



WEST AFRICA'S EVOLVING SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

LOOKING BACK TO THE FUTURE



POLICY SEMINAR REPORT

30 AND 31 OCTOBER 2006, LA PALM HOTEL, ACCRA, GHANA

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RAPPORTEURS

ANGELA NDINGA-MUVUMBA AND ABDUL LAMIN

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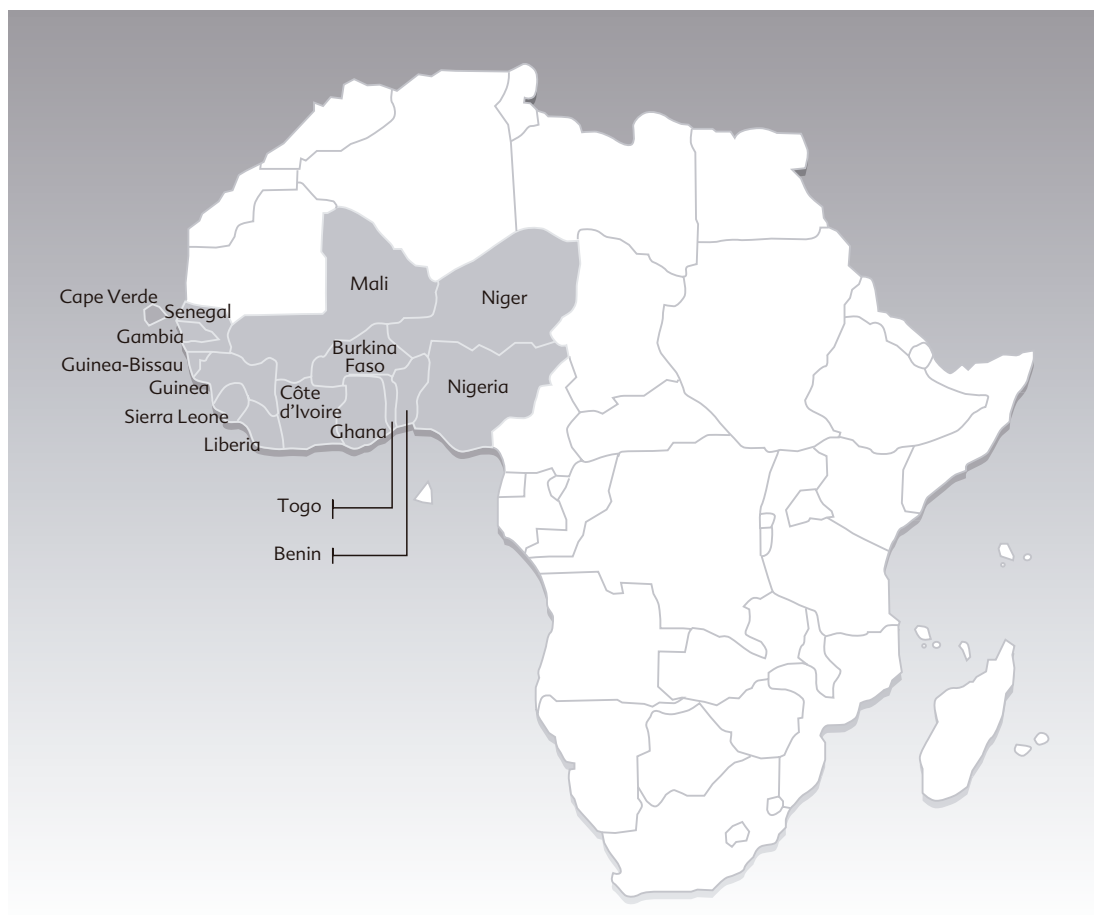
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Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)



Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Acknowledgements

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa, would like to thank the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA); the governments of Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden; as well as the United Kingdom's (UK) Department for International Development (DFID) for their generous support which made possible the holding of the policy seminar in Accra, Ghana, on 30 and 31 October 2006.

About the Organisers:

Centre for Conflict Resolution

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) is affiliated to the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa. Established in 1968, the organisation has wide-ranging experience of conflict interventions in the Western Cape and southern Africa and is working increasingly on a pan-continental basis to strengthen the conflict management capacity of Africa's regional organisations, as well as on policy research on South Africa's role in Africa; the United Nations (UN) role in Africa; African Union (AU)/New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) relations; and HIV/AIDS and security.

The Economic Community of West African States

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was founded in 1975. Its mission is to promote economic integration in all fields of economic activity, particularly industry; transport; telecommunications; energy; agriculture; natural resources; commerce; monetary and financial interests; and social and cultural matters. ECOWAS also established a Security Mechanism in 1999. The ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria, implements ECOWAS' policies; pursues a number of programmes; and carries out projects in member states.

The United Nations Office for West Africa

The UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) was established in Dakar, Senegal, in 2001 as an innovative response to the pressing call by ECOWAS leaders for a sub-regional approach to the many challenges of peace and security in West Africa. UNOWA is the first UN regional peacebuilding office in the world, with a mandate to harmonise UN activities and promote the integration of a sub-regional – as opposed to country-by-country – approach. The establishment of UNOWA was part of an attempt to bring regional UN activities in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding closer to local realities and needs.

The Rapporteurs

Ms Angela Ndinga-Muvumba is a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town. Dr Abdul Lamin is a Lecturer in the Department of International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Executive Summary

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa, in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Abuja, Nigeria, and the United Nations (UN) Office in West Africa (UNOWA), Dakar, Senegal, convened a two-day policy advisory group seminar on “ECOWAS’ Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future”, in Accra, Ghana, on 30 and 31 October 2006.

The seminar’s focus was on the evolution of ECOWAS’ security architecture, as outlined in the 1999 ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (commonly referred to as “the Mechanism”) and the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance adopted in 2001.

The seminar generated policy debates and recommendations on how to accelerate the institutionalisation of ECOWAS’ security architecture; leverage the roles of a diverse group of West African and UN actors to achieve ECOWAS’ aims; and address emerging and influential developments that affect the sub-region’s peace, security and governance architecture. Dr Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, and senior ECOWAS officials shared their perspectives at the meeting. Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, also contributed to the seminar. About 30 members of the ECOWAS diplomatic community; civil society; academia; military experts; the ECOWAS secretariat; and UNOWA staff members participated in the meeting.

The following seven key themes were addressed during the seminar:

1. West Africa’s Evolving Security Architecture;
2. Mediation: The Council of Elders;
3. The ECOWAS Earlywarning System;
4. Peacekeeping: ECOWAS/UN Collaboration;
5. Peacebuilding: ECOWAS and the UN Peacebuilding Commission;
6. Elections and Democratic Transitions; and
7. HIV/AIDS and Security.

1. West Africa’s Evolving Security Architecture

Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, West Africa has been among the most volatile regions in the world. Local brushfires have raged from Liberia to Sierra Leone, from Guinea to Guinea-Bissau, and from Senegal to Côte d’Ivoire in an inter-connected web of instability. Due in part to neglect by the UN Security Council, West Africa has gone further than any other African sub-region in efforts to establish a security mechanism in 1999 to manage its own conflicts. This “great leap forward” presents opportunities as well as challenges for strengthening ECOWAS’ security architecture.

2. Mediation: The Council of Elders

The Council of Elders is one of the institutions established under ECOWAS' 1999 Protocol to promote peace and security in West Africa. The Council consists of 15 eminent personalities – one from each member state of the Community – including women, traditional, religious, and political leaders. The current composition of the Council is 13 men and two women. The body has observed elections in Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Togo; and contributed to defusing potential conflicts throughout West Africa. However, the Council of Elders has been under-utilised, while Council members meet as a group only once a year. The composition and method of selection of members, and their appointment to the Council, also require further refinement and consideration. The inter-connectedness of identity, citizenship and language issues as sources of conflicts in West Africa also need to be properly understood and integrated into the Council's engagement with the sub-region's evolving security, governance and development architecture.

3. The ECOWAS Earlywarning System

As envisaged in the ECOWAS security protocol of 1999, steps have been taken to establish ECOWAS' sub-regional peace and security observation system – or “earlywarning system”. The core of the organisation's earlywarning system is ECOWAS' Observation and Monitoring Centre. The earlywarning system's four reporting zones and its information bureaus are collectively known as ECOWARN. The zonal bureaus are based in Gambia, Benin, Liberia, and Burkina Faso. The Accra-based West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) has deployed 15 focal points in each member state to work alongside ECOWAS focal points to gather information and provide analysis for the system. The conceptual underpinning of the earlywarning system is human security. ECOWAS analysts produce situation reports by entering data according to 93 indicators, and record earlywarning incidents. Though reports by the zonal bureaus informed ECOWAS policymakers in the case of Togo, for example, the long-term effectiveness of ECOWARN remains unclear, since it is often political will – and not lack of information – that determines early responses to these warnings.

4. Peacekeeping: ECOWAS/UN Collaboration

The need for UN peacekeeping in Africa is clear: nearly half of the 50 UN peacekeeping missions in the post-Cold War era have been in Africa. The continent currently hosts the largest UN peacekeeping missions in the world; and in 2005, eight of the 17 UN peacekeeping missions in the world were in Africa, including in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire. Additional steps have now been taken to address the need for a West African peacekeeping capacity through the establishment of an ECOWAS Standby Force. The brigade will be the West African component of the African Standby Force (ASF) which is to be established by 2010. ECOWAS is taking steps to lay the foundation for the brigade's operating procedures, training, and provision of logistical equipment. West African heads of state have also agreed to the establishment of a logistics depot in Freetown, Sierra Leone. It is important to ensure an effective, transparent and appropriate division of labour between the UN and African peacekeepers. The presence of the UN Office for West Africa, and the role of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, has the potential to lead to more robust engagement between the UN and ECOWAS on conflict management issues.

5. Peacebuilding: ECOWAS and the UN Peacebuilding Commission

In December 2005, the UN Security Council and the General Assembly adopted joint resolutions establishing the UN Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission is backed by a Peacebuilding Support Office that marks a new level of strategic commitment to enhancing and sustaining peace after conflict, though it remains unclear whether the funds needed for post-conflict peacebuilding will be mobilised by this body. The Commission will focus primarily on assisting post-conflict societies as they make the transition from war to peace. Sierra Leone and Burundi are the first two countries the Commission will focus on. Lessons from the UN's Peacebuilding Support Offices in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and the Central African Republic (CAR), as well as ECOWAS/UN experiences with post-conflict reconstruction should provide useful lessons for the new Commission. African actors must also build effective partnerships between the Commission and other inter-governmental organisations such as the African Union (AU), which is currently developing an African Framework on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD).

6. Elections and Democratic Transitions

Recent democratic transitions in West Africa signal new challenges for ECOWAS in the area of governance. Already, ECOWAS has been involved in helping Liberia to devise institutional transformation and to investigate fraud and corruption charges levelled against the transitional administration between 2003 and 2005. ECOWAS' electoral capacity will need to be strengthened further. In May 2005, ECOWAS, UNOWA and the European Union (EU) agreed to provide the sub-regional body's Electoral Assistance and Observation Unit with technical assistance in the area of elections. Successful democratic transitions rely on addressing the socio-economic and political root causes of conflicts as well as sometimes evolving notions of citizenship and identity. Furthermore, West Africa has often imported European models of democracy without considering their relevance to the sub-region. A considered and deliberate process of determining the most conducive system of governance must be undertaken in drafting constitutions in West Africa. Here, the role of the military in either supporting or hindering peaceful democratic consolidation in West Africa will continue to be an important factor.

7. HIV/AIDS and Security

The issue of HIV/AIDS was not included in ECOWAS' security protocol of 1999. With plans to establish an ECOWAS brigade for an African Standby Force by 2010, it is important that sub-regional leaders devote sufficient attention to this important area. Studies in West Africa have shown that HIV/AIDS is a leading cause of death in the defence sector. Without adequate, timely and consistent interventions, the sub-region's HIV infection rates could increase. ECOMOG (ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group) troops returning to Nigeria in the late 1990s from Liberia and Sierra Leone had significantly higher rates of HIV than their counterparts at home, and the risk of infection increased as troops were deployed for longer stints in both countries. After three years of service, the risk of HIV infection for the average soldier had increased from seven percent to 15 percent. ECOWAS has since revised its operating procedures and is currently implementing a Plan of Action for 2004 – 2006 for the control of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS in sub-regional armies. The further implementation of this plan is an urgent task, particularly since the AU has already started to conceptualise a military health doctrine for the African Standby Force.

Policy Recommendations

The discussions at the Accra seminar resulted in policy recommendations in four key areas:

1. Enhancing ECOWAS' collaboration with the UN, the AU and the international community;
2. Ensuring peaceful transitions in political governance;
3. Integrating human security as a central component of addressing conflict; and
4. Mobilising sustainable human and financial resources in support of ECOWAS' activities and initiatives.

1. Enhancing ECOWAS' Collaboration with the UN, the AU and the International Community

- The UN Office for West Africa must precipitate more robust engagement between the UN and ECOWAS on conflict management issues through more regular interaction and help to streamline an effective, transparent and appropriate division of labour between the UN and ECOWAS peacekeepers;
- ECOWAS member states must also take concrete measures such as accelerating the establishment of the sub-regional brigade of the African Standby Force to support the UN's efforts to devise a 10-year peacekeeping capacity-building plan with the AU, which should be extended to sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS;
- Lessons from the UN's Peacebuilding Support Offices in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and CAR, as well as ECOWAS/UN experiences with post-conflict reconstruction should be examined in order to provide useful lessons to the new UN Peacebuilding Commission;
- ECOWAS should share its Plan of Action for 2004 – 2006 for the control of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS in the armed forces sector with parallel efforts by other institutions such as the AU, regional economic communities (RECs) such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); and the UN; and
- The lessons from past ECOMOG interventions suggest that defence forces are uniquely vulnerable to HIV/AIDS due to prolonged deployment in difficult, stressful and often lonely environments. In order to control the likelihood of increased risk to HIV infection, ECOWAS' troop-contributing countries in future peacekeeping operations must ensure that troop rotation occurs every six months.

2. Ensuring Peaceful Transitions in Political Governance

- It is important to implement measures like the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001 and the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) Algiers Decision Against Unconstitutional Changes of Government of 1999 so that African leaders resist the temptation to amend national constitutions in order to stay in power. This may require providing incentives such as membership of the ECOWAS Council of Elders for good leadership without compromising principles of accountability;
- Governments and civil society groups in West Africa should undertake a deliberative process on constitutionalism and systems of democratic representation. The knowledge-production sector in the sub-region should also be harnessed to provide civic education which addresses the rights, procedures, privileges and responsibilities of democracy to parliamentarians, local government leaders, and the electorate; and

- In order to be effective, sanctions against errant leaders need to be well targeted; supported by all major external actors through the UN; and designed and implemented to punish failing leaders rather than their citizens.

3. Integrating Human Security as a Central Component of Addressing Conflict

- ECOWARN's earlywarning reports are based on human security indicators and can thus provide a useful source of information on security as well as governance and development in West Africa. As a priority, regular briefings based on these reports should be made to the top policymaker in each of ECOWAS' organs and institutions;
- The ECOWAS secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria, should undertake more comprehensive collaboration between its various departments and civil society. Where appropriate, earlywarning reports could be shared with the media. The gender indicators of ECOWAS' earlywarning system should also be used by the secretariat's Department of Gender to mainstream issues of conflict prevention into ECOWAS' gender equality programmes and initiatives; and
- The crisis of a bulging and marginalised population of children and youth is prevalent across West Africa. Conflict management strategies must take into account the link between conflict and the alienation of young people in the sub-region, many of whom have no access to education and employment.

4. Mobilising Sustainable Human and Financial Resources in Support of ECOWAS' Activities

- The capacity of the ECOWAS Council of Elders has been under-utilised. The knowledge-production sector and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in West Africa should facilitate regular training, interaction and information-sharing among the members of the Council of Elders;
- ECOWAS member states have imposed a 0.5 percent tax on all imports from non-ECOWAS countries. This is the community levy, which is expected to be used to provide internal financing for ECOWAS' activities and fill the gap in arrears in assessed contributions. While the community levy is useful for the functioning of ECOWAS' security and governance institutions, the implementation of the provisions of the Mechanism will require additional resources and greater financial commitment by member states;
- West African governments must honour their pledges to the ECOWAS Peace Fund by mustering the political will to pay their dues consistently in order to enable the organisation to confront the pressing challenges of peace and security in the sub-region; and
- West Africa still has abundant natural resources, including diamonds, gold, iron ore and oil, which the sub-region must use to reduce its dependence on external support to finance its peace and security efforts in the long term.



From left: Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town; General Francis Agymfra (Ret), former Chief of Army Staff of the Ghana Defence Force, Accra; Colonel Yoro Kone, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja, Abuja.

1. Introduction

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa; the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Abuja, Nigeria; and the United Nations Office in West Africa (UNOWA) in Dakar, Senegal, convened a two-day policy advisory group seminar on “ECOWAS’ Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future”, in Accra, Ghana, on 30 and 31 October 2006.¹

The seminar focused on the progress of ECOWAS’ evolving security architecture, as outlined in the 1999 ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (commonly referred to as “the Mechanism”) and the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which was adopted in 2001.

The Accra seminar sought to assess the evolution of the ECOWAS Mechanism in the past seven years and to provide concrete policy advice on how best to support its institutions. The meeting took place at a time when ECOWAS, as an organisation, is in the process of institutional transformation, with the secretariat having become a Commission in January 2007. The meeting also sought to strengthen the relationship between ECOWAS and UNOWA in their joint efforts to tackle security, governance and development issues in West Africa. Dr Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, and senior ECOWAS officials shared their perspectives at the meeting. Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, also contributed to the meeting. About 30 members of the ECOWAS diplomatic community; civil society; academia; military experts; the ECOWAS secretariat; and UNOWA staff participated in the meeting. (See Annex II for full list.)

The seminar generated policy debates and recommendations on how to accelerate the institutionalisation of ECOWAS’ security architecture; leverage the roles of a diverse group of West African and UN actors to achieve ECOWAS’ aims; and address emerging and influential developments affecting the sub-region’s peace, security and governance. The following seven key themes were addressed during the seminar:

1. West Africa’s Evolving Security Architecture;
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5. Peacebuilding: ECOWAS and the UN Peacebuilding Commission;
6. Elections and Democratic Transitions; and
7. HIV/AIDS and Security.

This report is based on a summary of the discussions and recommendations from the Accra seminar, as well as additional research.

¹ The 15 member states of the Economic Community of West African States are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Since the signing of the ECOWAS Security Protocol in 1999, a number of reviews of its interventions and institutions have produced noteworthy analyses on the organisation's progress in establishing its security architecture.² These perspectives have helped to codify and articulate the lessons learned by ECOWAS in its conflict management efforts. The next phase of the organisation's implementation is to operationalise its security architecture within a complex and dynamically evolving West Africa in which protracted conflicts have ended and elections have been held in Sierra Leone in 2002 and Liberia in 2005, while tensions remain in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Togo. Two factors influenced the objectives of the Accra seminar. First, recent political, economic and security developments in West Africa and the establishment of new international conflict management institutions present critical opportunities and challenges for ECOWAS. Second, a range of actors and stakeholders have sought to support the implementation of the 1999 ECOWAS protocol. These stakeholders are both friendly critics of ECOWAS and collaborative partners. Their engagement in the operationalisation of the ECOWAS mechanism should therefore be clarified and strengthened.

Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, West Africa has been among the most volatile regions in the world. Local brushfires have raged from Liberia to Sierra Leone, from Guinea to Guinea-Bissau, and from Senegal to Côte d'Ivoire in an inter-connected web of instability.³ Due in part to neglect by the UN Security Council, West Africa has gone further than any other African sub-region in efforts to establish a security mechanism to manage its own conflicts.⁴ The ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) intervention in Liberia between 1990 and 1998 was the first such action by a sub-regional organisation in Africa relying principally on its own men, money and military material. It was also the first time the UN had sent military observers to support an already established sub-regional force. The ECOMOG intervention in Sierra Leone to restore the democratically elected government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to power in 1998 was equally unprecedented, and the UN took over ECOMOG's peacekeeping responsibilities by 2000.⁵ ECOWAS' fourth military intervention in Côte d'Ivoire was launched in early 2003. The Ivorian case again highlighted the interdependence of security and the need to adopt a regional approach to managing West Africa's conflicts.

Sub-regional leaders are currently attempting to institutionalise ECOWAS' security mechanism in order to manage future conflicts more effectively. In crafting the ECOWAS security mechanism, West African leaders interpreted Chapter VIII of the UN Charter – dealing with regional arrangements – to allow military interventions in cases of regional instability and unconstitutional changes of government, with the flexibility of

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- 2 See *Lessons from ECOWAS Peacekeeping Operations: 1990-2004*, Workshop report published by UNOWA, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and ECOWAS, Accra, Ghana, February 2005 (available at <http://www.un.org/unowa/unowa/reports/ecowasII0205.pdf>; accessed 24 July 2006); as well as *Appraising Efforts to Improve Conflict Management in West Africa*, Conference report published by the International Peace Academy (IPA), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and ECOWAS, Accra, Ghana, October 2004; *Operationalising the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security*, Report published by IPA and ECOWAS, May 2003, based on a meeting in Dakar in August 2002; and *Toward a Pax West Africana: Building Peace in a Troubled Sub-region*, IPA and ECOWAS, Report of a seminar in Abuja in September 2001. (All IPA reports are available at <http://www.ipacademy.org/Publications/Publications.htm>; accessed 24 July 2006.)
 - 3 See Adekeye Adebajo and Ismail Rashid (eds), *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in A Troubled Region* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2004).
 - 4 See the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism For Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, ECOWAS, Lomé, Togo, 10 December 1999.
 - 5 For a background to the Sierra Leone conflict, see Ibrahim Abdullah and Patrick Muana, 'The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone: A Revolt of the Lumpen-proletariat', in Christopher Clapham (ed.), *African Guerrillas* (Oxford, Kampala and Bloomington: James Currey, Fountain Publishers and Indiana University Press, 1998); Adekeye Adebajo and David Keen, 'Sierra Leone', in Mats Berdal and Spiros Economides (eds), *United Nations Interventionism, 1991-2004*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.246-273; Adekeye Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2002); *African Development*, Vol.22, Nos. 2 and 3 (1997), Special issue on 'Youth Culture and Political Violence: The Sierra Leone Civil War'; John Hirsch, *Sierra Leone: Diamonds and the Struggle for Democracy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001); David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: James Currey and New York: Palgrave, 2005); and Mark Malan, Phenyio Rakate, and Angela McIntyre, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL Hits the Home Straight* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2002).

informing the Council only after troops had already been deployed. Indeed, the African Union's (AU) "Ezulwini Consensus" of February 2005 acknowledged the need for the AU and sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS to seek the approval of the Security Council after the fact, under certain urgent circumstances – as occurred with the ECOMOG intervention in Liberia in 1990.⁶ Furthermore, ECOWAS is currently establishing a rapid-reaction force as one of five sub-regional brigades of the African Standby Force (ASF) to be established under the auspices of the AU by 2010.

The ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group intervention in Liberia between 1990 and 1998 was the first such action by a sub-regional organisation in Africa relying principally on its own men, money and military material.

Security challenges in West Africa are, however, not limited to conflicts. The sub-region is coping with a number of inter-connected human security challenges such as rife poverty; debilitating health pandemics such as HIV/AIDS; the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; gender inequality; and the implosion of state governance structures. The 2005 Human Development Report listed 13 West African countries as being among the poorest in the world.⁷ This climate has led to endemic corruption that fuels poor governance, the undermining of state structures and the promotion of apathy among the region's 230 million citizens. Widespread poverty has also created a generation of disaffected young people who have often become cannon fodder for ruthless warlords. UNOWA has thus focused attention on youth unemployment in West Africa.⁸ Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau all have large numbers of children and young people who are trained as combatants. The rebel movements of Sierra Leone and Liberia – the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), respectively – both consisted of child soldiers who still present a challenge to the reintegration of these formerly war-torn societies.

ECOWAS' Evolving Mandate

At its inception in 1975, the hope was that ECOWAS – which marked its 30th anniversary in 2005 – would meet the sub-region's development challenges, particularly by undertaking intra-community trade; facilitating the free movement of persons, goods and services; increasing and expanding productive activity; and engaging in monetary and financial co-operation to create a single ECOWAS currency.⁹ By the early 1990s, ECOWAS' economic integration priorities were subsumed by the need to promote peace in the sub-region. Five ECOWAS peacekeeping missions were launched in Liberia (1990 and 2003), Sierra Leone (1997), Guinea-Bissau (1999), and Côte d'Ivoire (2003). These developments prompted sub-regional leaders to establish a security mechanism for conflict management within ECOWAS.¹⁰

6 The Common African Position on the Proposed Reform of the United Nations: The Ezulwini Consensus, African Union (AU), Seventh Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council, Ext/EC.CL/2 (VII), March 2005. See also *Building an African Union for the Twenty-First Century: Relations with Regional Economic Communities (RECs), NEPAD and Civil Society*, Report published by the Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa, 20 – 22 August 2005 (available at <http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za> ; accessed 17 July 2006).

7 *Human Development Report 2005, International Cooperation At A Crossroads: Aid, Trade and Security in An Unequal World*, Report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, 2005.

8 See *Youth Unemployment and Regional Insecurity in West Africa*, UNOWA Issue Paper (Dakar: UNOWA, December 2005).

9 See Adebayo Adedeji, "ECOWAS: A Retrospective Journey", pp. 21-49; and S. K. B. Asante, "The Travails of Integration", pp.51-68, both in Adebajo and Rashid (eds), *West Africa's Security Challenges*.

10 ECOWAS official website (available at <http://www.sec.ecowas.int> ; accessed 24 July 2006).

West African leaders adopted the Protocol relating to the ECOWAS Mechanism in 1999 and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001. Both instruments were preceded by the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression, and the 1981 Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence. However, the earlier Protocols, adopted within the context of the Cold War, were primarily designed to deal with threats emanating from outside the territorial boundaries of member states, rather than from within. The 1999 Mechanism's protocol laid the foundation for establishing the following organs: the 10-member Mediation and Security Council; the Defence and Security Commission; and the Council of Elders. The ECOWAS Protocol of 1999 also called for improved co-operation in earlywarning; conflict prevention; peacekeeping operations; cross-border crime; and the trafficking of small arms and narcotics. Many of these ideas were based on ECOMOG's experiences, with the concern about cross-border crimes and arms trafficking being a direct result of the deleterious effect of civil wars on neighbouring states like Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Senegal. There was also a clear recognition among sub-regional leaders that democratic governance and sustainable development had to be included as components for peace and conflict prevention efforts in West Africa.



TOP: Ambassador Lansana Kouyaté, former Executive Secretary, Economic Community of West African States, *left*; Dr. Saran Daraba Kaba, former President of the Mano River Women's Peace Network, Conakry
ABOVE: Dr Jane Ansah, Ghana Defence Force, Accra
RIGHT: General Francis Agymfra (Ret), former Chief of Army Staff of the Ghana Defence Force, Accra, *left*; Dr Abdel Fatau-Musah, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja

2. West Africa's Evolving Security Architecture

West Africa's security architecture continues to be dynamic and fluid. The outbreak of violent civil conflicts in Liberia (1989) and Sierra Leone (1991) at the end of the Cold War highlighted two important phenomena.

First, a link was established between internal conflicts, caused in large measure by factors such as poor governance, inequitable distribution of resources and marginalisation, on the one hand, and inadequate development efforts on the other.¹¹ Second, a new generation of internal conflicts were “regionalised”, meaning that they were no longer confined to the territorial boundaries of individual states.¹² For ECOWAS, this meant that the mechanisms already in place to defend national sovereignty and protect member states from external aggression were grossly inadequate to meet the new challenges. Given the peacekeeping lessons from Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s, the imperative became urgent to create ad hoc mechanisms that could be subsequently transformed into more permanent and institutionalised structures capable of addressing, in a holistic manner, the compelling nature, dynamics and effects of conflicts in the sub-region.¹³ A new approach prioritising a “systemic search for conflict prevention and conflict management mechanisms” had to be developed.¹⁴ As the legal instruments at ECOWAS’ disposal at the time had only anticipated inter-state rather than intra-state conflicts, the need to develop a new legal framework – the absence of which had caused disagreements among West African governments, especially with respect to the deployment of ECOMOG to Liberia and later in Sierra Leone in the 1990s – therefore became urgent.

This new and evolving conflict dynamic in West Africa, coupled with field experience, persuaded ECOWAS leaders to rethink the relationship between security and development, and consequently to prioritise conflict prevention in the same way as economic development and integration. ECOWAS leaders realised that violent conflicts could undermine the gains made towards achieving the initial vision of ECOWAS to promote regional economic integration. The organisation accordingly developed and adopted new legal instruments to confront the new security challenges of the post-Cold War era. The ECOWAS Treaty was revised in 1993 to strengthen the organisation’s capacity in the security field. In 1999, ECOWAS adopted the Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, followed shortly thereafter by the adoption of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001. Collectively, these instruments provide “a comprehensive framework for confronting the new threats to peace and security on a more permanent basis”.¹⁵ These instruments are also broadly designed to provide normative content to military actions by ECOWAS in order to develop a systematic approach to addressing conflicts in the sub-region; and ultimately to exert civilian control over military interventions. In the past few years, the epicentre of conflict in the sub-region appears to have shifted from Liberia to Côte d’Ivoire. The country has remained divided for a fifth successive year between the government and rebels, separated only by a 6,430-strong UN interposing force (UNOCI) and about 4,600 French troops. (An accord between the government and rebels in March 2007 saw

11 Mohamed Ibn Chambas, “The ECOWAS Security Mechanism: Progress and Prospects”, Presentation at the CCR/ECOWAS/UNOWA policy seminar, *ECOWAS’ Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future*, Accra, Ghana, 30 and 31 October 2006.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

rebel leader Guillaume Soro become Prime Minister under President Laurent Gbagbo.) In September 2005, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became Africa's first elected female leader after polls in Liberia. After five years of peacekeeping, the UN withdrew its troops from Sierra Leone in December 2005 and established a peacebuilding office in the country. Simultaneously, new conflict management institutions have evolved on the continent. The establishment of the AU's African Standby Force has progressed, with West Africa's ECOWAS Brigade making strides in its development. In December 2005, the UN established a new Peacebuilding Commission to mobilise funds for post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

These critical developments present opportunities as well as challenges for strengthening ECOWAS' security architecture. The establishment of institutions to deliver mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding services will depend for their success on their ability to increase capacity; establish rapid-reaction multifunctional peacekeeping forces; and work effectively with civil society actors and the UN. However, as ECOWAS evolves, it will continue to be confronted with conflict management challenges that span the fields of governance (elections and democratic transitions); development (gender inequality and HIV/AIDS); as well as security sector reform and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Three major challenges for the institutionalisation of ECOMOG emerged during its three interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau:

- First, ECOMOG peacekeepers were deployed to the three countries before detailed logistical and financial arrangements had been made. Observers have noted that the peacekeepers were ill-equipped and ill-prepared, and not all ECOWAS members were informed before full-scale deployment occurred.
- Second, analysts have noted that the ECOMOG forces in Liberia and Sierra Leone were dominated by Nigeria, resulting in a lack of sub-regional unity and depriving the force of important legitimacy in fulfilling its tasks.
- Third, the ECOMOG missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were under the operational control of ECOMOG commanders in the field, rather than the ECOWAS secretariat in Abuja.

Based largely on these experiences, the ECOWAS Security Protocol of 1999 called for the establishment of a stand-by force of brigade-size consisting of specially-trained and equipped units of national armies ready for deployment at short notice. All 15 ECOWAS states pledged one battalion each to the proposed force. The ECOMOG force was mandated to be used in four cases:

- First, aggression or conflict within a member state;
- Second, a conflict between two or more member states;
- Third, internal conflicts that threaten to trigger a humanitarian disaster, pose a serious threat to sub-regional peace and security, result in serious and massive violations of human rights, and/or follow the overthrow or attempted overthrow of a democratically-elected government; and
- Fourth, any other situation that the Mediation and Security Council deems appropriate.

The proposed sub-regional force is to embark on periodic training exercises to enhance the cohesion of its troops and compatibility of its equipment. ECOMOG's soldiers will also undertake training exchange programmes in West African military training institutions, as well as external training involving the UN and the AU. The Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra is to provide operational-level training; Nigeria's War College in Abuja is to provide training at the strategic level; while a centre in Mali will provide tactical training.

3. Mediation: The Council of Elders

The Council of Elders was one of the six institutions established under the ECOWAS 1999 Protocol to promote peace and security in West Africa. The other five are: the Authority of Heads of State and Government; the Mediation and Security Council; the Defence and Security Commission, comprising chiefs of armed forces and security agencies; Special Representatives of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary; and the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group.

The Council of Elders consists of 15 eminent personalities – one from each member state of the Community – including women, traditional, religious, and political leaders. The current composition of the Council is 13 men and two women.¹⁶ The Council was officially inaugurated in March 2004 in Ghana by the then Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority, Ghanaian President John Agyekum Kufuor.

The Council of Elders has been one of the instruments used by the ECOWAS secretariat and the Authority of Heads of State to help defuse potential conflicts in West Africa. For example, Council member General Abdulsalaam Abubakar, the former Nigerian head of state between 1998 and 1999, played an important role as a mediator in the Liberian peace process, often intervening to break impasses that arose among the parties to that conflict. Council members have also been deployed by ECOWAS to observe elections. A delegation of Council members, led by Sierra Leone's Speaker of Parliament, Elizabeth Alpha-Lavalie, observed the presidential and parliamentary elections in Gambia in September 2006. Council members have also served as election observers in other countries including Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Togo, and Zimbabwe.

In theory, the elders are supposed to use their reputation as senior statesmen and stateswomen to defuse tensions before they escalate into violence. In practice, however, the Council of Elders has mostly been limited to the monitoring of elections.

The composition, method of selection and appointment of members to the Council require further refinement and consideration.¹⁷ Priority for membership on the Council should be given to those who are knowledgeable about the complexity and sensitivity of West Africa's security landscape. Council members must understand the historical complexities of identity, citizenship and language – and their inter-connectedness – as sources of conflicts in West Africa. The exploding population of youth in the sub-region, coupled with the problems of youth unemployment, are a critical area for intervention by the Council. The selection of members to such an important body within ECOWAS should also not be left entirely to heads of state. It will be important to establish an independent panel of experts that could develop selection criteria to oversee the appointment of Council members.¹⁸

16 The members of the Council of Elders in 2006 were: Omar de Souza (Benin); Léopold Andre Joseph Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso); Julio Monterio Santes (Cape Verde); Alassane Salif N'diaye (Côte d'Ivoire); Babou Ousmane Jobe (Gambia); Seth K Obeng (Ghana); Abdourahmane Sow (Guinea); Gaetano Nitchama (Guinea-Bissau); Emmanuel Gbalaze (Liberia); Sira Diop (Mali); Aminrou Garba (Niger); Abdulsalaam Abubakar (Nigeria); Elizabeth Alpha-Lavalie (Sierra Leone); Mbaye Mbengue (Senegal); and Bitokotipou Yagninim (Togo).

17 Abdoulaye Bathily, "The Council of Elders: Looking Inside from the Outside", Presentation at the CCR/ECOWAS/UNOWA policy seminar, *ECOWAS' Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future*, Accra, Ghana, 30 and 31 October 2006.

18 Ibid.

As stipulated in the ECOWAS Mechanism, the role of the Council of Elders is chiefly that of preventive diplomacy. However, the Council is further constrained because it is an advisory body, and given that ECOWAS is an inter-governmental organisation with the legal powers vested in the Authority of Heads of State and Government, organs like the Council have struggled to establish an effective role in West Africa's evolving security architecture. In theory, the elders are supposed to use their reputation as senior statesmen and stateswomen to defuse tensions before they escalate into violence. In practice, however, the Council of Elders has mostly been limited to the monitoring of elections. Other limitations include the fact that Council members meet together as a group only once a year. Additionally, the ECOWAS Protocol of 1999 provides that members of the Council serve only a one-year term of office.¹⁹ This is seen as a limitation to the Council's ability to contribute to conflict management efforts in West Africa. It may therefore be useful to explore the possibility of amending the 1999 Protocol to provide for an extension of the tenure of Council members. The Council should also build relationships with civil society organisations in West Africa to support its advocacy efforts, and provide opportunities for the Council to meet more frequently. It was further suggested that civil society organisations should convene training workshops and policy meetings for the Council of Elders in order to facilitate deeper understanding and information-sharing with African civil society actors on the dynamics of conflicts in West Africa.²⁰

Since its inception, the Council has appealed to member states to implement the Protocol related to the ECOWAS community levy for financing the work of the Mechanism. ECOWAS member states apply a 0.5 percent tax on all imports from non-ECOWAS countries. This is the "community levy", which is expected to provide internal financing for ECOWAS' activities and fill the gap caused by arrears in assessed contributions. However, many West African governments are taxing imports in order to support their national programmes. Therefore, the levy has not been able to be fully implemented. Assessed contributions of member states to ECOWAS are substantially augmented by donor funds. The implementation of the provisions of the Mechanism, such as the Council of Elders, will require additional resources. West Africa still has abundant natural resources, including diamonds, gold, iron ore, and oil. A conference by ECOWAS on the mobilisation of natural resources to build the economic base of countries in the sub-region could be a first step in establishing sustainable sources of funding for the implementation of the 1999 Mechanism in the long term.



ABOVE: Ms Angela Ndinga-Muvumba, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, *left*; Dr Abdul Lamin, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

LEFT: Dr Martin Uhomoibhi, Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja, *left*; Lieut-Colonel Daniel Ladzekpo, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja

¹⁹ See Article 20, Protocol Relating to the ECOWAS Mechanism (available at http://www.iss.co.za/Af/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/ecowas/ConflictMecha.pdf; accessed 6 March 2007).

²⁰ See Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff, "Civil Society", in Adebajo and Rashid (eds), *West Africa's Security Challenges*, pp. 265-290.

4. The ECOWAS Earlywarning System

Article 58 of the 1993 revised ECOWAS treaty calls for the establishment of “a regional peace and security observation system”.²¹ As envisaged in the ECOWAS security protocol of 1999, steps have been taken to establish ECOWAS’ sub-regional peace and security observation system — or “earlywarning system”.

Moreover, by 2003, the human and financial costs of intra-state conflicts had become evident in their regional implications. In the May 2003 Declaration on a Sub-regional Approach to Peace and Security, ECOWAS leaders acknowledged that issues such as the use of child soldiers; uncontrolled armed militias and mercenaries; the movement of refugees; and coup d'états, called for the operationalisation of the ECOWAS earlywarning mechanism.²²

The core of the organisation’s earlywarning system is ECOWAS’ Observation and Monitoring Centre, which consists of the departments of Operations, Peacekeeping, and Humanitarian Affairs (DOPHA); and Political Affairs and Security (DPAS). The first department aims to formulate and implement all military, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations, while the latter is mandated to organise, manage, and provide support for political activities related to conflict prevention as well as the formulation and implementation of policies on cross-border crime; the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; and the control of drug-trafficking. Military officers from ECOWAS states have been seconded to its secretariat in Abuja to bolster its planning cell.

The earlywarning system has been designed to collect and analyse information systematically – as it happens in “real time”. In order to ensure this occurs, earlywarning information must be timely, accurate, valid, reliable, verifiable and reflect ongoing developments within West Africa. The system’s methodology for gathering information differs from traditional security intelligence. This is an open system which relies on information shared by international actors such as the UN; regional organisations such as the AU; West African government agencies; the media; non-governmental organisations (NGOs); and civil society.²³

The earlywarning system’s four reporting zones and its information bureaus are collectively known as ECOWARN. The zonal bureaus are based in Banjul, Gambia (to cover Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal); Cotonou, Benin (to cover Benin, Nigeria, and Togo); Monrovia, Liberia (to cover Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone); and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (to cover Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Niger). The conceptual underpinning of the earlywarning system is human security. From the four zonal headquarters, officials are expected to assess political (human rights and democracy); economic (food shortages); social (unemployment); security (arms flows and civil-military relations); and environmental (drought and flooding), indicators on a daily basis. ECOWARN’s methodology of analysis is both quantitative and qualitative. ECOWAS analysts produce situation reports by entering data into a computerised monitoring

21 Treaty of ECOWAS, ECOWAS (Abuja: ECOWAS Secretariat, 1993); (available at http://www.iss.co.za/Af/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/ecowas/3ECOWASTreaty.pdf ; accessed 6 March 2007).

22 Declaration on a Sub-Regional Approach to Peace and Security, ECOWAS, Abuja, Nigeria, 28 May 2003.

23 Yoro Kone, “The Operationalisation of the ECOWAS Early Warning System”, Presentation at the CCR/ECOWAS/UNOWA policy seminar, *ECOWAS’ Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future*, Accra, Ghana, 30 and 31 October 2006.

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system according to 93 indicators. Monitors also record incidents based on field reporting and news items into the same system. Incidents and situation reports are analysed jointly to assess conflict trends in the sub-region.²⁴ The effectiveness of ECOWARN is its strategic link between analysis and action. ECOWARN analysts are expected to build scenarios for various contingency plans and to present options for a response to the office of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary. This requires continuous planning, monitoring and evaluation of the sources of conflict; the impact of instability; and the results of a response to conflict. Consequently, in any given situation, the requirements for an intervention evolve over the short, medium and long term.²⁵

The following personnel have been recruited for ECOWAS' earlywarning system: the director of the Observation and Monitoring Centre; its chief analyst; three monitoring officers; its systems and planning head; its programme manager; a communication officer; an information officer; and the heads of ECOWAS' four zonal bureaus. The United States' (US) European Command in Germany has assisted ECOWAS to establish an effective communications system. Finally, at the continental level, ECOWARN faces the challenge of complementarity with the AU's own developing earlywarning system, as well as sharing comparative lessons with the Addis Ababa-based earlywarning system of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

An encouraging development of ECOWAS' earlywarning system is the involvement of civil society actors in its establishment. The Accra-based West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), an umbrella group of 300 civil society organisations, was prominently involved in establishing ECOWAS' earlywarning system. WANEP has deployed 15 focal points in each ECOWAS member state to work alongside ECOWAS focal points to gather information and provide analysis for ECOWARN. WANEP's Peace Monitoring Centre in Abuja, Nigeria, is now considered an implementation partner of ECOWARN. Indeed, ECOWAS' collaboration with civil society underlines the fact that the organisation has taken steps to decentralise its peace and security work through a more inclusive process.²⁶ Civil society, however, continues to call for more comprehensive engagement with ECOWAS on earlywarning. One recommendation has been that a wider cross-section of civil society – beyond

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Thelma Ekiyor, 'ECOWAS' Early Warning System: A Civil Society Perspective', Presentation at the CCR/ECOWAS/UNOWA policy seminar, *ECOWAS' Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future*, Accra, Ghana, 30 and 31 October 2006.

NGOs and regional networks – which includes community-based organisations, women’s groups, students, trade unions and faith-based institutions, should be approached to engage with ECOWARN. However, there are additional challenges emanating from closer reliance on civil society in sharing earlywarning information. Without commensurate earlywarning training, information shared could include biased interpretations and episodic, anecdotal and incomplete analysis.

Support for the ECOWAS security mechanism has been provided by the governments of Canada, Denmark, Japan, Norway, Germany, the US, Britain and the European Union (EU). While ECOWAS owns the copyright on its earlywarning system, IGAD has established a similar structure – the Conflict Earlywarning System and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) – with the help of the same American company that designed the ECOWARN system. Though ECOWARN is the most advanced earlywarning system on the continent, it still faces challenges of capacity, funds and sustainability. ECOWARN uses broad indicators and calls for an elaborate, well-funded and well-staffed structure. The system requires sustainable, long-term investment in human resources for the Observation and Monitoring Centre, particularly in its research and analytical capacity. There is an over-dependence on foreign support, and long-term sustainability will require more concerted financial and political ownership on the part of ECOWAS member states. Reports by the zonal bureaus reportedly informed the actions of ECOWAS policymakers during the elections in Togo in April 2005. Yet, the long-term effectiveness of ECOWARN will depend ultimately on its institutionalisation.

Experts have also noted that ECOWARN’s effectiveness is linked to the Mechanism’s other conflict management instruments. Without a consistent and legitimate response by other political institutions within ECOWAS, earlywarning can be perceived as irrelevant. The Council of Elders and the Executive Secretary’s Special Representatives should thus be strengthened and encouraged to co-ordinate their interventions with ECOWARN.

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Although the call for the establishment of an observation system was made in the revised ECOWAS treaty of 1993 as well as in the 1999 Protocol, it was not until 2003 that visible steps were taken to establish and implement ECOWARN. The reasons for this delay can be attributed to a reluctance on the part of governments and international organisations to invest in conflict prevention. Although many experts believe that the prevention of conflicts is more cost-effective than peacekeeping, most inter-governmental security organisations would rather commit funds to visible mechanisms than to what many regard as blunt tools like earlywarning systems. In fact, prevention is only less costly when it is responding to immediate “triggers” such as the instrumentalisation of religious or traditional institutions; fuel shortages; or ethnic-based clashes. “Accelerators” of conflict such as youth unemployment require more systematic long-term human security and development interventions, and these strategies need more resources and research information. While ECOWAS is fundamentally committed to economic development, its programmes and mechanisms for alleviating poverty and inequality in West Africa have not been fully understood as conflict prevention solutions. There is thus a disconnect between earlywarning, conflict prevention and development. ECOWAS should

undertake more comprehensive collaboration among its various departments in order to strengthen these links. For example, mainstreaming gender and using the gender indicators of ECOWARN for deeper analysis could bolster the work of ECOWAS' Gender Department and help to develop more useful conflict prevention and development interventions.

Furthermore, an effective earlywarning system is essentially an information system that can regularly monitor conflict trends at the national level and then promote regional solutions to prevent conflicts.²⁷ As inter-governmental organisations such as ECOWAS advance their integration agendas, it will be easier to envisage more collective ownership of instruments such as the earlywarning system that appear to place regional interests above national interests. Member states accord different levels of support to earlywarning. In the case of IGAD, its 2000 Protocol establishing CEWARN has not been ratified by all member states. One solution to strengthening the ownership by national governments of these systems could be to provide support to member states for critical, active and applied conflict monitoring and analysis. Additional strategies for bridging the gap between earlywarning and response should be developed. Policymakers are not yet attuned to responding regularly to conflict trends, and regular briefings by ECOWAS' earlywarning staff to the top policymaker within each of the organisation's organs and institutions should become a priority. Finally, it is important to note that earlywarning is not a panacea. Lessons of interventions in West Africa and beyond suggest that it is often political will – and not lack of information – that determines early responses to warnings.



TOP: Ambassador Lansana Kouyaté, former Executive Secretary, Economic Community of West African States, *left*; Dr Saran Daraba Kaba, former President of the Mano River Women's Peace Network, Conakry
ABOVE: Lieut-Colonel Daniel Ladzekpo, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja, *left*; Dr Bola Adetoun, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja
RIGHT: Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, *left*; Ms Zamzam Kasujja, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Addis Ababa

27 Ibid.

5. Peacekeeping: ECOWAS/UN Collaboration

The need for UN peacekeeping in Africa is clear: nearly half of the 50 UN peacekeeping missions in the post-Cold War era have been in Africa. The continent currently hosts the largest UN peacekeeping missions in the world — in the DRC; and the world body has established sub-regional offices in West Africa, the Great Lakes and central Africa, as well as peacebuilding offices in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and the Central African Republic (CAR).²⁸

In 2005, eight of the 17 UN peacekeeping missions in the world were in Africa (including in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire), and nearly 90 percent of its personnel were deployed on the continent.²⁹ The Ghanaian former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, set up a High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which submitted its report in December 2004.

In response to this report, Annan submitted his own report, *In Larger Freedom*, to the General Assembly in March 2005. Both reports called on donors to devise a 10-year capacity-building plan with the AU and advocated UN financial support for Africa's regional organisations.³⁰ This is particularly welcome in light of ECOWAS' interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the AU's peacekeeping difficulties in Sudan's Darfur region between 2004 and 2006, which led to calls for the UN to take over the mission. Africa must, however, remain vigilant to ensure that this capacity-building plan is implemented. At the same time, it is critical that African governments take their financial responsibilities seriously in support of their sub-regional organisations. In the case of ECOWAS, member states must honour their pledges to the ECOWAS Peace Fund in order to enable the organisation to confront the pressing challenges of peace and security in West Africa. The difficult experiences of regional peacekeepers in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire are all clear signs of the need for better-equipped and resourced UN peacekeepers to continue to contribute to efforts to maintain peace and security in Africa.

Few ECOWAS member states have the capacity to undertake strategic military deployments without external financial and logistical assistance. This lack of capacity is further compounded by a lack of a joint operational doctrine and structures within the ECOWAS secretariat in Abuja to manage peacekeeping operations. As a consequence, the UN took over ECOWAS missions in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire between 1999 and 2003, though many sub-regional peacekeepers were "rehattd" as Blue Helmets. "Rehatting" as a concept in international peacekeeping featured prominently in the UN's Brahimi report on peacekeeping of 2000, which formally recommended the need for, and use of, robust regional standby forces in accordance with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.³¹

28 See Adekeye Adebajo and Helen Scanlon (eds), *A Dialogue of the Deaf: Essays on Africa and the United Nations* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2006).

29 These missions were in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Sudan, Western Sahara, DRC, and Burundi.

30 See *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, Published by the United Nations Department of Public Information DPI/2367, December 2004; and *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights For All*, Report of the UN Secretary-General, Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, 21 March 2005, A/59/2005. See also *A More Secure Continent: African Perspectives on the UN High-Level Panel Report*, CCR and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Cape Town, South Africa, May 2005 (available at <http://www.ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za>; accessed 24 July 2006).

31 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, 21 August 2000, A/55/305 - S/2000/809.

Given past experiences of poorly-trained and logistically ill-equipped peacekeepers, steps are now being taken to address this problem through the establishment of an ECOWAS Standby Force, in order to avoid similar problems in the future. The objective is to have a well-trained, logistically equipped and credible force capable of meeting the challenges of peace support operations in West Africa. Training is categorised into individual, collective and specialised components, and takes place at three levels: strategic (to be carried out at the National War College in Nigeria); operational (to be carried out at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana); and tactical (to be carried out in Bamako, Mali).³² For these training activities to be effective, and in the interest of harmonisation, a training needs analysis is conducted periodically. In order to address the logistical inadequacy of past peacekeeping missions and to overcome future challenges, ECOWAS leaders decided to establish a logistics depot in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The facility is currently being developed with donor assistance from the US.³³

It is important that ECOWAS engages the UN Security Council on peacekeeping issues in order to ensure that meaningful solutions are found to the problems of insecurity in the sub-region.³⁴ The lessons of past tensions between ECOWAS and the UN during peacekeeping operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone should serve as a guide, and even a sober reminder, for future engagement and co-operation. An important step in this regard will be to ensure an effective, transparent and appropriate division of labour between the UN and African peacekeepers. The creation in Dakar, Senegal, in 2001 of the UN Office for West Africa, and the role of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, can precipitate more robust engagement between the UN and ECOWAS on conflict management issues. ECOWAS should also develop strategies for engaging other critical external actors including former colonial powers and historical allies – such as Britain in Sierra Leone, the US in Liberia, and France in Côte d'Ivoire – which have in various ways been influential in the multiple conflicts in West Africa in the past 20 years. Similar strategies of engagement should be developed to deal with emerging powers such as China and regional hegemons such as Nigeria.³⁵ Finally, ECOWAS must confront the problem of “spoilers” such as Liberia's Charles Taylor and Sierra Leone's Foday Sankoh in various peace processes.³⁶



From left: Honourable Abdoulaye Bathily, former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Senegal; Ambassador Lansana Kouyaté, former Executive Secretary, Economic Community of West African States; Honourable Elizabeth Alpha-Lavalie, House of Representatives, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

32 Lieut-Colonel Daniel Ladzepko, “Peacekeeping: ECOWAS/UN Collaboration – A Military Perspective”, Presentation at the CCR/ECOWAS/UNOWA seminar, *ECOWAS’ Evolving Security Architecture*, Accra, Ghana, 30 and 31 October 2006.

33 Ibid.

34 Adekeye Adebajo, “Peacekeeping: ECOWAS/UN Collaboration, A Civilian Perspective”, Presentation at the CCR/ECOWAS/UNOWA policy seminar, *ECOWAS’ Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future*, Accra, Ghana, 30 and 31 October 2006.

35 See James Jonah, “The United Nations”, in Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa’s Security Challenges*, pp.319-347.

36 Ibid.

6. Peacebuilding: ECOWAS and the UN Peacebuilding Commission

In December 2005, the UN Security Council and General Assembly adopted joint resolutions establishing the UN Peacebuilding Commission.³⁷

The General Assembly Resolution establishing the Commission emphasises that “the Commission shall where appropriate, work in close consultation with regional and sub-regional organisations to ensure their involvement in peacebuilding processes in accordance with Chapter VIII of the [UN] Charter”.³⁸ The details of this collaboration and co-operation are yet to be agreed upon. The Commission is backed by a Peacebuilding Support Office and “a multi-year standing Peacebuilding Fund” which marks a new level of strategic commitment to enhancing and sustaining peace after conflict.³⁹ The core work of the Commission will be its country-specific activities. At the national level, a Peacebuilding Support Office will prepare the substantive inputs for meetings of the Commission through analysis and information gathering. Predictable and reliable funding will need to be identified for short-term early recovery activities as well as financial investment for development over the medium to longer-term period of recovery. The Peacebuilding Fund is therefore tasked with ensuring the provision of these resources.

The permanent Organisational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission has 31 members and its decision-making process will be based on consensus. The UN Security Council is represented by seven members, including its permanent five members – America, Russia, Britain, France and China – and two selected by the Council, while seven members represent the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Membership also includes the five top contributors of UN peacekeeping funds and the five top contributors of peacekeeping troops to the UN.⁴⁰ The Commission will primarily focus on assisting post-conflict societies as they make the transition from war to peace. Sierra Leone and Burundi are the first two countries on which the Commission is focusing its work. In order to support these efforts, the Commission is assisted by the Peacebuilding Support Office, which is staffed by qualified experts in the field of peacebuilding. In this regard, lessons from the UN’s Peacebuilding Support Offices in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and CAR, as well as ECOWAS/UN experiences with post-conflict reconstruction, should prove useful to the new Commission. The challenge, as with all cases of institution-building, will be to convert rhetoric into reality.

The concept of peacebuilding itself can be traced back to Egyptian former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s *An Agenda for Peace*, published in 1992. The concept was designed to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to dealing with challenges of international peace and to encompass the pre- and post-conflict phases of crises. However, at the time of the publication of *An Agenda for Peace*, powerful members of the UN Security Council were reluctant to embrace the idea of peacebuilding, particularly after debacles in

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ The Peacebuilding Commission, UN General Assembly, A/60/L.40, New York: United Nations, 20 December 2005; *In Larger Freedom*, UN document A/59/2005, 21 March 2005, and *Outcome Document*, UN General Assembly, 14 September 2005.

³⁹ The Peacebuilding Commission, UN General Assembly, operating paragraph II, p3.

⁴⁰ Members of the committee are: Tanzania, Angola, Nigeria, Ghana, Burundi, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, China, Denmark, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States, Belgium, Brazil, Indonesia, Poland, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Germany, Italy, Japan, Chile, El Salvador, Jamaica, Fiji, Croatia, Netherlands and Norway.

The African Union is developing an African Framework on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), the main objective of which is to improve timeliness, effectiveness and co-ordination in post-conflict countries and lay the foundations for social justice and sustainable peace. Among other goals, this framework aims to serve as a tool for consolidating peace and preventing a relapse to violence; address root causes of conflicts; encourage fast-track planning and implementation of reconstruction activities; and enhance complementarity and co-ordination between and among diverse actors engaged in post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa.

Somalia (1993) and Rwanda (1994). Importantly, even though the Commission has now been established, and the significance of peacebuilding to conflict management efforts is widely acknowledged, the Commission is effectively only an advisory group that cannot take executive decisions. Moreover, the question of ownership and control of peacebuilding processes will be critical as the Commission evolves. During the course of the preliminary discussions which set out the parameters for the Commission's mandate and operations, the imbalance between benefactors and recipients became apparent. Donor countries may have more control and influence over the Commission's agenda, yet the bulk of the Commission's work will take place in Africa. African governments and civil society actors should, however, view the Commission as an opportunity to identify Africa's concrete interests and take strategic measures that will enhance peacebuilding on the continent.⁴¹ African actors must further undertake efforts to build effective partnerships between the Peacebuilding Commission and other inter-governmental organisations such as ECOWAS, as envisaged under UN General Assembly Resolution 60/180 of December 2005.⁴²

The African Union is also developing an African Framework on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), the main objective of which is to improve timeliness, effectiveness and co-ordination in post-conflict countries and lay the foundations for social justice and sustainable peace.⁴³ Among other goals, this framework aims to serve as a tool for consolidating peace and preventing a relapse to violence; address root causes of conflicts; encourage fast-track planning and implementation of reconstruction activities; and enhance complementarity and co-ordination between and among diverse actors engaged in post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa.⁴⁴ Within ECOWAS, the legal and political framework for peacebuilding is embedded in both the 1999 Security Protocol and Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001. Chapter IX of the ECOWAS Mechanism explicitly deals with peacebuilding. The effective operationalisation of these normative principles will, however, depend on developing successful strategies for synergy between ECOWAS, the African Union's PCRD and the work of the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

41 *African Perspectives on the UN Peacebuilding Commission*, CCR and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Maputo, Mozambique, August 2005 (available at <http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za>; accessed 16 February 2007).

42 Said Adejumobi, "Peacebuilding in Africa: An ECOWAS Perspective," Presentation at the CCR/ECOWAS/UNOWA policy seminar, *ECOWAS' Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future*, Accra, Ghana, 30 and 31 October 2006.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

7. Elections and Democratic Transitions

In an attempt to address the root causes of conflict in West Africa and to strengthen the 1999 Mechanism, ECOWAS adopted a Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001. The long-term goal of the protocol is to foster participatory democracy; “good” governance; respect for the rule of law; and the protection of human rights in West Africa.

In addition to its commitment to democratic governance, ECOWAS is also the lead sub-regional implementer of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) of 2001. Seven countries in West Africa – Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone – have acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process under NEPAD. Ghana was one of the first African countries to be reviewed in 2004, and the report from this review has been finalised.⁴⁵ The leaders of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade (who withdrew in March 2007), were also founding members of the NEPAD implementation committee.

Recent democratic transitions in West Africa signal new challenges for ECOWAS in the area of governance.⁴⁶ In 2004, the collective response of ECOWAS member states to Togo’s governance crisis resulted in elections, though only after a tense and fragile transition. Despite Liberia’s widely celebrated election in 2005, the country’s transition to peaceful democratic rule remains difficult. The security situation in Liberia remains fragile. Elements of the former Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) complained about their disarmament packages, as did irregular militias who staged protests in Monrovia in October 2005. Plans for restructuring a new Liberian army have also proceeded slowly and there was a \$3 million shortfall for security sector reform in December 2005, raising fears of future insecurity.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, former Liberian president and warlord Charles Taylor was extradited to The Hague to face a trial on war crimes in 2006. Finally, following elections in Gambia and



ABOVE: Mr Mashood Issaka, International Peace Academy, New York

LEFT: Mr Anatole Ayissi, United Nations Office for West Africa, Dakar, left; Mr Prosper Addo, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra

45 Ayesha Kajee, “NEPAD’s APRM: A Progress Report, Practical Limitations and Challenges”, in *South African Yearbook of International Affairs* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2004).

46 See *Life After State House: Addressing Unconstitutional Changes in West Africa*, United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), Issue Paper, March 2006.

47 This information on Liberia has drawn on the Ninth Progress Report of the UN Secretary-General on the UN Mission in Liberia. S/2005/764, 7 December 2005.

Senegal by March 2007, polls were scheduled for 2007 in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, but instability in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, as well as the fragile situation in Liberia, could still threaten West Africa's new-found peace.

The flux of change in West Africa will require a more timely and efficient response from ECOWAS in the areas of elections and governance. Already, ECOWAS has been involved in helping Liberia to devise institutional transformation and to investigate fraud and corruption charges levelled against the transitional administration between 2003 and 2005.⁴⁸ ECOWAS' electoral capacity will need to be further strengthened. In May 2005, ECOWAS, UNOWA, and the EU agreed to provide the sub-regional body's Electoral Assistance and Observation Unit with technical assistance for this purpose.⁴⁹

Elections are an essential but insufficient condition for peaceful democratic transitions. The factors leading to the consolidation of democracy in post-conflict states in West Africa require more conceptual clarity. Elections are critically important, but are fundamentally merely procedural aspects of an overall process. The 2005 elections in Liberia, for example, could signal the beginning of national sovereignty for this formerly war-torn country which has experienced only a few years of calm since a civil war erupted in 1989. However, Liberia's fragile peace will only be strengthened by a process that consolidates the roles of various public and private institutions and actors, while encouraging collaboration among key players during the democratic transition of the country's post-conflict phase. Similarly, the upcoming elections in Sierra Leone in 2007 will be a benchmark of that country's transition from conflict to peace, but will not provide an ultimate solution for pre-empting a return to instability. Finally, the role of the military in either supporting or hindering peaceful democratic consolidation in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, will continue to be critical.

Successful democratic transitions depend to a large extent on whether certain underlying factors that transcend elections – such as the socio-economic and political root causes of conflicts, as well as evolving notions of citizenship and identity – have been effectively addressed. For example, high levels of illiteracy – a socio-economic challenge – can preclude the ability of the body politic to choose informed and effective democratic leaders. Members of post-conflict societies are also often traumatised by the scale and severity of violent conflicts, and are thus ambivalent about their roles and responsibilities as citizens. The complex nature of citizenship and ethnicity in this context can influence and affect post-conflict nation-building. Furthermore, West Africa has often imported European models of democracy without considering their relevance to each country's specific environment. A considered and deliberative process of determining the most conducive system of representation has not yet been undertaken in the drafting of most of the constitutions in West Africa.

Intellectuals and the knowledge-production sector have a critical role to play in democratic transitions in West Africa. Essentially, a definition of the knowledge-production sector would imply that this grouping comprises institutions of higher learning such as universities and think-tanks. It can, however, also include communities at the grassroots level, such as the media, professional associations, traditional leaders or women's groups. This sector should be expanded beyond "centres of excellence", and incorporate broader views that can feed into ECOWAS' conflict management efforts.

48 IPA, *Appraising Efforts*, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and ECOWAS, p.5.

49 ECOWAS, the European Union, and UNOWA, 'ECOWAS-EU-UNOWA Framework of Action for Peace and Security', Statement published by UNOWA, May 2005.

NGOs in West Africa can add important value to democratic consolidation in many ways. Institutional actors such as universities and think-tanks, for example, can provide historical perspectives on previous political transitions in the sub-region, and provide technical support to policymakers on a range of issues. ECOWAS has recently announced the availability of research fellowships in migration studies and trade negotiations as a means for the sub-region's intellectuals to contribute to the organisation's work. Community-based groups can also enhance ECOWAS' understanding of local dynamics in areas such as gender; governance; reconciliation; justice; and social development by sharing their experiences with the sub-regional body. The knowledge-production sector can contribute to democratic practice, peacebuilding and development, as well as provide civic education that addresses the rights, procedures, privileges, and responsibilities of democracy. These actors should proactively claim their spaces and engage with the sub-region's transitions from conflict to peace and democratic consolidation. Finally, West Africa has a history of intellectuals both supporting and opposing authoritarianism. The intellectual community is heterogeneous and can drive change as well as sustain the status quo. Recent developments in West Africa suggest that civil society and the knowledge-production sector are making a positive contribution to peacemaking efforts.



From left: Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, United Nations Office for West Africa, Dakar; Ambassador James Jonah, former UN Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs, New York; Ambassador Lansana Kouyaté, Economic Community of West African States; Mr Roger Maconick, Independent Consultant, New York

8. HIV/AIDS and Security

With the end of the Cold War, new security concepts such as “human security” have emerged which seek to address the sources of conflicts and insecurity across sectors. The AU’s African Common Defence Pact of 2004 defines human security as social, political, economic, military, and cultural conditions that protect and promote human life and dignity.⁵⁰

Africa’s human security frameworks have thus been defined, revised and articulated by a number of state as well as civil society actors within this new paradigm. The establishment of new security mechanisms and the advent of new actors coincide with an era in which three major diseases – HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis – are wreaking havoc in societies across sub-Saharan Africa. HIV/AIDS was not mentioned in ECOWAS’ security protocol of 1999. With plans to establish an ECOWAS brigade for an African Standby Force by 2010, it is important that sub-regional leaders devote sufficient attention to this important issue. While significant strides have been made in defining the ECOWAS Standby Force’s doctrine and operating procedures, and steps to equip and train future ECOMOG troops have been taken, the organisation must still systematically address the interaction between HIV/AIDS and its future peacekeeping operations.

The issue of HIV/AIDS was not included in ECOWAS’ security protocol of 1999. Without consistent interventions, the sub-region’s HIV infection rates could increase dramatically.

The highest HIV rates are in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, and Nigeria, all of which have highly mobile populations. The mobility of these populations is a particular concern: mobile populations have fuelled the southern African AIDS epidemic, and it remains uncertain how to contain HIV within this context. Evidence in Nigeria – Africa’s most populous state of 130 million people – suggests that experts must view HIV/AIDS as more than just one epidemic. In 2003, HIV prevalence ranged from 23 percent in south-west Nigeria to 12 percent in Cross Rivers state.⁵¹ Diverse socio-economic profiles suggest that there are, indeed, various HIV epidemics in West Africa, with varying levels of prevalence, incidence, and impact. Moreover, illness and death due to transmissible diseases such as HIV/AIDS in West Africa are exacerbated by drug-resistant tuberculosis. The sub-region is also plagued by inadequate health infrastructure for care and treatment; a human resources deficit in the health sector; and a poor supply of medicine to health services. Studies in West Africa have shown that HIV/AIDS is a leading cause of death in the defence sector.⁵² Without adequate, timely and consistent interventions, the sub-region’s HIV rates could increase dramatically. An additional concern has been the

50 See *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century*, The Human Security Centre and the Liu Institute for Global Issues, University of British Columbia (London and Vancouver: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.VIII; and AU, Draft Text of the Common African Defence and Security Policy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 20 and 21 January 2004, adopted at the AU Heads of State and Government Summit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 7 – 9 July 2004, as cited in Jakkie Cilliers, *Human Security in Africa: A Conceptual Framework for Review*, African Human Security Initiative, 2004.

51 *AIDS Epidemic Update*, December 2004. A report published by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNAIDS/04.45E, December 2004, p.28.

52 Ugboaga Nwokoji and Ademola Ajuwon, cited by Jane Ansah, “HIV/AIDS and Security: A Practitioner’s Perspective”, Presentation at the CCR/ECOWAS/UNOWA policy seminar, *ECOWAS’ Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future*, Accra, Ghana, 30 and 31 October 2006. See also Ugboaga Nwokoji and Ademola Ajuwon, “Knowledge of AIDS and HIV Risk-related Sexual Behavior Among Nigerian Naval Personnel”, *Biomedical Central Public Health*, 2004 (available at <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/4/24> ; accessed 16 February 2007).

The impact of the epidemic on military health structures include:

1. An increased number of consultations;
2. A higher incidence of tuberculosis and opportunistic infections;
3. Compromised care for other diseases; and
4. Overworked medical personnel.

Increasingly, the social impact of HIV/AIDS within the security sector is mirroring broader societal impacts, with an increase in the number of orphans and widows dependent on military personnel.

vulnerability of peacekeepers to HIV within conflict zones and the risk of these troops spreading the virus among civilian populations at home and abroad.⁵³ Nigerian peacekeepers returning from the ECOMOG peacekeeping mission in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the 1990s had nearly twice as high infection rates as non-peacekeepers. The Lagos-based Medical Command School Headquarters found that the overall HIV prevalence rates among Nigerian troops had increased dramatically during the period of the ECOMOG interventions. In 1989, HIV prevalence in the Nigerian army was less than one percent. By 1997, prevalence had climbed to an estimated five percent and by 1999, to approximately 10 percent. Moreover, the risk of HIV infection increased dramatically for each year spent on deployment in these conflict zones. After one year of deployment, the average risk of infection rose to seven percent.⁵⁴ Within three years of service, the risk of HIV infection for the average soldier had increased to 15 percent. A key lesson from this experience is that peacekeepers should be allowed to return home to their families at least once every six months. During the ECOMOG interventions of the 1990s, this was not always the case. ECOWAS has since revised its operating procedures to ensure that troop rotation occurs on a regular, six-month basis. Troop-contributing countries of the ECOWAS standby brigade and future peacekeeping operations must stringently enforce this measure.

Illness and death of security personnel such as soldiers could result in operational inefficiency. Within West Africa's military establishments, the impact of HIV/AIDS has been noted in the health, social, economic, and sectoral spheres. The impact of the epidemic on military health structures include: an increased number of consultations; a higher incidence of tuberculosis and opportunistic infections; compromised care for other diseases; and overworked medical personnel. Increasingly, the social impact of HIV/AIDS within the security sector is mirroring broader societal impacts, with an increase in the number of orphans and widows dependent on military personnel. The economic impact of HIV/AIDS is also becoming more apparent, as soldiers of all ranks are unable to maintain the cost of HIV treatment or to provide care to orphans and widows. Finally, the functionality of West African armies is undermined by HIV/AIDS in cases where prolonged absences and loss of experienced officers and trained professionals reduce the efficiency of military divisions. Many observers have argued that the problem of HIV/AIDS – with its demands for labour-intensive palliative care and a lifetime provision of anti-retroviral therapy (ARVs) – presents novel, and as yet unexamined, challenges for the management of human and financial resources in national militaries. While various West African militaries have established HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programmes, ECOWAS has not fully implemented a

53 See *HIV/AIDS and Militaries in Southern Africa*, Windhoek, Namibia, 9 and 10 February 2006; and *HIV/AIDS and Human Security: An Agenda for Africa*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9 and 10 September 2005. Both reports published by the Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town (available at <http://ccrweb.ccruct.ac.za>; accessed 17 July 2006).

54 A. Adefolalu, 'AIDS in the Military', presented at the Third All African Congress of Armed Forces and Police Medical Services, Pretoria, South Africa, 1999, cited in Ernest Ekong, 'HIV/AIDS and the Military', *AIDS in Nigeria: A Nation on the Threshold*, Harvard University, (available at: <http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:SbbqnwPJBMJ:www.apin.harvard.edu/Chapter24.pdf+Adefolalu+A.+AIDS+in+the+military&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=za>; accessed 9 March 2007).

comprehensive approach for mitigating the impact of the pandemic on its evolving security architecture. The Burkina Faso-based West African Health Organisation (WAHO) – an agency of ECOWAS – designed a Plan of Action for 2004-2006 for the control of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS in the armed forces sector of ECOWAS member states. Partly due to a notable increase in the cases of HIV/AIDS among militaries returning from peacekeeping missions, the plan seeks to harmonise the preparation of troops for future multilateral operations.⁵⁵

The ECOWAS plan has six key areas of focus:

1. Adapting an institutional framework within the defence sector of ECOWAS states;
2. Preventing the spread of HIV within the armed forces on mission and among new recruits;
3. Enhancing the availability of care and counselling;
4. Promoting financial support to those in need;
5. Institutionalising a common training curriculum; and
6. Strengthening regional advocacy by decision-makers.

This plan faces three specific challenges:

- First, the HIV/AIDS and defence sector plan requires numerous training and information-sharing exercises in order to strengthen the control of HIV/AIDS across the sub-region. This will require new capacities and skills;
- Second, the plan calls for regional support by key policymakers and political advocacy on HIV/AIDS management and mitigation among West African armed forces. A central challenge will thus be how to generate long-term ownership and the political capital to bring this issue to the attention of a broader constituency than just health officials at the West African Health Organisation; and
- Third, the perennial challenge of generating sustainable and reliable resources for HIV/AIDS in the military sector remains critical.

The ECOWAS HIV/AIDS plan's overall budget for 2004-2006 was \$4 310 000.⁵⁶ WAHO sought to mobilise these funds from the Geneva-based Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as well as the US government.⁵⁷ Although the period of its implementation has come to an end, ongoing efforts on the part of national military establishments and WAHO will continue. Monitoring and evaluating the plan's existing record of implementation should also help to identify areas for future resource mobilisation. Without increased ownership from West African governments – demonstrated by paltry financing of these initiatives – the sub-regional strategy for controlling HIV/AIDS within West Africa's armies will be difficult to implement in the long run.

Despite having the most experience in peacekeeping and an HIV/AIDS plan for its standby brigade, ECOWAS has not yet fully shared its HIV/AIDS and defence forces plan with parallel efforts by African institutions and civil society actors. ECOWAS should contribute meaningfully to the development of complementary plans in east, southern, central and north Africa, and provide substantial lessons to regional economic communities such as IGAD, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Arab Maghreb Union in their efforts to build standby brigades for the ASF. This is an urgent task, particularly since the AU has already started the process of conceptualising a military health doctrine for the ASF to be established by 2010.

55 *Plan of Action (2004 – 2006) of STI/HIV/AIDS Control in the Armed Forces Sector of the Member States of ECOWAS*, The West African Health Organisation, Ougadougou, Burkina Faso, April 2002.

56 *Plan of Action (2004 – 2006) of STI/HIV/AIDS Control in the Armed Forces Sector of the Member States of ECOWAS*.

57 *Ibid.*

9. Conclusion: The Way Forward

The establishment by ECOWAS of institutions to carry out mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding will depend for their success on their ability to increase capacity; establish rapid-reaction multifunctional peacekeeping forces; and work effectively with West African civil society actors, the AU and the UN.

However, as ECOWAS' security architecture evolves, the organisation will continue to be confronted with conflict management challenges that span the areas of governance (elections and democratic transitions); development (gender inequality and HIV/AIDS); as well as security sector reform and post-conflict peacebuilding. Meeting these challenges effectively could largely determine whether West Africa is at peace or at war in a new millennium.



ABOVE: Participants of the two-day policy seminar, "ECOWAS' Evolving Security Architecture: Looking Back to the Future", held at the La Palm Hotel, Accra, Ghana, on 30 and 31 October 2006

FAR LEFT: Dr Said Adejumobi, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja, Left; Professor Bayo Adekanye, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja

LEFT: Seminar participants at the conference venue, La Palm Hotel in Accra, Ghana

10. Policy Recommendations

The discussions at the Accra seminar resulted in policy recommendations in four key areas:

1. Enhancing ECOWAS' collaboration with the UN, the AU and the international community;
2. Ensuring peaceful transitions in political governance;
3. Integrating human security as a central component of addressing conflict; and
4. Mobilising sustainable human and financial resources in support of ECOWAS' activities and initiatives.

10.1 Enhancing ECOWAS' Collaboration with the UN, the AU and the International Community

- The UN Office for West Africa must precipitate more robust engagement between the UN and ECOWAS on conflict management issues through more regular interaction and help to streamline an effective, transparent and appropriate division of labour between the UN and ECOWAS peacekeepers;
- ECOWAS member states must also take concrete measures, such as accelerating the establishment of the sub-regional brigade of the African Standby Force, to support the UN's efforts to devise a 10-year peacekeeping capacity-building plan with the AU, which should be extended to sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS;
- Lessons from the UN's Peacebuilding Support Offices in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and CAR, as well as ECOWAS/UN experiences with post-conflict reconstruction, should be examined in order to provide useful lessons to the new UN Peacebuilding Commission;
- ECOWAS should share its Plan of Action for 2004-2006 for the control of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS in the armed forces sector with parallel efforts by other institutions such as the AU, regional economic communities (RECs) such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); and the UN; and
- The lessons from past ECOMOG interventions suggest that defence forces are uniquely vulnerable to HIV/AIDS due to prolonged deployment in difficult, stressful and often lonely environments. In order to control the likelihood of increased risk to HIV infection, ECOWAS' troop-contributing countries in future peacekeeping operations must ensure that troop rotation occurs every six months.

10.2 Ensuring Peaceful Transitions in Political Governance

- It is important to implement measures like the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001 and the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) Algiers Decision Against Unconstitutional Changes of Government of 1999 so that African leaders resist the temptation to amend national constitutions in order to stay in power. This may require providing incentives for good leadership without compromising principles of accountability;
- Governments and civil society groups in West Africa should undertake a deliberative process on constitutionalism and systems of democratic representation. The knowledge-production sector in the sub-region should be harnessed to provide civic education which addresses the rights, procedures,

privileges and responsibilities of democracy to parliamentarians, local government leaders, and the electorate; and

- In order to be effective, sanctions against errant leaders need to be well-targeted; supported by all major external actors through the UN; and designed and implemented to punish failing leaders rather than their citizens.

10.3 Integrating Human Security as a Central Component of Addressing Conflict

- ECOWARN's earlywarning reports are based on human security indicators and can thus provide a useful source of information on security as well as governance and development in West Africa. As a priority, regular briefings based on these reports should be made to the top policymaker in each of ECOWAS' organs and institutions;
- The ECOWAS secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria, should undertake more comprehensive collaboration between its various departments and civil society. Where appropriate, earlywarning reports could be shared with the media. The gender indicators of ECOWAS' earlywarning system should also be used by the secretariat's Department of Gender to mainstream issues of conflict prevention into ECOWAS' gender equality programmes and initiatives; and
- The crisis of a bulging and marginalised population of children and youth is prevalent across West Africa. Conflict management strategies must take into account the link between conflict and the alienation of young people in the sub-region who have no access to education and employment.

10.4 Mobilising Sustainable Human and Financial Resources in Support of ECOWAS' Activities

- The capacity of the ECOWAS Council of Elders has been under-utilised. The knowledge-production sector and other NGOs in West Africa should facilitate regular training, interaction and information-sharing among the members of the Council of Elders;
- ECOWAS member states have imposed a 0.5 percent tax on all imports from non-ECOWAS countries. This is the community levy, which is expected to be used to provide internal financing for ECOWAS' activities and fill the gap in arrears in assessed contributions. While the community levy is useful for the functioning of ECOWAS' security and governance institutions, the implementation of the provisions of the Mechanism will require additional resources and greater financial commitment by member states;
- West African governments must honour their pledges to the ECOWAS Peace Fund by mustering the political will to pay their dues consistently in order to enable the organisation to confront the pressing challenges of peace and security in the sub-region; and
- West Africa still has abundant natural resources, including diamonds, gold, iron ore and oil, which the sub-region must use to reduce its dependence on external support to finance its peace and security efforts in the long term.

Annex I

Agenda

Day One Monday 30 October 2006

9h00 – 10h30 **Session I: Setting the Scene: West Africa's Evolving Security Architecture**

Chair: Dr Adekeye Adebajo, Executive Director, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

Dr Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja, "The ECOWAS Security Mechanism: Progress and Prospects"

Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, Dakar, "The UN Office in West Africa: Strengthening the ECOWAS Mechanism"

10h30 – 10h45 Coffee Break

10h45 – 11h30 Question and Answer Session

11h30 – 13h15 **Session II: Mediation: The Council of Elders**

Chair: Ambassador Lansana Kouyaté, Former Executive Secretary, Economic Community of West African States

Honourable Elisabeth Alpha-Lavalie, Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Sierra Leone; Member of the Economic Community of West African States Council of Elders, Freetown, "An Insider's Perspective"

Honourable Abdoulaye Bathily, Former Deputy Speaker of Senegal's National Assembly, Dakar, "Looking Inside From the Outside"

13h15 – 14h15 Lunch

14h15 – 16h00 **Session III: Peacebuilding: ECOWAS and the UN Peacebuilding Commission**

Chair: Dr Martin Uhomoibhi, Nigerian Foreign Ministry, Abuja

Dr Said Adejumobi, ECOWAS, Abuja, "An ECOWAS Perspective"

Ambassador James Jonah, Former UN Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs, New York, "A UN Perspective"

16h00 – 16h15 Coffee Break

16h15 – 17h45 Session IV: Peacekeeping: ECOWAS/UN Collaboration

Chair: Professor Bayo Adekanye, Co-ordinator Policy Analysis and Strategic Planning Unit, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja

Lieut-Colonel Daniel Ladzekpo, Programme Officer, Defence and Security Department, ECOWAS, Abuja, “A Military Perspective”

Dr Adekeye Adebajo, Executive Director, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, “A Civilian Perspective”

19h30 Dinner Address

Chair: Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, Dakar

Ambassador Lansana Kouyaté, Former Executive Secretary, Economic Community of West African States, “The ECOWAS Security Mechanism: Progress and Prospects”

Day Two Tuesday 31 October 2006

09h00 – 10h30 Session V: The ECOWAS Earlywarning System

Chair: General Francis Agymfra (Ret), Former Chief of Army Staff, Ghana Defence Force, Accra

Colonel Yoro Kone, Director of Observation and Monitoring Centre, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja, “Conflict Prevention and Earlywarning in West Africa: An ECOWAS Perspective”

Ms Thelma Ekiyor, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, “ECOWAS’ Earlywarning System: A Civil Society Perspective”

10h30 – 10h45 Coffee Break

10h45 – 12h15 Session VI: Elections and Democratic Transitions

Chair: Honourable Elisabeth Alpha-Lavalie, Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Sierra Leone, and Member of the Economic Community of West African States Council of Elders, Freetown

Dr Sarah Daraba Kaba, Former President of the Mano River Women's Peace Network, Guinea, "Democratic Transitions in West Africa"

Dr Yao Gebe, Senior Research Fellow, University of Ghana, Accra, "Democratic Consolidation in West Africa: What Role for the Knowledge Sector?"

12h15 – 13h15 Lunch

13h15 – 14h45 Session VII: HIV/AIDS and Security

Chair: Dr Bola Adetoun, Head, Gender Division, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja

Dr Jane Ansah, Ghana Defence Force, Accra, "A Practitioner's Perspective"

Ms Angela Ndinga-Muvumba, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, "A Civil Society Perspective"

14h45 – 15h00 Coffee Break

15h00 – 15h45 Session VIII: Life After State House: Addressing Unconstitutional Changes of Power in West Africa

Launch of a UNOWA Report

Chair: Ambassador Lansana Kouyaté, Former Executive Secretary, Economic Community of West African States

Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, Dakar

16h00 – 17h00 Session IX: The Way Forward

Rapporteurs Report

Chair: Dr Abdel Fatau-Musah, Conflict Prevention Adviser, Economic Community of West African States, Abuja

Dr Abdul Lamin, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Ms Angela Ndinga-Muvumba, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town

Annex II

List of Participants

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Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping
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Accra, Ghana
2. Dr Adekeye Adebajo
Centre for Conflict Resolution
Cape Town, South Africa
3. Dr Said Adejumobi
Economic Community of West African States
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4. Professor Bayo Adekanye
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5. Dr Bola Adetoun
Economic Community of West African States
Abuja, Nigeria
6. Gen Francis Agymfra (Ret)
Former Chief of Army Staff of the Ghana
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7. Honourable Elisabeth Alpha-Lavalie
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8. Dr Jane Ansah
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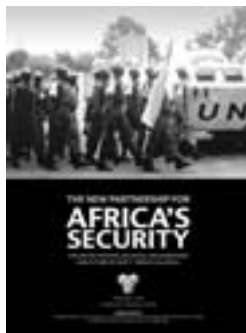
Annex III

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Title
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ARVs	Anti-retrovirals
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CCR	Centre for Conflict Resolution
CEWARN	Conflict Earlywarning and Response Mechanism
DOPHA	Department of Operations, Peacekeeping, and Humanitarian Affairs
DPAS	Department of Political Affairs and Security
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Conflict Earlywarning and Response Mechanism
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PCRD	African Framework on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SADC	Southern African Development Community
STIs	Sexually-transmitted infections
The Mechanism	1999 ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security
UN	United Nations
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNOWA	United Nations Office in West Africa
US	United States
WAHO	West African Health Organisation
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

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The role that South Africa has played on the African continent and the challenges that persist in South Africa's domestic transformation 10 years into democracy were assessed at this meeting in Stellenbosch, Cape Town, from 29 July - 1 August 2004.



VOLUME 6 HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN SECURITY:

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The links between human security and the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa, and the potential role of African leadership and the African Union in addressing this crisis were analysed at this policy advisory group meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 9 and 10 September 2005.



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The state of governance and security in Africa under the AU and NEPAD were analysed and assessed at this policy advisory group meeting in Misty Hills, Johannesburg, on 11 and 12 December 2004.



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This seminar in Cape Town from 20 - 22 August 2005 made policy recommendations on how the AU's institutions, including NEPAD, could achieve their aims and objectives.



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A MORE SECURE WORLD: OUR SHARED
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African perspectives on the United Nations' (UN) High-Level Panel report on Threats, Challenges and Change were considered at this policy advisory group meeting in Somerset West, Cape Town, on 23 and 24 April 2005.



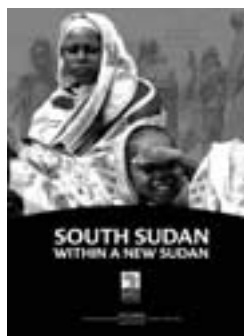
VOLUME 8 THE PEACEBUILDING ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

This meeting, held in Maseru, Lesotho, on 14 and 15 October 2005, explores civil society's role in relation to southern Africa, democratic governance, its nexus with government, and draws on comparative experiences in peacebuilding.



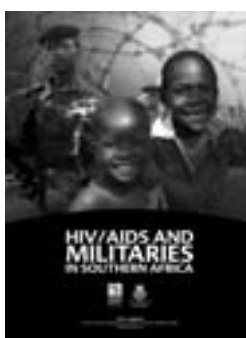
VOLUME 9 WOMEN AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA

This meeting, held in Cape Town on 27 and 28 October 2005, reviewed the progress of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peacebuilding in Africa in the five years since its adoption by the United Nations in 2000.



VOLUME 13 SOUTH SUDAN WITHIN A NEW SUDAN

This policy advisory group seminar on 20 and 21 April 2006 in Franschhoek, Western Cape, assessed the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in January 2005 by the Government of the Republic of the Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM/A).



VOLUME 10 HIV/AIDS AND MILITARIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

This two-day policy advisory group seminar in Windhoek, Namibia, on 9 and 10 February 2006 examined issues of HIV/AIDS and militaries in southern Africa.



VOLUME 14 AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE UN PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

This meeting, in Maputo, Mozambique, on 3 and 4 August 2006, analysed the relevance for Africa of the creation, in December 2005, of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, and examined how countries emerging from conflict could benefit from its establishment.



VOLUME 11 AIDS AND SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

This policy and research seminar, held in Cape Town on 27 and 28 March 2006, developed and disseminated new knowledge on the impact of HIV/AIDS in South Africa in the three key areas of: democratic practice; sustainable development; and peace and security.



VOLUME 15 THE PEACEBUILDING ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN CENTRAL AFRICA

This sub-regional seminar, held from 10 to 12 April 2006 in Douala, Cameroon, provided an opportunity for civil society actors, representatives of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the United Nations (UN) and other relevant players to analyse and understand the causes and consequences of conflict in central Africa.



VOLUME 12 HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

This two-day policy seminar on 26 and 27 June 2006 took place in Cape Town and examined the scope and response to HIV/AIDS in South Africa and southern Africa from a human security perspective.



VOLUME 16 UNITED NATIONS MEDIATION EXPERIENCE IN AFRICA

This seminar, held in Cape Town on 16 and 17 October 2006, sought to draw out key lessons from mediation and conflict resolution experiences in Africa, and to identify gaps in mediation support while exploring how best to fill them. It was the first regional consultation on the United Nations' newly-established Mediation Support Unit (MSU).

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As the security architecture of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) evolves, the organisation will continue to be confronted with conflict management challenges that span the areas of:

- Governance (elections and democratic transitions);
- Development (gender inequality and HIV/AIDS); and
- Security sector reform and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Meeting these challenges effectively could largely determine whether West Africa is at peace or at war in the new millennium. This seminar report captures the essence of the current debate surrounding these pressing concerns.



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