



Report of REGIONAL EXPERIENCE SHARING CONFERENCE



15 Years Of Implementing 1325 In West Africa: LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD



1.0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in partnership with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) convened a meeting to commemorate the 15th Anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 from October 20 to 21, 2015 under the theme: ***“15 Years of Implementing UNSCR 1325 in West Africa: Looking Back and Looking Forward”***. The meeting was convened to review the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in West Africa, share the successes and lessons learned in promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, examine the challenges of implementation of NAPs, and strategize on how to fast track the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in West Africa.

The commemoration hosted by the Ghana Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection was held at the Mensvic Hotel Accra, Ghana and brought together over 45 participants comprising representatives of local, national and regional women’s groups, representatives from National Gender/Women’s Ministries, representatives from partner agencies, AU, UN Women and the media. Others included staff of ECOWAS, WANEP and representatives of Civil Society Organizations across West Africa.

The UNSCR 1325 adopted in 2000, is a landmark international legal framework that stresses the importance of women’s equal participation and full involvement as active agents in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. It also addresses the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and recognizes the under-valued and under-utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and sustainable peace-building. As the year 2015 marks the 15th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325, the UN Secretary General commissioned a global study on the resolution to give opportunity for policymakers, women’s groups and other civil society actors in West Africa to assess the successes, achievements and challenges in the implementation of the resolution.

In West Africa, there has been an increased interest in the Resolution following its adoption with a number of activities dedicated to “1325” at civil society, governmental and regional level. Through the National Action Planning process, governments identify strategies, priorities and resources for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the national level. National Action Plans determine countries’ responsibilities and commitment to action and are often the result of the combined efforts of government and civil society. Currently, an estimated

WANEP through the WIPNET program has been working in collaboration with the Gender Directorate of ECOWAS and Gender Ministries across West Africa to promote the implementation of the Resolution and assess progress made. In 2012, WANEP produced a resource to guide in the development and implementation of the National Action Plans, NAPs. In 2013, WANEP and ECOWAS conducted a baseline study to analyze efforts made in the development of NAPs across the region and followed up with the development of monitoring and evaluation indicators and training of Gender focal points in Gender Ministries on how to use the indicators to track progress made. Findings from the base line study found that while there has been a tremendous progress in terms of development and adoption of UNSCR1325 National

Action Plans (NAPs) in all the ECOWAS Member states an indication of strong political commitment, the implementation of these plans have not been matched with the resources to enforce its application for the benefit of all community citizens.

Following on the baseline survey and as part of activities to commemorate the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, WANEP and ECOWAS conducted another survey to determine the status of development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of NAPs in West Africa and provide practical recommendations that would inform further review of the Resolution as well as further development of related programs by WANEP and other key stakeholders. The survey also sought to determine to what extent the WANEP Guidelines on the development and implementation of NAPs was utilized in developing the country NAPs.

It is against this background that ECOWAS and WANEP hosted the Regional Conference specifically to deliberate on topical issues on women, peace and security, reflect and share their experiences of working with the resolution and highlight the successes, best practices, and the lessons learned in implementing NAPs in West Africa. It was also to examine challenges and the way forward in view of the emerging peace and security threats in the region. Outcomes of these discussions will lead to concrete and specific recommendations on issues of women, peace and security in West Africa relevant for the work of CBOs, NGOs, Gender/women's Ministries, and other governmental and intergovernmental bodies such as ECOWAS. These recommendations will be analyzed and shared with the Global women community to serve as a reference and resource mobilization document for national and regional stakeholders on women, peace and security.

1.1. Specific Objectives of the conference were to;

- Assess the implementation of UNSCR 1325 NAPs in West Africa for the last 15 years
- Highlight successes and lessons learned in promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda
- Examine the challenges of implementation of NAPs, and share experience in dealing with the obstacles to UNSCR 1325 implementation in West Africa
- Provide recommendations as inputs into the global review process

2.0. Summary of Proceedings

2.1. Opening Session

The well attended opening session was chaired by Commandant, Kofi Anan International Peacekeeping Training Center, (KAIPTC) Major General O. B. Akwa. The Honorable Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection Honorable Nana Oye, represented by the Deputy Minister, Honorable John A. Ackon, delivered the keynote address and formally declared the conference open. In the address, the Honorable Minister expressed appreciation for the choice of Ghana as the venue of the Conference and appreciated the ECOWAS Commission and WANEP for their efforts in ensuring a strong and effective women participation in peace processes as enshrined in the UNSCR 1325. He conveyed the greetings of the President of the Republic of Ghana and pledged Ghana's support for the outcomes of the conference.

Speaking in the same vein, the ECOWAS Commissioner for Social Affairs and Gender, Dr. Fatimata Dia Sow represented by Director Gender, Dr. Sintiki Tarfa Ugbe expressed her commitment to ensuring the success of the meeting and commended WANEP for its coordination, forthrightness and quick response to making the meeting a success. According to her, investing in engendering the peace and security in Africa is a priority for ECOWAS and to this end, the organization has devoted efforts to strengthen humanitarian strategies and has created a humanitarian support fund. The Commissioner further commended ECOWAS member states for their efforts in the development of the NAPs although the gap between policy and implementation is still high and stressed that more work needs to be done as women are still at the margins, excluded in key issues, and highly vulnerable. She said ECOWAS and WANEP working together is an example of translating our commitments into real action in the field.

In his welcome remarks, the Executive Director of WANEP, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze said the meeting offered stakeholders the opportunity to assess to what extent the resolution has made a difference in the lives of women across the region and how policies, processes and laws reflect a level of this positive change. He said experience throughout the world has shown that excluding women in all aspects of life, makes sustainable peace and development a mirage adding “it is obvious that there can be no security where women are exposed to violence and no peace where they are ignored.”

2.2. Goodwill Messages

Representative of UN Women Regional Office for West and Central Africa Ms. Comfort Lamptey described the meeting as coming at an opportune time especially as it is coming on the heels of



the recent High Level review convened by the UN Security Council to assess 15 years implementation of 1325, the adoption of UNSCR 2242 and the launch of the independent Global Study on women peace and security. She said the wide array of security challenges in the region presents one of the most convincing rationales for engaging women fully in all peace and security efforts. In addition, Ms. Lamptey conveyed the commitment of the UN Women’s Executive Director to strengthening collaboration with regional and sub-regional organizations like ECOWAS and civil society organizations in the region.

The representative from the African Union Peace and Security Department (AU PSD) was unavoidably absent but sent in a goodwill message due to the critical importance of the conference. The message outlined AU’s pledge and commitment to collaborate with WANEP and ECOWAS in supporting other regional CSOs and RECs to take stock of the implementation of 1325 as well as conduct intensive engagement with key policy makers and development partners on the resolution. The statement further detailed several efforts undertaken at the African level to fully implement UNSCR 1325 and mainstream gender in the peace and security agenda. Such efforts included; the AU Gender Policy (2009), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People Rights (2013), the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (2014) and the Agenda 2063

among others. A most crucial step in these efforts was the appointment in 2014 of a Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security by the AU Commission.

3.0. Workshop Proceedings

3.1. Paper Presentations

3.1.1. The UNSCR 1325 in West Africa: Then and Now: An assessment of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in West Africa: Critical challenges in the last 15 years and prospects – By Prof Patricia Donli

As the title stated, this paper followed progress of UNSCR 1325 implementation in West Africa, successes, challenges and prospects. In terms of progress made, 12 countries according to Prof Donli have NAPs; eight of these countries are in Africa. The NAPs have been translated into local languages while various trainings were conducted and surveys carried out to monitor implementation and track progress. All these has led to increased profile of women and the adoption of laws and policies for the advancement of women's peace and security agenda.



However, Prof. Donli opined that despite the progress recorded, there are still a number of limitations and challenges to the full implementation of the resolution. Some of these limitations included the fact that the language of the resolution is weak and tentative rather than directive and the document is not time bound. There is still a lack of effective reporting framework, inadequate enforcement of laws and policies, little progress against sexual abuse and low participation of women in decision-making and peace negotiations. For instance, in Nigeria only three women are in the committee on Boko Haram.

Inadequate funding, lack of political will, political instability, lack of public awareness and understanding of 1325, centralization of NAPs and 1325 at national level and the marginalization of grassroots communities remain challenging to successful implementation of the resolution. As a way forward, the paper recommended that funding allocations should be provided in the annual budget for NAP implementation, awareness creation especially at the grassroots level, establishment of proper monitoring and evaluation committees and trainings on M&E. It also called for serious commitment from ECOWAS, Development Partners, NGOs and bilateral partners. Particularly, the paper suggested the establishment of a council of African women mediators and including women in the panel of the wise as measures to boost the participation of women in decision-making.

3.1.2. Women's roles in confronting emerging peace and security threats in West Africa and the implications for Women's Peace and Security Agenda – By Dr. Kwesi Aning

Dr. Kwesi Aning, Course Director, KAIPTC delivered this presentation which traced the history of women's roles in the peace and security agenda in the region. The paper reiterated that women have been combatants, survivors, victims and peacemakers at different levels and added that



women still have critical roles to play in the face of emerging threats of religious extremism and terrorism. Quoting statistics, Dr. Aning stated that 85% of female suicide bombings in the world occurred in Nigeria between June 2014 and May 2015. He said the social constructions of women as ‘pacifists, care-givers etc,’ are being exploited by militant groups who find it easier to recruit women to carry out their nefarious activities.

Lamenting the dismal situation of women, Dr. Aning stated that despite the positive contributions of women to peace processes, no African state has celebrated the African woman. He said the time has come to move from rhetoric to action and develop a score card to hold our leaders responsible. He recommended that in order to increase women’s participation in peace and security, it is important to include women in dialogues on countering violent extremism, encourage the re-orientation of the traditional constructions of women by recognizing the different roles women can play and enhance women’s role in the intelligence service among others.

3.1.3. Tools for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 – Ms. Comfort Lamptey, UN Women

Ms. Comfort Lamptey of the UN Women gave an overview of the range of tools available at the inter-governmental, national and civil society level to strengthen, review or reapply for the successful implementation of 1325. Some of these include the use of special envoys on women, peace and security to advance the process and mobilize political support for the resolution. As part of preventive diplomacy, she suggested the engendering of the ECOWAS early warning indicators so it can be used to advance the implementation of 1325 and the adaptation of the Global study which reviews women peace and security mandate across the globe as a platform to reprioritize the way forward in the next five years.

At the national level, Ms Lamptey calls for the implementation of the national action plans within one framework for advancing women peace and security agenda and stated that the inter-ministerial forum provides a tool for bringing the ministries together to look at how the plans will be implemented. She also cited the training of more women mediators at the community level in addition to the over 30 women mediators in the region, the adaptation of review mechanisms such as the working group on 1325 at the level of ECOWAS and the global acceleration instrument that brings together the UN government and CSOs to coordinate the work of women peace and security as instruments if well deployed, will fast-track the implementation of 1325.

3.1.4. NIGERIA NAP 1325: LESSONS FROM NIGERIA STABILITY & RECONCILIATION PROGRAMME (NSRP) by DR. ELEANOR ANN NWADINOB

Dr. Eleanor Ann Nwadinobi, Manager, women and girls at the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) made a presentation on lessons learnt from the NSRP’s involvement in the implementation of the Nigerian NAP. The presentation covered NSRP contributions, lessons learnt, challenges and way forward. A key lesson in the successful

implementation of NAP is civil society groups and development partners' intervention is key to ensuring action on the NAP.

The presentation calls for the NAP/1325 implementation process to be truly consultative and inclusive and urged security agencies, human rights commissions, relief and recovery agencies to see implementation of the NAP as core to their work. It further advocated for a dedicated budget to be allocated to NAP in order to have real, meaningful and sustainable impact. In addition, the paper suggested the establishment of a process for recognizing 'champions' (male and female) of women, peace and security and appointment of high level advocates for global women's issues. Some of the challenges for the slow implementation of NAPs is that women,



peace and security agenda is seen as 'a woman's concern' rather than a matter of national security; the culture and politics of non-inclusion of women in decision-making and delays in budget allocation and release among others.

NSPR is managed by the British council, International Alert and Social Development Direct and works in eight states of Nigeria. It covers security and

governance, economics and natural resources, women and girls and research media and advocacy.

3.2. Findings of the Follow-up Survey on status of NAPs and UNSCR 1325 development and Implementation

WANEP and ECOWAS through the Gender Ministries in the ECOWAS member states conducted a survey to determine progress made in the development and implementation of UNSCR 1325 NAPs and also to determine how effectiveness of the Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms since the development of the guideline. Specifically, the survey was to provide WANEP with an analysis on the status of development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of NAPs in West Africa and provide practical recommendations that would inform further review of the Resolution and on-going program development by WANEP and other key stakeholders. A total of 13 out of the 15 ECOWAS countries participated in the survey.

As regards implementation, progress is fair, yielding positive outcomes such as the increase of women within the security forces, women's inclusion in peace-building, the dissemination of UNSCR 1325, combating gender-based violence, enactment of new legislation, strengthened institutional mechanisms, promotion of the women rights, and the availability of support and expertise of CSOs and other organizations. The NAPs according to the survey, have generally been well received by the communities. Below are some of the findings and challenges;

Preliminary Findings

- The survey showed that respective Ministries has been working on the UNSCR 1325 in all the countries surveyed
- Majority of respondents were familiar with the WANEP Guideline, but its actual use was low, however, the few countries that used them found them helpful.
- Only 46 out of 193 countries have complied with reporting under the procedure and women's participation in formal peace processes still remains low.
- There was a high awareness of the priority areas in each country's NAP, by ranking protection, participation, prevention, promotion and prosecution
- There are personnel and systems in place to monitor the NAPs though monitoring activities were not being done as planned.
- The M & E context specific indicators developed at the WANEP/KAIPTC training were not being used

Challenges

- Low resource mobilization,
- Lack of funds and budgetary allocation,
- Lack of ownership/political will,
- Limited awareness of UNSCR 1325,
- Inadequate coordination,
- Inability to attain the UN 50% target for women's representation,
- Low M &E capacity and the absence of a functioning Secretariats.

4.0. Status of implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Lessons Learned in West Africa

This session was focused on presentations on the status of development and implementation of national action plans across the region. Generally, all the countries reported a level of progress with regards to NAPs implementation. Currently, 12 countries have developed and are implementing the NAPs while some country's NAPs are due for review such as Ghana. Only Cape Verde, Niger and Benin are yet to develop their NAPs. Tangible achievements were recorded in the three pillars, namely prevention, participation, and promotion of the UNSCR 1325 in majority of the countries while additional pillars of protection and prosecution in the NAPs of some countries also recorded positive outcomes.

Civil society organizations, donor partners and other key stakeholders were mentioned to have contributed to the implementation through collaboration in outreach and sensitization activities, advocacy, training and capacity-building programmes. Other areas of cooperation and involvement with the NAPs processes included; monitoring, establishment of networks, and provision of services as well as technical and material support.

4.1. Country Priority Areas of NAPs

UNSCR 1325 addresses the inordinate impact of war on women as well as the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict management, conflict resolution and sustainable peace. It acknowledges the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peace-building and governance. The resolution marks the first time that the Security Council addressed the role and experiences of women and girls in armed conflicts and calls on all UN bodies, Governments and all parties to conflict to take special measures under these four key pillars;

PREVENTION: improving intervention strategies in the prevention of violence against women; end impunity by prosecuting perpetrators of sexual and other violence on women and girls; strengthening women's rights under national law; and supporting local women's peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes.

PROTECTION of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict including in emergency and humanitarian situations, such as in refugee camps.

PARTICIPATION: increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national, regional, and international institutions; in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; in peace negotiations; in peace operations, as soldiers, police, and civilians; and as Special Representatives of the U.N. Secretary-General; increase gender perspectives in all conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace-building, planning of refugee camps and reconstruction.

RELIEF AND RECOVERY efforts should ensure the equal distribution of aid to women and girls and incorporate gender perspectives into relief and recovery efforts.

In addition, other key components of the resolution covers the following; Demobilization Disarmament, Reintegration, Policy and Programming, Capacity building/training and Awareness creation, advocacy and lobbying. Others are; Planning, Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation Resource Mobilization and Budget. In the national presentations, most of the countries mentioned prevention, participation and promotion while others added protection and only Sierra Leone included prosecution as their priority area.

4.1. Achievements

- Increase participation of women within the security forces and in peacekeeping operations e.g in Ghana and Guinea)
- Women's inclusion in peace-building processes such as in task forces and other peace committees across the region
- The Establishment of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as local mechanisms and instruments for peace initiatives and indigenous conflict resolution processes
- Enactment of new legislation to combat sexual gender based violence and other forms of violence against women such as the Violence Against Persons (prohibition) Act enacted in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia)

- Strengthened institutional mechanisms such as integrating women, peace and security issues into the local legislation process and development planning process in Sierra Leone
- Promotion of women rights in the media
- Establishment of Steering Committees on NAP implementation and National M & E committees and WPS networks (Nigeria,)
- Adoption of Gender responsive policies which has translated to the establishment of Gender desks, Gender task force in most of the Ministries; gender policies adopted by security forces and admission of females as cadets into the elite Nigerian Defense Academy
- Trainings and capacity building on gender
- Empowering women through the establishment of micro-credit schemes and literacy projects in Guinea Bissau and other countries

(Please see Annex for country presentations)

4.2. Challenges

- Poor documentation and dissemination of outcomes of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 processes
- Lack or inadequate funding and lack of political will
- Low level of awareness on the provisions of the UNSCR 1325 especially among state security actors and other key stakeholders
- Emerging trends such as violent extremism, insurgency and epidemics (Ebola) which were not envisaged at the time the NAP was developed
- Non-support of strategic interventions on women, peace and security
- Low participation of women especially in politics and other key decision-making areas
- Deep seated cultural perceptions that have prevented the enacting of legislation and policies to support NAP implementation
- Low implementation and enforcement of laws and policies that seek to promote and protect the rights of women and girls
- Lack of continuity as it happened in Togo

4.3. Lessons Learnt

- Coordination and Partnership with major stakeholders such as Legislature, media, religious/traditional leaders and the private sector is key in the successful implementation of NAP
- Funding is crucial. There should be a dedicated national budget allocation by governments, development partners, ECOWAS and AU for NAP implementation
- The role of CSOs is very important in advocacy, lobbying, awareness creation and mounting of pressure
- Capacity building and follow-up is very important
- Issues of IDPs , humanitarian relief and post-conflict reconstruction remains a big challenge and must be seriously addressed in the NAPs

4.4. Recommendations

- There should be continuous strengthening of partnerships, alliances, coordination and collaborations among key stakeholders for the successful implementation of UNSCR 1325.

- Prevention is key to sustainable peace and development. Rather than invest so much money into peacekeeping and directing our energies in the wrong process, prevention must start from building a culture of peace from primary to the tertiary levels
- We must invest on women holistically on their rights, education, economically, health among others.
- Need to strengthen our institutions and improve resource allocation.
- Establish a platform for continued engagement and experience sharing so as to add value to our interventions and efforts
- Build practical partnerships for cooperation and information sharing
- Transforming words to action is key. Change is inevitable

5.0. Closing Courtesies

The meeting was officially closed by the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, Honorable Nana Oye Lithur. In her closing remarks, the Minister again reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of Ghana through her Ministry to promoting the women, peace and security agenda. She expressed optimism that gender equality in the region can be achieved through the collective efforts and involvement of all stakeholders and urged the participants to adopt outcomes of the deliberations as a call to action in fast-tracking the implementation of 1325 in their respective localities.



The communique presented at the end of the meeting outlined the process of the meeting including observations, successes, challenges and proffer recommendations for the way forward. The communique noted that much progress has been made in West Africa on the development of UNSCR 1325 Regional Action Plan and NAPs recording concrete achievements especially in the three pillars of prevention, participation, and promotion. Despite the progress made, the communique recognized that more work needs to be done by relevant regional, government and civil society organizations in order to strengthen the operational implementation and also apply specific set of indicators to track and document the implementation of the Resolution.

As part of key recommendations for the effective implementation of 1325, the communique called for the promotion of Alternative Dispute Resolutions or Mechanisms within Member States, promotion of peace education and culture of peace, and the continuous sensitization and awareness on the content of the resolution including translating it into the various ECOWAS languages. It further emphasized the need for capacity building for security officers, law enforcement agencies and judiciary including religious and traditional court systems, full implementation of international, regional and national instruments to promote and protect the rights of women and the need to increase the participation of women in all ECOWAS and its member states' peace processes including in the enlistment of women in the ECOWAS Panel of the Wise, National Peace Infrastructures, Mediation support services among others.

(Please see Annex 2 for full communique)

Annex 1:

GROUP WORK

KEY AREAS	ON-GOING EFFORTS	GAPS	KEY STRATEGIES
PREVENTION	To be taken from the various presentations	To be taken from the various presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening grassroots awareness raising on the resolution and the related country laws through holistic communication strategies • Establishment of mediation units in various ministries within the country • Policy engagement: UNSCR 1325 should be factored into country laws • Establishing secretariats within the ministries • Early warning and early response at both the national and community levels • Civic education in school curricula
PROSECUTION and PROTECTION			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen laws by sensitizing of security officers, law enforcement agencies, judicial system, and religious courts systems etc. • Translation of policies and laws into the local languages for education through cassettes, radios and other mediums of communication (multi-mass communication strategies) • Engagement of local community leaders • Recruiting more female officers and legal practitioners
PARTNERSHIP and COORDINATION			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum for stronger collaboration/partnership with the different security agencies to implement the laws • Training of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary on gender related issues • Partner with community traditional council leaders to disseminate knowledge on the laws/policies • Platform for coordination and harmonizing of efforts e.g. quarterly meetings by a leading institution which could include CSOs, national steering committee, regional and district committees, etc. • Strong collaboration between the UN, governments, and civil society in developing the NAP with input from all stakeholders • Formal regional platforms for constant discussion both physically and virtually

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compendium of skilled women in each ECOWAS country
RESOURCE MOBILISATION			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket funding • Local resource mobilization • Private sector contribution through e.g. corporate social responsibility • Global Acceleration Instrument • Funding from the legislative through the Community Development Fund
ACCOUNTABILITY /REPORTING			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging the youth core group of African Union • Harmonized M&E and reporting frameworks at all levels • Naming and shaming culprit countries • Align all national, regional and international documents on UNSCR 1325 • Having a database on working groups

Annex 2: Communique



Communiqué of the Commemoration of the 15th Anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in West Africa Accra Ghana, 20 & 21 October 2015



The **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** in partnership with the **West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)** convened a meeting to commemorate the **15th Anniversary of the UNSCR 1325**, which brought together about 45 participants from Ministries of Women Affairs and Gender, representatives of Civil Society Organizations, Media and Development Partners from West Africa.

The commemoration hosted by the Ghana Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection took place at Mensvic Hotel in Accra Ghana, from the 20th to 21st of October 2015. The theme of the meeting was “**15 Years of Implementing UNSCR 1325 in West Africa: Looking Back and Looking Forward**”.

The meeting was convened to review the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in West Africa, share the successes and lessons learned in promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, examine the challenges of implementation of NAPs, and to strategize on how to fast track the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in West Africa.

The Honorable Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection represented by the Deputy Minister, Honorable John A. Ackon, delivered the keynote address and formally declared the conference open. The Honorable Minister expressed appreciation for the choice of Ghana as the venue of the Conference and appreciated the ECOWAS Commission and WANEP for their efforts

in ensuring a strong and effective women participation in peace processes as enshrined in the UNSCR 1325. He conveyed the greetings of the President of the Republic of Ghana and pledged Ghana's support for the outcomes of the conference. The ECOWAS Commissioner for Social Affairs and Gender, Dr. Fatimata Dia Sow represented by Director Gender, Dr. Sintiki Tarfa Ugbe and the Executive Director of WANEP, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze delivered the opening statement and welcome remarks at the meeting.

OBSERVATIONS

The conference:

1. Noted the progress made by West Africa on the development of UNSCR 1325 Regional Action Plan and NAPs.
2. Noted the tangible achievements made in the three pillars, namely prevention, participation, and promotion of the UNSCR 1325.
3. Noted the inclusion of additional pillars – protection and prosecution in the NAPs of some countries.
4. Recognized that more work needs to be done not only to strengthen the operational implementation, but also to apply specific set of indicators as a common basis to track and document the implementation of UNSCR 1325 by relevant regional, government and civil society organizations.
5. Identified insurgencies, electoral violence and identity crises including ethnicity and religious conflict as the current/emerging peace and security challenges in the region.
6. Identified impunity and inadequate access of women to justice as main drivers of violence against women in the region.
7. Observed the poor documentation and dissemination of outcomes of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 processes.
8. Observed inadequate funding and lack of political will as a key factor militating against the implementation of National Action Plans for the UNSCR 1325.
9. Observed the low level of awareness on the provisions of the UNSCR 1325 especially among state security actors and other key stakeholders.

10. Underscored the need for partnerships, alliances, coordination and collaborations among key stakeholders for the successful implementation of UNSCR 1325.
11. Raised concern on the continued hostage of the Nigerian Chibok girls.
12. Welcomed the Global Study on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and the establishment of Global Acceleration Instrument to support implementation of 1325.
13. Expressed commitment to the new UNSCR 2242 on women, peace and security passed on 13 October 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the two-day deliberation, the participants arrived at the following recommendations:

PREVENTION:

- The participants underscored the need for investment in national early warning and early response mechanisms as approved by the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government ensuring the critical role of women and CSOs in the various early warning pillars.
- The promotion of Alternative Dispute Resolutions or Mechanisms within Member States.
- Promotion of peace education and culture of peace in all Member states
- Governments and CSOs/Networks should continue to sensitize and raise awareness on the content of the resolution including translating it into the various ECOWAS languages

PROTECTION AND PROSECUTION

- Capacity building for security officers, law enforcement agencies and judiciary including religious and traditional court systems.
- Fully implement international, regional and national instruments to promote and protect the rights of women.

- Improve women's access to justice and establish appropriate sanctions for perpetrators of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

PARTICIPATION

- The need to increase the participation of women in all ECOWAS and its member states' peace processes including in the enlistment of women in the ECOWAS Panel of the Wise, National Peace Infrastructures, Mediation support services among others.
- Establishment of database of women with expertise in women, peace and security and other areas related to development.

ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORTING

In order to ensure full compliance of all Women, Peace and Security Resolutions, the UN should mandate its member-states who ascribe to the UNSCR 1325 to develop Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks.

- Disseminate best practices in M & E framework as well as key indicators for monitoring implementation.
- Member States are encouraged to submit Periodic Reports to ECOWAS as a means of tracking implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the region.
- Set up Multi-stakeholder taskforce including CSOs, Academia and Gender Ministries to ensure the implementation and monitoring of NAPs.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

- The AU and ECOWAS should make resources available to support the implementation of NAPs in countries that already have them in place as well as countries that are yet to develop NAPs. The required fund could be made available from the recently established financial mechanism "Fund for the African Women" or any other source;
- Annual National Budget should make provision for the activities relating to national action plans and such should be included as an indicator of country compliance to the principles of UNSCR 1325.
- Strategic engagement with the Private Sector for possible funding of concrete NAP activities.

- More information and guidance to be provided to Member States and CSOs in the ECOWAS region on how to access funding for work on implementation of UNSCR 1325 through the recently established Global Acceleration Instrument.

PARTNERSHIP, ALLIANCES AND COLLABORATION

- Women led organizations/networks should partner with executive, legislature and judiciary for increased women participation in decision making;
- Women organizations should partner with the media for popularization of UNSCR 1325, sustenance of the issue in the public domain and generation of support for the resolution among journalists.
- Women organizations/networks should partner with men from diverse backgrounds, religious/traditional institutions to strategically and innovatively address the patriarchal systems that resist women's advancement.
- The participants called on UN Women to make available the report of the Global Study on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, in addition to facilitate the process of review and validation of the study.

KEY OUTCOME DOCUMENTS

- *Communique*
- *Conference Proceedings documenting presentations and all support documents.*

Annex 3: Country Presentations