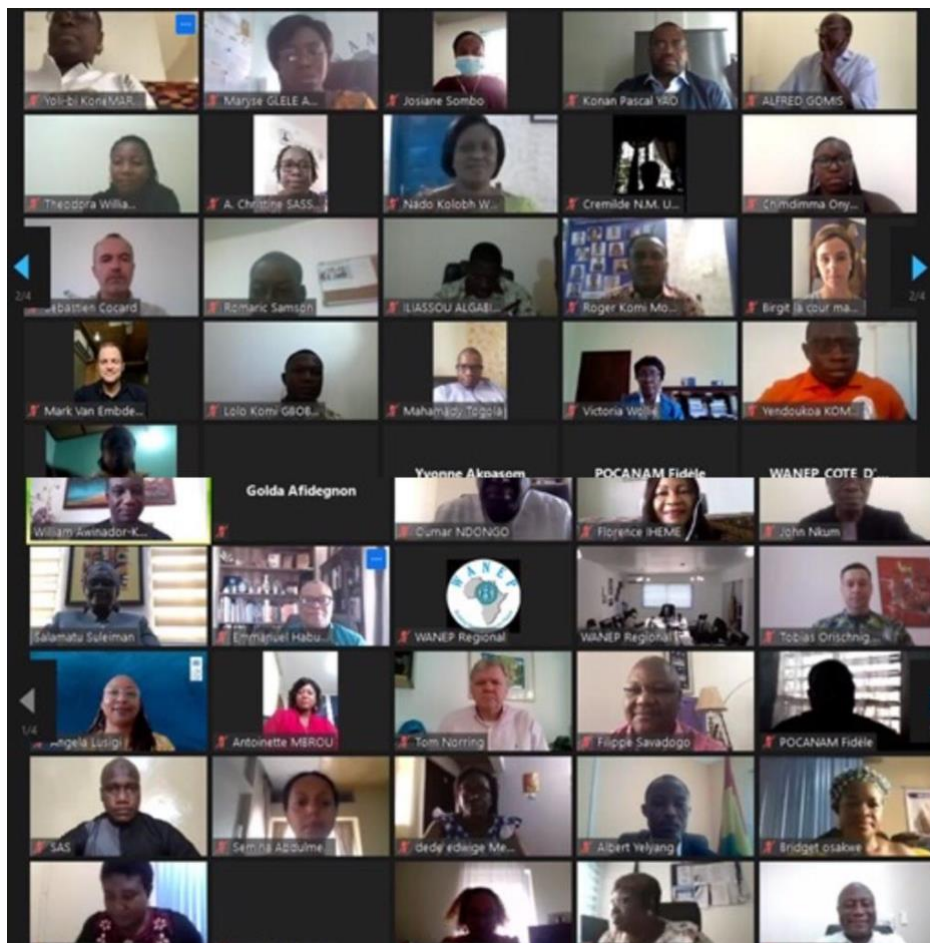




WANEP HOLDS ITS 2021 VIRTUAL PARTNERS' FORUM

February 9, 2021 – The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) convened, for the first time, a virtual Partners' Forum owing to the current unprecedented global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was attended by eighty-six (86) participants including WANEP's National Networks, strategic partners, and key stakeholders. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Ambassador William Awinador, Former Ghana Ambassador to Africa Union and ECOWAS, while the Vice President of ECOWAS Commission, H.E Finda E.M KOROMA, delivered the keynote address themed **"ECOWAS Vision 2020 in Retrospect: Reflections on ECOWAS – CSO Partnerships"**.

The forum, aimed to reflect on past successes, interrogate trends, gaps, and explore prospects for peacebuilding in the region with the view to broadening WANEP's influence and partners support for peace and security in West Africa. More importantly, the platform was meant to present WANEP's new Strategic Plan



A cross-section of participants during the virtual Partners' Forum

covering 2021-2025, foster relationships, confirm the commitment of partners in the implementation of the new priority areas. Additionally, the forum provided the opportunity to discuss alternative sources of funding and deepen collaboration between WANEP, AU and ECOWAS and its member states.

In her welcome remarks, the Board Chair of WANEP, Mrs. Antoinette Brou stated that “WANEP’s new five-year strategic plan focuses on greater integration between programmes, research and policy advocacy towards an enhanced citizens and state capacity for sustainable peace”. The Executive Director of WANEP, Dr Chukwuemeka B. Eze, took the opportunity to thank major partners who have demonstrated sustained commitment and flexibility despite the COVID-19 pandemic. They include WANEP’s Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA) partners SIDA and ADA, who despite the pandemic, maintained their commitment to supporting peace and security in Africa, the European Union for its increased funding envelope, Wellspring Foundation, GPPAC, ECOWAS, Danish Embassy, Accra, GIZ, UNDP and other numerous partners who support WANEP’s networks across the region. It is worthy of note that WANEP made history in 2020 by becoming the first civil society organization to receive direct funding from UNDP Africa Regional Office.

The meeting concluded with Partners’ statements and commitments on the strategic plan. Further discussions and major policy decisions will be taken during the business session of the WANEP General Assembly on February 10, 2021.