

## PRESS RELEASE

### WANEP, SIPRI AND DRC LAUNCH THE RESEARCH AND ACTION FOR PEACE (REcAP) NETWORK



A cross-section of participants at the official launch of the REcAP Network

**Dakar, 2 February 2023:** Fifty-four (54) participants convened in Dakar, Senegal, for the official launch of the Research and Action for Peace (REcAP) Network. The launch was held in a hybrid format with eighty-two (82) participants joining online. Participants included representatives from the European Union (EU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), international organisations, research institutions and experts working in the fields of peacebuilding, the prevention of conflict and violent extremism drawn from West Africa, the Lake Chad Basin and Europe. Other dignitaries included Ambassadors from the EU and ECOWAS member states.

The welcoming and closing remarks were delivered by Mrs Levinia Addae-Mensah, WANEP's Deputy Executive Director. During her opening statement, Mrs Addae-Mensah emphasised the significance of the launching of the network in the context of multifaceted crises experienced in the West African region and the Lake Chad Basin. According to her, the myriad of challenges calls for effective cross-fertilisation of knowledge and expertise in response to challenges of peacebuilding, prevention of conflict and violent extremism in the regions.

The welcoming remarks by Mrs Levinia were reinforced by Mr Yann Faivre, the Executive Director, West and North Africa and Latin America of DRC, who further expounded on the significance of a bottom-up approach to research projects. According to him, this approach will help deepen understanding and address problems in fragile and conflict-affected zones. Mr Faivre also noted the timeliness of the Network. He urged the REcAP Network members, researchers, and practitioners, to work collaboratively and not in silos to serve crisis-affected populations.

Likewise, Mr Luc van de Goor, Director of Studies of the Conflicts, Peace and Security research area at SIPRI, during his opening statement, underscored the importance and the uniqueness of the REcAP

Network, as it is designed to provide an interactive cooperation platform which is relevant to SIPRI's ambition to contribute to preventing and resolving conflicts and sustaining peace.

Similarly, Mr Giovanni Squadrito, the Head of the regional team at the EU Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), equally stressed the significance of the operationalisation of the REcAP Network, which will ensure the continuity of previous EU-supported efforts to create a network of expertise in the region. He insisted in particular on the importance of the REcAP Network being based on proven and recognized expertise, while remaining open to any actor which would like to join. According to him, the REcAP Network will provide insights into the unique security challenges facing each of the 18 countries.

During the various panel discussions, speakers were able to deepen their understanding of several peace and security issues, share lessons learned and models of best practices on how to effectively leverage existing opportunities to collectively address the issues of conflict, and violent extremism and contribute to peacebuilding efforts in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin regions. There was also a consensus among panellists and network members during plenary sessions that the network is timely and well-designed to respond to the myriad of peacebuilding and conflict prevention challenges of the target countries. It was particularly emphasized that the complex and politically sensitive areas in the two-target areas in Africa necessitate partnerships within a stronger network of experts and Think Tank institutions to foster collective response to critical peacebuilding and conflict prevention gaps and challenges.

In her closing remarks, Mrs Levinia Addae-Mensah expressed gratitude to physical and online partners and encouraged stakeholders to continue engaging with and contributing to the Network through the various lines of communication.

The event generally revealed a renewed sense of commitment and urgency from all stakeholders to enhance peacebuilding and conflict prevention policies and practices in the target countries. Members of the Network also expressed their willingness and commitment to step up efforts to successfully carry out REcAP's Network mandate.

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**About the REcAP Network:** The REcAP Network is a project funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the [West Africa Network for Peacebuilding](#) (WANEP), [the Danish Refugee Council \(DRC\)](#) and the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#) (SIPRI). The Network comprises experts in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and violent extremism from 18 countries in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin and Europe. The main objective of the REcAP Network is to strengthen the role of these experts at regional, national and community levels, and to enable more informed decision-making by policymakers. The Network will serve as an interactive platform for regional cooperation between existing expert networks, research centres, civil society, implementing partners, regional organisations, and governments to foster research and scientific information generation, as well as a platform for mutual learning. In this regard, an online platform will serve as a referral point for capacity building, mentorship, and adoption of models and tools that support approaches to sustaining peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts in the target regions.

For more information about the Network, follow [@REcAP\\_Network](#) on Twitter or contact [Golda Afidegnon](#)