Resolving West African Conflicts

*Early Warning - Early Response*

Proceedings of the Centre for Democracy and Development &
The West African Civil Society Forum
Consultation on Early Warning and Early Response
Programme for West Africa

Jibrin Ibrahim and Oumar Ndongo (Editors)

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Finally, this book could not have materialised without the openness of the Department of Early Warning at ECOWAS Commission that saw the involvement of civil society as complementary to its actions and plans.

Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim
Director,
CDD – West Africa

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WACSOF
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<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>CDD</td>
<td>Centre for Democracy and Development</td>
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<td>WACSI</td>
<td>West African Civil Society Institute</td>
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<td>ASSN</td>
<td>African Security Sector Network</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
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<td>WANEP</td>
<td>West African Network for Peacebuilding</td>
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<td>ECOMOG</td>
<td>ECOWAS Monitoring Group</td>
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<td>ECOWARN</td>
<td>ECOWAS Early Warning System</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDCI</td>
<td>Parti democratique de la Cote d’Ivoire</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>KAIPTC</td>
<td>Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre</td>
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<td>FPI</td>
<td>Front Populaire Ivoirien</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>RDR</td>
<td>Rassemblement des republicains</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPCI</td>
<td>Mouvement Partriotique pour la Cote d’Ivoire</td>
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<td>MJP</td>
<td>Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix</td>
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<td>MPIGO</td>
<td>Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>UN High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>SCR</td>
<td>Security Council Resolution</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>UNOIC</td>
<td>United Nations Office in Cote d’Ivoire</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>UK Department For International Development</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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<td>SGPIC</td>
<td>Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat</td>
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<td>IANSA</td>
<td>International Action Network for Small Arms</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>FAN</td>
<td>Forces Armées Nigeriennes</td>
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<td>MNJ</td>
<td>Mouvement Nigérien pour la Justice</td>
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<td>HCRP</td>
<td>High Commissioner on the Restoration of Peace</td>
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Resolving West African Conflicts: Early Warning – Early Response
About The West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF)

WACSOF was organised to galvanize the emerging ‘civic’ powers and facilitate constructive partnership with state authority, political parties, as well as ECOWAS. Since its endorsement by the Authority of ECOWAS HEADS OF STATE, WACSOF has been providing an umbrella structure for CSOs by partnering with ECOWAS to promote the socio-economic integration as well as peace and security in the sub region.

Vision and Mission
WACSOF envisions a West Africa sub region characterized by democracy, human rights, good governance, and the rule of law, economic prosperity, and social justice. At the core of WACSOF’s mission is the empowerment of civil society to exploit the public space. In liberal democracy to which WACSOF aspires, the sovereigns are the people. It is determined to make this a reality in West Africa.

Structures of WACSOF

The Peoples’ Forum
This is the supreme organ of WACSOF which is composed of all representatives of CSOs registered as members of WACSOF. The forum meets annually to review the activities of WACSOF members, ECOWAS and member states in order to provide recommendations to the ECOWAS annual Head of States meetings.

The Executive Committee
The executive committee is elected by the peoples’ forum and is composed of representatives from all the linguistic divides in the sun region. The Committee supervises the implementation of policies by the secretariat.

Working Committees
Among other areas, the following working committees are deemed as relevant thematic areas of engagement between civil society groups and WACSOF/ECOWAS CSOs relationship; Food, Agriculture and Environment, Gender issues, Democracy, Governance and Human Rights, Health, HIV/AIDS and Education, Media, communication and Information Technology; Peace and Security; Policy Research; Regional Integration, Economic Development, Trade and Investment.

National Chapters
The National chapters are comprised of groups of coalitions of the different civil society actors within member states that are members of WACSOF.

The Secretariat
The secretariat is headed by the Secretary General. It is responsible for providing programmatic trust for working committees and to provide the latter with secretariat duties. It is responsible for the expansion of the forum through coordination and networking among national chapters. The secretariat is the strategic link between West African Civil society organisations and ECOWAS.
About The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) is a non-profit, non-governmental, research, information and training institution dedicated to policy-oriented scholarship on question of democracy development and peace-building.

As a catalyst organisation, CDD seeks to build the capacity of all stakeholders in the democratic and development process. It is an international organisation which focuses on West Africa but constructively engages like-minded organisations across the continent and globally. CDD works towards conflict prevention and management for sustainable regional security, promotion and consolidation of democracy and responsive development.

Established in October 1997 in response to the need for an independent space for critical reflection and development of universally relevant and culturally sensitive response to the challenge posed by democracy and development agenda in the West African sub region, CDD has become a major reference point for informed analysis and practical strategies on West African socio-economic dynamics.

With its central office in Nigeria, an international office in the UK, programme partners in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, and a multicultural staff which include volunteers and interns, CDD has become a bridge between West Africa and the wider world, providing critical analysis and rigorous insight for policy makers, governments, inter-governmental organisations, development agencies, scholars and the media.

In the course of its work, CDD has significant impact on constructive socio-political debates in West Africa; enhanced development and democracy in West Africa through its diverse programmes and activities in the region, as well as gained the confidence of the international community.

Mission

The mission of CDD is to be the prime catalyst and facilitator for strategic planning and capacity building for sustainable democracy and development.

Vision

The greatest challenge for CDD is to locate democracy process within the development framework that reflects the organic link between politics and economy, and between fundamental freedoms and socio-economic opportunities.

Goal

The goal of CDD is to serve as a leading catalyst in the transformation of the West African sub region into an integrated, economically vibrant and democratically governed community of nations that guarantees holistic security to its population and is capable of permanent peaceful conflict management.
Part One
Early Warning, Early Response and Peacebuilding
The Economic Community of West African States of (ECOWAS) was created in 1975 with the aim of ensuring the economic integration of its member states. The wave of conflicts that broke out after 1989 in the states of the Mano River Union raised awareness in African leaders of the fundamental link between peace and development. This in part explains the special interest of ECOWAS in the resolution of the violent conflicts that has emerged in the region since 1982 with the escalation of crisis in the Casamance region of Senegal.

These new challenges amply justified the revision of the ECOWAS treaty in 1993 with a new emphasis on a sub regional framework for peace and security in ECOWAS member states. On December 10, 1999, the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for the Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, otherwise known as ‘The Mechanism’ was signed in Lomé (Togo).

In its fourth chapter, the protocol puts in place an Early Warning System whose role is to monitor, detect and analyze early warning signals of a potential outbreak of conflict in a community. By observing these early warning signals, violent conflicts will be prevented through timely responses. ECOWAS seemed to have fully understood that in matters of handling conflicts, anticipation is the best remedy to fully overcome the outburst of conflicts. ECOWAS and its partners have thus classified ninety-four different signals to be considered as conflict early warning indicators.

From 2001, ECOWAS set up benchmarks in collaboration with WANEP in order to involve civil society in the collation of indicators for the consideration of authorities in the quest to guarantee a peaceful, stable and secured environment. The regional space has been divided into four (4) zones with zonal offices acting as intermediaries between the populace and the frequent indicators that occur in the localities and the ECOWAS Early Warning Department where quick responses are made in the form of resolution, analysis and proposition of solutions to signalled incidents. At the top of this hierarchy is the president of the ECOWAS commission, the designated authority who is responsible for finding appropriate solutions to signalled incidents.

However, the responsibility of conflict prevention in the communities is a collective one. To this effect, civil society must not relent in its mission considering its proximity to the populace and its knowledge of the realities that generate conflicts.
The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) included Conflict Prevention in their list of key programmes. The workshop that prompted this write-up is proof of the commitment of these two organisations to partner with ECOWAS in tackling this very crucial problem.

The outbreak of conflict in Northern Niger cannot be a typical case of Early Warning but an interesting case all the same especially if it is considered in the light of overcoming the recurrent crisis by seeking for measures that has to be put in place to subdue it--added to this is the Touareg rebellion which is complex in terms of social facts, its geo-strategic implications, and its place in the mining and energy resources of the sahel Saharan strip. If managed without taking into account all these factors, the Touareg rebellion risk posing a great threat of instability to Africa especially at this moment when the Mediterranean project has identified the sahel–Saharan strip as the new border between Europe and Africa. There is therefore the need to mobilise all actors.

The workshop and the resultant communiqués that constitute the essence of this piece of work, add up to a strong call to the regional community for more vigilance in observing the signals of early warning as well as in the development of strategies geared at finding appropriate responses. This book, therefore, should generate another level of actions as the issues addressed are still visible. Now in Mali for instance there is reported another resurgence of the same phenomenon. Niger and Senegal where similar outbursts of low intensity violence are observed need to come together along with Mali for an in-depth reflection to address root causes and move towards more effective strategies. This book aims to trigger critical responses to the issues uncovered.
Chapter One: Conflict and Institutional Frameworks for Peace building: Possibilities and Challenges of ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism

By Yoro Kone & Dauda Garuba

CONFLICTS AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION: POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF ECOWAS EARLY WARNING MECHANISM

For the United Nations, there is no larger goal, no deeper commitment and no greater ambition than preventing armed conflict. The prevention of conflict begins and ends with the protection of human life and the promotion of human development. –Kofi Annan (2001)

Peace is the prime value in contemporary Africa today, the most valuable public good’ but yet the most elusive. – David J. Francis

Introduction: The Dynamics of Conflicts in West African

West Africa has had a chequered experience with violent conflicts precipitating damning human carnage and collateral damages since the end of the Cold War. Defined as struggles between individuals and/or groups over incompatible goals, values and access to scarce status, power and resources, conflicts are a factual constructs in everyday life of societies, and their causes are often rooted in a complex set of political and historical factors. Indeed, what keeps societies on track and moving in the midst of everyday conflicts is the extent to which the competing interests and needs of parties involve are constructively managed to forestall violence; else conflicts become something abnormal, dysfunctional, and detestable. In this sense, conflict challenges rational minds “to …. alternative ways of meeting contesting human needs and interests, thus emphasising not conflict per se but the ways man respond to it”. The absence of such a dynamic management in West Africa in the past made the sub-region the most susceptible to violent conflicts and, by extension, one of the poorest sub-regions in the world. Indeed, the threat of conflicts in the sub-region has to a large extent demonstrated the seriousness with which ‘dissatisfied’ parties involved in them set forth their demands against the ‘satisfied’.

1 Col. Yoro Kone is the Director Early Warning Department of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), while Dauda Garuba is the Programme Officer for Peace and Security in the Abuja-Nigerian Office of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
The avalanche of conflicts characterising the affairs of contemporary West Africa has replaced much of earlier expressed optimism over the prospects of peace and sustainable development in the sub-region, and indeed in Africa, at the end of the Cold War. Despite the auspicious and remarkable change over of political power witnessed in Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali and Senegal in the 1990s, as well as the emergence of constitutional governments in Sierra Leone, Niger, the Gambia and Nigeria, West Africa has continued to witness the upsurge of violent conflicts, to the extent that raises serious questions about the sustainability of electoral democracy in the sub-region. From the armed struggles in Liberia and Sierra Leone, armed insurrections in Guinea, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, to the secessionist attempts in Casamance region of Senegal, and most recently the sectarian violence in Cote d’Ivoire, as well as other low intensity violence in northern Niger, northern Mali and Nigeria’s Niger Delta, the record of internal conflicts in West Africa threatens the capacity of states to guarantee effective security for their citizens, just as it has, in some other instances, set back genuine democratisation efforts in several others as Burkina Faso, Togo, Gambia and Guinea. All these conflicts, in which only the triggers are often given desired attentions, are buried in a combination of structural political and economic factors/policies that deepened social contradictions in the midst of the declining welfare role and capacity of states to function to the benefit of citizens in an increasingly globalise world (Obi 2006). The policies were themselves rooted in governance deficits in these countries. The failure of leadership and undemocratic and repressive practices that presents the state as the primary source/instrument of violence in the sub-region only compounded the situation.

Beyond the diverse causes and methods of their prosecution, one fundamental feature of the myriads of violent conflicts that conflagrated post-Cold War West Africa is their capacity to spiral out of national boundaries to the extent that increases their regional character and poses a huge challenge to the implementation of peace processes in the sub-region. It was no surprise therefore that ECOWAS, a regional body established in 1975 as a response to the crisis in international economic relations, to promote regional economic integration and development through policy harmonization, had to largely abandon its original economic agenda at the outbreak of the civil in Liberia in 1989 that was followed by similar outbreaks elsewhere in the region, to take on the more urgent issues of peacemaking and peace-building, a move which was not without controversies in regard to its legality or otherwise.

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4 The crisis in international economic relations that precipitated the formation of ECOWAS were: declining living standards in developing countries, overdependence of the developing world on the advanced economies and shrinking space for manoeuvrability by the individual developing countries in a world economic system distorted by Cold War politics.

5 Dauda Garuba, the co-author of this chapter had discussed the controversies around the issue elsewhere. See D. S. Garuba, “Predatory Accumulation and the Internationalisation of Post-Cold War Conflicts in Africa”, Unpublished Masters degree dissertation submitted to the Department of Political Science, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, 1996, pp. 59-70.
The institutional framework for ECOWAS intervention in conflicts in the West African sub-region was anchored on the 1981 *Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence*. Although designed primarily to address external threats and aggression, the argument was that there was the need to appreciate the fact that “no meaningful economic development can be attained in a sub-region characterized by insecurity and other threats to peace” (Garuba 1996:59), sensing that economic cooperation and integration are not an end in themselves but that they are of necessity underpinned by the peace and political stability of the sub-region.

It is important to stress that ECOWAS’ interventions in violent conflicts in West Africa, through ECOMOG, were undertaken in classical military operations either designed to stop wars and effect ceasefire such that creates the necessary conditions for humanitarian operations and peace negotiations. The ECOWAS intervention has made West Africa the only sub-region in Africa where the most ambitious and the most determined efforts have been deployed to find collective regional solutions to conflict, albeit this have had their compounding challenges, including the huge capital outlays for peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction. The comparative advantage that ECOWAS derived from these experiences is reflected in the various mechanisms and conventions it has in place today for comprehensive conflict prevention framework, in its adopted strategies of self-repositioning.

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6 The very prominent among these are The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security (1999), The Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) and the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons.
(which started since the 1990s) to efficiently and effectively deal with the new threats to peace and security in the sub-region on a more permanently rooted ground.

The Early Warning Mechanism is a core component of the elements of the comprehensive conflict prevention framework. It is anchored on the UN Security Council Resolution 1625\(^7\) which re-affirms the need for a broad strategy of conflict prevention that addresses the root causes of armed conflict and political and social crises.

This chapter takes a look at the possibilities and challenges of the ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism against the backdrop of the myriads of conflicts in West Africa and the institutional framework for their prevention. The chapter is divided into five parts with this introduction providing an overview of the dynamics of contemporary conflicts in the West African sub-region. The second section attempts a brief review of the concept of Early Warning as a conflict prevention mechanism with a view to tying it to the UN Security Council Resolution 1625 and other ECOWAS instruments. The ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism as an institutional response to the UN Resolution 1625 with varying legal frameworks for its legitimacy forms the discussion of section three of the chapter. This is followed by an analysis of the mechanism against the backdrop of the possibilities and challenges it present in section four. The concluding section five summarises the paper and makes some policy recommendations.

**Early Warning Mechanism for Conflict Prevention: An Explanation**

Early Warning, as are all concepts in social sciences, does not necessarily share a universal definition. There are different definitions of the concept, except that there is a common agreement on its overall conflict prevention goal which, when further interrogated, could generate further divergent views. Added to that is the fact that much of what we read about conflict early warning is constructed in regional and international sense, sharing egocentric tendencies reflective of their outsider-authors (Barrs, n.d.). This, if anything, explains why Adelman (1988) is of the view that “the quest for defining ‘early warning’ is an exercise in understanding how what is happening ‘over there’ comes to be known ‘over here’”. But for the purpose of our focus in this chapter, Early Warning conceptualised as defined by Dmitričev Andrei is the “operational procedure or mechanism for the structures and systemic collection and analysis of information, and the subsequent communication of results of this analysis to policy makers in a form that would be recognised and understood” (Kone 2006).

This definition may well be construed to recognise that fact that military intervention alone rarely resolve the underlying problems that precipitate violent conflicts; thus stressing mechanism that anticipate conflicts and policy measures to adopt to preclude often unnecessary and expensive military intervention. The idea of conflict early warning is thus informed by the belief that conflicts do not just occur, but operate in a build-up that eventually leads to implosion or explosion. Hagmeyer-Gaverus (2003) puts it succinctly when it argues that “there is no such a thing as a ‘sudden crisis’, only a lack of information”. Quite a lot of academic literature and policy documents have attempted to capture and classify the stages of conflict. Ojiji (n.d.) accounts for five stages of pre-conflict, confrontation, crisis, outcome and post conflict in the context of Nigeria scenario, while Davies (2000) recounts the three stages of structural tensions or instability, escalation and

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\(^7\) UN Resolution 1625 was passed by the Security Council on September 14, 2005.
crisis/war distinguished by Lund” for purposes of building early warning systems”. Whatever are the context specifics of the stages of conflicts, they nevertheless negate the broader objectives of early warning which are:

- To enhance the ability of policy and decision makers to make strategic decisions on the basis of improved knowledge of the environment of operations, options available for response or action, and the implications of each decision or option made; and
- To move beyond sending flash warnings to a more important step of attempting an analysis of the situations in order to reduce the risk or tendency to make ambiguous decisions in a constantly changing environment.

What are discernable from the above are that early warning means much more than the flow of information and reports about visibility and escalating conflict potentials, but also about reliable analyses that identifies the still-latent or low-level conflicts before they attain crisis stage (Davies 2000). From its three components of Information, Analysis and Communication or Reporting, early warning/early response system works in symmetry. Diagram I below clearly shows this.

**Diagram II - Steps of an Early Warning System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Warning</th>
<th>Early Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>*Defining the indicators</td>
<td>*Receiving the warning</td>
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<td>*Monitoring indicators</td>
<td>*Believing the warning</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Issuing the warning</td>
<td>*Acting on the Early Warning</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Communicating the warning</td>
<td>*Consistent support to the Early Warning</td>
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There has been the tendency for governments and institutions to misconstrue early warning information, especially when dealing with conflicts in their area of jurisdiction. This singular reason explains why it is necessary to observe that early warning is not intelligence gathering, prophesy, magic wand against violence or an end in itself. Unlike intelligence gathering where information is covert (close), classified, political and destabilising, state security-based and prone to espionage, early warning information gathering is overt (open), unclassified, conflict preventive and human security-focused and completely devoid of espionage intention (Kone 2006).

Several methods exist in the field of long-term monitoring and tracking of latent and open conflicts by state and non-state actors, but what is clear in all these is that there is hardly any consensus on what constitutes best practices for conflict prevention, except to agree with Leonhardt and Nyheim (1999) that “an effective early warning is the one to which there is response”. This is the context in which the UN Resolution 1625 reaffirms the need to adopt a broad strategy of conflict prevention, which addresses the root causes of armed conflict and political and social crises in a comprehensive manner. This include promoting sustainable development, poverty eradication, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy, gender equality, rule of law and respect for and protection of human rights. The Resolution gave recognition to the need to strengthen the important role of the United Nations in the prevention of violent conflicts, and to develop effective partnerships between the Council and regional organizations, in particular the African Union and its sub-regional organizations, in

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8 Also, see Caey Barrs, “Conflict Early Warning: Warning Who?”, n.d.
order to enable early responses to disputes and emerging crises. Added to this is that it affirms the UN commitment in “supporting regional and sub-regional capacities for early warning to help them in working out appropriate mechanisms to enable prompt action in reaction to early warning indicators”. This is the context in which the ECOWAS early warning mechanism represents a response to the UN Resolution 1625. It was developed as a framework for nipping conflicts in the bud before they escalate into complex emergencies requiring humanitarian interventions.

**ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism**

It is true that the ECOWAS early warning framework represents a response to the good intended by the UN Resolution 1625. The resolution itself in sense re-affirms the Chapter Eight of the UN Charter which recognizes the possibility of regional institutions, such as ECOWAS, to take necessary action in matters concerning international peace and security, provided such institutions and/or their activities are in accordance with the spirit and objectives of the world body. Thus, the development of the framework as a conflict prevention mechanism is informed not only by the evolving conflict dynamics in the West Africa sub-region, but also by the sub-regional body’s practical experience with peacekeeping and peace-building from which it has learned many lessons. ECOWARN, as popularly called, is about monitoring the state of Peace and Human Security in West Africa with indicators focusing on (drawing from data base), but not limited to:

- Intra-state conflict
- Ethno-political or religious conflict
- Political instability
- Environmental/Resource based conflicts
- Genocide, gross human rights violations
- Internal displacements, refugee flows, humanitarian crisis
- Illicit Arms flow
- Sharp economic downturns
- Economic performance

Besides the UN Resolution 1625, the legal instruments that give legitimacy to the ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism are located in:

- The 1993 Revised Treaty in which Article 58 emphasises Regional Security through the establishment of a regional peace and security observation system;
- The 1999 ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security chapter IV which established the framework for setting up a sub-regional peace and security observation system (early warning); and

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**West African Conflicts**
The 2003 Declaration on a Sub-regional Approach to Peace and Security in which ECOWAS Heads of States and Government (in an extraordinary Session) concerned about growing Intra-state Conflicts and sub-regional implications and issues of militia, mercenaries, Child Soldiers, coup d’états, refugees, etc, called for the establishment of the Early Warning Mechanism.

Perspectives on the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) are rooted in its intention to:

- Reinforce ECOWAS’ capacity in data collection.
- Strengthen CSOs’ systematic input into the ECOWAS data collection system.
- Develop a national and regional communication infrastructure and network capacity for Early Warning.
- Enhance and expand collaboration between CSOs in Early Warning data collection and analysis.
- Improve CSOs and ECOWAS’ collaboration in monitoring, analysis and reporting.
- Effectively engender Early Warning in West Africa.

The foregoing points explain the essence of making human security the basis for contemporary security. The framework identified four stages of early warning and conflict prevention, namely: latent phase, escalating phase, crisis phase which signifies violence at its peak and post-conflict phase. The four phases are graphically shown in the Diagram 2 below, within measurable variables of magnitude and timeframe of conflict dynamics:

Diagram III – ECOWAS Framework of Early Warning/Conflict Prevention
The data collection instrument/template of ECOWAS early warning mechanism was adopted from Virtual Research Associate (VRA), an American company based in Boston, while the 94 point indicators that form its content were developed at a multi-stakeholders workshop organized by ECOWAS in Cotonou, Republic of Benin. The indicators are a breakdown of the following 11 thematic headings:

- Agriculture, farming, fishing livestock & mining;
- Crime, corruption and safety;
- Economy, trade and manufacturing;
- Governance, political action & the law;
- Health, education & social services;
- Information, communication & transportation;
- Natural disaster, accidents & environment;
- Negotiation, mediation & peacekeeping;
- Security, arms & armed conflict;
- Society, culture, community & religion; and
- Women, children, refugees & gender inequality.

One interesting thing about the ECOWAS Early Warning System is its acknowledgement of the critical role of civil society not only in monitoring and reporting on looming conflicts in the West African sub-region, but also in pushing the necessary advocacy for their early

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9 See Yoro Kone, Op. Cit. The stakeholders comprised of staff of the ECOWAS Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC), civil society representatives, practicing experts and academics in peace and security. Mohamed Diagne, the Head of Bureau Zone II of OMC, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, also confirmed this at a meeting of the Civil Society Consultative Forum on the Conflict in Northern Niger and Sahel held at Hotel Oasis, Niamey, Niger, from 20 – 22 September, 2007.
resolution before they escalate into complex emergencies. This is the sense in which the West African Network for Peace-building (WANEP) was tipped as the implementing partner to complement the role of government focal points in information gathering, while the West Africa Civil Society Forum (an umbrella body of CSOs in the sub-region) takes on advocacy responsibility of pressuring ECOWAS (and by extension, national governments) to act based on information emanating from the field about potential conflicts. Three reasons have been identified as responsible for the partnership by ECOWAS with the civil society in setting up the framework for early warning. These are:

- Because CSOs are aware of events as they unfold, they can make important contributions to early warning
- CSOs can respond swiftly and flexibly to conditions as needed, often using innovative and non-coercive strategies and quality processes to address problems
- CSOS can act when – for various reasons – official actors are immobilised (often related to mandates, lack of political will or the implications conveyed by their official status)

The information gathering framework divides West Africa into four zonal bureaus. Zone I comprises The Gambia, Senegal, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde with Capital in Banjul; Zone II covers Burkina Faso, Cote D’Ivoire, Mali and Niger with Capital in Ouagadougou; Zone III consists of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ghana with Capital in Monrovia; while Zone IV takes on Benin, Togo and Nigeria with Capital in Cotonou. The way it functions is that there are two National Focal Points – one State reporter and one Civil Society reporter – for each of the 15 ECOWAS member states, and the analytical approach of the conflict information the focal persons gather is both qualitative and quantitative. A template of 93 indicators is handed down to each of them to gather information. They are to act in a non-partisan way in the discharge of their duties. What makes a case for intervention (i.e. early response) by ECOWAS in any country where conflict is looming is not about the number of cases reported. Although reports are collected on collected on weekly basis, certain situation may not necessitate waiting for weekly report. The trend of the graph on dynamic phases of conflict assists in determining the appropriate time to intervene. Even the decision is expected to go through appropriate channels (i.e. Focal points, Heads of Bureaus, ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS Mediation & Security Council) before actions are taken.

Whatever is generated through the 94-point indicators in the field, which is expected to be confirmed by media reports, are simulated through a process of integration in Early Warning Contingency and Early Response Planning. This is where WACSOF’s role as an umbrella body of civil society organisations in the sub-region is required not only to mount pressure on ECOWAS to respond early, but also to assist the latter in planning how to respond to diffuse such potential conflicts; bearing in mind that the whole essence of early warning is early response.

*Diagram IV: Mechanism of the ECOWAS Early Warning System*
Possibilities and Challenges
The ECOWAS early warning mechanism, though adopted based on the sub-regional body’s thinking, experience and learning on its feet, reveals quite a lot of possibilities and challenges that require recounting.

Possibilities
One of the visible achievements of the ECOWARN, since coming into effect, is the establishment of four liaison offices in Banjul, Cotonou, Monrovia and Ouagadougou not only to facilitate the process of data collection and monitoring of looming conflicts, but also to facilitate necessary interface for lobbying and advocacy for their genuine early response as a way of mitigating their potentials for damming human carnage and heavy collateral damage, through appropriate mechanisms. The proactive ECOWAS interventions in the military coup d’état in Guinea Bissau 1999, the conflict that erupted in Cote d’Ivoire in September 2002, the succession dispute precipitated by the demise of President Gnassingbe Eyadema in Togo in 2005, and the Guinea crisis in 2006, are a clear demonstration of the benefits of this arrangement.

Closely related to point one above is the fact that the establishment of the zonal bureaus has gone a long way to meeting the long overdue decentralisation objective of bringing ECOWAS closer to its member states and citizens. This has increased the profile of the organisation in terms of the sense of ownership it conveys among these states and citizens.

Three, ECOWAS is also, for the first time in the history of its existence, now able to establish a database for conflict indicators. By so doing it has not only demonstrated much
appreciation of the correlation between security and development in a human security sense, but has also communicated a feeling that ECOWAS has regularly reviewed its mission objective in a manner that meets new regional and global security dynamics.

Lastly, ECOWARN & role of WANEP in the ECOWAS Zonal Bureaus, plus the expected advocacy of WACSOF in the mechanism, has further enhanced and expanded the new trend of effective collaboration between governments and civil society; thus confirming that the era of mutual suspicion and antagonism between former and the latter is giving way for constructive dialogue in West Africa.

**Challenges**

Beyond the above recounted successes, the enormity of the challenges of implementing the ECOWARN is also there to be appreciated. The first has to do with the difficulty in achieving comprehensive documentation in early warning system. Beyond the low level of literacy of citizens in the rural part of the sub-region which often create problems for data gathering, there is the challenge of access to quality information.

The second is the challenge of *limited resources* available for the exercise. It has been observed that a chunk of the budget of ECOWAS has been expended on conflict prevention over the last years. The negative impact of this on an organisation established initially for regional economic integration and development can only be imagined.

There is also the associated problem of risk management against the backdrop of security of the job. Some governments of ECOWAS member states still construe information gathering for early warning as intelligence reports and against national security interests, especially when their countries are involved. In view of the continuous misperception of early warning as intelligence reports, the risk thus posed to ECOWAS monitors and analysts remains a major cause for concern. Elsewhere, some focal points had had to flee their countries because of threats from their national governments on grounds of divulging sensitive official information, thus requiring having mechanisms in place to mitigate the threat posed them.

Also, there has also been the claim that the problem of conflicts in the sub-region is not so much about ‘early warning’ but ‘early response’. Examples abound about CDD’s whistle blowing prior to the beginning of the conflict in Cote d’Ivoire via one of its briefs, which was not treated seriously, and the case of Niger where the authorities denied the state of hunger in the county in 2005, in spite of gory picture of famished that the world was treated to in international media.

It has also been argued that the 94 indicators in the ECOWARN template are one too many, leading to the suggestion that they reduce in the interest of more specific measures. It is to this extent that the indicators were reviewed, synthesized and reduced to 40 at the CDD-WACSOF Capacity-building Workshop for Focal Points on ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in December 2006. It was advocated at

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10 At a two-day Retreat of the West African Network of Research Centres and Think-tanks (WANRCTT) held at Maizube Farms House in Minna from 26 – 27 April, 2005, ECOWAS representatives expressed concerns about the fact that up to 70% of ECOWAS expenditure was going into peace and security, arguing that this was detrimental to the original objective of regional economic integration and development of the sub-regional body.

11 The Workshop which was held from 13-14 December 2006 under the DFID-supported project of Security Sector Transformation in West Africa to the African Security Sector Network (ASSN), in which CDD is a
that important meeting that the 40-point indicators be push by WACSOF as an advocacy document in its engagement with ECOWAS.

Last but (perhaps) not the least of the identified challenges of the ECOWARN is the growing criticism trailing the adoption of template from Virtual Research Associate, an American company based in Boston. Besides questioning its effectiveness, the criticism alleges this is amounts to bowing to imperialism. A clarification to the effect that it is only to be test-run for a year, after which a review will be contemplated, appears to douse frayed nerves about the template. But how the dust raised by the situation settles will be determined by not only what happens after the review, but also by the extent to which the revised template satisfies the needs of the ECOWAS, its member states and its citizens.

Concluding Remarks

Peace and security are about the most sought-after of the numerous interests that individuals and governments of nation-states pursue. This is because of the direct impact they have on democracy and sustainable development. West Africa, having experienced some of the most atrocious conflicts in Africa in terms of their damning human carnage and collateral damage, evolved early warning mechanism based on lessons learned from the various peacekeeping operations it has prosecuted to track conflicts and nip them in the bud before they escalate into complex emergencies requiring humanitarian intervention.

Although the mechanism is widely acclaimed for its satisfactory possibilities, it nevertheless has its challenges which are expected to be addressed when the template with which early warning data are collected would have been reviewed (after the on-going test-run) to meet realities of the sub-region. While this is commendable, it will further enhance the mechanism if the components of media complementary role to data generated from the field are strengthened along professional and ethical standards, given the front seat and commanding status it occupies as the mouthpiece of the people. The heuristic experiences of porous borders, with particular respect to the contagious nature of conflicts in certain areas (i.e. Mano River) should also be given considerable attention as a possible way of dealing with their spiraling character.

References

2) Barrs, Caey (n.d.), Conflict Early Warning: Warning Who?


Introduction
It was not too long ago that Cote d'Ivoire was a shining star of stability and prosperity in the West African region. Today there is a sense in which the continuing conflict, between government-controlled South of the country, and the Northern parts of the country, controlled by Forces Nouvelles, known as the New Forces, plays out as a reality check. The conflict adds yet more evidence to the belief that West Africa has today become, in the words of Adebanjo (2004:1), one of the most unstable and poorest of regions in the world. The enormous human carnage and heavy destruction associated with the conflict is a matter for the records.

Once acclaimed a model of West African stability, on account of religious and ethnic harmony that characterized the long period of the rule of President Felix Houphouet-Boigny, the founding father who ruled the country from 1960–1993, Cote d'Ivoire has since become engulfed in ethnic and religious conflagrations. The military coup that overthrew the government of Henri Konan Bedie in 1999, threw up deep internal divisions in the country. Eventually it resulted in the mutiny that escalated into a full-scale rebellion in September 2002.13 It is generally accepted that the underlying issues of citizenship and ethnic identity in the Ivorian conflict are not new problems, as the history of the country itself is essentially the story of the problems. This is the reason why the country’s leaders and the international community have not found a ‘quick fix’ to the issue (Safer Access 2006:7). Efforts to deal with the security threats pose by the situation had largely remained unresolved, while the country continues in its fragile state of ‘no peace, no war’.

This chapter discusses and reflects on the collaborative efforts by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) in the promotion of sustainable peace in Cote d'Ivoire. The following questions are considered. How has Cote d'Ivoire found itself in the present mess? What are the patterns and impact of the conflict on the country and the sub-region? What is the nature of various forms of intervention? What drives the CDD-WACSOF interests in the peace-building efforts? What possible lessons could be learned for the genuine realisation of peace in Cote d'Ivoire? Responses to these questions and many more form the fulcrum of the chapter which is divided into five main sections. Following this introduction, we attempt to sketch the geography and history of Cote d'Ivoire with particular focus on how the country gravitated from its long known status of a model of stability into a centre of violent conflict. This is followed by section three which assesses the pattern and impact of the conflict. Section four looks at the civil society engagement with the conflict, both from the dimensions of fact-finding mission and direct intervention, while section five summarises the main thrust of the chapter and makes concluding remarks as to the possible wayward with the peace process.

From a Model of Stability to a Bastion of Violent Conflict

12 Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim is the Director of the Centre for Democracy & Development (CDD), while Dauda Garuba, is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Political Science, University of Benin, Nigeria, is the Programme Officer for Peace & Security at the Abuja-Nigerian Office of the CDD.
13 See http://globalpolicy.org/security/issues/ivorindex.htm (retrieved 18 October, 2007)
Geographically, Cote d’Ivoire lies on the West Coast of Africa, where it shares common borders with Mali and Burkina Faso in the north, Guinea and Liberia in the west, Ghana in the east and Gulf of Guinea in the south. The country, whose land area covers 31,800 square km, has an estimated population of 18,012,409, (based on a 2.0% growth rate) with infant mortality rate of 87.4 per 1,000 births, and a life expectancy of 49 years, according to 2007 figures. The population density per square kilometre in Cote d’Ivoire is 147, while Abidjan and Yamoussoukro are the country’s largest cities and human settlements.

Cote d’Ivoire’s early history has not been comprehensively recorded, although it is reputed to have had a Neolithic culture with numerous isolated settlements which today represent more than 60 distinct tribes that include the Agni, Baoule, Bete, Dan, Lobi, Malinke and Senoufou. Much of the documented evidence about the history of the country reveals that there were interactions between the Portuguese who had arrived in the coastal area on ship and local population as far back as 1460, while other major inter-group relations were marked by migrations of Kru people from Liberia around 1600; Senoufo and Lobi people from Burkina Faso and Mali towards the South of the country; the Akan and Baoule people came from Ghana into the eastern part of the country in the 18th and 19th centuries; and the Malinke from Guinea into the northwest area around the same period. Langer (2005:3) classifies the 60 different ethnic groups in contemporary Cote d’Ivoire into five larger socio-cultural or ethno-linguistic groups with their population: Akan (42.1%), Voltaic or Gur (17.6%), Kru (11%), northern Mande 16.5%) and southern Mande (10%).

14 “Cote d’Ivoire”, www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107434.html
Although citizenship and identity politics are at the heart of the contemporary conflict in Cote d’Ivoire, the issues are not entirely new as their dynamics can be traced back to the early colonial period. Through various treaties signed between 1842 and 1843, Cote d’Ivoire was brought under French Protectorate and subsequently became a French colony in 1893. As a French colony, the country occupied a major place in French colonial agriculture, “attracting immigrant workers from throughout the French Empire” who worked in cocoa, coffee and banana plantations, as well as pineapple and oil palm plantations that became added at independence. Not even the abolition of forced labour by the French Assembly in 1946 could stop the attraction of labour migrants to Cote d’Ivoire; a policy which the country’s independence President Felix Houphouet-Boigny also promoted with liberal land ownership laws founded on the slogan that “the land belongs to those that cultivate it“ (Ibid:2; Refugees International 2007:1). President Houphouet-Boigny’s government decision to grant foreign migrants the franchise in national elections added an important political lever to the latter’s productive economic workforce (Safer Access 2006; Langer 2005:2).

The liberal land ownership policies of the Houphouet-Boigny administration precipitated massive influx of people in neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso and Mali who were facing the challenge of access to arable land. This dynamics was promoted by the excellent power-sharing style of President Houphouet-Boigny who took into account the multi-ethnic character of Cote d’Ivoire society in his administrative style. He was willing, and indeed
encouraged the population of foreigners in the country which was estimated at 40%, and succeeded in balancing regional and ethnic differences resulting in the country’s stable political environment. Added to this is the fact that the Ivorian government under Houphouet-Boigny offered good prices to farmers for their products, thereby stimulating production that catapulted Cote d’Ivoire into the world’s leading producer of cocoa in 1979, the third largest exporter of coffee after Brazil and Colombia, and Africa’s leading exporter of pineapples and palm oil. This raised the country’s GDP growth rate to more than 7%.

These conditions that catapulted Cote d’Ivoire into a model of ‘African miracle’ were soon to become the same reasons for its slip and descent into chaos after the death of Houphouet-Boigny in 1993. An attempt to explain the cause of the Ivorian conflict tend to advance ethno-religious reasons that sees the conflict as between a prosperous Christian population in south and a predominantly Muslim and poorer population in the north. While this may seem to be the case, especially in the context of the sharp divide and religious configuration between the two opposing sides in the conflict, it is nevertheless too simplistic to sufficiently explain the raison d’etre for the conflict in the country (Crook, n.d:1). Any meaningful and genuine explanation of the root of the conflict in the country must give cognisance to the liberal land and migration policies of Houphouet-Boigny government which were themselves rooted in the French colonial policies on agriculture. While the policy, as advanced above, had helped to increase the country’s GDP growth rate to more than 7%, it nevertheless precipitated an increasing sense of grievance in indigenous landowners who felt short-changed by Houphouet-Boigny’s Parti democratique de la Cote d’Ivoire – PDCI (Ivorian Democratic Party) policies. The situation was further compounded by the 1980s global economic crisis, which in the case of Cote d’Ivoire was exacerbated by the decline and emergent scarcity of land. The country’s heavy reliance on cocoa, coffee, timber and sugarcane export revenues for survival exposed it to the vagaries of international market prices of the commodities which had crashed in the 1980s with serious economic consequences. This global economic recession caused the rise in Cote d’Ivoire of the old grievances of indigenous landowners against so-called ‘foreigners’, majority of whom were born and bred in the country. The result was eruption of violent clashes starting from the Bete area where attempts were made to ‘renegotiate’ earlier land arrangements with migrants.

The emerging conflicts coincided with the struggles and agitations for multi-party democracy, (the democratisation wave), that engulfed Africa in the 1990s following the end of the Cold War, and which in the case of Cote d’Ivoire was characterised by major protests and demonstrations by students and the “officially illegal political opposition” (Langer 2005:3), among which was Laurent Gbagbo’s Front Populaire Ivoirien – FPI (Ivorian Popular Front). The political reforms that accompanied these demonstrations and protests brought about the opening up of the democratic space, resulting in the first ever Ivorian multi-party elections in May 1990. Houphouet-Boigny did not only win the elections in which Laurent Gbagbo was the only other candidate under the FPI for Presidency, he also

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*Post-independence life in Cote d’Ivoire was unlike the rest of other African countries where many Europeans left after self-rule had been attained. The European population in Cote d’Ivoire rose from 10,000 before independence to 50,000 at the eruption of violence in the country in 2002. Also, the estimated population of non-native Africans in the country reveals: 3 million Burkinabes, 2 million Malians, 500,000 – 1 million Ghanaians, 250,000 Guineans, plus tens of thousands of Liberian refugees who were based in Cote d’Ivoire. See Lansana Gberie & Prosper Addo, “Challenges of Peace Implementation in Cote d’Ivoire: Report on an Expert Workshop by KAIPTC and ZIF” in Origins and Nature of the Ivorian Conflict, Monograph No. 105, Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria, August 2004; “Cote d’Ivoire”, www.wikipedia.org*
sought political accommodation with the north through the appointment of Alassane Ouattara – a Malinke from the Northern Mande ethnic group – to serve as the country’s first Prime Minister with the aim of tapping on his international reputation and economic management skills as former Director in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to redeem Cote d’Ivoire economically. The appointment did not only add to an emerging northern consciousness after decades of agonising and complaints about marginalisation and lagging behind the south in socio-economic conditions (IRIN News 2007:2), it also shifted the battle of the simmering conflicts between Ivorian south and north from economic sphere into the political sphere, with the latter making strong demands through a Charter of the North\textsuperscript{16} for:

\textit{fuller recognition of the Muslin religion,..., more efforts to reduce regional inequalities, greater political recognition of the north political loyalty during the upheavals of the 1980s and ...an end to Baoule nepotism in recruitment to public jobs (Charter of the North 1992 as quoted in Crook 1997:226).}

Multi-party elections also provided Gbagbo’s FPI an opportunity to introduce ethno-nationalism and xenophobia into the political arena, as it built its campaign message around the claim that: “the PDCI was a partial regime which had systematically favoured the interests of particular Ivorian ethnic groups – Baoule and groups from the north – and of foreigners” (Crook 1997:222). This proved incapable of widening its political appeal outside of its narrow stronghold, thus precipitating its merger with a radical/splinter group from the PDCI – Rassemblement des republicains-RDR (Republican Rally) – which was led by Alassane Ouattara in preparation of the 1995 elections against Henri Konan Bedie who succeeded President Houphouet-Boigny on the death of the latter in 1993 as Speaker of the National Assembly. In an apparent strategy against a formidable opposition launched by Quattara who had indicated his interest to run in the presidential poll, Bedie concocted a pseudo ‘nationalist’ concept of Ivoirite (pure Ivorian-ness) in a sense that plays to “anti-foreign sentiments stirred by severe economic crisis” to exclude Quattara from the presidential polls (Refugees International 2007:2; Independent Online 2005), thus distorting and compromising the careful ethnic/regional balance and immigrant workers friendly policies which late Houphouet-Boigny had upheld and nurtured since independence. He contorted the country’s constitution and got the National Assembly to adopt a new electoral code that required candidates standing for elections to be born by Ivorian parents and barring foreigners from voting in Ivorian elections, alleging that Ouattara’s mother is a Burkinabe. The uproar generated by the elections which Bedie won due to the exclusion and boycott of Ouattara and Gbagbo respectively broke the ranks of RDR/FPI (highly fragmented and disorganised) and climaxed in the December 1999 coup d’Etat which started as a mutiny by disaffected young army officers over non-payment of their financial entitlements for participating in international peace-keeping mission in the Central African Republic.

The coup which brought General Robert Guei to power in December 1999 erupted just before the general elections slated for 2000. General Guei who had promised to stay in power only to “sweep the house clean” took all by surprise when he indicated his interest to run in the elections. His new adventure was itself not as surprising as the adoption of the same electoral code that disqualified Ouattara from standing in the October 2000 elections (via a politically manipulated Supreme Court judgement) on grounds that the latter’s mother was from Burkina Faso. Ouattara’s exclusion from standing in elections since 1999 came “to symbolise the

increasingly acrimonious and violent social problems of migrant labour, ethnic divisions and citizenship in Côte d’Ivoire. The exclusion prompted Ouattara’s RDR to call for a boycott of the elections, thus “setting the state for low election turnout” in which General Guei and Gbagbo (who was not in any mood to forgo standing for the next election) become the main contestants amidst chaos and violence arising from the disqualification of Ouattara. General Guei’s attempt to stop the elections in which early results indicated Gbagbo was winning led to widespread protests and violent demonstrations by Gbagbo’s FPI against him on the one hand, and Ouattara’s RDR for refusing to recognise the legality of the elections and calling for fresh elections that would respect the rights of Ouattara’s candidacy on the other hand. The Supreme Court judgement of October 26 formally handed the electoral victory to Gbagbo.

The declaration of Gbagbo as President-elect and the initial appointments he made after taking his oath of office sent simmering feelings of political exclusion long held by the RDR whose followers are mainly from the north. His deployment of Bedie/Guei-like tactics of re-organising the military in favour of his Bete (a Kru socio-cultural or ethno-linguistic group), perhaps to facilitate his regime’s security, further aggravated the feeling of exclusion nursed by elements in the RDR and the military itself. This is the context in which the mutiny (or is it coup?) over a planned demobilisation of Zinzins and Bahefoue contingents – predominantly soldiers recruited during the short spell of General Guei as Head of State – on September 19, 2002, escalated into a full-scale rebellion that voiced out discontents of the northern population against real and perceived marginalisation in the politics of Côte d’Ivoire. The ‘coup’, which happened while President Gbagbo was away in Italy, led to the death of General Guei in unclear circumstances, while Ouattara was lucky to have survived the attempt on his life, but not without the shelter granted him at the French Embassy in Abidjan. The development locked the Ivorian government with France whose troops’ interjection to save the situation resulted in the loss of control of the north to the mutinied soldiers-turned armed rebels, and the area has remained separated from the south till date. From their base in the northern part of Côte d’Ivoire, the rebels who refer to themselves as Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d’Ivoire-MPCI (Patriotic Movement of Côte d’Ivoire) and largely populated by forces with northern/Muslim background demanded: “the resignation of President Gbagbo, the holding of inclusive general elections, a review of the Constitution and an end to the domination by the Southerners”. Further compounding the situation was the emergence of other rebel groups – Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix-MJP (Movement for Justice and Peace) and Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest-MPIGO (Ivorian Popular Movement for the Great West). Seeming efforts to synergise their ‘struggle’ has resulted in the merger of these groups into what is today collectively referred to as Forces Nouvelles (New Forces). There had been series of brokered peace, but the most convenient analysis of the conflict situation in Côte d’Ivoire today is that the country lurches on a pendulum – neither entirely at war nor fully at peace – in a fragile peace.

Patterns and Impacts of the Conflict

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17 See BBC Country Profile.
18 Opinions are divided on what happened on the night of the ‘mutiny/coup’. While the President Gbagbo government claimed that General Guei had led a coup with state television showing pictures of his dead body in the street, there are counter-claims to the effect that the latter was actually murdered at his home and have his remains brought to the street to perfect a premeditated plan to incriminate him. Safer Access, an organisation that exists for resource NGO community, is even of the opinion that General Guei was killed by either leading elements of the ‘coup’ or innocently while at home, depending on the source. See Wikipedia ……; Safer Access, “A Precis of the Historical Security Context of Côte d’Ivoire”, 17 January, 2006. www.saferaccess.org
19 Ibid.
Cote d’Ivoire is located in a relatively turbulent zone of West African – i.e. Upper Guinea/Mano River region. The conflicts in the region, which started with the eruption of the Liberian civil war in 1989, share a spiral character. This character, as applicable to other countries in the zone (i.e. Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea) with whom Cote d’Ivoire shares geographical linkages and similar political history, has also largely dictated the patterns of the Ivorian conflict. Among the important dimensions of the conflict are the recruitment of cross-border mercenaries (or roving warriors), perverse culture of armed banditry and plundering, forced recruitment of children (including girls) as soldiers, compounding human rights abuses and outright impunity. All these are perpetrated by both government forces and rebels. The devastating consequences of patterns of the conflict are reflected in everyday life in the country. It has been argued that the extreme violence in Liberia and in Sierra Leone fuelled the danger of recruitment of cross-border mercenaries into the Mano River region’s conflagrating conflicts such that stirred political instability in Cote d’Ivoire and Guinea (Human Rights Watch 2005a). Also, the level of planning and coordination, infrastructural provisioning and weaponry availability to the rebels clearly indicates a pattern of outside assistance (Kansteiner 2003), similar to other conflicts in the zone.

The political conflict in Cote d’Ivoire, even in its present stalemate of ‘no peace, no war’, has had far-reaching political, social and economic impact on both the national and regional character of the zone. Politically, the ‘no war, no peace’ predicament of the country has put the issue of elections on hold, while President Gbagbo remains in power despite the expiration of his tenure of office in October 2005. Also, there is the continuing state of insecurity and growing population of refugees who are victims of abuses perpetrated with impunity by government and rebel forces who have the least respect for the Geneva Convention in relation to prisoner of war rights.20 The biggest challenge this poses to the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is how to find a solution to the plight of the “over half a million internally displaced persons and undertake efforts to prevent statelessness by assisting residents in their efforts to attain proof of citizenship” (Refugees International 2007:2).

The economic impact of the conflict is felt most in the falling production of coffee and cocoa as migrant workers flee in the face of the frenzy of xenophobia and violent attacks on them by people who accuse them of supporting the rebels. There has also been a sharp cut in the export of coffee and cocoa produced in the north of Cote d’Ivoire via the south, thus precipitating rise in world cocoa prices which doubled between 2000 and 2002. This is fast affecting the long emerging agro-industry and manufacturing of consumer goods for domestic and West African regional markets. The markets are diminishing for Cote d’Ivoire due to on-going reconfiguration of trade by other countries in the sub-region to redress the prevailing incidents of border closures, armed banditry and roadblock ‘tolls’ collection by government and rebel forces. The Sahelian states of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are currently, in their search for alternative markets, promoting trade relations with Senegal, Benin and Togo (Oxford Analytica 2005:1). Another issue placed on the table by the Ivorian crisis is that of a criminalised economy. The breakdown of law and order which extended to some border parts of the country has combined with a growing proliferation of armed groups to facilitate smuggling and illegal collection of (roadblocks) tolls in the face of increasing desperation to make money. All these have a compounding effect in the government’s poverty reduction strategy programme (PRSP) which has been kept on hold since 2002 when

20 The Geneva Convention was declared in 1949 to protect and guarantee the lives and rights of civilians in war times.
the conflict started. The 2005 UNDP and World statistics reveal that households living in
poverty in the country have risen considerably from 32% in 1993 to 37%, while cases of
HIV/AIDS have risen to 7% of the population, one of the highest in ECOWAS member
states.

Socially, the Ivorian conflict has also “wrought an unrelenting deterioration in healthcare,
public education and water and sanitation” conditions in the country (Human Rights Watch
2005b). This situation, which is more prevalent in the New Forces - held north of the country,
is further worsening the disparities that caused the conflict in the first instant. Some donor
agencies have either completely stopped or partially suspended their operations in Cote
d’Ivoire over concerns about credible financial management, while others such as the
European Commission and the World Bank have tied disbursement of funds for
reconstruction to full implementation of the negotiated peace agreement that is still to be
finalised. In November 2003, the European Union announced its decision to withhold €400million of aid to Cote d’Ivoire, arguing that it is a necessity not only to press for the
implementation of the peace accords, but also to press for an end to the impunity that has
been at the heart of the conflict in the country. The headquarters of African Development
Bank which had sat in Abidjan since 1966 was relocated to Tunis in February 2003, while
several diplomatic missions, including the British Embassy suspended its operation owing to
the uncertain security situation in the country.

**From Fact-finding Mission to Intervention: Civil Society Engagement**

There have been various efforts by the international community to stop the armed conflict in
Cote d’Ivoire and push for a peaceful settlement through negotiations between the
belligerents and other major stakeholders. These mediation efforts which have been deployed
by France, ECOWAS, African Union and United Nations have resulted in the signing of
numerous accords, including Marcoussis, Accra I, II, III, Pretoria I, II and UN resolutions
1572, 1633 and 1721. Among these the SCR 1633 has been very significant in that it
established a one year transition period effective from October 2005, date of the end of
President Gbagbo’s tenure, though this (plus further extension) was never realised. Ambiguities, contradictions and apparent incongruities between SCR 1633 and the
Constitution of Cote d’Ivoire that is supposedly still in force are a factor in the failure of the
peace process. What this thus means is that though International community’s intervention
was timely, it has not been calculating enough to take on the real issues at the heart of the
conflict, making it largely impossible for to deliver peace for Ivorians.

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24. UN Security Council Resolution 1572 was passed in November 2004 to impose arms sanction on parties to
the conflict in Cote d’Ivoire in the face of failed disarmament and intensification of violence. SCR 1633 was
passed in October 2005 to initiate one year Road Map, while SCR 1721 was promulgated to extend the Road
Map for another year.
25. The issues at the heart of the conflict are: citizenship, identification process (Audience Forraines), voter
registration and elections.
It is in this context that civil society involvement in the process, both at the level of fact-finding mission and direct intervention, draws its strength.

**Fact-finding Mission**

Civil society’s formal engagement with the peace process in Côte d’Ivoire started with the fact-finding mission organised by the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) in August-September 2006. The mission was prompted by WACSOF’s concerns about the minimal role of civil society in the process and the acknowledgement of its complimentary role to Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in promoting regional peace and security, regional integration and economic development. Given recognition to the consultations and agreements reached with the international community – including the ECOWAS, African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) – in seeking an amicable and peaceful resolution of the political impasse and instability in Côte d’Ivoire, WACSOF sent a team of Civil Society activists from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Niger to Côte d’Ivoire from 27th August to 2nd September 2006 to assess the political situation in the country and the level of preparations for the elections hitherto planned for the end of October 2006. The delegation which was headed by the Director of CDD, Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, was specifically tasked to review the electoral process, the issues of disarmament, identification (Audience Forraines), voter registration and the implementation of Resolution 1633 which are critical processes in the negotiated Road Map to peace in Côte d’Ivoire. The Mission was also mandated to assess the capacity of civil society to constructively engage the peace process.

While in Côte d’Ivoire, the Mission held extensive discussions with the Ivorians ministries of Cooperation & Integration in Africa, Interior, Youths & Sports, and Foreign Affairs. It also met with the Electoral Unit at United Nations Office (UNOIC), the European Union Delegation, the African Union Mission and the Special Representative of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary all in Côte d’Ivoire, as well the leading political parties in the country: Parti Democratique de Côte d’Ivoire-Rassemblement Democratique Africain-PDCI-RDA (Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire-African Democratic Rally), Front Populaire Ivoirien-FPI (Ivorian Popular Front), Partie Ivoirien des Travailleurs-PIT (Ivorian Worker's Party), and Rassemblement Des Republicains-RDR (Republican Rally), as well representatives of the Forces Nouvelles (New Forces). Discussions and Consultations were also held with civil society networks and coalitions in Bouake and Abidjan.

The WACSOF Mission identified the following salient issues:

1. That the disarmament process could not proceed as planned because of lack of trust on all sides. Parties in the conflict fear that disarming without achieving their goals was suicidal. Since there was mutual suspicion and lack of trust, people needed reassurances from the international community.

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26 This Section draws extensively from the Report of the Fact-finding Mission organized by the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) From 27 August – 2 September, 2006. For details, see “WACSOF Mission to Côte d’Ivoire, 27 August – 2 September 2006” duly signed by Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim and Dr. Richard Konteh, the General Secretary of WACSOF.
27 Malian and Togolese representatives who were also on the team could not make it to Cote d’Ivoire for unavoidable reasons.
28 The forum at Bouake was held on August 31, while that of Abidjan was held on September 1, 2006
2. The reluctance by certain forces to resolve the issue of identification of citizens and citizenship was viewed as an attempt to disenfranchise a substantial percentage of the population. It was revealed during the discussions that as many as 3.5 million Ivorians do not have valid identity papers that would allow them have voter cards to make them eligible to vote. This number includes some highly placed individuals in government and Ivorian civil society. This is quite substantial considering that Cote d’Ivoire has a current voting population of just over 5 million. There is therefore a close correlation between the issuing of identity papers and the likely outcome of the elections considering the political dynamics and political realities in Cote d’Ivoire.

3. With the expiration of the mandate of the current administration on 31st October 2006, the daunting question on the table relates to the way forward after October. It was apparent from the discussions held with a cross section of Ivorians that the current situation is not substantially different from what it was 12 months earlier. All parties are desperate to either retain power or acquire power. The Ivorian People have lost confidence in the subsisting system of perpetual political blockage and are yearning for a change. There was no guarantee that sustaining the current dispensation would lead to any positive change in the short to medium term.

4. The view was expressed repeatedly that the lack of a united position within the international community and among the regional leaders has not made resolving the impasse any easier. It was apparent from the discussions that people hold the view that some regional leaders, with questionable governance credentials, are using the crisis in Cote d’Ivoire as an opportunity to play out their rivalries to the detriment of Ivorians. Ivorians therefore clamoured for a more united and decisive regional leadership and an international community that is ready to take radical steps to resolve the current stalemate.

5. It was apparent that some individuals were benefiting personally from this impasse and would not want to see the problems resolved. This is worrisome because new triggers could lead to a further degeneration of the security situation or even outright war. At the moment, procrastination and further delays would negatively affect the political development of Cote d’Ivoire. This impasse would therefore continue for as long as it would take, if radical measures are not taken to turn a new leaf.

6. A significant part of civil society in Cote d’Ivoire was generally believed to be partisan, non-neutral and therefore incapable of positively impacting the peace process in Cote d’Ivoire. There was therefore a unanimous call on WACSOF from across the range of consultations to remain engaged in Cote d’Ivoire, build civil society capacity and champion a process that would enable civil society to regain its role and to constructively and positively impact the peace process in Cote d’Ivoire.  

In view of the above highlights, the mission made the following recommendations:

i. Most of the consultations revealed that maintaining the current political dispensation would not lead to a successful resolution of the conflict. The general view expressed was therefore in favour of a new transition government with a two year mandate 2006 – 2008 that would oversee the identification of the population, voter registration, disarmament and the entire electoral process that would usher in a new democratically elected government. WACSOF is of the view that any individual wishing to play a role in the transition government would do so with the understanding that he/she will no longer qualify to contest

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Resolving West African Conflicts: Early Warning – Early Response
the elections. A model along the lines of what obtained in Liberia and the transition
government is therefore recommended. What this means in essence is that if President
Gbagbo wishes to continue as Head of State during the transition, he should equally be
willing to relinquish his right to contest the planned elections. In this way, a level playing
field can be assured.

ii. WACSOF, like most actors in the field, is of the view that issues relating to citizen
identification and the issuance of national identity cards are not unconnected with the
pending elections. WACSOF feels that if there is an interim Head of State that knows that
he/she has no stake in the elections, then the current restrictions on identification and voter
registration/citizenship, which constitutes the crux of the current crisis, is not likely to be
sustained. WACSOF is of the opinion that in the event that President Gbagbo opts to step
down and prepare to contest the elections, the International Community, The African Union
and ECOWAS should either appoint a neutral person to head an interim government that
would rule for no more than two calendar years or request the Constitutional Court to oversee
the transition. The understanding here is that members of this government can no longer run
for the Presidency. It must be acknowledged that the argument based on constitutionalism
that is being put forward by President Gbagbo as the basis for him clinging to power is
opportunistic. The reality is that the passing of Resolution 1633 by the Security Council and
his designation as Head of State have curbed the powers of the Constitution. In any case, the
Constitutional requirement for regular, free and fair election has been disregarded.

iii. WACSOF hereby further recommends that the current process as provided for in the
Audience Forraines (mobile identification courts), be continued. WACSOF recommends that
all people who receive positive judgement in the tribunals should automatically be issued
their nationality certificates so that they can acquire or regain their citizenship rights and
participate in the elections.

iv. On the issue of disarmament, WACSOF recommends that this process be allowed to
proceed simultaneously under the supervision of the United Nations. A Commission for
Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration along the lines of what obtained in Sierra
Leone should therefore be considered.

v. During the two-year transition period, WACSOF calls for a new Road Map to be
developed with clear-cut benchmarks that must be rigorously and continuously monitored
and periodically evaluated. This would ensure that any potential hitches are identified early
enough and concrete steps taken to address them immediately. This will avoid the situation
wherein a whole year would be wasted only to realise that nothing has moved forward. In
addition to the International Contact Group (ICG), WACSOF is calling for the appointment
of a credible International Mediator acceptable to all parties and with the appropriate clout to
accompany the process as was the case with the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace
Agreement in Liberia.

vi. WACSOF also notes with concern the apparent exclusion of civil society from the
peace process. Even though various reasons, including the alleged partisanship and non-
neutrality of civil society were put forward as possible justification for this, WACSOF feels
that this was an omission that needed to be addressed in any comprehensive effort at seeking
a sustainable solution to the crisis in Cote d’Ivoire…. WACSOF if therefore calling for the
inclusion of civil society in the ICG. Furthermore, WACSOF calls on civil society to set up a
neutral and parallel monitoring and evaluation mechanism to monitor and evaluate the
implementation of the new Road Map. In this way civil society shall ensure that any lapses
are brought to the fore and sufficient pressure is brought to bear on all actors to seek redress. 30

WACSOF used the opportunity provided by the mission not only to express its willingness to work with the civil society in Cote d’Ivoire and ECOWAS to amicably resolve the Ivorian conflict, but also called on its partners and stakeholders to support the process.

**Intervention**

The direct intervention of civil society in the Ivorian conflict was informed by the expressed concerns about the observed minimal or apparent exclusion of this vital constituency from the various efforts that were attempted to resolve the conflict in Cote d’Ivoire. Various reasons, including the alleged partisanship and non-neutrality of the Ivorian civil society, was put forward as possible justification for this. CDD was particularly alarmed by the dismissively scathing and disparaging remarks from external source that “there is no civil society in Cote d’Ivoire.” Yet, CDD and WACSOF, drawing experiences from their work in the West Africa region, felt that the exclusion of civil society was a costly omission that needed to be addressed in any comprehensive effort at seeking a sustainable solution to the crisis in the country. This position was advanced against the backdrop of the constructive role civil society played in complementary the efforts at resolving the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea Bissau, which was partly responsible for the formation of WACSOF itself.

The entry point for CDD-WACSOF work in Cote d’Ivoire was, in the view of failure of earlier efforts at resolving the Ivorian conflict and the impending new transitional arrangement to be put in place (post 31 October 2006), uniting Ivorian civil society organisations to re-strategize to better engage the issues and stakeholders in the crisis through monitoring of the transition process, 32 including the Audience Forraine and other related issues leading to post-elections and peace consolidation in the country.

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30 Ibid.

31 This Section draws extensively from the report compiled by Dauda Garuba, one of the present authors, who on behalf of CDD assisted to organize the National Civil Society Coalition Dialogue on the Conflict in Cote d’Ivoire, in collaboration with WACSO. See Dauda Garuba, “Report of the National Civil Society Coalitions Dialogue on the Conflict in Cote d’Ivoire Held at Coconut Grove Regency Hotel, Accra, Ghana, from 2nd – 4th November, 2006” (Unpublished).

32 The CDD-WACSOF project in Cote d’Ivoire derives from an on-going collaboration between the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) – in which CDD is a member institution – and the UK Department for International Development (DfID) on security sector transformation in West Africa. Within the context of a broader goal of complementing on-going activities aimed at promoting regional security within ECOWAS, including contributions to the security sector transformation processes in particular countries, the project has four broad components, namely: (1) Strengthening of regional conflict prevention and security sector governance capacities of bureaucrats and civil society workers; (2) Building the capacity of regional civil society organisations and their national focal points to understand, anticipate, monitor and forecast governance challenges and conflict triggers with a view to contributing to ECOWAS’s Early Warning Mechanisms; (3) Developing capacity of specific local institutions in post-conflict setting, to conduct critical analysis and generate public debate around security sector transformation issues, with particular focus on Liberia and key elements; and (4) Assessing challenges posed to security sector transformation and governance re-building by...
In specific terms, the objectives of the national civil society dialogue that was held at a neutral country (Accra-Ghana, from 2nd – 4th November, 2006) to allow for free discussion without fear of recrimination, were:

- Bring together a broad section of Ivorian civil society organisations from across political and regional divide to critically review and discuss the peace process in Cote d’Ivoire with a view to developing a strategy for active civil society engagement in the peace process.

- Review the previous peace accords and critically analyze the likely reasons for their failure with a bid to ensuring that previous mistakes are not repeated. This will requires analyzing opportunities for ECOWAS and the International Community, including donor agencies/development partners, to support a peaceful transition in Cote d’Ivoire.

- Produce an acceptable Action Plan (with appropriate benchmarks or milestones monitoring) for CSOs to engage the Road Map to peace as contained in the UN Security Council Resolution 1633 (which was reaffirmed with slight changes – including dates – in SCR 1721 on the eve of the dialogue).

The meeting which was widely attended by civil society groups from across the two divides worked through plenary and parallel sessions wherein the strengths and weaknesses of previous peace accords and UN Resolutions 1633 and 1721 were appraised, culminating in the development of a Civil Society Action Plan for the peace process and a Communiqué (attached herein as Annex I) that was presented at two separate press conferences in Abidjan and Bouake in Cote d’Ivoire. Highlights of the identified weaknesses are:

- Apparent lack of clarity and precision of the terms of Accords and UN resolutions, (i.e. incongruities underscored in UN Resolutions 1633 & 1721 such that contradicts the Ivorian constitution);

- Restriction of peace talks to only politicians (instead of the entire Ivorian people including the civil society), leading to deliberate distortion, manipulation and withholding of information for reasons of hidden agendas;

- Apparent lack of adequate knowledge of the Ivorian conflict by the international community;

- Absence of any re-assuring statements to ‘warlords’ in the conflict; and

- Funding of the peace accords’ process.

These weaknesses do not necessarily negate the milestones that have been attained. These milestones in the peace process are:

- Timely intervention of the international community, even though actions were not courageous enough;

- Achievement of ceasefire between government and New Forces;

- Inauguration of a transitional government;

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Youth exclusion and vulnerability in West Africa, with particular focus on the Mano River Basin and other selected West African countries such as Liberia, Nigeria, Mali etc. with a view to inculcating a democratic culture of civic responsibility and duty among youth. These four components of the ASSN-DfID collaboration were not only carefully designed, but have also been (so far) prosecuted in a sense that broadens the notion of security and develops multi-faceted responses to address violent conflicts in the West African sub-region.
• Opening up of the electoral space for all;
• Introduction of a Road Map to be supervised by the Prime Minister;
• Commencement of the identification (*Audience Forraînes*) process, albeit with its inherent problems; and
• Inter-military dialogue.

The most recent, in wake of the failure of re-scheduled deadline for elections in 2007, is the peace talks brokered by the Burkinabé government which culminated in the signing of yet another peace deal between the two sides in the conflict on March 4, 2007 and the appointment of Guillaume Soro, the political leader of the *Forces Nouvelles* (New Forces) as Prime Minister, in April.\(^\text{33}\)

The agreement which foresees the dismantling of the buffer zone between the government forces and *Forces Nouvelles* with a joint army, envisages that presidential elections would be held within 10 months.

**Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has examined and discussed the joint efforts of CDD and WACSOF in mobilizing civil society across opposing divides in Côte d’Ivoire to work for sustainable peace and to put an end to the violent and destructive conflict between Government Forces in the south and New Forces army in the north. In attempting to understand how Côte d’Ivoire slipped from its enviable status as a model of stability and prosperity in the West African region, to a cauldron of violent conflict that tore the country apart, the chapter reviewed the patterns of the conflict, and showed its impact on the country and on the region as a whole.

The character of civil society polarisation along the dividing lines of the parties in the conflict gave serious concerns to CDD and WACSOF, two organisations focused on democracy and development in West Africa. Both organisations took up the challenge of organising this important constituency to play its traditional role as the occupant of the space between the public domain of government and the private realm of the family. Starting with a fact-finding mission organised by WACSOF which the Director of CDD headed, both organisations have advanced their collaboration to intervene in the Ivorian conflict by bringing together civil society groups from across the two divides in the conflict to engage the peace process (especially, issues such as citizenship, identification, disarmament, voter registration and election that are the heart of it), believing strongly that genuine peace and reconciliation could still be achieved in the country, despite the delayed implementation of the many peace accords and UN Security Council Resolutions on the conflict. All that is required to achieve this is for the Ivorian civil society to eschew partisan interests and organize for Ivorians to take responsibility of the peace process with the international community playing only a supporting role. In appreciation of the challenges currently facing the civil society with respect to the Ivorian conflict, coupled with a clear understanding of the magnitude of the tasks being proposed for it, an Action Plan that takes into account civil society capacity-building needs was drawn to assist in developing increasing capacity to monitor threats to

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\(^{33}\) While appraising the peace agreement signed in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso by Laurent Gbagbo and Guillaume Soro as a major turning point in resolving Côte d’Ivoire’s armed conflict and a step in the right direction, a source has however exercise a doubt as to whether the said agreement is not more of ‘a deal between two sides looking for an escape route that protects their own interests than a compromise that guarantees lasting peace’. See International Alert, *Côte d’Ivoire: Can the Ouagadougou Agreement Bring Peace?*, Africa Report No. 127, 27 June, 2007.
political and social transition that could facilitate not only the peace process, but also the realisation and consolidation of human security in Cote d’Ivoire.

References


ANNEX – I

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN COTE D’IVOIRE: THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

As a follow up to the evaluation missions of the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) in Cote d’Ivoire, the last of which held in August 2006, a consultative meeting of the Ivorian Civil Society was held on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th November 2006 in Accra, in partnership with the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD). This historic meeting is the first of its kind between Civil Society operating in the government controlled zone and that operating in the zone held by the New Forces since the crisis broke out in Cote d’Ivoire in September 2002.

The deliberations were held in an atmosphere of friendship and frankness with all the participants expressing themselves freely and without hindrance on the range of issues stated below:

- The strengths and weaknesses of previous peace accords and resolutions
- The timing and appropriateness of the involvement of ECOWAS and the International Community in the Ivorian peace process
- The urgent need to draw up a clear timetable to be closely followed with respect to the new resolution 1721/2006.

We, participants in this historic meeting,

- Hailing WACSOF’s engagement alongside the Ivorian Civil Society to actively contribute to the peace process in Cote d’Ivoire;
- Recognizing unanimously that living conditions of Ivorians have significantly deteriorated both in the government held zone and in the New Forces controlled zone;
- Considering that Cote d’Ivoire is one and indivisible, and that Ivorians must not be deprived of their freedom of movement in the length and breadth of the country and of benefiting from the services of the State wherever they may find themselves;
- Conscious that the Ivorian Civil Society did not play its monitoring role during the previous transition;
- Appraising rightly the recommendation of Resolution 1721 in its point 18 calling on the Prime Minister to solicit the active participation of Civil Society to help move the peace process forward;
- Sensitive to the efforts being made by the African Union, ECOWAS, and the United Nations;
- Aware that the interest of Cote d’Ivoire must take precedence over personal and partisan interests;
- Distressed and outraged by the suffering endured by the population;
- Determined to guarantee Civil Society’s independence;
- Aware that the Ivorian crisis can only be resolved when Ivorians play leading role,
Ivorian Civil Society is hereby committed to:

- Speak with one voice in the sole interest of the Ivorian People;
- Distance ourselves from partisan positions;
- Put in place a transition observatory to monitor the various stages of the peace process including DDR, identification and electoral processes;
- Undertake collective actions in the two zones with a view to sensitizing, informing and teaching the people the contents of the different accords and resolutions and on the need to accompany the peace process;

Furthermore, the Ivorian Civil Society calls upon:

- The belligerents to rise above their disagreements because they do not have the right to compromise the welfare of the people and that of future generations;
- The press as a body to avoid any incitement to hatred and violence and to rather accompany the peace process;
- Youth and women to resolutely and definitively engage in the peace process;
- The President of the Republic and the Prime Minister to resist all internal or external pressures which can lead them into conflict and rather give prominence to dialogue and consultation;
- Financial partners to support Civil Society initiatives

Ivorian Civil Society wishes to thank and salute the WACSOF General Secretariat and the Center for Democracy and Development for the historic initiative and calls upon them to not to relent in their efforts so as to accompany Ivorian Civil Society in its effective commitment to the peace process in Cote d’Ivoire.

Done on this day of the 4th November 2006

PORQUET SALIMATA
FIFEM

NGUESSAN KONAN GERVWAIS
CONARECI

SANGARE ASSANA
ICCI

KONE NATHALIE
FOSCAO-CI

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NETH WILLY ERNEST
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SORO SINA
ARK

DAUDA GARUBA
CDD

DIOMANDE VALLET
CONVENTION DE LA SOCIETE CIVILE
## ANNEX – II
BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN COTE D’IVOIRE: THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

### ACTION PLAN

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Part Two

Niamey Conference on the Resurgence of Conflicts in the West African Sahel and Sahara
Chapter Three  Resolving the crises in Northern Niger: A civil society perspective
By Moussa Tchangari

“Armed conflict in the North of Niger: analysis of the geopolitical stakes and impacts on the democratic framework”

Introduction
Following the example of most African countries, Niger fully entered the era of multiparty democracy in 1991 with the holding of the National Sovereign Conference. This notable progress was characterized by the advent of political pluralism, the organization of free and transparent elections, the constitutional guarantee of democratic freedom and rights, the emergence of plural civil society and the liberalization of the media space.

If it is true that important progress has been made in a few years, no one would deny that the democratic path of the country was one of the most tumultuous of the sub region. From 1991 to 2000, Niger was hit by two waves of armed rebellion in the North and East, two military coup d’états in 1996 and 1999 and a multitude of mutinies of soldiers. Faced with these painful ordeals, the citizens of Niger showed an exemplary determination in the defense of their ideals democracy and peace.

Today, with the resurgence of a new site of armed conflict in the North of the country, the people of Niger are confronted with yet more challenges. The singular factor in this new conflict comes from the fact that the real stakes are not dissociable from the struggle between the super powers for access to the natural resources of the Sahara. The resurgence of this armed conflict tellingly coincides with the decision of the authorities of Niger to diversify the partnership for the exploration of mines and the backing the authorities gave to the American military project of surveillance in the Sahara

In view of the continuing armed conflict in the North, the association Alternative Citizen Spaces (ACS) and the Niger Association for the Defence of Human Rights (ANDDH) decided to organize a day of reflection bringing together personalities from diverse walks of life (university people, politicians, leaders of the civil society organizations, religious leaders, etc.) This initiative was intended as an invitation for a non-partisan analysis of the situation that many people in Niger clearly think bears serious threats to the democratic framework that has been built as a result of the sacrifices that the people have made.

The day of reflection was held in the conference room of Hotel Ténéré in Niamey on August 11, 2007. Several eminent personalities from diverse walks of life participated and willingly debated the complex issues facing the country in an atmosphere of calm and cordiality. Delegates were quick to agree that the main resource of our country is first of all its men and women who, during these hard times, are ready to do their best to preserve the one and absolute essential: namely the sovereignty of our country, its national unity, its democratic framework and the social welfare of its populations.

We are telling all these men and women that history will remember them. Because in these difficult and dangerous times they stood firm and sent a strong message that Niger should not get bogged down in an armed conflict but must pursue its democratic ideals and development goals in the interest of the future of our children and country. The real achievement of these

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men and women is that they understood and saw in the present dangers the very real opportunity that now exists to correct the weaknesses of our democratic system and to make irreversible the standing of our sovereignty. These they have sized upon.

We now expect that the authorities of our country will also understand by reading this summary report of the day of a reflection that we will only overcome the present challenges by evolving for ourselves a viable democratic system. That is to say a system that enables the citizens to fully enjoy all their rights and freedom, and to develop socially and culturally free from hunger, diseases and ignorance.

In the framework of the reflections and actions that are presently conducted in our country in order to contribute to finding a solution to the problem of insecurity in the North of the country, ANDDH and Alternative Citizen Spaces, with the help of the Programme for the Prevention of Crises and Revival of UNDP organized a day of reflection on Saturday, August 11, 2007 at Hotel Ténéré. In his inaugural speech, Mr. Badié Hima, vice president of ANDDH, on behalf of the organizing committee of that day of reflection, thanked all the participants for responding to the invitation.

Talking about the central question of insecurity in the North, he mentioned that a lot of things have been done and said, and various, diverse and often contradictory stands have been expressed. The initiative of this day of reflection, he pointed out, must be seen as an invitation to continue looking for solutions for a lasting peace in our country and region. This was clearly a citizen based and non-partisan initiative as reflected in the plural composition of the panel of personalities assembled.

Thus, he invited the participants to think over the present burning questions. First of all, they have to determine whether there is a link between armed conflict in the North and the geo strategic stakes for the control of the Sahara. They must find out if the conflict bares as well internal causes, for example in the governance and in the democratic framework. And finally participants were to determine why the peace agreements signed in 1995 and the others could not guarantee a lasting peace in Niger.

These series of self questionings, Mr. Badié Hima declared, was so as to enable the panel to arrive at conclusions and some recommendations concerning the best way forward and out of the present crisis. And from then on, to determine how resources can best be mobilized in the interests of a free and prosperous Niger Republic.

Before finishing his speech, Mr. Badié Hima thanked the Programme for the Prevention of Crises and Revival of UNDP as well as the manager of hotel of Ténéré for their support.

Thematic axis 1: “Point of History: the strategic stakes around the Sahara through history “presented by Professor Djibo Hamani, historian, lecturer at the university Abdou Moumouni of Niamey.

Professor Djibo Hamani, by introducing the reflection on the central question of insecurity in the North reminded people that the Sahara is the largest desert of the world with a surface of 11 million square kilometres extending from the Atlantic to the Red sea, and the 12 Saharan states cover 13 million square kilometres. He continued by pointing out that any strategy that concerns the Sahara also concerns all these states and Africa as a whole taking into account the large surfaces that these states cover as well as their demographic and political weight.
The widespread interest in the Sahara started at the beginning of the 8th century with the Trans Saharan trade. According to Mr Djibo Hamani, all the Moslem super powers, which appeared on the historic scene, tried to control the Saharan passage for it was a source of considerable commercial revenues. Moreover, it is the covetousness for the Trans Saharan trade that explains, he added, the creation of the Sultanate of Ayar (Agadez) by the touareg tribes from recent immigration. The conquests of Idrissa Alaoma in the 16th century up to Bilma where he settled at the head of a powerful army as well as those of Askia Mohamed who came twice (1500 and 1515) to Agadez were in line with the trans Saharan trade. That is to say that during the whole pre-colonial period, the Sahara was a major geo political stake for all the states of the regions, he insisted.

According to Professor Djibo Hamani, in the era of colonial imperialism, the French showed more enthusiasm to seize the Sahara. Thus, even before the conference of Berlin which carried out the partition and the sharing of Africa, the French had put forward since 1879 the idea of constructing a Tran’s Saharan railway aimed at facilitating the conquest of central and western Sudan to drain towards France the wealth that many people considered fabulous at that period. The disappointment that came out from the absence of the expected Eldorado led to the abandonment of all ambition by the imperialist powers for the Sahara, but France otherwise kept an eye on that region for security reasons.

It was with the discovery of petrol in this area around 1953 that the western powers developed a new interest for the Sahara. It was within those perspectives that we find the French attempt to create the Common Organization for the Sahara Regions (COSR) in 1957, which consisted in regrouping the Saharan regions of Algeria, the French West Africa (FWA) and the French Equatorial Africa (FEA) in a unique ensemble under the former colonial power.

Today people who are nostalgic for the idea of French Sahara still exist in France. Professor Djibo Hamani said it is such people who are active in creating troubles for the most vulnerable regimes of the region such as those of Niger, Mali and mainly Algeria. Professor Djibo Hamani said logic dictates that the Saharan question must be a priority for all the neighbouring states of the region. The immense strategic mineral resources of the Sahara the whole of this region make to be of real importance in geo strategic terms, given the growing rivalry between the West and the new Asian giants.

In relation to the present situation in the North of our country, Professor Djibo Hamani urged that a country like our own must abandon the path that the colonizer had drawn for us, and must embraced our Saharan traditions. Niger, he said, is not a country south of the Sahara but a country of Southern Sahara. All the people of the Sahara, he added, have a common cultural feature, solid and deep religious relations that our country should not ignore. Only such a move will protect the countries of this region from the fallout of the strategic gambles of outside powers.

Upon the conclusion of Professor Djibo Hamani’s lecture, there followed a lively debate that resulted in the drawing up of the following points:

- Up until the end of the nineteen nineties, world powers did not express much interest in the Sahara. We notice that many things have changed since the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States. Under cover of fight against terrorism, the United States...
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of America have taken several initiatives to build and reinforce their military presence in the region. Among these initiatives, are the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) and the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCI) whose official objective is said to be to help the security forces of the countries along and bordering the Sahara (Niger, Mali, Algeria, Chad, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, Senegal, and Ghana) control their borders and fight against terrorism and illegal activities.

- we note that the United States military activities in the Sahara have not at all contributed to reinforce the stability and security in the countries covered by the PSI and TSCI. Three of these countries, namely Niger, Chad and Mali are confronted with or have been confronted with armed rebellion, smuggling and trafficking activities of all kinds. This clearly shows that the increased interest and activities of the super powers in the Sahara does not necessarily favour stability in the region. And it may to the contrary be the carrier of threats and danger for the countries of the region. American and other big power interests are often more related to the struggle for influence and dominance among the big powers themselves. A good of this is illustrated for us by the conflict in Darfour, where supper power interests, particularly Chinese, contend for the control the countries petroleum resources to the detriment of the country.

- During the last ten years, the political influence of France has considerably diminished in some countries of its former African zone of control. The emblematic example of the reduction of French influence as far as West Africa is concerned, remains the incapacity of Paris to impose “its solution” in Côte d’Ivoire, a country that used to be the turning point of “France-Africa”. In Niger, the former colonial power is today not only bothered by the military activism of the United States in the Sahara, but also by the increasing interest of China for the exploitation of the raw materials. The decision of the authorities of Niger to join in the American military projects and to grant mineral exploration permits to Chinese companies can only be considered in some Parisian spheres a defying act towards the French hegemony. The authorities in Niger must stand firm in the protection of the country’s freedom and sovereignty as a guarantee of peace.

- In the light of the renewed interest of outside powers in the Sahara, it is imperative for Niger to undertake through research projects to determine the geo strategic and geopolitical questions around this area. The country needs to have an institute of strategic studies to investigate these important questions and come out with answers and solutions. The mission of the institute would include the study of all strategic issues concerning the country and the region.

- Presently, there are no research projects developed around the geo strategic and geopolitical stakes in the Sahara. And the result is that Niger lacks a strategic and prospective vision that could guide its policies and actions in regard to the region. The strategic vision of Niger should be based on the fact that there is a common cultural feature to all the communities in Niger that we often forget they originate in the Sahara. This vision should enable us to consolidate the ties by creating a strong internal front in order to guarantee the Unity of the country and thwart external interference, especially by means of popular participation. These regions have important potentials for agriculture, cattle rearing and tourism.
People may think, and rightly so, that the armed conflict in the North is inseparable from the imperial strategies of the big powers, especially the activities of the new investor in the region (Chinese, Indians, Canadians, Australians, etc). But we should not forget that bad governance and the frustrations it generates is the real cause of the problem. This conflict is happening in a pastoral zone witnessing massive and mounting poverty of the population. The sense of frustration caused by bad governance is more acute in populations who live in areas where huge wealth is extracted from the soil of their region. This is why the fair sharing of these riches seems to be one of the most appropriate answers to this armed conflict.

Thematic axis 2: “Armed conflict in the North: Analysis of the internal causes and the external interferences”, introduced by Mr. Abdoul Karim Seydou, Doctor in political science, of the National Youth Service at the High Commission for the Restoration of Peace (HCRP). Mr Abdoul Karim Seydou pointed out that the resurgence of insecurity in the North of our country constitutes a major challenge for the State whose structural weaknesses especially in security matters is now exposed for all to see. He located the source of the problem in the internal factors related to the management of the State in general and the post conflict management in particular. He sat this as his central hypothesis.

Mr Abdoul Karim Seydou focused the rest of his talk on the assessment of the peace process in Niger since the signing of the peace accords between the government and the former rebel armed groups in 1995. He noted that three peace accords have been signed, namely the peace agreement of April 24, 1995, the additional protocol of Algiers of November 28, 1997 and the peace agreement of N’djimena signed on April 21, 1998.

The agreements, Mr Abdoul Karim Seydou said, were structured around four principal mainstays:
- decentralization
- the management of security in the zones affected by the conflicts
- the development of the affected regions
- and the integration and socio economic reinsertion of the ex combatants.

The commitments taken in article 12 of the agreement signed on April 24, 1995 turned around the elaboration of a law on decentralization, the adoption of the status of the Saharan Units with military characteristic and their implementation, the execution of the emergency economic programme for the region affected by the conflict and the beginning of the integrations in the various sectors of the State.

In his view Mr Abdoul Karim Seydou, thought that the whole mechanism related to decentralization was presently well underway, and local elections accordingly took place in 2004. However, he pointed out that the peace agreements planned for decentralization up to the regional level, whereas the plan that is presently being carried out amounts to centralization. The lecturer also pointed out that the four Saharan security barracks created for the Air Force, namely Azawak, Kawar and Manga, are all operational.

As for the development aspects, he mentioned that the donors’ round table planned by the peace agreements took place from October 30—31, 1995 and that some development partners made promises for help. Some programmes, which have been elaborated, were taken into account in the strategy for the reduction of poverty and the Special Programme of the President of the Republic. As far as the sector of integration and socio economic reinsertion is concerned, the lecturer reported that 3014 ex combatants have been integrated into the
different sectors of the State, educational institutes and schools whereas 4050 were taken for the socio economic reinsertion in the four regions (Air, Azawak, Kawar and Manga.)

In his analysis of the implementation of the peace agreements, Mr Abdoul Karim Seydou indicated that significant efforts have been made by the State, although large areas of weaknesses persist, constituting a source of continuing frustrations. He gave the following as examples:

- The delay in the implementation of the process of socio economic reintegration that began only ten years after the signing of the peace agreements;
- The lack of transparency around the process of recruitment and reintegration of the ex combatants in the different sectors of the State;
- The non recruitment of several high personnel of the ex armed groups. Notably at the mining companies. Although some leaders of the rebel groups were appointed to different posts in the structures and institutions of the State;
- The bad management of the careers of the reintegrated ex combatants and the fear among the elements integrated into the army and security forces, many of whom have already deserted since June 2006. while some were often dismissed for mere minor mistakes;
- The inequalities created by the peace accords, which resulted in the emergence of a new group of wealthy people among the rebel leaders and others who played an important role in the rebellion.

To conclude, Mr Abdoul Karim Seydou thought that the resurgence of the armed conflict in the North of our country is partially the expression of the failure of post conflict management, especially in military, economic and socio political matters. In regard to other matters, he thought that the High Commission for the Restoration of Peace (HCRP) did not have the necessary support to properly conduct its mission. It had not enough funds in the first place, which were moreover gradually reduced even further. And its mandate was overly restricted to only the management of the peace agreements.

Before concluding his talk, Mr Abdoul Karim Seydou, discussed the role of Libya and France through AREVA who, according to him, have some interests to defend in this part of the country. He also added that good governance and post conflict vision should be the leitmotivs for the political authorities. Finally, the lecturer called on the political class, the intellectuals and the civil society to work out some sustainable solutions to the situation in the North.

At the end of the debate that followed Mr. Abdoul Karim Saidou’s presentation, the following important ideas came out:

- Though many participants in the day of reflection totally agreed that the hypothesis that there was external interference in the armed conflict in the North should not be excluded, no one had the pretension to have the intangible proof. This lead many to people believe that this hypothesis is above all based on the presumption of good faith in the authorities of Niger, notably the President of the Republic. As regards the accusation of interference by foreign elements, namely France via the company AREVA and the Libyan Jamahiriya, participants thought evidence of such involvement if they exist, should be made available to the public.
- As far as the external interferences are concerned, it is reported that, in a letter sent to the Minister of foreign affairs of Niger, Libya claims 30,000 square km in the...
northern part of Niger. The President of the Republic confirmed this information by indicating that this dispute would be taken to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. If this option is considered to be just, the authorities should give some importance to the question of the delimitation of the national borders. Some adequate means should be deployed so that the competent services produce some intangible studies and data during the discussions with the neighbouring countries. About this matter, several evidences pointed out some weaknesses noticed in the management of the problems of borders, in particular the little willingness of the authorities to give adequate resources to the national commission for the delimitation of borders.

- Justified or not, the hypothesis of the external interference should not lead us to overlook the fact that the outburst of the armed conflict in the North is first of all related to the weakness of the State and above all to the lack of real democratic framework. This situation also results from the neo liberal policies applied by the successive regimes, which resulted in the total collapse of the social services (health, education, drinkable water, etc) and the massive unemployment of young people, graduate as well as non-graduate. Because of the extent corruption in all sectors of the state and society, the level of frustration is high in all the regions of our country. The public resources are badly managed or merely embezzled by a handful of individuals whereas the basic social services suffer because of a lack of adequate funding. The most obvious example is the affair called MEBA, which is today clearly and simply closed.

- Because of the appalling and continuing degradation in living conditions in all parts of the country, many participants think that the armed rebellion could have occurred in any region of our country. Although some progress had been made in setting up democratic institutions, the social conditions of most of the citizens have not improved in any way. Many participants cited the problem of chronic food insecurity in the country as a good illustration of this condition.

- After more than sixteen years of the process of democratisation, the culture of the Rule of Law is far from existing in the country. The perfect illustration of this situation is the malfunctioning of the judiciary system and its many inadequacies. Yet it is the judiciary that should constitute one of the pillars of the State of law and a resort against injustices. Justice in Niger is nowadays less credible than it used to be under previous regimes. The equality of citizens in front of the law and the presumption of innocence, which are the principal elements in a State of law are often not respected by the judges. This situation explains the disaffection of citizens towards a judiciary system considered corrupt and iniquitous. If nothing is done for the moment to restore the credibility of justice, the consequences on the preservation of the democratic framework will be immense: “People can prosper in disbelief, but not in injustice”, says a Hadith of the Prophet Mohamed (Peace upon Him).

- If it is undeniable in the eyes of some people that the armed conflict in the North of the country is linked to the weaknesses of the democratic framework and bad governance, others say that these two factors cannot by themselves alone explain this situation. They recall that big democracies such as France and Spain also have similar situations. These two countries are victims, for decades, of irredentism identity (Corsica and Basques notably). Niger could get some inspiration from the experiences of these democratic countries, which are confronted with separatist grievances; but without ignoring its own experience under the past regimes, notably during the 1st
Republic based on “patronage” and “clientism.” The authorities could also get some inspiration from the most ancient traditional mechanism such as the assemblies of the tribes of the Air during which were discussed and settled all the problems of security.

- The resurgence of the armed conflict in the North of our country is certainly not related to the shortcomings noticed in the implementation of the peace agreements signed with the ex rebel groups which have mainly been implemented. Moreover, if it is true that a few combatants integrated into the Saharan Security Units (SSU) have joined the MNJ, it is convenient to point out that the elements integrated into the regular armed forces and those reinserted in the framework of micro projects initiated in their favour still remain in place. Otherwise, it is good to point out that the development activities planned in the framework of these peace agreements have not taken into account the process of disarticulation of the economy in the zones affected by these rebellions. The pastoral activity of these areas has not been sufficiently taken into account; and everything shows that the problems the populations in these areas are confronted with have been relegated to the second rank. This make us deplore a lack of monitoring of the peace agreements and their assessment by the State, the political parties, the organizations of the civil society and the intellectuals.

- The High Commission for the Restoration of Peace has been relegated to a simple role of monitoring the peace agreements without any big means. In other respects, it has other missions that consist in creating the conditions of sustainable peace between all the citizens of Niger. It can only fulfil this mission if it is endowed with some organs of reflection and socio economic, cultural and political analysis. There is then a need to envisage a restructuring of this Institution by integrating some people aimed at thinking over the political, military and social management.

Thematic axis 3: “The foreseeable impacts of the armed conflict on the democratic framework,” presented by Mr. Maman Sani Adamou, Secretary General of ORDN-TARMAMUWA

In his speech on this theme, M. Maman Sani Adamou pointed out that the analysis of the armed conflict in the North would have more importance if it were placed in the global context of contradictory dynamics and relations of internal and external forces that have marked the democratic processes. If the restoration of a democratic and pluralist framework appeared to the workers and people of Niger, as the solution to the failure of the regime, for the Western powers that supported the regime, liberalization appeared as the remedy to all the problems of the post colonial State and as the appropriate framework for the deployment of the trans national capital, supposed to ensure general prosperity and put and end to bad management.

debating this assumption, Mr Maman Sani Adamou, insisted that it is not by chance that it was within a democratic context that Niger has recorded more violent and armed conflicts. Analysing the foreseeable impacts of the present armed conflict, he pointed out that this would bring about a drastic reduction of resources allocated to the social sectors and the fight against poverty. In addition to the war effort, this conflict can also bring about a slowdown of the economic activities in the North with notably a paralysis of the mineral resources exploitation.
On the political field, the speaker pointed out that the present armed conflict could weaken the State further by subtracting de facto one part of the country from the implementation of the democratic process. This can accelerate further the centrifugal tendencies susceptible to external covetousness. In these conditions, he considers that it is no exaggeration to think that the territorial integrity of the country could be under threat.

Moreover, the speaker thought that his conflict could jeopardize national unity because of the warlike rhetoric used by some social and political actors.

As for the human rights, the speaker was of the opinion that we have to expect from the belligerents a strong inclination to infringe on the rights and freedom of people without any possibility for the victims to fight back against the abuse and violations. he gave as examples, the government’s attempt to muzzle the media, that it has accused of a lack of objectivity.

Despite all the negative consequences of the conflict, Mr Maman Sani Adamou said, the conflict can be seen as a test of the viability of our institutions. It represents an opportunity to question their functionality. If we want to seize this opportunity, we have to believe in the democratic process and must condemn any resort to violence, he stated. According to him, the belief in the virtues of democracy has been seriously eroded as a result of the economic and social policies that have exacerbated poverty and because of the unprecedented predatory management of public resources.

To conclude, the speaker said that there is no genuine democracy without an independent and credible justice system, an effective popular participation, and citizen control of the public actions, and without the State of law. This is why he envisages the following solutions:

- The rehabilitation of the present democratic institutions by setting up a credible and independent judiciary system;
- The promotion of a culture of conflict prevention instead of a culture of reaction;
- The completion of the process of decentralization by extending it to the level of regions and by urgently solving the problems of the functioning of the decentralized communities;
- The absorption of the disparities between the regions and between the rural areas and the urban centres sustained by the implementation of a development model based on the satisfaction of the needs of the population.

After this presentation by Maman Sani, the discussions were launched on the thematic axis 3: the foreseeable impacts of the armed conflict on the democratic framework, and on the thematic axis 4: Analysis of the present management of the conflict and the propositions to solve the crisis. The exchanges around the two axes enabled the group to come out with the following points or positions:

- The armed conflict in the North is a clear reminder to us that Niger should overcome its challenges and reinforce its democratic framework and improve the functioning of its institutions. Once the democratic framework works and enables citizens to participate and to be heard, the risks of violent conflicts will be minimised. The most urgent task is to restore the credibility of our judiciary and to accelerate the
completion of the process of decentralization. We must abolish the environment of fear injustice, and we must move to the goals of balanced development of the regions.

- The durability of the democratic framework and the preservation of peace are only possible if the State make efforts to improve the living conditions of the populations. Through the implementation of appropriate economic, social and cultural policies the State must strive to satisfy the basic needs of the populations, notably as concerns education, health, and the access to clean water and adequate food. The must move to curve the problem of endemic unemployment among the youth, which constitutes a real time bomb.

- Considering the shortcomings noticed in the functioning of the institutions of representation, some people felt that it is necessary to set up a second chamber at the national assembly. This chamber could be composed of representatives from the regions with the mission to examine in the last resort the decisions made by the assembly. The representation in that chamber should be equal among all the regions, contrary to the rule prevailing at the present national assembly.

- The management of the armed conflict in the North is characterized by the serious failures in communication. The government communicate badly about the subject whereas it is its duty to objectively inform the citizens and the partners about what is going on. Presently, neither the citizens of Niger nor the partners have a coherent official version of all the twists and turns of the situation in the North. The interventions of the army and the hype by some social and political actors are considered hitches by many observers. The government should work to regain mastery and public confidence rather than encourage initiatives that will only confuse the situation. The examples of Côte d’Ivoire and Sudan clearly demonstrate that such acts can lead to drifts detrimental to national unity.

- The refusal of the authorities of Niger to recognize the MNJ as a rebellion is questionable. Even though people do not deny that some of the main actors of this movement have been at a given period involved in illegal activities, notably smugglers of vehicles and transporting forbidden goods. Some people believe that the MNJ is surrogate of external powers. Others talk back that the refusal to engage MNJ in negotiations is counter productive even foolish. Evidence seem to suggest that the radicalization or birth of the organization could have been avoided, if the governments of Niger and that of Mali had accepted the request for amnesty formulated by the leaders of MNJ at the beginning of their actions.

- According to some evidences, no rebellion can come to life and take such an extent in the North without the consent of the populations of the region and that of Algeria, with which Niger shares more than 800 kilometres of border. Considering this ascertainment, some people think that it is imperative to involve Algeria in the search for solution to the armed conflict in the North of the country. Others add that it is time for Niger to stop its present policy of backing Morocco in the Sahara matter. If the diplomatic relation with Morocco is important, it would be absurd to ignore that a good understanding with Algeria.

- The armed conflict in the North is cannot be separated from the mining policy conducted by the authorities of Niger as all the official protagonists including the
MNJ recognise it openly. This mining policy not only displeases the French company AREVA, which has lost its monopoly on the exploitation of uranium, it is also source of worry for other local actors who fear some considerable environmental damages and the subsequent reduction of the pastoral lands. If no one objects to the fairness of the present policy of the authorities of Niger, mainly in its sector of diversification of mining partners, people’s opinion is different as far as the appreciation of the procedure of granting permit and taking into account the interest of the local communities. The State has the inalienable right to exploit its natural resources with the partners of its choice, but it should also recognise the equally inalienable right of the local populations to ask for compensations for the occupation and degradation of grazing land. It is the duty of the State to implement some programmes of conversion for those who happened to lose their traditional means of existence.

- Niger officially adhered to the Initiatives on the Transparency of Extractive Industries (ITEI) in 2005, but the government has not yet satisfied its obligation to publish an assessment of the activities done in the framework of this initiative. A few days away from the deadline of August 31, 2007, we can wonder whether the State of Niger is not trying to avoid the fulfilment of its commitment in favour of the transparency on extractive and gas industries. Moreover, it has never made public a complete assessment of the resources obtained from the industries whereas more than one hundred exploration permits have been granted during the last seven (7) years. The clauses of the petrol code and the mining law allocating to the communities 15% of the profits drawn by the State are not respected. The transparency in the management of the revenues drawn from the exploitation of mineral resources as well as the realizations of investments carried out by the State for the local communities are considered everywhere in the world a necessary condition for the preservation of peace.

- Nowadays, everywhere in the world, the mining companies are compelled to take some appropriate measures to protect the populations, the livestock, the fauna, the flora and biodiversity from all the dangers deriving from mine extraction. The impacts caused by radioactivity on the health of the populations in Arlit, the environment and the water tables are the illustrations of the catastrophe, which may result from the absence of a State control of the mining activity. After 40 years of the exploitation of uranium, it is unacceptable that the town of Arlit and its surroundings don’t even have clean water. The companies should assume a social responsibility towards the local communities for which they have to carry out some social investments to satisfy their needs. Despite the pressure exercised by the civil society of Arlit, the State of Niger has not made any efforts to oblige the company AREVA to redress its mistakes. The State of Niger hindered all the initiatives aimed at conducting some independent inquiries on the effects of radioactivity on the populations.

- The recent review of the contract of AREVA, in some obscure conditions, left many citizens of Niger unsatisfied. The agreement signed was only partially made public. The revalorisation of the price of uranium has not been to the level of the legitimate expectations of the citizens of Niger; and the worries still remain as far as the results of the negotiations scheduled for next year are concerned. The prices of the uranium of Niger are always given in F cfa whereas those of other raw materials are in hard currencies. The future negotiations must take into account all the aspects and should be conducted in the biggest transparency. Presently, the price of uranium on the
international market is around 126 000 f cfa a kilo, but the French group AREVA has accepted to pay only 40 000 f cfa a kilo. This price is not acceptable, mostly because AREVA has had the pleasure to impose its price for 40 years.

- The recurrence of the attacks of MNJ brought to the open the weaknesses of our security and defence system. The security and defence forces, specifically the had serious difficulties tackling the rebels. This situation arose obviously because of, by the difficult conditions in which the troops operated. But it was in a large measure the result of low morale among the soldiers on account of the many injustices mated out to them by the authorities. During the decade there had been several army mutinies, soldiers complaining over their poor living and working conditions, but without results. Some soldiers arrested and tried in the framework of these mutinies were dismissed from the army despite being found not guilty of the facts they were accused of. The situation of ordinary soldiers differs greatly from that of the officer corps; and this does not favour cohesion and discipline within the army.

Conclusions and recommendations

The participants in the programs of the day of reflection were full of praise for the initiative of ANDDH and Alternative Citizens Spaces. Participants were unanimous in their assertion that the situation produced by the armed conflict in the North of Niger deserves to be taken seriously. To this end they formulated a set of recommendations as a guide to immediate action and remedy in the short term. The recommendations were inviting the Government of Niger to:

1- To act immediately to restore the integrity and the credibility of the judiciary system and cleanse it of corruption and illegalities so that citizens may once again have confidence in the system.

2- To desist from actions that restricts and limits the exercise and enjoyment of rights and freedom guaranteed by the Constitution of Niger, notably the freedom of expression and movement, and the freedom of association and peaceful demonstration. There must be no excuse to interfere in these freedoms because of present conflicts in the North.

3- Recognise immediately the MNJ as a Rebel Movement and start a dialogue with its representatives who must observe an immediate cease-fire. The option for dialogue and negotiations comes from a simple good sense as all the armed conflicts always finish at a negotiation table. Niger cannot indulge in a fratricide war, which would only complicate the already difficult socio economic situation of our country, weaken the nation and open the way to undermining the benefits of democracy.

4- Involve partners and friendly countries in the search of a negotiated solution to the armed conflict, which if allowed to continue would bring about famine and other serious social consequences.
5- Through a commission of inquiry determine the impact of uranium exploitation on health of the population and environment of Arlit. Demand and compel, if need be, immediate payment of compensation and damage reparation by AFEVA, the group operating in the region. For a long time civil society campaigners have made this demand without results.

6- Establish and publish as soon as possible an assessment of the activities conducted in the framework of the Initiatives on the Transparency of Extractive Industries (ITEI) and determine the amount of resources drawn from the exploration and exploitation of mines. This already is part of the commitments that the government of Niger had undertaken when it signed the ITEI initiative in 2005. Without this assessment, it would not be possible to monitor adherence to the clauses of the law on mines and the petrol code, which to allocated 15% of the profits directly to the local communities of the regions.

7- Take action to ensure that all payments and compensation due to the local populations on account of the use of the land or resources derived from their land, are paid as and when due.

8- Must continue to affirm the sovereignty of Niger on all part of its territorial domains including those under a bone of contention until a judiciary act decides otherwise. All bones of contention must be settled by judiciary means.

9- Convene a national forum on insecurity and adopt a national strategy for the prevention of conflict and their settlements. This forum should get an overview of the entire resources of the country and should be able to examine all the questions related to insecurity.

10- Take all the necessary measures to avoid the occurrence of new types of conflict by revising the existing frameworks of prevention and management of conflicts. Considering the devastating results of conflicts on the population Government must take measures that ensure that no further conflicts occur in future, or if they do, they would be promptly and adequately managed.

11- Encourage the people and their leaders to further commit themselves in the search for peace. In the present crisis there has be a positive sign of local leaders and the people of Agadez region being actively engaged in the peace process. It is important that the government support and encourage them by listening to them and giving value to their contribution.

12- Take urgent measures to remedy the serious crisis that exists in education at all levels by engaging in frank negotiations with all the stake holders, including students, teachers and parents. These past years, the school and univesity situation has become very worrying in our country. If nothing is done to enable the young people to study under good conditions, they may be tempted by violence.

13- Give an immediate response to the crucial problem of endemic youth unemployment in the country. Unemployment nowadays affects thousands of young people in our country, but the authorities presently envisage no sustainable solution. The problem of youth employment is a social menace that is also a security problem.
The above recommendations constitute only a sample of the propositions made by the participants in the day of reflection organized on August 11, 2007. This report gives an account of many other propositions that have not been synthesised in a form of recommendations. This is why we advise people to read the complete report.

Chapter Four

ECOWAS Regional Mechanism

By Mohamed Fadel Diagne

The Early Warning mechanism is completely a necessity. This became mandatory as the regional organization ECOWAS had not been able to achieve full political, economic and social integration of its membership, which still remains the ultimate objective. Moreover the sub-region was and still is beset with recurrent conflicts. The essence of ECOWAS’ efforts is to restore peace and security in those member states that have suffered conflicts and destabilisation. Progressively, instruments on conflict prevention and conflict management have been instituted within regional frameworks. To this end, the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Peacekeeping and Security was adopted in 1999 and was supported in 2001 by the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. All these were aimed at ensuring the consolidation of democracy and good governance within ECOWAS sub-region.

Thus, the Early Warning System constitutes one of the elements of conflict prevention and management. Articulated around the Early Warning Department (ex WTO), this system was decentralised from inception so as to reflect the realities in the field. The following four zones were carved out:

- **Zone 1**: Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde; with a zonal bureau in Banjul;
- **Zone 2**: Mali, Burkina, Cote d’Ivoir and Niger; with a zonal bureau in Ouagadougou;
- **Zone 3**: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Guinea Conakry; with a zonal bureau in Monrovia;
- **Zone 4**: Nigeria, Benin and Togo; with a zonal bureau in Cotonou.

While this was going on, the need to engage civil society and member States in the efforts to make the Early Warning System truly workable became obvious. These are stakeholders whose participation absolutely makes the system credible and reliable. To this reason, each member state is a host to a Civil Society focal point and a State focal point which, along with the zonal bureaus, contribute to the diversification and the credibility of sources of information in the Early Warning System.

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WACSOF/WANEP is involved in the process in different ways; through NGOs that are members of the Forum and also by contributions aimed at improving the concept of the Early Warning System. Finally, WACSOF/WANEP should be the lead in advocacy campaigns geared towards raising awareness about the system among different actors in the sub region.

On its part, ECOWAS is multiplying efforts to make the Early Warning System more accessible; soon, a working manual should be completed to assist the focal points in the filling of bulletins that highlight security and peace indicators. Also, the French and Portuguese language versions of these forms should be made available soon so as to help speakers of these languages in understanding the different tools of the system and to reflect the multi-lingual nature of ECOWAS.

The capacity of the Early Warning Department will need to be strengthened with at least six analysts four of whom will be for the zonal bureaus, one specialist in cartography and one registrar.

There is a need for an evolution in the relationship between the zonal bureaus and the focal points –‘civil society’ and ‘States’. There is equally the need to harmonise procedures at local levels on managing information destined for the Early Warning System. Also, there is the need for constant dialogue. In addition, the focal points should be equipped with basic equipments (laptops, printer, and internet subscription) for effective performance.

Finally, the management of peace and security indicators should be the preoccupation of all. The Early Warning System is bound to evolve. A mechanism for assessment and validation of indicators will need to be put in place in order to capture accurately the realities in the field and to forecast emergency needs. A permanent technical committee consisting of representatives from civil society (WACSOF perhaps) ECOWAS and member states could be the option.

This then is the summary of our reflections which we now submit for your considerations. We believe that there is still room for further improvements in the Early Warning System as presently conceived. When fully operational the System should be in a position to guarantee peace in our region, or at any rate minimize greatly the occurrence of conflicts.
Chapter Five  Resolving the Crises in Northern Mali: A Civil Society Perspective
By Mariam Maiga

The Malian Experience in Conflict Management in Northern Mali

Profile:
Country: Mali
Capital: Bamako/ a surface area of 1,241,328 km²
Borders: 7,340 km in length
Population: 12,000,000 inhabitants

Northern Mali: vast territory of 937,742 km² with a population of 928,324 inhabitants, that is to say less than 10% of the total population of the country.
It covers the present regions of Timbuktu, Gao et Kidal, which are the 6th, 7th, and 8th Malian Administrative regions respectively.
It is a sahelo-saharan region, essentially agro pastoral, characterised by high aridity.
The Northern Mali constitutes a highly vulnerable area in the country.

I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION
West Africa is, for many years now, confronted with serious threats to security, which jeopardize social peace, political stability, economic development and compromise greatly the dynamics of the integration of the sub-region.

In Mali, in particular, threats to peace, security and development have been a constant factor for the last twenty years or more. Two factors contributed to exacerbating the situation: the Western Sahara conflict, which broke out in 1975 between the Polisario Front and Morocco on the one hand, and the 1990-1996 rebellion in the North of Mali on the other hand. It is true that the Western Sahara conflict is now subsiding, but weapons used by the Polisario Front have been moving within the Sahelo-saharan strip (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad) to fuel other internal conflicts.

Besides the above factors, there is, in the national territory, the presence of Algerian Islamist terrorists (especially, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, SGPC), who use the uncontrolled Malian Sahara as their rear base. There is equally the ripple effect of crises and

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conflicts in the sub-region the least manifestation of which is massive influx of refugees and internally displaced persons and, the attendant activities being traffics of all kinds. The need to sell these weapons, particularly destructive for human beings, by gunrunners of different types, the very opportunity of concealing and transporting them, their availability in the market at a very affordable price, the porosity of the seven borders of the country with its neighbours have contributed to insecurity and a new wave organised crime.

II. HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE CONFLICT

Mali has witnessed two rebellions in the Septentrion, in 1963 and 1990. The first was subdued by force (military solution). The second was settled politically (dialogue, consultation, and participative approach). The causes of these two rebellions are multiple and complex. They are historical, economic and socio-cultural.

What is generally called Northern Mali is, geographically speaking, a vast territory of 937,742 km², which host a population 928,324 inhabitants, that is to say less than 10% of the total population of the country.
It covers the present regions of Timbuktu, Gao et Kidal, which are the 6th, 7th, and 8th Malian Administrative regions respectively.
It is a sahelo-saharan region, essentially agro pastoral characterised by high aridity.
The Northern Mali constitutes a highly vulnerable area in the country.

First rebellion
The first rebellion broke out in 1963. This first rebellion was subject to different interpretations depending on the position of the different actors. What one can, however, remember is that the then authorities opted for a military solution to end it.

Second rebellion
The second rebellion broke out on 19th June 1990 with new actors, in every respect. It is important to note that the 1990 insurgents are descendants of those of the previous rebellion.
Taking into account the socio-economic context of the time, the authorities were trying negotiation, which, after the heat of violence, proved to be the best means of achieving solution by taking into consideration the concerns of all parties in conflict.
It is noteworthy that it is this second rebellion that was subject to a new management focussed on dialogue, consultation and participation.

III. MANAGEMENT OF THE CONFLICT OF NORTHERN MALI

Right from the beginning of the conflict the authorities of that time have opted to negotiate with the rebel leaders, most especially through the traditional leaders, and through Arab and Touareg officers. Later on, the entire Malian people mobilised itself in favour of a peaceful and negotiated solution to the conflict so as to preserve the social cohesion, national unity and retain the national territorial integrity.

Malians are a people endowed with a rich culture and a deep sense of history. This endowment proved of tremendous value in the peaceful search for peace. In the end the resolution of the conflict through peaceful negations in the spirit of give and take greatly strengthened the Malian society as people gained new confidence in themselves.
3.1. The negotiation Process from Tamanrasset Agreements to the National Pact.

Tamanrasset Agreements
From the early weeks of the conflict, following the Summit of Heads of State of Algeria, Libya, Niger and Mali, the Malian authorities sent delegations of key traditional leaders of the region to make informal contacts with leaders of armed groups. These contacts were a useful means of getting understand the motivations and fears the groups in armed rebellion. This enabled the contact group to secure the agreement of the rabbles to a negotiated peace and settlement. The parties in conflict therefore, agreed to hold the first meeting at Tamanrasset under the aegis of Algeria, a friendl country, who, from that moment on became a mediator. The talks led to the signing of the Tamanrasset Agreements of January 1991.

These Agreements provided in the first place for immediate ceasefire. Beyond that it sought to build in frame work for development and regional balance as a means of putting an end to hostilities and ensuring lasting peace and security. But even then as the agreements were being signed and before they could be implemented, the Government was shaken by a popular insurrection that led to the coup d’état of 26th March 1991.

As soon as General Moussa Traore regime fell the Transition Committee for the Salvation of the People (CTSP) confirmed its support to the Tamanrasset Agreements. It acknowledged all the representatives and signatories to the Agreements. With the assistance form Algeria, in its role as mediator and France who sent a team of facilitators, the CTSP now pushed forward with fresh negotiations in a bid to open new perspectives and to consolidate the peace.

The National Pact
The National Conference organized in July-August 1991. It served as a forum for popular expression and a platform for all stakeholders, including armed groups from the North. Participants called for a special conference expressly to discuss the ideals of peace and democracy. To this end a preparatory technical meeting was held in Segou 25th to 27th November.

The Special Conference itself followed on 16th, 17th and 18th December 1991. It was held at Mopti under the chairmanship of H.E. Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the CTSP. The conference gave a new dynamic to conflict management through peaceful negotiations and the will to arrive at consensual solutions. The Mopti Special Conference proved a deciding event and it paved the way leading to negotiations between the Government and the Armed Groups.

Form 29th to 30th December 1991, Malians and Algerians met in Algiers to agree on the framework and the content of the negotiations. That meeting was followed by series of other meetings, between January 1991 and March 1992 under the aegis of the Algerian mediator. The result was the adoption by the parties in conflict of an outline agreement called «National Pact», the signature of which took place in Bamako on 1st April 1992 under the chairmanship of the CTSP's president. The official ceremony was graced with the presence of the Algerian mediator as well as many representatives of friendly countries and international organisations.
The National Pact contains three clauses:

a) Security clause: provided for immediate ceasefire, followed by demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants into the armed forces and the civil service. Those not integrated, would be provided for through socio-economic rehabilitation. To this end a compensation and rehabilitation fund will be established. The clause also allowed for the return of refugees and IDPs.

b) The institutional clause: insisted on the strict implementation of the decentralisation policy as way to peace and stability. It set a commission in the North to take care of implementation of the National Pact.

c) The clause on economic and social development: this established a programme of social and economic development in the North to ensure for a balanced development of the country

3.2. Some local conflict management tools and their recorded results

3.2.1. Regional dialogues
In its quest to broaden the consensus base that led to the National Pact, the Government of the 3rd Republic deemed it fit to organise in August 1994, regional dialogues throughout the national territory with the central theme focused on the North issue. The Malian people were well informed and sensitised on the Septentrion problems: the importance of the National Pact, the stakes of its application, the insecurity phenomenon and its sub-regional dimension, etc.

At the end of the regional dialogues a national summary document defining a consensual pattern of conflict management was drawn and widely circulated. The lessons drawn from those dialogues were of great importance. They were focused on the role that civil societies could play to bring a lasting solution to internal crises as well as the relationship between peace, security and development.

3.2.2. Government Missions
They followed the regional dialogues. These missions were carried out by ministers, including representatives of the National Assembly, traditional leaders, religious leaders, the media as well as armed groups that have accepted peace have gone throughout the country and the refugee camps in neighbouring countries. Their objective was to spread peace and security messages and national harmony.

These Government Missions were followed, some weeks later, by a series of inter-community meetings in the Northern regions where conflicts have seriously damaged the social fabric and affected badly social cohesion among different communities.

3.2.3. The Inter-community meetings
They have enriched the logic of regional dialogues and Government Missions. Organised freely by the communities with the support of the authorities, the meetings provided
opportunities for reunions and opportunities for dialog and reconciliation. It enabled everyone to plan for a common future. These have built trust and they gave a feeling of security to especially to refugees and facilitated their return and rehabilitation.

The transcripts of the meetings were compiled into a book titled «Summary of Inter-community Meetings» and many evaluation reports were widely circulated to respond to the information needs. According to observers, these inter-community meetings had a very positive impact on the field. They have, most especially, mended the social fractures. Reconciliation was sealed between nomads and sedentary populations thanks to the virtue of dialogue.

At the end, regional dialogues, Government Missions and the inter-community meetings have proven to be authentic local conflict Management tools.

3.2.4. Integration Programmes and reintegration of ex-combatants

Shortly after signing the National Pact, and without waiting for the reaction of technical partners and donors, the Malian Government undertook, with its own funds the process of assembling of combatants from the various groups so as to plan for their integration.

Between 1993 and 1996 the integration process enabled the Government to recruit into the military and paramilitary services and the civil service a total of 2,540 ex-combatants from the Movements and the Unified Fronts of AZAWAD (MFUA) as well as the Malian Patriotic Movement Ganda Koy (MPMGK).

The Government in association with its development partners, and with the technical assistance of UNDP have put in place the Special Integration Funds to cater for the needs of the ex-combatants who could not get absorbed into military and paramilitary organisations or the civil service. This fund formed part of the implementation of the Support Programme for the socio-economic reintegration of the ex-combatants (PAREM). The following countries have contributed to that fund: United States of America, Canada, The Netherlands, France, Belgium, Japan, Switzerland, and Mali.

Some 9,509 ex-combatants have benefited from the programme through 866 individual and collective projects, for a total amount of about 9 millions US dollars. The first rehabilitation programme (PAREM) ended in December 1997. It was followed by a second programme called the Consolidation of the Gains of the Rehabilitation Programme (CAR-NORD), which continued till 2002.

3.2.5. Programme for the return of the refugees and IDPs.

The repatriation of refugees and the settlement of internally displaced persons were made possible by the partnership with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and Mali partners. This necessitated many sensitisation campaigns in the neighbouring countries that have hosted Malian populations. Besides the sensitisation campaigns, more than one hundred inter-community meetings were held to facilitate the return and rehabilitation of refugees and displaced persons. They have tremendously contributed to the reconciliation process and the reopening of closed local markets. Each meeting has, practically, put in place a Commission for Disarmament and fight against insecurity. These commissions have inspired Malian authorities to create, at the community level, micro-disarmament local commissions, emanating from the national commission, which fights against the proliferation of small arms.
Practical measures have been taken to facilitate the repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons:

a. provision of amenities and security in the resettlement sites

b. improvement of the living conditions before reintegration

c. establishment of cooperation programme in the area of food assistance, rural water, health, education, micro-finance, etc.

All these actions were made possible through direct support received in form of grain contribution and others «work for food» or «work for training».

On 25th June 1999, the return of 132,000 refugees was recorded by the UNHCR among who 65,000 or about half were spontaneous return following government missions.

The very interesting aspect of the process were the way in which the Malian authorities succeeded in building trust between the government and the ex-combatants, on the one hand and among the refugees, the IDPs and the populations that stayed behind on the other hand.

From 1999, all the Northern regions started enjoying a relative autonomy through decentralisation. This privilege is shared with the seven other regions and Bamako district.

3.2.6. Meetings with development partners.

To consolidate the dynamic of peace, the Government organised on 27th June 1995, in Timbuktu a meeting with partners on the development of the North. Participants to that meeting were Government agencies, armed groups’ representatives, the civil society as well as technical partners and donors. A number of measures were adopted in relation to the normalisation transition and rehabilitation programme in the North, as well as the joint commission Mali/development partners.

The joint commission brought together representatives of ministerial departments under the chairmanship of the Foreign Affairs Minister, on the one hand and all technical partners and donors that intervene in the North under a rotational chairmanship among of Diplomatic Missions. The transition programme and the joint commission have played, for four years, a critical role in the field in terms of partnership and fruitful international cooperation. The Malian Government created an Integrated Development Agency for Northern regions (IDAN) to coordinate and make all external support coherent. This body replaced the Commission of the North that was serving as the technical secretariat of the joint commission.

3.2.7. The Organisation of Peace Torch in Timbuktu in March 1999 ad the Official Declaration of all the ex-combatants (MFUA and MPMGK) of the Official Dissolution of their armed Movements and Fronts.

3. The Civil Society initiatives

During the conflict, violence, intolerance, hatred and tribalism had reached a worrisome stage, which predicted a very gloomy prospect of the situation. Violence was just the next logical step in Northern Mali like in other countries.
But, surprisingly, one witnessed a reversal of the situation. In the complexity of the dynamics that led to the settlement of the conflict, it is clear from the Malian experience in conflict management, that civil society put in a lot help halt the crisis and to the mobilise moral and socio-cultural resources. In this particular case we can see clearly that civil society (notables, traditional leaders, women, and youth) was able to draw from values and norms moulded over centuries. They applied these old lessons to mend and consolidate the social fabric eroded by months the prolonged period of crises. Some organisations and notables have got involved in the management of the conflict and have succeeded in constituting themselves into a social pressure strong enough to influence key decisions in the area of peace and security.

The involvement of the civil society was critical in two very important phases:

**The first phase runs from June 1990, the date the rebellion broke out, to 11th April 1992, the date the National Pact was signed.** The different components of the civil society (traditional leaders, religious leaders, independent personalities, women organisations, youth, community associations, etc. got involved so as to promote dialogue among the belligerents, encourage the materialisation of the ceasefire and negotiations and participate in the planning and the signature of the National Pact.

**The second phase runs from 11th April 1992 to 27th March 1996, date of the ceremony of the Peace Torch in Timbuktu.** Over this period, civil society committed itself to peace and security consolidation. Its membership worked to collect and distribute information in the sensitisation campaign in favour of positive social values, the regulation of social and interpersonal relations, search for consensus through dialogue.

**3.2.9. Specific role of women in the process**

In the commitment shown by civil society, women have particularly distinguished themselves. They were at the very heart of conflict management, the settlement process, and the consolidation of peace and security.

In October 1991, a group of Malian women had taken part in Mali National Conference. There they initiated a programme for the sensitisation of Northerners residing in Bamako. They were the same group of women that gave birth to the group that became known as Women National Movement for the safeguard of Peace and National Unity. This Movement in collaboration with other women organisations like the Association of women in Camps played a critical role in the restoration of peace and reconciliation in Northern Mali. The contribution of Malian women to the conflict management process in the North was based on the wise use of social capital and local peaceful conflict resolution tools.

**1. Women’s participation in crisis management**

- Thanks in part to their earlier participation in the Mali National Conference, women became thoroughly aware of the grave challenges and the high stakes involved in the Malian crisis
- Consequently women were prepared and ready to do all it took to halt the crisis. For instance they were among the groups out there in the field in Gao, in Timbuktu and in other places, canvassing for peace
- Women mobilised their own personal resources including finance and deployed them in crisis management and peace negotiations.
Women proved very good in providing analysis of the dynamics of the crisis situation and related events. Consequently women were able to come up with concrete programmes of action that helped in the crisis management and peace negotiations.

2. Women participation in the pre negotiation arrangements:

- Women participated actively in the Bamako and Ségou peace preparatory meetings
- Women sent RFI message in connection with the meeting of the different armed Movements and Fronts at EI Golea in Algeria
- Women sent a message to armed movements at the EI Golea armed movements’ meeting, and ensured that the message was read.
- Women prepared radio and television broadcasts on the subject of reconciliation and national unity for all parties and actors in the crisis and peace negotiations.
- Women were active in the control of rumours in partnership with IRC so as to prevent a situation in which individuals and communities would engage in the ugly acts settling of scores
- Women were engaged in the information and sensitisation missions to the populations of Northern regions on the PN project
- Women were not deterred by attempts by some combatants in Timbuktu to kidnap members of women delegation.
- Women were involved in the Mopti Preparatory meeting which prepared the way for peace.

3. Women active in the signing of the National Pact on 11th April 1992

- The National Pact project is broadcasted in the concerned regions
- Reception of the MFUA at Bamako airport

4. Women active in the implementation of the National Pact

4.1. Sensitisation of populations for the establishment of the Ceasefire Commission

5. The 23rd May 2006 events and the Women Action:

6. The August 2007 Events

Among the cultural values that women mobilised and deployed in the cause of peace the «sanankunya» kinship for joke. Women made the most effective use of that golden sound in their pursuit for peace. Given the importance attached to women’s words, in this particular case, the women positively influenced the course of history. Their message was aimed directly at the authorities, the combatants and the other parties engaged in the negotiations and the peace process.
Among themes that women popularized that of respect for good neighbourliness proved the most impactful. As we know, the neighbourliness is sacred in Malian world view. The neighbour is considered, after the family, as the first parent, the first witness of a person and a family within a community. The bases of a relationship is guided by trust, peaceful coexistence between neighbours are rooted in sound religious and social values. One should share with neighbours, in fortune and misfortune.

Another theme was that of tolerance and self control. Many events illustrated that aspect. For example, at the Mopti meeting, the populations had already organised themselves to prevent the plane bringing the armed movements to take part in the preparations for the peace negotiations from landing. It took the salutary and robust intervention by the women’s delegation to prevent an ugly situation with the result that the delegation of the armed movements were received in a most friendly way.

On the day the National Pact was signed, women mobilized themselves to receive the various delegations they arranged the ceremony. They opened a Golden Book that was duely signed by all the participants.

In their anti conflict sensitisation program the women targeted especially community leaders such as groups of from families and tasked them to take to their communities the message of peace. The women were able to deploy very effectively the African sense of humour as contained in joking relationships.

The Raising of the Right Breast

In summary, the message and method used by women had a resounding impact and was central to the restoration of peace and security in our country.

The contribution of women in conflict management in the North was acknowledged by all, and much appreciated to all who witnessed it, including representatives of the international community. The Malian experience serves as a reference point to other African countries as well as countries outside the continent.

The role of CONASCIPAL

Created on 2nd March 1999, this coalition brings together about twenty umbrella civil society organisations among which, Family Founders of Bamako (Niaré, Touré, Dravé), the Coordination of Ward Heads, Malian Association for the Unity and Progress of Islam (AMUPI), the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, the Women National Movement for the Safeguard of Peace and National Unity (MNFPUN), The Committee for the Coordination of NGOs (CCA-NGO), Group for Research and Action for Development (GRAD), SECO-NGO, Enda-Third World, Association of Malian Traditional Singers, National Federation of Malian Artisans (FNAM), Child Foundation, Pacific Association 2000, Association of Traditional and Customary Leaders for Peace and Development for Gao Region, Coordination and Association of Organisations and Groups of Malian Retailers, Informal Group of Malian Local Weapon manufacturers, Association of Malian Hunters, Malian Chamber of Commerce and industry/CCIM.

Since its creation, CONASCIPAL has carried out many activities. In April 1999 in Gao, it hosted an inter-regional workshop on the “Place and the Role of Civil Society in the Fight...
against Proliferation of Small Arms”. Between 2002 and 2003 it ran a series of workshop on the “Fight against Insecurity and the Proliferation of Small Arms in the District of Bamako”. At the national level CONASCIPAL ran the secretariat located within the National Council in charge in charge of peace and security. At the international level CONASCIPAL is a founding member of the Network for the Civil Society Action for the Fight against Small Arms in West Africa/(RASALAO) and IANSA (International Action Network for Small Arms).

CONASCIPAL is headed by the Women National Movement for the Safeguard of Peace and National Unity. As the key figure in the fight of Malian women for peace in Northern Mali, it holds many honorary distinctions for its commitment to the cause of peace and security in Mali, particularly a diploma of Acknowledgement form the Malian Women, Children and Family Affairs Ministry (July 2006) and an NGO called International African Women Solidarity/AWS (Woman Peace Mediator in Africa, June 2006). MNFPUN is a Malian Chevalier of the National Order since 1992.

Spurred by its steering Committee, CONASCIPAL holds a position that makes it a partner to reckon with in the area of conflict prevention and management and in the fight against the proliferation of small arms. In reaction to the call by the Government it organised on January 29th, 30th and 31st 2007 the first civil society national forums on Democratic Governance. All in all more than two hundred participants from all the regions of Mali and from across the social strata were in attendance.

IV. Challenges to the implementation of the National Pact

Upon the signing of the National Pact, the authorities promised to promptly implement all its clauses. But it was clear from the start that this would not be easy. The sticking point was, the Government would need to put in more resources than it has at its command. It would take time for it to mobilize the extra resources needed.

The Government remained committed at its highest level, and has pushed for many initiatives, at finding peaceful solution within as well as without the country. One can mentioned among other initiatives the followings:

- The publication of a White Paper on the Northern Issue, dealing with the causes, impacts as well as the possible solutions envisaged by the Government;
- The establishment of an Interim College of Administrative Subdivisions that will represent the people and assist the government and development partners in the definition and the choice of intervention programmes;
- The organisation, in June 1994, of a meeting in Tamanrasset to strengthen the dialogue and make necessary arrangements aimed at speeding up the implementation of National Pact in all its clauses.

Besides, the Government had launched a robust social capital mobilisation programme in the pursuit of local advocacy for peace and inter-community meetings to consolidate the reconstruction process in the North.

Although the National Pact reconciliation, concluded in April 1992, between the Government and the armed Movements had succeeded in ending hostilities in Northern Mali, two concomitants phenomena have emerged:
1. a form of residual banditry characterised by acts of hold-ups, abduction of vehicles and despoliation of goods (clearly new activities of the jobless but armed youth)
2. and intra-community conflicts of different types; between cattle keepers/farmers, Arabs/Touareg, Arabs/Kounta, Nigerien Nomads/Malian farmers, Mauritanian cattle keepers/Malian farmers etc.

Other factors have equally contributed in arousing doubt in the minds of some ex-combatants who have gone back to their arms. Such factors include:
- The slow implementation of the Pact
- Insufficient follow-up of the evaluation of the National Pact
- Lack of national policy to consolidate peace
- Lack of the involvement of the different civil society groups in the implementation of the National Pact despite the fact that they played a critical role in its formulation and acceptance by the various parties.

**Consequences:**
The events that took place on 23rd May 2006 in Kidal and Méneka crowned with Algiers Agreement for the restoration of peace, security and development of 4th July 2006 followed by the forum organised in Kidal are considered as part and parcel of the National Pact.

**V. LESSONS LEARNED**

3.1. **First lesson:** the internal armed conflict is more difficult to manage because it is a conflict among parties that are from the same soil.

3.2. **Second lesson:** the critical role of the national mediation
One of the essential keys to the resolution of an internal conflict is the ability to take into regard the perception and the consciousness of the protagonists themselves. The concerned parties are always able to appreciate the high stakes involved. Answers and resolutions must be sought within the framework of the conflict. In this regard the Malian experience and its use of National Mediation as a tool of conflict resolution, has shown the importance of social values in conflict management and resolution, especially those values related to dialogue, consultation, cooperation, solidarity, sharing and consensus.

3.3 **Third lesson:** the absolute need to involve the international community in the implementation of the peace and security agreements, as this serves to reassure the parties in conflict. Moreover most internal conflicts have repercussions far beyond national borders. Sometimes the local environment on its own can have a negative impact on the progress towards peace. Assistance coming from the international community, whatever its nature should be considered a contribution and treated as such by all the parties.

3.4. **The forth lesson:** The need of a pertinent follow-up evaluation mechanism because the search for peace is never ending process and must be treated as such.
3.5. **The fifth lesson:** The need to take into account, security issues in the design, implementation and follow up programmes.
3.6. The sixth lesson: agreements should be accompanied by peace consolidation programmes that will take into consideration the gender dimension during their design, implementation and follow-up evaluation.

Conclusions
The settlement of the problem in the North through a negotiated solution consolidates Mali’s position as a Nation of dialogue, tolerance and moderation. It would be better if these virtues are further consolidated as part of our effort to bring out the best in our rich socio-cultural heritage.

There exist in Mali local tools that can be used whenever conflicts break out among individuals or groups and threaten the social peace and tranquillity. This local reflex to conflict management, which was formalised and used by the civil society in this instance, is absolutely of great importance in conflict management and resolution.

Recommendations
The establishment countrywide of focal points for the purpose of early warning in conflict and disaster control and management

Ensuring that institutional capacity building, preparedness and networking, in the area of conflict prevention and conflict management, is carried out.

The establishment of a databank and information system on early warning and conflict management should be undertaken.

There is a need always to involve civil society in pre and post conflict management as a way of preventing or minimizing conflict occurrence or reoccur.
Chapter Six  
Conference Report on the Conflict in Northern Niger and Mali

By Abdoulaye Diallo

WEST AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON EARLY WARNING AND THE CONFLICT IN NORTHERN NIGER AND MALI

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

In the past decade, the world has witnessed numerous violent conflagrations across several nations in West Africa. The instability in the sub region has proved to be the most serious threat to development and economic prosperity in the region. This situation constitutes one of the main obstacles to the evolution and development of democracy in West Africa. Taking cognizance of the dire need to find lasting solutions to the situation, the international community, the African Union and ECOWAS have been intensely seeking for decisive ways and means toward a definite resolution of the political impasse under which yoke lies the destiny of the West African Sub-region. As attempts are being made to redress the situation, it is however sad to notice that civil society has been somehow sidelined in consultations and peace building endeavours at state and multilateral level. In an attempt to bolster the necessary contribution of civil society for a permanent entrenchment of peace in the sub region, WACSOF, CDD along with ECOWAS and other organisations have steadfastly embarked on a crusade to seeking, finding, proffering and implementing salutary strategies and policies for the management and resolution of conflicts in West Africa. Civil society has been proving the importance of their constructive and complementary role in the resolution of conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, among others.

There is a general consensus today that realities and exigencies in West Africa demand transcending conflict resolution. People have now come to the realization that exerting energy and resources to solve crises are not all that practical since many conflicts tend to re-emerge. Instead, focus should be redirected to the root causes of violent crises, with an eye to devising ways to nip crises in the bud hence preventing them from conflagrating. It is therefore within this framework that early warning and rapid response programmes have been developed by ECOWAS, WANEP, WACSOF, CDD and others, to try and make conflicts in West Africa a thing of the past.

A case in point is the Touareg rebellion in Northern Niger which has recently gained momentum, leading to a socio-political conundrum that augurs a crisis of unfathomable proportions. In northern Niger, the frequency of rebel attacks has been on the rise during these past seven months. Attacks and sabotage attempts are being perpetrated by rebels on state infrastructure and on the installations of foreign companies like the French AREVA, which to a large extent holds the monopoly for the exploitation of natural resources such as uranium and oil. Fighting between FAN (Forces Armées Nigeriennes/Armed Forces of Niger) and the Touareg rebels have been raging particularly in Agadez, causing a lot of destruction loss of lives all around, especially on the civilian population. In the meantime,

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37 Abdoulaye Diallo was a program officer at CDD. He works now for CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal.
38 held at oasis hotel, Niger 20- 21st September, 2007
the administration of President Mamadou Tandja refuses to acknowledge the rebels, referring to them merely as a ‘bunch of hoodlums and drug traffickers’. The regime continues to refuse to consider rebel demands, centred on the key Touareg demands of the integration of their people into the day to day running of the country (particularly in the national army, and public administration), and in their participation in the exploitation of mines most of which are located in the Touareg area of Northern Niger. Clashes between government forces and rebel militants - led by the Aghaly Alambo, president of Mouvement Nigérien pour la Justice (MNJ) - have been particularly violent during the last half of the year 2007. To add fuel to the fire, the formerly dormant Touareg rebels of North Mali have sprung into action and are believed to be backing their kinsmen in Niger. This collaboration both compounds and turns the crisis turns it into a trans-national one. The situation has since deteriorated despite the existence at hand of democratic means to resolve the crisis. There is for instance in and in particular the peace accord signed in 1995 and the subsequent Constitution of August 9th, 1999 both of which defend and uphold the rights of all the people of Niger.

The situation is serious and if left unchecked, could lead to a full blown conflict, sure to engulf all the surrounding countries in the West African region. If this grim scenario were allowed to materialize, the region will ineluctably backslide to the dark days of violence and destruction. Many lives will be lost. Peace and development will be a remote mirage.

In face of this dreadful menace and fearful prospects for the region, WACSOF and CDD decided to mobilize and to bring together civil society organisations in the sub region for a workshop, under the umbrella of The West African Civil Society Consultative Forum on Early Warning Mechanism. The meeting took place in September 20th and 21st at the Oasis Hotel in Niamey. More than thirty five leading civil society activists, government representatives, journalists and professionals from Mali, Senegal and Niger were invited to deliberate on the way forward for peace in the region. All invited participants were experienced civil society activists with records of achievements. Every participant was thus a resource person. A report of the work that had been done so far on early warning plus two lead papers on the subject set the stage for dialogue and discussions. Working groups were formed to examine fully the various dynamics of the Niger crisis and come up with strategies and solutions.

The main objective of the meeting was to develop a strategy for capacity building and a more active role for civil society in Early Warning processes in general and the ECOWAS mechanisms on early warning and rapid response in particular. The crisis in Northern Niger fell perfectly within this framework. The impetus behind the gathering was the obvious necessity to reappraise the Niger crisis in order to come forward with a workable solution. In bringing together civil society activists in Niger along with those from the neighbouring countries of Mali and Senegal, the occasion allowed them to compare notes on the crises within the Sahel region. It allowed the participants to analyse compare strategies that have been employed to confront and contain the crisis across the region. As mentioned already, the occasion provided opportunity for CDD and WASCOF to enlighten civil society organisations in the sub region on the ECOWAS Mechanism for early warning. The meeting also proved useful in involving local CSOs in the programme.

1.1 ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES of the meeting:
   a. To critically examine conflict threats peculiar to the Sahelian/Saharian region,
b. To critically examine the draft framework and strategies for engagement in the peace and early warning process in West African sub-region,
c. To the previous peace deals and early warning mechanisms and critically assess their effectiveness and also look at ways to ensure that previous mistakes are not repeated,
d. To analyze the opportunities for ECOWAS and the International Community to support their involvement in the implementation of early warning mechanisms.
e. To produce a clear framework of an action plan that will engage CDD and WACSOF as well as ECOWAS to address emerging conflict triggers in states of the West African region,
f. To develop a CDD/WACSOF Action Plan, looking at the opportunities and challenges that would help or hinder the engagement of civil society in the early warning program, and
g. Finally, to issue at the end of the workshop, a communiqué to draw the attention of both the government of Niger and its citizens, to role of ECOWAS as well as those of CDD/WACSOF members and donors/partners in peace making.

1.2 The following objectives were successfully achieved during the meeting:
a. Development of a strategy for active analysis of the Niger crisis,
b. Advances towards a more united civil society in the sub region, particularly in Niger, were made
c. Progress was made towards a more effective participation of West African civil society organisation in the improvement of the ECOWAS early warning mechanisms,
d. The Niger State as became more appreciative of the overriding desires of its citizens for a speedy resolution of the crisis, and was more eager to secure peace
e. Enhancement of the action plan framework between CSOs and ECOWAS to address evolving conflicts in West Africa,
f. Enhanced understanding of the socio-political dynamics of conflicts in North Mali and Niger and the nature of early warning triggers,
g. Agreement between CDD and WACSOF to accompany key civil society members from this workshop to ECOWAS Commission in Abuja for the presentation of the communiqué to the ECOWAS President.

At the end of the workshop, a communiqué emanating from the meeting’s deliberations and recommendations was issued, and specifically directed for the attention of the Tanja Administration, West African Civil Society Forum, the ECOWAS and the international community at large. WACSOF was entrusted with the task of presenting the communiqué to the ECOWAS Commission as input to future programmes.

2. The Niamey Workshop

2.1 Opening Ceremony: Among the dignitaries who graced the West African Civil Society Consultative Forum with their presence at the opening ceremony were; Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, Director of CDD and Provisional Administrator of WACSOF, Professor Oumar Ndongo, incoming General Secretary of WACSOF, Alhoussein Abdoulaye, representing Mouhamed Anacko, High Commissioner for Peace in Niger, Souley Adji, Président of Group Alternative, Espace Citoyenne of Niger, Mr. Mohamed Fadhel Diagne, Head of ECOWAS Zonal Office of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and Mr. Laoual Sallaou Sayabou, WACSOF Focal Person in Niamey.
At the opening ceremony, the invited dignitaries thanked all participants for their presence. The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) affirmed their unyielding commitment to tackling issues assailing the West African sub region. Delegates thanked especially the CDD for its financial assistance and co-organisation of the event.

Delegates put in the enormous challenges facing the people of Niger and civil society there as they grappled to bring an end to the raging conflicts in that country. Awareness was expressed that if the crisis were not speedy resolved it could endanger the entire West African region and engulfed Central Africa as well. The issue of failed peace treaties that were signed in Mali and Niger were a central focus of concern to all present. Delegates were invited to ponder the factors behind the collapse of the peace and bring forward ideas that could help bring back the peace of the region. The need for a more effective collaboration between ECOWAS and the West African civil society was also expressed as being one of the stimuli of the meeting which was a welcome opportunity for civil society to proffer ways to improve the ECOWAS mechanism on early warning. Additional opening comments and expectations were expressed toward a fruitful deliberation.

2.2 THE FIRST WORK SESSION started with the presentation of the report of a previous workshop held in Ouagadougou. These led to much deliberation. There was consultation between civil society organisations (CSO) in the sub region and ECOWAS, as delegates grappled with the issue of streamlining and strengthening the Early Warning programme. Civil society organisations sought for ways to review the ECOWAS 93 initial indices for early warning triggers, suggesting modifications aimed at enhancing the efficacy of the programme. At the end 14 indices were adopted. Participants at the Niamey workshop were reminded that it was within this framework that CDD, in collaboration with WACSOF had intervened for the resolution of the Ivorian crisis in 2006. A brief discussion over the report ensued, helping shed more light on the nature and outcome of the Ouagadougou workshop.

A presentation on ECOWAS Early Warning system followed. The ECOWAS representative from the Ouagadougou Zonal Office led the discussions, and established from the onset a broad holistic approach to the subject. A detailed history and background of the early warning programme was presented. The programme became necessary following the failed peace accords and a return to full scale violence in the region. It was against this background that the ECOWAS early warning mechanism was attached to the Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy. However, many states have yet to comply. Structural changes have also taken place within ECOWAS. It was within this framework that four zones were created in the four main areas of West Africa under the department formerly known as Observation and Monitoring. The latter has now become ECOWAS Early Warning Department.

The importance of the role of civil society was highlighted, particularly at zonal bureau level. Participants were invited to investigate ways in which civil society organisations could enhance and extend their work on advocacy, which should include also working with and alongside governments in the ECOWAS member countries. It was in this regard that programmes of the West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP) was extended to cover the entire sub region. It was pointed out that in the past there had been a misunderstanding and misconceptions regarding the early warning system. Some believed it
had which a link with covert international intelligence activities. This was not the case as its open and non classified nature of the information gathering clearly demonstrates.

With regards to the operational side of the early warning system, participants of the workshop were reminded that ECOWAS has established different outreach posts or early warning focal points where civil society and the state’s early warning agents or focal persons collect and report issues and incidents related to conflict triggers or evolving crises in the sub region. The purpose of this structure is to create an environment whereby all stakeholders can put heads together and make constructive inputs in the fight against conflicts in West Africa. This constitutes the backbone support of ECOWAS’ early warning system. Initially, focal persons had to report directly to the ECOWAS Commission, but delays in reaching the Commission became a hindrance to the success of the programme. Consequently, it was decided that information from the focal points be sent to ECOWAS Zonal offices to be processed before being reported to the Commission in its daily or weekly early warning sessions.

An announcement was made in reference with the issuance of an ECOWAS early warning handbook containing forms to be filled by state and civil society focal persons. There is, however, a need to translate the handbook which for now is written in English. In its efforts to improve the implementation of the early warning program, ECOWAS is increasing its personnel in the early warning department to better detect the hot spots in the sub region and deal with conflict triggers before they degenerate into full blown conflicts. Several agents were scheduled to be recruited soon. ECOWAS’s decision to provide technological equipment for the focal points -namely computers, printers and internet subscription- was welcomed with enthusiasm by the workshop’s participants.

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Issues, concerns and recommendations surfaced during the discussion that followed the ECOWAS presentation. Following are the main ones:

a. It was pointed out that there was a difference between role of local civil society organisations and that of civil society coalitions such as WANEP. The latter are umbrella organisations that work in close collaboration with ECOWAS on the early warning programme. Both type of civil society organizations are important. Local civil society organizations are better placed to handle problems on the ground. The key to success lays in collaboration between the two categories of civil society organization so that their efforts towards peace and good governance are harmonized.

b. A recommendation was made along the line of WACSOF working out modalities for a strong collaboration with WANEP;

c. There also needs to be a clear definition of the types of information that should be provided by agents and their specific roles to play in the early warning programme;
d. The need for an information system that helps in harmonizing the various signals from different regions was highlighted as the main operational challenge to the ECOWAS early warning mechanism;

e. People should never lose sight of the fact that conflicts in the northern countries of Africa have deep repercussions on ECOWAS countries. Therefore, finding ways to solve conflicts in the north would be critical for the preservation of peace in ECOWAS member states;

f. A study should be conducted regarding the motivation of some of the leadership in the region. Since it seems there exists leaders in the region who profit by the presence of the conflicts.

g. The inclusion of CSOs from countries such as Libya and Algeria in future peace plans in the Sahel would help to enhance the peace programme.

h. What is ECOWAS doing about including other non ECOWAS entities such as France and the United States which intervene in various degrees in conflict situations in the region?

i. The supra-national nature of conflicts in the region makes necessary the collaboration between governments and civil society regardless of national borders;

j. The ECOWAS is to support and bring unity amongst its member states in order to create a strong bloc against the constant pressure from super powers;

k. The ECOWAS needs to distinguish between the interests of civil society for peace and security, and state security. ECOWAS has correctly affirmed that its focus and main concern is for the security of civil society. Participants still criticized the organisation for not demanding enough that the state must respect the rights of citizens. The ECOWAS stated its position on the April General election in Nigeria, seen by many as flawed at the time.

l. The ECOWAS stated it continuing to pressure member governments to relinquish a part of their sovereignty in accordance with ECOWAS agreements duly signed by member states. a new organogram has been set up empowering the commissions to carry on the organisation’s mandate, instead of a single general secretariat as it has been;

3. The Conflict in Northern Mali
Many aspects of the conflict in Mali were used to illustrate the fact that conflicts have proven to be the main obstacles to progress and development. The lull in the Saharan conflict had the adverse effect of spreading in surrounding countries unused weapons which have fuelled conflicts in the region, especially in Mali. The blossoming illicit traffic in weapons, their low cost and easy access have exacerbated the entrenchment and the perennial nature of crises in the Sahelien/Saharian area throughout the years. So was the case of the two rebellions that took place in Mali. The first one occurred in 1963 and was settled with violence. However, the 1990 rebellion of was diplomatically settled. A military coup, spearheaded by Amadou Toumani Touré, put an end to the rule of President Moussa Traoré. It was during the ensuing National Conference of July 1991 that a special conference was convened to deal with the conflict in Northern Mali. Solutions for the resolution of the conflict were effectively brought forth during that conference. A peace accord was signed between the Malian government and the rebel movement. Several agreements came out of the peace pact. It was proposed that:

1. Government should initiate popular discussions;
2. Government should bring together all actors to sensitize the population with a strategy for addressing future crises;
3. Government should help in designing strategies for addressing conflicts between the Arabs and the Touaregs; and
4. Bring people together to reflect on what happened with the view to seeking solutions toward preventing future occurrences.

One of the significant outcomes of the national conference was that for the first time in history, women were allowed to participate. At the conference, women proposed a number of resolutions that proved most useful in consensus building.

A programme of development was henceforth sketched for the north of Mali. Consultations were held between communities affected by the conflict, the government and the Malian civil society which played an important role in several processes, including that of the reintegration of ex-combatants into the Malian society. In this regard, 866 developmental projects were implemented at a total cost of 9 million dollars with the support of Mali’s partners. The official dissolution of the rebel movement, exemplified by the incineration of weapons, took place in 1996 under the supervision of the UN. The positive role played by civil society in the peace process was warmly acknowledged. The contribution of traditional leaders, religious organisations, women, the youth and ordinary people was specifically noted.

Women especially played a key role in the resolution of the conflict in Mali. They were instrumental in spreading messages of peace, most effectively using radio and television. When fights were still raging, women provided humanitarian services for combatants on both sides of the conflict. They contributed in the design of peace strategies to stop unnecessary deaths. Overall, they were instrumental in the harmonization and coordination of efforts to bring peace back. One of the main challenges was to reach the rebel side with the message of peace and reconciliation. Women were the main group that brought about and restored social linkages in the Malian conflict.

Among the lessons learnt from the conflict in Mali were:

1. engaging rebels and the opposition in dialogue is a necessity.
2. The involvement of all the parties in the peace process is an absolute necessity.
3. Internal mechanisms developed by local communities were instrumental in the peace process,
4. The creation of databases and geographical maps indicating zones of conflict was helpful in peace building.
5. The involvement of CSOs and women’s organisations helped legitimize was helpful in building trust and confidence.

By the end of the conference participants were agreed that the Malian government deserved commendation for its cooperation civil society and the other parties in the long search for peace. It was only through cooperation that peace was finally arrived at.

4. Civil Society Presentation on the Conflict in Northern Niger

A synthesis of a previous meeting dubbed ‘The Armed Conflict in North Niger, An Analysis of the Geopolitical Stakes and the Impact on the Democratic Framework’ was done at this session. This was a landmark event that brought to the surface the dynamics of the conflict and its implications in the society in Niger.

It was a dynamic presentation that questioned the viability of states in West Africa some of which seem to be incapable of controlling what is happening in their territory. The image that was given was that of a weak head of family who, because of poverty and powerlessness, cannot control the actions of its progeny. Such was the case of many states in the region. This also explains the similarity between the conflict situation in Northern Mali and Niger.

There were many provocative and urgent questions thrown open to the floor: What is the essence of government if it cannot fulfil its mandate? Are governments for the capital cities alone? When there are no signs of any development or social amenities in the rest of the country? or presence of democratic dividend? Should government always act alone as if it were the only entity within the state boundaries?

From the above questions, a review of the relationship between the Tanja administration and the rebels were extensively considered. That relationship is mainly characterized by the government’s obstinate refusal to acknowledge the Touareg rebels and their demands on the one hand and the rebel’s frequent attacks on government properties as well as common people on the other hand.

There are many obstacles still standing in the way a peace settlement in Northern Niger. Participants mentioned a few of these challenges, among which are:

a. The lack of political will on the part of the Government and its supporters
b. The complexity of the ethnic issue in the national army, including the issue of its leadership that at the moment is politicised along ethnic lines
c. The breakdown of the school system that allows students to become idle and subject to recruitment in the armed conflict
d. Unchecked movements of weapons from conflict zones to Niger and other countries in the region
e. The lack of developmental programmes designed to alleviate poverty and thus deter people from joining in the armed conflict
f. The spirit of solidarity that previously existed among the various communities and ethnic groups is dissipating, creating room for more conflicts,
g. People are beginning to regard the colonial system better than independent rule- a development that is not healthy for national sovereignty,
h. Soldiers in the army are used to a certain way of life so much so that after leaving the army, they find it too difficult to adapt to normal civil life. They are thus encouraged to join the rebels to continue that pattern of living they got used to in the army.

5. Recommendations for the Resolution of the Conflict in North Niger

Participants of the West African Civil Society Consultative Forum expressed their concern about the growing crisis in Niger and brought to the fore several recommendations among which:

a. Seeing the crisis in its totality and tracing it back to its origin in the colonial period so to understand its present dynamics, the better to be able to solve it.
b. A better representation of youths and women in the decision making apparatus of the state.
c. Tackling the problem of unemployment, especially of youth unemployment
d. A reform of the educational system, now in a bad state.
e. Reinforcement of civic and democratic principles through reform and through education.
f. Replacement of the politics of exclusion which now bedevils Niger society, with the politics that includes all citizens and embraces dialogue,
g. Ending the marginalization of minority ethnic groups in Niger to diffuse tension and frustrations.
h. Constitutional and budget reforms that will take into account the needs of the common people,
i. The resolution of the mining issues, particularly the problem connected with the mining of uranium,
j. The allegation that foreign companies have been exploiting and fuelling the conflict need to be investigated,
k. A percentage of the money earned from mining must be given back to the communities where the minerals are extracted from. A decision has been taken by government to reinvest 15% of revenue earned from the mining back into the respective communities.
l. The growing civic and political awareness of ordinary people following their involvement in peace works should be encouraged.
m. The direct involvement of the national army in politics should be discouraged as it is detrimental to the morale of the army and distracts them from focusing on ending Niger’s internal crisis,
n. There should be a study of the composition of the armies as a part of the general reformation of the armed forces to better serve national interests.
o. The armies particularly in the Sahel Region should be decentralized,
p. Working and living conditions in the armed forces should be improved as a way of discouraging desertions from the army into rebel ranks.
q. The need to reconstitute the army to ensure ethnic balance as a way of avoiding ethnic prejudice within the army.
r. Putting a check on corruption and illegal acquisitions of wealth especially the elite and privileged class.
s. A higher level of involvement by civic organisations such as trade unions, traditional leaders, student bodies, and women’s groups in negotiations would provide a better guarantee against conflicts.

6. The Work Groups and their Recommendations on Retroactive Justice

Participants arrived at the following points:

a. The absolute necessity for all parties in conflict to committee themselves to work for peace;
b. The need for a reform of the judiciary;
c. The establishment fundamental human freedom;
d. Capacity building for institutions for the deepening of democracy;
e. Foster an environment conducive to negotiations;
f. Close and effective collaboration between the state and financial agencies to manage resources;
g. The role of the international community and agencies is critical in the search for solutions to the conflict must be clarified;
h. Build capacity for a strong civil society apt to be engaged in the negotiations with the guidance of WACSOF;
i. Acknowledging the MNJ should not mean recognition or promotion of the rebel leader, it should rather help undertake actions that will be beneficial to affected communities, and helpful in finding solutions to the crisis;
j. Collaboration with third party countries which are indirectly involved in the crisis (some of which serve as hideouts and training grounds for rebels (i.e. Libya, Algeria, etc.));
k. Reinforcement, with the help of civil society, of citizenship to fight civic disengagement on the part of most people;
l. Eradicate limits on structures that are institutional and those non-institutional such as civil society in the area of early warning;
m. If the state is pressured to recognize the rebellion, what is expected of the rebels? They are urged to stop any violence while negotiations are going on with the help of civil society,

n. The government in Niger should pay attention to the demands of the rebels so that those demands can be revised,
o. The other African states should get involved to compel the state in Niger to review its position,
p. Prisoners held by the MNJ should be released,
q. The media can be an agent for peace, but it can also become a deadly force for conflict,
r. Journalists are also among the vulnerable groups in the society,
s. There is no religious conflict in Niger. The creation of a Ministry of Religion cannot cause conflict, though it is dominated by Muslims. Most religious problems happen among the Muslims themselves.
t. Young people are both agents and victims of conflicts,
u. Democracy can be a source of conflict when leaders are unwilling to play the democracy game are not ready to entertain ideas that differ from their own,
v. The entrenchment of the culture of Peace is a good means to avoid future conflicts.

7. Conclusion

Concluding remarks were made by WACSOF Secretary General and CDD’s Director. The delegates were unanimous in their assessment that the consultative forum had been a success, and that the quality of contributions was remarkable.

The issue of conflicts in West Africa, particularly the issue of early warning in the conflict in Northern Niger and Mali was thoroughly investigated. The solutions that were proposed reflect the deep commitment of all present at the forum to peace and stability in Niger and in the region. It was agreed that the approach to conflict resolution in the region cannot be local but must be all embracing since conflicts transcend national borders. This explained why a close attention was given to the Touareg rebellion in Northern Mali, as it is in many ways connected to that in Northern Niger. The meeting turned out to be a good opportunity for further information sharing on the conflicts generally. Priority was now to be given to the dissemination of the information gathered during the meeting. This it was agreed is the task of all civil society organisations represented at the meeting.

Participants took note contrary opinion often expressed by sceptics who assert that West Africa is domed and could not escaped both its pre-colonial, both of which were filled with conflicts. Participants dismissed such opinion as grossly misleading. There were problems of course but West Africa has developed mechanisms for resolving its own problem and was boldly looking ahead. Among such mechanisms are the establishment of a regional body like ECOWAS, a mechanism for the region’s economic growth and integration, an early warning mechanism for crises, conflict resolutions and preventions; a supplementary protocol on governance and free movements, etc. These mechanisms have been successful in solving crises in places like Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coasts.

What this demonstrates, is that the future of Africa is not at all bleak. Africa is beginning overcome its admittedly many problems. The challenge now is to forge ahead on this basis of what has been achieved so far.

This forum and this gathering which has brought together participants from across the region who have here engaged in frank debate about the problems of the region and have come up with practical solutions is reason enough to believe in the future of our region and of Africa. The growing strength of ECOWAS and our regional institutions is indication of the emergence of a new West Africa.

8. The Way Forward
At the end, it was concluded that:

1. Dr. Mariam Maiga from WACSOF Mali, Professor Oumar Ndongo, Secretary General of WACSOF would stay back in Niamey for two more days to work with the leadership of Group Alternative in Niger to prepare the communiqué stemming from the meeting. This communiqué is to be addressed not just to the Government of Niger, but to civil society, to the general public, to ECOWAS and all its member States, in the interest of a speedy resolution of the conflict.

2. A representative from Niger and Mali will be invited by WACSOF to Abuja to meet with the leadership of ECOWAS and present the result of deliberations from the Niamey meeting;

3. Plans for future interventions in Niger would be worked out in the following month;

4. It was proposed that events of this nature would in future, include the participation of Libya and other surrounding countries.

Chapter Seven

Newspaper Article on the Regional Workshop on the Management of Conflicts in Northern Niger and Mali

By Moustapha Kadi

Within the framework of WACSOF’s activities, (The West African Civil Society Forum) organised a consultative forum on the Early Warning System was held at Oasis hotel, Niamey from the 20th to 21st September 2007. The Forum brought together 35 representatives of the civil society from Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Niger. The objectives of the forum was to share experiences in conflict management in West Africa through effective Early Warning mechanisms and to work out strategies for a lasting peace in northern Niger and Northern Mali, specifically by working through and the main regional organization, ECOWAS.

In his welcome address on behalf of WACSOF Niger, Mr. Laoual Sayabou highlighted the challenge that awaits the participants - to work out a comprehensive and lasting solution to the problem of recurrent armed conflicts in the region that have dealt so severe a blow to development and progress especially in the affected areas. Speaking on behalf of Association Alternative Espace Citoyen, Dr Souley Adji stated that this same issue question had earlier been considered by ANDDH on August 11, 2007. He was happy to see that the issue will now receive further deliberations likely to result in a stable peace for the region.

Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, the interim Administrator for WACSOF’s and Director of the Abuja based Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), extended a warm welcome to participants. He said he was in Niger to witness the integration of Africa. the convening of the forum was for him proof that the process was underway. Dr. Ibrahim said the many conflicts that afflict the region, whether in Niger, Mali, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, each require a specific response. This is the reason it was necessary to bring together the civil society organizations in the region to reflect on these issues and work out lasting solutions.
In his speech on behalf of the President of ECOWAS Commission Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas and The Commissioner for political affairs, peace and security, Mohammed Fadhel Diagne recalled how happy ECOWAS was to have been involved in WACSOF’s activities taking place in Niamey. He stressed that this was not a new development as last December in Ouagadougou, WACSOF and ECOWAS’ Early Warning Department met to reflect on concrete ways of improving the ECOWAS Early Warning. He added that in the course of this important meeting, WACSOF has shown its total commitment to the process of building a credible Early Warning system for the sub region. To this effect, several recommendations were made at the level of ECOWAS to enrich the current workshop. He also used the opportunity to congratulate WACSOF for the initiative to bring to bear the management of the conflicts in the northern parts of Niger and Mali. This is was deemed as important as there is a risks of spill over which can occur at any moment and affect the sub-region and even Central Africa through the lake Tchad basin. This is the more reason why ECOWAS is very keen to participate in the forum, whose deliberations he is confident will pave the way for the much needed peace. In conclusion Mohammed Fadhel Diagne observed that conflicts like what we have here often have an exogenous character that sometimes escapes the logic of states.

the High Commissioner on the Restoration of peace, (HCRP), was represented at the forum by Mr. Alhousseini Abdoulaye, who commended the idea of the forum and the workshop as a laudable initiative for peace in the region. He said that the HCRP was created in 1994, specifically in pursuit of peace. But peace has been illusive. He said peace required sustained efforts and could never be attained with any degree of finality because every society is characterized by all forms of contradictions that constitute potential sources of conflicts.

As the sessions at the Oasis Hotel in Niamey drew to a close, participants noted that there had not been any government representation, neither at the opening nor at the closing ceremony. Civil society commentators said this was not entirely a surprise either. Given that the President of the Republic had made clear his preference for the means of ending the conflicts.
Chapter Eight

Conference Communiqué

WACSOF/FOSCAO

COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON EARLY WARNING MECHANISMS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ARMED CONFLICT OF NORTHERN MALI AND NIGER

The West African Civil Society Forum and the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) organised a meeting - ‘Consultative forum on early warning mechanisms for armed conflicts in the West African sub region’ from September 20 – 22, 2007 at Oasis Hotel in Niamey (Niger)

The meeting brought together about 30 civil society participants from Mali, Nigeria and Senegal.

The objective of the meeting was to build civil society capacities in early warning and to seek appropriate responses to escape crises situations.

Themes examined during this meeting included but were not limited to:

- briefing on the Ouagadougou workshop on ECOWAS early warning mechanisms held in Ouagadougou in December 2006;
- a general discussion on potential crises in the West African Region and recommendations for resolution;
- a briefing about the experience of Mali in managing the conflict in the north of the country;
- a presentation on conclusions and recommendations made during the workshop held on ‘The armed conflict in Northern Niger: examining its geopolitical challenges and impact on democratic processes’ held on Niamey in August 2007;
- a presentation on the role of civil society in restorative justice;
- a presentation on early warning triggers;
- a group work on responses to early warning and conflict resolution.

39 Held on September 20-21, 2007 in Niamey, Niger
The workshop ended with an action plan for Mali and Niger. Following the presentation of the various themes, there were extensive debates during the work-group sessions. After a through examination of the issues, the following recommendations were made:

1. The resolution of the internal armed conflicts in Mali and Niger can only be achieved through dialogue and the concerted efforts of all the parties in the conflict;

2. The governments of Mali and Niger are called upon while resolving the differences between the Fagaga-Bahanga group of Mali and MNJ of Niger to promote dialogue and moderation, and to keep in mind the supreme interest of the peoples of Mali and Niger while respecting territorial integrity;

3. The meeting will like to see the start of negotiations that engage all protagonists plus representatives of civil society organisations, in constructive dialogue that seek out the root causes of the conflicts.

4. The meeting solemnly calls on MNJ from Niger and Fagaga-Bahanga from Mali to:
   a. Free immediately and unconditionally all prisoners and hostages;
   b. Cease immediately the use of antipersonnel mines that have caused so many human casualties now pause a serious threat to the population.

5. Conflicts of this nature are rarely limited to a single state; this could be seen in the current situation in Northern Mali and Northern Niger. The meeting would like to urge ECOWAS, CENSAD and the African Union to get involved in the settlement of this conflict through appropriate diplomatic channels.

   WACSOF in this regard is committed to taking the issue further to ECOWAS and to mobilise the civil society in West Africa, with a view to bringing adequate response to the management of the conflict;

6. The meeting invites CSOs from Mali and Niger to move away from their present disagreements and create instead coalitions geared towards peace in the region and so enhance the prospects for economic and social advancement for the region.

7. Finally, the meeting will like to congratulate the president of the republic of Mali for convening an international conference on ‘peace, security and development in the Sahelo-Saharan zone’. This kind of forum promotes collaborative efforts between government and civil society in the pursuit of the common wellbeing.
Part Three

Reflections on Civil Society and Peacebuilding in West Africa

Chapter Twelve

Chapter Nine

The Role of West African Civil Society in Peacebuilding
Civil Society: Definition, role and relationship with the State in the West African Sub-region.

Introduction

The project titled “West African Conflicts”, which is trying to grasp the nature of conflicts in the West African sub-region as well as the tools put in place to stem them could not ignore the conflicts in Northern Mali and Niger. The workshop that was organised in Niamey on September 19 – 20, 2007 by WACSOF and funded by CDD aimed at calling on the civil society to depart from the fault lines created by State actors and to put an end to the recurrent conflicts in the sahelo-saharan strip.

I-The West African situation in the last decade

The West African socio-political context has recorded considerable progress in recent years. If, between 1960 and 2001, only two of the fifteen countries that make up the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have escaped military coup d'état (Senegal and Cape Verde), it is fortunate to note here that, in the last ten years, no single country in the West African sub-region has been led by a Head of State exercising his mandate after acceding to power through a coup d'état. The case of Togo in 2005 is illustrative of the new trend in the political management within the confines of ECOWAS. Besides, those who came to power through that channel were forced to choose; either to remain in the army and renounce their candidature to the presidency or become civilian so as to contest, like any other civilian candidate, for the Highest Office. In fact, military regimes that came to power to end moribund civilian regimes could not resist the wind of democratisation that blew in the 1990s.

One witnessed a rapid decline in the number of military regimes, which gave way to full multiparty systems as was the case in most countries. Even though multiparty system is not always synonymous with democracy, there was certainly progress in the political arena. The initiators and promoters of the move towards democracy, which were consolidated over the years, are not essentially those in charge of Governmental. This was possible thanks to the joint actions of the media and civil society.

In the West African context, civil society's contribution was made more visible by the particular situation in which ECOWAS found itself. Created in 1975 to respond to the need of harnessing the economic resources of all member countries, it was faced with another challenge: ensuring security of the members while dealing with conflicts, the roots of which could hardly be traced even in one country. The wave of violence that has shaken the members of the Mano River Union as well as many other areas has made the Heads of State and heads of Government to develop new tools for collective security within their common organisation - ECOWAS. The need to get adequate means to respond to the security challenges was further justified by the spate of violence in West Africa, that followed the total collapse of a couple of failed states in the region, a situation described by Anatole

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40 Prof. Oumar Ndongo is the General Secretary of the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF)
Ayissi\textsuperscript{41} Because ECOWAS could not undertake alone this enormous task of watching over conflict triggers while managing the centres of open tensions, it sought the support of actors, who before now, were confined to the area of community development and were hardly visible in public arena. Through this partnership, and especially in view of the development of tools that are both coercive and persuasive, as part of ECOWAS protocols, plus the advocacy and the sensitisation campaigns initiated by the civil society, gradually peace began to return to the region.

This study also aims at reviewing some attempts to define civil society as a new social actor before taking stock of its presumed or assigned role, most especially in the consolidation of peace in the West African sub-region.

II-The context of the emergence of the civil society

The emergence of the civil society appeared to many as a new phenomenon. However some observers trace its origin to the Greaco-Roman. In the Eighteen Century, some thinkers like Saint Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Hobbes and Jean Jacques Rousseau had already understood the political power circle, social organisation in general and specified the level of involvement of different actors. They were already making mention of civil society. Not in a distant century, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels - great political power and ideology theoretician shared the same views. They clearly alluded to this category of actors in their theories. These 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries thinkers greatly contributed in delineating this category of social actors. However, it is important to mention that it is in the areas of environment and quality of life that the civil society left its mark.

It was the followers of this socio-political trend that generated the founding ideas of “civil Society” ideology. Civil society ideology became interested in urban life and its setting, which was becoming more and more asphyxiating. It figured a new consciousness was necessary so as to render it capable of offering opportunities for a better life.

It is this new perception of the relationship between man and his immediate environment that gave birth to Ecology or “Green” ideology. The message here area is that political rights are not enough to guaranty human well being. There were other levels of rights like economic rights, environmental rights, which have a direct impact on the human life expectancy, just like the first ones.

On the theoretical level, this analysis can be pushed further on the basis of the conditions of its emergence. In a speech delivered on the subject of retreat on civil society in Ghana, Kwesi Jonah\textsuperscript{42}, indicated that civil society can only thrive in a modern state, which recognises the citizen's rights and is ready to value them in the market place. This is to say that the existence

\textsuperscript{41} Anatole Ayissi, “Société Civil et Résolution des Conflits en Afrique de l'Ouest” P.687
\textsuperscript{42} M. Kwesi Jonah, Political scientist, Political Science Department, University of Ghana, Legon. During the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Republic of Ghana, Regional seminar on the theme: “Reflecting on Civil Society’s Evolution in Ghana Over the Last 50 Years” from 8\textsuperscript{th} to 9\textsuperscript{th} November 2007, Prof. Jonah made a speech on: “Before We Were Called Civil Society”
of the civil society depends on that of the State and the market. To illustrate his statement, while showing the African basis of his analysis, he acknowledged three periods in the evolution of the African civil society. In what he called the pre-colonial period, the civil society was almost inexistent because African societies have defined the role of each individual in the social system. The mode of power devolution is known in advance. This system that is communal in essence hardly experience protest against its mode of functioning. The African society changed at its contact with western culture.

The colonial state was that of exclusion of local people. Another public sphere was put in place, parallel to, and often, conflicting with the old order. Land was highly attractive to the colonial administration, to mention but one, and became a space of confrontation because of the seizure of large African family’s lands by the colonial powers. This situation, at the very least, arbitrary and obviously unfair, gave birth to the civil society, which, as the time goes, has metamorphosed into political force to lay complaints that were becoming increasingly complex. The settings for the fight for political independence are, according to Jonah, borrowed from an African civil society that was almost gestating. In both the colonial and post-colonial eras, it is fair to say that the African civil society is closely link to the political struggle. It was, first, a question of struggle for accession to independence, to recover their freedom as sovereign and make their will to manage their environment and resources.

However, in the post-colonial period almost all the civil society actors joined the political structures after the departure of the colonial administration, either within the ruling parties or those in the opposition. Almost all of them thought that with the independence the struggle was no longer having its raison d’être. Other transformations were also perceptible, most especially in the social sectors. That is how one witnessed the birth of social forces that would take over the social protest terrain for an active unionism following the emergence of an intelligentsia increasingly critical. But it is the woeful collapse of the first African regimes that constituted a justification for the arrival on the scene of organisations called “Non-Governmental” or NGOs. They served as transmission belts for aid coming from developed countries to local communities, who were exposed to precariousness. The need to call on NGOs was explained by the huge number of mismanagement in the chain of distribution of aid by the office holders in the state. The sector invested by the new actors was essentially that of economic and social development. But the exacerbation of the African powers management conditions and structural adjustment policies have accelerated the State collapse and favoured the military intervention into power. Subsequent attempts at redressing the situation have led in some countries to National Conferences.

Quite obviously, a new era has come, a time that would mark the openness of the State management to many groups, the projects of which called for States as well as social reforms. It is within this complex situation that civil society came to assist groups of State actors and it itself became the protector of the interests of the majority but marginalised social strata and the voice of the people and minorities. In the West African sub-region, Dorothy Gordon noted the clear difference between actors from the sahelan zones where one observed a strong and efficient militancy of rustic and rural type, with meagre means but determined, while in the coastal zones, she went further, most especially along the Atlantic ocean, the civil society actors are mainly intellectuals, middle and high ranking officers residing in urban or semi-

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43 Mrs. Dorothy Gordon, Managing Director of the Kofi Annan Training Centre of Excellence, Accra, Ghana. She chaired the Opening Session of “Reflecting on Civil Society's Evolution in Ghana Over the Last 50 Years”
urban areas. The question of the definition of its role and its prerogatives in the management of West African States' affairs remains unanswered.

III-Attempts to define the civil society

The definition given to the civil society is far from being accepted unanimously. For many political actors that are disturbed by this category, the civil society is a transit posture that leads to a Government office. It is quite understandable if we go by the appointment of its members to official positions due to their specific competences. And again if we go by the fallback niches it offers to some of the fallen from government and politics. And of course there the closeness to electorate being a civil society actor can offer. Because of the porosity of the circles between the political actors and those of the civil society, some accusations or perceptions about the roles could be justified.

To agree on the definition of the concept of “civil society”, it is possible to argue that it is a setting where non-state actors operate. This definition is undoubtedly confusing but what is important to understand is that it offers the advantage of showing that the essence does not reside in the mastering of its semantic details but rather the motivations of its members. The civil society is a heterogeneous and mixed entity that acts on the State and organisations that manage the latter to the benefit of the populations. Going by the definition given to it by Ayisi, it is perceived as “an aggregate of citizens without official political offices, acting individually and collectively, whose activity is essentially apolitical, non-profit-making and unpaid.”

This definition calls for some clarifications for the interest of those who would need to use it in a precise framework. The World Bank understands by civil society “A range of Non Governmental Organisations and non-profit-making organisations which coordinate public life and defend the interests and values of their members, or others based on the consideration of the ethical, cultural, political, scientific and philanthropic order: community groupings, organisation of indigenous populations, Charity organisations, religious groups, professional associations and private foundations.”

The United Nations exclude the international organisations from the civil society. For the European Union “Trade unions and pastoral organisations, non-governmental organisations, which involve citizens in local and communal life with specific contribution of churches and religious communities” are members of the civil society. It was equally indicated that in Benin Republic the media is part of the civil society platform beside traditional leaders, development associations, NGOs, craftsmen, and trade unions. WACSOF (West African Civil Society Forum) did an exhaustive inventory of its members by including research institutions, youth associations, women, children, farmers, aged persons, physically challenged persons, professional groups, human rights organisations, development organisations, local community organisations, volunteers and personalities that command respect in the society. As a matter of fact, it is said that in some countries opposition political parties are ranged in the category of civil society. More surprising, was professor Ken

44 Ibid, Anatole Ayissi, p. 685
46 WACSOF, (West African Civil Society Forum), seeks to bring together all the West African civil society organisations so as to promote Democracy, Good Governance and Human Security in West Africa. It represents the civil society in ECOWAS.
Attafuah⁴⁷, a renown Ghanaian human rights activist, who place government in the civil society considering the functions which its performs in social regulations. That is to say that these terms cover a very complex reality by the nature of its actors and the roles of the latter in the game and stake of the State power.

IV- Its role and relationships with the State

Concerning its role, it revolves around three principal axes:

- To perform a critical and constructive function while insuring that the Government gives account to the real power holders in the democracy;
- To serve as a relay between the people and those it has elected to exercise power on its behalf and to be the voice of the voiceless, which means the minorities and the marginalised;
- To ask for fair treatment for its country in international relations.

We can, therefore, say that the role of the civil society is essentially to watch over the decision-making, the protection of individual and collective rights and the distribution of the State’s resources. As an intermediary force, bearer of propositions, it must remain in constant dialogue with the populations to have a full knowledge of their problems and needs on the one hand and to make use of the means available to influence the State policies. From then it becomes a social and economic regulatory force. In its actions, it should be guided by ethic, transparency of processes and respect of the rule of law. Its action may be highly political, in the real sense of the word, which means in relation with the management of the city and people but it must avoid being partisan if this means defending the interests of its clan or group. The major challenge on its way is the way to deal with the power in place.

While some think that the civil society plays its true role, only when it opposes the Government and denounces its laws and policies, others focus rather on collaboration. But, the risk, there, is great when it opts for collaboration. It should rather be in the position of cooperation. The position of collaboration could weaken its efficacy and it could weaken its autonomy in relationship to Government, which it needs to maintain its watchfulness and to improve its services in the interest of the populations. We must agree to the fact the civil society cannot replace the State and should not claim to substitute the latter. Thus, their relationship should be that of complementarities and assistance so as to help the State to better understand the role that is devolved upon it by the laws and rules of the country. It is a constructive opposition, made up, of course, of alliances and ruptures but aiming at one objective, the well-being of the population and its own transparency in the course of its activities.

In the West African context, civil society played and continues to play a critical role in the consolidation of peace and in the search for solutions leading to the latter. It is all the more true since conflicts recorded in the West African sub-region involves different actors among who is the State itself. In 2003, it is the civil society that brought the protagonists of the Liberian conflict to the negotiating table in Akosombo in Ghana. In the Ivorian, Malian, Niger, Senegalese, Nigerian and Guinean conflicts the civil society worked beside the

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⁴⁷ Professor Ken Attafuah is the Executive Director of Justice and Human Rights Institute, University of Ghana, Legon. His presentation was focused on “Civil Society’s Role in safeguarding Human Rights”
populations, sometime absolutely anonymous and through its message of peace it reduced the gap between the belligerents' positions.

Through its knowledge of the stakes and the cultural and sociological realities, it favoured dialogue and consultation; for the fact that it is not seeking its own interest in resolving conflict but the social peace, its mediation missions are sometimes crowned with success. The process of the resolution of the Malian conflict is the striking example of its effectiveness. When the official state process showed their limits it was the local communities, women organisations and religious leaders who took charge of the process to lead to the positive success it recorded. The mission of the civil society does not stop at bringing peace, but equally instilling it in minds, preventing it by finding methods of its transformation into positive and productive force for the community. Through its mobilisation capacity and methods of cushioning the most violent chocks and find the most original therapy so as to get to dialogue and to end hostilities.

However, for the definitive settlement of the problem, it needs the back up and approval of the Government. Touareg rebellion in Niger presents us with an interesting model of its implication due to the weakness of the Government in the response to the problem posed by the rebellion. The State, because its has its army, may consider its own solutions but once it shows its ineffectiveness, the civil society should starts getting set for its own intervention in discretion and cohesion. Its members, by their serenity, because they do not have any office to protect, should dig out the profound causes of the conflict so as to make the considered solutions lasting. The appointment to ministerial offices or granting scholarship to unyielding parties should stop being considered as solution to such manifestations. These solutions constitute a kind of allowance to the rebellion if light is not shed on the profound causes and deal with them in fairness and equity for concerned parties while taking into account the populations, who underwent exactions inflicted on them by rebel movements.

The post-conflict context in which the civil society has demonstrated itself is just a stage in the life of civil society. The real role of civil society should be more and more that of the consolidator of social justice and the rule of law. Democratisation is in its essence a permanent confrontations arena. The civil society should regulate this new setting. To achieve this, they need to form strong coalitions in all the areas that call on the conscience of the State. It should equip its members with competences to understand and help in solving the most complex problems.

V- The requirement of a responsible and credible civil society

Otherwise, if the role of the civil society is to enable the State to carry out all its official missions in a just and transparent manner, it is important to ask civil society to exhibit these qualities themselves. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. The ideas which it carries along and puts forward in government projects, to remain credible, must be reflected in its own actions and in its own mode of functioning. A point that needs to be mentioned here, at least this is true for some civil society organisations, is the opacity of their procedures and lack of clarity in their ways of dealing with communities, whom they are ambitious to serve.

In fact, a conclusion is already drawn, this is due to the dearth of resources, and these organisations are more concerned with nursing their images to please donors than having transparent relations with populations, who are the beneficiaries of their projects. Civil
society practices need be improved to give civil society the necessary credibility needed for its actions and proportional to its intervention.

**Conclusion**

To conclusion, due its multifaceted role and the pertinence of its answers to questions posed by the community, the civil society has become and will remain for a long time, a critical actor in the consolidation of peace. It has become a force to reckon with, not only in peace issues, but also in the consolidation of the democracy process in West Africa. Because its inherent generosity, its volunteerism, civil society has a greater potential for conflict resolution confidence building among the population.

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### Chapter Ten

**The Importance of Restorative Justice in Peacebuilding**

By Abdulmumin Sa’ad

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### INTRODUCTION

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48 Professor of Sociology/Criminology; Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, and; Head, Department of Sociology and Anthropology UNIVERSITY OF MAIDUGURI, MAIDUGURI, NIGERIA
Conflicts had, since time immemorial, been part of every group of individuals, communities and societies. Notwithstanding the omnipresence of conflict, societies have always conceived it as an abnormal situation, while the opposite (concord/consensus/equilibrium) the normal fact of life. Early sociologists such as Augustus Comte, Emile Dhurkheim and Max Weber had fallen victims of this societal perception of conflict. Radical scholars of society such as Karl Marx however saw conflict as not only normal, but also a necessary element that leads to growth and development. In other words, concord/consensus/equilibrium is the one that is transient since society is dynamic. But whether conflicts lead to growth and development or destruction and chaos would depend on their causes, nature, and how they are handled. In this paper however we are concerned with the handling of the aftermath of destructive conflicts to ensure that justice is done to both sides of the divide and stable peace is achieved and maintained.

1. DEFINING CONFLICT AND CONFLICT HANDLING

Simply put, conflict means disagreement, discord, collision or struggle over something. Coser for example defines conflict as “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize injure or eliminate their rivals” (Coser, 1956: 8). Conflict may occur within or between individuals, groups/families and communities/societies/nations. In other words, conflicts occur at four different levels, namely: intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-group/society/nations and inter-group/society/nations. Even though each of these levels of conflicts can be prolonged and violent, the last two tend to be more prolonged and violent. They are also larger in scale. Conflicts also vary on the basis of how easy or difficult to handle. These again depend on the causes and nature of conflicts.

A distinction should also be made between conflicts and disputes. Disputes are short-term disagreements that are relatively easy to resolve. Conflicts on the other hand involve long-term, deep-rooted problems or issues that do not seem negotiable issues and are resistant to resolution. Though both types of disagreement can occur independently of one another, they may also be connected. In fact, one way to think about the difference between them is that short-term disputes may exist within a larger, longer conflict. Following the above distinction, disputes involve interests that are negotiable. That means it is possible to find a solution that at least partially meets the interests and needs of both sides. For example, co-workers may disagree about who is to do what task in an office. After negotiating, each may have to do something they did not want to do but in exchange they will get enough of what they did want to settle the dispute.

In other words, they can reach a compromise. Long-term conflicts, on the other hand, usually involve seemingly non-negotiable issues; deep-rooted moral or value differences, high-stakes distributional questions, or conflicts about who dominates whom. Similarly, fundamental human psychological needs for identity, security, and recognition are involved. None of these issues are easily negotiable if at all negotiable. Conflicts can also be latent or manifest. A latent conflict is a disagreement over interests, values or needs which have not been acted upon, while manifest conflict is when such disagreements are brought forward in the form of a dispute or disputing process, which means that “a conflict can exist without a dispute, but a dispute cannot exist without a conflict”(Douglas, 1999: 115)

There are various forms of manifestations of conflicts once it moved away from latent. In other words, one can talk of various stages of conflicts thus:

- Latent conflict
- Emergence
- Escalation
- (Hurting) Stalemate
- De-Escalation
- Settlement/Resolution
- Post-Conflict Peace building and Reconciliation

These stages are usually shown on a diagram that looks like the one provided below.


**Latent stage:** The potential for conflict exists whenever people have different needs, values, or interests; this is the "latent" conflict stage.

**Emergent stage:** The conflict may not become apparent until a "triggering event" leads to the emergence (or beginning) of the obvious conflict.

**Escalation Stage:** Emergence may be followed quickly by settlement or resolution, or it may be followed by escalation, which involves an increase in the intensity of a conflict and in the severity of tactics used in pursuing it. Once a conflict is in the escalation phase, identities, grievances, goals, and methods often change in ways that perpetuate the conflict in increasingly destructive fashion (Kriesberg, 2003).

**Hurting Stalemate Stage:** Once conflicts escalate for awhile, they often reach a stalemate: a situation in which neither side can win, but neither side wants to back down or accept loss either. Stalemates emerge for a number of reasons: failed tactics, depletion of available resources to fuel the conflict, a reduction in support of the conflict by group members or
allies, or costs becoming too high to continue. [Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994: 152-155]. If the pain of continuing the conflict exceeds that of maintaining the confrontation, the parties are in what Zartman calls a "hurting stalemate,"[2] which often presents an ideal opportunity for negotiation and a potential settlement.

**De-escalation:** Escalation and/or stalemate, however, cannot continue indefinitely. In other words all conflicts eventually wind down, i.e., de-escalation. De-escalation can be temporary or can be part of a broader trend toward settlement or resolution.

Post-Conflict Peace building: Finally, if and when an agreement is reached as a result of de-escalation/negotiation, peace building efforts work to repair damaged relationships with the long-term goal of reconciling former opponents.

It should however be noted here that the progress from one stage to the next is not smooth and conflicts may repeat stages several times.

As rightly noted by Sa’ad, the omnipresence of conflicts and disputes have forced all societies to develop ways of handling conflicts. What then do we mean by conflict handling? Conflict handling encompasses four elements, namely: conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation (IIDEA, 76-78). In other words, the concept of conflict handling is more encompassing than either conflict resolution or conflict management, which is commonly used in conflict literature and in everyday language about conflict. The four concepts are described below:

a) Conflict prevention is a process, which ensures that potentially dangerous conflicts are detected early enough and are nipped in the bud before they escalate dangerously.

b) Conflict management is a process of “keeping disputes within accepted arenas of negotiation and keeping them from escalating into damaging confrontation and violence” (IIDEA, 76).

c) Conflict resolution “is a process whereby an issue or set of issues is discussed, agreement are made and implemented, and the underlying source or cause of the conflict is removed.

d) Conflict transformation involves changing the underlying structural disparities in society that fuel the conflict.

Thus, to talk of just conflict management and or conflict resolution rather than conflict handling is to loose sight of the other two: conflict prevention and transformation, when they are in fact the best two approaches to peace building, which is the focus of this paper. This leads us to the next important section of this paper, which is on Restorative Justice and Peace building.

**2. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND PEACE BUILDING**

As we have earlier mentioned, the omnipresence of conflicts and disputes has forced all societies to develop ways or methods or mechanisms of handling their conflicts, especially violent conflicts, in order to resolve the conflicts and ensure long lasting peace. This process is usually referred to as peace building. Restorative justice is one of the mechanisms of peace building. Peace building is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation. Distinction is also made between post-conflict peace building and long-term peace building. The former, which is narrower concept, refers to the more traditional strategies of peacemaking and peace keeping. Even though these processes are an important part of peace transformation, they are not sufficient to build a long lasting peace called
stable/sustainable/long term peace. Long-term peace building techniques however focus on the underlying substantive issues that caused the conflict and institute mechanisms for handling conflicts to result into stable peace. Restorative justice, if adapted to peace building, seeks to do just that.

Restorative justice, has been defined as a process that brings victims and offenders/culprits in conflict situation together to face each other, to inform each other about their crimes and victimization, to learn about each others’ backgrounds, and to collectively reach agreement on a 'penalty' or 'sanction' or solutions. In short, restorative justice is a response to crime that focuses on restoring the losses suffered by victims, holding offenders accountable for the harm they have caused, and building peace within communities. The mechanism can however be adapted beyond dealing with crimes, criminals and victim, to deal with conflict situations. It has five major characteristics which we shall discuss briefly in the paragraphs that follow; showing the relevance of each to conflict resolution and peace building.

3. MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

First, Restorative Justice (henceforth referred to as RJ) is a different way of thinking about conflicts and our response to conflicts. Instead of seeing conflicts as a problem for the state/government or for those directly involved in the conflicts such as the Touaregs and Niger state or the Touaregs and Mali state on the one hand and Touaregs and the settled farming communities like the Ganda Koi, restorative justice requires us to look at conflicts in our communities, nations and regions as our own problem and therefore requiring collective response. Restorative justice therefore requires us asking two pertinent questions: What am I doing that is fuelling the conflict in my community or nation or region? What am I not doing that is fuelling the conflict in my community or nation or region? Answers to such questions necessarily force you as an individual to take responsibility for the conflict and do something either alone or with others to bring to an end the conflict. In other words the conflict is first and foremost your own problem and the answer lies within you.

This characteristic of RJ therefore requires envisioning, another very important peace building mechanism. Conflict is in the present and has its roots and origins in the past. But if we are going to find our way out of it, we need to move toward a future different from the past and present. Grappling with intractable conflict requires us to create a path to a future so different from the present that it is hard to imagine. How we go about defining that future is the business of envisioning. Here, we not only assume that we can influence the future, as individuals and as groups, and make an optimal future more likely, we also free ourselves from the notion that certain solutions are less plausible than others. Such an approach is of great import when dealing with an intractable conflict. The intractability itself suggests that forecasting will be of little consolation. We already know that unless something changes, the conflict and its attendant damages will continue. Management offers little help either, since violent conflicts tend to spiral out of control. While management may help us to limit loss, it cannot by itself enable us to prevent it. So, we try to figure out what can be done to create a new future that will bring the conflict to a constructive conclusion (Dugan, 2003). In other words, we need breakthrough goals and projects.

Secondly, RJ focuses on the harm caused by conflict: repairing the harm done to victims and reducing future harm by preventing further conflicts. Thus, it is not only curative but also preventive. This characteristic of RJ requires us to undertake two important activities. We must embark on a critical and comprehensive analysis of the nature and extent of harm caused by the conflict. Similarly we must take on a critical and comprehensive analysis of
who the culprits and victims are. These two activities are done so that repairing the harm done to victims can be adequately and satisfactorily undertaken.

Thirdly, RJ requires offenders to take responsibility for their actions and for the harm they have caused; not necessarily for punishment but for other more positive reasons such as apology and forgiveness (Hauss, 2003). Apology and forgiveness are two sides of the same emotional coin. They reflect the constructive ways the culprit and the victim in a violent conflict can come to grips with the pain and suffering the conflict produced.

The culprit who committed human rights violations and other atrocities has to take responsibility for their actions and apologize. By the same token, the victims of those atrocities have to find the space in their hearts to forgive those who victimized them, even though the pain and suffering will never disappear in a short while. But forgiving is just as important as apologizing in any society which wishes to put its struggles behind it and create a more peaceful and cooperative future. An apology has to be heartfelt and reflect true remorse for past actions. An apology can still matter if it is made by someone who is several generations removed from the abuses, something President Bill Clinton understood when he apologized for slavery, even though it had happened long before he was born!

Fourthly, RJ seeks redress for victims, recompense by offenders and reintegration of both within the community. Compensation and reparation are integral part of these characteristics. RJ recognizes that addressing past injustice is a crucial part of the process of healing and reconciliation. In order to move towards a peaceful future, governments must acknowledge and respond to the wrongs and injuries of the past through compensation and reparations. As Maiese (2003) correctly explained, compensation serves a variety of important functions:

- First, it helps victims to manage the material aspect of their loss. Individual financial grants help to bring immediate economic relief to the victims and allow them to meet basic survival needs. In many cases, monetary reparations in the form of monthly payments are essential to ensure victims’ survival. At the collective level, funds for community rehabilitation programs ensure that survivors of gross human rights violations receive proper treatment.

- Secondly, monetary compensation programs may also deter the state from future abuses by imposing a financial cost on such misdeeds.

- Thirdly, reparations also serve to expose victims' grievances and redirect blame towards those who are truly responsible. This can contribute to the reintegration of victims into society and reduce the likelihood of renewed violent confrontation.

- Finally, reparations are not primarily about money, but rather about making crucial repairs to individuals' psyches, and to social and political institutions. Compensation programs therefore serve to publicly acknowledge wrongdoing, restore survivors’ dignity, and raise public awareness about the harms victims have suffered. For this reason, reparations for former victims or their family members are often a psychologically necessary component of the healing process. In addition, both monetary and symbolic compensation plays an important role in the process of bereavement. Monuments, plaques, and other markers serve to publicly remember the events of the past and help carry lessons from the past into the future. This can help former victims to come to terms with the traumatic events that have occurred.
The Final major characteristic of RJ is that it is achieved through a co-operative effort by communities and the government. This can be done through joint projects. McMorran (2003: 1) describes Joint Projects as projects that “…are positive, usually local activities performed by members of two or more groups that are or have been in conflict with one another”. Such projects according to him “allow individuals from opposing sides of a conflict to encounter one another in a conflict-free zone of cooperation” McMorran (2003: 1). The following are examples of joint projects:

- Croats and Muslims in Bosnia, former enemies, jointly rebuilding houses destroyed during their conflict.
- A project to rebuild Albanian mosques in Kosovo by Jews, Protestants, Serb Orthodox, and Albanian Muslims, all former enemies
- The JAMAA project in Burundi, which encourages soccer games with teams composed of both Hutus and Tutsis
- The European Union can also be considered as a kind of joint project, since it came about following World War II and has served as a galvanizing focus for former enemies.
- Integration of the Rebel Touaregs groups into the military in both Mali and Niger can be seen as a kind of joint project to rebuild the military institutions of the two countries.
- The joint project cooperative effort encourages reconciliation between opposing parties on various ways, viz.:
  - One of the greatest impediments to reconciliation during or following a conflict is that enemies are separated from one another. This separation inevitably leads to negative stereotypes on both sides. Joint projects necessarily bring enemies together, which in turn can lead to the breakdown of stereotypes as people on one side get to know people on the other.
  - Because the focus of joint projects is building institutions that have positive meaning or use for both sides, such as houses, hospitals, schools, places of worship, parks, etc, the parties are able to see that they share common interests.
  - Participants who help each other in such simple ways as carrying heavy objects can develop shared work ethics.
  - Through the process as a whole, participants have the potential to begin or continue communication and create lasting relationships or even friendships.
  - Finally, joint projects allow enemies to realize some cooperative accomplishment that may eventually lead to conflict de-escalation and transformation.

4. CONCLUSION

May I conclude this humble submission by calling upon Civil Society Organizations here present to reflect upon their own activities and to see to what extent those activities in one form or the other fit into of the characteristics of restorative justice we have examined in this paper? If you find your activities do fit, please may I encourage you to continue along the same line. If however you find that they do not, may I suggest you reconsider your plans and strategies.

REFERENCES


