devastating effects of massive flooding resulting to loss of lives, properties, displacements/dislocation and massive food insecurity thus deepening the poverty cycle in the region. Despite these catastrophes, WANEP remained resolute in its quest to contribute to a West African region characterized by just and peaceful communities where the dignity of the human person remains paramount. In this wise, WANEP collaborated with key partners and major stakeholders to carry out programs and activities with significant impact on the peace landscape of West Africa.

A major achievement in the quarter is the successful implementation of series of activities under the EU funded, UNWomen implemented project on Promoting Women's Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigerian states of Adamawa, Gombe and Plateau. Under this project, WANEP successfully developed an SOP, produced a gender-sensitive training manual and conducted several capacity building initiatives in the project states. This is particularly worthy of note as the North-East region of Nigeria has been embroiled in Boko Haram insurgency attacks for over a decade.

WANEP continued to deploy its resources and expertise in contributing to the peace and security discourse through production and dissemination of evidence-based reports and presentations at national, regional and global arena. Despite these achievements, competing/conflicting activities leading to the postponement, rescheduling or cancellation of planned activities remained a key challenge.