



Time of Release-Immediate

TWO-DAY CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN WEST AFRICA ENDS IN ACCRA

Accra, 16 November 2021 – The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) hosted a two-day CSO Consultative



Participants at the opening ceremony held on 15 November in Accra, Ghana.

Meeting to review the state of democracy and governance in the ECOWAS region. The meeting adopted a hybrid approach with more than 80 participants joining in person and online at various sessions. The participants included key Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the academia, representatives of the Peace and Security Department of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), development partners as well as members of the public.

Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, former UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel delivered the keynote address titled: **“The State of Democratic Governance in West Africa: Progress or Decline?”** Dr Chambas in his speech emphasized the importance of the review of the 2001 ECOWAS protocol on Democracy and Good Governance as requested by the Authority of Heads of States and Government. He stated that “it is envisaged that the reviewed protocol will come up with additional instruments to address emerging threats to democracy and its tenets, particularly the respect for presidential term limits, rule of law, judicial independence, civil liberties and to strengthen the sanctions regime in the protocol in order to adequately respond to the exigencies of the times”. Dr Chambas, who is also the ECOWAS Special Envoy to Guinea on the transition to civilian rule, commended WANEP for the initiative to review the Protocol and described it as a critical input of civil society to the review process.

Dr. Chukwuemeka B. Eze, Executive Director of WANEP, in his welcome remarks, highlighted the important role played by CSOs in democratic governance, specifically in addressing the current challenges bedeviling democracy in the region. He noted that despite the notable progress made in the quest to consolidate democracy over the years in recent times, the democratic governance landscape of the region has witnessed a declining trend, leading to widespread concerns about the return of authoritarian regimes.

“Democratic processes in the region are being tainted by a number of constraints and challenges –especially those that prevent wider participation, inclusivity, and constructive dialogue among political stakeholders”, Dr Eze noted. In light of the above, WANEP, as the leading peacebuilding organisation and civil society partner to ECOWAS in the implementation of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, particularly in the operationalisation of the early warning mechanisms, convened the consultative meeting with key partners and stakeholders to interrogate the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance 2001, to assess its implementation and effectiveness in responding to the current challenges to democratic governance in West Africa.

The outcomes of the meeting will be presented ahead of the December 2021 summit, to the leadership of the ECOWAS Commission as perspectives and contribution of CSOs to the review of the Protocol. It is expected that these outcomes will be considered in the finalisation of proposed amendments to be approved by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS.