ECOWAS and the Dynamics of
Conflict and Peace-building

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ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Conflict and Peace-building

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Preface

For over two decades now, West Africa has remained one of Africa's most conflict-ridden regions and the theatre of some of the most atrocious brutalities in the modern world. Surprisingly, however, the region is about the only place in Africa where perhaps the most ambitious and determined internal efforts to find collective regional solutions to conflict have been deployed and sustained, through the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS). As a regional body formed in 1975 for the sole purpose of regional economic integration, the convergence between economic and political matters precipitated the signing of the Protocol on Non-Aggression and the Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence adopted in Dakar (Senegal) and Freetown (Sierra Leone) in 1978 and 1981 respectively, which then provided the basis for ECOWAS intervention in conflicts in the sub-region. The lead role of the ECOWAS peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, in search of peaceful solutions to the civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire has yielded a mix of successes and failures in a number of cases, while aggravating or creating new tensions in some others.

While the reasons for these contrasting outcomes are numerous, and the context of their challenges (in terms of the capital outlays for peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction) enormous, the comparative advantage that ECOWAS has derived from the experiences is reflected in the various conventions, mechanisms and protocols that are now in place to ensure a more comprehensive conflict prevention framework. The ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism (ECOWARN) is particularly of note in this regard.

This book provides a nuanced analysis of the above issues and others on the dynamics of conflicts in the region and the roles played by ECOWAS and various actors in the context of the complex interplay between natural resource governance, corruption, demography and the youth bulge, gender and the conflicting interests of national, regional and international players. As a research effort, it explores the value of retrospective analysis at a time when even the regional umbrella body (ECOWAS) is re-thinking its conflict intervention framework, in a bid to mainstream human security within its security sector intervention paradigm and transform itself from an ECOWAS of states to an ECOWAS of citizens.

Thomas Jaye, Dauda Garuba & Stella Amadi

Introduction

Thomas Jaye, Dauda Garuba & Stella Amadi

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 and comprises fifteen member states and has the total population of 280 million people. ECOWAS was established to address a specific problem with which it was confronted – economic development. Consequently, ECOWAS was originally conceived and established to address the narrow security issues of economic integration as the basis for self-reliance. However, with time, the leaders of the regional body realised that there was a strong nexus between economics and other broader security issues. Hence, in recent years, the organisation has begun to tackle a number of issues which were not originally envisaged to address.

After independence, most African states faced the challenge of addressing the legacies of long years of colonial rule, and economic development was one of the issues confronting these fledgling states. Individually, these states could not address such problem and therefore the need for a regional approach to it. The creation of ECOWAS provided the regional framework for achieving such a goal but like other post-colonial projects, the process of economic integration was undermined by the strong link with the economies of the former colonies, which led more to dependence than independence; and the unfavourable and unequal international trade regime established did not provide any basis for African countries to develop.

Long years of single party and authoritarian rule coupled with frequent regime change through military coups d'etat made it impossible to pursue development in any stable environment. Politics therefore undermined economic development because most leaders were more interested in maintaining the status quo through power struggle than pay serious attention to development that would benefit the citizens of the respective states constituting the region.

Often, arbitrary regime change was aided and abetted by neighbouring states and this made it impossible to pursue any regional project with success as governments became suspicion of one other.

Accordingly, ECOWAS responded to the ugly situation by adopting two major security documents, namely, the Protocol on Non-Aggression (1978) and the

Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence (1981). These legal instruments constituted the beginning of the realisation by West African leaders that security was linked with economic integration.

By the end of the 1980s, new forms of challenges emerged in West Africa, which required new ways of addressing them. Unlike in the past when inter-state rivalries and conflicts were the order of the day, during this period, intra-state conflicts posed new challenges to ECOWAS. Although the region had experienced intra-state conflict in Nigeria (the Nigerian civil war) between May 1967 and January 1970, the conflict in Liberia and subsequently in Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire posed new challenges. The impact on the lives of West Africans; their regional and international dimensions; and their nature meant that ECOWAS could not afford to sit supinely to allow the conflicts take their natural course.

Consequently, when the Liberian civil war erupted, ECOWAS was swift in putting together troops to intervene in the conflict. For the first time, the regional body organised ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to intervene militarily in order to bring the carnage under control. It was also the first time a regional body like ECOWAS intervened in such conflict without prior authorisation by the UN Security Council (UNSC). The ECOWAS intervention raised a number of issues including legitimacy and legality. Questions were posed as to whether ECOWAS had any legitimate and legal right to intervene in such conflict. There were two major reasons for this debate. First, there was the erroneous view that Nigeria intervened in Liberia because of the personal relations between President Samuel Doe of Liberia and President I. B. Babangida of Nigeria. Secondly, some felt that it was questionable whether countries led by undemocratic military governments could promote democracy in war-torn Liberia.

Subsequently, the ECOWAS intervened in Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire in order to find solution to the crises in these countries. Without delving into the shortcomings and strengths of these interventions because they are covered in the papers in this book, what is important is that such interventions constituted the beginning of the effective involvement of the organisation in other security issues, which impinged upon economic integration.

Currently, intra-state conflicts on the scale of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire are declining but the region is plagued by conflicts in Senegal (Cassamance), Ghana (Northern), Nigeria (Niger Delta) and others. Moreover, there are transnational or trans-border security challenges that the region must confront if it should remain stable and secure. First, addressing the challenges of post-war reconstruction is a tall order. Second, the region is awash with Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and drugs trafficking; there are issues of money laundering and human trafficking, youth unemployment, and spread of the HIV/AIDS disease.

One other area which needs to be addressed within the context of this discourse is the gender dimension to conflicts as they occur in the sub-region. The praxis has more often than not been to pay attention to gender issues only during the post conflict period. In Sierra Leone for instance it was estimated that 250,000 women were raped during decade-long civil war.[1] Women in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire faced similar ordeals and even in societies that are considered relatively stable; the situation of women demands serious attention.

However, there have been notable and positive developments within the region. Over the past five years, there have been democratic changes in West African states based on political pluralism. For example, in the year 2007, a total of ten West African countries conducted democratic elections. With the lingering poverty and impact of protracted conflicts, however, the holding of 'pro forma democracies' on their own will not be able to ensure sustainable peace and security in the region. There is thus the need to address the broader security needs of the people as part and parcel of the democratisation of West Africa. Thus, the nexus between politics and economics should be recognised as the basis for sound policy making at the national and regional levels.

Although ECOWAS relies on its member states to address the challenges narrated above, the organisation must understand the nuances and dynamics of the conflicts in order to play the role of facilitator and monitor of developments in the region. It must ensure that security is viewed from a holistic perspective, and that the new shift towards human security is not just about the physical security of the people. On the contrary, it should be about addressing the oppressive power structures that perpetuate human suffering. Hence, human security is also about emancipation. Such conceptual clarity is vital for sound and effective policy making in the region.

This book therefore provides a nuanced understanding and explanation of the broad range of issues that relate to the dynamics of conflicts in the region. It covers issues such as natural resource governance; the nexus between demography, environment and conflicts; youth vulnerability; gender; peacemaking; human security; internal and external dimensions of conflicts; Diaspora and conflicts; and the responses of ECOWAS to conflicts in the region. As a research effort, this process brings with it the value-added of retrospective analysis at a time when even the sub-regional umbrella (ECOWAS) is re-thinking its conflict intervention framework in a bid to effectively mainstream issues of human security within its security sector intervention paradigm.

Accordingly, in his chapter, Abiodun Alao argues that natural resources have entered the dynamics of conflicts in the region because the mechanisms for governing these resources in most countries in the region are deplorably weak,[2] and the sub-regional organisation overlooking the affairs of the region, ECOWAS,

still has considerable amount of work to do in order to manage the complexities of natural resource governance at the sub-regional level. By natural resource governance, Alao refers to 'the complex structures of considerations, internal and external, which come to play in the management (i.e. the ownership, extraction, processing, distribution and control) of natural resources'. Thus he covers the legal and political contexts for natural resource governance.

In their chapter, Andrews Atta-Asamoah and Emmanuel Kwesi Aning provide an analysis of the complex relationships between population composition, especially age distribution; environment and the dynamics that accompany the outbreak of conflicts in West Africa by using Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire as empirical case studies. They argue that the conflicts in the region have never been linked with the problem of youth bulge and the effects of economic downturns. They also point out the adverse impact of conflicts on environmental security. In this light, reference is made to the role of environmental issues in fomenting tensions in many forest and Sahelian areas. As they argue, the increasing desertification in West Africa constitutes an early warning indicator that must be addressed or else the region could degenerate into more deadly conflicts in the future.

Augustine Ikelegbe and Dauda Garuba probe the role of youth in the conflicts in West Africa. In this light, they examine the factors that make young people to get involved in these conflicts. According to them, although youth dominate some conflicts, they are not the drivers. However, there are conflicts that are driven and run by young people. The case of the Niger Delta exemplifies this assumption and therefore understanding and explaining their roles and character of youth involvement in such conflicts are crucial in understanding conflicts dynamics in the sub-region. Against the backdrop of the above, they pose a number of questions that are relevant to articulating policy options for addressing such a problem within the region. These relate to the origins of youth involvement; characteristics and trends of youth in conflicts; and policy measures for redirecting the energies of youth in order for them to realize their potentials in society.

Awa Ceesay-Ebo provides some critical insights into the gender dimension of the ECOWAS peace and security architecture in relation to UN Resolution 1325. In her contribution, she argues that in post-conflict environments, women are 'only sporadically involved in peace negotiations and agreements'. According to her, even where they are involved in peace-building in society, the views of women are not taken seriously. Yet in demographic terms, 'women are half of the human race'. Ebo points out that the role of women in such process can go a long way in sustaining peace and security.

Boubacar N'Diaye reflects on the internal and international dimensions of conflicts in West Africa. In his chapter, he argues that even though the conflicts in West Africa originate from objective socioeconomic, psychological, and political conditions in the confines of national boundaries, they are also influenced by the

sub-regional, regional, and global environments in which they occur. In this light, he provides a historical background to the region and subscribes to the definition of conflict as 'a situation in which actors use conflict behaviour against each other to attain incompatible goals and/or to express their hostility'.[3] It also examines the nature of the African state and the implications for understanding the dynamics of conflicts in the region.

In her chapter, Funmi Olonisakin discusses the dynamics of conflict and peace-building in West Africa within the contexts of the role of ECOWAS. In her assessment of the role of ECOWAS, she writes that the organisation has demonstrated its capacity in the area of peacekeeping. However, its involvement in overall peace-building in the region has been comparably weak and less systematic. Indeed, peace-building in the region has witnessed greater involvement by external actors, with ECOWAS, playing a minimal role.

Ishola Williams provides personal insights into the process of peacemaking in the region. As someone who has worked in this area in the region, he explains why peace agreements are not durable. As he points out, most of the negotiated processes in Africa follow the same method, the same template and the peace accords are similar. In most cases, peace agreements are not respected because when rebels negotiate, they do so under pressure and often with carrots and sticks incentives. It is from the vantage point as a practitioner, both at national and sub-regional levels, that he discusses peacemaking with emphasis on the instruments, institutions, resources and capacity.

In his chapter, Mohammed J. Kuna examines the issue of social vulnerability and Conflicts in West Africa. He conceptualises the notion of vulnerability and outlines its basic elements in the West African context. He argues that a regional Conflict Vulnerability Analysis (CVA) should include an analysis of the trajectories of conflicts.

Therefore, he reviews the 'existing regional mechanism for conflict management, and draws attention to some of its limitations, thereby laying the ground for the necessity of a broader mechanism that encompasses a CVA'. He argues, furthermore, that 'such mechanisms have been locked within a broad, though paralysing framework that emphasises the rigidity of national sovereignty and boundaries'. He stresses that the evolving regional mechanism remains militaristic and is located 'within national, rather than regional security frameworks, and largely *reactive* in its response to conflicts'. He calls for the revision and strengthening of the entire architecture in order for it to become predictive and anticipatory. In this way, it will contribute meaningfully to understanding the 'probable impact of conflicts, the probable humanitarian assistance required, as well as identifying the salient conditions determining the differential exposure of communities and populations to conflicts'.

Given the fact that the West African Diasporas are closely identified and linked with conflicts in the region, Musa Abutudu and Crosdel Emuedo examine their increasing role as active players in them. As he points out, the proportion of migrants to the total population of West Africa is estimated to be 2.9 per cent with Nigeria alone having 15 million of its citizens living abroad. One of the factors that contribute to the increasing role of the Diasporas is the rapid development of new communication technologies which has made it possible to transmit information quickly and therefore enhancing the capacities to mobilise across continents on common causes.

Another issue raised by the authors is that because of the unfavourable conditions associated with living abroad where people are often discriminated against on the basis of race, xenophobia and other factors, people in the Diasporas have found it difficult to settle abroad. Hence, as a way out, they tend to focus on their countries of origin. Often these people are forced to flee their countries for several reasons ranging from economic hardships to political problems emanating from the key role they play in the struggle against authoritarian regimes. For others, relocation is a function of professional necessity. In most cases, these people lead the struggle from abroad. This raises the question as to whether Diasporas are conflict accelerators or moderators.

In his chapter on 'ECOWAS and regional responses to conflicts', Abdel-Fatau Musah writes that the regional body has always responded to changing events in the international scene. Thus, the initial attempts to address the issues of peace and security were informed by the realities of Cold War politics. These were reflected in the key normative documents on peace and security such as the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression, and the 1981 Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence, which were 'designed primarily to address external threats and aggression'. However, by the mid-1980s, new global dynamics and local responses had emerged to threaten ECOWAS' integration efforts. He therefore stresses that the recent transformation of ECOWAS from a Secretariat into a Commission, which gives the organisation some supra-national status, has implications for its integration drive at the institutional and programmatic levels including its work in the field of peace and security.

On the theme of 'ECOWAS and Human Security', Olawale Ismail observes that 'despite the lull in rebellions and the commendable recalibration of ECOWAS peace and security forces, the extent to which extant conflict prevention and management mechanisms reflect or adequately takes care of emerging and possible future security threats is doubtful'. Therefore, he critically interrogates how, where and why human security is linked with the broader security debate in theory and practice. Against this background, the chapter focuses on the 'freedom from fear' component of the broader human security agenda. He 'contends that

emerging sources of human and material destruction, displacement and disloca-
tion, and trans-border insecurity in the sub-region are inadequately reflected and/
or prioritised in ECOWAS' peace and security architecture'. Significantly, he high-
lights the need for a West African perspective on human security that recognises
and prioritises the pervasive threats to the security of individuals and communi-
ties. Ismail is not convinced that the transformation of ECOWAS into a
supranational authority can enable it respond to the challenges of human security
challenges unless it clearly and effectively defines the human security normative
principle of intervention (overriding sovereignty).

In the concluding chapter, Thomas Jaye makes the point that it is only through
regional and collective efforts that peace and security can be consolidated in West
Africa. The basis for this contention is that the security of any one state or country
is indivisible from the rest of ECOWAS member states. He therefore argues that
there is the need to give critical thought to the reforming of the security sector,
not just in post-conflict societies, but in every country throughout the region. This
point is important because of the nature, scope and dimension of transnational
security threats and dilemmas facing the region. Finally, the chapter argues that as
important as a regional approach to security sector reform is, it will remain
inadequate to address the broader security needs of the people in the absence of
a regional approach to people-centred economic development; thus rekindling
the role of the state and such intergovernmental organisations as the ECOWAS in
leading the way for policy direction.

PART I

Understanding Conflicts in West Africa

1

ECOWAS: From Economic Integration to Peace-building

Funmi Olonisakin

In considering the extent to which ECOWAS has played a role in responding to conflict in West Africa, one is often tempted to forget that the organisation was meant, at its origin, to foster economic integration and only got into the field of peace and security by default. In the last decade, but more importantly in the last few years, ECOWAS has played a significant role in addressing conflicts in the region. However, its capacity has been better demonstrated in the field of peacekeeping. While not directly responsible for post-conflict peace-building work in West Africa, ECOWAS has, through a number of activities, promoted peace-building in regional as well as certain national contexts. These include, for example, systematic collaboration with civil society, cooperation with development and other partners in activities aimed at meeting sub-regional security challenges.

The thesis of this chapter is that while ECOWAS has performed significantly well in regional peacekeeping, the extent of its involvement in overall peace-building in the region, at least until recently, has been comparably weak and less systematic. Indeed, peace-building in West Africa, especially after bitter civil conflict, has witnessed greater involvement by external actors, with ECOWAS playing a minimal or subordinate role. The chapter also argues that the regional organisation has sufficient capacity to be a decisive actor in the area of post-conflict peace building, just as much as it has been in peacekeeping. However, before this can be realised, a number of challenges must be overcome.

Discussion of the above argument comes under five sub-headings. The first section discusses ECOWAS' demonstrated capacity for regional peacekeeping, while the second looks at the challenges of peace building in West Africa, identifying the activities undertaken and the actors that have been involved. In the third section is a discussion of why ECOWAS has not been able to participate as much as it

should do in the process of peace building. The on-going efforts by the organisation to improve its peace-building activities are discussed in the fourth section while the fifth section offers a conclusion to the discussions in the chapter.

Demonstrated Capacity in Conflict Management

ECOWAS has scored a number of continental 'firsts' in the area of regional peacekeeping. The organisation was the first in the continent to undertake a major peacekeeping mission (beginning with the deployment of ECOMOG in Liberia in 1990); it was also the first to collaborate with the United Nations in meeting the challenges of a complex emergency in the post Cold War world, while it preceded other regional organisations in evolving a workable security management mechanism[4]. Indeed, in the area of peacekeeping, the organisation has played a decisive role. Much has been written on the involvement of ECOWAS in regional peacekeeping, such that going into greater detail here serves no useful purpose.[5] Rather, what is presented here is a capsule summary of the ECOWAS role in a way that illustrates its capacity as an effective actor in regional peacekeeping, notwithstanding the obvious challenges.

Broadly speaking, ECOWAS involvement in conflict management can be brought under two headings: peacekeeping and mediatory diplomacy. Its peacekeeping capacity was demonstrated in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau.

Apart from the initial controversy surrounding the first ECOWAS intervention in Liberia given the questions raised about the role of Nigeria, it has been difficult to challenge the rationale behind the deployment of ECOWAS peace forces in regional conflicts since 1990. The 'declared' motivation in all the four countries where there have been peacekeeping and peace support missions have been similar: the desire to put an end to the carnage and destruction which, at the time of intervention, had resulted in the death of considerable numbers of civilians and had resulted in the complete collapse of law and order. Attendant to this was the effect of these wars on the neighbouring countries, especially through the massive influx of refugees and other cross-border issues, notably, small arms proliferation.

Going briefly into individual cases, it should be pointed out that before ECOWAS intervened in Liberia in 1990, there had been a complete breakdown of law and order and the government of the late Samuel Doe was on the verge of collapse. Indeed, the late President Doe was arrested by one of the warring factions and subsequently killed just as the regional peacekeeping force was settling down in the country. The Sierra Leone situation was similar to that in Liberia. The central government was too weak to meet the challenges posed by the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Furthermore, a significant part of the national army that was supposed to be defending the elected government had staged a coup and entered into an informal alliance with the rebels. Indeed, the catastrophic

consequences of this weakness had effects on the civilian population and some of the neighbouring countries. For example, more than a million persons were displaced and at least 300 000 refugees had fled to Guinea.[6]

In Guinea Bissau, the military coup had threatened the central government and not even the assistance from the Senegalese and Guinean governments could meet the challenge posed by the country's military force, which challenged the central government, while in Cote d'Ivoire, the central government was too weak to manage the complexities of security challenges posed by the rebels. Consequently, in all the cases, there were sufficient grounds to justify the deployment of ECOMOG (later ECOMICI in Cote d'Ivoire and ECOMIL in Liberia) in these conflicts.

On the whole, while there were rough edges in its military operations, which have been discussed elsewhere and widely published, ECOWAS has succeeded in establishing itself as an effective force when it comes to peacekeeping, and many aspects of its operations have become the focus of teaching in military institutions and training schools across the world.

The second area where ECOWAS has made its mark is in mediation in civil conflicts across the region. In Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS performed major mediatory roles, admittedly with varying degrees of success. Many of the peace agreements signed to end the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone were signed under the auspices of ECOWAS, notably the Cotonou, Abuja and Accra Peace agreements on Liberia and the Lome Peace Agreement on Sierra Leone. Although the United Nations also played important roles in all these cases, the bulk of the initiatives that led to the settlement of the conflicts were undertaken by ECOWAS. Furthermore, the organisation was at the forefront of mediation in Cote d'Ivoire notwithstanding the role played by the AU and UN at different stages. Indeed, the organisation was determined to ensure peace that it was willing to set aside the recommendations by the South African President, operating on behalf of the African Union, on the ways of resolving the conflict in the country. The South African President's position was judged as being too close to that of the government of Cote d'Ivoire.[7]

ECOWAS has also played active roles in monitoring transitional elections in West Africa. While ECOWAS mediation efforts and peacekeeping missions could not be said to be have always been an unqualified success, they have been accorded recognition both within and outside Africa. At critical moments, the ECOWAS responses were not simply the best options on offer, they were the only real options on the ground and the perseverance of the organisation made it possible to achieve a settlement in Liberia and Sierra Leone in particular.

However, the crucial question that has always remained is what needs to be done in these countries after the cessation of armed conflict to ensure that violence does not recur to further stall the development efforts and compound the security

challenges of the country and the sub-region? The experience of Liberia, where armed conflict resumed from 1999-2003 despite the seven-year mediation and peacekeeping effort of ECOWAS/ ECOMOG from 1990 until Charles Taylor's election in 1997 is a case in point. Despite the massive investment in human and financial resources made by ECOWAS in bringing peace to Liberia during this period, crisis erupted once again under Taylor's rule. It is notable that Liberian factions signed fourteen agreements before the hard won peace settlement (Abuja II agreement) that led to Taylor's election in 1997.

Similarly, attempts to bring lasting peace to Sierra Leone suffered a reversal on two occasions. First was in 1997, when as mentioned above, parts of the army staged a coup in connivance with the RUF to oust the elected regime of President Kabbah. This coup occurred following a peace agreement between Kabbah's government and the RUF in October of the previous year. President Kabbah was reinstated in March 1998, when ECOMOG succeeded in overwhelming the forces of the AFRC and RUF in Freetown following an incident in February 1998. But in January 1999, the rebels once again succeeded in overwhelming the peacekeeping forces, when they invaded Freetown, abducting thousands of children while killing hundreds of ECOMOG soldiers.

There are several important messages in these stories of the recurrence of violence. Perhaps the most fundamental is that while enforcement action, and peacekeeping – the interposing of military personnel between warring factions to defuse crisis and establish a measure of order – certainly has a role in the process of resolving difficult conflict, this cannot, by itself, build lasting peace. Ensuring lasting peace will depend on the extent to which other conditions can be created. The creation of such conditions will be discussed before proceeding to examine the role of ECOWAS in building peace in West Africa.

The Essence and Essentials of Peace-building

The challenge of building lasting peace whether in situations of violent conflict or in conflict situations that have not yet degenerated into violence is one that has consumed the attention of not just West Africans, but the world community as a whole. Since the 1990s, the international community has grappled with the challenge of consolidating peace and preventing a recurrence of armed conflict in states emerging from war. This has generally entailed the building of institutional and physical infrastructure and attempts at societal reconciliation. This process has been described as peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction, state building or, more controversially, nation-building.[8]

Peace-building was first conceived of by former United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros, Boutros-Ghali in his *Agenda for Peace* (1992) as part of a chronological conflict management cycle which included four sequential, even if overlapping activities including preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemak-

ing and peace-building. The concept of peace-building evolved and has since been developed under various umbrellas including post-conflict reconstruction and state building. While it seemed logical to distinguish between these activities and prescribe neat application through specific phases of a conflict management cycle, the realities on the ground have required different dynamics. Indeed, neither *Agenda for Peace* nor its supplement, *Another Agenda for Peace* (Kofi Annan 1995), envisaged that peace-building could be applied before the onset of armed conflict as a primary prevention mechanism, rather than just a post-conflict activity to prevent a relapse into armed conflict.

The *Brahimi Report* of 2000 (United Nations 2000) also described peace-building as 'activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war'.[9] It was not until 2001 that the UN Security Council addressed the issue of sequencing by conceiving of peace-building as a longer-term mission that serves a preventive role both before and after conflict – a view that was also shared by the *UN High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in 2004*.[10]

Notwithstanding the range and intensity of international action to support negotiated settlements and move toward lasting peace in post-conflict settings, studies indicated that about half of peace agreements collapsed within five years.[11] More recent studies show that there is now a 44 per cent chance that where peace has been achieved, conflict will reignite within ten years.[12] Several factors have been put forward to explain the abatement or recurrence of armed conflict. Either conflicting parties reach a 'saturation point' or 'exhaustion level' because the use of violence to pursue their conflict is costlier than the reasons for which they went to war, or a peace agreement offers expectations that there will be redress for the injustices and grievances that underlined the conflict.[13]

In many instances, violence recurs either because the expectation of social, political and economic justice has not been fulfilled, or because peace processes emphasise the creation of structures far above the more intricate process of relationship building aimed at healing societies and reconciling people and groups previously locked in a bitter struggle. This is what Lederach refers to as the 'justice gap' and 'process-structure gap' respectively, in peace-building.[14] In Mozambique, Angola and Haiti, to Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, the international community has attempted with varying degrees of success to rebuild societies torn apart by brutal armed conflict and to prevent a relapse into violence.

It is therefore possible to distinguish between post-conflict reconstruction and state building in terms of the flexibility of application in different contexts. While the former remains obviously geared toward post-conflict settings, state building can conceivably be applied in both post-conflict settings and in other

fragile states not necessarily experiencing large scale armed conflict. This distinction has implications for the scope and nature of activities to be undertaken in these settings. In post conflict settings, international response must take into account a range of activities, including, for example, the continued enforcement of peace agreements, continued support for public order and safety, disarmament, demobilisation and effective reintegration of ex-combatants and structured arms control arrangements. The degree of permissiveness (for international assistance) also varies between post-conflict countries and other fragile states.

State building and post-conflict reconstruction invariably represent integral aspects of peace-building efforts and have various common dimensions, which are crucial for ensuring continued stability and preventing armed conflict or a relapse into violence. The broad categories outlined below give some sense of the nature of activities undertaken as part of post-conflict reconstruction and state building initiatives across different regions.[15] The overall focus in most cases is on restoring governance systems.

Establishment of Safety and Security

- Reconstituting the security establishment
- Ensuring public order and safety
- Securing territorial borders
- Reforming security sector governance

Establishing or Strengthening Constitutional Governance

- Constitutional reforms
- Strengthen mechanism for elections and citizen participation
- Guarantee of freedom for civil society and the media
- Guarantee human rights
- Strengthen key branches of government

Strengthening Justice and Reconciliation

- Rebuilding or reforming the justice system
- Strengthen oversight of security agencies
- Support truth and/or reconciliation bodies
- Promote balanced application of international justice systems
- Promote better systems for integrating excluded groups including women, youth and children

Promoting Economic Justice and Growth

- Equitable distribution, management and control of natural resources
- Reforming financial, economic and regulatory institutions

- Promoting trade and investment
- Strengthening the private sector
- Promoting job creation and developing human skills
- Extending social safety nets

Recovery and Reconstruction

- Rebuilding infrastructure
- Restoring public services
- Extending education and health facilities
- Extending social protection, in particular, for vulnerable groups

It now remains to be seen how ECOWAS has geared itself to respond to West Africa's current conflict dynamics.

Peace-building in West Africa: Contents and Actors

To effectively address the ECOWAS response to peace-building challenges in West Africa, it is important to understand the nature of the conflict and security challenges that continue to confront the region. At the root of West African conflicts is a breakdown in governance systems and indeed, the absence of effective governance structures. The prevalence of this challenge in West African states, which have, at best, a recent history of political pluralism, means that pre-armed conflict peace-building as well as post-conflict peace-building are both legitimate goals to pursue in the sub-region. What is significant about West Africa's security environment is that even in states not experiencing generalised armed conflict, the threat of low-intensity conflict is real and has the potential to slow down economic and human development processes. In these situations of 'no war, no peace', low intensity conflicts do not pose a significant threat to international peace and security, but they are not sufficiently benign to allow for the continuation of normal development throughout the affected states. The Casamance conflict in Senegal, the Dagbon crisis in Ghana and the Niger Delta conflict in Nigeria are few examples.

However, greater attention is often paid to situations of open armed conflict. This is understandable given the dire consequences of armed conflict for the states concerned and for the region as a whole. In any case, it is unlikely that the same states addressing the consequences of war in neighbouring states will themselves admit that they are also legitimate candidates for Peace-building assistance. Leaders do not always objectively deal with, or accept the idea that they bear some responsibility for a (potential) breakdown in governance, which might place their countries at risk of war. Thus, it is likely that only situations where a partial or complete collapse of the state has occurred will receive comprehensive regional attention in the foreseeable future.

The ending of armed conflict and the re-establishment of a crude semblance of stability is only a first phase in managing the complexities associated with armed conflict. In all situations however, the efforts to prevent a relapse into armed conflict, is as important, if not, in fact, more important, than the initial cessation of hostility.

Across West Africa, experience has shown that even after wars end, a relapse is always a distinct possibility. In the two cases where ECOWAS had assisted in establishing relative peace after collapse of state structures, the organisation has not been able to play a decisive role in peace-building. Generally, the process of peace building in these communities has entailed the re-establishment of institutions of governance. The failure of ECOWAS to play a lead role in this regard is significant. We will now look at aspects of the process of peace building in these states and the range of actors that have led the process.

In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, the processes of peace-building required fundamental reforms like the re-building of civil service, new national armed forces, security sector reform, the management of youth vulnerability and exclusion, educational rebuilding, re-orientation of social order, re-creation of harmonious inter-group relations, the management of natural resources, among others. These are issues that are demanding, both in terms of human and financial resources but, more often than not, the slender budgets of affected countries are unable to meet these demands. Consequently, external actors had inevitably come in to assist in the rebuilding efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It should be noted that the need for institutional rebuilding also requires a gradual process of reconciliation and a re-tuning of societal mindset away from the bitter memories of war and accompanying brutality toward reconciliation. Only then can the process of rebuilding lead to a stable peace.

In Liberia, the level of engagement by the international community after Taylor came to power in 1997 was relatively low key. But following the relapse into conflict, Taylor's exit and the subsequent signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003, the United Nations has played a prominent role through its multi-dimensional peacekeeping mission, UNMIL. The UN took over from an ECOWAS mission – ECOMIL – which was initially deployed to maintain stability in the country. The scale of the UN involvement, post-Taylor, is significantly higher than in the 1990s when it contributed only a small number of Military Observers to operate alongside ECOMOG.

Similarly, in Sierra Leone, the UN stepped up its engagement in 1999 after the signing of the Lome Peace Accord. In 2000, an enlarged UNAMSIL took over from the ECOMOG force. Indeed, it was in Sierra Leone that the practice of 'rehatting' (i.e. swapping green berets for blue berets) regional peacekeepers into

UN peacekeeping missions began. We have subsequently seen this in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. The larger multi-dimensional peacekeeping missions that took over have often focused on activities that move beyond the policing action of classical peacekeeping.

New integrated UN missions now have expanded civilian components which look at addressing immediate consequences of conflict as well as issues that can create a challenge for peacekeeping in the longer term. These include, for example, human rights and justice, child protection, disarmament demobilisation and reintegration of people associated with fighting forces, civil affairs (beyond support of electoral process), HIV/AIDS and improving gender relations, among other activities. The recognition by the UN, that the short-term nature and relatively narrow focus of peacekeeping cannot guarantee the consolidation of peace, led in part to the establishment of the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) on 1 January 2006, the day after UNAMSIL's withdrawal was complete.[16] Its role is to assist the Government of Sierra Leone with the consolidation of peace. This is also the message underpinning the UN Peace Building Commission.

Broadly, the external actors that came to assist the West African states that had suffered collapse or serious destruction of their institutions can be divided into five. These were the United Nations, international NGOs, the European Union; governments of individual Western European nations and policy/academic institutions. The involvement of the United Nations in the area of peace building in both Liberia and Sierra Leone came in two forms: the peace building role of UN missions and the activities of various UN agencies mentioned above. In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, the peace missions, headed by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG), led the process. Various agencies of the United Nations also worked as part of country teams notably the UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, and others contributed significantly to the consolidation of peace in these countries.

The European Union has contributed to peace building in these countries in three ways: first is through direct support to the governments of these countries or the sponsorship of specific projects; second is through the assistance offered to non-Government Organisations (NGOs) operating in these countries, for specific programmes including strengthening the capacity of civil society; and, third, is through the assistance that was given to the regional organisation, ECOWAS, in the re-building of its security architecture. While the affected countries are not the sole beneficiaries of this, the sharpening of ECOWAS security arrangement, as will be discussed later, has indirectly benefited the countries in their effort to maintain stability after bitter civil conflicts.

In terms of support to NGOs, who are part of the actors providing assist-ance in these post-conflict settings, international NGOs (INGOs) are often ac-corded pre-eminence over local NGOs and civil society groups. It is INGOs who receive the bulk of external funding and these resources in turn trickle down to local NGOs and civil society in general. Sierra Leone, in particular, is known for its well organised civil society. Local NGOs here complained about limited support from the international community, which tended to give more support to their international counterparts. They challenged the assumptions and argu-ments put forward by the international NGOs, for example, that local groups lack the appropriate capacity arguing that it was mainly Sierra Leoneans who implemented the projects of the international NGOs operating in the country. The debate surrounding the differences between international and local NGOs is one that will continue for sometime to come.

Individual Western European countries and the United States constitute the fourth set of actors. Under bilateral agreement with Governments and/or support to NGOs, the development agencies of several European countries (e.g. UK and Germany and Scandinavian countries) have offered assistance in different areas. At times, their support is routed via the UN and such support include, for example, the retraining of the national army or overarching reform of the security sector, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of people associated with fighting forces, and anti-corruption initiatives, among other things. The support provided by the UK Government for security reforms in Sierra Leone stands out in this regard. It is one of the few cases where a leading nation has made a ten-year commitment toward peace-building programmes in a war-affected African country rather than the relatively short term programmes of support that characterise most donor engagements in Africa. This approach of longer-term support is not widespread and appears to have been a one-off gesture by the regime of Tony Blair in response to the much publicised horrors faced by the people of Sierra Leone at the time.

The final actors are policy/academic institutions. The role of this category of actors is often not acknowledged in academic literature and policy papers looking at the nature of external assistance for war-affected societies in Africa. Increasingly, these actors are playing significant roles in different areas of post-war recovery, especially on security sector reform. A prominent example here is the initiative being facilitated by the African Security Sector Network (ASSN), which is coordinated in West Africa by the Centre for Democracy and Development), in collaboration with the Conflict, Security and Development Group at King's College London and the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces. These institutions have among other things developed a training programme for Liberian Parliamentarians on democratic oversight of the security sector. How-

ever, there is a longer-term objective to the support provided by these actors. This is to contribute to the development of a sound knowledge base on peace and security among Liberians. As part of their programme of support these institutions facilitated the establishment of a Centre for Conflict Transformation at the University of Liberia.[17]

There is, however, a more controversial aspect to the role played by external actors in war-affected countries in the region. Sometimes, external actors set agendas in the name of peace-building, which invariably raise questions about local ownership and usurpation of roles in ways that chip away at the sovereignty of the states in question. Perhaps the best example here is in the case of Liberia, where a string of external actors came together to introduce the idea of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP). Although it needs to be pointed out that ECOWAS was also among those who supported this initiative, other actors being the African Union, European Commission, IMF, Nigeria, Ghana, United States and the World Bank. The objective was to put in place structures to ensure proper management of the economic affairs of Liberia.

In its operation, the GEMAP has six components: financial management and accountability; improving budgeting and expenditure management; improving procurement practices and granting of concessions; establishing effective processes to control corruption; supporting key institutions; and capacity building. Under the arrangement, all state-owned enterprises will be reformed, and financial experts, with signatory powers will be recruited from abroad to supervise and assist their government counterparts. Much more importantly, an external supervisor with binding co-signatory authority will be brought into key governmental institutions like the Bureau of Customs and Excise, Ministry of Land, Mines and Energy, in order to promote transparency and accountability. The program was signed into law in September 2005, and it was to last for 36 months.

Opinions in Liberia have been divided on the issue of GEMAP, sometimes with strange alliances being formed to accept or condemn the programme. Those who support the program argue that some form of externally monitored initiative was needed to prevent graft in governance. Furthermore, an initiative that brought together the calibre of groups within the GEMAP was the only way to caution the government. On their part, those who oppose the GEMAP are concerned about the loss of sovereignty that comes with the external vetting of Liberian financial accounts.

Indeed, apart from the GEMAP case, Liberia has also experienced a situation in which the task of rebuilding its national army has been overseen by Private Security Companies. Since 2003 when the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement began, two American Companies have taken turns to over-

see the rebuilding of the armed forces – Dyn Corp and PAE. The role of Dyn Corp in particular has sparked allegations by civil society as well as Parliamentarians, of lack of transparency and respect for the legitimate authorities in Liberia, given Dyn Corps' failure to consult widely on this issue.[18]

In none of the cases described above has ECOWAS played a significant role. It now remains to investigate the reasons why ECOWAS has not occupied a central place in peace-building in West Africa in the same way that it has done in peacekeeping.

ECOWAS and Peace Building: Explaining the Reduced Involvement

Several explanations can be offered for ECOWAS' inactive participation in international peace-building efforts in West Africa. The first is that the organisation has inadequate financial capacity to undertake the major initiatives required to place post-conflict societies on the path to reconstruction. This is especially the case with the rebuilding of collapsed infrastructure. Second and related to this is that ECOWAS lacks the technical capacity to support socio-economic and institutional infrastructure in a sustained manner. Indeed, the reality is that many ECOWAS member states are themselves ripe for pre-conflict peace-building required to consolidate democracy and prevent an outbreak of violence.

Notwithstanding these obvious challenges, ECOWAS has failed to capitalise on its true strengths which can potentially underpin the international Peace-building agenda in West Africa. The real value of ECOWAS lies in its superior knowledge of the region, deep commitment of many member states to regional security and integration, and a sound normative framework that can provide the basis for systematic Peace-building in the region. Indeed, the missing link in the external involvement in Peace-building in West Africa is precisely what ECOWAS has in abundance. – its commitment to relationship building, and a normative framework to implement a comprehensive peace building agenda. ECOWAS has not been able to make the best use of its own peace and security structures for sustained engagement in Peace-building.

Indeed, the missing link for a long time has been the absence of a framework for translating its normative instruments into operational tools. Two of such instruments are particularly worthy of mention. The first is its Mechanism for handling conflicts, which was institutionalised by the 1999 Protocol on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The Protocol established a number of institutions to address peace and security. These include, for example, the Council of Elders (now Council of the Wise); the Authority of Heads of States and Governments; the Mediation and Security Council; the Defence and Security Commission; Special Representatives of the ECOWAS Ex-

ecutive Secretary; and the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) – all which perform different but inter-related functions.

The ECOMOG force remains an important component of the region's security architecture. Indeed, the 1999 Protocol called for the establishment of a stand-by force of a Brigade-size consisting specially trained and equipped units of national armies ready to be deployed at short notices. All the 15 ECOWAS states pledged one battalion each to the proposed force. Under the Protocol, the force was mandated to be used under four conditions: (a) aggression or conflict within a member state; a conflict in two or more member states; internal conflicts that threaten to trigger humanitarian disaster, pose a serious threat to sub-regional peace and security, result in serious and massive violations of human rights, and/ or follow the overthrow or attempted overthrow of a democratically-elected government; and any other situation that the Mediation and Security Council deems appropriate. Indeed, ECOWAS forward looking approach in institutionalising ECOMOG is of great benefit to the continental body, the African Union, which established a peace and security architecture in 2003, including among other things, the African Standby Force, which composes five regional brigades and is to become operational by 2010. ECOWAS is the most advanced in that process with the establishment of the ECOWAS Brigade.

Another major aspect of ECOWAS security architecture is geared toward conflict prevention. This is the Early Warning System, whose responsibility is to collect and analyse information early enough to determine suitable responses to threats identified. The system relies on the ECOWAS Observation and Monitoring Centre. The System has four reporting zones, located in Banjul, Gambia (to cover Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal; Cotonou, Benin (to cater for Benin, Nigeria and Togo); Monrovia, Liberia (to address Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone); and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (to manage Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger). In theory, the early warning system should trigger action through relevant departments of the ECOWAS Commission, including the development and implementation of policies relating to issues such as cross-border crime, drug trafficking and small arms and light weapons proliferation. The attempt in 1999, to develop a systematic response to all of these security issues is understandable given the immediate threats of armed conflict and cross-border security challenges that confronted the region since the 1990s.

ECOWAS initially reacted to regional security challenges as they emerged having not previously envisaged security problems of these types particularly in the Cold War period when bipolar rivalry kept a lid on potential conflicts resulting from governance deficit. However, the implementation of the 1999 Protocol has placed a strong emphasis on conflict and crises management rather than on structural prevention, which aims to tackle the factors at the root of destructive conflict, not least the poor governance arrangements that breed social and politi-

cal exclusion. The need to prevent armed conflict as well as consolidate peace by tackling the nagging issues underpinning conflict and insecurity later became apparent as some states relapsed into conflict.

To further consolidate regional peace security, ECOWAS, in 2001, adopted the second instrument relevant, the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. This Protocol allows ECOWAS to ensure a meaningful democratic process in the region. This is predicated on the belief that absence of credible democracy through strong institutions is at the centre of many of the region's security challenges. Yet many countries in the region have struggled to move beyond the symbolism of elections. Indeed the perception that elections are simply 'insrumentalised' to entrench a class of leaders in power has gained ground in the last decade given the number of questionable successions and contested elections that have occurred in the region. Indeed some of these events have given the impression of reversals of the earlier trend toward democratisation and not the consolidation of democracy.

ECOWAS' resolve to ensure democracy in the region was tested when the death of the Togolese leader, Gnassingbe Eyadema, resulted in a questionable transition that saw his son assume office as the new Togolese President. ECOWAS succeeded in ensuring a democratic process even if it still yielded the same outcome i.e. transition from father to son. It is important to note that the Supplementary Protocol is designed to address structural factors in all its member states, not only those emerging from war. It remains to be seen, however, whether and how the organisation can ensure that these principles are applied in states not at war or at peace, where leaders are expected to take the initiative and take necessary action.

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), adopted in December 2007, provides, for the first time, a sound basis for a comprehensive peace-building agenda for West Africa. The ECPF is also consistent with the African Union's new Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development. For the first time, ECOWAS has a framework which encompasses all the principles outlined in several normative instruments and systematically ties together the goals of conflict management, consolidation of peace and the structural prevention of conflict to prevent outbreak of violence as well as a relapse of armed conflict in societies emerging from war.

To be certain, the ECPF adopts a human security approach, thus moving far beyond peacekeeping and stabilisation to addressing many of the fundamental threats to the security of peoples and individuals – 'the protection of human and democratic rights and the promotion of human development to ensure freedom from fear and freedom from want'.[19]

The components of the ECPF confirm the focus on the combined areas of security and development – both of which should be contained in any meaningful peace-building agenda. The issues covered in the ECPF include, for example,

conflict early warning, preventive diplomacy, democracy and political govern-ance, cross-border initiatives, security governance, micro-disarmament, increas-ing women's role in the management of peace and security, ECOWAS Standby Force, humanitarian assistance and peace education. The interconnectedness of these issues emphasise the consistency between conflict prevention and peace building conceptually and practically. Peace building interventions in the region must invariably take these issues into account depending on their relevance to and the priority needs of the target environment.

How then can ECOWAS make better use of its existing structures to become a major player in peace-building? Notwithstanding its rough edges, ECOWAS has always been a forerunner in terms of developing an agenda for responding to crisis in West Africa. The ECPF will allow the organisation to further articulate a clear agenda for the consolidation of peace and for ensuring human security in West Africa. The lack of financial backbone and inadequate technical capacity in this field are not sufficient reasons to stay away from engaging at the forefront of peace-building. Indeed, in every post-conflict environment even if not across its member states, ECOWAS must present a clear set of principles, by which external actors must abide, if it wants to be taken seriously in peace-building processes in the region. Indeed, situations like Liberia, in which private security actors are determining the basis on which a national army should be reformed, should not have occurred if ECOWAS had an influential role and was able to insist on respect for its core principles. As ECOWAS proceeds to develop an implementation plan for the ECPF, it is important to take note of the AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development and reinforce some of the core principles outlined in that policy, not least that of 'local ownership'.

Conclusion

ECOWAS has moved away significantly from where it was at the time of its founding. It will remain one of the greatest achievements of the organisation that it has succeeded in transforming itself from its original economic-focused organisation to being a strong force in the management of human security. It has now positioned itself better to deliver on an issue that remains a challenge to the international community – how to better connect the security and development community. Indeed, other regions of the continent are increasingly looking towards ECOWAS for leadership and direction on issues relating to peace and security.

However, for ECOWAS to further meet the desire of its population and assist countries that have fallen victims of major civil conflicts, it has to consolidate its security management structures and ensure that it plays a greater role in the area of peace-building. The need for agenda setting should not be taken lightly. It is a role that ECOWAS has the legitimate role to play in West Africa. Until it exercises intellectual leadership over the principles guiding peace-building in West Africa, it

will be difficult for Africa's external partners to accord ECOWAS with the re-spect it deserves in this field. However, the new ECPF remains a work in progress and those responsible for championing this project in ECOWAS are well aware of this. The sooner the framework is translated into concrete initiatives on the ground, the sooner ECOWAS can become the driving force behind peace build-ing initiatives in West Africa. This is its rightful role.

2

Conflicts and Crises in West Africa: Internal and International Dimensions

Boubacar N'Diaye

> And I heard the stories of how those who had access to power, or access to those who had access to power, of how they have robbed, and pillaged, or broken all laws and all ethnical norms to acquire wealth. It is out of this pungent mixture of greed, dehumanising poverty, obscene wealth and endemic public and private corrupt practice, that many of Africa's coups d'état, civil wars, and situations of instability are born and entrenched.[20]

Until West African states and their regional organisation figure out fully the internal and external connections of the conflicts and security crises that have bedevilled the sub-region for the last 15 years, it is unlikely that they will be able to resolve them adequately and, more importantly, prevent their recurrence. While these dimensions and connections are often closely related to the so-called 'root causes' they are not one and the same. They affect the incidence of conflict and impact considerably on how they are managed, resolved and prevented from reoccurring. West Africa is widely viewed as the most conflict-ridden sub-region in the world,[21] even on a continent notorious for instability, crises of all sorts, and incessant warfare. This unsettling reputation is validated by the recent spike in the conflict opposing on the one hand the governments of Mali and Niger and on the other disgruntled former *Touareg* rebels. Coming on top of the other ongoing breaches of the peace, the rekindling of the *Touareg* conflict in a sensitive geo-strategic area (the *Sahel* region) and in two countries touted for the strides they made toward more democratic openness and stability is certainly worrisome. That already the United States has become openly involved, in addition to countries closer to the region like Libya and Algeria, illustrates the external dimensions conflicts in the sub-region inevitably take.

The characterisation of West Africa as the most unstable sub-region in the world is also entirely substantiated by the interstate conflicts that occurred, a generation ago, between Mali and Burkina Faso, Senegal and Mauritania, etc, the civil war in Nigeria and, more recently, the bloody conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal, to name but a few. While all this is certainly true, thankfully not all states are equally affected, the number of conflict has receded over the last few years, and where they linger they do not have the same intensity or effect on the sub-region as they did just a few years ago. All these conflicts had – and still have – domestic, regional, and international dimensions. It is critical to understand all these dimensions in order to effectively address their 'root causes' and prevent their resurgence. To be sure, conflict in West Africa has attracted considerable scholarly and journalistic analysis. So far, these analyses and prescriptions have had mixed, even controversial, results both on account of the diagnosis[22] and the prescriptive remedies for permanently shutting off West Africa's bountiful fount of crises and wars. These analyses have provided varying insights into just what makes Africa (and West Africa in particular) so conflict-prone and proffered solutions to this predicament.

The 'good news' is that, as Arie Kacowicz has satisfactorily established, West African states have, by and large, consciously renounced cross-border wars, establishing in the sub-region what he called a 'negative peace' among them.[23] Kacowicz shows that this has, nevertheless, been remarkable given the objective incentives for multiple territorial conflicts in the sub-region. This peaceful approach to relations between the states has certainly not obtained when it comes to contradictions within national boundaries, the two developments being connected. The insights – and oversights – of these studies can be judiciously exploited to further our understanding of the phenomenon. While these efforts continue, it is also fair to say that this all but permanent security crisis situation and consequent frequent violent conflicts have transformed ECOWAS and considerably slowed down the original economic integration mission its founding fathers envisioned.

As the regional organisation attempts to revert back to its original mission and integrate that of conflict management and prevention, efforts to help understand better in all its dimensions the extreme volatility of the sub-region must be redoubled. This chapter proposes to examine the international and external dimensions of the conflicts that have beset West Africa between the 1990s and 2008, with particular emphasis on the ongoing conflicts. Every conflict in West Africa, as anywhere in the world, stems first from objective socio-economic, psychological and political conditions on the ground in the confines of national boundaries. In an increasingly interdependent world, however, no conflict can escape the influence of realities and dynamics of the immediate sub-regional, regional, and wider international ever-evolving environments in which it unfolds. Indeed, these realities and dynamics, quite often, find themselves more or less

prominently in the causes of the conflict in the first place. These presumptions inform the present analysis of the internal and external dimensions of the conflict that have devastated West Africa starting in the late 1980s up to the present. It bears also saying that conflicts in (West) Africa are multidimensional and complex phenomena and that the space allocated for this analysis cannot possibly adequately encompass all their many dynamics and dimensions.

The chapter consists of two main sections which, respectively, tackle the internal and external dimensions of conflicts and crises in West Africa. To set the stage for the analysis provided in the two main sections of the chapter, a preliminary section provides a brief, relevant historical and socio-political background to the sub-region. First, while it is not necessary to address the theoretical aspects of the central concepts of this study, it is useful, however, to state that, subscribing to a definition by two well known theoreticians of conflict, by 'conflict' we mean 'a situation in which *actors use conflict behaviour against each other to attain incompatible goals and/or to express their hostility*.[24] 'Crisis' is operationalised as a situation of heightened tension in a polity that increases the probability of a conflict between relevant actors. 'External dimensions' refer to aspect of the conflict relating to actors and dynamics outside the national boundaries of a conflict-affected state, while 'internal dimensions' refer to dynamics inside those boundaries. Of course, this dichotomy is for convenience only since dimensions of conflict overlap necessarily, and are too intertwined to be neatly categorised.

West Africa: Relevant Background

The sixteen states of West Africa[25] present all the socio-political and economic diversity and face all the challenges readily associated with the entire continent. To that extent, with its nearly 250 million, almost 30 per cent of the total population of the continent, it is a microcosm of Africa. It should not be surprising therefore that the convulsions, trials and tribulations found elsewhere on the continent are also found, albeit with more intensity in its most populous sub-region. A critical starting point for any background note must be to say a word about the political realities and challenges the postcolonial state in West Africa faced as it came on the scene. Part of those realities is that, under the pressure of the nationalist and independence movement, a decidedly alien, repressive and exploitative colonial state was handed over, as it was, to a national elite to become the instrument of the national project. A postcolonial state that retained all the characteristics of a colonial state – the *raison d'être* of which was to carry out policies that were entirely contrary to the interests of the populations – was singularly ill-suited to the tasks that awaited it. In all the multiethnic, multilingual, haphazardly drawn, poor colonial territories that became 'national' states, that task was to forge national unity, develop the infrastructure (both physical and symbolic) of a modern state, where none existed.

This daunting mission was also supposed to be pursued in an environment characterised by a raging Cold War and former colonial powers, (singularly France, the former colonies of which constitute nine out of sixteen countries), that had not renounced the privilege they enjoyed just a few years earlier as the colonial master.

Soon enough, as the independence era got under way, the daunting character of the postcolonial undertaking became apparent. In nearly all the states in West Africa, already fractious national elites became caught up in the contradictions between carrying out a genuine national project which served as the basis of the anti-colonial movement and the strong inclination of many of them, backed more or less directly by former colonial powers, to simply man the inherited state and carry on with business as usual. Along these more or less ideological lines of division among elites (within countries but also across national boundaries)[26] were other lines of fracture that would soon prove deadly in many states. In effect, never far off the colonial project, in fact in large part created by it, ethnicity, region of origin, religion, in other words, identity politics quickly became a permanent fixture on national life in most West African states. In this context, the national development project rapidly receded, in some cases was even abandoned altogether. A mad race for self enrichment and aggrandizement started to rage among elites, and of course, to make this possible, the artificial democratic political systems hastily bequeathed at independence by the colonial system were jettisoned and replaced by authoritarian and repressive single party regimes. These became the instruments of a veritable looting operation carried out by the faction of the national elite that happened to have won out in any of the rivalries mentioned above.

As this went on, one of the symbols of the 'national sovereignty' supposed to have been won at independence entered the fray of national politics throughout West Africa. In nearly every single country, military intervention to take power became routine ushering in a political culture of military rule and a certain militarisation of political and social mores across the sub-region. It wasn't until the 1990s that, with the changes in the international system and the growing chorus worldwide for more democracy that a new political reality started to take shape in the sub-region (and throughout the continent). This new era, just as the previous one, entailed serious challenges for the states and their people.

The crises and conflicts that have singularly afflicted West Africa, staring in the 1990s and beyond, can be said to result from the confluence of the legacy of the colonial and post-colonial era as well as new challenges stemming from the reconfiguration of the world in the late 1980s. It is against this background that any analysis of the internal and external dynamics of conflict in West Africa can be done.

Internal Dimensions of West African Conflicts

By 2004, any objective observer of the sub-region would have had to concur with Peter Schwab (and notwithstanding his ominous 2001 book *Africa: A Continent Self-destructs*) that, indeed, West Africa was 'on life support'.[27] The most recent of its many conflicts, the civil war that has all but partitioned Cote d'Ivoire was in full gear with no end in sight, despite concerted efforts regionally and continent-wide with the full support of the United Nations. The outcomes of the decade-old civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia were uncertain; the acute governance and security crises in Guinea Bissau, Guinea, and Togo showed no sign of abating and even in countries where no openly tense situation prevailed such as Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Senegal, and Nigeria, low-intensity security crises could be discerned. In the latter two an unmistakable low-intensity internal warfare with occasional flare-ups existed. And denoting the frequent incidence of conflict in Africa, as of 2005, there were 14 peace missions of the United Nations in Africa, and three of them prominent in West Africa, namely in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire.[28]

Thankfully, by 2007, the situation in West Africa has markedly improved and, using Schwab's allegory, the patient could be said to be breathing on his own and showing signs of steady improvement, even if any definitive prognosis must be reserved for the time being. The question, of course, is what characteristics do all these conflicts and crises share, and relatedly, which of their common features are generated and sustained by domestic dynamics. There is a consensus among observers of conflicts and crises in Africa that typically, these stem from, and have a structural, policy related, or behavioural character. This section examines some of the domestic characteristics of these conflicts.

An appropriate starting point to examine the internal dimensions of these conflicts seems to be the distinctive nature of the post-colonial state, the cardinal characteristic of which is its disjunction from the aspirations of the people it is supposed to serve. In all West African states in which these conflicts take place, the state has no legitimacy to speak of and no organic link with the populations who, decades after political independence, continue to view it as an alien, awkward institution from which they should not expect anything, and in which they have no stakes. Pita Agbese and George Kieh capture quite cogently this attitude when they observe the following:

> The typical African state is noted more as a repressive, brutal, corrupt and inefficient entity than as a mechanism for the promotion of the collective well-being of its citizens. Consequently, the modern state remains largely irrelevant to the needs, interests, and aspirations of the people. A telling evidence of the vote of confidence in the African state is the fact that even the African leaders who serve as the custodians of the state have little faith in its ability to cater to their well-being.[29]

Agbese and Kieh go on to back up and illustrate this attitude toward the state of the very people who are in charge of running it. They use for their family and themselves virtually none of the service they are supposed to make available for their people (including education, health care, etc) and, of course, they invest the product of the loot of national resources in foreign bank accounts. The end result being that '[c]itizens have no faith in their leaders [who symbolise the state] and they entertain no illusion that the state would address their concern and material well-being'.[30]

Given this widespread attitude toward the typical state, any challenge to it is welcome, indeed applauded, encouraged. Such challenges are often viewed by large segments of society as almost conducted on their behalf and deserving success, at least when initially launched. This discontent with the state as a structure that failed to live up to the expectations of the peoples of West Africa can certainly be seen in many of the conflicts listed above. Liberia is of course the typical illustration of this phenomenon, although not a former colonial state in the usual sense, it shares, as Ebo argues, the same 'neo-colonial structures'[31] with other neighbouring states that estranged the state as an institutional and political presence, from the overwhelming majority of the population. This alienation of the state from its people is of course widespread throughout the region where, because not only of its poor record of economic development, but repressive interaction with populations, the state is viewed more as a predatory and suffocating presence than a good Samaritan or even a useful tool. The crisis in Cote d'Ivoire has also been analyzed as one in a long series (not all as dramatic) and attributed to the utter failure of its successive leadership to seize upon numerous opportunities to create the appropriate connection between the post-colonial state and the people.[32] The same can be said of nearly every other state of the sub-region that found itself victim of intractable tensions, violence and war. All were caught up in the fundamental, eminently conflict-generating contradiction of societies at odds with the very tool supposed to ensure their security and provide for their other needs.

A second, very much-related common internal dimension of all these conflicts is a failure of governance on the part of regimes, more or less democratically elected. Even when, starting in 1990, the sub-region and the entire continent started to abandon the repressive policies that characterised earlier years, the outcome was more of the same failures, notwithstanding an opening up of the political space and the empowerment of more socioeconomic groups in society. Old habits die hard and even the improvements made did not eliminate the proclivity of the political leadership to violate the basic tenets of democratic governance. In other words, the extreme tensions and conflicts West Africa has experienced over the last few years are also directly related to what can be referred to as a double deficit in governance (to use a well-worn conceptualisation).

By failure of governance we mean not only the bad governance that has haunted the continent with repressive, ineffective leadership, exclusionary policies, but also the failure of the same leaders to anticipate and adequately address conflicts when they occur. In effect, political tensions and subsequent conflicts are often the result of the manner in which those who have been in power have run the affairs of the polity. They are also the logical outcome of how they have treated their compatriots who may not be of the same political persuasion, the same ethnicity or religion.. When power is used to exclude, to repress, and to deprive some people of their human and political rights and of their birthright to the 'pursuit of happiness' as the cliché goes, the logical consequence is the creation of an atmosphere where violent conflict is only a matter of the next trigger. Because of this particular deficit in governance characteristic of so many of the countries affected by conflict (notably Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry), the conditions were so ripe for conflict that it took only a coup attempt or some other challenge to the existing order to trigger a spiral of violence. Even more than engaging in such undemocratic and repressive practices, the most remarkable aspect of this deficit is the failure of the typical leadership in West Africa to appreciate perceptively the likely price of their policies. As Raymond Copson has pertinently noted in the mid-1990s, during a period of turmoil in the sub-region,

> [m]istakenly, leaders believed that they could undermine opportunities for participation without encountering significant opposition from within societies they governed. It turned out, however, that many states were far weaker than their leaders realised, and that in many societies there were sources of opposition with a strong indigenous base. These included factions with a political, ethnic, or clan origin; regionally based opposition forces; religious movements; and local leaders and strongmen'.[33]

Compounding this miscalculation were serious policy decisions made 'with little or no attempt at consultation with affected groups and no genuine effort to accommodate the interests or obtain their consent,'[34] in an admittedly conflict-prone environment with many fracture lines as typical for West African states.

Fracture lines – be they religious, ethnic or regional – are not a source of conflict *per se*, even though they can very rapidly become the locus of conflict, intentionally or not, as Ero and Temin have shown.[35] This forms the connection with the other governance deficit variable mentioned above. In *Governance as Conflict Management,* William Zartman has noted that 'governance is conflict management. Governing a state is not only the prevention of violent conflict from destroying the country; it is the continual effort to handle the ordinary conflicts among groups and their demands which arise as society plays its role in the conduct of normal politics'.[36] The governance deficit resides also in the unwillingness or inability of many African governments to keep within bounds or adequately resolve and on a timely manner 'normal' conflicts and thereby

allow them to escalate into even more complex and deadly confrontations. With lightening speed, these conflicts reach well beyond the given government's ability to cope with them, even more so because it is not democratic to begin with, and has not developed popular and institutional capacity to handle the legitimacy and the confidence of the societal groups involved to increase the likelihood of success.

As a direct result of these intangible aspects and dynamics of conflicts, a non-democratic government sees retaliatory violence and repression as the only appropriate means of addressing conflicts. In itself, the attitude in itself only exacerbates conflict rather than resolve it. A careful scrutiny of the measured, responsible answer of the democratic Malian government to the recent resumption of the conflict with the *Touareg* rebellion contrasts starkly with the earlier knee-jerk reactions of previous non democratic governments of the same country (and in neighboring Niger) to what is, after all, a conflict that can find its resolutions more by democratic means than all out assault.

To further contrast the Malian approach, consider the overreaction of successive Nigerian governments (with emphasis on the 'law and order' dimension) to challenges to the Nigerian state in the Niger Delta.

While the challenges are not identical, there is a clear difference in the overall approach to the resolution of conflict made possible; in the first place, by what is clearly a deficit in governance, i.e. *not* attending responsively and effectively to the grievances and needs of populations with a strong sense that they were wronged by their country. Reflecting on the decisions that led in the past to serious deterioration of initially manageable conflicts in Africa, West Africa in particular), Copson suggests that '[m]ore prudent governments would have taken care to build consensus among key elements in society before launching major policy initiatives; and they would have sought to avoid shocking abuses of power that could alienate them from those key elements'.[37] Again, this double governance deficit is a major factor in the conflicts that affect West Africa. As long as it persists, conflicts are likely to continue to occur, escalate, and more importantly, when 'resolved,' to recur.

A third internal dimension of conflict in West Africa, not unrelated to this double deficit, is that they occur in an environment of widespread oppressive poverty, deteriorating economic outlook, and growing inequalities. As just argued, conflicts are a normal occurrence in any polity. They need not be destructive conflicts. For that they must be anticipated and managed competently and effectively. It is also widely accepted that conflicts naturally grow out of scarcity and competition for access to resources. Therefore, the socioeconomic environment prevailing in the states individually, and in the sub-region as a whole, will intimately affect not just the incidence of conflicts, but how (and the means with which) they will be approached and resolved. For example, with a long decried

near exclusive focus on blotted urban centres, it is evident that governments will be unable to find the right approach to conflicts whose epicentres are typically the countryside and its dynamics and the specific concerns of those who live there.

Very richly endowed in natural resources and therefore with the potential to provide decent living conditions for all their people, the sub-region has not been able to use this situation to the benefit of its people, and reduce the incidence of conflict.

Indeed there is a copious literature dealing with the existence of certain mineral wealth and how this is linked to civil wars.[38] Nevertheless, with a per capita GDP of 527 USD on average in 2004, West African states' economic growth over the last few years after some improvement, has considerably slowed, certainly since 2003. The growth of real GDP for the region has shrunk from an average of 4.2 per cent between 2000 and 2003 to 3.4 in 2004, according to the 2005 African Development Bank report, and stands at '1.7 percentage point below the continental average'.[39] A welcome statistic, however, is that, the external debt as a percentage of the GDP has significantly shrunk from 73.1 per cent to (a still sobering) 54.4 per cent in 2004.

A closer look at the landscape reveals that for 2004 (?), out of a group of 12 countries among the least performing in the world, nearly half (Benin, Guinea, Mali, Liberia, Niger) are from West Africa alone, the highest concentration of any region of the world (and Africa!), with nearly zero growth, if not negative growth altogether, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).[40]

With regard to the critical issue of food production, every country in the region had a negative per capita production, according to the World Bank 2006 world development indicators report.[41] Over the 1990s, many of the West African states had the lowest percentage of their populations with access to sanitation, safe water or health services, with Mali, Sierra Leone, and Liberia and Niger faring the worst. Not surprisingly, all have been conflict countries throughout that period and beyond. For the same period, according to the World Bank, West African countries have also had the highest proportions of their people living with only a dollar a day, for example, Mali (73%), Sierra Leone (57%), Burkina Faso (61%), and The Gambia (59%).

Meanwhile, the income distribution is one of the most skewed of the continent with up to as much as twenty times of the national income controlled by the top 10 per cent than the share controlled by the bottom 10 per cent of their poorest compatriots.[42] In addition to the other equally worrisome statistics on life expectancy, infant and child mortality as well as on unemployment, particularly the youth, these statistics result in extremely constraining conditions. These not only favour the emergence of conflicts, but make it more difficult for even the

most democratically minded government to manage or resolve these conflicts. Little wonder then, as Ero and Temin have noted, that '…conflicts centred around competition for scarce resources have intensified since the 1990, as leaders could not longer rely on aid from abroad to secure their position',[43] or for that matter, even address conflict effectively and genuinely if they wanted to.

The most visible inequalities (quite readily displayed in most countries) make a mockery of the pretension of belonging to the same nation. Policy processes and decisions or maladroit actions (even when unintentional), suffice to exacerbate these dimensions, accelerate or trigger conflicts with devastating consequences. As conflicts erupt (and they inevitably do), these constraints limit the ability of governments to divert them by reducing to, and remaking them about, the distribution of material rewards. When a solution is eventually found, they eventually contribute to reigniting future conflicts in two ways. First, ceasefires tend to rely on immediately carrying out measures that involve the rapid mobilisation of resources, the so-called deal sweeteners. When these are not forthcoming from the international community, the ambient economic constraints deny governments the ability to take those crucial measures in a timely manner to consolidate the ceasefire. Second, and possibly more importantly, they make it impossible to fulfil the central part of most peace agreements, addressing the root socioeconomic causes of most conflicts by investing economically and carrying out long term reforms to meet the needs of the aggrieved parties.

This makes it almost inevitable that the conflict will reignite in the near future. The non-application of the socioeconomic clauses of conflicts is not always attributable to the bad faith of the government (though that can be the case as for Taylor's Liberia and Gbagbo in Cote d'Ivoire) but, quite often, to the intractable dire economic conditions that are the backdrop of the conflict itself.

The resurgence of the Touareg crisis in Mali and Niger largely illustrates this entirely internal dynamic of conflict in the sub-region. So does, at least in part, the inability of Senegal to permanently solve the Casamance crisis largely because of the country's severe economic limitations. Let's not forget that in Mali and Niger only a decade ago, disaffected and unemployed youth from the Berber dwelling area imbued with Arab or Pan-Saharan Berber nationalism took up arms and succeeded in calling attention to the predicament of a long neglected aspect of Malian and *Nigerien* social and economic fabric. In many respects, the rebellion was, quite simply, the logical outcome of years of neglect of the interests and needs of minority populations of the north whose culture and life style, and specific concerns were ignored (possibly unwittingly) for too long by the political authorities in both countries.

A fourth dimension of conflicts in the sub-region has to do with the militarisation of the political culture that occurred over the first three decades of the post-colonial era. The military's repeated incursions in the political arena and its exercise

of power (usually synonymous with the cult of brute force and physical violence, repression and brutalisation of opponents), have injected perverse and morbid practices in the body politic of all countries of the sub-region except Cape Verde and Senegal. The logical extension and consequence of this infusion of martial values and instincts could only be the spread of conflict on the one hand, and, on the other, its corollary, an *a priori* aversion to compromise and peaceful, civilised settlement of disputes as the preferred means of resolving social and political contradictions. In this context, premium is put not on the peaceful resolution of conflict for the common good, but on who can prevail.

Supposed to be one of the strongest symbols of the nation-state and guarantor of its independent sovereign existence, the national army has become, by far, its most destructive institution by virtue of its necessary role in conflicts, and because of its role in causing these conflicts in the first place.[44] This can be measured by the impact militaries in Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, (in fact in every conflict country) have had in the origins, management, resolution of conflict as well as in peace building and peace consolidation. That role is more often than not problematic from the first fatidic step (meaning?) onwards.

The very act of coming to power through force is, in itself, a factor of conflict within the armed forces. It then seeps into society's fabric and other institutions and processes. For,

> However welcome and even salutary it may seem sometimes; the intervention of the military in the political arena invariably brings about an array of uncertainties and dangers. Not only is the potential for deep divisions within the military a very likely outcome with a chain of coups and counter-coups, but the potential for violence as the preferred means to solve contradictions increases sharply.[45]

Whether used by civilian authoritarian regimes to subdue or suppress opposition or doing it on their own behalf when in power, West African militaries are associated with exactions and unspeakable brutality that have driven people to enter into overt rebellion against the state, and led to a very low regard for and trust in the military. Once a conflict has erupted, these attitudes and sentiments will contribute to the continuation of conflict and make peace also difficult to attain and to maintain. While in armed conflict atrocities are sometimes committed by all belligerents, when they are committed by the national army in conflict, and even more so in cold blood in the absence of armed conflict, its impact on what lies ahead in terms of conflict resolution and prevention cannot be overstated.

There is a sense of betrayal that cannot be cast aside easily. It becomes a formidable psychological factor that will weigh on the management and resolution of conflict. It becomes an independent dimension of the conflict with its distinctive impact to be taken into consideration as a factor driving the conflict. Where military rule lasted, one of the dimensions of conflict quickly became, in most

cases, that there was (or is) no sense that the state (and those in charge of it), were apt or willing to honestly mediate the legitimate grievances of parties. Instead, the dominant feeling was that all that the state is interested in was to crush any part of society that dares to test the military's will.

In sum, this section has identified and analyzed the internal dimensions of conflict in West Africa. Among the many factors that affect how and why conflicts erupt and degenerate is the estrangement of the postcolonial state from the population it is supposed to serve. Another factor is the long running poor governance and the related inability of leaders to anticipate and properly manage even the most benign of conflicts once they occur. Other internal dimensions of conflict reviewed are, as a backdrop, dire endemic economic conditions made worse by poor economic performance over the last several years, and a history of militarism and abuses often committed by the military, the very institution charged with protecting the people. These internal dimensions of conflict are, unfortunately, often compounded by the external dimensions.

External Dimensions of Conflict

To discuss the external dimensions of conflict in West Africa, it is necessary to distinguish between the strictly sub-regional dimensions of these conflicts from those tied to, and affected by actors and forces outside the continent. The former refers to the impact a given state may have on a conflict or crisis originating outside its own national boundaries but occurring in another state of the sub-region. It refers also to the impact of the states of the sub-region acting collectively to affect the evolution and outcome of conflict in the neighbourhood. The latter refers to the dimensions of conflict as affected by the actions and attitudes of powers and actors outside the continent, typically world powers and the institutions they control. In this regard, the entire history of West Africa has been marked by the impact of activities of foreign powers in pursuit of interests and agendas that were (are?) not necessarily those of the peoples or states of the sub-region.

It should not come as a surprise that conflicts in the sub-region, even when indigenous in origin and nature, are also sometimes determined, heavily influenced and driven by dynamics directly related to these outside actors and forces. Indeed, as Copson has argued, the involvement of foreign powers in African conflicts has resulted in the increase in the level of violence in the 1980s.[46] Before examining some of these influences on a number of conflicts in the sub-region, it is appropriate to examine the dimensions of conflicts as determined by, and stemming from, the activities and policies of sub-regional actors and the impact of entirely sub-regional dynamics.

Sub-regional Dimensions

Invariably, any conflict in any state in West Africa affects and is affected by neighbouring states. This is due to the complexity and depth of the demographic, political, economic, and cultural ties that exist between countries whose boundaries were, after all, carved haphazardly. By and large, these countries share the same realities, in particular the internal dimensions of conflict discussed above, are therefore under the same pressures, and are, in addition, susceptible to be victims of the contagious effects of events occurring across their borders. A conflict in any country entails a high probability of rapidly spilling into its immediate neighbours if it does not, by its nature, affect already the citizens of these same neighbours who happen to reside in the affected country hence drawing in their country of origin. It is, therefore, only natural that as soon as a conflict situation is threatening in a given country, the reactions of its neighbours have the potential of profoundly affecting for ill or for good the trajectory of that conflict. Indeed, in some cases, conflict-affected countries accuse neighbouring states of having played a surreptitious role in their predicament and either threaten to take, or actually take, reprisal actions. In some cases they retaliated by fomenting conflict in accused neighbour, expanding, and complicating the initial conflict and pulling down the entire neighbourhood.

At any point during the Cote d'Ivoire conflict in September 2002, in Senegal throughout the 1980s and 1990s, throughout the Mano River basin, neighbouring countries have accused one another of interference Whether or not the accusations were founded, and whether or not the neighbouring countries liked it, the very nature and intricacy of these conflicts and their immediate impact on the entire sub-region made it inevitable that these conflicts would take a regional character and involve the concerned countries, individually and all the countries of the sub-region collectively. For once, even when circumscribed to the national boundaries of one state, because of the movement of populations, the victimisation of foreign nationals and the severe economic disruptions they often occasion, conflicts will rapidly cease to be 'an internal affair' governed by the international principle of 'national sovereignty'.

The propensity of domestic conflicts to rapidly turn into massive human rights violations, veritable massacres against minorities, and unarmed civilians all but guarantee that states and regional organisations will become involved and give the conflict external dimensions that soon overshadow the strictly domestic dimensions.

Since the 1990s, the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and, more recently, Cote d'Ivoire have led to sustained diplomatic and military inter-ventions of the ECOWAS, the regional organisation. Those actions and the heavy intervention of concerned neighbours such as Burkina Faso in the Ivoirian crisis,

Senegal in Guinea Bissau, Guinea in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, and even more recently the implication of both Algeria and Libya in the conflict in Mali and Niger gave to all these conflicts a definite sub-regional character that transformed both their dynamics and outcome. This is not to say that the role of intervention in conflict originating in their neighbours is always or even often positive. The role of Charles Taylor in both Sierra Leone and Guinea was most destabilising, for example. It is also well known that President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso meddled in the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, allegedly for personal gain, and that President Jammeh of The Gambia played an unhelpful role in both the Casamance conflict and the civil war in Guinea Bissau. It was also the bitter rivalry between Presidents Conté of Guinea and Taylor of Liberia that complicated all the Mano River basin conflicts and prolonged the miseries of the people of that area.

Finally, an external dimension to consider for some of these conflicts, most recently the Ivorian conflict, is the involvement of European mercenaries, used by both sides. The same were notoriously used in the Sierra Leone civil war. More importantly, the use or potential use of 'armed and aimless'[47] regional 'professional' mercenaries made up of unemployed youth toughened by previous wars in which they participated has become a worrisome dimension of conflicts throughout West Africa. Of course, when military intervention as ECOWAS did in Liberia and Sierra Leone, most notably was decided, the regional dimension trumped the domestic and bi-lateral dynamics altogether.

This does not mean that those dynamics will not remain important and cannot complicate the military intervention or mission, as indeed was the case in both Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone. It must be added that the relative success achieved by ECOWAS and its continued vigorous engagement in the various conflicts in the sub-region significantly alter the dynamics of conflict since parties to potential conflicts will now make it part of their calculus and strategies that they have to contend with a very close by and determined external actor. This, in the end, will be a factor in conflict in the sub-region although ECOWAS' role in conflict management has absorbed an inordinate amount of energy, talent, and resources that could have been used to pursue its original economic development and integration mission.

International Dimensions

While West Africa was not as affected by Cold War politics as East or Southern Africa was, it did not escape the determination of powerful states in the world to pursue aggressively their own geo-strategic and economic interests and agendas on the continent. Pursuing their Cold War objectives in West African countries, the United States, but also former colonial powers, namely France whose former colonies make up the majority of the states in the sub-region, and Great Britain,

arguably the lesser involved did, over the years, impact the nature, evolution and outcome of various conflicts in the sub-region.

The most immediate effect of these external actors on conflict in the sub-region was that they typically supported (through arms transfer and financial backing) some of the most repressive regimes in the sub-region, whether Samuel Doe in Liberia, Eyadema in Togo, Houphouet-Boigny) in Cote d'Ivoire and others. This support contributed to building in West African states all the ingredients and domestic factors of conflict discussed above. One particular aspect of the role of external power that is directly related to conflict is that, according to Copson, '[f]oreign actors had initially helped to widen state-society gaps in Africa when their aid encouraged particular regimes to believe that, because of foreign backing, they were capable of imposing their will on society'.[48]

As the former United Nations Secretary General also put it, speaking for the whole continent, 'undemocratic and oppressive regimes were supported and sustained by the competing super-powers in the name of their broader goals but, when the Cold War ended, Africa was suddenly left to fend for itself'.[49]

This abandonment, the so-called marginalisation of the continent, no longer deemed strategically significant after 1990, that is, until the September 11, 2001 attacks, that suddenly revised this assessment, contributed another external dimension to the conflict that occurred in the 1990s. For many of these conflicts West African states were left to manage, on their own, often without any serious attempts by major powers to help in any tangible way. For example, while under Samuel Doe the US was quite involved, even supporting his antics, when the civil war raged, the US was nowhere to be found, when a vigorous support of local efforts would have made a decisive difference early on. Furthermore, while the intervention of Great Britain is credited for ending the civil war in Sierra Leone, actually, it was the efforts of ECOWAS, through ECOMOG that shouldered the bulk of the peace enforcement efforts that made it possible for Great Britain to reap the glory of having imposed peace much later, when it remained on the sidelines for many years while the brutal civil war raged.

During the Cold War, France played its part in the tacit arrangement/division of labor between western powers Peter Schraeder calls the 'complementary Cold War regime,'[50] whereby its dominion was recognised over its former colonies, with the mandate of keeping them firmly on the side of the West, including hosting military bases and providing strategic minerals and products. That arrangement ended with the fall of the Berlin wall and was replaced with the uncertainties and tensions inherent in the post-Cold War world dominated by a single, now less accommodating superpower, the US. As a consequence, France was left to try and remain relevant even after it was forced to scale back its proclivity to intervene freely in the internal affairs of its former colonies to bolster friendly regimes or undermine those judged recalcitrant.[51]

These activities too contributed to the conflicts that erupted after the Cold War ended and direct intervention to defend Western interests was no longer necessary. When the September 2002 crisis started in Cote d'Ivoire, France did intervene under the pretext of protecting its citizens caught in the crossfire and ended up obtaining a UN Security Council mandate to position forces between the belligerents and to pursue efforts to end the crisis. While France continued to play a major role in this crisis, its presence on the ground and its diplomatic efforts arguably contributed to exacerbating and prolonging the crisis. Because of its record of pursuing its interest to the detriment of those of its former colonies, it was suspected by all parties to the conflict of having a hidden agenda and pursuing neo-colonial designs. Indeed, when the Licorne forces[52] opened fire on unruly and threatening young Ivoirians in November 2004, the external dimensions of the conflict were spotlighted. It is significant that with the domestic impetus for a lasting solution to the crisis, France's role, both diplomatic and military, is fast receding. However, France continues to maintain troops and military advisors in the country and other parts of West Africa and is likely to continue to play a significant role in the sub-region.

With the reconfiguration of the international system after the end of the Cold War and a reorientation of France foreign policy toward Europe, there has been an increased coordination of their Africa policies between the former colonial powers. France has also showed less willingness to intervene militarily and directly in the domestic Affairs of its former colonies or meddle in crises. However, old habits are hard to abandon as France's continued interference in Chad and Central African Republic demonstrate. Furthermore, France's interests in Africa (strategic military positioning and access to resources and markets, not to mention prestige) remain unchanged. It is also believed that France may very well have played a role in the current *Touareg* crisis in Niger and that this has to do with French businesses' unhappiness with Niger's new uranium policies. Nevertheless, there is a difference between France's attitude toward Africa today and its behavior prior to the end of the Cold War.

While the same could have been said about the United States throughout the 1990s, after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, the US Africa policy has markedly evolved and can be said to have become even more distinctly a dimension of conflict in the West African sub-region in particular.

The Pan-Sahel initiative aimed at preventing the implantation of terrorist groups in a vast, hard-to-control swathe of territory in the upper portion of West Africa has been one of the most notable American initiatives. It is in this context that the military assistance the US extended to Mali in the *Touareg* conflict must be placed. The United States' determination to prevent the growth in a region predominantly of Muslim movements hostile to its policies and/or sympathetic to its enemies has also been the basis of an intensification of its various efforts. Another

consideration is, of course, the fact that, since 2000, the US has imported more than 10 per cent of its crude oil from Africa, mainly Nigeria. This portion is destined to increase and so will the US efforts to guarantee secure supply of energy. The unfolding tensions in the Niger Delta in Nigeria, and the possible disruption of oil extraction in that area, may very well hasten the involvement in some fashion of the US. Whether or not this will contribute to resolving the crisis instead of exacerbating it is not easy to determine at this point in time. This suggests, however, that it is likely that the sub-region and for that matter the entire continent (with the current efforts to sell the unilaterally decided Africa Command, AFRICOM), will continue to be an area of interest and occasional interventions of the United states in its 'Global War on Terror' and to ensure the safe supply of oil.

Another external dimension of conflict in West Africa with an incidence on the economic backdrop to conflicts discussed above is the role of funding institutions. For decades, the IMF and the World Bank, though structural adjustment programs and other interventions, have affected the economic and social conditions of all West African states. Since it is widely accepted that, overall, the involvement of these financial institutions have failed to improve the socioeconomic conditions, and have instead, exacerbated them, it is evident that this outcome has an incidence on conflict and the ability of the states to handle them. For example, Eboe Hutchful has argued that the neo-liberal ideology inspired imposition of severe budgetary cut of military budgets inspired by Western donors as the Cold War ended has contributed to hollowing out many states' security sectors making them susceptible to, and unable to meet, the challenges posed by armed groups.[53] According to him, this has accelerated Africa's security crisis and its attendant conflicts.

Similarly, the 1994 devaluation of the CFA currency in the French-controlled monetary zone (UMOA (Union Monetaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest) has also contributed to the economic weakening of many francophone states and indirectly sown the seeds of some of the crises, the civil was in Cote d'Ivoire in particular.

Conclusion and Implications for the Future

This chapter has argued that, in addition to an antiquated, inept post-colonial state, the countries of the sub-region share widespread poverty, exceedingly unequal access to income, wealth, and consumption, a history of chequered governance, militarism and poor human rights records as critical internal dimensions of conflict. They have experienced, to varying degrees, lingering social and political tensions that have escalated in destabilising armed conflicts in the 1990s and beyond as a consequence of the conjugation of these factors. These predicaments are dimensions of conflict the effect of which must be understood to better address the existing conflicts and prevent the occurrence of other destructive ones. Of course, understanding these conflicts and their dynamics in West Africa will be impossible without also examining their external dimensions.

These can be either the specific actions of neighbouring states (or their leaders), and their roles in conflicts beyond their borders or the usually salutary interventions of the ECOWAS. External dimensions are also the open or surreptitious role of powerful states and non-state actors outside the continent. That role has been, at times, nefarious and driven by selfish economic or strategic interests and has, in the past, complicated the solution to conflicts. Current circumstances, though different from those extant during the Cold War period, carry the same danger for the sub-region's ability to prevent conflicts or, when they erupt, to manage them according to its own interests and agendas.

In recent years, ECOWAS has embodied those interests and the forward-looking approach to the challenges facing the peoples and states of the sub-region. In this role, ECOWAS has certainly accumulated an invaluable experience starting with peacekeeping operations during the 1990s civil-wars in the Mano River basin. More recently, ECOWAS carried out relentless preventive and mediation efforts in various crises and conflicts, whether in Togo or Cote d'Ivoire.

The continued susceptibility of the sub-region to conflict and indeed the fragility of the peace settlements in the countries recently emerging from conflict dictate that ECOWAS must be ready to continue to take on this charge. It must continue to heighten the awareness of West African people and states of the long-term nature of conflict prevention and resolution. ECOWAS must make sufficient room in its future plans for extensive efforts both in preventive diplomacy and in strengthening its material, operational, and logistical capacities. It must also accelerate the implementation of its own pertinent instruments for conflict prevention and democratic consolidation, and the AU Peace and Security Council Protocol which have the same aim. The 2001 ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance provides an appropriate monitoring framework and instrument for conflict prevention and for avoiding bad situations reaching crisis proportions. Pertinent aspects of the AU Peace and Security Council Protocol are another avenue to monitor and bring needed corrections to the policies and behaviour of states that could endanger regional peace and stability. Article 3 of that Protocol states that its objectives are *inter alia* to 'promote peace, security and stability in Africa' (which is also one of the areas where the Council performs its functions) and 'anticipate and prevent conflicts'.

Another critical objective of the protocol is to 'Promote and encourage democratic practices, good governance and the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the sanctity of human life…' all of which will help prevent conflicts. Finally, ECOWAS must, without delay, start implementing (or strengthening) its early warning mechanisms and the provisions of the stand-by forces in the AU protocol. In essence, the regional organisation must remain vigilant in order to abort any potential for conflict in West Africa, whether domestic or foreign in origin.

3

Natural Resources and the Dynamics of Conflicts in West Africa

Abiodun Alao

Introduction

Academic literature and policy documents now seem to be paying considerable attention to conflicts over natural resources, especially in Africa.[54] This in a way is understandable. The devastations often associated with such conflicts, especially their attendant links to the weakening or collapse of state institutions, and the danger, even if somewhat remote, that these conflicts can affect the global flow of vital resources, whilst also reducing the revenue coming to the affected countries, have been causes of enormous concerns to many within and outside the continent. West Africa has been of particular interest on matters concerning conflicts over natural resources. Indeed, the sub-region witnessed its most difficult phase since independence in the 1990s, with some of the consequences extending into the first half of the 2000 decade. Civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire, and inter-group tensions in Nigeria's Niger Delta and northern Ghana are some of the conflicts which, while sometimes linked to political governance, are also deeply rooted in natural resource politics. But having pointed out the difficulties of the period, it is also worthy of note that the 1990s and early 2000s also witnessed some positive developments, some linked, ironically to conflict and instability enumerated above.

For example, civil society gained considerable strength in the region, while the regional organisation, ECOWAS, was able to use the experience of violence to develop a mechanism for handling conflicts, including those linked to natural resources. Again, from the ravages of the Liberian civil war came an election that has won considerable global respect. All these developments, positive and negative, have major links to the politics of natural resources management in the sub-region.

In this chapter, I take a look at natural resources and the dynamics of Conflicts in West Africa. The central argument I advance in the chapter is that natural resources have entered the dynamics of conflicts in the region because the mechanisms for governing these resources in most countries in the region are deplorably weak,[55] and the sub-regional organisation overlooking the affairs of the region, ECOWAS, still has considerable amount of work to do in order to manage the complexities of natural resource governance at the sub-regional level. By natural resource governance, I mean the complex structures of considerations, internal and external, which come to play in the management (i.e. the ownership, extraction, processing, distribution and control) of natural resources. This include the role of constitution in natural resource management, the politics of revenue allocation, the process of distribution, indigenisation policies and the politics of expatriate involvement in the ownership, management and control of natural resources, property rights, human rights concerns, the relationship with global market demands, and the complexities of managing environmental issues relating to resource extraction.

The chapter has six substantive sections, the first of which presents an overview of West Africa's natural resource endowment. The primary objective of this section is to investigate the extent to which one can explain the conflicts over natural resources in the region to scarcity, which, regardless of any idiosyncrasies, could predispose any region to conflict. Discussions on natural resources and the dynamics of inter-group conflicts in the West African sub-region comes up in section two, while the third section focuses on how natural resources comes into discussion on the weakness and destruction of state structures.

The objective of the fourth section is to interrogate the dynamics of local claims and national interest in the politics of natural resource conflicts in West Africa. The examination of the role of ECOWAS in natural resource conflicts in West Africa is the pre-occupation of section five, while the sixth section offers a conclusion.

West Africa: Overview of Natural Resource Endowment

Before discussing the geography of natural resource in West Africa, there is the need for the definition of what is meant by 'natural resources'. This is with the view of putting discussions in the chapter within contextual focus. Here, natural resources are taken as 'all non-artificial products situated on or beneath the soil, which can be extracted, harvested or used, and whose extraction, harvest or usage generates income or serve other functional purpose in benefiting mankind'.[56] West Africa is rich in natural resources. Although the extent of this varies from country to country, there is no nation in the sub-region that does not have enough to meet its needs. For ease of discussion, natural resources in West Africa can be categorised into five: land and agricultural products, solid mineral, oil, water and water resources, and animal-stock.[57]

(a) Land

The vegetation of West Africa makes agriculture the dominant preoccupation in the region, and a number of agricultural products both for local consumption and for export, come from the region.. Crops for subsistence farming include beans, yam, etc., while agricultural products include Cocoa, rubber, timber, etc. Cocoa productions are done mainly in countries like Ghana, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire. Logging from timber is also done across countries in the sub-region but countries like Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and other coastal countries are leading producers, while rubber is predominant in Liberia, which, indeed, is the world's largest producer.

Many of these commodities are exported to Western Europe, Asia and the United States and some multinational corporations from these foreign countries are based in some of the countries to maximise opportunities created by the existence of these commodities. But apart from the resources, the land on which production is made is in itself, a resource of most profound economic, social and spiritual significance across West Africa. Indeed, as will be shown later, conflicts surrounding land are some of the most devastating in the sub-region.

(b) Solid Minerals

Although there are a number of solid minerals found in many West African countries, two minerals are particularly important: gold and diamond. The quantity of these resources, at least in the case of gold, is not as profound as that in some other parts of the continent. Among the countries endowed with gold are Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mali. On its part, diamonds are found in Ghana, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Of these countries, however, only Sierra Leone has diamonds of appreciable quantity. The main actors involved in West Africa's solid mineral resources are mainly multinational corporations such as De Bears (in the case of diamonds), artisan actors and Lebanese businessmen. Indeed, the role of Lebanese business interest was to be crucial in appreciating the complexities of conflicts over these resources.

(c) Oil

Oil is a natural resource that is fast bringing international attention to West Africa and the entire Gulf of Guinea. There can be no doubt that the region has significant amount of oil reserve and recent discoveries, as in the case, for example, of Ghana, seems to be improving the significance of the region in global oil politics. The key oil producing country in the region and also the continent's largest producer is Nigeria. On-going prospecting may yield other discoveries as there are likely to be more off-shore findings in other parts of West Africa. As in the case of solid minerals, the marketing of oil and the conflicts associated with it has brought an array of actors, including oil multinational corporations, especially Shell and Chevron, militant groups in the resource-producing communities and the state. The

importance of West Africa has been further enhanced by the declared intention of the United States to derive 25 per cent of its oil needs from the Gulf of Guinea by 2015.

(d) Water and Water Resources

West Africa is endowed with a number of very rich river basins, including Niger, Benue, Volta, Senegal, Mano, Lake Chad and several other small basins. Some of these rivers are among the longest in the world and Lake Chad holds one of the largest areas of wetlands in the Sahelian region. These rivers have served several functions, including provision of hydro-power for some of the countries, and in recent times, a number of countries have come together to form 'unions' around river basins, as in the cases of Mano and Volta rivers. Fishing is another economic activity that is fast gaining prominence in West Africa. Expectedly, the predominance of this is in coastal countries. The region's fishing and other marine resources have brought into some of the coastal countries massive international trailers, especially from Western Europe and Asia. This has provided some revenue for countries such as Senegal, Gambia and Mauritania. It has, however, brought its own complications, as local fishermen have often clashed with international trailers using sophisticated equipments.

(e) Pastoralism

The final category of natural resources is Pastoralism. For the purpose of this paper, pastoralism is taken as the trading in animal stock. This is a category of resources that is not as predominant in West Africa as in other parts of Africa, especially east and central Africa. What, however, makes this category of natural resources important in any calculation of conflict is the transhumance nature of the operation. More often than not, many of those participating in this line of business do not respect international boundaries and this has been a major issue in the linkage between this particular natural resource and conflict in West Africa.

The discussion above points us to at least three major conclusions. First is that West Africa has enough resources to meet its needs, and that any conflict over natural resources in the region cannot be attributed to scarcity. Indeed, apart from meeting its needs, South Africa has enough resources to develop and make its impacts felt in global resource politics. Second, many of the resources in the region are inextricably linked to international business corporations, especially as many of the resources are such that can only be mined and sold in global markets. Third – and attendant on the last two – is that what seems central to managing the relatively sufficient resources in the region, especially with its links to external market, is the effective management of these resources at both national and sub-regional levels. Against the above background, this paper now discusses the dynamics of natural resource conflicts at the local level.

Natural Resources and the Dynamics of Inter-Group Conflicts

Because some of the consequences are hardly felt outside national boundaries, there is often the tendency to forget that natural resource conflicts do have significant impact on inter-group relations at the local level, and that many of the resource-centred conflicts that ultimately resulted in more profound national conflicts had their origins at the local base. Countries across West Africa have recorded many resource-centred conflicts that have affected inter-group relations and, quite expectedly, the resource that has been in contention here is land. Broadly, the root causes of this category of conflict can be brought under six headings: disagreements over historical claims, changes in climatic conditions, consequences of changes in the nature of power balance; elite manipulation, youth reactions to vulnerability and exclusion and alterations in boundary structures. While in some cases each one of the listed items has been sole causes of conflicts, in most cases, many of these have come together to explain the causes of acrimonious inter-group relations.

Disagreements over historical claims over land have emerged mainly because of the absence of documentary evidences of historical rights to land. In communities across West Africa, the traditional land ownership structures between communities have been affected by successive legislations by governments, right from the colonial era till the present day. Consequently, land tenure arrangements between communities become violently contestable, as communities come up with claims of ownership rooted to conflicting oral traditions.

While there have been cases in recent times for governments across West Africa to set up ad hoc committees to untangle the web of complexities involved in many of these claims, not much success often attend such efforts as groups that lost out in such adjudication processes often accuse governments of partiality. Consequently, violent conflicts have often emerged as a result of these disagreements. Among some of these conflicts are those between the Amuleri and Aguleri in South East Nigeria, Ife and Modakeke in South West Nigeria, and the Chamba and Kuteb in Northern Nigeria.[58]

Changes in climatic conditions have become a factor in conflict considerations when unanticipated environmental changes emerge to alter existing land-tenure arrangements between local communities. More often than not these changes have resulted in communities encroaching on the land of their neighbours, a tendency that has been violently resisted by the aggrieved communities. Also important in this consideration is when droughts have affected grasing land pastoralists use for their animals and such animals have trespassed on farms. Examples of these have been common, especially in recent years when climatic changes seem to be altering land and water resources available to local communities. These problems have been further aggravated because most West African

countries do not have policies for managing crisis associated with environmental changes. Consequently, slight alterations in the environment have been known to ignite conflict.

The third factor – changes in the nature of balance of power – has become particularly important in explaining recent communal clashes over natural resources. More often than not, problems have emerged when ethnic communities that had been allocated land and had thus been playing second-fiddle positions to their 'land-lords' suddenly assume important positions in national politics and they are using such positions to seek greater autonomy from groups that have historically being their 'landlords'. A recent example of communal clashes of this nature was the case in northern Ghana, with the Nanumba-Kokumba conflicts. The Nanumbas, who had, historically, been considered as 'tenants', were able to attain a level of importance in education. Consequently, they challenged the historical dominance of their erstwhile masters over land and chieftaincy rights, and the result was a major conflict that ultimately necessitated the involvement of the Ghanaian military.[59] Another example can be found in South West Nigeria, where the Modakeke, historically referred to (perhaps erroneously) as tenants to Ife landlords, wanted to seek greater control to land and autonomy.

Elite manipulation is another major cause of conflict over natural resources at the local level. The pattern of expression here is not different from other ways through which elites have exploited communal differences to advance selfish interests. However, it needs to be pointed out that very rarely has this been a sole cause of conflict. Rather, the way this often manifests is that, once there are conflicts with major natural resource bearing, elites come into the scene to exploit it to their advantage. Indeed, in all the communal conflicts identified above, prolongations of tension have been linked to elite manipulation.

The importance of youth vulnerability and exclusion to conflicts in Africa is fast assuming academic and policy relevance, especially in West Africa.[60] Perhaps the main reason for this is the whole issue of youth bulge that seems to be prevalent in Africa. In West Africa, youths have been at the forefront of many recent communal clashes over natural resources. The best example that comes to mind is in the Niger Delta region, where many of the ethnic conflicts over oil have been fought mainly by youths. Across countries in the region, youths, feeling despondent at the downward plunge of their economic fortune and disappointed at the ways the older generations have handled national affairs, including the management of natural resources, are now increasingly assuming violent dispositions to resource politics. Another example is the case in northern Ghana earlier mentioned, where the cause of the Komkomba for greater access to land and chieftaincy authority was championed by the youths.[61]

Finally, boundary alterations have resulted in communal clashes and examples of this are more prevalent in countries that are constantly adjusting state and provincial boundaries. It is not uncommon among countries in the region to re-adjust boundaries in ways that make communities believe that they are losing out of their land resources. As will be expected, boundary adjustments inevitably bring along with them controversies as where ethnic groups along redefined borders belong and there have, in some cases, been violent clashes. For example, in July 2003, there were conflicts between Edo and Kogi states of Nigeria over boundary land, forcing the Deputy Governors of both states to have a meeting to resolve the crisis.[62] Ebonyi and Benue States also have conflicts of this nature between the Ngbo and Agilla clans respectively.[63] In this as well as many other conflicts over natural resources at the local level, there have been cases of proliferation of arms, which again has been at the roots of crimes and political instability in many of these countries.

In concluding this section there is the need to identify how communal clashes over natural resources have been linked to governance. Indeed, a close look at many of these conflicts will show that they have arisen because there are no adequate structures in place for managing inter-group relations in most West African countries. Consequently, groups and communities have resorted to violent clashes because they realise that their interests cannot be protected by their respective central governments. In most cases also, they do not have recognition and respect for the judiciary and other ad-hoc institutions established to manage communal affairs, especially those over land.

With the enormous importance attached to land across communities in West Africa, ethnic groups have fought violently to protect their respective interests in what they see largely as a zero-sum game. Elements of this too also reflect in conflicts that have resulted in the collapse and weakening of state structures in the region

Natural Resources and the Dynamics of Conflicts in 'Failed' and 'Wounded' States

It may be appropriate to preface discussion in this section with the definition of what is meant by 'failed' and 'wounded' state. For the purpose of this chapter, a 'failed' state is taken as one where the capacity of the central government to control the apparatus of violence was completely eroded, and as a result complete anarchy dominated the affairs of the society, with individuals and armed groups taking laws into their hands and embarking on acts of violence with impunity. An example of this in the West African context was Liberia during the period of its first round of civil wars. On its part, a 'wounded' state in taken in the context of this chapter as a state where there exists only a crude semblance of governance but where the state is considerably weak to manage many of the security chal-

lenges confronting it. Often, central governments in this situation might be facing opposition from an armed group or armed groups that are effectively armed and pose sufficient challenge to wrestle power from the centre. A recent example of this in the West African sub-region was Sierra Leone. In all the countries that have either failed or are wounded, natural resources have come out as issues of major concern, both in the causes of the conflicts, in their prolongation, and in the mechanisms for their resolution. In short, what seems to be the basic difference between the two is the extent to which the state still retains a semblance of authority and control, especially over the mechanisms of security. While it may be somewhat difficult to determine the time a 'wounded' state becomes a 'failed' state, the transition may come if, a wounded state is neglected and events degenerate.

The histories of the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire have been widely recorded, such that it serves no purpose discussing them here.[64]

What this section thus attempts is a discussion of the role of natural resources in the dynamics of these conflicts. Broadly, natural resources have come into discussions either as causes of these conflicts; explanations for the prolongations; or the reason for their resolution. As it is often the case with major civil conflicts, no single cause can be alluded to the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. While there is often the proverbial 'last straw', no singular explanation addresses all the ramifications of the conflicts. Having said this, however, natural resources were core considerations in all the causes. In Liberia, years of mismanagement of vital natural resources was a cause of the war, as populations not benefiting from these resources joined the rebellion that was started by former President Charles Taylor. Before the war, the centuries of Americo-Liberian domination and the near decade of Samuel Doe's dictatorship had already divided the society, and the access of these societies to natural resources. For example, the country's main natural resources – rubber and logging – were being managed by groups that were not taking the interest of the majority of the population into consideration, while the Doe government traded in these resources to acquire weapons to fight insurgent groups when they started the war.

In Sierra Leone, the situation was similar, as the failure of successive governments to develop the country especially the resource-producing province was a factor in causing the war. Indeed, the rebellion took off from the South East region of the country, the province of Sierra Leone where the bulk of the diamonds is located. Analysts of the Sierra Leone conflicts have argued that one of the reasons why the rebel leader, late Foday Sankoh, commenced the rebellion from this region, and not from his region of origin, where one would have naturally expected him to have considerable support to commence a rebellion was that the south-eastern region provided a disenchanted operation base be-cause of the neglect they had suffered, despite providing the main natural re-source that is sustaining the national economy.

In Cote d'Ivoire, access to land and natural resources has been a factor in explaining the conflict, especially as it fuelled ethnic violence and underlined tension between those who consider themselves as proper Ivorians and those regarded as foreigners. Indeed, the nature of cocoa production in the country is such that people from many West African countries involved in cocoa production have, over the past several decades, settled in Cote d'Ivoire. Over time, tension began to emerge between these people and the host community and the tension was to be a major issue in explaining aspects of the civil war.

However, where natural resources have become a factor in the dynamics of conflict in West Africa has been through the ways these resources have explained the prolongation of conflicts, and it is this that has brought these resources to global attention. In all the countries that have either 'failed' or have been 'wounded', natural resources have played a key role in prolonging the conflict. In discussing this, however, it needs to be pointed out from the outset that, contrary to what is often assumed; it is not only the rebel factions that have exploited natural resources to prolong civil conflicts in West Africa. Indeed, central governments having to confront these rebel groups have also used natural resources to advance their respective causes in these conflicts. In Liberia, the moment the war was imminent, the Doe government had been battering natural resources for weapons. In an example I have cited elsewhere, Samuel Doe had, as at February 1989, entered into an agreement with a company in London to supply military weapons worth US$60 million, and as a payment for this, the Liberian government granted timber concessions in the following areas to the company.

(a) An area of 173,448 acres located in Grand Gedeh County, lying to the north-west of Pyne Town;
(b) An area of 150,240 acres also located in Grand Gedeh County, lying to the north-west of Zwedru; and
(c) An area of 24,000 hectares located in Grand Cape Mount County, lying to the east of the town of Congo and immediately bordering the Mano River.[65]

Once the war became full-blown, all other factions began exploiting natural resources under their control to advance their respective interests in the war. Undoubtedly, the faction that exploited this opportunity most was Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Because of the extent of the resources under its control and the complex structures Taylor had succeeded in developing across the region,[66] the NPFL was able to market these resources to countries in Europe and Asia.[67] It can also be assumed that Taylor used his knowledge and experience as the former Procurement Chief of the country to access multinational corporations. With the revenues coming from these natural resources, Taylor was able to procure weapons to prosecute the war. It can also be argued that one

of the reasons why he was able to win the immediate post-war election was that he was able to use the money accruing from these resources to browbeat his opponents and rivals into conformity and to embark on the most expensive campaign for the election. The access other factions too had to natural resources was used both for individual benefits and for weapon procurement. Expectedly, the financial opportunities coming from these resources were sufficient motivations for the armed factions to continue the war.

In Cote d'Ivoire, natural resources have been a major factor in financing the conflict, and once again, both the government and the rebels have used these resources to their advantage. It is now widely recognised that the rebels are illegally exploiting mineral resources and cocoa to finance the war. Global Witness – an international NGO widely recognised and respected for the authenticity of its information – pointed out in September 2005, that diamonds mined in rebel-held *Forces Nouvelles* areas were smuggled into Mali and Guinea, from where they were transferred to the international market.

 Apart from this, the UN Panel of Experts report also indicted the rebels for using cocoa, cotton and diamonds to fund their war and for personal benefits. This was to account for the ban subsequently imposed by the United Nations on Cote d'Ivoire's exports of rough diamonds to the international market in December 2005. But the Cote d'Ivoire government has also used natural resources for its own benefits in the war. The same UN Panel of Experts report also pointed out that about 20 per centof government military spending had come directly from the cocoa industry in the form of contributions, loans and grants. This is in addition to the routine contributions made by the industry via taxes to the treasury. This calculation was given an implicit confirmation in August 2003 by the chairman of one of the cocoa industry's regulating bodies, when he admitted giving large sums of the institution's money to President Gbagbo to enable him to 'defend Ivorian people'.

But undoubtedly the country where natural resources have been known to fuel conflict was Sierra Leone. The nature of the dynamics here was quite complex, as the fuelling of the conflict was not limited only to the government and the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), but also involved a complex string of external actors. The resource that was exploited here were mainly diamonds, the alluvial deposit of which the country has in considerable abundance. Diamonds have been used by successive governments both to fight the war and to line the pockets of key politicians. The governments – especially that of Tejan Kabah – procured weapons to fight the rebel force. More importantly, however, the government used money from diamonds to engage mercenaries to fight the rebel force. While all the details of the deal with the mercenaries, especially the Executive Outcomes from South Africa, are not known, it is believed that the

government agreed to pay the mercenaries in diamonds. The extent to which opportunities for politicians to benefit personally from the diamond was a factor in prolonging the war is also a matter of controversy. A Western news agency had alleged that former leader, Valentine Strasser, profited from diamonds. The RUF also benefited from diamonds, and this was a major factor in the provision of arms for the rebels. Foday Sankoh was able to sell diamonds to his sub-regional allies and he was also able, through the same channels, to acquire weapons with which he was able to fight the war. But it has also been established that RUF rebels wanting to continue benefiting from the diamonds deposit encouraged intransigence and consequently prolonged the war.

The involvement of sub-regional interference is complex, especially as it involves unravelling between allegations, denials and suspicions. The category of external actors whose names have been mentioned in the controversies over diamonds and the prolongation of conflicts have included Regional and United Nations Peacekeepers and neighbouring countries. Again, allegations against the peacekeepers have come from three different sources: Sierra Leoneans, external observers and the Military head of the United Nations Peacekeeping force. While most Sierra Leoneans are grateful to the regional Peacekeeping force that came to address the conflict, there are some who felt that many of the soldiers who came violated their rules of engagement and participated in illegal activities involving natural resources. Specifically, they were alleged to have acquired and exported diamonds. It is important to point out that many of the peacekeepers have denied this allegation, it persists and it has gained considerable adherents. The allegations of external analysts have followed a similar line, with these analysts alleging that peacekeepers, especially those sent by the regional organisation, ECOWAS, have illegally engaged in diamond looting. These analysts have claimed that the regional peacekeepers extended to Sierra Leone the negative reputation they had acquired in Liberia, where their acronym of ECOMOG bastardised as 'Every Car of Moveable Object Gone'. The reaction of ECOMOG to this allegation has been to dismiss it as a mischievous misrepresentation of their sacrifice in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Of all the allegations against the peacekeepers, however, the one that was most contentious was the one levelled by the Commander of the UN force (UNASIL), Major General Vijay Jetley, against key Nigerian actors in the peacekeeping effort in Sierra Leone, including Brigadier General Muhammad Garba, Major General Gabriel Kpamba, the late Major General Maxwell Khobe and Ambassador Olu Adeniji,[68] Jetley accused these officials of collaborating with the RUF in diamond mining and of sabotaging his military efforts. This was emphatically denied by the accused and they were supported by the Nigerian government. The allegation was also received at the UN office in New York with

a level of doubt as the UN Secretary General's Special Representative who was indicted in Jetley's report was widely respected in the organisation for his integrity.

At the end, Jetley left, as there were irreconcilable differences between him and those with whom he would have to work closely if he were to continue with his command of the operation. The final layer of regional consideration that was a factor in appreciating the dynamics of regional conflicts in Sierra Leone's conflict vis-à-vis natural resources was the involvement of the former Liberian President, Charles Taylor. It was alleged that Taylor exploited Sierra Leone's diamond to fund conflicts in the sub-region. It is worth noting that this remains an issue before the international criminal court.

But just as natural resources have been a key factor in causing and prolonging some of the wars that have resulted in the collapse of state institutions in West Africa, they have also been an issue in the resolution of at least one of these conflicts. In Sierra Leone, attempts to pacify the rebel leader, Foday Sankoh, and in the process put an end to the wilful mismanagement of diamonds forced one of the peace agreements – the Lomé Peace agreements – to concede the Chairmanship of the Commission for Strategic Mineral Resources and Development to the rebel leader, Foday Sankor. This was a position, which gave him the control of the country's diamond resources also came with the status of Vice President and an amnesty for all the crimes he had committed before the peace deal. Although this gesture did not achieve the intended result, as there was another outbreak of conflict in the country.

In concluding this section, it needs to be pointed out that the link between conflicts and natural resources in states that collapsed or were wounded is inextricably linked to governance, as many of the conflicts that later drew from natural resource endowment were, in their origins, conflicts rooted in political governance. Indeed, if there had been proper management of political, economic and social affairs, many of these conflicts would not have emerged in the first instance. But apart from the countries that had experienced considerable weakening of its governance structure, there are still several others where central governments are facing challenges from groups that believe that they are not having the best deal from the natural resource endowments beneath their soil, and this is the topic for discussion in the next section.

Local Claim, National Interest and the Dynamics of Natural Resources Conflict

In recent times, a tendency that is becoming common in West Africa's natural resource politics is the clash between 'Local claim' and 'national Interest'. Two actors, each with different sets of arguments, are in contention here. At the one end here are local communities producing natural resources that are crucial to the

economic development of the country, while on the other are the central governments of the affected countries. The main argument of the resource-producing communities has often been that since they produce the natural resource that is central to the economic power of the nation, they should be treated with special attention and that certain special concessions ought to be given to the development of their communities. The producing communities also base their argument for better consideration on the fact that they bear the environmental brunt of extracting these resources. On its part central government has argued that the hosting of these resources was a geographical accident which the producing communities should not blow out of realistic proportions. While governments might claim that it is willing to recognise and treat the resource producing communities with consideration, they have also claimed that they would not allow themselves to be blackmailed by the communities. Also important in the arguments of governments is that there are constitutional stipulations for handling the situation and that the refusal of resource-producing communities to recognise these stipulations was at the roots of the problem.

The conflict that clearly expresses this is the controversy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where communities of the oil-bearing states have accused successive governments in the country of not according the oil-producing regions special consideration. Apart from arguing for better considerations, these communities have also argued that successive governments in the country have tried to forcefully suppress their agitations. Indeed, the controversies here are quite profound. At the root of it all is the nature of revenue allocation in the country. Although it had varied over time,[69] the current nature of revenue allocation in the country gives 13 per cent to the resource producing region. However, the region has complained that this is not only insufficient. Complaints of insufficiency – as well as a number of related issues – have underlined the nature of conflict in the region.

While there are many layers of conflict in the Niger Delta, a central one has been between the Niger Delta militants and the Nigerian Federal Government. This problem, which has been going on for some time, reached nihilistic dimensions in the last few years. While more coherent protests began with the emergence of Ken Saro Wiwa, the militant protests that brought the crisis to international attention began after the Abacha regime hanged Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders. From this time, youths in the Niger delta became more determined in their response. Indeed, by the time a new civilian administration came to power in the country in May 1999, the line seems to have been drawn between the militants in the Niger Delta and the Nigerian government. After waiting for what they expected would be a better dispensation under a civilian regime, the youth took to more organised violence against the organisation and the multinational oil com-

panies operating in the region. The situation was first aggravated by the unleash-
ing of the Nigerian army on the village of Odi in December 1999 by the Obasanjo
administration. This action, which saw many people killed and the village reduced
to the ground, was one of the most negative political actions of the Obasanjo
administration. It is small wonder that the action did mark a turning point for the
worse in the conflict between the Nigerian government and the Niger Deltans.

In the last few years, the nature of the problem has intensified, especially with
the emergence of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
(MEND). Since its inception, the organisation has presented the Nigerian
government with its most serious security challenge in the Niger Delta, as the
group has taken on the military and has adopted the strategy of kidnapping
foreign oil workers, both to embarrass the government and to obtain ransom.
The attempt by the government to incarcerate the leader of the group, Mojihad
Asari Dokubo, did not work, and for the remaining part of the Obasanjo
administration, militant activities in the Niger Delta continued to challenge the
Nigerian state over the management of oil in the region.

President Shehu Umaru Yar'Adua had no choice but to take the situation in
the Niger Delta seriously from the outset of his administration. Apparently with
the desire to placate the region, the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) selected
an indigene of the region, Goodluck Jonathan, as Yar'Adua's deputy, and one of
the early steps taken by the administration was to release Asari Dokubo from jail.
It is early days yet to find out whether there will be a lasting solution to the
problem during his administration, especially as many countries in the region,
including the regional organisation, ECOWAS looks up to the country for
leadership and direction on a number of issues.

ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Natural Resource Conflicts in West Africa

It has to be admitted from the outset that, until recently, ECOWAS hardly accorded
any special attention to addressing the complexities of natural resource conflicts
in the region. This may be understandable, as many of the conflicts have not
clearly manifested as resource wars but as political conflicts. For example, major
regional conflicts as those in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire which, as
noted above have had strong natural resource contents and which attracted
significant interest from the regional organisation, were at origin, political conflicts
that later assumed resource dimensions. Consequently, it can be said that ECOWAS
has an active role to play in key political conflicts that have attained natural re-
source dimensions. But there is an aspect of natural resource management on
which ECOWAS has a clearly stated initiative is on the issue of transhumance on
which the organisation has developed a certificate. Efforts are now in progress

by the ECOWAS Commission to undertake a comprehensive assessment of natural resource management in the sub-region. Another area where the Commission seems to be making considerable effort is Conflict Prevention, where there is now a Mechanism that pays special attention to the management of natural resources and their links with conflicts.

But despite this remarkable progress, there are major gaps which the ECOWAS Commission is either reluctant or unable to address. These are those conflicts that border on the politics of addressing local conflicts involving natural resources and in those cases where there are dichotomies between local claims and national interest.

This explains why ECOWAS has not been able to impact on the situation in the Niger Delta and in other conflicts which member states insist fall within the remit of their national sovereignty. Indeed, in the years ahead, ECOWAS may find itself in a situation where the Commission may need to develop mechanisms to compel its members to address the peculiar needs of its members in the managing of their natural resources.

To assist ECOWAS' on-going efforts at developing concrete initiatives on natural resource management, this chapter identifies some of the key issues that the organisation has to take into consideration in its efforts in this direction:

- Need for a careful auditing of sub-regional natural resource endowment
- Formulation of policy over property rights
- Harmonisation of laws governing land tenure
- Incorporation of gender sensitivity in the management of land
- Formulation of policy on natural resources that cut across national boundaries
- Development of policy to meet the peculiar demands of resource producing communities
- Coming up with concrete policy on key natural resources that are currently attracting global interests, especially oil
- Looking into the activities and drawing lessons from the performances of countries that have formed unions around river basins, especially Mano River Union and Volta River Union
- Formulation of policy for a Code of Conduct to be followed by Multinational Corporations operating in the region.

Having recommended the establishment of a regional initiative on natural resource management, this chapter also recognises that there are factors militating against this, the most profound of which is the inability of the organisation to impose decisions on members on the management of their natural resource endowment. However, it can also be argued that if the organisation has established

its stand on other crucial issues such as democracy and good governance, it can also take a similar stand on the issue of natural resource management. Even if it cannot impose conditions, it can, at least, ensure that the organisation has a policy that forces its members to better manage their natural resource endowment.

Conclusion

The management of West Africa's natural resources has been central to the politics of conflict in West Africa and it is most likely to remain so for quite some time to come. What seems to be at the centre of the whole controversy is the inability of the population to derive benefit from their natural resource endowment and the failure of governments across the region to meet the expectations of the population. What seems to be central to the prevention of conflicts in West Africa is credible democracy that will give allowance for the proper governance of the natural resource sector.

4

Social Vulnerability and Conflicts: Elements for Regional Conflict Vulnerability Analysis

Mohammed J. Kuna

Introduction

The humanitarian consequences of recurrent violent conflicts in West Africa clearly demonstrate the need not only for a more coordinated regional approach in understanding their trajectories, but also for an integrated conflict management strategy capable of *mapping* and *anticipating* the proportion of populations' exposure to damage or conflict conditions, the potential factors or forces capable of causing damage, and the capacity of populations to absorb the impact of that damage or conflict. In the past two decades, devastating conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d' Ivoire Guinea Bissau, Senegal's Casamance region, Nigeria's Niger Delta and the northern parts of Niger and Mali underscore the complexity of both their trajectories and impact on West Africa. The profile of these and other less well-known conflicts demonstrate the limitations of conceiving these as local or localizable phenomena in the West African Sub-region; the sheer complexity of these conflicts that straddle concerns ranging from resources, state (in)capability, identity issues, demographic changes through to other internal and external social forces makes it imperative to fashion out a broader, more inclusive and less militaristic approach to conflict management than currently exists. In the past 25-30 years, a variety of mechanisms in the West African sub-region have been devised to address some of these conflicts, and just as the conflicts increased in complexity, so too have the management mechanisms. In general however, such mechanisms have been locked within a broad, though paralysing, framework, that emphasises the rigidity of national sovereignty and boundaries; the dominance, though often unacknowledged, of colonial experiences and ethos arising from membership of different sub-regional organisations and linkages with erstwhile

imperial powers; the projection of reactive, and predominantly militaristic strategies as the only possible mechanisms in conflict management; and a general focus on regime, rather than human, security.

The setting-up of a regional mechanism for conflict management by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) a few years after its existence has started transforming this dominant conflict management paradigm, as was demonstrated especially in the cases of the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This evolving regional mechanism is, however, still too militaristic, still predominantly located within national, rather than regional, security frameworks, and largely *reactive* in its response to conflicts. Its whole architecture needs to be revised to have a strengthened *predictive* or *anticipatory* capability not just in addressing the trajectories/dynamics of conflict and peacekeeping, but also in the assessment of the probable impact of conflicts, the probable humanitarian assistance required, as well as identifying the salient conditions determining the differential exposure of communities and populations to conflicts. These are essential first steps in a more inclusive, less militaristic conflict management. All conflicts, wherever and whatever their origin, have trans-border implications, and therefore defy the confinement of colonially constructed boundaries. A more coordinated regional approach to the identification not just of conflict trajectories, but also of estimating the differential degrees of the exposure of communities, groups, and individuals to the impact of conflicts together with an assessment of their capacities to absorb impact should constitute integral parts of the sub-region's conflict management architecture. This chapter attempts to isolate the key elements that could enter into this broader regional conflict management architecture.

The justification for this is not far-fetched. Exposure to conflict manifest differentially in populations depending on prior social differentiation, such that certain social classes, communities, or groups stand a greater risk of exposure to, and therefore may be more at risk from the impact of conflict than others. Exposure to risk and impact is one thing; the *capacity* of communities and groups to *absorb* the impact of conflicts is also differentially distributed. Furthermore, an overview of conflict trajectories in the sub-region makes it imperative to build-in an assessment of risk exposure as part of an overall regional conflict management mechanism. Studies have demonstrated the disruptive effects of certain natural conditions such as droughts, crop failures, epidemics and diseases and their capacity for causing uncertainty in peoples' lives. The availability of information in conditions of conflict or disaster could be critical in reducing uncertainty both for victims as well as for planners, thus making the planning of conflict management more organised. Similarly, a cursory survey of the conflicts in the sub-region shows that these not only have fairly common trajectories, but they often have common impact patterns within and across borders.

The intensification of the conflict in Liberia as from June 1990 and its spread to Bong and Lofa counties created a wave of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) over a wide area not only within the country, but by early 1991 had pushed people across the border into Sierra Leone and Guinea. Across the region, events and processes such as the intensification of ethno-nationalism and sub-nationalist identities; growing levels of state incapability; the deepening marginalisation of certain groups and communities vis-à-vis the growing wealth of others; involvement of foreign and diaspora interests in the sub-region's resource conflicts; changing demographic composition of the population in response to, among other things, the devastating impact of malaria and HIV/AIDS; a growing army of a young, unemployed population; pressures of population movements as well as the dominance of authoritarian regimes and their continued influence on politics and society are fairly common, and have serious implications for a regional peace and conflict management architecture (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters 1994; Rupesinghe and Tishkov 1996; Brubaker 1998, 1995; Shampa 2002; Deng 1996; Drayton 1995; Geschiere 1998). In general, therefore, the region not only faces broadly common security challenges; these challenges increasingly require coherent and harmonised strategies as we move deeper into the 21st century (Ball and Fayemi, 2004). The analysis of the probable impact of conflict, the differential degrees of exposure of communities and populations, and the capacity of such populations to absorb the impact of conflict is what a *vulnerability analysis* attempts to do. A deeper discussion of this concept is provided in section three; however, the objective of this chapter is to broadly outline the main elements of conflict vulnerability analysis (CVA) in the West African sub-region. It is not a CVA of the West African sub-region as such; that would involve detailed and country-specific assessments from which a composite regional vulnerability index (RVI) could be built. However, it raises some of the key elements that such an analysis could consider.

Against this background therefore, the chapter briefly conceptualises the notion of vulnerability and outlines its basic elements in the West African context. It is organised into six sections, including the introduction.

Section 2 reviews the existing regional mechanism for conflict management, draws attention to some of its limitations, thereby laying the ground for the necessity of a broader mechanism that encompasses a CVA. Section three conceptualises the idea of vulnerability as a tool of analysis in conflict management and transformation. Section four focuses on social vulnerability and conflict mapping, and identifies key elements for a CVA. Section five discusses the main determinants of vulnerability in West Africa, and argues that a regional CVA should and must include an analysis of the trajectories of conflicts. Section six concludes the chapter.

Conceptualising Social Vulnerability

In the past few years, conflict researchers have increasingly turned attention not just to the analysis of the causes, trends, and dynamics of conflict; but also to the degree to which given populations, communities, groups, societies, or entire countries might be *prone* to conflict. Although the analysis of a population's proneness to conflict or its *vulnerability* is a well-established method in the earth sciences concerned with the dynamics and impact of climate change on humans and in studies of poverty, it is only recently becoming an important segment of conflict discourse. In general, vulnerability is defined as the extent to which a community, service, or geographic area is likely to be damaged or disrupted by the impact of a particular disaster or hazard. It is the *propensity* of people, structures, and institutions, relationships of things to *damage* by a conflict or hazard. However, vulnerability also draws attention to a group's or community's capacity to absorb the impact of a conflict or hazard, and the speed with which that impact could be absorbed. As Aubee (2004) averred, social vulnerability is the 'characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of any form of natural or artificial hazard'. Thus vulnerability involves the assessment of risk, the identification of early warning signs, and the projection, on these bases, of the probable populations at risk, the probable risks and state of readiness or absorptive capacity of that population, as well as the damage-capacity of these risks. The scale and intensity of the destruction often reflect the nature and character of the hazard. In vulnerability analysis, the identification of vulnerable *elements* and *matching* these elements with destroyable things is important. Both in turn, depend on the *evaluation* and *quantification* of vulnerability.

Destroyable things could be *tangible* or *intangible*. In the case of floods for example, crops, livestock, machinery, equipment, infrastructure could be tangible things, while social cohesion, community structures, cultural artefacts, patterns of authority, and law and order intangible (Samarasinghe et al 1999).

Although vulnerability embodies *risk assessment,* (RA) and *early warning* (EW), both need to be clearly distinguished from *conflict vulnerability assessment* (CVA). Whereas RA attempts to 'evaluate the *potential* for violence in a given social context,' EW is restricted to '*anticipating* and *tracking escalation* in the shorter term from high risk' – usually political tension or sporadic violence – to open or high hostility conflict. While RA focuses more on long-to-medium term analyses, EW focuses largely on the 'systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purpose of anticipating the escalation of violent conflict' and is 'applied to a more limited number of situations already singled out through risk assessment as high-risk (Samarasinghe et al 1999). Integral to CVA is RA, with the added critical element of an informed assessment of a populations' *capacity* to cope with risks or hazards, including the capacity for tension management,

ability to control violence when it breaks out as well as the capacity for the reconstruction of destroyed social fabric or physical infrastructure (Samarasinghe et al 1999; Blanch 2001; Wisner 1978).

Given the sketchy conceptual background above, attention can now move to social vulnerability. According to the UNDP (2002), social vulnerability reflects 'the degree to which societies or socio-economic groups are affected by stresses and hazards, whether brought about by external forces or intrinsic factors – internal and external – that negatively impacts the social cohesion of a country'. Social vulnerability assumes that the dynamics of conflict and its outcomes are differentially determined by vulnerabilities existing *prior* to conflicts embedded in broader power relations, and that these are crucial in understanding people's unequal opportunities for counteracting the impact of conflict. It seeks to apprehend and analyze the nature and dynamics of the forces involved in a population's vulnerability to violent conflict. As a tool of analysis, it deals essentially with the susceptibility of a population or community to conflict situations, hinging on the principle that violent conflicts are not only difficult to forecast, but that their impact is even more difficult to contain. In attempting to determine the proneness of populations to risk factors, CVA is the third and final stage of conflict assessment. CVA analysis begins with EW (detecting the early signs of potentially violent conflict), moves on to RA (assessing the risk of exposure of groups and communities), and ends with CVA (the determination of the probable impact of the identified conflict/hazard on identifiable populations/communities, the human and material resources that may be at risk, the capacity of the populations at risk to absorb the impact of the conflict or hazard, as well as the administrative and infrastructural facilities required during the conflict and in reconstruction efforts).

All four are *critical elements* for any prompt, efficient, and effective intervention in conflict management, very broadly conceived. In general then, a focus on social vulnerability could enable and better equip a conflict management mechanism identify the dominant characteristics of populations at risk, the type of resources (individual and community) available to these populations for coping with possible hazards, as well as existing processes and institutional mechanisms designed to deal with risks or disasters in a particular context in the event of a conflict outbreak.

Scholars convincingly argue that if the overall goal of CVA is to increase the capacity for anticipating, preventing, and in the extreme case mitigating the impact of conflict or hazards by identifying probable risk factors and their differential impact on diverse social and population groups, then at the minimum, such an analysis needs to take five key indicators into consideration (Samarasinghe et al 1999; Wisner 1978; Peader 2003). The first major element is a broad assessment of a population's or structure's '*initial well-being*'. This will include an analysis of the nutritional status, physical and mental health and morale of populations/groups at risk or, in the case of structures, its carrying capacity, structural condition,

availability of facilities such as water, electricity etc). Second, is an analysis of patterns of '*livelihood and resilience*'. This will involve an analysis of the 'assets, capital, income, and social networks' at the disposal of a group or population. Third, is an assessment of the mechanisms available for '*personal security or protection*' (e.g. personal security, type of house, location, etc). Fourth, is the availability of '*social security or protection*' (e.g. effective law enforcement agencies, focus on human rather than regime security, conflict prevention/mitigation measures, availability of and training in the provision of critical humanitarian services, gaps between outbreaks and response time, nature of intervention and so on).

The final key indicator is the existence of '*social and political networks and institutions*' (social capital, but also the role of institutional environment in setting good conditions for hazard precautions, peoples' rights to express needs and of access to preparedness).

However, these aspects of livelihood, simultaneously also indicators of vulnerability, are themselves embedded within broader social, economic, and political processes. To address vulnerability, it is necessary to consider these broad factors.

Only in this sense can vulnerability be seen as an outcome of a series of intermeshing factors, including access to resources, the diversity of income sources, the location of the social units in question in the broader social framework, the availability of support social networks, the existence of social infrastructure, as well as the institutional and organisational frameworks enabling prompt intervention when necessary. The presence or absence of formal and informal coping mechanisms such as social security, insurance, infrastructure, income, and social safety nets are also other significant considerations. Thus vulnerability is affected not just by the relative distribution of income, access to and diversity of economic assets; and by the operation of informal social security arrangements; it is also determined by the institutional arrangements that organise warning, planning, intervention, rehabilitation, and other services. The identification of populations at risk and their characteristics should be followed by an identification and mapping of risk factors. Some of the important risk factors across the West African sub-region include the high rates of poverty, youth unemployment, high dependency ratios, the high degree of the marginalisation of women, children and the elderly, increased levels of national and trans-border crime, especially trafficking (drugs and humans), poor institutional and organisational capacity to respond to emergencies, weak infrastructures to mention but a few.

Regional Conflict Management Mechanisms

Although the region has witnessed serious conflicts in the past two decades, it perhaps has, compared to other regions on the continent, broader and deeper experience in conflict management. One of the clearest indications of this

experience is reflected in the evolving ECOWAS peace keeping process as re-flected in various *Mechanisms* established by ECOWAS for conflict management.

Thus, the *Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance of Defence* (1981), *Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation, and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa* (1998; 2001), *Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security* (1999), *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* (2001), as well as the *Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED*, 2002) together constitute the institutional and legal foundation for a regional conflict management regime.

Amongst other things, and for the purposes of this chapter, Chapter 9 of the 1999 *Mechanism*, for example, holds that 'the Community hereby adopts a graduated strategy for building peace which shall be implemented as a continuum' wherein articles 42, 43, and 44 gave a detailed description of what this 'graduated strategy' meant. Article 42 for example, requested member states to be involved in 'institutional capacity building' for peace requiring the 'preparation, organisation, and supervision of elections in member states…' as well as to assist member states emerging from conflicts to 'increase their capacity for national, social, economic, and cultural reconstruction'. The cost of such an endeavour was not lost on the framers of the *Mechanism*. They insisted that 'all ECOWAS financial institutions' were enjoined to 'facilitate funding for reintegration and reconstruction programmes'. Similarly, Articles 43 and 44 underscored the significance of peace-building during and after hostilities, by noting that 'in zones of relative peace, priority shall be accorded to the implementation of policies designed to reduce degradation of social and economic conditions arising from conflicts' and that 'particular assistance would be rendered to '*vulnerable persons* – children, the elderly, women and other traumatised groups – in the society'.

These and similar articles have been further refined in subsequent decisions and instruments by various organs of ECOWAS, thus further extending the efficacy of the *Mechanisms*. It was along these lines that a set of *Early Warning Conflict Indicators* for West Africa was identified that could enable prompt intervention before a conflict develops into a major crisis. Similarly, four *Early Warning Observatories* (Banjul, Cotonou, Monrovia, and Ouagadougou) with focal points at country levels consisting of civil society and local authorities, a Coordination/ Analysis Centre and an Early Warning Early Response (EWER) Situation Room at the ECOWAS Secretariat were established to further extend and deepen the regional reach and efficacy of its conflict management.

Through these, an integrated plan for the management of regional conflicts gradually took shape. This has been further re-enforced by practical concerns, the most notable of which was the role of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone and Liberia, as well as the *Community's* efforts in the resolution of the conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire.

However, good as this mechanism is, its efficacy in conflict management is limited by its inability to take within its purview a regional assessment of risk exposure and the probable impact of conflict on classes and communities within and across national boundaries. Since vulnerability is limited not just to classes and communities, particularly in contexts of a high degree of economic and social affinities, the impact of conflicts or disasters could indeed be massive and widespread, as they were on a number of occasions in West Africa. The conflict in Liberia – that spread to Sierra Leone and then spilled into Guinea – is one clear example. In such cases, the dimensions of vulnerability could cut across countries and affect regions, a dimension that requires a regional approach to the assessment of the nature and degree of vulnerability. Such analysis is critical especially when we acknowledge that conflict is an integral part of human existence, and that a capacity for the determination of vulnerability elements, vulnerable populations, a projection of the impact of these elements, and how these differentially affect populations are indispensable elements in conflict management. There is an increasing awareness within both academic and policy circles that an understanding of the differential and unequal access to the distribution of wealth tends to significantly affect propensities to hazards and risks. These differential abilities determine a groups,' communities' or individuals' risk or hazard thresholds, and that understanding how these interface with people's responses is an indispensable element in the management and transformation of conflict. Good as the *mechanisms* are the neglect or at the very least, the insufficient attention paid to a *regional* analysis of the elements, events, and forces that make certain populations *prone* to hazards or conflict is a critical missing element in the *mechanisms*. Furthermore, the influence of different national security architectures with their different operational ethos, the dominance of state-security paradigms in the management of conflict, the existence of too many early warning indicators as well as logistic problems in putting together intervention forces in cases of emergencies are also key limitations of the existing regional mechanism.

Nevertheless, the mechanism, given its operational contexts, has done fairly well. What remains is to examine ways to improve its efficacy. And this is what this contribution seeks to do.

Long incorporated into the studies of the impact of climatic change on humans and of poverty, conflict analyses are only gradually embracing the idea of *vulnerability*, and how certain populations, due to long-entrenched economic processes, may have higher risk exposures or propensities to the adverse effects of disasters or conflicts. A greater focus on the differential impact of disasters and the way and manner communities and groups respond is significant in enhancing the understanding of both the macro social forces involved in adaptation to conflict and the micro decisions groups, communities and individuals have to make in periods of hazards or intense conflicts. Individuals, groups and

communities are not only differentially exposed to conflicts but pre-conflict con-
ditions differentially determine, based on prior social differentiation, the impact
of such exposure, influencing whether, and the extent to which, resources could
be *mobilised* or *accessed* by victims in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Social vulnerability, the differential exposure to, and impact of hazards and
disasters on groups as determined by long-term social disparities constitutes a
potentially significant research area in fashioning efficient regimes of conflict
management and transformation. It draws attention to how *exposure to hazards
tends not only to be based on prior social forces in a conflict or disaster, but also on the way in
which prior social contexts and relations of power accentuate or deepen impact and marginality*.
Social vulnerability involves the identification of the *proneness* of a specific population,
group, or class to the impact of conflict or disaster. It connotes a *predictive* quality
(Samarasinghe et al, 1999) the strength of which lies in its ability to apprehend
and make a reasonable projection of what *may* happen to identifiable population
units under conditions of particular conflicts.

Social Vulnerability and Conflict Mapping

In the foregoing, it has been established that the focus of CVA is to determine the
degree to which particular populations or its subsets are prone to the adverse
impact of conflict, in addition to gauging the capacities of such populations to
absorb impact.

This essentially raises three major questions. First, what are the social conditions
or forces that make group conflicts probable within a specific social context?
Second, what social conditions or social forces make certain populations or sub-
sets of those populations more at risk from conflict outbreaks than others? And
finally, what resources are available to these populations in the event of conflicts
or disasters? In addressing these questions in the West African sub-region, it is
imperative that we first identify and then map the trajectories of existing conflicts
as well as understand their nature, forms, dynamics, and manifestations. The
identification and mapping of risk factors in a CVA need to consider nine (9)
main elements. These are the (a) identification and (b) location of *populations at
risk*; (c) establishing *loss parameters,* (d) *determination of risk* (including the assessment
of hazard occurrence probability and the nature and type of elements at risk), (e)
presentation of the risk, (f) *scenario mapping*, (g) *potential loss mapping*, (h) *annualised risk
mapping*, and (i) *hazard evaluation* (UNDP 2002).

These nine elements should yield sufficient information for the identification
of the population clusters at risk, their major socio-economic and demographic
characteristics, as well as the major players or stakeholders at the community and
national levels who could influence the course of events based on which a conflict
map could be constructed. In and through these elements, the location and
proximate size of population clusters, communities and neighbourhoods within

national boundaries or across the sub-region could be constructed. Thus pressure on grasing land, drying water points, the expansion of both human and livestock populations as well as the impact of extractive industries has placed nomadic populations such as the *Fulbe* and *Tuareg* across the sub-region in a conflict situation with their more sedentary neighbours (Blanc 2004). This happens to be the source of some of the regional conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary populations in northern Niger, Mali, and Nigeria. Similarly, conflicts often lead to the definition of groups in terms of a number of characteristics, real or imagined, differentiating them from the *other*. In such cases, conflict groups assume certain identifiable characteristics or identities that here may be tied to geography and there to language, culture, religion, ethnicity and, recently residential locations, as we have seen in some of the conflicts in northern Nigeria. Such characteristics often overlap, but it is important to identify the salient identities, as well as the social conditions under which certain identities may be politically more active than others.

Determining broad socio-economic categories based upon sources and/or levels of income, assets, urban/rural location, education level is also a crucial element in the identification of populations at risk. Attempts should be made to identify the major stakeholders in terms of organised political or communal groups, as well as the social, political, and economic patterns of exclusion. CVA should also determine which groups bear the brunt of such patterns; establish dominant and subordinate groups in the political process, as well as the mechanisms for maintaining such dominance. It should determine whether marginalised groups are likely to deploy violence in redressing their positions, what groups are more likely to benefit from conflict, whether or not such groups have the capacity to incite it, what issues competing groups dispute or commonly agree on, and what groups are likely to play mediating roles in cases of outbreaks of conflict. Some of these issues are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Major Risk Elements and Possible Indicators

	Element	Indicators
A	Populations at Risk	Ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities; migrant and nomadic populations; marginal groups; youth; women and children
B	Location	Urban or rural areas; neighbourhoods, community, local council, state, region, city, or trans-border; estimation of the number of people at risk
C	Loss Parameters	Persons; livestock; buildings; water points; pasturelands; social relationships; market stalls and crops etc.
D	Risk Potential	Neighbourhoods; recurrence or persistence of low intensity conflict; segregation of residential areas along clear 'ethnic' or 'religious' lines; proliferation of small arms and light weapons
E	Characteristics of Risk Population	Identification of sources, and levels of income;educational educationa level; assets; exclusionary and marginalization Populations patterns; dominant/subordinate groups; sense of social injustice
F	Demographic Characteristics of Risk Populations	Dependency ratio; gender characteristics; proportion of unemployed youth (educated and without formal education) in the general population; levels of education
G	Stakeholders in Conflict or Potential Conflict	Identification of subordinate/superordinate groups; processes and patterns of social exclusion; beneficiaries of conflict and their capacity for incitement;
H	Potential Loss Mapping	Lives, corps, livestock, savings, assets, infrastructure, social cohesion
I	Conflict Mapping	Using information in A-H to create an informed CVA

Source: UNDP, 2002

The identification of risk elements and their possible indicators should be com-plemented by the identification of levels of violence and phases of conflict, for both are essential in order for CVA to retain its predictive quality. Scholars (Samarasinghe et al 1999) have identified five main levels of violence. These include: (a) *Peaceful Stable Situation*, reflecting a high degree of regime legitimacy where violence occurs only rarely if at all. (b) *Political Tension Situation* reflects an increasing level of tension and systemic strain characterised by sporadic violence resulting in fewer than 50 fatalities annually. (c) *Violent Political Conflict* is a context in which regime legitimacy is increasingly eroded, where the state has begun to lose total monopoly over the instruments of violence, and in which political assassinations,

terrorist acts, and violent government repression occur, although fatalities remain below deaths 100 annually. (d) *Low-Intensity Conflict,* characterised by open hostility and armed conflict among factional groups, regime repression and insurgency, and in which fatalities, while remaining below 1,000 annually, are often above 100. In addition, there is also displacement of the population that is below 5 per cent. (e) *High-Intensity Conflict,* characterised by open warfare among rival groups and/or mass destruction and displacement of sectors of the civilian population and in which fatalities exceed 1,000 deaths per annum.

Figure 2: Matrix of Loss Assessment

		Losses	
Consequences	**Measure**	**Tangible**	**Intangible**
Deaths	Number of people	Loss of economically active individuals	Social and psychological effects on remaining community
Injuries	Number and injury severity	Medical treatment needs, temporary loss of economic activity by productive individuals	Social and psychologica' Pain and recovery
Physical damage	Inventory of damaged elements, by number and damage level	Replacement and repair cost	Cultural losses
Emergency operations	Volume of manpower, man-days employed, equipment and resources expended for relief	Mobilization costs, investment in preparedness capability	Stress and overwork in relief participants
Disruption to economy	Number of working days lost, volume of production lost	Value of lost production	Opportunities, competitiveness, reputation
Social disruption	Number of displaced persons, homeless	Temporary housing, relief, economic production	Psychological,social contacts, cohesion, community morale
Environmental impact	Scale and severity	Clean-up costs, repair cost	Consequences of poorer environment, health risks, risk of future disaster

Source: Adapted from Samarasinghe et al, 1999 and UNDP, 2002

Social Vulnerability and Conflict Trajectories

Looking at the two major conflicts in the sub-region – Liberia and Sierra Leone – it seems clear that a number of common themes that could form a basis for such a regional mechanism are present. In both countries, weakening state capacity and legitimacy, the heightening of sub-national to the detriment of national forms of identity, the fragmentation of state power into factions supported by armed gangs, as well as the strong social, cultural and religious linkages in the countries of the Mano River Union clearly demonstrate the complexity of these conflicts. Conflicts in other parts of the region share similar trajectories, and we can point to a few. First, West African conflicts appear to be predominantly identity-based. This should hardly be surprising given the ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of the region, as well as the legacies of three different colonising powers. Such conflicts, particularly those between ethno-national groups, appear in the form of contentions for power either with similar other groups, or with the state itself. However, ethno national conflicts are 'often symptoms of other social forces, such as competition over scarce resources, modernisation, and state collapse' (Tilly 1975; Brubaker 1998). In addition to ethno-nationalism, other forms of tensions over religion, citizenship, and community are important conflict trajectories. The struggle over citizenship most clearly demonstrated in Liberia in the divide between 'indigenes' and 'settlers' has led to serious conflicts in the recent past, and could constitute a basis for a broader regional problem in the future across the sub-region.

Second, resource-based issues are some of the most intractable trajectories of social conflicts across the region. The most well known, of course, is the conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region; but the ongoing conflict in the northern parts of the Republics of Niger and Mali are also clear examples of this phenomenon.

Moreover, the shrinking of pasturelands, the growth of cities and more generally the expanding process of sedentarisation, changing demographic patterns, expansion in livestock, the impact of climate change on water sources and points all bring pressure to bear on the relationship between nomadic and sedentary groups that is becoming a serious conflict issue across West Africa. However, other economic assets and resources are no less significant conflict sources: markets, abattoirs, land.

Third, one recurring theme in the region's conflicts is declining state capability. Generally reflected in terms such as predatory, weak or failing states, the declining capability of the state raises a series of challenges to its 'stateness' as this encourages different contenders to its power. These contentions are significant, for they draw attention to issues of the constitution of the state itself, its legitimacy, degree of sovereignty, as well as the exercise of power. These three broad trajectories are further explicated in Figure 3 below. These could form the basis for the establishment of an instrument for the collection of baseline data for a CVA.

Figure 3: Conflict Trajectories and Possible Indicators

Trajectory	Manifestations	Indicators
Identity	Ethnicity	Ethnic tensions; the use of state power for the advancement of sectional or ethnic interests; Power representation of a specific ethnic nationality rather than a broader national arena; the Constructionand propagation of 'stereotypes' of specific ethnic groups as the *Other*
	Religion	Constructing, maintaining, and reinforcement of religion in exclusivist terms; intolerance demonstrated by practitioners, especially through proselytisation;
	Citizenship	Distinctions between 'indigenes and 'settlers;'
	Community	Disputes over freak accidents
Resource	Land	Struggle over pastureland, farmland, and so on
Based	Markets	Struggle for control of revenues
	Abattoirs	Struggle for the control of revenues
	Water Mineral Resources	Struggle for the control of rents; resource control;

Figure 3: Continued

State Viability		
	State Formation	Contentious state power: conflict arising from competition between groups or between elite and these groups for control over the state; existence of sub-national groups that may wish to form a separate state; perceived or eal group based injustice, and the inability to address same within available institutional mechanisms; such conflicts are usually framed in ethnic, religious, or other forms of sub-national identity
	State Legitimacy	Conflicts arising from contestations over the legitimacy of either the state or of existing government; dominance of authoritarian forms of rule of the military or 'democratic' type; conflation of regime and party; de-institutionalization and the flouting of 'rules of the game,' generalized insecurity and the dominance of personal rule; rigging in elections; length of tenure of rulers; corruption and loss of 'moral imperatives'for exercising power due to abuse of power
	State Dependency	Conflicts arising from the dominance of foreign interests, interventionism; total or partial loss of sovereignty through, for example, control by supra-national organizations (IMF & WB) or MNCs.
	State Capability	Frequent resort to state of emergencies, curfews, or extra-ordinary powers; privatization of the means of violence and the dispersion of violence from the state onto private, non-public forms; inability to ensure security and control crime and criminal violence; progressive deterioration in public services and state withdrawal from social provisioning
	Abuse of State Power	Predominance of predation as a mechanism of rule; control over or worsening operational climate for independent media; political assassinations, abductions, tortures, and extra-judicial killings; deployment of state power to personal rather than public ends; violation of the rule of law; criminalization of the state

Source: Adapted from Samarasinghe et al, 1999

Conclusion: Social Vulnerability and Capacity for Conflict Management

This chapter is a preliminary attempt to make a case for the inclusion of conflict vulnerability assessment in the conflict management mechanism in the sub-region. It drew attention to the significance of this concept, examined its possibilities, and its key indicators and major elements. The identification of conflict trajectories and their indicators is a significant step in CVA, and on this basis, region-wide baseline data could be collected to establish risk elements, risk populations, capacities of populations to absorb impact, institutional and organisation frameworks for responding to conflict situations and the availability of infrastructure to address conflict situations.

Such an analysis should revolve around a number of key questions. First, it should involve the identification of actual and potential risks as well as the populations at risk in the region. Second, what kinds of vulnerabilities does the sub-region face that cut across national boundaries and for which collective responses are not only possible, but also imperative? Third, what is the relationship between vulnerability and conflict? To these questions must be added corollaries: what types of groups and communities are potentially vulnerable to which types of risks? Some indicators have already been provided in the chapter n order to address these questions, however, it is important to reiterate that four sets of data are required: nature and sources of conflict nationally and regionally; the current national conflict statuses of ECOWAS member states; identification of potentially vulnerable groups, the capacities of potentially vulnerable groups to absorb conflict or hazard and existing infrastructure (including institutional plans) for addressing projected conflict conditions. Moreover, data on countries, groups and current crises, monitoring systems for armed conflicts, state viability, and so on are critical.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasise the identification of coping mechanisms. What possible mechanisms, strategies and capabilities are prevalent to which type of conflicts or risks? What images and rationalisations of vulnerability are dominant? Addressing these questions require data on: people's or communities management strategies and capabilities, identification of populations or groups at risk and, third, the identification of actual and potential individual, group and institutional responses available for specific risks.

In sum, a CVA analysis complements current efforts towards a more robust regional conflict management mechanism. It helps integrate Early Warning and Risk Analysis into a more robust management strategy, prunes down the currently too numerous early warning indicators, and assists in collecting region-wide conflict resolution and transformation data for the effective management of conflicts.

5

Demography, Environment and Conflict in West Africa

Andrews Atta-Asamoah & Emmanuel Kwesi Aning

Introduction

It has been argued that the end of the Cold War lifted the lid from a cauldron of simmering tensions and plunged Africa into bloody conflicts that exacerbated poverty, worsened disease prevalence and increased atrocities on the continent.[70] In 1996 alone, 14 of the 53 countries of Africa were afflicted by armed conflicts, accounting for a significant number of war deaths and resulting in more than 8 million refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons.[71] The accompanying atrocities and human rights abuses meted out to non-combatants made Africa home to some of the world's most gruesome war-related human rights abuse records and atrocities.[72]

Contributing to this history of Africa in the post-Cold War era is the West African sub-region where Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire were, at different times, plunged into civil wars. The combined sub-regional effects and interrelated conflict complex contributed to considerable negative tagging of the sub-region. In many quarters, West Africa has consequently been considered as unstable, dangerous and crisis-ridden.[73] Against this backdrop, Ibrahim Gambari, a former United Nations Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs, described West Africa as dangerous. Herman Cohen and William Pfaff recommended a re-colonisation of the sub-region by former metropolitan powers as a way of stabilising it.[74]

The extent of human insecurity and its effects on sub-regional economic developments has necessitated the involvement of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in attempting to resolve these conflicts. Consequently, though originally crafted as an economic integration scheme,

ECOWAS was transformed from an economic into a political-security organisa-
tion, in response to the worsening instability. Surprisingly, it embraced a security
mandate under which it intervened in West Africa's crisis situations.

In the pursuit of peace and the stabilisation of the sub-region, many attempts
to understand the underlying social, economic, cultural and political factors for
the conflicts and their ensuing dynamics have been made. Yet, very little scholarly
research has attempted to test the argument that a combination of demography,
particularly population composition and migration, and environmental factors
have had critical impacts on the sub-region's conflict dynamics and should be
critical variables in any analysis for designing future policy options. A review of
scholarly work on conflict analysis in West Africa reveals an abysmal void in the
establishment of the link between these important variables and the preponderance
of conflicts or violence in the sub-region. In many instances such linkages are left
to conjectures without substantial empirical arguments. This apparent lack of
analytical input, we argue, has contributed to undermining both sub-regional and
international endeavours to formulate holistic and sustainable intervention strategies
that comprehensively engage the underlying causes of the conflicts in West Africa.

Rather than leave such linkages to conjectures and refutations, in this paper,
we attempt to understand the complex and multiple inter-linkages between
population composition, especially age distribution; environment and the dynamics
that accompany the outbreak of conflicts in West Africa by using Liberia, Sierra
Leone and Cote d'Ivoire as empirical case studies. The choice of these cases is
informed by their dynamics reflected in the region-wide spill-over effects,
multiplicity of actors, protraction and fluidity, which are the hallmarks of many
other African crisis situations.

In this chapter, we argue that West Africa's conflict experiences since 1990
have never been devoid of the concurrent influence of the youth bulge problematic
and the effects of the economic downturns of countries in the sub-region. These
factors can therefore not be relegated to the background in present and future
attempts to achieve peace. We also argue that the outbreak of conflicts has had
grave ramifications on the region's environmental security. In tandem with such
developments, however, environmental challenges are also playing an important
role in fomenting tensions in many forest and Sahelian areas. In this context, the
increasing advancement of desertification in West Africa is an early warning
indicator that, given increasing population growth and the pressure on natural
resources, tensions in the forest communities of West Africa between migrants
and indigenes over access to arable lands and pasture might increase.

This chapter starts with a section that analyses the nexus between demography
and conflict out of which evidence is deduced to explain the youth bulge
phenomenon and supporting destabilising factors. Subsequently, we discuss

migratory flows and conflict in terms of the role of migration and its impact in fuelling tensions and the cyclical impact of conflict on migration trends. The third section assesses the possible role of environmental challenges in fomenting tensions and the effects conflicts have on the environment. The paper concludes with possible policy options for West Africa.

Demography and Conflict: The Population Composition Nexus

Demography concerns the entire social characteristics of a population and their development through time. These include, *inter alia,* analysis of a population on the basis of age, sex, ethnicity, occupation, changes in population, and migration. In assessing the nexus between demography and conflict, therefore, several important deductive pairings can be made given the many characteristics of demography. However, in this section we focus on the population composition nexus and migration for the purposes of distilling policy-relevant conclusions.

Sex and age distribution ratios are two characteristics that are key to population composition considerations in relation to conflict analysis. Proponents of sex distribution ratio as a factor in conflict analysis argue that the greater the imbalances in a population in favour of men, the higher the likelihood of instability and conflict.[75] On the other hand, the age distribution ratio contenders argue that there is a nexus between a higher proportion of young adults as a ratio of total adult population and the likely outbreak and sustenance of conflict.[76] With the active involvement of young people in African conflicts and the consequent emergence and role child-soldiers have played in West African conflicts, an analysis with respect to age distribution is useful as it provides an explanatory framework to understanding the underlying dynamics surrounding both their recruitment and usage – and this is important for facts-based policy options.

The transformation of a population from one characterised by short lives and large families to one with long lives and small families is referred to as demographic transition. Demographic transitions occur in five basic phases: the pre-transition phase, early-transition, middle-transition, late-transition, and post-transition phases.[77] A country's progress through these phases is linked to the birth and death rates of its population. All countries, therefore, belong in one of the phases. Countries in early demographic transitions are characterised by a decline in childhood death rates while birth rates remain high. This notably results in rapid population growth, unusually large proportions of children and adolescent dependents, and a relative dearth of working age adults per dependent.

Between 1970 and 2000, countries that were in the late phase of demographic transition characterised by lower birth-rates and higher life expectancy had an evenly distributed age group ratios and were less prone to the outbreak of civil conflicts. As overall birth and death rates declined, however, the risk of conflict

outbreak decreased.[78] Conversely, countries in medium demographic transitions characterised by higher birth rates and lower life expectancies resulted in high youth population as a proportion of total adult population and became more predisposed to the outbreak and sustenance of conflicts. Consequently, in the 1990s, the demographic factors that were most closely associated with the likelihood of civil conflict were a high proportion of young adults (aged 15 to 29 years), and rapid urban population growth rate.[79]

Countries where young adults comprised more than 40 per cent of the adult population were more than twice likely to experience the outbreak of civil conflict than those with lower young adult population.[80] Also, countries with urban population growth rates above 4.0 per cent were about twice as likely to sustain the outbreak of a civil conflict.[81] Whereas the Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire conflict situations buttressed this school of thought (see table 1), the examples of other countries such as Ghana which had similar characteristics but did not get into war, nuances the argument and highlights the importance of other underlying factors apart from demography in fomenting and sustaining conflict.

Young Adults and Conflict: Conceptualising the Youth Bulge

Studies on the later half of the 20th century show that populations with high proportions of young adults have had a high likelihood of becoming embroiled in civil conflict.[82] Where countries are already in the throes of conflict, an unusually high young adult proportion of adult population is a factor in the intensity and sustenance of conflicts.[83] These observations inform arguments about the proportion of young adults in a population and the proclivity for conflict outbreak, an idea which sums up as *youth bulge*.

The concept of youth bulge identifies young people (particularly aged between 15-29) as a historically volatile population and equates the high proportion of 15-to-29 year olds relative to total adult population to increased possibility of violence[84] particularly in developing countries where the capacity to support them is lacking.[85] According to *François Bourguignon, a World Bank Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics,* 'large numbers of young people living in developing countries present great opportunities, but also risks'.[86] In the 1990s, proponents of the concept argued that countries in which young adults made up about 40 per cent or more of the adult population were more than twice likely to experience an outbreak of civil conflict than countries with lesser young adult populations. This is because under situations of a high young adult population, the propensity is for their numbers to outpace available jobs and, thereby, result in even educated young adults wallowing in abject unemployment and poverty.

The accompanying frustrations and consequent resentment against those per-ceived to be enjoying the few available opportunities lead to the emergence of *desperadoes* resolved to survive by any means possible and wherever available. This phenomenon contributes to urban decay and accompanying social consequences. Over-exploitation of natural resources such as water, forest and arable lands drives them to critically low levels. Rural economies lose their capacities to absorb available labour which becomes compounded by other potentially destabilising demographic forces such as migration and adverse social and economic condi-tions. These factors, together with other social realities, produce vulnerable youth populations who become ready-made cannon fodder for recruitment by rebel militias, political gangs and extremist networks. Through the foregoing, the youth bulge phenomenon leads to a demographic stress and thereby contributes to the complicated maze of factors that underlies the likely outbreak of new civil con-flicts and the sustenance of ongoing ones.

Adducing Evidence in West Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa, a juxtaposition of the above realities and the unstable countries beginning from the early 1970s reveals that many countries have had to grapple with mutually reinforcing destabilising situations of: (i) economic down-turns; (ii) population changes; and (iii) social misfortunes resulting from resource scarcity.

In the early 1970s, the global economy experienced a strain due to the collapse of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates and increases in commodity prices. In addition to the quadrupling of oil prices in 1973/74, the world economy was adversely hit. The impact, though adverse globally, was particularly worse on Third World economies. Many African countries lost control over their domestic economic parameters and economic indicators went amuck as a result of the sudden rocketing of national expenditure owing to increases in oil prices, short-falls in export receipts, and dwindling productivity.

In their attempts to borrow from the Bretton Wood institutions, particularly the IMF and World Bank to make up for the resultant balance of payment (BOP) deficits, many African countries incurred crushing heaps of debts. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of some countries subsequently grew at increasingly decreasing rates. As figure 1 shows, the average annual percentage growth rate of total GDP of West African countries dropped phenomenally from 2.2 per cent between 1975-80 to about 0.5 per cent by 1985. Concurrently, total average annual population growth rate increased from 2.6 per cent to about 2.8 per cent in the same period.

Figure 1: West Africa's Percentage Population and GDP Growth Rates (1970-2005)
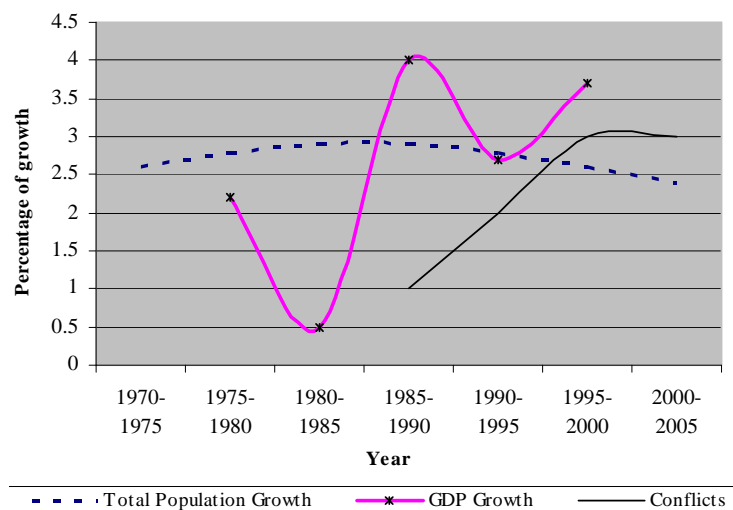
Source: Raw data for figure 1 was taken from US Census Bureau International Database. Curve for conflicts comprise full-blown civil conflicts in West Africa starting from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and La Cote d'Ivoire.

The total GDP of Liberia, for instance, fell from an average of 1.5 per cent between 1975-80 to − 1.8 per cent by 1985 and further to –15.6 per cent by 1990. Average population growth rate, however, increased from 2.9 per cent to 3.0 per cent between 1970 and 1985. Sierra Leone's economy sunk from 2.2 per cent of average annual total GDP growth rate between 1975 and 1980 to –0.2 per cent by 1990. Côte d'Ivoire's economic performance dipped from 4.7 per cent between 1975 and 1980 through 2.8 per cent in 1985 to 3.0 per cent in 1990. In Ghana, the economy fell from stagnation (0% growth) to –0.1 per cent between 1980 and 1985. These trends were worsened by a decreasing percentage of economically active people sub-regionally and nationally.[87]

In Liberia, the economic downturn contributed to the 1979 increase in the price of rice from $22.00 for a 100-pound bag of rice to $30.00, a situation which sparked riots and protestation against the Tolbert regime and greatly contributed to citizen distrust for his government. The distrust in turn provided a fertile environment which the Doe regime exploited in catapulting itself into power through a coup d'etat. Similarly, the persistence of the harsh conditions aided the support Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) garnered for his rebellion that plunged Liberia into civil war.

In other West African countries, for example Ghana, the non-performance of the economy and its associated hardships on citizens greatly influenced the series of military take-overs experienced in the 1970s and 1980s as various governments were blamed for non-performance and corruption.

Whilst the sub-region generally grappled with wobbling economic factors, the population growth rate not only soared (see figure 1), but also increasingly changed in composition. The population of young people between ages 15-34 years increased markedly as a proportion of total adult population (>15 years) primarily due to decreasing life expectancies. In Liberia, about 57.4 per cent of the adult population was aged between 15-34 years in 1975, 58.0 per cent in 1980, 58.6 per cent in 1985 and 58.8 per cent in 1990 (See table 1). In Sierra Leone, about 52.8 per cent, 54.3 per cent and 56.0 per cent in 1975, 1985 and 1990 respectively whilst in Ghana, they were 57.9 per cent, 55.1 per cent and 62.2 per cent respectively.

According to the African Youth Charter, a youth within the African context is anybody aged between 15 and 34 years. On the basis of this definition, it can be deduced from table 1 that young adults (age 15-34) comprised more than 50.0 per cent of total adult populations (aged above 15) in many West African countries and particularly those countries that experienced conflicts (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire). This consequently has had dire implications.

In the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, young people comprised about 95 per cent of the fighting forces.[88] An estimated number of between 6,000 and 15,000 young people below 18 years took up arms from 1989 to 1997.[89] Strikingly, many of them were merely recruited from slums and gang networks of young adult desperadoes in the many slum communities of the respective countries and, sometimes, from contiguous countries. The circumstances and contexts of their involvement in combat are similar to the involvement of young people in conflicts elsewhere in Africa. In Rwanda, for example, many jobless and hopeless young adults who were 'wasting in idleness and attendant resentments'[90] got recruited into the factions of the *génocidaires* merely motivated by the opportunity to drink, loot, murder, and enjoy higher living standards than previously.[91]

Table 1: Population Composition of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ghana (1975-2005)

Year	T P	Pop below 15	T A P (15<)	T P (15-34)	% of YA over TP	% of YA(over T A P 15<)
Liberia						
1975	1616534	705647	910887.0	522621	32.3	*57.4*
1980	1848799	809415	1039384.0	602982	32.6	*58.0*
1985	2136870	932113	1204757.0	706001	33.0	*58.6*
1990	2117239	928735	1188504.0	698606	33.0	*58.8*
1995	1975252	837746	1137506.0	670366	33.9	*58.9*
2000	2694875	1151814	1543061.0	909982	33.8	*59.0*
2005	2902179	1239736	1662443.0	1003580	34.6	*60.4*
Sierra Leone						
1975	3,027,190	1,282,417	1,744,773	920,914	30.4	*52.8*
1980	3,327,118	1,465,763	1,861,355	979,941	29.5	*52.6*
1985	3,695,969	1,597,315	2,098,654	1,138,596	30.8	*54.3*
1990	4,220,883	1,819,054	2,401,829	1,344,868	31.9	*56.0*
1995	4,381,750	1,919,823	2,461,927	1,437,353	32.8	*58.4*
2000	4,808,817	2,149,887	2,658,930	1,584,531	33.0	*59.6*
2005	5,867,426	2,632,299	3,235,127	1,912,218	32.6	*59.1*
Ghana						
1975	10,117,862	4,736,589	5,381,273	3,113,193	30.8	*57.9*
1980	11,016,641	5,163,686	5,852,955	3,378,797	30.7	*57.7*
1985	13,228,425	5,963,618	8,064,739	4,442,438	33.6	*55.1*
1990	15,413,800	6,806,108	8,607,692	5,353,328	34.7	*62.2*
1995	17,712,493	7,703,892	10,008,601	6,130,641	34.6	*61.3*
2000	19,736,036	8,215,754	11,520,282	6,917,233	35.0	*60.0*
2005	22,025,680	8,643,345	13,382,335	7,905,262	35.9	*59.1*

Source: Raw Data from US Census Bureau, International Database[92]

TP = Total Pop

TAP = Total adult = Pop (<15)

YA = Young adult

YAP = Young adult population

Table 1 reveals that before and at the onset of the civil wars in these countries, the young adult populations and even people below age 15 were substantially towering.[93] This offered an opportunity for some warlords to then exploit them as soldiers in the complex political emergencies that characterised the West African sub-region in the 1990s. Charles Taylor, and the NPFL, for instance, became infamous for the abduction, recruitment and use of boys, most of who were below 18 years, in war. This tactic later spread out to other rebel groups in Liberia and other West African countries, particularly the RUF of Sierra Leone.

When young people feel left out in the distribution of national resources and sidelined in the contribution to national discourse relevance, the proclivity to rise to revolt and to support any revolutionary inertia is well buttressed by political history.[94] Pragmatically, the incentives and calculations that inform young adults' enlistment into armed rebellion is most generally the result of a considered juxtaposition of what can be potentially lost and what is to be gained. If young adults are left with no alternative to unemployment and poverty, and there are indications of future worsening trends, it is always easier for them to enlist into any beguiling rebellion that promises better life. According to Paul Collier, unemployment reduces the cost for young people to engage in conflict and, increases the proclivity to engage in collective violence and hence conflicts.[95]

In many West African communities, the young adult population do not have substantial material benefits to lose in the struggle and gamble of a civil conflict.[96] Rather, it presents an opportunity and incentives for the daring ones to support themselves by looting, robbing and exploitation of available natural resources. In an interview with some sixty former West African combatants, crippling poverty and hopelessness were unanimously identified as the fundamental factors which motivated them to take up arms. Many of them recounted the extent to which they battled daily against abject poverty and the hallucinations of the struggle of daily survival and lack of access to resources. Given the difficult present, unpredictable future and unlikely fulfilment of their dreams, many of them thought that going to war was their best option for survival. The surrounding psychological and physical complexities aided and abetted their recruiters.[97]

Once these situations got them into combat, many of them willingly crossed borders as veteran fighters into other wars in neighbouring countries under the influence of the same situations of unemployment and wobbly economic circumstances.[98] To many of such young adults, warfare always provided an avenue for survival by looting and pillage of property. A 24 year old Liberian who fought in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire confessed that:

> There are some of us who can't seem to live without a weapon – anywhere we hear about fighting, we have to go. It's because of the way we grew up – and now it's in our blood. A warrior can't sit down when war is on…[99]

Once civil wars break out survival becomes vital. Many young adults then learn to 'live by the gun' through looting and robbery. The point is that many rebel soldiers have few prospects of finding a livelihood in civilian life, due to the fact that many of them have no professional or vocational skills with which to make a livelihood in the event of the end of the war and their return to civilian life. For such many, survival by looting and robbery has to be maintained to sustain them rather than return to peace to confront economic uncertainties. The options available to them at the end of war alternate between seeking other armed professions, such as security guards; migrating across borders as mercenaries or criminals; or rekindling the act of war by joining any available splinter rebel group and refusing to demobilise. Thus, undermining the effectiveness of any mediation initiative or attempts to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate combatants after the war.[100]

Indeed, these reflections lend credence to the high young adult determinist argument of the causes of conflict. From such a view point, we argue that the phenomenon has significantly contributed to the past and present security uncertainties of the West African sub-region.

Nuancing the Youth Bulge Argument: The Ghana Case

Whereas siding with the youth bulge determinist school of thought will cause one to admit that the youth bulge phenomenon may have enormously contributed to the periodicity and sustenance of the conflicts in West Africa, it is also important to nuance the argument with certain key comparisons in the region. Particularly, it is essential to reflect on why certain countries in the sub-region had an equally high young adult population and yet steered clear of civil conflicts. We attempt in the ensuing paragraphs to provide an analysis of the important factors that explain why some countries slipped into instability under the situation of a high young adult population whilst others did not using the Ghana situation as a case study.

The Ghanaian young adult population has since the 1970s comprised an important fraction of the country's total population (see table 1) that gave Jerry Rawlings the initial support for his revolutionary moves in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Subsequently, majority of them were incorporated into his civil defence committees, especially the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR). The committees provided many young adults the opportunity to challenge the *status quo,* particularly traditional power arrangements and urban bureaucracies and to, generally, feel part of the revolutionary inertia at the time. At the time the state made efforts to capture the control of its resources which would have deprived many young adults their sources of livelihood, many young people resorted to illegal mining operations in the mining towns and villages of Ghana.

In response and in order not to worsen the prevailing situation of unemployment among young people, the 1989 Small Scale Mining Law was passed. The law legitimised the operations of the many illegal miners and further

gave way for a patronage of their products. Consequently, about 15,000 small-scale miners were granted operation licenses and purchases of their products rose from zero to about $18.4 million in 1998 for gold, and $11.2 million for diamonds. This policy, even though sought to protect the resources of the country also implicitly sought to and ultimately, assisted in preventing the emergence of discontent among the young adult population. Though the effectiveness of these initiatives as regards the creation of jobs and the total improvement of the livelihood of young people can be contested, the point of relevance is that it contributed to the prevention of a youth-related implosion that could have affected the stability of the country.

This counterfactual argument brings into sharp critique any attempt to employ the youth bulge phenomenon as a mono-causal and simplistic yard-stick to explain West Africa's past and present of security uncertainties. It highlights the fact that whereas explaining the underlying causes of conflicts using a single conceptualisation could be persuasive, it could also be catastrophic. An extensive analysis of any conflict situation should, therefore, be considered on the basis of multiple causes taking into particular consideration the peculiarities of any given situation. Against this background, in addition to the youth bulge phenomenon, other factors such as the specific local dynamics and response on the part of respective states to prevailing local conditions are important in understanding the effects of the youth bulge phenomenon in West Africa. Even though Ghana equally had a high young adult population, like some other countries in the sub-region, its response to the economic and political marginalisation of the young adult component of its population differed.

Therefore, whereas the high young adult population argument holds true for some of the conflicts, the example of Ghana suggests that it is not necessarily always the case. We argue that leadership, mobilisation and ill-exploitation of the massive youth revolutionary inertia by inept and selfish power-seeking political entities, in the context of haphazard government policies are factors that contributed enormously to the explosive role of the youth bulge problematic in West African conflicts.

Migration Patterns and Conflicts: A Cause or the Curse?

West Africa is one region of Sub-Saharan Africa that is highly noted for intense human mobility. Traditionally, the patterns of intra-West Africa migration have been rooted in the economic performance and the availability of economic opportunities for migrant populations in the recipient countries. Throughout the sub-region's history, expulsion and deportation policies against migrants in the event of any economic down-turn have been notable. As early as 1958, for instance, Côte d'Ivoire expelled more than 1,000 Beninese and Togolese whilst Chad expelled thousands of Beninese. In 1964, about 16,000 Beninese were again expelled

from Cote d'Ivoire; in 1967 Senegal expelled Guineans. Ghanaian fishermen were expelled from Sierra-Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire in 1968. Following the implementation of the *Alien Compliance Order* in Ghana, an estimated half- a-million West Africans mostly from Burkina Faso, Niger, Liberia and Nigeria were expelled in 1969. The largest of such expulsion of aliens, however, occurred in 1983 and 1985 when Nigeria embarked on mass expulsion of aliens.[101]

These statistics establish the extent of intra-regional migration which dates back to the pre-colonial era and was heightened at the turn of the twentieth century[102]. The statistics also highlight the ease with which migrants become objects of harsh *ad hoc* political policies of recipient states in the region. Migration in West Africa is intense. Between 1988 and 1992, for instance, more than 6.4 million migratory movements were recorded by Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal together.[103] About 1.3 million of the movements occurred within the countries whilst 2.3 million were international. Within this aggregation, migration between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire was the most markedly high representing about 40 per cent or 508,000 of total movements among the seven countries?[104]

In parts of West Africa where population movements force local residents to share scarce arable lands, forests, grazing lands, or water resources with migrants, competition for resources generate tensions between locals and migrants.[105] Ghana currently grapples with migrant Fulani herdsmen from neighbouring countries who, in pursuit of grazing pasture, migrate into the country. In the wake of their presence in the country, many of them have been responsible for destruction of life and property at various villages. Some herdsmen and their livestock destroy crops, attack people, cause bush-fires, and conduct highway robberies with sophisticated weapons. In some local communities in the Upper West Region of Ghana, economic activities among local villages where herdsmen operate have dipped significantly as traders, mostly women, are not able to conduct their businesses in other neighbouring villages for fear of being robbed, raped or killed by alien herdsmen operating around the communities. In one instance, property valued at about $1,700 was destroyed by a herdsman in the Greater Accra region of Ghana.[106] Such occurrences have led to bloody confrontations in some communities between machete and or gun-wielding herdsmen and locals. In 2006, about 80 per cent of the inmates at the Tamale Prison were migrant herdsmen convicted for various crimes including highway robbery, cattle rustling, motorbike theft, murder, and rape.[107]

Côte d'Ivoire is one of the countries in West Africa that experienced high rate of urban and rural population growth prior to the Ivorian crisis. From a population size of about 3 million in 1960, the country's population increased to about 13 million in 1990 and about 17 million in 2000. Within this important increase in population is a large fraction of migrants from other West African countries

particularly Burkina Faso. The heavy migration patterns towards Côte d'Ivoire in the 1990s can be understood within the context of the country's flourishing economic activity, peace and stability, availability of arable land and ease of integration of economic migrants particularly those from neighbouring francophone countries. Compared to other countries in the sub-region, Côte d'Ivoire could be said to have been better economically than its neighbours. As a result of this, the country became an attractant to economic migrants in the sub-region.

In 1998, no fewer than 26 per cent of the country's total population was migrants and till the onset of the crisis which distorted the patterns of migration to the country,[108] about one-fifth of the population comprised more than 500,000 Ghanaians, 250,000 Guineans, 2 million Malians, 3 million Burkinabes and other West African nationals.[109] One can establish the nexus between the huge migrant population in the country and its crisis via the evolution and emergence of the concept of *Ivorite* in the politics of Côte d'Ivoire which is inevitable in understanding the genesis of the current crisis in the country. The concept of *Ivorité* or the *Ivorienness* of people of Côte d'Ivoire emerged among the intellectual community in the 1960s and 1970s as a way of giving expression to Ivorian nationalism.[110] Following the emergence of the concept, it was employed as a public policy to prevent foreigners and immigrants, who hitherto had permeated the country's public service, from occupying some positions key or strategic positions. In some instances, migrants were dismissed from public services.

The concept has since remained key and emotive in the political history of the country. Following its exploitation and subjective application for the victimisation and marginalisation of political opponents by President Laurent Gbagbo, Côte d'Ivoire was plunged into crisis. Whilst migration cannot be directly blamed for the current crisis in the country, it is important to acknowledge that the concept of *Ivorite,* which was the critical trigger factor in the crisis, has its roots in the endemic permeation of migrants in Côte d'Ivoire since the country's independence. Besides this perspective, migrants in some local communities in Côte d'Ivoire have contributed to tension between migrants and local farmers sometimes resulting in deadly clashes.

One of such serious confrontations took place in 1999 between indigenous Kroumen and Burkinabé migrants leading to the death of about 50 people and forcing the Burkinabés in the community to flee. In 2005, a similar situation at the western region of Duékoué led to about 10 deaths and the displacement of more than 10,000 people.[111] In these two instances, the principal cause of the confrontations has been traced to the struggle over land and accusations that migrants are degrading the forests by burning them to commence farming activities.

Whilst migration is, thus, contributing to conflict and tension in West Africa, the outbreak of conflicts in West Africa has also evidently led to forced migration and distorted migration patterns in the sub-region. The outbreak of armed conflict

in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire and the use of wanton brutalities against non-combatant civilians produced successive outflows of displaced people throughout West Africa and elsewhere. In Liberia, for example, an estimated 500,000 to 600,000 internally displaced persons had been recorded throughout the country by August 2003 at the time the Accra peace accord was being signed.[112] Despite commendable efforts at settling the massive number of displaced persons in West Africa, statistics still indicate an estimated total displaced population of 972,390 as of August 2007. Out of this, 236,170 were refugees, 709,050 internally displaced people and 27,170 Asylum seekers. This number is against the background of about 7,450 Liberian returnees from Ghana, 2,000 from Côte d'Ivoire, and 12,000 from Sierra Leone. There have also been about 6,500 Ivorian returnees from Liberia.[113]

As is evident in figure 1, the average annual percentage increases to total West Africa population, started decreasing glaringly from the early 1990s. Whilst so many factors can be attributed to this increasing decrease, it is equally important to realize that the West African civil wars were high about the same period. Our argument against this backdrop is that the intense casualty levels of the conflicts in West Africa significantly affected the population growth rates by increasing the morbidity and mortality ratios in the conflict-ridden countries significantly.

In Liberia, years of civil war contributed to high unemployment, illiteracy, and increasing HIV/AIDS infection rates resulting from internal displacement and migration. The infant mortality rate rose to about 137 deaths per 1000 live births, and maternal mortality ratio increased to about 760 deaths per 100,000 live births.[114] Life expectancy dropped from 45.9 years to 40.5 years between 1985-90 and 1990-95 respectively.[115] In Sierra Leone, it reduced to 38.4 years from a previous of 39.5 during the same period. With the exception of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone, all the remaining countries in West Africa increased their life expectancy levels. Overall, however, sub-regional life expectancy rate declined from 47.7 year to 47.6. The sub-regional total fertility rate (children per woman) also decreased from 6.86 to 6.59.[116] Whereas conflict cannot be wholly blamed for this reduction, the fact that all the then conflict-ridden countries registered a reduction in life expectancy establishes the impact West African conflicts have had on the population growth patterns of the sub-region.

Moreover, conflicts distort patterns of conscious migration movements and sometimes populate urban centers where safety camps are sited more than rural communities where raids on villages by insurgents create insecurity. In Liberia, many people migrated further into Monrovia with the advancement of rebel forces. This distorted settlement patterns in Monrovia, increased its population and surged pressure on Liberia's urban facilities.

Environment: A Cause or a Victim?

According to Arthur H. Westing *et al*, the relevance of environmental issues in fomenting disputes leading to armed conflicts include: (i) disputes over access to renewable resources; (ii) disease burdens that overwhelm communities' ability to cope and that tear apart fragile social fabrics; (iii) the repercussions of migrant populations; and (iv) the unequal nature of adverse impacts and burdens.[117] In West Africa, however, accessibility to renewable resources and the repercussions of the flow of 'environmental refugees' are an important way by which the environment is greatly relevant to armed conflict. Whilst the former has been noted in almost all the major conflicts in West Africa and the ongoing Niger Delta crisis, the latter is rarely mentioned notwithstanding its importance in the discourse on the nexus between conflict and the environment.

In sub-Saharan Africa, migration is a form of coping mechanism adopted by settlers when environmental factors turn harsh.[118] For instance, in areas of West Africa where desertification is advancing, the incentive for migration as a coping mechanism is increasing with the yearly expansion of desertification. Between 1980 and 2005, up to 3.3 per cent of West African forests were lost. From 1990 to 2000, about 1.2 per cent or 1.3 million ha of forests vegetation was lost to exploitation from high dependency of national and domestic economies on available natural resources and rampant poverty.[119] The implication of a continuous depletion of the sub-region's forest through deforestation is increasing expansion of desertification which has serious implications on the patterns of migration between the Sahel and forest areas of the sub-region.

A notable cause for the massive movement of Sahelian populations towards the forest regions is for the purposes of arable lands and pasture for livestock. A Burkinabe migrant resident in Côte d'Ivoire attested to this by revealing that *'…we don't have any more land to farm at home. The drought there is permanent, and the ground is always dry. This is why we come south. Here, we have fertile land and good rainfall'*.[120] In the Ghana situation involving migrant herdsmen discussed in earlier sub-sections of this paper, the primary purpose for their movement downwards has been for the purpose of finding greener pasture for their livestock. In both cases, however, the presence of the migrants has led to communal tensions linked to their activities, struggle over land and the impact of their activities on the environment. Within this context, we argue that environment is an important conflict fomenter in the West African sub-region. Notwithstanding this link, it is important to acknowledge that even though environment has been instrumental in inciting intra-state disputes, it has not been solely blameable for any armed conflict in West Africa.

However, there is room for concern in the future given worsening environmental conditions. As a sub-Saharan region wrapping both Sahel and forest patches, West Africa has a variable climate that enhances the region's vulnerability to floods

and droughts. Extreme conditions with warming between 0.2°C and 0.5°C per decade is expected to increase water loss to rising temperature, and about 10 per cent less rainfall in interior regions.[121] Already, the Sahel areas are experiencing noticeable declines in rainfall patterns with recorded instances of drought in the countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.[122]

Given sustained further worsening trends of climate change, the Sahel and moderately degraded areas will predictably become drier. The resultant increase in degradation will increase desertification as moderately degraded lands will become severely degraded and intensify pressure on farm lands. The increase in pressure on arable lands will directly add to the growing environmental strains and surge tensions in the forest areas of the sub-region between migrant farmers and pastoralists who may move further down into the forest belt from the Sahel. Currently, rivers in West Africa discharge more than 40 per cent less than they discharged in the 1970s.[123] This implies that rivers in the sub-region could provide less water in the future than they are currently. With increasing sub-regional population growth and demand for water, it is fairly predictable that the region will run into a water crisis if environmental conditions worsen or even remain as they are presently. Within areas where situations will worsen, the likelihood of tensions developing over access to water is high. The Niger and Volta basins could then become possible flashpoints for inter-state tensions due to the fact that rivers in these basins are shared by several countries. The Niger River, for instance, currently provides water for about 10 countries; if it loses water and begins to run dry, critical security issues could emerge around the extent to which individual countries in the basin can draw on the available water so as not to run the river completely dry or deprive other dependent states. If inter-dependency and inter-state collaboration strategies in the management of the water do not emerge in such a situation, the likelihood of water-related inter-state tensions can be predicted.

In Ghana, the Volta River which provides the country's primary source of electricity has its source in Burkina Faso. Between December 2006 and September 2007, a drop in the water level in the Akosombo Dam due to reduced water level in the Volta River had multiple economic and political implications as the country had to ration electricity. The extent of politicisation of the issue was so pervasive that the ruling party's governance capability was questioned by many political analysts. Yet, many traced the worsening drop of water in the dam partly to Burkina Faso's decision to construct a dam on the Bagri River which is the source of the Volta River in Ghana.[124] In a realist situation of state-centrism, this is a classical avenue for inter-state tension between the two countries if similar crises continue to occur downstream as a result of the activities of countries up-stream. Such crises could lead to inter-state tensions as water (rivers) would then become an inter-state security issue.

The only panacea within such a situation would then be the extent of inter-dependence and inter-state collaboration in managing trans-boundary waters. Currently, there is no strategic sub-regional approach to avert such an occurrence between states. For years, both Ghana and Burkina Faso, despite the importance of the Volta River to both countries, had not consciously mapped out any strategy for mutual use until recent times when a joint committee for both countries on the management of the Volta Lake was initiated.

Whilst contributing to disputes in the sub-region, the outbreak of conflict in West Africa has had critical impact on the environment. These include: (i) the use of high explosive munitions; (ii) use of heavy equipment particularly tanks and other off-road vehicles; (iii) pitching of bases and camps; (iv) over-exploitation of the environment for shelter, food and economic purposes by insurgents; (v) Bush-burning as an insurgency strategy; among others. Whereas these stated points have direct adverse impacts on the environment, the breakdown of law and order due to civil war usually leaves protected areas and species vulnerable to over-exploitation by communities and warring factions. In Sierra Leone, forest protection officers such as foresters, rangers and guards were not paid for a long period during the civil war. This gave the leeway for illegal mining activities, logging and other forms of massive deforestation of the country's forest cover.[125]

The Liberian civil war also gave room for poaching of wild animals of the country's wildlife for food and illegal logging. The breakdown of law and order subsequently led to marine pollution resulting from damaged and abandoned ships at the coastal sites. Urban waste collection arrangements were badly strained leading to hoards of uncollected urban waste with their accompanying environmental effects.

Conclusion and Policy Options for West Africa

In West Africa, the prevalence and devastation of human life by HIV/AIDS pandemic will critically have an influence on the youth composition of many populations and affect security adversely. Increase in AIDS-related deaths will reduce the adult population and increase the proportion of an already large young adult population. The trend will then have the capacity of creating a large population of under-educated and under-supervised young people who may have adverse effects on security of states.

Even though factors underlying conflicts are multi-causal and should be considered as such, it is high time realistic conflict prevention policy initiatives began to disaggregate the multiplicity of underlining factors so as to properly pre-empt policy orientation. We have argued that the youth bulge phenomenon, migration and environmental degradation are important perspectives from which security concerns in the sub-region should be confronted. Whilst admitting that the fac-

tors do not act alone to underlie the conflict situations in West Africa, it will be regrettable to discount these factors as mere coincidental conceptualisations and deductions that should be relegated to the background in the quest for peace. Together with the various underlying economic, social, political and structural factors in many countries, we have argued that some countries in the sub-region have fallen victim to the effects of a higher young adult population, and the complexities that ensue as the situation becomes concurrent with inadequacy/ inequitable distribution of resources, and unpredictable domestic economic and political environment. Similarly, tensions surrounding the activities of *environmental refugees* especially migrant farmers and pastoralists in the forest belt highlight the critical role of the environment in the security of West Africa.

It is, therefore, important that in addition to the many peace initiatives in West Africa, the following policy options are given vital consideration:

- Factors and processes that have the capacity of impacting on the demographic composition of states and further contribute to a skewed demographic composition in favour of young adults must be confronted with utmost urgency in the sub-region. This is because such factors have the capacity to worsen the demographic composition of states creating a youth bulge and its associated complexities. An important factor in this regard is the HIV/AIDS pandemic which has the capacity to distort sub-regional demography by increasing the proportion of the already large young adult population through reduction in life expectancy. The fight against HIV/AIDS could therefore be securitised both nationally and sub-regionally. This will positively affect the commitment of states in terms of resource allocation and political will to implement formulated policies.

- Policies that target young adults should be consciously crafted so as not to create discomfort and dissatisfaction that make young people vulnerable to political manipulation by desperate individuals who may want to exploit their desperate situations to foment unrests. In this direction efforts should be made to answer (address?) the chronic unemployment and the generally uncertain future that lies ahead of young adults. Youth development programmes should be made inseparable parts of DDR processes so as to sustain peace and also prevent youth-led implosion and re-ignition of conflicts. Specific intervention efforts should target training and job creation, and entrepreneurship promotion among young people.

- Environmental protection policies should be an important part of national and sub-regional security strategies. Presently, ECOWAS does not have an environmental policy for member states. Even though it is being drafted at the time of writing this paper, the document does not clearly outline

sub-regional strategies for managing trans-boundary resources such as water. ECOWAS, through an environmental policy document, should clearly establish guidelines for inter-state collaboration in the usage of trans-boundary resources as a proactive way of preventing resource-based inter-state tensions in West Africa. Countries that share a particular environment-dependent resource (such as water in the case of Ghana and Burkina) should be encouraged to collaboratively craft mechanisms for their peaceful use.

6

Youth and Conflicts in West Africa: Regional Threats and Potentials

Augustine Ikelegbe & Dauda Garuba

Introduction

There has been an upsurge of scholarly and policy concerns about the place and role of youths in Africa's contemporary politics and development. This has been spurred in part, by the 'increasing and dramatic incidences of youth protests', the urban youth driven 'upheavals in African cities, and the visible youth dominated acts of rebellion and violence in Africa' (Graham 2001:392-393).

In West Africa, youths have been at the centre of the protracted conflicts, including serving as foot soldiers and recruitment base for the conduct of conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as in other states such as Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Mali and Nigeria where horrendous violence and plundering have almost become a way of life. Many of these conflicts have been largely conducted through hordes of mobilised youths, armed bands, cult groups, vigilantes, militias, rebel forces and state militaries. In Sierra Leone, as Abdullah (2004B:62) notes, the bulk of the leadership and membership of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) were below thirty-five years. Yoroms (2005:31-50) has put some order into the maze of militias by identifying state and non-state militias. He particularly noted the heavy participation of Juvenile youths in the criminal militias.

Youth roles in conflict can be categorised into three. First, there are conflicts in which the youth play some roles. The youth may be physically numerous but this is merely because of the preponderance of active males. Here the youth are participants just as the middle age segment. The second category is that of youth dominance. They dominate the conduct of conflicts but are mostly not the driving force as they largely operate at the level of foot soldiers. This has been the situation of several militias and of insurgent and rebel armies. They are dominated by

youth but directed and led by older age segments, whose participation is high at the level of leadership and command.

The third category is that in which youth spearhead and constitute the vanguard of participation in the conflicts. Here they chart the course of methods, tactics and strategies and define conflicts. By so doing they constitute the very essence of their momentum, vitality, vocalisation and diction. This was the situation of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and many other conflict spots in West Africa, including the low-intensity conflicts in Nigeria's Niger Delta and popular protests across the sub-region. While all the categories of youth involvement are important for analysis, youth-driven conflicts are more significant for examining their roles and the character of their involvement.

The questions that are thus apposite in investigating the role of youths in conflicts in West Africa and its regional threats and potentials are: How did youth dominant role in conflicts evolve in West Africa? What drives youth actions? Do youth act independently? Are there common characteristics and tendencies of youth conduct of conflicts? What are the trends of youth-driven conflicts? What comparative insights and notes can be drawn? What policy measures are required for positive redirection of youth with a view to genuinely helping them realise their potentials?

Youth and Conflicts: Towards an Explanatory Framework

The upsurge in scholarly work on 'youth' has not resolved long standing divergent views on the definition of the concept which has been construed and used differently by governments, NGOs and the general public around the world.[126] The United Nations defines the youth as individuals between ages 15 and 24; the Commonwealth pegs youth age category at between 15 and 29; while many African countries have either adopted one of these definitions or set different age categories altogether.[127] While defining youth based on age only attempts to provide a degree of 'objectivity', the concept is, nevertheless, increasingly linked with the 'idea of transition from 'childhood' to 'adulthood', though adulthood itself is 'largely determined by the capacity to sustain a 'legal marriage''.[128]

Although this may explain 'youthhood' as 'a phase of life in which the individual needs protection, sheltering and guidance to one of self-determination, maturity, independence, responsibility and accountability for decision-making',[129] it also renders the notion of youth as both socially constructed and context dependent. As a 'waiting period' in social, economic and political terms, an age-based definition of youth would most certainly differ in view of the diverse and protracted problems that have either slowed down or totally disrupted human growth and development in Africa. This explains the tricky, culturally specific, and susceptibly manipulative context of the concept (Gavin 2007:220) and its diverse definitions.

Be that as it may, emerging literature on youth and conflict in Africa are suggestive of the view that the youth play a significant role in conflicts, be they struggles of regions, ethnic groups, religious groups, popular classes and civil society, as they engage the state and the governing elite for inclusion, accommodation, incorporation, equity, fairness, justice and accountability. These struggles, characterised, as they are, with broad sympathies, sentiments and aspirations, are underlined by mass political and identity mobilisation, broad solidarities, broad political participation, popular organisations and mass politics. This participation has in some cases been transformed into militant, violent and militia activities in circumstances where conflicts, insurgencies and civil wars emerged from the struggles.

But beyond these broad settings of youth involvement as subjects and agents of conflicts are peculiarities, role expectations, frustrations and challenges. The concept of 'youth bulge' has been adopted to explain them. Youth bulge gives a fundamental strain of analysis that suggests the existence of a correlation between youth bulge and civil conflicts. Beehner (2007) buttresses this with the result of an empirical research that reveals that between 1970 and 1999, 80 per cent of civil conflicts occurred in countries where 60 per cent of the population or more were under the age of 30. He added that of the 67 countries with youth bulge around the world, 60 of them experience social unrest and violence (Ibid).

Characterised as 'majority of the African population' (Mamadou 2003:2), the youth population is not only high relative to West Africa's total population, they have also been identified as having recorded high incidence of violent conflicts.[130] They are seen as a social category that makes certain demands on the state. This has its own challenges, especially where the resources and capacity to provide them are inadequate. In situations of slow economic growth, a youth bridge is thus confronted with failing educational and health services, decaying infrastructures and social services, thinning employment opportunities and social mobility. These create frustration and social discontent that prompt diverse mobilisation of hordes of disaffected youths.

Though the youth in Africa are presented with huge roles, powers, potentials and hopes, their actual fate represents a contradiction (O'Brien 1996; Durham 2000; Ikelegbe 2006A). On one side is powerlessness, dependency, marginalisation and absence of privilege and a search for relevance and space in an adult and elite dominated terrain. On the other is a huge potential for power, autonomy, counter-hegemony, rebellion and subversion, based on a definition of youth that is populist, radical and oppositional. While, in the first, the youth is at the back burner, in the second, the youth is mobilised and appropriated as its power translates into advantage in diverse struggles such as succession and political identity, resource and power struggles. The unfortunate thing here is that the youth, except when it occasionally asserts itself, is at the mercy and manipulation of society, its elite, ruling class and elders.

They are mistrusting of elders, leaders and institutions. They reject and seek escape from the guardianship, supervision and subordination to adults and elders. In sum, they are disaffected and disoriented and their reactions and responses have tended towards disdain, indifference and hostility towards the elite and defiance towards political powers, rules, leaderships, and institutions.

Mamadou (2003:6-10) expresses the youth dilemma and responses vividly:

> … they substitute risky behaviours in the street, the underground and formal economic practices, which provide them with alternative modes of self expression and new procedures for inhabiting the public sphere.…In sensuality or in violence, youth cultures in many African societies, express their outrage and subvert the social norms.

Mamadou (1996:234) further describes the attributes and characteristics of the youth as having 'set about promoting new solidarities and producing new parameters, confronting the state, parents and educators or simply ignoring them. As a result of these contradictions, challenges and ensuing responses, youth participation in conflicts, violence and wars may merely provide media for the expression of power and the search for recognition and identity. The violent conduct of conflicts to them is sometimes, in reality, a registration of dissent and frustration and a challenge against the forms, practices and conduct of the state and its officials and local elite. For example, in relation to the O'odua People's Congress militia in Nigeria, *Human Rights Watch* (2003:7) notes that while some members joined for reasons of identifying with the political ideology and self-determination agenda, the need for protection against perceived political, economic and social discrimination, others, especially the mass of young, unemployed men, have simply taken advantage of the organisation as a channel for venting their general frustration. This is the mindset from which we mirror and discuss the Charles Taylor's *Small boys* (SBU) and *Gronna boys* in Liberia, Museveni's boy soldiers – *Kidogos* – in Uganda, the 'technical' operating *Moryham* youth in Somalia, the lumpen *rarray boys* in Sierra Leone, *Bayaye* in Kenya and Uganda, *Manchicha* in Tanzania, *Hittiste* in Algeria, *Tsotsi* in South Africa, and *Area boys*, *Egbesu boys* and *Yan Daba* respectively in Lagos, Niger Delta and Kano in Nigeria, and several others across Africa; though circumstances under which they have become active participants in armed conflicts are as varied as the conflicts themselves.[131]

The youth then can at best be described as a social category in crisis being excluded, marginalised, threatened, victimised, abused and consequently angry, bitter, frustrated, desperate and violent (Ikelegbe 2006:89–90). But arising from these crises and the nature of responses, contemporary African conception of youth has dramatically changed from that of hope and development, to the representations of the youth as dangerous, criminal, decadent, delinquent, defiant and resistant (Mamadou 2003:6).

There is the phenomenon of urban underclass made up of unemployed school graduates, school dropouts, unemployed artisans and apprentices and 'just all sorts of young men who have problems conforming with the socially acceptable means of earning income' (Obayori 1996:15). With a political consciousness that is characterised by 'spontaneity and fatalism' (Momoh 2000:200), this class has fed the protests, demonstrations, revolts and violence in Africa as well as crime in the urban centers. In Nigeria, Momoh (2000:198 – 199) reports that *Area boys* in Lagos participated actively, sometimes with mobilisation by students, in the anti-SAP protests (in the late 1980s and early 1990s) and the civil society pro-democracy protests from 1993 onwards. However, such participation was often expressed in looting and violence. This underclass is available for diverse kinds of mobilisation, including thuggery, extortion and violent actions. They are associated with drugs and the easy resort to violence for the defence, protection and promotion of their interests.

The youth is also a social category, with a specific, though sometimes fluid and self-forming perceptions about ideas, social behaviours, value systems and attributes, evolving languages and discourses. Several scholars have asserted the existence of a youth culture. The substantive aspects of this culture include elements of nihilism, populism, spontaneity, violence, resentments of the state, politicians and elders, declining obligations to society and the state and deviance from societal norms. The propensity for violence is one attribute that has been quite associated with the youth. Several explanations have been offered. Momoh (2000:201) points at militarism and the culture of violence that it nurtured. Others point at economic crisis and accentuated poverty, unemployment and job losses.

But some enduring strand of explanation for the emergent youth culture are the issue of failing social control, the distortion of social values, the loosening of the cultural and social fabric on social behaviour, the decay of society's moral and ethical fibre and the disintegrating family and communal cohesion. These have loosened the restraints, controls and standards that made for socio-cultural order and released all kinds of unruly, alien, self-interested and decadent behaviour, which are particularly prevalent among the youth.

The state is at the centre and root of most conflicts in Africa (Oladoyin 2001:196). The nature of state politics has been such that environments and situations of volatile, intense, hostile and bitter politics and political struggles pervade. The state's tendency of being an agent of powerful state officials and hegemonic groups has destroyed its credibility and legitimacy and that of its security agencies, particularly in conflict mediation. (Ukiwo 2003:29-130). The failure of the state to provide security and stability has weakened the people's confidence in its ability to prevent crime, settle conflicts and contain violent clashes.

State persecution, arbitrariness, excessive force, repression, brutalities, and human rights abuses furthermore tend to create politics of counter-violence. According to Gurr (2000:127):

> A government's use of force against people who think that they have a just cause is likely to inspire fear and caution in the short run, but in the longer run, repression provokes resentment and enduring incentives to resist and retaliate.

Economic decline, blocked mobility and aspirations, unemployment and poverty generate frustrations which tend to increase the intensity of political competition. In other words, violent political, ethnic and communal conflicts may be 'rooted in popular alienation' Hutchful (1998:5). There is also the problem of growing dissatisfaction with the achievement of democracy particularly as it relates to material economic improvement and peace in spite of the huge hopes and euphoria that followed democratisation. For example, trickle and fleeting democracy dividends in Nigeria have made the people impatient, restless, alienated, hopeless and disappointed (Ukiwo 2003:130-134). This is the case in Nigeria where democracy is practised top-down – without recount to bottom-up approach – and presented as culture blind. Rather than valorise, since democracy is a cultural model that can neither be exported nor imported wholesale, Nigeria's democracy denies the communal character of Africa's neo-traditional societies which accommodate youth interests and assigned roles.

However, it must be noted that youth involvement in conflict is sometimes a product of strategic manipulation and mobilisation. Youth are particularly amenable to mobilisation of different kinds – be it ethnic, religious, oppositional, regional, communal – and particularly in relation to change, domination and oppression. The elite are the prime agents of the cultural, political and social construction of these diverse mobilisations and often times sustain them with patron-client reciprocities, such as access to goods and services. The elite are at the centre in the sense of promoting, challenging, urging and teasing youth to a regime of more virulent activism, protests, rebellion, armed violence and warfare. In Nigeria, it has been noted that youth community, ethnic and regional militias are mobilised and recruited by political and business elite and ethnic entrepreneurs (Harnisihfeger 2003:23). That a mass of youth is readily available for mobilisation puts to question the functionality of the various youth development policies.

However, youth involvement in conflict cannot always be attributed to agency and particularly elite strategic manipulation. Such is rather a robotic and motorised construction of youth that only gets engaged by manipulation. It thus becomes self-generated and built on youth political interests, knowledge, awareness interpretations, perceptions, frustrations and expectations. There is a sense in which the youth pressure the other demographic segments such as the elite into certain actions. As leaders they know what an active and informed youth would accommodate, expect and reject and they try where necessary and convenient to fall in line.

Youth and Conflicts in West Africa: Zonal Case Analyses

West Africa has been the epicentre of conflicts in Africa, having recorded some of the most atrocious post-Cold War brutalities. These range from civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, armed insurrections in Guinea, Mauritania, and Guinea-Bissau, to secessionist attempts in the Casamance region of Senegal violence in Cote d'Ivoire and other low-intensity violence that had occasionally plagued Niger, Mali and Nigeria's Niger Delta region. A simplistic categorisation of a number of these numerous conflicts reveals them as local conflicts, national conflicts, rebellion and insurgencies, civil wars and interstate conflicts. Quite associated is the incidence of warlords, armed bands and cults, vigilantes, private armies and gangsters. All this has precipitated damning human carnage and maximum collateral damage that have manifested in the weakening of the state's capacity in several West African countries to guarantee effective security for their citizens, just as it has, in some other instances, set back genuine democratisation efforts in Burkina Faso, Togo, the Gambia and Guinea-Conakry.

Most prominent among the increasingly regionalised and spiral character of the challenges posed by conflict is the lamentable degree of youth involvement in them. In quite a quantum of these conflicts, though intra-state in nature, have crossed borders and mutate into 'network wars'.[132] Due to some geographical linkages and history of similar political and social context, the approach to the nature and character of youth involvement in conflicts in West Africa is to classify, in a panoramic sense, the sub-region into four zones of Sahelian states, Senegambia states, Mano River states and Coastal states. Specific focus is given to the case of Nigeria's Delta region, not necessarily to play down the seriousness of other equally important conflicts in the Coastal zone, but to register how ECOWAS has, for whatever reasons, refused to intervene in the conflict. This observation, if anything, has limited expressed external concerns to the Niger Delta Question as coming only from industrialised countries of Europe and America. Even that has been viewed in the lens of the threats it poses to their source of energy supply.

Youth and Spiralling Conflicts in the Mano River Basin

The entire Mano River Union states comprising Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea (and Cote d'Ivoire which is now politically associated with the region by sheer stroke of economic and security interests; have experienced violent conflicts with the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, precipitating serious human carnage and maximum collateral damage. Violent conflicts in the zone started with the Liberian civil war (1989-1996, 1999-2003). This was followed by the civil war in Sierra Leone (1991-2002) and the violence in Cote d'Ivoire which started in 2002, and the incessant armed insurrection in Guinea which has continued since the conflict in Liberia began. Indeed, the devastating consequence of the pattern of impunity and impoverishment which the extreme violence in Liberia and Sierra

Leone fuelled is today reflected in the potential danger of cross-border recruit-ment of mercenaries in the zone's emerging conflicts in which Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea are noted for growing political instability.[133]

Youth and child soldiers were both perpetrators and victims of these con-flicts. Their involvement as soldiers by all sides in the conflicts in the Mano River, in which the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone lasted 14 years and 11 years respectively, was highly publicised in international media. In particular, it has been argued that the youth crisis in Sierra Leone and other armed conflicts were instrumental to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the use of armed Children into force (2002) which attracted the attention of the United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs).[134]

The main issue thrown up by the economic re-engineering process which turned out to be a failure in countries where they were adopted included cut and/or drastic reduction in social provisioning by governments which resulted in fall in household income, obliteration of the middle class, decline in healthcare delivery, increase in cases of school dropouts and decrease in school enrolment.[135] While the youth were highly affected by governance deficits characterised by these policies as dependants, their simultaneous interaction with the 'democratisation wave' that was prompted by the demise of the Cold War and agitation against one party rule and military dictatorship became the readily available opportunity through which they vented their anger. This is the sense in which the RUF, an organisation known for pre-war radical student politics and a force for change, suddenly gained notoriety for forced recruitment of young people (among them, children) for the civil war in Sierra Leone. Put differently, it was easy for the RUF to cash in on the gullibility of the disaffected youth in Sierra Leone who, prior to the civil war, had been left behind by the country's dysfunctional system. Although alienated and unemployed youth played a huge role, the lumpen *rarray boys,* made up of school drop outs, poorly educated and unemployed urban fringe youths and characterised with drug addiction, anti-social behaviours and rebelliousness (Abdullah and Muana 1998) became a particular category that was catalysing. This category of disaffected youth developed a particular culture of rebellion built around resistance discourse, militant language and some political consciousness of liberation and change.

The enlarged *rarray boys* were not only some of the early members, but the base of the early recruitments for the Revolutionary United Front. Like the lumpen youth resident in Liberia and in the mining areas of the early RUF-conquered territory, the youth of Freetown and the hinterlands and lumpen youth who engaged in diamond mining (San-San boys) were the initial recruitment-base once the war began (Abdallah & Muana 1998).

From the foregoing our take on the divergent perspectives on the involvement of youth in the conflicts that conflagrated the Manor River states are largely complex and tied to a combination of factors.

Beyond the various perspectives analysed above are other downplayed issues relating to problems of governance and the nature of social organising which had 'thrived within a particular demographic space,'[136] as well as a combination of political and economic policies that deepen contradictions in the face of declining capacity of the state's welfare role in a post-Cold War globally-led reform. In the wake of the crisis precipitated by the deepening and intensified contradictions signified by the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) and Economic Recovery Programmes (ERPs) in Mano River state (and by extension) other parts of Africa in the 1990s, the youth became victims of mass poverty and alienation.

The constructive social incentives attached by rebel groups to the youth being recruited and several others who became conscripted, to the disregard of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in the various states in the Manor River, only added to the ever-declining belief in the state as an institution that could function to the benefit of its citizens. Although both parties in the conflict in Sierra Leone were culpable in the use and recruitment of underage children, RUF was most often criminalised. Also, youth (and children) who refused recruitment into the *Forces de Liberation du Grand Ou*est (FLGO) – Liberation Forces of the Great West – to fight along side government forces in Cote d'Ivoire were regularly harassed and threatened. Interests within neighbouring countries, including the desire to settle old grudges, did not only fuel the war in the Mano River, but they also accounted for cross-border recruitment of youth in conflicts in Mano River states.

In Liberia, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia – NPFL (1989-1997) and his government (1999-2003) were also guilty of recruiting youth to fight in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire, while the Ivorian government assisted the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) in recruiting children and youth from refugee camps to fight in Liberia in 2003. In Cote d'Ivoire, there were cases of Liberian youth and children who were recruited under an arrangement between the Ivorian government and Liberian armed opposition group – Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) – for the latter to return to Liberia with their arms when they would have accomplished their mission in Cote d'Ivoire.[137]

In his November 2003 Report to the UN General Assembly, the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, said the Ivorian armed forces and the *Mouvement Patriotique de Cote d'Ivoire* (MPCI) – Patriotic Movement of Cote d'Ivoire – and the *Mouvement pour la justice et la Paix* (MJP) – Movement for Justice and Peace – *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO) – Ivorian Popular Movement for the

Great West – also recruited quite a lot of youth and child soldiers[138] with MPCI drawing significantly from Guinea. Annan also expressed deep concern about what he described as the 'pervasive involvement of youth in the conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire and other neighbouring countries at a meeting of the UN Security Council in December 2003, adding that it undermines the security of the Mano River countries.[139]

Youth and Conflicts in the Sahel

The Sahel states of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are caught in a web of violent conflicts, though they do not share the same intensity as those of the Mano River states. The dust generated by the armed insurrection in the Sahel became an unsettling issue between Malian and Nigerien governments and the mainly young Touareg rebels in the northern part of both countries, while Burkina Faso, the other country in the zone, is associated more by its alleged support to one of the Ivorian rebel groups – MPCI. The Touareg, also called 'Blue men of the desert' because of indigo colours of their traditional flowing garments, number about two million people, straddling between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, with yet other smaller numbers in Algeria, Libya and Mauritania. Their traditional nomadic and pastoralist life style which accounted for their incessant movement across colonial borders prevented them from being fully integrated into the emergent social fabric of French colonial rule which, upon termination in Mali and Niger in the 1960s, kept them 'outside the web of political relationships and material benefits of the new states'.[140]

Among the major issues underlying their grievances from the earliest times in both Niger and Mali were land tenure system, equitable representation in government, and underdevelopment. The real or imagined sense of marginalisation this conveys has prompted the Touareg's long dream of an independent state of Azawad that would comprise Touareg populations in northern Mali, northern Niger and southern Algeria.[141] Complaints about inequitable allocation of revenue accruing from uranium (mainly derived from Touareg area), with increasing soared price as an alternative source of energy to the spiralling oil prices at international market, added a major dimension in the case of Niger.

The droughts of the 1970s/80s and the deepening economic crisis that precipitated the adoption of structural adjustment programmes (SAP) in the 1980s, combined with long- held feeling of marginalisation that led to the emigration of a large cohort of disaffected Touareg youth to North Africa, especially Libya where a large proportion of them picked up wage labour in the oil industry. Others joined the Libyan army as volunteers where they received military and ideological training. Libya was soon to also suffer a series of reverses precipitated by the 1980s oil glut (i.e. prices collapse) leading to the downsising of its workforce. This resulted in visibly widespread unemployment and restlessness among Touareg

youth who returned home in the Sahel with considerable military experience. This development, coupled with the original grievances dating back to the 1960s – i.e. that their central governments were unresponsive and hostile to them – provoked a rebellion that became difficult for Malian and Nigerien governments to easily contain or crush in the face of severe financial constraints and ground-swell opposition precipitated by the democratisation wave of the 1990s.

While it took the timely signing of a National Pact in Mali in 1992[142] and National Agreement in Niger in 1995 to deal with the security threats precipitated by the rebellion, current reference to reneging on the implementation of the peace agreements in both countries has taken the rebellious youth back to the trenches, with Niger posing bigger security threats for obvious reasons.[143] External influences have been seen in the sense in which Libya, Algeria and Morroco are locked in the Sahel-Sahara politics. The French multinational company, Areva (owner of equity shares of the two dominant companies in the uranium extraction), is also involved in a game of wit with some Canadian, Chinese and Indian firms in northern Niger; while the US Pan-Sahel Counter-terrorism project has also added to the extraneous factors and cobweb of relations in the conflict that have put the youth at the centre of crossfire in the Sahel.

Youth and the Casamance Conflict in Senegambia

The protracted armed insurrection in Casamance region, involving the *Mouvement des Forces Democratiques de Casamance* (MFDC – Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance) consisting of mainly, but not entirely, Diola (Jola) ethnic group, and successive Senegalese governments, has raged with little regional and international concerns. The uprising for self-determination for Casamance region, which formally began in the provincial capital of Ziguinchor in December 1982 with active youth participation, is fallout of the people's grievances over political under-representation and economic under-development.

The conflict 'has been characterised by unsuccessful negotiations punctuated by periodic clashes that have resulted in the loss of many lives and displacement' with each side in the conflict blaming 'the other for the lack of progress towards peace'.[144] Added to this is the split within MFDC in August 1992 which has resulted in both splinter groups led by Fr. Augustin Senghor and Sidy Badji alternating between negotiating table and battle field in the quest for independence for Casamance.

While the conflict in Casamance is readily explained by ethnic factors, the fact that the fighters are mixed in terms of ethnic origin has provided for an alternative explanation by De Jong who placed more emphasis on 'youth disaffection and unemployment resulting from structural adjustment and the 'downsizing' of the Senegalese state'.[145] This, if anything, simply confirms already articulated position that youth violence does not just erupt, but that it is often symptomatic of clashing political and socio-economic factors often buried from ordinary eyes.

Arms flow from various civil war sites in Liberia and Sierra Leone has not only fuelled the conflicts in Casamance, it has also precipitated criminal activities such as poaching, armed robbery and drug trafficking among the youth in Senegal. This has also resulted in the growing isolation of the older generations of MFDC leadership whose influence has fast diminished and replaced by younger elements, with fluid motives.[146] The Senegalese government's tradition of defining the Casamance conflict as an issue of 'law and order' with the separatists referred to as *bandes armies au Sud* (meaning, armed bandit in the South) makes the conflict fester on while giving international public opinion the impression that a negotiated settlement is in process. One sad effect of this is that having realised how impossible it is to win the war by military might, both the government and the MFDC now take on innocent civilians who are regularly subjected to all forms of arbitrary arrest and detention, murder and extrajudicial killing, rape and torture, intimidation and extortion.[147] Many children and youth have been taken hostage from their homes by the MFDC, while state security officials have been unable to make arrest of the perpetrators of this dastardly act.

The Coastal Zone: Youth Militias and Insurgency in the Nigeria's Delta Region

The Niger Delta region, Nigeria's oil belt, is at the epicentre of the numerous violent conflicts in the coastal states of West Africa. The conflict in the place, which has reached crisis proportion, is a culmination of long years of neglect and of unstructured and unpredicted struggles that started in the 1960s under a young cadet sub-inspector, Isaac Adaka Boro, who together with his colleagues in the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), declared a separate state of Niger Delta Republic and proceeded through an armed insurrection to seize oil facilities. While the NDVF could not withstand the Nigerian army as its members were arrested, prosecuted and convicted for treason, the action of the 'boys' has nevertheless become a heroic precursor and example of the current insurgency involving the youth in the Niger Delta.

From the despair of peaceful protests and petitioning against conditions of poverty in the 1970s and 1980s to blockading of oil platforms and occasional disruption of oil production in the 1990s, the struggles in the Niger Delta have risen, since the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995, to the point of a rebellion in which small arms flow easily through the region's labyrinthine network of creeks and rivers.[148] The violent character of the rebellion were: shotdown of oil installations and platforms, cross-killing and maiming of militants, state security forces and innocent citizens, and unprecedented practice of hostage-taking and 'illegal oil bunkering', which has become big business in recent times. More recently, militias have attacked military and oil facilities with bombs and explosives. This has led to shut down, suspension or curtailment of operations, production cuts and deferments and

heavy production losses, which in 2003 and since 2006, have affected over 40 per cent of Nigeria's oil production.[149] This is apart from severe periodic disruptions of oil distribution. Oil and gas production has become so risky and insecure that it is moving offshore. Also, thousands of soldiers and youth have been lost to the conflict. Since 1999 and particularly since 2002, the militias have embarked on an extensive regime of kidnapping and hostage-taking of foreign oil workers.

Youth militancy, militant movements and militias in the Niger Delta region are founded on deep and broad grievances about neglect, underdevelopment and marginalisation since the dying days of colonisation. The emergence of the region as Nigeria's oil belt accentuated the agitation as the state of under-development and exclusion worsened, in spite of enormous resource contribution. The region's elite led the agitation through 'accommodationist' and 'pacifist' approaches. The failure of the elite and rising impatience of the population began to manifest in disparate but uncoordinated and localised protests in the 1970s. In the late 1980s, increasing oil exploitation to generate funds for development and debt re-payments amidst economic crisis and economic adjustment heightened environmental degradation, land scarcity, social and economic disruptions, poverty, unemployment and misery in the region.

A regime of anger, disorientation and frustration emerged which accentuated localised protests and began to coalesce in the flowering of regional, ethnic and communal groupings, minority nationalism and region wide co-ordination of struggles for resource control. The 1990s defined the struggle. First amidst localised community protest, the Ogonis began minority ethnic rights campaigns against environmental devastation, economic and political discrimination, resource and political inequity and marginalisation that was directly related to their minority status. The mass ethnic-wide mobilisation and action and the nature of excessive state force and repression attracted international attention. But rather than douse the agitation, the Ogoni struggle largely conducted through youths and women generalised and intensified the region's struggle. By the mid-1990s, other ethnic groups had become 'restive' and begun a regime of communal and ethnic protests.[150] Second, Having been disillusioned and disappointed with failed elders and the elite in the struggle, highly mobilised, politically conscious, angry, desperate and assertive youths, began to shove their elders and elite aside right from the communities and took over the task of conducting the struggle, through more mobilised activism, aggressive and combatively militant methods.[151]

There are certain things to note. First, the youth vanguard of the Niger Delta conflict arose out of a massive mobilisation of communities and people through a massive flowering of civil society and a growing activism and concern over civil, human, ethnic, environmental rights abuses (Ikelegbe 2001; 2005A; 2006A). Second, the existence of youth vanguard meant that the youth took their destiny in their hands and embarked on a vociferous, combatively militant and

confrontational challenge of the Nigerian state and multinational oil companies by popular direct actions. This meant the appropriation of the *Ogelle*, the traditional community square protests by aggrieved community members in Ijaw land.

Third, it was the extreme repression, confrontation and excessive force of the Nigerian state that compelled the formation of militias and armed bands and the intensification of violent confrontations. At this stage in the late 1990s, the youth appropriated the *Egbesu* Ijaw deity as a rallying point for strength and invincibility in the 'just war' for survival. Numerous and disparate *Egbes*u militias emerged and the struggle became 'militarised' and militia-driven.

Fourth, certain factors intervened. First among these was considerable opportunities for resource appropriation at various levels emerged and more importantly; a lucrative illegal theft and sale of crude and refined oil emerged which equipped the conflict with loose funds and arms and drove the struggle into greater violence and criminality (Ikelegbe 2005B; 2005C, 2005D; 2006A; 2006B). Second, intense electoral competition which has become largely violent since 2002 made loose funds and arms further available and enabled the political elite to infiltrate, manipulate, divide and utilise youth militias for political struggles. This further drove the militias into violence and criminality (Ikelegbe 2006B). Third, a lull in the activities of the militias between 2000 and 2002 enabled a weakening of the militia and militant movements' organisational frameworks and the infiltration of political elite and illegal oil thieves. What ensued was loss of focus, control, direction and discipline. The result was a growing criminality of the militias (Ikelegbe 2004).

Analytical Notes on Regional Threats and Potentials

From the foregoing, it is discernable that conflicts in West Africa have a character of youth identity that is mirrored in highly chaotic, horrendously violent and unregulated ruthlessness and criminality. This general nature of opportunism and illegal economy that pervades conflicts in West Africa, and elsewhere around the globe, does not only devoid them of organisational control and discipline, it also sends far-reaching regional consequences. Beyond destabilising governments and everyday life in countries where they manifest, conflicts in West Africa have precipitated refugee crisis with adverse regional calamity.

Of the estimated 350,000 refugees in Africa, a sizeable number comes from West Africa, being centre of one of the most atrocious conflicts in Africa, while the sub-region also constitutes a good chunk of the estimated 80 per cent of the World's child soldiers, among whom were 15,000 young Liberians who had to be lured to surrender their arms in exchange of $75 under the UN-supervised disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) programme (Garuba 2005). The growing population of refugees who are victims of abuses and impunities perpetrated by all sides in conflicts in West Africa have shown the least

respect for the Geneva Convention in relation to war rights.[152] This poses the challenge of finding solution to the UN Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Youth involvement in conflicts has also provoked spiral character in West Africa. The prominence here is in the Mano River, where all countries in the zone have been at some point or the other caught in the eddies of interlocking web of conflicts, with perverse cases of cross-border recruitment of youth and child soldiers who have become roving warriors-for-hire in the zone. These youth were soon to precipitate a perverse culture of cross-border armed banditry, plundering and looting that is further compounded by human rights abuses and outright impunity.

Closely linked to the above point is the increased flow and youth's access to small arms and light weapons which has a huge implication for regional security threats in West Africa. Both from the conditions that precipitate their demand and the abuses that their availability facilitates, small arms are a fundamental challenge to post-Cold War life in West Africa. While they do not necessarily cause conflicts, small arms have the potential to fuel underlying tensions, deepen sense of crisis, to a point that raise the number of casualties and generate more insecurity (Ero & Ndinga-Muvumba 2004:223). Thus, from the hotbeds of wars in the West African states of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire to the low-intensity violence arenas of Niger, Mali and Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region, the record of internal conflicts sustained by youth's easy access to obviously cheap, portable and easily transferable and difficult-to-monitor small arms and light weapons poses challenges and vulnerabilities (Garuba 2007:1-2). The human and development consequences of this is manifested in the loss of state monopoly over arms (Musah 1999:11) and the increased culture of violence that this thus precipitated in terms of conflict escalation, undermined peace agreements, criminality, impediments to socio-economic stability and democratic governance (Garuba 2001) in the sub-region.

Youth involvement in conflicts in West Africa has also exacerbated poverty and ravaging HIV/AIDS pandemic in the sub-region. Indeed, poverty and HIV/AIDS are about the most devastating of all non-military threats to security in contemporary West Africa. As the largest social category of the sub-region's population, youth involvement in conflicts reduces productivity and increases social problems (such as prostitution, rape and sexual slavery) often associated with poverty and its net effects on unrelenting deterioration in healthcare, public education, food security, as well as water and sanitation. This is further compounded by the fact that vulnerability to HIV infection are increased by peacekeeping operations in conflict zones. An example is Cote d'Ivoire. conflict which did not only compound the government's poverty reduction strategy programme (PRSP) (which was kept on hold in 2002 when the conflict started), but also considerably

raise the statistics of households living in poverty in the country from 32 per cent in 1993 to 37 per cent in 2005, while cases of HIV/AIDs have risen to 7 per cent of the population, one of the highest in ECOWAS member states.[153]

The foregoing notwithstanding, there is a sense in which the youth, through appropriated policy planning and direction, could represent an enabler of opportunistic and sometimes fatalistic and tactical ways to expand possibilities in the world of conflict, turmoil and diminishing resources depicted by West Africa. This sense requires that the youth be seen as being at the heart of the possibility of potentials for the transformation of West Africa into a peaceful and progressive sub-region.

Conclusion and Policy Options

There is a growing vilification of youth in relation to conflicts in society as if the mere fact of being young and supposedly energetic is synonymous with conflict. This tends to overlook the clearly positive roles that the youth play in sustaining the society and peace-building through positive changes and transformations. Perhaps it has been forgotten, so soon, that the youth were at the 'forefront of anti-dictator and anti-structural adjustment street protests throughout the 1980s and 1990s' (Graham 2001:392.).

While conflicts might represent a violent manifestation of youth crisis, they, nevertheless, mirror a combination of factors in which contradictions precipitated by the declining capacity of the state to function to the benefit of the youth – supposed 'leaders of tomorrow' – provide the option of taking up arms against the system; thus making youth violence symptomatic of a clashing political and socio-economic agendas. It is in this sense that unemployed and unemployable youth became the cesspool from which warlords and other conflict entrepreneurs recruited foot soldiers to prosecute the several conflicts that have ravaged the West African sub-region for over two decades. Thus, rather than vilify the youth for their role as non-state combatants, child soldiers and suicide bombers in the myriad of conflicts that have rocked the sub-region, more productive efforts could be directed toward reflecting on problems of youth crisis and the factors that engender them with a view to designing policy programmes that could positively re-direct their potentials for the good of the sub-region, rather being a threat to peace, security and development.

ECOWAS is in a position to lead the process that would evolve a policy framework in which member states could take primary responsibilities for redirecting the youth to work for peace and security in the sub-region.

For policy options, therefore, the first possible thing to address is the reconfiguration of the society by those at the helm of affairs in West Africa to counteract the sense of betrayal that the youth hold about them. This is necessary because youth violence in conflicts is, in a sense, an expression of grievance and a

dramatisation of bitterness, anger and frustration, as well as a challenge to op-
pressors and those perceived as responsible for societies' marginality, poverty,
unemployment and blocked social aspirations and expectations. Thus, their
engagement in plunder, looting and extortion results in part from the frustration
and disenchantment with the society and their desire to get their share (though by
force) of the distribution of largess and wealth monopolised by the elite.
Bazenguissa-Ganga (1999:48) puts this phenomenon more succinctly in relation
to Congo Brazzaville conflicts:

> Looting constituted a trial of the older generation, collectively held responsible for
> the everyday failures, the misfortunes and the frustrations of those who considered
> themselves the younger generation.

Another policy option is the need for ECOWAS to encourage member states to
establish and support structures that give a sense of recognition and social inclusion
to the youth. While it is worthy to note and appreciate the regional body's initiative
in suggesting to all its member states to establish a ministry of youth, it will also
be interesting to push the agenda up to ensuring that programme contents and
human capacity of the ministries are actually youth-directed and participatory.
They should not reflect a case of the senior citizens imposing policies on the
youth, bearing in mind that no matter how good a policy is, it can only be rightly
and better directed if it takes into account the people whose lives it seeks to
improve. The regional youth policy that is currently being developed by ECOWAS
could draw on the peculiarities of youth vulnerability and exclusion in West Africa,
rather than merely rehash the United Nations and the Commonwealth use of age
to define the social category; a yardstick that hardly meets exigencies in the sub-
region or any other part of Africa.

The enhancement of human capital development through provisioning of
basic education, vocational training and infrastructures that would guarantee life
and livelihood skills are also a precondition for youth attainment of necessary
multiple capabilities that would transform and enable them survive in their societies.
ECOWAS could encourage its member states, through constant engagements
and partnership with the donor community, to provide required resources to
address this. The engagement should be directed at bringing to the fore the fact
that the youth are a social category that are in dire need of attention and resources
to be committed to their cause for genuine realisation of the sub-region's dream
of building a society of the future.

To be sure, the above efforts will also require an all-inclusive citizenship edu-
cation for the youth, as a requirement, to positively redirect their life goals and
focus. Peace education and conflict resolution skills acquisition programmes should
be a component of the curriculum of the inclusive citizenship education. Through
it, it should not only demonstrate that while particular conditions of state mis-
governance, economic decline and deterioration ideally precipitate radical pro-

tests and demands for regime change, the outright resort to war to forcefully effect such a change often takes the country far back when compared to the conditions that precipitated the war in the first instance.

At the national level, governments should promote programmes that de-criminalise the youth, especially those that have been at the centre of conflicts. Investigation reveals that general perceptions about youth are often driven by negative stereotypes of young people as harbingers of delinquency, drug abuse and violence; thus failing to recognise that while most young people do not en-gage in these activities, several others who engage in them do eventually desist (ECOSOC 2005:22). Thus, decriminalisation programmes of youth take on the issue of mindset and the associated labelling that goes with it. It is common to refer to *Taylor boys* and *ex-RUF* in today's Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively with scathing and disparaging remarks that tend to keep civil war wounds in both countries from healing, just as the mere mentioning of youth in Nigeria's Delta region, Touareg homesteads in northern Niger and *New Forces* in northern Cote d'Ivoire conjures images of violence and rebellion. Such is the power of mindset.

To all appearances, mindsets have more powerful effects on action and be-haviour of any people than structures and systems. This is the context in which policy option for reconciling the youth with society should seek to neutralise what Adedeji Ebo refers to as 'looking at each other with yesterday's eyes'.[154]

Another area requiring policy intervention is post-war reconstruction pro-grammes. A cursory look at most ones organised by the World Bank and other international governmental and non-governmental agencies emphasise the rebuild-ing of infrastructure instead of youth rehabilitation. Where the youth are given any focus at all the emphasis is on disarmament, demobilisation and re-integra-tion (DDR) of ex-combatants. Very little consideration is given to fashioning out comprehensive programmes capable of tackling children and youth challenges in post-conflict societies who genuinely require therapy for trauma suffered in the years of war. This tends to give the impression that the society is only interested in (*rewarding*) ex-combatants, as against several other categories of youth who, though did not bear arms during war, went through psychological trauma that could well be compared with the experiences of ex-combatants. ECOWAS could do much by driving a process that would enable comprehensive and all-inclusive post-war reconstruction strategies for youth through collaborative efforts with international governmental organisations and development partners.

At the national level, ECOWAS member states need do much more to tackle the ever-soaring problem of youth unemployment in West Africa. This should be seen as a matter of urgency, especially against the backdrop of guaranteeing socio-economic security and giving desired sense of belonging and partnership of the vast army of jobless youth who have become willing soldiers for mobili-sation in the sub-region. This, no doubt, will enable them realise their potentials rather than craving for opportunities that conflict and war provide.

7

The Diaspora and Conflicts

Musa Abutudu & Crosdel Emuedo

Introduction

The past two and half decades have witnessed a surge in the prominence of the Diaspora as a key player in the international political arena. This is not surprising, given the percentage of the world population currently living outside their own countries of origin. In 2006, this was estimated to be 191 million worldwide. In West Africa, the proportion of migrants to the total population is estimated to be 2.9 per cent. Nigeria alone is estimated to have about 15 million of its citizens living abroad (Sani 2007; Singer 2001). A number of factors accounts for the growing prominence of the Diaspora on the world stage. The rapid development of new communication technologies has improved abilities to transmit information rapidly, and therefore enhance the capacities to mobilise across continents on common causes. There is the improved climate of multiculturalism in host countries, which has helped to revitalise the cultural identities and assertiveness of Diasporas. This is coupled with profound changes in global political configuration in the form of the emergence of more widespread claim or adherence to liberal democratic tenets among nation-states in the aftermath of the Cold War (Vertovec 2005).

In the late twentieth century, most wars became intra-state in nature, raising issues about the role and status of nationalities and communities within these states (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1997; Holsti 1996). The political goals of these wars are often presented as being geared to the construction and consolidation of the power of rival ethnic groups or nationalities. Identity politics defined in ethnic, nationalist, religious or communalist terms tends to constitute their dominant ideological platform. More often than not, the external support base for them has shifted from the superpower of the Cold War era or even ex-colonial powers, to the Diaspora, foreign mercenaries, criminal mafia and regional powers. The

war economy is often sustained by external emergency assistance and a ruthless parallel economy of plunder and unofficial exports and imports (Kaldor and Vashee 1997:7-19; Miall et al 1998:69).

The increasing importance of Diaspora communities to contemporary conflicts is traceable to the rapid rise of war refugees in intra-state civil conflicts (Miall et al (1998:130). With a sizeable part of some of the new Diasporas directly rooted in conflict from the home country, it has been pointed out that the Diaspora communities usually participate in their homeland conflicts, and indeed, "live their homeland politics long-distance" (Anderson 1992:12). The spectre of a virulent racist nationalism in contemporary Europe whose defence of the home space and territory pointedly identifies the immigrant, the asylum seeker and ethnic minority as an unwanted category has increasingly made settling in other countries difficult. This in turn has reinforced the focus of Diaspora communities on their countries of origin, as it becomes increasingly risky to stake their future in their new abode (Koser and Lutz 1998; Brinkerhoff 2005). Finally, the growing prominence of the Diaspora has been impacted by the economic crises of the last two decades and half in Africa that had seen many African professionals or workers migrate to Europe or America. This migration process might also have been fuelled by the protracted political struggles against authoritarian rule in the continent during the same period which produced a steady stream of an exile element. In the Diaspora, authoritarian persecution could force various groups on the receiving end to constitute themselves into "communities of suffering", which would invariably reinforce underlying identities.

If Diaspora communities are increasingly involved in living the politics and conflicts of their homelands 'long-distance', precisely what does this entail? In what ways do Diasporas insert themselves in the conflicts of their homelands? What are the effects of such interventions? Are Diasporas conflict accelerators? Or do they serve to moderate conflicts?

In attempting to grapple with these questions, this chapter adopts a two-pronged approach. The first is to catch some a glimpse of the answers proffered in the general literature on Diasporas and conflicts. This is complemented with case studies on the multiple patterns of intervention or involvement of Diaspora communities of West African origins in conflict and post conflict situations in their home countries.

Conceptualising the Diaspora

Although used quite liberally, the term 'Diaspora' has no single definition. However, there is a general agreement about some common features which members of a Diaspora community share. First, Diaspora members share a self-awareness or consciousness borne out of common origins in a homeland and current domicile outside of that homeland.

Second, they tend to identify with each other as members of an identity group, often scattered or dispersed, but with sustained common ties to the homeland. It is these features that often lead to 'institutionalising networks of exchange and communication that transcend territorial states,' linking Diaspora groups between host countries (Vertovec 1997:278). According to Sheffer, 'modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands' (Sheffer 1986:3). In effect, a Diaspora community refers to a group that recognises its separateness based on common ethnicity or nationality, lives in a country other than its own country of origin, but maintains some kind of attachment to the home country. Cohen suggests that the strong motivation for collective action on behalf of the homeland usually found among Diaspora communities is driven by a collective memory and myth about the homeland. A sense of distinctiveness, common history and belief in a common fate all help to fashion an idealisation of the putative ancestral home. This, in turn, provides a 'collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation' (Cohen 1997:515).

Diaspora communities can be multi-layered, ranging organisationally from the regional and national to the ethnic or even town and village levels. Thus, it is possible to be part of the African Diaspora, the Nigerian Diaspora, the Niger-Delta Diaspora, the Urhobo (or Itsekiri, Ijaw, Isoko, Ogoni) Diaspora, all at the same time. In this context, the 'homeland' may not necessarily be fixed at a particular level. It is contextual and its expression may well reflect the complex interactions of the diverse layers. The myths, consciousness and constructs about the ancestral home may be shared at one level but they may also clash at another. This could be a reflection of the importation of contested issues of land or history into the Diaspora. Much of the animation for some Diaspora groups may be derived from such contestation. In effect, the Diaspora very much reflects the heterogeneous mix of the national (home) population.

However, the organisational directions of the Diaspora community and the kinds of intervention it can mobilise in its 'long-distance living' of the homeland will be affected by the socio-economic and political environment of the host country. If the African Diaspora communities played prominent roles in the continent's various struggles (liberation, human rights, democratisation, and economic development), the host environment often provided the resources mobilised for such. These resources include 'homes' for the exile and the refugee, and employment opportunities for the migrants. Educational and skills acquisition opportunities are important resources. Same goes for communication resources and the accessibility of social and political processes in the host country. The Internet in particular has become a forum for the organisation and promotion of

various kinds of associations and institutions (public, private, and nonprofits). The internet has fostered inexpensive, instantaneous global information sharing and often circumvention of national legal frameworks. Also, the internet enables the creation, and enhances the effectiveness, of transnational movements to address key global public policy issues. Indeed, the Internet promotes universalism, that is, 'a universal moral code transcending state boundaries and state interests' (Jacobsen and Lawson 1999; Greig 2002). Such moral codes increasingly encompass respect for human rights and democratic practices. Thus, Boli (2001:66) argues that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the 'most highly legitimated single expression' of world citizenship doctrine – a doctrine that calls into question the locus of state sovereignty.

It is on the basis of such values that transnational civil society organisations and inter-governmental organisations increasingly seek to intervene in and/or otherwise influence policy and practice internal to the nation-state. Diaspora groups often intervene in conflicts in their home countries by deploying this human rights discourse and tapping into a sympathetic civil society element in their host states to influence political developments in their countries of origin. In specific terms, the chapter briefly examines the pattern of involvement of relevant Diasporas in the crisis in the Casamance region of Senegal; the Tuareg revolt in Mali and Niger; and the attempt at conference diplomacy by Diaspora groups on the Warri crisis in Nigeria. Finally, the paper highlights the efforts to bring the memory, recollections and suggestions of Liberian Diaspora elements to bear in a post-conflict attempt to heal the wounds of the Liberian civil war.

Diasporas and Homeland Conflicts: Patterns of Intervention

Several studies have examined the role of organised Diasporas in promoting policy and regime change in their homelands (Byman et al 2001; King and Melvin 1999/2000; Shain 1994-1995, 1999). Many others have focused on the economic value of remittances by Diaspora communities to the home country. Migrant remittances have been generally recognised as critical to many economies in the Global South. In fact, by the end of 2004, official figures suggested that remittances from across the globe collectively added up to approximately $125 billion (Fagen 2005). It is therefore not surprising that remittances from African Diasporas from 2000 – 2003 averaged about 17 billion dollars per annum, practically overtaking the flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which averaged 15 billion dollars during the period (Egbe & Ndubisi 1998:43). The contributions these make to the development processes in the countries of the Global South have also been generally acknowledged, although this has remained debatable. However, there is no question that remittance income reaches social sectors that official development assistance (ODA) usually misses (Meyers 1998; Newland 2004; GCIM 2005).

However, the role of remittances in conflict situations has been more controversial. There is some degree of consensus that one of the most significant avenues of influencing the course of conflicts by Diaspora groups is through remittances. However, the nature and direction of the impact of such remittances on the conflicts remains an issue that is very much controversial. Two opposed standpoints are evident on the role of remittances by Diaspora communities in conflict in their homeland. One group of scholars sees much of Diaspora communities' financial muscles in the funding of conflicts. For these scholars, Diasporas play a particularly important role in sustaining insurgencies (Byman et al 2001; Van Hear 2003). For example, out of 74 insurgencies active since 1991, 40 received significant support from refugees and Diaspora groups. In fact, it is held that Diaspora support is far more important than state support for the sustainability of many insurgencies (why is that the case? You may wish to interrogate this point briefly). The state is held to be particularly unreliable for the sustenance of conflict since its support could suddenly disappear or be reduced (Byman et al 2001). Furthermore, both state and non-state support for an insurgency can make a movement far more effective, prolong the war, increase the scale and lethality of its struggle and may even transform a civil strife conflict into an international war (Byman et al. 2001).

In addition, channels through which private financial transfers are sent are alleged to allow criminal or 'terrorist' groups to use 'clean' Diaspora networks to move 'dirty' money to other countries. Africa can be particularly vulnerable in this regard, given that most of the remittances transmitted to Africa south of the Sahara are not conveyed by means of formal banking procedures. Only 16 per cent of the money remitted to Senegal by the so-called *modou-modou* migrants, for instance, is channelled through Western Union (Pérouse De Montclos 2005).

Large segments of the populations living in conflict, war-to-peace transition and crisis contexts are highly dependent on remittances (Fagen 2005). Some studies have pointed out that in many countries in West Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, warlords and criminal political leaders make use of global connections to exploit or use migrants to advance power and illegal wealth and to prolong war (Ballentine 2003; Ballentine and Sherman 2003; Collinson 2003). Anderson (1999) has observed that during conflicts, Diaspora communities raise money to support continuing warfare, promote public opinion and international interventions in support of their cause, and prevented (?) resolution, even when local compatriots are prepared to negotiate. Many Diasporas use networks to coordinate activities and raise funds. While their actual mobilisation characteristics vary extensively, some Diasporas have demonstrated the ability to exert sufficiently focused, organised, and powerful influence to become significant actors in international affairs. Many rebel movements are launched in exile because of

political repression or crisis in the homeland. Some of these use the countries of asylum as places from which they can inform against a dictatorship at home (Israel 1999:281; Thomas 1996:333). Others plot against or support armed struggles from neighbouring countries. Refugees sometimes utilise opportunities that may arise to launch guerrilla attacks against the authoritarian regimes that caused them to flee their countries of origin (Benard 1986). Due to their often richer financial status compared to those in the homeland, it is often relatively easy for emigrants to fight by proxy by financing military operations. Some World Bank economists assert that the more powerful a Diaspora is, the more likely it is that a civil war will be prolonged. According to them, the probability that a conflict will resume during the five years following a cease-fire or a peace settlement is increased six-fold if a strong migrant community has an interest (Collier & Hoeffler 2000:11-12). (How does the money for such an enterprise go through both international and national money transfer circuits? How can we be sure that some categories of transfers are meant for militias and rebel groups and some others are not?).

In both the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts, neighbouring countries provided launching pads for attacks on these countries by their exile elements. These neighbours were either complicit, or had become too weak to exert control in some parts of their territories. For example, the December 24, 1989 attack of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPLF) was launched from across the Ivorian border. The arms from Libya for the NPLF were brought into Burkina Faso by air. From there, they were usually transported by road through Ivory Coast into Liberian territory (Williams 2002). In the same vein, the Foday Sankoh, the leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was allegedly resident in the Ivory Coast while directing his campaign against the government of Sierra Leone. Then, in 2002, Ivory Coast itself became the target of a rebellion from groups that were reputed to have roots in Liberia (Williams 2002).

The Casamance Revolt in Senegal
Since 1982, the separatist *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC) has been first through popular protest, then since 1990 through a guerrilla war fighting for an independent Casamance. Durable peace remains elusive despite ceasefires and accords and improved security conditions throughout the 1990s. The death toll either killed in armed attacks, by landmines or as a result of human rights abuse due to the conflict directly is probably around 1,000. Many more have been displaced into neighbouring countries or within the Casamance since armed conflict commenced in 1990. Modes of displacement are complex, and reliable figures are difficult to obtain. However, according to a 1998 Caritas census, 62,638, out of a total 1.1 million Casamance population were displaced.

Ziguinchor, the capital of the western region of the Casamance, has received some 14,000, with a further 6,000 in other Casamance towns. Estimates by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees indicate that a further 10,000 people are refugees in Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia (Evans 2007).

The Casamance conflict started in mid-December 1983, when hundreds of demonstrators – armed with spears, machetes, and hunting rifles, covered in protective charms, and chanting incantations to render them invulnerable to bullets – invaded the streets of Ziguinchor to call for the independence of Casamance – a region in the southwest corner of Senegal (Humphreys and Mohamed 2005). The government responded with a heavy hand, leaving an official toll of 80 injured and 29 dead, though unofficial reports put the death toll at over 100 dead and more that 700 arrested. A handful of those retreating, led by veterans from the Senegalese army, under the banner of the MFDC took to the forest of lower Casamance to commence military operations against government positions. So began the guerrilla war that has left thousands killed and the south of Senegal dotted with land mines.

The Senegalese Exterior (an umbrella platform of Senegalese nationals especially in the United States of America) has typically directed itself at mobilising external support for the home government as well as promoting social and economic development of the home country. Following the smooth and peaceful transfer of power in 2000, emigrant elements from Senegal under the aegis of the Senegalese Exterior in the United States met to consider how the Diaspora could help to improve the social and economic conditions of the country. Apart from the developmental issues which the forum considered, it was also felt that the Senegalese Diaspora should concern itself with the situation in the Casamance region of the country. Specifically, it was to create a strong lobby in the United States with the objective of getting the government of the United States of America to take a more active interest in the crisis in the region.

 In this regard, the expected assistance from the United States in resolving the conflict would be in the form of exerting pressure on Libya, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau (Portugal, why the conflation?) to halt their perceived support for the MFDC; participate in the struggle to dismantle the circuit of production and distribution of illegal drugs (which is presumably one of the sources of funding for the separatist movement); organise, through the Carter Centre, negotiations between the governments of Senegal, Guinea Bissau and The Gambia on putting an end to separatism; and assist Senegal to de-mine the war zone. The post-conflict role of the United States would then be to assist in the 'economic revitalisation of the Casamance region' (CORISEN 2000).

The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali and Niger

The insurgency in Mali started very differently. In June 1990, the *Mouvement Populaire de Libération de l'Azawad* (MPLA), intent on gaining independence for Azawad, their region, commenced military operations against the Malian government by way of an attack on government positions in the far northeast of Mali. Neighbouring countries provided safe haven while the Tuareg in Dispora provided support to the insurgency of their kith and kin in Mali. Thus, at this point while no external patron was providing the Malian government with significant financial or military assistance (meaning Mali had no military/defence assistance or accord with any western or eastern 'development partners'?), the Tuareg rebels clearly had external sources of support (from which countries? What types of support?) (Rowland 1992:43-45).

As Humphreys and Mohamed opine, 'These attacks were the beginning of a war that would engulf the region in inter-communal conflict, pitting northern "whites" against northern "blacks". After extensive and broad-based negotiations, the war ended with a weapons-burning ceremony in 1996' (Humphrey and Mohammed 2005). In 2006, the conflict flared again, and a year later, the Tuareg in Niger Republic unleashed a similar revolt against their own government.

The Tuareg revolts in both Niger and Mali could be seen as a pointer to the importance attached to relevant Diaspora communities in homeland conflicts, and how they are mobilised to support the agitations at home. In July 2007, the *Mouvement des Nigeriens pour la Justice* (MNJ) which has been engaged in armed conflict with the government of Niger Republic decided to set up a political office with the aim of reaching out to Tuaregs in Europe and America. The objective was to use the Tuareg Diaspora to help garner external support and funding for the struggle (Newsgroup, Nordniger 2007, online).

In Mali, the Tuareg who took to arms again in June 2006, after earlier demobilising in 1996, tried to reach out to its Diaspora when the conflict flared again. In the latter case, the military activities of the Tuareg are believed to be strongly influenced by the existence of a returnee Tuareg ex-combatant element in Libyan and, perhaps, other Middle East causes. The discovery of oil reserves in commercial quantities in Northern Mali (mostly inhabited by the Tuareg), the increasing presence of United States' military advisers in the country and a pool of fundamentalist militias in the area of Algeria bordering Mali, have all combined to reignite a war that was once thought to have ended (Wienberg 2006).

The separatist movement in the Casamance region of Senegal and the Tuareg uprising in Niger and Mali are contemporary conflict areas in West Africa where parties to the conflicts have made serious efforts to mobilise their Diasporas behind their positions. The transnational character of Casamance is reflected in its familial, ethnic, religious and economic links with Guinea Bissau and The Gambia. This facilitates cross-border movements of people (including Casamance rebels

and refugees) and trade in arms and 'conflict goods' between the region and the other two countries (Evans 2004:3). The Gambia and Guinea Bissau have often mediated between the separatists and the Senegalese government. However, their territories have also provided bases for the Casamance revolt, just as factions of the MFDC have intervened in the internal affairs of Guinea Bissau by fighting for the government in power or the armed opposition.

Governments also seemed to be involved in promoting conflict and instability in other countries by organising their Diasporas against them. Senegal, for example, claims to see the firm imprint of the Yahya Jammeh administration in The Gambia in the mid-2007 upsurge of the fighting in the Casamance. This has led to allegations that Senegal has tried to retaliate by organising elements of the Gambian Diaspora to unseat President Jammeh (Morgan 2007). Whether the Senegalese Government is behind this effort or not, it is apparent that there is an open effort on the part of the Gambian Diaspora to unseat the Jammeh administration. The firm authoritarian grip on power by Yahya Jammeh and the apparent inability of a fractious opposition to bring about regime change through elections has galvanised some elements of the Gambian Diaspora (largely driven into exile, in the first instance, by the iron fisted rule of the government) to get rid of him by 'whatever means necessary' (Jalloh 2007). To achieve this, the Diaspora dissidents' movement proposes to create a military wing and a political wing. While the military wing is located in neighbouring Senegal, the political wing, which embraces the Gambian Diaspora in Africa, Europe and the United States, has the task of raising funds from 'Diaspora Gambians, democracy and human rights organisations and friendly governments around the world to support both the political and military wings of the movement' (Jalloh 2007). (So, funding for both political and military wings come from the same source (s)?)

The tendency to read conflict-increasing role into the remittance activities of Diaspora groups is very much contested. It may be possible that when funds are channelled through organisations with connections to radical causes in the homeland, the intervention of the Diaspora community will 'tend to be conflict-increasing than contributing to constructive conflict transformation' (Zunzer 2004:27). However, as Zunzer maintains, remittances are more often than not channelled on family to family basis. In situations of serious conflicts occasioning population displacements, economic production and the livelihood of households in agriculture, fisheries or even paid employment are often very much undermined. Migrant remittances become important in sustaining the viability of households in these conditions.

This much was acknowledged by the then President of Sierra Leone, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, when in 2002, he initiated a crusade to encourage Sierra Leoneans living in the Diaspora to contribute meaningfully to the country's reconstruction efforts. He noted that Sierra Leoneans in Diaspora made enormous contribu-

tions in sustaining their families, relations and friends during various stages of the civil war in that country. In the post-conflict phase where poverty reduction is a critical dimension of reconstruction, increasing the support of the Diaspora would go a long way in ensuring the success of the programme (Sierra Leone Homecoming Summit 2003).

Quite often too, funds from the Diaspora are channelled to the most disadvantage of the population, the kind that are generally overlooked in the 'development' process, and missed out in the foreign donor agenda. Remittances in this case contribute to the stabilisation and transformation of the lives of the disadvantaged (Zunzer 2004:28). In contemporary times, remittances constitute a vital core of the intervention of Diaspora communities in their home countries. Whether this core role is positive or negative remains controversial. The conflict-increasing perspective has been quite dominant and the fact of the respectability it enjoys is to be found in the rash of anti-terror laws in many countries which invariably include provisions to eliminate and criminalise migrant funding of violent or 'potentially violent' groups.

However, the household sustainability thesis is much more recent, at least in the context of locating the role remittances play in situations of violent conflicts. While the two perspectives appear to have their own moments, care must be taken to ensure that the effort to contain the conflict-increasing possibilities of remittances in the age of 'anti-terror wars' do not create difficulties for remittances that are critical to household survival in home countries.

The other major mode of Diaspora intervention in home country affairs is essentially in the area of information dissemination. There are two dimensions to this. The first dimension is the mobilisation of public opinion in the host country and the world in general to draw attention to conflicts and unwholesome practices of home state and economic agents in the home countryside. The internet and other means of communication have been veritable tools servicing this process.

It involves a great deal of networking with various non-governmental organisations in the sensitisation of the general public to the plight of environmental pollution, land erosion and degradation, exploitation, and consequences of these on the population of the home country. It also involves drawing attention to the authoritarian character of regimes, their specific acts of repression and a demand for action, including intervention by international organisations such as the United Nations, European Union, the African Union or the Economic community of West African States. The other major dimension is to demand action against the offending home state or group by the host state through foreign policy action. As pointed out earlier, the Senegalese Exterior in the United States has tried to mobilise the diplomatic weight of the United States towards a resolution of the conflict in the Casamance region of Senegal. The activities of other Diaspora groups in West Africa exemplify this trend.

Limits of Dialogue and Peace Initiative of Diaspora Communities:
The Washington DC Peace Conference on the Warri Crisis

Over the years, various groups identified with the Niger Delta Diaspora have been quite active in mobilising foreign support for their struggles. These include the Ijaw National Alliance of the Americas, Ijaw National Congress (USA), Council of Ijaw Associations Abroad, Itsekiri Survival Movement, Warri Frontline (UK), The Urhobo Historical Society, etc. These groups track events in the Niger Delta on a daily basis and make public responses to them promptly, often through the internet. That these Diaspora organisations constantly put the deleterious policies and activities of the Nigerian state and multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta in the limelight is usually taken by the home state as evidence that such organisations promote conflict, which has become endemic in the region. Often this is really an inability to transcend its own framework of the conflict itself and begin to look at it from the point of view of those who are the major victims of its major impact. However, the inability of these organisations to transcend their peculiar ethnic bases also become apparent when the ethnic groups in the country of origin find themselves embroiled in inter- communal conflicts.

The Washington DC Peace Conference on the Warri Crisis was convened by U.S based Nigerian scholars with ethnic affinity to the three warring ethnic groups involved in the Warri crisis, namely, Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo. The Conference took place at Howard University, Washington DC, on July 24, 1999. The trigger for the conference was the eruption of violence between the Ijaws and the Itsekiri communities in Warri, in mid-1999. While the matter of local government creation in the city was the immediate cause of the violent confrontation between these two groups, it was realised that any peace initiative must embrace the Urhobos, the other major claimant to the ownership of Warri, but not involved in the particular crisis when it erupted. Once the issue of the tripartite nature of the conference was settled, the next was to be (?) the mode of representation. Here, it was agreed that each of the three ethnic groups would be represented by a delegation. This did not preclude individual participation, but the delegation was to act as the negotiating arm of the group. Another issue that had to be trashed out was whether the delegations should contain elements from the home front. The challenges of fund-raising to finance the participation of delegates from the homeland, especially for a conference that was being convened at a very short notice (approximately one month) apparently dealt a blow to this suggestion.

However, it would not be out of place to suggest that there were strong feelings within the Diaspora communities too that such an inclusive arrangement might deny the conference the necessary flexibility to tackle issues that had assumed a non-negotiable status by the long history of conflict and mutual recriminations among the ethnic groups in Warri. But this decision would leave the other major challenge of the conference open – how do you translate the conference decisions

into practical peace-builders in the city if those who directly live the crisis at home are not involved in the process of arriving at these prescriptions? This challenge was not to be tested, as the outcome of the conference was unable to deal with the conflicting claims of the warring groups. Diaspora groups may try their hands at inter-ethnic conference diplomacy to resolve violent conflicts in their country of origin, but, as the present case shows, long distance will not diminish the emotions attached to the issues or create a common platform for interpreting the history that brought them together.

The agenda of the conference which drew input from the three communities involved clearly set out its goals. While the achievement of 'harmony among our people at home to ensure an immediate end to the present hostilities' and ensuring 'a lasting peace in the long run' in Warri were the immediate goals, the conference also set its sights on engaging the larger Niger Delta conflict, a conflict in which all three warring groups in the Warri crisis, among others, lay claim to neglect and marginalisation within the Nigerian federal framework. Thus, the conference aimed to 'help further the interest of all our people in the area by getting involved in processes that will lead to the betterment of our area (a) in revenue allocation (b) in reduction of the oil exploration and exploitation on our ecosystem (c) in the management of our towns, villages and rivers' (Ikomi 1999, online).

The conference duly took off with the delegates of the three groups presenting their opening statements. These delegates were made up of academic and professionals of the three ethnic groups, who were based in North America. Their opening statements dealt with the remote and immediate causes of the hostilities as well as proffering short and long-term solutions to the conflict. However, the conference could not really proceed beyond this point as the directions of the proposals by the various delegations became clear.

For example, the Itsekiri delegation refused to go further unless the twin items of the issue of the title of the Olu of Warri and the status of the city were removed from discussion. For the Itsekiri delegation, the opening statement of the Urhobo delegation was nothing less than the adoption of the views of the foremost, home based protagonist of the Urhobo cause in Warri (Itsekiri Report 1999; Itsekiri Delegation to Peace Summit 1999). On the other hand, the other two delegations accused the Itsekiris of trying to banish the main issues of the peace talks from the agenda on the grounds that they were, for them, settled issues and non-negotiable. Furthermore, the Diaspora groups of Itsekiri origin participating in the conference are said to have received instructions from the highest authority in Itsekiriland to the effect that in the absence of the express permission of the *Olu*, they could not talk peace on behalf of the Itsekiri people. From the point of view of the other groups, this negated the purpose of the conference, which was to avoid as much as possible, the importation of home precepts into the peace forum of the Diaspora (Urhobo and Ijaw Report 1999; Ekeh 1999; Natufe 1999).

In effect, the conference failed to achieve its objectives. Each delegation wrote separate report on the proceedings and on why the conference collapsed. The Ijaws and the Urhobo delegations issued a joint communiqué while the conveners also issued their own. This outcome essentially reproduced the course of the crisis and the stalemate existing at the home front. If anything, this indicates the tendency of the Diaspora community to 'live the conflicts in their homeland long distance'. Even the idea of preserving the 'coalition' that brought about the peace conference died with the collapse of the peace conference.

The laudable initiative to find a solution to an inter-communal war in the country of origin through an inter-communal conference made up of delegates from the Diaspora failed due to the inability to transcend the paradigms on which the conflict had been interpreted by the contending ethnic groups. The conference initiative of the Diaspora elements turned out to be a forum to transmit the established positions of the warring communities in the homeland. Yet, as an initiative it cannot be faulted. In a country such as Nigeria where inter-communal wars are not uncommon independent initiatives of those affected, yet far removed from the actual battleground could provide some degree of detachment that may be crucial in reaching an acceptable solution. While the Washington DC Conference on the Warri crisis failed to meet its set objective in this regard, it, however, offers some useful ideas on which Diaspora groups can approach inter-communal crisis in their homelands.

A Post-Conflict Reconstruction Initiative: The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission Diaspora Project

Since the South African pioneering experiment, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions have been increasingly adopted by countries emerging from serious conflicts, especially those involving the deployment of state machineries in the perpetuation of various forms of atrocities against groups, communities and individuals. The Liberian TRC is considered a pioneer of sorts in the prominent role it has accorded to the country's Diaspora in the effort to reconcile its people as an important component of the post-conflict reconstruction of the country. The project is designed to give a voice to Diaspora Liberians in the promotion of justice and human rights 'as part of the truth, justice, accountability and reconciliation processes in Liberia'.[155]

A major project coordinated by the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights in the United States, the process involves two main phases and it mirrors the TRC process which has been underway in Liberia since 2006. The first phase consists of a statement-taking exercise in the USA (Minnesota, Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, New York and Washington DC), the United Kingdom, and the Bujumbura Refugee Settlement outside Accra, Ghana. This phase of the exercise makes provision for statements to be taken via telephones for those who may

not be resident in the major cities scheduled for the exercise. In addition, volunteers are made available for those who may have problems putting their statements in writing. Statements are expected to give opinions on the causes of the conflict, what happened to oneself, friends, family and neighbours in the course of the crisis from 1979 to 2003. The impact of the crisis on personal property, town, county, ethnic group and country are also areas in which statements are expected to throw some light. Recommendations on how the country should proceed are also expected from statement-givers.

The second phase of the project is the public engagement phase and is again expected to involve public conferences, discussions, tributes to victims, and public.[156] The TRC mechanism which is currently on going in the Liberian Diaspora is no doubt unique in the sense of the systematic acknowledgement of the vital role which the experiences of the exiles, migrants and refugees could contribute to the national healing process. The painstaking manner of the organisation of the exercise as well as the publicity of the exercise in the Diaspora is a measure of the value which is attached to the input of the Liberian Diaspora. However, experience with some TRCs suggests that key players are sometimes reluctant to send in memoranda to the commissions or appear before it in public hearings. In such cases, some quasi-judicial powers of the commission can come into play. It is in this area that the commendable effort to include the power to compel appearance before the Commission in the Liberian TRC mechanism could fall short of its potential promise. The Diaspora community lacks the power to compel appearance of any unwilling citizen. It may not also have the authority within the host country to compel an appearance at the public phase of proceedings. Memoranda may also require physical inspection and verification of claims for which the presence of statement givers may be a necessity, yet may not for one reason or the other, be immediately practical. This of course will adversely impact the evaluation of presentations.

The Liberian Diaspora TRC proceedings are ongoing and there are no indications that the issues raised above have at any point dogged the process so far. Yet, they are pointers to potential challenges which could impact negatively on the quality of the outcome and the legitimacy of the whole process if victims find themselves denied the opportunity of confronting their persecutors before the TRC. But, more importantly, the TRC recognises that Diaspora elements harbour important memories, knowledge and skills which are required for the post conflict reconstruction of Liberia. To that extent, it is a platform that offers healing and reintegration to a Diaspora element that may have become bitter and alienated by the prolonged conflict in that country.

Suggested Policy Directions

Regional bench marks in terms of quality of life of citizens, human rights observance, constitutionalism and democracy should be considered for governments in the sub-region. Neighbouring territories have been used to launch attacks in many of the conflicts in the sub-region. Existing treaties prohibiting such hostile activities in the sub-region should be reinforced with specific, punitive and enforceable sanctions against violations.

Events can mobilise 'inactive' or 'dormant' Diasporas into politically active ones. National policies should therefore be put in place to bridge the knowledge and participatory gap between the Diasporas and the affairs of their home countries. There is no reason why those in the Diaspora should not be able to participate in elections in their home countries. In other words, the vote should be extended to them. The increasing ease of information flow and technological advances in the age of globalisation has made the logistics involved in organising their participation in such elections easier. Regional policy should encourage this. Beyond this, regional policy should encourage harnessing the developmental potentials of the Diaspora, especially in the areas of remittances and humanitarian interventions in health and education.

Concluding Comments

There is reason to believe that the political weight of Diaspora communities in intra-state conflict has increased. This may be linked to the rise of new patterns of conflict and the speed of mobility and communication, which has made group identities much less territorially bounded. The political and economic activities of Diaspora-based organisations blur the distinction between domestic and international affairs, supporting links that abridge the sovereignty of states and also extend the scope of their foreign policies.

Beyond the provision of financial resources, Diasporas play important roles in setting the terms of debate around issues of conflict and identity. The concept of homeland is inherent in the Diaspora identity and serves as a focal point of Diaspora political action and debate. Therefore, Diaspora groups are a vital link between globalisation, conflict, territory, and identity. Often, homeland conflict is the touchstone of Diaspora identity and Diaspora social organisations regularly mobilise around providing support for actors engaged in the conflict back home.

Diaspora organisations thereby usually become a factor that inadvertently complicates processes of conflict resolution and may make homeland conflicts more protracted and indeed help to internationalise local conflict. The Diaspora has helped both to internationalise the Niger Delta crisis by the creation of the various websites where the peculiarities of the region and the exploitative activities of state and multinational corporations are placed on the global front burner.

In Liberia and Sierra Leone, exiles resident in neighbouring countries played prominent roles in the launch of the conflicts. Active steps have been taken by communities in the Diaspora to get involved in finding lasting solutions to crisis in the homeland. As our case study on the Warri crisis indicates, no matter the noble intentions of the Diaspora communities, they must avoid the pitfall of 'living the conflict they are meant to resolve long-distance'. In the case of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission Diaspora project, the main barriers to bringing the full potentials of the Diaspora on the reconciliation project may as well lie in the fact that the voluntary character of the exercise cannot be breached in the host state even when circumstances compel otherwise.

The positive role of remittances in maintaining household viability and sustainability was well canvassed in the paper. But the paper also drew attention to the hidden danger in the efforts of states to curb 'illegal money' getting into the coffers of terrorist organisations. This is understandable in a context where the dominant global powers have erected their foreign policy platforms around the 'war on terror'. However, the small scale flows through which the Diaspora communities help to ameliorate the consequences of violent hostilities at home and keep hope alive must not be allowed to become another casualty of this new war.

The involvement of the Diaspora in conflicts in West Africa, as elsewhere, is a complex one. Its role in some cases could be said to contain traces of conflict-increment tendencies, as in the launch of the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone or during certain stages of those wars. The same trend is apparent in Casamance separatism in Senegal. It is not always the case that only rebel groups utilise the Diaspora. Governments also recognise their potentials in conflict situations and do mobilise them behind their own goals. However, the evidence of remittances and the vital role they play in sustaining the lives of the displaced and other war affected persons suggest some fundamental positive contribution of Diaspora to the ability of households and individuals to survive conflicts.

Remittances have also been indicated as being critical to post-conflict reconstruction efforts of governments. Along with the strong advocacy of justice and equity and a general fight against neglect, marginalisation and environmental degradation in the Niger Delta which various Diaspora groups have championed, it is apparent that the Diaspora could usefully be tapped in the continuing efforts at conflict management in the West African sub-region.

8

Gender Dimensions of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture: A Regional Perspective on UN Resolution 1325

Awa Ceesay-Ebo

Introduction

With its unanimous adoption in October 2000, UN Resolution 1325 has emerged as the main global normative instrument for addressing peace and conflict from a gender perspective.[157] The major instruments that constitute the ECOWAS peace and security architecture also emerged around the same time. The task of this chapter is to examine the extent to which the main normative instruments that make up the ECOWAS peace and security architecture meet the main demands of UN Resolution 1325. Its objective therefore is to employ UN Resolution 1325 as the yardstick for the role of gender in peace and security in West Africa. The chapter spells out the main provisions of the principal ECOWAS peace and security instruments, with a view to measuring the extent to which they comply with 1325. Such an exercise would reveal the gender gaps (if any) in the ECOWAS peace and security architecture upon which the paper puts forwards policy recommendations.

Women routinely pay a disproportionately high price for conflicts. They, along with children, the aged and the physically challenged, are among the most vulnerable victims of war. Women are victims of inhuman treatment during conflict, being dehumanised and traumatised through rape and torture, forced to serve as 'bush wives' and other degrading roles in conflict and war which amount to a gross abuse of their human rights. As they are seeking to secure themselves during conflict, women also often have the duty of singularly taking care of other vulnerable groups such as children and the old. Thus, conflict imposes disproportionate and often unbearable responsibilities on women.

In post-conflict environments, women are, at best, only sporadically involved in peace negotiations and agreements. The traditional secondary role of women in mainly patriarchal African societies has meant that, even when they are engaged in peace-building, their views are often not taken seriously enough. Yet we need to recognise that, even in terms of simple demographic terms, women are half of the human race. Therefore, any human endeavour which excludes women amounts to operating at less than full human capacity. Certainly, building upon the energy of women would give an insight into the thinking and perspectives of half of the human race. It would reflect the position of a crucial peace constituency, and, thus, enhance the success of peace-building efforts.

There are two major challenges surrounding UN Resolution 1325. The first is that even though the resolution has been agreed upon, there remains the even more important need to operationalise and contextualise it, to ensure that each country – and region – comes up with its own particular programme for achieving the laudable goals set out in the resolution. In this regard, it is important to link the ECOWAS Peace and Security architecture with Resolution 1325. The second is to ensure that any such strategic linkage recognises, is based upon, and integrates the energies of ordinary women working at the grassroots level in several African communities and villages. Therefore, while recognising the leadership role of educated/elite women, there is a need to constantly pay homage to the role of ordinary African women and to ensure that any policy agenda that is concluded reflects their interests and perceptions.

This chapter is structured into three main parts. The first part discusses the role of women in peace and security, while the second enumerates the main elements of the ECOWAS peace and security architecture, and assesses the extent to which these comply with 1325. The third part identifies the challenges facing the implementation of 1325 in the West African context, while the final section concludes the chapter and puts forward policy recommendations.

The Role of Women in Peace and Security: Analytical Framework

On the whole and as a general trend, the reality of peace processes has been that those who take up arms are the main actors in peace negotiations, unwittingly creating the impression that peace agreements are rewards for the havoc that has been wrecked and the lives that have been lost. Thus, the more atrocious the human rights abuses, the more space belligerent actors seem to occupy at the table of peace negotiation. Peace processes in Liberia and Sierra Leone bear some credence to this fact, in which rebel groups who had been responsible for despicable acts against their own populations – particularly against women – featured as the main parties to peace agreements. Within the context of this paper, therefore, even though women have organised for peace at various levels (communities, national, regional and global levels), they are rarely visible in the

official processes for peace after conflict. As earlier stated, a main assumption and argument of this chapter is that peace processes that marginalise, ignore and/or exclude women are unlikely to lead to sustainable peace. Such processes lack the input and support of a large section of the population, and amount to, at best, a partial search for peace. Such exclusionary (so-called) peace agreements contribute to the resumption of violent conflict. The inclusion of the perspectives of women in peace processes and in decision making, is therefore not a mere human rights imperative which responds to the rights of women as human beings to be involved in decisions and processes that affect them directly and indirectly, critical as this may be. Crucially, the engagement and inclusion of women in discussions and decisions on peace is a necessary condition for sustainable peace and security. It is not a normative appeal but a necessary condition for peace.

Contrary to popular misconception, gender is not synonymous with 'women's issues'. Rather, gender describes the social roles and relations between men and women in society; it affects all aspects of life – economic, political and social. Such roles change over time and differ in other cultures and societies. Indeed, gender relates to how power is distributed and used between men and women. There are significant changes to the role of women during conflict, including the increased involvement of women in direct combat. In this regard there is a need to stress that women are not always victims of violence but have been known to be direct combatants and perpetuators of violence.

Some are even reputed to be better fighters than men.[158] It is however significant to note that while gender roles change (with women performing 'male tasks') during conflict, gender relations are hardly affected by conflict. It has been noted that:

> There are unlimited examples of women performing 'male' tasks during conflict. However, once a peace deal is concluded and the men return to civilian life, they are inclined to restore the pre-conflict division of tasks and roles, again resuming activities and responsibilities outside the home, and relegating women to the domestic sphere.[159]

There is therefore a direct correlation between gender and the role of women after conflict. The marginal and subsidiary role ascribed to women in most typically patriarchal African societies is socio-culturally determined. After conflicts, therefore, women either return to their pre-conflict roles or, worse still (especially in cases where there is public knowledge that they have been sexually abused) suffer public humiliation and relegated further in social hierarchy and societal roles. The end result is that gender defines power relations in society in a manner in which women are systematically disadvantaged.

Violence against women and girls has reached unprecedented and critical levels across Africa. Incidences of sexual abuse and wife-battering are ever on the increase. Harmful traditional practices against women and girls such as female genital mutilation, virginity tests, early and forced marriages and widow inheritance continue to retard efforts towards the emancipation of women. The Chair

of the African Union, Alpha Oumar Konare, has concluded that 'the situation of women in conflict situations in Africa is deplorable'.[160]

UN Resolution 1325 as a Yardstick for the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture

The UN Security Council adopted Security Council resolution 1325 on the 31st October 2000, reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building. The resolution details the steps to be taken by the UN and its member states in order to improve the protection of women in conflict zones. It represents a critical component of international law that addresses how women are affected by war and the importance of their participation in the search for sustainable peace. In many respects, Resolution 1325 breaks new grounds. It is recognition that war and conflict affect women and men, boys and girls, in different ways and that for this very reason a gender perspective has to be included in all efforts towards peace and security. This recognition is at the basis of the decision by the UNSC to adopt SC 1325 in 2000. The resolution is a viable instrument which women can use to lobby national governments and regional organisations for their voices to be heard, and for the perspectives to be integrated into peace-building processes and post conflict reconstruction. It is also an instrument for advocacy and empowering women on the universal legitimacy and priority of their role in peace and security.

Box 1: Main Provisions of UN Resolution 1325

In this historic adoption of the first Security Council Resolution that directly addresses the issues of women, peace and security, it urges states and the United Nations to:

'ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict…'. (para 1);

'expand the role of Women in UN field-based operations' (para 4);

'incorporate a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations' (para 5);

train peacekeeping personnel, military personnel and civilian police personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women in conflict situation (para 6);

adopt a gender perspective when negotiating and implementing peace agreements (in particular, special needs of women during repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction (para 8);

support local women's peace initiatives (para 8);

adopt measures that ensure protection and respect of human rights of women and girls (para 8).

Security Council Resolution 1325 deals with women in situation of armed conflict and calls on states/parties to an armed conflict:

- to respect international law concerning the protection of women's rights,
- to adopt special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence
- to prosecute those responsible of violations
- to take account of women ex-combatants' needs in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes.

Having therefore evolved as the main global instrument for addressing questions relating to peace and security from a gender perspective, it is pertinent to examine the extent to which the resolution has permeated the activities and thinking of peace and security initiatives in various parts of the world. In this regard, West Africa presents a useful case study, with which the implementation of Resolution 1325 can be measured. In the discussions that follow, an attempt is made to measure the ECOWAS peace and security architecture against the provisions and demands of Resolution 1325.

The end of the Cold War and the marked decrease in the strategic interests of Africa to Western powers, notwithstanding the renewed scramble for Africa multiple resources, has both necessitated and facilitated the emergence of regional peace and security initiatives, with the West African sub-region being a pioneer. At the continental level it has been noted that the regime of the OAU paid little attention to the issue of women in peace and security, and in governance generally. According to Prof Maria Nzomo, 'in terms of gender representation in the OAU, African women, including women's organisations, were virtually absent from its organs and held no position of influence during its 39 years of existence'.[161] Nonetheless, the establishment of the Africa Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) by the OAU and UNECA in 1998 is commendable. The AWCPD functioned mainly more from outside than from within the OAU.[162] The African Union, on the other hand, has, from the onset, recognised the pivotal role of women. Accordingly, the Durban summit of July 2002 took major decisions which provide the institutional basis for mainstreaming gender within the AU.

It is a positive coincidence that it was around the same time that negotiations were taking place regarding what eventually emerged as Resolution 1325, and must have impacted on developments at the AU. Assessing the AU's position on gender in 2007, the President of the AU Commission noted that:

> The African Union has provided a legal framework that provides for gender equality and women's empowerment. The Constitutive Act of the Union, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Protocol to African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa all provide for the attainment of gender equality and

women's empowerment in Africa. From the onset, the African Union recognised the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to the attainment of sustainable human development and security on the continent.[163]

Accordingly, following the decisions of the Durban Summit, the AU Commission has 50 per cent representation of women. In addition, a Gender promotion Directorate has been created in the office of the AU Chairperson. As impressive as this and all other steps to protect women in war seem, there remains gaps between self-perception and self-reality; that is to say, between law and politics, between what the statutes stipulate and the reality on the ground. To this extent, women in the structures above are yet to veritably represent and valorise women interest.

At the level of West Africa, the end of the Cold War signified the start of the first Liberian civil war. This and subsequent conflicts in the sub-region exposed the challenges faced by women in conflict and post conflict settings.[164] Conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Cote d'Ivoire have displayed the demands on women, the multiple roles which they play, and the challenges which they face.[165] While gender-disaggregated data has been generally lacking, there is overwhelming empirical evidence of the link between gender, conflict, and the search for peace and security. In response, regional normative instruments have evolved which seek to address issues of women in peace and security in both preventive and post conflict peace-building.

As detailed in Table 1, 1325 calls for action in three major related areas.

• *Participation of women in decision making and peace processes*: The first four paragraphs of 1325 is focused on women's participation and representation in decision-making and peace processes, including in peacekeeping and other field-based operations. Paragraph 1 specifically 'urges member-states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict'.

In consonance with the provisions of 1325, the ECOWAS Mechanism addresses directly the participation of women in decision making generally, and in peace processes in particular. Article 40 of the Mechanism provides that 'ECOWAS shall recognise, encourage and support the role of women in its initiatives for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security'. Furthermore, the ECOWAS Council of Elders (now renamed Council of the Wise) is an important component of the ECOWAS peace and security architecture. It is composed of eminent personalities from various segments of society who are called upon to deploy their good offices and experience to play the role of mediators, counsellors and facilitators, on behalf of ECOWAS, for the purpose of managing and resolving conflicts in West Africa. While the Executive Secretary

Table 1: Measuring the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture against Resolution 1325

UN Resolution 1325 Benchmarks	Mechanism Protocol	Democracy and Good Governance (Supplementary) Protocol
Increased representation of women in national regional and international organizations and mechanisms on conflict (paragraphs 1-6) Protection of women in armed conflict*, including adoption of mechanisms that ensure protection and respect of Human Rights of women and girls (paragraphs 9-13) · Gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping (paragraphs 15-17)	Council of Elders (the Wise) to include women. (art. 20) Assistance to vulnerable persons, including children, the elderly, women (art. 44) ECOWAS shall recognize, encourage and support the role of women in its initiatives for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security. (art. 40.4) · A policy to promote women's education at all levels and in all fields of training shall be adopted and implemented in each Member State and at the level of ECOWAS. (art. 30.4) · Member States shall guarantee women equal rights with men in the field of education... They shall also ensure the elimination of stereotyped concepts of roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education. (art. 30.5).	'to take all appropriate measures to ensure that women have equal rights with men to vote and be voted for in elections, to participate in the formulation of government policies and the implementation thereof and to hold public offices and perform public functions at all levels of governance'. (art.2.3) ECOWAS election observation missions shall include women (art. 14) Member States agree that the development and promotion of the welfare of women are essential factors for development, progress and peace in the society. Consequently, they undertake to eliminate all forms of discrimination and harmful and degrading practices against women (art. 40). The Executive Secretariat shall put in place all necessary structures within its establishment to ensure the effective implementation of common policies and programmes relating to the education and the promotion of the welfare of women and youth. (art. 43)

of ECOWAS (now President) compiles a list of such individuals annually for the approval of the Mediation and Security Council, the ECOWAS Mechanism expressly states that such a list shall include women (Article 20). However, no specific quota is indicated. Out of a total of fifteen members, three are women in 2008.[166]

Beyond conflict, however, there is a need to recognise that the inclusion of women in governance generally, is a veritable strategy for conflict prevention and for building the necessary conditions for sustainable development. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that the ECOWAS Democracy and Good Governance Protocol provides for equal rights of women to vote and be voted for, and to participate in the formulation and implementation of government policies by holding public offices (Article 2.3). In the specific area of election monitoring – a cardinal aspect of establishing the legitimacy and transparency of electoral processes – the Good Governance Protocol states that 'the Executive Secretary shall appoint the leader and the members of the Observer/Supervisory Mission, who shall be independent persons and nationals of Member States other than the Member State conducting the elections. The Members of the Mission shall include women' (article 14). Again, no specific quota of women representation is indicated.

There appears to be a marked gap between normative provisions and actual implementation. Within the ECOWAS Commission itself, only 1 out of 7 current commissioners is a woman. No woman has been Executive Secretary (now President) of the ECOWAS Secretariat (now Commission) since inception in 1975. Though a more detailed study will be needed to determine the extent of compliance with 1325 within ECOWAS states, there are some encouraging developments. It is indeed commendable that West Africa boasts of the first and, so far, only elected female African President (Liberia), and virtually all ECOWAS states have female ministers (including a female Vice-President in the Gambia), two significant observations are worthy of note. With few exceptions (such as the case of the former Nigeria's Finance and Foreign Affairs Minister), Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, female ministers in West Africa are often located in 'non-strategic' portfolios. Therefore, while women's participation in decision making has certainly witnessed quantitative improvements, the extent of qualitative changes can be easily exaggerated. Secondly, while specific assessment of women's participation in governance on a country – by-country basis may not be feasible in the present exercise, available secondary data indicate that, even in terms of sheer numbers, West Africa compares unfavourably with other sub-regions in Africa.

Regional Average of African Women in Governance
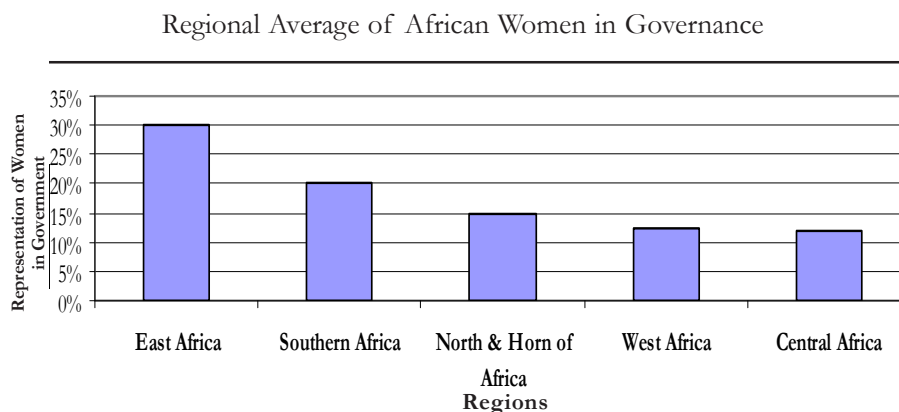
Source: 'Kemi Ogunsanya, 'Gender Peace and Security in Africa', Presentation
at the Gender and ESDP Course, Budapest, Hungary, 18-20 April, 2007.

In Eastern Africa, women occupy some 30 per cent of all posts in Government, 22 per cent in Southern Africa, and 16 per cent in the North and Horn of Africa. The corresponding figure for West Africa is 14 per cent, and only marginally better than the situation in Central Africa. There is no minimal quota for women's participation, which remains at the discretion of respective ECOWAS states. While the ECOWAS peace and security instruments appear to comply, in normative terms, with the provisions of resolution 1325, there is certainly much room for improvement in terms of effectively meeting such normative standards in practice.

• *Protection of women, including in armed conflict:* Paragraph 9 of Resolution 1325 'calls upon parties to a conflict to respect, fully international law applicable to the protection of women and girls…'. Paragraph 10 further calls for the adoption of special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict. There is ample evidence from the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars that both statutory and non-statutory combatants routinely disregarded, and indeed, actively abused the rights of women and girls.

The phenomenon of 'bush wives'– which refers to women who were captured to serve as sex slaves to combatants – the indiscriminate amputation of limbs, and despicable acts of disembowelling pregnant women suggest a wide gap between the provisions of 1325 and actual practice during conflict situations in West Africa.

There can be little doubt, however, that, at the level of legal and normative instruments, ECOWAS as a regional organisation has the utmost respect for international law concerning protection of women's rights. Virtually all ECOWAS normative and legal instruments expressly recognise the need for the protection of women during armed conflict and beyond. Even though it predates the

adoption of Resolution 1325, the ECOWAS Conflict Mechanism, in its preamble, recognised the need 'to develop effective policies that will alleviate the suffering of the civil population, especially women and children…'. In the same vein, the Good Governance Protocol noted in its preamble that 'women's rights have been recognised and guaranteed in all international human rights instruments'. In the emerging additions to the ECOWAS peace and security architecture, the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms states expressly 'taking into account Security Council Resolution 1325 on women peace and security which recognises the specific role of women in Peace-building' (preamble). However, such enthusiasm with 1325 is hardly reflected in the body of the Small Arms Convention itself.

Various sections of the ECOWAS Conflict Mechanism and the Good Governance Protocol, (as detailed in Table 1 above) recognise the need for the protection of women during and beyond armed conflict. In the final analysis, however, the reality in West Africa is that states are only a part of the security complex. Therefore, while states and regional organisations such as ECOWAS are respectful of international law provisions on the protection of women, the same cannot be said for the wide circulation of non-state actors (such as armed groups) which are constant features in West African conflicts.

Paragraph 13 of Resolution 1325 highlights the need to take account of women ex-combatants' needs in DDR programmes (art. 13). ECOWAS peace and security instruments do not directly address the special needs and concerns of women and girls in DDR programmes. While the paucity of data and information makes it difficult, nay impossible, to discuss the extent to which women's special needs were met in ECOWAS peace missions, the general impression is one of a shortfall in this regard. Even in UN missions, it has been noted that in the case of Sierra Leone, abducted women in the fighting force (known widely as 'bush wives) were excluded from the DDR programme. They were, instead, regarded as official dependants of male combatants.

Thus, they had no rights of their own. In both the Liberian and Sierra Leonean DDR processes, Gender Advisers were not present at inception, resulting to the marginalisation of gender dimensions in DDR planning.[167] In the case of Liberia, however, the involvement of Women Associated with Fighting Forces (WAFF… a more respectable pseudonym for 'bush wives') has received better attention. Some 22,000 women were integrated into the DDR programme.

First-hand accounts have indicated that the initiatives of women's groups in the DDR process often received a condescending reception. Proposals of Liberian women's groups were rejected in the early stages of the DDR process on the grounds that they were not considered 'experts'. Instead, the programme brought in 'experts' from other situations – Kosovo, Sierra Leone – but did not include Liberian women's voices in their planning. The women who tried to get involved in the DDR process were told to 'go home and take care of their children'[168]

• **_Gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping:_** Paragraphs 4 and 5 of Resolution 1325 relate to the need for gender perspectives and training in UN peacekeeping missions. In this regard, while it has been noted that, thanks mainly to 1325 (and the Secretary General's Strategic Plan of Action A/49/587), the number of Gender Advisors had risen from 2 in the year 2000 to 10 by September 2005, the absence of ECOWAS peace missions for much of the period makes a comparison impossible. These include all the peace missions in West Africa: UNMIL, UNIOSIL, ONUCI. In addition, gender mainstreaming in the UN reporting systems and programmatic implementation mechanisms is increasingly visible. Focusing on UNMIL, for example, the Office of the Gender Advisor has registered a marked difference. A Police gender policy has been established for the Liberia National Police (LNP), while a police gender curriculum and training manual has been developed for the Police Academy. A Women's NGO Secretariat has been established with UN support. Also noteworthy is the production of various gender resources and materials, including the integration of gender into the country's PRSP, the development of gender-based training materials for UNMIL personnel.[169] Also, for the first time in the history of the UN, an all-female police unit has been part of UNMIL since January 2007.[170]

It is, however, easy to exaggerate the pace of progress in mainstreaming gender within the UN peacekeeping mechanism and process as a whole. Five years after passing Resolution 1325, only 25 per cent of the total civilian personnel serving in UN missions were women; the percentage in the Police and the armed forces was, respectively, 5 per cent and 1 per cent.[171]

In the ECOWAS Conflict Mechanism, there is no provision on training of peacekeeping and armed forces personnel on women on the special needs of women, and on women and demobilisation and reintegration programmes. Beyond general statements such as in Article 44 of the Mechanism (see Table 1 above), there is no mention of special measures to be adopted in armed conflicts to protect women from gender-based violence and of the responsibilities of the state to prosecute those responsible for violations. There are, however, encouraging indications that ECOWAS is upgrading its gender instruments and institutional approaches to peace and security. The prospects for gender mainstreaming in regional integration generally, and peace and security in particular are positive.

At the 26th Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Governments held in Dakar in January 2003, an institutional mechanism for mainstreaming gender in the ECOWAS region was put in place. A Gender Division was created within the Executive Secretariat, while the West African Women's Association (WAWA) was transformed into the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre. The objectives of the gender development programme, among others, are to mobilise women and empower them to be active participants in the regional integration process, mainstream gender in ECOWAS institutions and member

States, and develop networks and partnership with relevant agencies for technical and financial support for ECOWAS' gender mainstreaming programme. The meeting of the Council of Ministers held in July 2004 strengthened the gender programme by adopting the Gender Policy document, the administrative structure of the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre, a strategic plan framework and guidelines on the structures and mechanisms of the Gender Management Systems (GMS) for ECOWAS.

Currently, the ECOWAS framework on gender is receiving a boost. Within the Gender Division, a *Training Manual on Gender and Child Protection Issues During Complex Emergencies* is under development. More strategically, Gender. Peace and Security is one of the fourteen components of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, which has been developed.[172]

Civil society has also been active in the task of engendering peace and security, with UN Resolution 1325 often featuring as a point of reference. A group of women's organisations on peace and security have emerged in the last decade, all of which increasingly seek to operationalise Resolution 1325 in part and in whole. The Femmes Africa Solidarité FAS was created in 1996 and, in its early years, played an active role in engaging women in conflict management and resolution. Regarding 1325, the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) – network of more than 100 civil society groups, particularly women's associations, located in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia – emerged as an initiative of FAS in 2000 with the aim of advancing the role of women in promoting peace, security and development in the Mano River sub-region.[173]

WANEP/WIPNET

Women In Peace-building Network (WIPNET) was created in 2001 as a programme of the West African Network for Peace (WANEP)[174] to mobilise women, build their capacity and encourage collaboration among them to build lasting peace and promote human security in West Africa. WIPNET's focus is on the integration of women's concerns and their participation in policy formulation and implementation in peace and security issues in the sub-region.

Its main objectives include the development of policy recommendations for mainstreaming women's issues in peace and security; strengthening links between policy makers, technocrats and women's groups; strengthening capacity of rural/grassroots women in peace-building at community and national levels; building strategic partnerships with women's networks in other regions; and sustaining women's participation in formal peace-building in West Africa. In November 2004, WIPNET held a consultation with women's groups and the ECOWAS Gender Unit to develop a policy framework for mainstreaming women's issues in peace and security in West Africa. WIPNET has also been active in the *localisation of training methodology and UN Security Council Resolution 1325*. WIPNET translated

its specialised training manual and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and security, into seven local/indigenous West African languages. In November 2005, the Fourth Annual WIPNET Regional Conference was dedicated to the theme of 'Revisiting United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Opportunities and Challenges for the Future.

Box 2: Draft ECOWAS Conflict and Prevention Framework – Women in Peace

The objective of the Women Peace and Security component of ECPF shall be to promote women's role and contribution to centre stage in the design, elaboration, implementation and evaluation of conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building initiatives while strengthening regional and national systems for the protection and advancement of women.

To enhance the visibility and impact of women in peace and security, the following activities shall be prioritised:

a. The Department of Human Development and Gender and the Gender Centre, in collaboration with identifiable networks of women organizations in West Africa to study the gendered impact of conflicts on women and map out their role in the emerging ECOWAS security architecture.

b. Adopt a regional policy to combat discrimination against women in all its forms, including in inheritance, pay differentials, female genital mutilation (FGM), arranged marriages and girl-child labour.

c. Develop programmes to enhance the capacity of women organizations in project design and implementation and support them with targeted financial and equipment packages.

d. Develop targeted programmes to enhance the leadership, negotiation and dispute resolution skills within women organizations.

e. Adopt an ECOWAS policy to include women in the leadership of fact-finding and peace missions, and in peace negotiations.

f. Establishment of 'Young Women's Fellowship' programme with the collaboration of institutions of higher learning and the private sector in ECOWAS and other regional institutions working on peace and security.

g. Mainstream gender in all aspects of the ECOWAS peace architecture.

h. Put women organizations at the forefront of community and crossborder peace initiatives, reintegration processes, as well as programmes to combat human trafficking, HIV/AIDS and STDs.

i. Adopt affirmative policies to enhance girl-child education.

Women Peace and Security Network - Africa (WIPSEN-Africa) was formally launched at the Strategic Reflection Forum for Women in Peace-building, with the theme Institutionalising Women Peace and Security in Africa, held at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana, 21-24 May 2007.[175] According to its blog, WIPSEN is a Pan African network committed to institutionalising women, peace and security in Africa, with a core mandate to institutionalise women peace and security in Africa. WIPSEN-Africa is both women-led and focused; and envisions a 'violence-free, non-discriminatory continent that fosters peaceful coexistence, equality, collective ownership and the full participation of particularly women in decision making on peace and security'.

Broader in scope, the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) was created in 2003, arising out of 'the need to create an institutionalised dialogue between regional civil society organisation (CSOs) and the ECOWAS Secretariat' (now ECOWAS Commission).[176] Gender is one of WACSOF's programme areas.[177] As part of its recommendations to the ECOWAS Council of Ministers' Meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (18-19 December 2006) WACSOF called for the implementation of Resolution 1325, and urged 'the implementation of the ECOWAS Gender Policy and the ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women'.[178]

In a nutshell, therefore, Resolution 1325 has featured, and is increasingly featuring, on the West African peace and security landscape both within the peace and security architecture and in the activities and programmes of civil society organisations. However, gender peace and security mainstreaming in West Africa is not far beyond infancy, and several challenges remain on the path of the goals of 1325.

Challenges of Implementing 1325 in West Africa

The Resilience of Mindsets: In the final analysis, what 1325 seeks is a change in the mindsets of all the actors engaged in peace and security in the direction of gender mainstreaming and inclusion. Seeking a fundamental change in attitudes, social practices and ways of thinking which are centuries old is necessarily a long term project which requires sustained efforts. This is particularly so when the very institutions on which the success of 1325 depends continue to be dominated and directed by men. In this regard, it is important that 1325 has, ultimately, a political objective of altering power relations between men and women. A degree of resistance is therefore to be expected.

The increase in intra-state armed conflict, often deliberately targeting civilians, typically featuring armed non-state groups, means that state-based instruments such as Resolution 1325 are not sufficient to protect women as these groups deliberately disregard such normative instruments. 1325 therefore faces the dilemma of several other international legal and normative documents which are state-based and, to that extent, are of limited practical value on the ground.

For instance, despite the Security Council's many strategic initiatives to pro-mote gender equality and support the empowerment of women, its attention to gender issues is not systematic. Since the adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000, as of 30 June 2006, only 55 of 200, or 26.07 per cent, of country-specific Council resolutions include language on women or gender.[179] With specific regard to West Africa, women's representation remains marginal in ECOWAS institutions. Un-like the African Union which has agreed on a 50 per cent quota for women at the level of AU Commissioners, ECOWAS lacks such a quota. Among the latter's seven statutory Commissioners, only one is a woman. In addition, beyond stand-ards setting at a macro level, there are accompanying benchmarks and timelines specified for the achievement of the lofty objectives of 1325.

1325 is Necessary, but not Sufficient: The sheer distance between norms and prac-tice on gender and the depth of the marginalisation of women in social organi-sation and governance in Africa means that a lot more is required than the provi-sion of adequate legal frameworks, useful and desirable as these may be.

The widespread and continued flagrant discrimination of women and girls; the use of rape as a weapon of war, torture and dehumanisation; the mere act of lip service exhibited by public office holders to gender equality and women's empowerment concerns and the concomitant lack of genuine political will on the part of governments to commit to the implementation of the instruments they have signed on to; persistent gender inequality, injustices, the reinforcement of patriarchy within typically male-dominated peace and security structures, are some of the factors responsible for the persistent gaps between the goals of 1325 and its realisation in West Africa. In addition to 1325 therefore, governance and legal reforms that address discriminatory laws against women are necessary at both regional and national levels. As noted elsewhere, while international law may seek to address gender inequalities, social norms do not necessarily advance in line with these changes, and women often remain politically and economically disadvantaged. The tension between discriminatory customary law and state or international law must be recognised in post-conflict reconstruction strategies.[180]

Grassroots Imperatives of 1325: Undoubtedly, Resolution 1325 is a watershed political framework for addressing the challenges faced by women, particularly in post conflict reconstruction. In reality, however, a wide gulf often exists between the perspectives and priorities of ordinary, mostly uneducated and rural women, on the one hand, and African women elite who lead the gender debate and who (ostensibly on behalf of ordinary African women) lead the debate and enter into dialogue with international organisations and donors. The challenge therefore is the need to ensure that strategies for localising and contextualising 1325 in West Africa are based on, and reflect the energies and priorities of ordinary women at the grassroots level in several villages and communities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter used Resolution 1325 as template for addressing peace and security in West Africa from a gender perspective. It is not, and does not claim to be, a comprehensive assessment of the role of women in peace and security in West Africa. In any event, such an exercise is an on-going process, the scope of which is far beyond the reach of a single analysis. The paper's modest contribution has been that of a methodology for measuring the implementation of global legal and normative instruments in specific regional contexts. Conceivably, therefore, the methodology used here for ECOWAS, can be used for other regions within and beyond Africa, in assessing specific responses to global normative standards and frameworks. Given the fact that Resolution 1325 is only as good as its implementation, the use of Resolution 1325 as a yardstick for gender-based regional assessments is recommended for other parts of Africa and beyond.

The chapter noted that the main ECOWAS peace and security instruments largely reflect and comply with 1325. The more recent instruments such as the ECPF and the Small Arms Convention make specific reference to the Resolution. In terms of implementation, however, the paper concludes that several gaps remain. The ECOWAS bureaucratic decision-making structure still manifests a deficit with regard women. An overwhelming percentage of posts are still held by men, without any specific quota for women, or even a timeline in this regard. The interface between Resolution 1325 and the ECOWAS peace and security architecture and experiences raises several issues of policy relevance, for which the paper puts forward the following specific recommendations:

ESF Missions: ECOWAS has an impressive record of innovative regional peace-keeping missions, starting with the ECOMOG (now ECOWAS Standby Force) intervention in Liberia, followed by Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire. With the adoption of 1325, it is recommended that deliberate steps should be taken to ensure that subsequent ESF missions comply with 1325. As with UN missions, future ESF missions should include Gender Advisors, in addition to other gender mainstreaming approaches detailed in 1325. Special Representatives of the ECOWAS President should include women.

ECOWAS Gender Quota System: The ECOWAS Commission should introduce a quota system, so as to guarantee women effective participation in decision making related to peace and security and other aspects of regional integration. Within the larger ECOWAS Commission bureaucracy, affirmation action policies should be further entrenched to encourage the interest of women in working for the organisation, particularly in the field of peace and security.

Gender Disaggregated Information and Data: Gender-specific analysis, information and data are necessary to paint a clearer picture of the challenges facing women, particularly during and after conflict. Such an approach would enhance planning for ESF operations.

1325 National and Regional Plan of Action: 1325 Plans of Action: ECOWAS states should pass national implementation action plans for 1325, which should flow from, and comply with, a regional ECOWAS action plan.

Strengthening the ECOWAS Gender Unit: As detailed above, the ECOWAS Gender Unit is in the process of developing a viable policy framework, which forms an essential part of the draft ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework.

In this regard, it is important to ensure that the Gender Unit has the necessary human, financial and technical resources available to meet the demands of implementing regional policy frameworks and for supporting national action plans, as suggested above. The development of prioritised Plans of Action, with measurable targets, would be essential. Within the broader framework of regional integration and the indivisibility of human security, it is also important that the ECOWAS gender agenda is linked to (and, ideally, forms an essential part of), continental initiatives on gender and security, particularly of the African Union. In this regard, the AU Maputo Declaration of 2003 forms an essential guide for the ECOWAS Gender Unit.

Identifying and Multiplying Best Practices: A combination of factors enables good practices on women peace and security which should be identified and advocated (by the ECOWAS Gender Unit) for duplication within the ECOWAS region. For example, the post-conflict reconstruction process in Liberia manifests encouraging elements of gender mainstreaming which is worthy of duplication. The deployment of the UN's first all-female peacekeeping contingent, the quota policy of recruiting at least 20 per cent women in the police, the appointment of a female Police Chief are all worthy of encouragement and emulation in other parts of Africa. The specificity of context must, however, be stressed.

The post-conflict context of Liberia, propelled by the reality of Africa's first elected female President, makes it a unique but encouraging signpost for what is desirable and possible elsewhere.

Civil Society Advocacy: Civil society organisations should sustain sensitisation campaigns and localisation of 1325 in order to improve on the understanding of gender, and to bring 1325 closer to the teeming masses of ordinary, particularly rural African women.

PART II

ECOWAS' Institutional Responses

to Conflicts

9

ECOWAS and Regional Responses to Conflicts

Abdel-Fatau Musah

Introduction

This paper traces the trajectory of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) from an organisation preoccupied with economic matters at inception to an emerging Regional Security Community today. It argues that, over the last thirty-five years, the changing global and regional human security dynamics have dictated the organisation's journey, often obliging it to juggle between its original mandate and emerging priorities. Starting with a discussion about the original *raison d'être* of ECOWAS, the paper tracks the organisation's daring forays into hard regional security matters as events force it to recognise the unavoidable relationship between development and security. Learning on its feet, the Organisation has responded to the realities on the ground by fashioning normative frameworks to underpin its practice in marrying economic integration with regional security.

The paper recognises the challenges facing ECOWAS. These relate to, on the one hand, contentious issues of national sovereignty and the Anglophone-Francophone divide that tend to slow down progress and; on the other, internal human and financial resource constraints and West Africa's status as one of the most impoverished regions of the world, have limited its achievements over the years. Nonetheless, the paper concludes that ECOWAS has performed creditably over the years and it is rightly seen today as a pace setter in continental integration processes within the framework of the human security agenda. To this end, the paper argues that the transformation of ECOWAS from a Secretariat into a Commission in 2007 with greater supranational powers (at least on paper, but has to go beyond the paper) has the potential to boost the regional integration drive at the institutional and programmatic levels, not least in the field of peace and security.

The Genesis of ECOWAS

ECOWAS emerged in May 1975 at the height of the Cold War. Proxy wars were the order of the day, with France pitching its wits against the Anglo-Saxon Axis, and the Communist Soviet Union and Maoist China forcing their way into the cracks created by the battles between the traditional powers. France saw Nigeria as too large and a threat to its *chasse gardée* – Francophone West Africa – which was in the making using the economic might of Cote d'Ivoire and the cultural heritage of Senegal. For example, Cote d'Ivoire was used as an instrument in the attempt to break up Nigeria during the Biafra War. Politically, dictators and autocratic civilo-military diarchies held sway in almost all the countries in the sub-region. On the economic front, a global economic downturn and the inability of individual raw material-based economies of the sub-region to compete at the world stage deepened economic hardships and instability.

Given the geo-strategic environment at the time, it was next to impossible to propose any common security umbrella for the sub-region. Consequently, when two military rulers – the Anglophone General Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria and the Francophone General Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo – came up with the idea of a common regional organisation, they sold the least line of resistance – economic integration – as the basis of integration to guarantee the acceptance of the project. Even then Cameroun, to the immediate east of Nigeria and naturally belonging to the West African sub-region, declined the invitation fearing the dominance of Nigeria.

The Treaty establishing ECOWAS came into being in May 1975 with a vision to create a single regional economic space as a building block for the continental common market, through integration and collective self-reliance; an economic space with a single market and single currency capable of generating accelerated socio-economic development and competing more meaningfully in the global market of large trade blocs and uneven patterns of trade between the industrialised Global North and raw material-based economies of the Global South. The attempts at the time to address the issues of peace and security were informed by the realities of Cold War politics. The key normative documents on peace and security then were the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression, followed later in 1981 by the Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defense, both of which were designed primarily to reinforce state sovereignty by addressing external threats and aggression. The boldest attempt by the organisation to bridge the linguistic and political divide came in 1979 with the adoption of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment. The protocol set out the vision and principles to underpin the creation of a borderless sub-region with a common community citizenship of equal rights.

The New Threats to Development, Peace and Security

Fast-forwarding to the mid-1980s, new global dynamics and local responses had emerged to threaten a derailment of the ECOWAS economic integration efforts. The easing of Cold War tensions was accompanied by a dramatic spike in violent internal power struggles that threatened state implosion across the continent. It did not take long for ECOWAS to realise the changing nature of threats to stability. It became obvious that a nexus existed between the so-called internal conflicts and collective development efforts. Barely a decade after the creation of ECOWAS, violent internal conflicts erupted in Liberia (1989) and Sierra Leone (1991) as a new phenomenon not confined to the borders of individual nation states, but with serious regional implications, both in their causes and effects. So similar were the cause of the wars that all the member-States of the sub-region could identify with them. They included the unequal and unfair burden of poverty on different social and ethnic groups within the community, bad governance and the denial of human rights and the rule of law. They also included endemic corruption, a lack of probity and accountability in political and natural resource governance, exclusion and, above all, a population explosion and infrastructure collapse that had created a major youth crisis.

Starting off as internal struggles for power and control over resources, these devastating conflicts soon took on a regionalised nature, fuelled by the illegal exploitation and exchange of natural resources for the acquisition of small arms and light weapons and characterised by the proliferation of private armies without borders made up of mercenaries, dispossessed youth and bandits. It quickly became clear that the mechanisms that were put in place to safeguard national sovereignty and ward off external aggression were grossly inadequate to meet the challenges of an increasingly interdependent region in which the ripples of refugee flows, disrupted infrastructure, the proliferation of weapons and the export of violence, were felt far and beyond national borders.

The ECOWAS Response

The regionalised 'internal' conflicts threatened to derail the original economic agenda of ECOWAS. Worse still, the implosion of states in the sub-region coincided with the spread of global anarchy that followed the collapse of the former Soviet Union and, most notably, the beginning of the First Gulf War. With the attention of the international community focused elsewhere – Africa no longer of interest to the major western powers (except for the buying and selling of primary commodities and mineral resources), therefore, ECOWAS had to reposition itself and act locally to avert the looming regional crises. However, the legal instruments and protocols in the possession of ECOWAS at the time only anticipated inter-state and not intra-state conflicts. For example, the existing

protocols were clearly designed to prevent conflicts between member states; nothing was in place for 'interference' in the internal affairs of member states. In the absence of an enabling legal framework for intervention there was division amongst its leadership, thus complicating efforts to resolve the conflicts in the sub-region. While some states dragged their feet, citing the respect of the OAU's 'non-interference' principle to justify inaction, others argued, quite rightly, that 'non-interference' should not be equated with indifference to grave human rights violations. ECOWAS, led by a coalition of willing states, overcame the absence of an enabling legal framework for intervention by initially creating ad-hoc mechanisms and, thereafter, more permanent structures through a systemic search for conflict prevention and conflict management tools to address the compelling dynamics of the new conflicts. The creation of the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to intervene in Liberia and Sierra Leone was, therefore, an act of absolute necessity dictated by the unfolding realities. It also heralded the period when, for a time, the military agenda overshadowed the economic preoccupation of ECOWAS.

Militarily, few ECOWAS member states had the capability to undertake strategic force generation and projection without outside assistance. The absence of interoperability – uniform operational doctrine and equipment – between the Anglophone and Francophone troops contributing states was further compounded by the fact that no structure existed at the then ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to manage peacekeeping operations since ECOWAS was designed primarily to serve economic integration. By August 1990, there were 225,000 Liberian refugees in Guinea, 150,000 in Cote d'Ivoire, 69,000 in Sierra Leone and a huge Liberian colony in Nigeria. Furthermore, 5,000 people had been killed and about 3,000 Nigerian, Ghanaian and Sierra Leonean citizens were being held hostage by the insurgents from National Patriotic Front of Liberia led by Charles Taylor. The apparent global 'disinterest' in the unfolding drama and the humanitarian imperative left ECOWAS with no other choice but to react to stop the carnage.

Under a shaky peace agreement, the ECOMOG Force that was put together in a rush was meant to supervise a cease-fire, while an interim government was to be established, which would organise elections after twelve months. ECOMOG was designed primarily as a peacekeeping force and had no mandate to enforce the peace. When the troops arrived, they were stiffly resisted by the rebel group. On the ground, the troops had to switch between self-defense, peace-enforcement, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. It took a lot of courage, trial and error tactics in uncharted waters, and commitment by a few member states, particularly Nigeria, for ECOMOG to eventually emerge with a reasonable degree of credibility and accomplishment. In the end, though, the economic and human toll of the intervention on ECOMOG forced the regional organisation to *de-facto* cede control of the country to Charles Taylor through elections that he was bound

to win, not because he was loved, but because the population was tired of war and feared that any other outcome would prolong it. Thus began the disastrous reign of Taylor in 1997.

Building on Experiences: From Ad-hoc to Permanent Structures for Peace and Security

With subsequent missions, however, ECOWAS responses to crises became more rapid and an incremental projection of professionalism was clearly visible in later interventions in Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Liberia again in 2003 and, more recently, in Cote d'Ivoire. Moreover, serious thought was now given to the development of robust institutional frameworks for conflict management. From then on, ECOWAS leaders raised peace and security matters to the same status as the development agenda and enacted new statutes to reflect the new realities.

The ECOWAS Peace and Security Mechanism

The ECOWAS Treaty was revised in 1993 to confer supranationality on the regional body. In 1999, the institution adopted the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (The Mechanism), followed closely by the adoption of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001. Together, these legal instruments constituted a comprehensive framework for confronting the new threats to peace and security on a more permanent basis and dealing with the entire conflict chain from pre-crisis tensions through to peace-building. The Mechanism provided for the establishment of the Early Warning System and organs including the Council of the Wise, Special Mediators and Offices of the Special Representative for the gathering and analysis of conflict indicators and preventive diplomatic work respectively. The ECOWAS Council of the Wise is one instrument that has been utilised in various mediation efforts and also in the observation and monitoring of elections, which have become a major trigger to conflicts in the sub-region. The ECOWAS President also deploys Special Representatives to conflicts zones to interface with local actors, AU, EU and UN representatives on the ground to monitor daily developments and intervene in a timely manner to diffuse potential tensions during peace processes. Additionally, ECOWAS fields Special Mediators to complement the efforts of representatives on the ground. The Organisation established the Mediation and Security Council as the highest decision making body on peace and security, advised by the meetings of the Defense and Security Commission (now Committee) of Chiefs of Defense Staff and the Executive Secretary (now the President). The adoption of the Mechanism was a landmark event and represented the most advanced attempt yet at creating a 'Security Community' on the continent. The OAU was later to borrow extensively from it to underpin the evolving continental peace and security architecture.

Testing the Mechanism

When crisis erupted in Cote d'Ivoire in September 2002, the implementation of the Mechanism was still in its early stages, but, thanks to it, the political and military responses to the conflict were markedly different. The Mechanism was activated. The Defense and Security Committee, the Mediation and Security Council and the Authority of Heads of State and Government played their roles as required by the Mechanism. In fact, ECOMICI rapidly deployed and quickly stabilised the situation.

Given the resource handicap facing ECOWAS, the institution requested for assistance from UNDPKO and member states for the ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (ECOMICI). The ECOMICI advance team sent in to conduct a reconnaissance of the theatre of operation received assistance from France, which operated a military base in Bouake in the north. The US also sent officers to assist. Logistics were provided principally by France, USA, Belgium, UK and a host of other European countries. Thus, unlike Liberia and Sierra Leone, the launching of ECOMICI was indeed an example of international cooperation in support of ECOWAS. The same pattern was later repeated in the preparations for, and deployment of, the second ECOMOG Mission to Liberia (ECOMIL). Indeed, the post-Mechanism ECOMOG missions served principally as bridgeheads for the later deployment of larger UN, as well as international humanitarian missions, through 're-hatting'. It is no coincidence that the latter-day ECOWAS interventions were characterised by greater civilian political oversight, fewer civilian casualties and instances of human rights violations.

That ECOWAS has developed a comparative advantage in the area of conflict management and has become a reference point in the continent is beyond question. With every new threat to peace and security, ECOWAS has been perfecting its capacity for early response. This has been amply demonstrated by the organisation's ability to contain the crises in Guinea Bissau (2003) and Togo (2005), and preventing the descent of the political upheavals into outright war.

Cooperation between ECOWAS, AU and UN in Peace and Security

The design and implementation of ECOWAS strategies to meet the challenges of regional peace and security are carried out in close collaboration with the African Union and the United Nations. Among other initiatives, the ECOWAS Early Warning System and the evolving ECOWAS Standby Force (successor to ECOMOG) are constitutive elements of the continental peace and security architecture. In the area of peace support operations, ECOWAS has always acted in concert with the African Union and UN, with the latter often designating Special Representatives to conflict zones to interface with ECOWAS. Currently, the AU has appointed mediators to Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Togo, among others.

ECOWAS and AU

Since the creation of the OAU in May 1963, several African leaders have been putting forward the idea of a standing continental force – the African High Command – capable of rapid intervention to maintain peace on the continent. This idea is coming to fruition under the auspices of the AU through the establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF). The idea flows logically from recommendations in the Brahimi Report on the reform of UN peace support operations, particularly with regard to the setting up of a Standing High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). Designed for rapid deployment in peace-keeping, the ASF comprises five brigades, one brigade to be provided by each of the five African Regional Economic Communities. The evolving 'Standby' approach will provide ECOWAS and AU with a rapid force generation capability in times of emergencies. Under the arrangement, military and civilian units will be identified, trained and equipped in member states ready for contingency operations. It also provides for the development of standardised operational procedures to enhance interoperability, and the creation of logistics depots in the continent to facilitate rapid deployment, self-reliance and sustainability of future operations (ECOWAS is already setting up such a depot in Sierra Leone).

With active financial and logistical support from UN and development partners, particularly the EU, ECOWAS is well placed to be the first REC to deliver its brigade to the ASF. To promote these initiatives, ECOWAS has set up a Mission Planning and Management Cell, and is actively training personnel – military and civilian – in member states. The Nigerian National Defense Academy, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana and the Malian Military Academy in Bamako have been identified as centres of excellence to spearhead capacity building at the strategic, operational and tactical levels respectively.

At the AU Summit in Accra in July 2007, the decision was taken to accredit REC liaison officers to the African Union to ensure better coordination between the institutions. Building on this initiative, the RECs and AU signed a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding at the January 2008 Summit in Addis Ababa to increase cooperation and collaboration between them in the implementation of the continent's peace and security agenda. The MOU is underpinned by the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantage. Thus, while recognising the primary responsibility of AU in the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, the memorandum also acknowledges the role and responsibility of RECs in these domains in their respective regions of mandate. The MOU identifies nine areas of cooperation, namely the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture; conflict prevention, management and resolution; humanitarian action and disaster response; post-conflict reconstruction and development; arms control and

disarmament; counter-terrorism and the prevention and combating of trans-
national organised crime; border management; capacity building, training and
knowledge sharing; and resource mobilisation.

ECOWAS and the UN

Over the past two decades, more so in the last ten years, ECOWAS has been
steadily developing collaborative action with the United Nations system in the
area of peacekeeping and peace-building. It would be recalled that the UN Charter
confers on the UN Security Council the ultimate responsibility to order military
intervention in a member state to guarantee international peace and security.
Consequently, ECOMOG military interventions in conflicts have to receive prior
authorisation or eventual validation from the UN to secure legitimacy. Importantly,
Chapter Eight of the UN Charter recognises the possibility of regional institutions,
such as ECOWAS, taking appropriate action over matters relating to international
peace and security, provided such institutions and/or their activities are consistent
with the purpose and principles of the UN.

All peace agreements relating to recent conflicts in the sub-region have been
negotiated under the coordinated and collaborative umbrella of ECOWAS, AU,
UN and EU. The comparative advantage of UN in expertise, human and financial
resources has ensured that peacekeeping operations have often transited from
ECOWAS mandate to that of the UN or been carried out jointly. Also, the very
important DDR components of peace support operations, as well as capacity-
building and post-conflict elections, have always been conducted under the auspices
of the UN but in consultation with ECOWAS. Indeed, ECOMOG has always
intervened in conflicts in West Africa to create the necessary conditions for the
deployment of broader UN peacekeeping missions.

Thus, a new formula for crisis response based on the Mechanism is slowly
evolving whereby, with the emergence of internal conflict or unrest, an immediate
political solution is sought through fact-finding missions and facilitation, using the
ECOWAS Council of the Wise and Special Mediators. Failing a resolution, a
vanguard force may be dispatched to separate belligerents and limit the spread
and adverse impact of the conflict. Based on the situation, the force is expanded
and stabilisation sought. Finally, as negotiated and based on need, the ECOWAS
force is converted to a UN mission. This 'formula for success' has already taken
place in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire.

On broader human security matters, ECOWAS maintains effective cooperation
with the UN Regional Office for West Africa in the fight against cross-border
and transnational crime, and youth employment, and the two institutions have
been probing areas of joint action on broader conflict prevention issues..

The Scourge of Small Arms

In the conflicts that have engendered severe insecurity and hampered developmental efforts in West Africa, small arms and light weapons have become veritable weapons of mass destruction. Estimated at 8 million in circulation in West Africa, these weapons have fuelled conflicts, facilitated the spread of armed non-state actors and the upsurge in crime and banditry post-conflict. In the efforts to stem the flow of these weapons, ECOWAS adopted a Moratorium in 1999 on the importance and exportation of weapons and promoted in-country as cross-border initiatives in a micro-disarmament drive. With the assistance of UNDP and developing partners from EU, ECOWAS has converted the Moratorium into a permanent binding instrument to counter this scourge. Further, a dedicated Small Arms Unit has been set up at the ECOWAS Commission to provide a strategic framework for the fight against weapons proliferation, complemented by a UNDP – supported operational field unit – the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Project (ECOSAP).

Promoting Good Governance and Democracy as a Conflict Prevention Strategy

ECOWAS places a high premium on political governance, evolution of democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. In the past, weak governance had blighted the development of many West African countries. Manifestations of weak governance included bad government policies and an economic and political climate that discouraged investment in the ECOWAS region. They also included corruption and bureaucratic systems that were impervious to scrutiny and not answerable to the public, as well as the absence of strong mechanisms that ensured that peoples' voices were heard and their rights upheld, such as parliaments, the media and the justice system.

Over the last decade, however, several West African countries have demonstrated a firm commitment to sound democratic practices by creating the required peaceful and stable framework for political and economic governance. The ECOWAS/NEPAD agenda places a high premium on deepening democratic culture and achieving good governance in West Africa. ECOWAS Member States adopted the Protocol on Democracy and Good governance in December 2001 as a supplementary protocol to the mechanism on Conflict Prevention. Together, the two ECOWAS protocols provide the supernatural framework and authority for ECOWAS intervention in Member States on issues relating to governance, democratic culture and human rights, respect for constitutionalism and the rule of law, probity and accountability, peace and security.

Emanating from these protocols is ECOWAS adherence to the policy of 'zero tolerance' towards unconstitutional and violent usurpation of power, backed by a strong determination to ensure credible, transparent, and free and fair elections

in the sub-region. This new policy was amply demonstrated by the proactive steps that ECOWAS took in Guinea-Bissau in 2003 to oppose the military coup d'etat and also in 2005, when ECOWAS stepped in to ensure a succession that was in conformity with the constitution of Togo, following the death of President Gnassingbe Eyadema.

Drawing from a pool of experts provided by Member-States, ECOWAS Council of Elders, the ECOWAS Parliament and West African civil society organisations, ECOWAS has established the practice of fielding pre-election fact-finding missions, election monitoring and observation teams in the course of electoral processes in West African States. Together with counter-part missions from development partners, such as the EU and other international organisations, the practice has not only assured proper national preparations towards elections, it has also greatly reduced election-induced violence and improved the credibility and transparency of elections in West Africa.

Over the last decade, as a consequence, we have witnessed measurable progress in the consolidation of democracy in several countries. As a measure of the progress made, five states have already agreed to submit themselves to the NEPAD Peer Review Process. Ghana, Senegal, Cape Verde and Benin have reached the threshold for debt cancellation under the PRSP programme and have also qualified for substantial assistance from the US under the Millennium Challenge Account.

To streamline and operationalise election intervention, ECOWAS has established the Electoral Assistance Unit within the secretariat to work with member states and civil society institutions, as well as the evolution and harmonisation of systems, processes and electoral procedures that produce transparent, free and fair results. Keen observers of West Africa, and indeed Africa, will not have failed to realise the pivotal role that civil society has played and continues to play in the incremental transition towards open societies and the law in the sub-region. There have been valiant acts of student movements, organised as well as unorganised labour, professional associations, actors in the formal sector, research institutes, churches and mosques, traditional rulers, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations in the relentless struggle against dictatorship, military rule and bad governance in West Africa. Commendable as their actions have been, these important institutions have tended to be weak and their interventions often spontaneous and uncoordinated.

In the efforts to streamline and valorise CSO contributions to peace and security, ECOWAS facilitated the emergence of a coordinating structure for the disparate civil society groups in West Africa with the help of development partners and leading West African NGOs. As a consequence, the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) was created in December 2003 with the objective of facilitating the emergence of networks of CSOs in member-states, enhancing their organisational capacity and mobilising critical civil society inputs across the

sub-region to strengthen and accompany ECOWAS interventions and dialogue with external partners.

Intensifying the Integration Agenda under a New Vision

Having pointed to the original *raison d'être* of ECOWAS – regional economic integration – it is necessary to emphasise that ECOWAS continues to march relentlessly towards integration under its new vision and within the framework of the AU vision, the NEPAD initiative and the UN Millennium Development Goals. The belief is that it is the only sustainable way that the root causes of conflict can be tackled. In addition to the obvious imperative for peace and security, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) recognises infrastructure development, good political and economic governance as necessary pre-conditions for sustainable socio-economic development and human security. Though ECOWAS has been engaged in many aspects of NEPAD goals for several years even before the formal launching of NEPAD, the opportunities the initiative provided is appreciated as a usual platform for dialogue with development partners and, more importantly, for inter-state interaction and peer learning. Further, NEPAD helps RECs to refocus their objectives and link regional initiatives to continental development programmes. This logic convinced West African leaders to designate ECOWAS as the focal point for NEPAD implementation and regional trade negotiations with the EU.

The New ECOWAS Vision and its Priorities

ECOWAS has kept its mission objectives under regular review, taking on board the new regional and global dynamics. The new vision of ECOWAS aims to create a borderless sub-region in which the peoples enjoy its enormous resources through the creation of opportunities of production and jobs; a space in which the people transact business and trade and live in peace within the rule of law; a zone that forms an integral part of the larger African continental space, under construction, within an even border (meaning?) context of a global village where all human beings live in dignity through an equitable exchange and mutual solidarity.

The overall objectives of ECOWAS' vision are, therefore, to sustain economic growth and promote intra-ECOWAS trade, develop regional infrastructure, promote and sustain social and environmental harmony, eradicate poverty and food insecurity; enhance trade negotiation capability and regional access to markets; and maintain regional peace and security. To this end, ECOWAS has adopted strategies to roll out regional infrastructure, including rail and road networks, power generation, schools and other social amenities. It aimed to adopt a common regional currency – the Eco – by 2010 to boost regional trade, having already implemented a visa-free regime within the sub-region to facilitate free movement and common citizenship. Further, it has adopted common regional poverty reduction and agricultural policies in the fight against poverty with a view to ensuring food security.

Prioritising Conflict Prevention

To build and sustain peace and stability, there is the need to go beyond contain-ment, often by military measures, towards strategies aimed at the core causes of societal discord. Indeed, at the centre of the root causes of conflict is alienation borne out of the unequal burden of poverty, the scramble for limited economic opportunities and power which, in turn, set off systemic marginalisation, exclusion and institutional corruption. Against the backdrop of a population boom in West Africa, and indeed in the entire continent, the pressures on the economies and the entire society cannot be underestimated.

The UNDP Human Development Report, while not without its limitations, remains the only authoritative document that attempts to offer a comprehensive comparative study of the state of human development between the regions of the world. The 2006 Report puts West Africa in a disturbingly bad light in relation to other parts of the world, despite the relative progress in the democratisation progress in the past few years. The report divides the 177 states examined into three broad categories of human development – high, medium and low. Needless to emphasise, all West Africa states except, perhaps two, fall under the Low Human Development categories, with the last five spots in the global league table occupied by our sub-region. Against this backdrop, West Africa is experiencing the fastest population growth and youth bulge in the world. From the figure of 120 million in 1975, West Africa's population is projected to hit 430 million by 2020, with 45 per cent under the age of 15. With current average annual economic growth of 4 – 4.5 per cent and population growth rates at 3.5 per cent, the sub-region would need to grow its economy at the rate of 7 per cent per annum to have any meaningful impact on poverty reduction. While the report credits sub-Saharan Africa with an appreciable rise in literacy rates among the youth (within 15-24 age bracket) at 71 per cent, the figure masks the quality deficiencies, gender and ethnic distortions and the dearth of employment opportunities for the youth.

Against the backdrop of weakening state capacity to feed, educate and facilitate employment opportunities for their populations, these statistics are laden with foreboding implications. In the conflicts that ravaged the West Africa sub-region only a few years ago, the unemployed and unemployable youth became the endless pool from which warlords and other adventures recruited foot soldiers and marauding bandits to terrorise their populations. Some of the roots of the phenomenon of non-state combatants, child soldiers and suicide bombers can be traced to the problem of the youth crisis, and the need to critically examine the factors that engender them.

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework

As can be seen from preceding paragraphs, the ECOWAS peace and security architecture boasts an impressive array of instruments, not least the mechanism,

for the top-down approaches to interventions in times of crisis. The inadequacies of the mechanism become glaring, however, when one considers the helplessness of ECOWAS when dealing with so-called internal conflicts, particularly in 'ungovernable spaces', such as Casamance, the Niger Delta and trouble spots in the north of Ghana, Mali and Niger. The organisation has been weak in promoting the bottom-up approaches to peace-building, using its resources on the ground and local peace constituencies. Remedying the situation calls for a conflict prevention mechanism that would promote cooperation between ECOWAS, member states and civil society in dealing with causes of conflicts, rather than their effects.

Recognising these challenges, the organisation in January 2008 adopted the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework as a tool to encourage such cooperation among ECOWAS resources and stakeholders on the ground around key conflict-inducing factors. The rationale for adopting the ECPF is to raise conflict prevention and peace-building to the same status as the development agenda. Its core objective is to strengthen and consolidate the human security architecture in West Africa, i.e. the creation of conditions to eliminate pervasive threats to people's and individual rights, livelihoods, safety and life; the protection of human and democratic rights and the promotion of human development to ensure freedom from fear and freedom from want. The framework aims to encourage collaborative interventions by field ECOWAS resources (the Council of the Wise, field agencies and the Zonal Bureaux for Conflict Prevention) and local civil society peace constituencies in conflict prevention and peace-building around concrete initiatives. These include natural resource governance, security governance, youth empowerment, gender equality and cross-border initiatives. Other areas of concern in the framework include early warning and action, preventive diplomacy, political governance, human rights and peace education.

It is hoped that the active cooperation between civil society groups and ECOWAS in-country in the implementation of the Conflict Prevention Framework will enrich the ECOWAS peace and security architecture by filling the bottom-up approach gap.

Conclusion: Responses to Conflicts as Work in Progress

The evolving ECOWAS security architecture has been informed largely by the sometimes bitter field experiences that the organisation has endured in its attempts to respond to violence and insecurity in the sub-region. Consequently, it has been obliged to apply a trial and error methodology as it fathoms appropriate tools to respond to human and regional security challenges. In the event, ECOWAS has accumulated vast expertise in dealing with instability. Though its response mechanisms to conflict are far from perfect, they are rightly regarded as a trail blazer in the continent.

It is pertinent to recognise the limitations of ECOWAS in meeting the regional challenges that confront it. ECOWAS is yet to acquire a reasonable degree of real supranationality in relation to member states and, consequently, its ability to intervene in member states to address grave insecurity is very much a function of the political will of individual member states. In particular, ECOWAS is constrained in its ability to bring large and medium states in line with the provisions of the protocols that they have ratified, particularly with regard to political governance matters and local internal conflicts, such as Casamance and the Niger Delta. So far, ECOWAS has been able to intervene more decisively in member states whose internal governance institutions and processes have collapsed and where central authority is under severe challenge.

The effectiveness of ECOWAS's response mechanisms will eventually be determined by deepening the regional democratic processes to such an extent that there will be a regional consensus on what constitutes good governance. For this to happen, the role of civil society at the regional level and within individual member states is critical (as well as the role of community-based/grassroots organisations/ethnic nationality groups in valorising true citizenship for the mass majority of the people).

Not only are civil society organisations the critical institution to forge democratic spaces within member states around acceptable international and regional norms, despite their seeming elitist look, and the norms routinely violated and truncated by the major western powers when their salient geo-political, strategic and economic interests are at stake. The civil society also constitutes the pressure needed to oblige large and medium member states to comply with regional norms. Thus, to establish a functioning response mechanism to conflicts, ECOWAS must recognise the enormity of the security challenges in the sub-region and appreciate the fact that achieving its set targets would require not only the mobilisation of its member states and organised civil society to accompany the efforts, but also the forging of cooperation and collaboration with development partners. ECOWAS' desire and efforts to constructively engage West African civil society and build lasting relations with EU and other partners in the realisation of its agenda are informed by these realities.

Finally, much as it is necessary to prepare for active intervention to pacify violent enclaves and mitigate humanitarian emergencies, ECOWAS must place greater emphasis on prevention. ECOWAS must develop effective strategies to sanitise natural resource governance, facilitate in-country and regional infrastructure development, ensure youth employment and combat the HIV/AIDS and Malaria pandemics. To this end, the operationalisation of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework with critical stakeholders must constitute immediate ECOWAS priorities.

10

ECOWAS and Human Security

Olawale Ismail

Introduction

Since the turn of the 21st century, the security situation of West Africa appears to be improving with the end of civil conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia, and cautious progress in Cote d'Ivoire. Also, the possible outbreak of large-scale civil conflicts in Guinea and Niger appear remote for the time being following ECOWAS' mediation through its use of special envoys and members of the Council of the Wise. Available data, however controversial, appear to point to a decline in the number and incidence of armed conflicts after the upsurge of the 1990s. All of this suggests that the security landscape of the sub-region is ameliorating, thereby raising the critical question: is the sub-region, its member-states and its peoples safer from violence and catalytic upheavals? Indeed, this touches on the crucial – and yet to be fully resolved – contestation about human security: in terms of what is being secured? Against what? Who provides for security? And what method can be undertaken to provide for security?[181] The contestation often straddles the divide between security from 'fear' (violence) and 'want' (existential and developmental needs), both of which were reflected in the seven issues highlighted by the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Report.[182]

Ordinarily, the decline in the number of old and new armed conflict should elicit peace optimism. However, this chapter, focusing on human security component of security thinking, highlights the need for cautious optimism. It warns that despite the lull in rebellions and the commendable recalibration of ECOWAS peace and security architecture, the extent to which extant conflict prevention and management mechanisms reflect or adequately takes care of current and emerging security threats is yet to be adequately tested. This chapter focuses on challenges to the physical security and safety of citizens in the ECOWAS sub-

region. It interrogates how, where and why human security links up to the broader security debate in theory and practice. Through this discourse, it focuses on the 'freedom from fear' component of the broader human security agenda. It contends that emerging sources of human and material destruction, displacement and dislocation, and trans-border insecurity in the sub-region are inadequately reflected and/or prioritised in ECOWAS' peace and security architecture. This chapter acknowledges the commendable formulation, provisions and comprehensive understanding of the security (mostly conflict) condition in the sub-region through the new ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). However, it footnotes key challenges (resource, institutional and political will), as much as the possible dangers and limitations of pigeonholing human security largely through conflict prevention. It advocates the opposite – making conflict prevention a subset of a broader human security agenda (charter).

The chapter also highlights the need for a West African perspective (charter) on human security that encapsulates and prioritises the pervasive threats (including, but not limited to armed conflicts) to the security of persons in the community. Moreover, it argues that in spite of the transformation of ECOWAS into a supranational authority, the unclear and ineffective definition and untested political will to apply the human security normative principle of intervention (overriding sovereignty) are still major impediments to an effective response to human security challenges.

The rest of this chapter looks at the conceptual evolution of human security on the global arena and pinpoints the decisive role of post-Cold War failings in expected peace dividends as a major catalyst. This is followed by an assessment of emerging human security challenges in the ECOWAS sub-region, including sub-national violence, youth militias, disasters, transnational terrorism, and transnational refugee crises. The third section evaluates ECOWAS' human security architecture with a view to highlighting the need for a West African perspective (founded on a coherent human security agenda and strategy). The fourth section examines the opportunities and constraints to enhanced human security promotion by ECOWAS. The last section is a conclusion that sums up preceding arguments.

Understanding Human Security: The Evolution of a Concept

The word 'security' is rooted in the Latin expression 'Securitas' that translates to tranquillity, freedom from care and the absence of anxiety.[183] In its elementary definition, security means the absence of existential threats or dangers, that is, to be 'safe or feeling safe from harm and danger' or the absence of threats to acquired values.[184] The field of security studies began in the late 1940s in North America, principally focused on international security, national interests, and power politics, and centrally reflected an American perspective during the Cold War.

The field of international relations was, until 1990, dominated by the realist-neorealist[185] orthodoxy that constitutes security in a traditional, state-centric framework. According to realist thinking, states are central to understanding politics and security; the international system is anarchical as states are autonomous and lacking any supranational authority able to enforce its will independent of states; the capacity for, and the threat of, coercive force is the utmost resource in international politics and security; and finally, the constituent units of the international system, solely states, constantly face the classical 'security dilemmas' whereby the preparation for, and protection of, security by one state is perceived as a threat by another state.[186] In short, neo-realism see the state as the only referent of security, interprets security and threats to it in an objective manner (relying on naturalism – physical evidence) that is strictly confined to the political and military spheres, and see the source of insecurity to emanate from the external – the actions and inactions of other states.

The debate about human security started with the publication of the 1994 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) annual report, which raised the critical question of rethinking the intellectual and policy content of security.

The report noted the trade-off between inter and intra-state conflicts as civil conflicts became common; that feelings of insecurity arise from daily existential issues of hunger, deprivation, gender-based violence, religious and ethnic persecution and repression by the state and regimes, as opposed to a cataclysmic world event or the international system (UNDP 1994)[187].

The range of non-military 'threats' to states – the political problems of economic dislocation, political violence, the refugee phenomenon, and environmental degradation amongst others – raised critical questions about the continued usefulness of neo-realism as a policy and scholarly framework for understanding and dealing with the new threats.[188] The report sought to reformulate security to reflect universal applicability and adaptability; its components are inter-dependent given that threats transcend national borders; it is people-oriented; and able to direct policy focus on the people as opposed to the state. The report lists seven areas of potential concern for security – economics, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. It also lists the main threats to these new security issues to be unchecked population growth, disparities in economic opportunities, migration pressures, environmental degradation, drug trafficking, and international terrorism.[189]

Also, the security experience of the Third World was an added reason for the emergence of human security perspectives that challenged the traditional view of external sources of insecurity. According to Ayoob, the definition of in-security in Third World states includes internal and external vulnerabilities 'that threaten to, or have the potential to, bring down or significantly weaken state structures, both

territorial and institutional, and regimes'.[190] This links the scope of insecurity in many Third World states, mostly in the form of intra-state and civil conflicts, to their state-making process and as inherent features of their 'juridical' statehood.[191] It is also contended that the security experiences of Third World states is almost at variance with the preoccupations of realism – that is, the realist emphasis on inter-state security, military issues, and with the international balance of power are irrelevant to insecurity in Third World states.[192]

Theoretically, the profiling of human security in policy and academic discourse is rooted in the questioning of the dominant realist and neo-realist assumptions in mainstream international relations (and security studies) by new (post-positivist) approaches.[193]

Yet, the attempt to broaden and deepen security is not without its own contestations and tensions, thus reflecting the view that security is a contested and contestable concept. Not unexpectedly, the notion of human security has been fraught with serious definitional and ideological contestations at the level of theory and policy.[194] This contestability underlined the inability of the 2003 high-powered United Nations Commission on Human Security (UN-CHS) to arrive at a precise meaning and definition of human security. The commission defines human security as 'protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance freedoms and human fulfilment'.[195] Embedded in this broad definition are two perspectives. The first is a state-centric paradigm that argues for the state as the only referent, and provider, of security.[196] The second is the extra-state perspective that emphasises the need to transcend the state, and recognise other referents of security, including individuals and social groups. This perspective contends that making the state the referent of security misses the crucial reality that 'states are often agents of human insecurity, rather than security'.[197]

Similarly, there are divisions in the range of issues covered by the security umbrella: the divide between human security as freedom-from-fear and freedom-from-want. The proponents of human security from fear seek to narrow the range of human security using 'vulnerability' to violence and natural disasters as the defining criterion.[198] The freedom-from-want perspective mirrors Caroline Thomas' (1987) call for including development issues in security thinking and policy. In spite of the contested nature of human security, it is important to highlight some of its usefulness.

First, the rejection of traditional, realist essentialism of security allows for the interrogation of a wider range of actors and issues, especially those connected with gender, social categories, and inter-generational tensions. It is also useful in giving political voice to politically marginalised people through a network of international coalition.[199] Human security is people-centred – that is, it refocuses attention on humans (citizens), rather than abstract entities (regimes, regions, institutions, etc) as the primary object of security. Put simply, 'it implies protection

against, or safety from, a future risk of severe deprivation, injury or death'.[200] The concept is also value-based contributing to a normative change in the understanding and practice of security, especially by providing a moral, legal and political basis for overriding traditional principles of non-intervention and territorial inviolability. This underscores the emergence of the principle of 'responsibility to protect' as a new policy and normative component of international relations.[201] The interventionist foundation of human security shifts sovereignty from authority to responsibility, and empowers supranational entities and even other actors (states, civil society groups, non-governmental organisations) to intervene and provide security for people in theatres of need.[202] It thus extends security obligations beyond states, and the security of states beyond their borders.[203] If human security relates to the protection and threats to the physical safety and security of people, it becomes appropriate to interrogate emergent sources and forms of physical insecurity in the ECOWAS sub-region.

Emerging Human Security Challenges in West Africa: Old Roots, New Leaves

Considering the overriding principle of protecting humans from violence, violent deaths and dislocation, this study refocuses its attention on the protection from fear component of human security. It highlights at least six prevalent or emerging threats to the physical security and safety of persons in the ECOWAS sub-region. The issues listed in this section do not overlook the importance and continued relevance of human security concerns already covered in extant literature, such as civil wars, small arms and light weapons, child soldiering, rape and human trafficking.

Rather, the chapter highlights the emergent transformation, mutations, manifestations, and realignment of security threats in the sub-region. It pinpoints the reality of massive human security challenges in the absence of, and/or reduction in, civil wars. The first is the Youth Challenge.

Youth Challenge: According to recent study on youth vulnerability and exclusion (YOVEX) in West Africa, by the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College, London, over 60 per cent of the sub-region's 250 million are under 35 years. This underlines the claim that countries in sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing a youth bulge – a situation where youth, defined as people between the ages of 15 and 24, constitute at least 40 per cent of adult under 49 years. To be sure, the youth bulge in Africa is actually predicted to be just beginning and the youth's proportion of total population on the continent is already more than four times its 1950 level and is projected to continue growing rapidly over the next two decades at least. Currently, 31 of the 36 countries where youth constitute over 50 per cent of total population are in SSA.[204] The projected youth demography for SSA is coming at a time when the youth

proportion of total population in other parts of the world is slowing down and declining. This burgeoning youth bulge in SSA is relatively new, although the region appears historically and culturally skewed towards a youthful population – considering subsistence agriculture and the need for family labour.

For example, in 1946, H.M. Grace (the correspondent for the Council of British Missionary Societies in East Africa) foresaw this demographic pattern, when, in reference to the situation of youth in the region and across Africa, he warned that youth 'is an explosive force, and though the number may be small, it will have growing power, and it all depends how it is treated now [then] whether it becomes a curse or a blessing'.[205] Over the years, advances in primary health care, sustained level and growth in fertility rates, and lower infant mortality have translated into greater survival rates for children. The newness of the current trend is rooted in its extensive scale and the associated socio-economic, political and security challenges it brings. The exposure of more young people to primary and sometimes basic (secondary) education, and trappings of modernity – globalisation and Western consumerism – have created unbridled expectations and a crisis of rising expectation.

Worse still, it is the exclusion of many young people from formal institutions of politics, education, and employment (economic), and their social stigmatisation and criminalisation that constitute the most pressing challenge.[206] The coincidence between the onset of the youth bulge and eroding state capacities (under structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s) in a majority of African countries created a combustible mixture that has manifested in serious socio-economic, political and security upheavals. The multiple cases of state failure and the rupturing of societal fabric by internecine civil conflicts (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, etc) in which young people played crucial roles (child soldiers for instance) have, since the 1990s, brought the youth issue in Africa unto global policy agenda. Of course, the increases in youth proportion of total population hardly explains the outbreak of civil conflicts in Africa, but the commonality of youth bulges in many theatres of conflicts and violence does draw attention to it. In spite of attempts by demographic transition theorists to explain multiple cases of insecurity in SSA since the 1990s by references to progress on the demographic transition continuum, it is crucial to restate that structural conditions associated with dysfunctional state, neo-patrimonial politics, economic disempowerment and politicisation of extant fault lines (ethnic, religious, regional, and social class) explain civil conflicts in SSA.

Overall, the socio-economic and political disempowerment of youths and their search for coping mechanisms and alternatives (including through urban violence, crime and rebellion) in the sub-region has given rise to negative and criminalised epithets such as area boys, militants and yandaba (in Nigeria), gronah boys (in Liberia) and rare boys (in Sierra Leone). The YOVEX study highlights

that a majority of youth in the sub-region, with minimal engagement with formal state institutions, resort to informal and often illegal resources as coping strategies. In countries recovering from decade-long civil wars (such as Liberia and Sierra Leone) and those experiencing huge levels of internal political volatility and internecine inter-group clashes (such as Nigeria and Ghana), a major coping strategy is the formation of vigilante and militia groups that seek to capture socio-economic and political spaces, and market their capacity to unleash terror and violence on fellow citizens and across national boundaries.

The activities of these youth militias, while not yet openly threatening or challenging for political power (similar to classical rebel and insurgency movements, thereby unlikely to lead to civil wars experienced in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s), pose, nonetheless, considerable threats to human security. The vigilantes and militias in West Africa are rooted in the 'distrust and disillusionment with the security and criminal justice system in the face of widening insecurity…in many instances, all these have degenerated into criminal gangs, thus escalating criminal violence and exacerbating public insecurity'.[207] The emergence of youth militias and vigilantes captures an important transition and connection with the phenomenon of child soldiers, especially in post-conflict settings where governments struggle with the overwhelming tasks of economic recovery. Several media and advocacy groups have documented the cross-border recruitment of youth mercenaries in the Mano River basin to the extent that these militias appear to be replacing the foreign (non-West-African) Private Military Companies (PMC)[208] that operated in the area in the 1990s. Similarly, youth militias and vigilantes, formed along the lines of ethnic and political identities have emerged and involved in several violent clashes with other groups and in direct confrontation with state security forces.

The activities of such groups are signposted by recurring clashes in Northern Ghana, Northern Mali, and Chad border region (Tuareg crises). This has also been the situation in Nigeria since 1999 with groups such as the Oodua People's Congress (OPC); Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA); Tiv, Jukun and Tarok militias; and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), among others. The *Human Rights Watch* also documents the huge humanitarian crises in eastern Chad as a result of armed attacks by youth militias (allied to Chadian rebels) especially from November 2006. It is noted that 'some towns in eastern Chad have increased ten-fold in size due to the influx of displaced rural villagers due to massive internal displacement', thereby exacerbating the existing humanitarian challenges occasioned by refugees from Sudan.[209] Apart from inflicting considerable human and material damage on civilians, the groups have destroyed socio-economic infrastructures, endangered the physical security of citizens, and made overt threats to regime stability.

Inter-group Clashes: The emergence and activities of youth militias fore-ground the second human security challenge in the region – inter-group clashes. This form of insecurity, rooted in internal political tensions and struggle for power, dots a majority of countries in the sub-region. Clashes of this nature are often constructed along ethnic, religious and regional identities. In Nigeria, the post-1999 period has witnessed over 60 clashes involving Yoruba (OPC) and non-Yoruba groups (Ijaw, Hausa, Igbo), Ijaw and Itshekiri, Ogoni and Andoni, Tiv and Jukun, and Hausa Muslims versus Christians, etc. The different clashes are reported to have generated over 500,000 internally displaced persons, several thousand deaths and heightened state of fear and insecurity. In some cases, the clashes have resulted in heavy-handed punitive action by the country's security forces. Similarly, inter-group clashes in Northern Ghana between the Nanumbas and the Konkombas has been a recurring phenomenon since the 1990s. This reached its peak in February 1994, up to 2000 people were believed to have been killed and about 100,000 displaced.[210] Another major conflict in Ghana, also in the northern part of the country, has been in Dagbon, where ethnic groups have engaged in historical conflicts over land and chieftaincy supremacy. Overall, the spate of inter-group clashes have produced levels of civilian casualties, destruction of infrastructures, displacement and atmosphere of insecurity and impunity similar to the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Disasters: The third emergent human security challenge that threatens to, and is already claiming human lives and causing physical dislocations is the increase in the scale of natural and man-made disasters in the sub-region. Using the benchmarks and data by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disaster (CRED), a disaster is 'a situation or event which overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request to national or international level for external assistance; an unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction and human suffering'.[211] There are two broad types of disasters (based on causes or trigger factors) – natural and technological (industrial accidents, including chemical spills, collapse of industrial infrastructures, explosions, fires, radiation, gas leaks, etc); transport accidents (by rail, air, road and maritime).

Across the ECOWAS sub-region, the record of disasters reveals it is fast emerging as the greatest cause and source of human insecurity. According to reports, over 7m people were affected by disasters in Niger between 1996 and 2005, while in 2005 alone, over 3.6m people were affected. In Senegal, over 1.2m people were affected by disasters between 1996 and 2005. Between 1996 and 2005, over 670,000 people were affected by disasters in Benin; over 471,000 in Ghana; over 220,000 in Guinea; 102,000 in Guinea-Bissau; 215,000 in Sierra Leone, and 602,000 in Nigeria. All this is subsumed under over $2.2b estimated damages from disasters between 1996 and 2005.[212] In Nigeria, air-travel disasters

since 2001 and 2006 claimed the lives of key state actors, including heads of armed forces, traditional rulers, lawmakers, chief executives in the public and private sectors, and ordinary citizens. A January 2001 Lagos bomb blast destroyed strategic military installations (barrack, armouries and equipment), local infrastructures (roads, houses, bridges, schools, hospitals, etc), claimed several hundreds of civilian lives, and displaced several thousands of people. Similarly, the September 2002 'Le Joola' ferry tragedy in Senegal claimed almost 2,000 lives.[213]

West Africa's appalling record foregrounds a broader trend sweeping across Sub-Saharan Africa. This is indexed by data showing that, between 1996 and 2005, 2.2 million people were affected by disasters across Africa, with estimated damages amounting to over $10 billion. In 2005 alone, about 3m and 19m people were reportedly killed and affected by disasters across Africa respectively.

Transnational Crime: The fourth challenge to human security across ECOWAS states is increased transnational crime (in armed robbery and narcotics) and the spread of international terrorism (especially those associated with militant Islam). The sub-region appears to be experiencing profound increases in cross-border car snatching, smuggling of narcotics and trade in other illegal substances that directly or indirectly endanger the physical security of the wider population. More importantly, there appears to be an upsurge in international terrorism connected with radical Islam, linked to global currents and events in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East. For instance, in January 2004, a local self-styled Taleban group in the city of Yobe in Northern Nigeria, the group stormed police stations, saying they wanted to set up an Islamic state in Nigeria.

Attackers overran police stations and stole large quantities of weapons, destroyed public and private properties, killed several citizens, and hoisted the flag of the Taleban movement in Afghanistan. The group demanded the proclamation of an Islamic republic, similar to the Taleban rule, in Northern Nigeria.[214] The group subsequently known as Boko Haram (meaning 'western civilisation is bad and rejected') and escalated its armed confrontation with the Nigerian state in July 2009, and has continued to carryout targeted killings and bombings till date. Post-Cold War clashes in Northern Ghana, although largely described in ethnic terms, have considerable religious undertones. For example, the December 2001 clashes recorded over 150 injured and 50 civilian deaths.[215] These examples reflect a subtle, yet strong rise in religious fundamentalism and resort to terror tactics of kidnapping, abductions, and wanton violence in the sub-region.

Refugees: The fifth challenge relates to the protection of refugees from non-ECOWAS member-states. This is the situation in Chad's eastern regions of Ouaddai and Wadi Fira and the northern region of Borkou, Ennedi and Tibesti. The region is host to over 250,000 refugees from neighbouring Darfur region (Sudan). The massive influx of refugees has exacerbated the already poor security situation

in the country (linked to over four years of tension and armed clashes between the Zaghawa and the Tama ethnic groups). The increases in population and continued inter-group clashes have endangered civilians in these areas to the extent that the European Union, in an extra-ordinary move, authorised the deployment of a 3,000 strong protection force in November 2007.[216] The Chadian refugee crises also connect to the Tuareg rebellion, which, although more pronounced in Niger, is spread across the Sahelian region, including Northern Mali. The refugee crises in Chad exposes a complex and complicated human security challenge that transcends national and sub-regional boundaries, intertwined with local (national) power struggles between constituent groups, and interlocks with a wider and internationalised conflict in Sudan's Darfur region.

Regime Brutality: The final human security challenge is the age-old phenomenon of regime brutality or insecurity induced by the activities of national security forces. This exposes the practical tensions and contradictions, often downplayed though, between human and regime security (traditional and human perspectives of security) in Africa. It underlines the blurred lines between legitimate state-led attempts at imposing and protecting security, and threatening human security.

In post-1999 Nigeria, the country's security forces have sacked entire communities, killed several innocent civilians, destroyed socio-economic infrastructures, and violated the human rights of citizens in the context of dislodging militias and exacting 'revenge' for killed soldiers. The invasion of Odi town (February 2000) by the national army is a typical example. Also, in Guinea, the Human Rights Watch notes that over 1700 injured and over 129 deaths were recorded during the brutal repression of a nationwide strike by the country's security forces. It is reported that 'security forces fired directly into crowds of unarmed demonstrators…gunned down demonstrators trying to flee to safety. Scores of Guineans, many of them mere bystanders to the demonstrations, were severely beaten and robbed at gunpoint by security forces, often in their own homes'.[217]

ECOWAS and Human Security: In Search of a West African Perspective

Cilliers (2004) in his discourse of human security in Africa concluded that 'Africa has traditionally followed an expansive approach to the concept of human security'.[218] Embedded in this claim is the view that African countries define human security in terms of freedom from fear and freedom from want. This underlines the multiple challenges of state making, state building and socio-economic development prevalent across Africa. Article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union reflects this expansive definition of human security given enabling principles such as the respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance; promotion of social justice to ensure balanced

economic development; respect for the sanctity of human life, condemnation and rejection of impunity and political assassination, acts of terrorism and subversive activities; and the promotion of gender equality. In relation to physical security, the article provides for the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity; the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security; the establishment of a common defence policy for the African Continent; peaceful resolution of conflicts among Member States of the Union through such appropriate means as may be decided upon by the Assembly; prohibition of the use of force or threat to use force among Member States of the Union; and non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another.

ECOWAS appears to follow a similar trend under its 1993 Revised Treaty, 1999 Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security; the 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; and its 2008 Conflict Prevention Framework. All these policy instruments underline the post-Cold War interconnectedness and convergence between traditional development and security (military) issues. The revised treaty, for instance, under Article 3, reaffirms the economic integration foundation of ECOWAS – the promotion of cooperation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among member states and contribute to development in Africa.

The ECOWAS revised treaty, under Article 58, provides for cooperation amongst member-states in 'establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intra-State and inter-State conflicts'. The 2001 protocol on good governance, supplementary to the 1999 conflict prevention protocol, attempts to address the deep-seated political causes of insecurity.

The protection from violence component of ECOWAS human security architecture is expressed clearly by its 1999 protocol on conflict management. The protocol, coming against the backdrop of the organisation's unplanned adventure in peacekeeping duties in Liberia and Sierra Leone, contains elaborate institutional mechanisms for preventing and dealing with outbreaks of conflict and violence that threaten citizens of the sub-region. Article 4 of the protocol identifies the Authority of Heads of State and Government (HSG), the Mediation and Security Council, the Executive Secretariat (commission), and specialised institutions set up by the body as key actors in the promotion of human security in the region. Article 17 lists the Defence and Security Commission (DSC), the Council of Elders and the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) as specialised institutions involved in the practical promotion of human security. The DSC, under Articles 18 and 19, is composed of security chiefs and actors

from member-state saddled with formulating functional mandates for the sub-regional peace-keeping force (ECOMOG), force composition and its rules of engagement. The Council of Elders is composed of eminent personalities in the sub-region who could be deployed as mediators in crisis situations.

The ECOMOG, formed following the May 1990 13th Summit of the Authority of HSG in Banjul by the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) to intervene in Liberia ostensibly on account of humanitarian objectives of protecting civilians and stemming the tide of insecurity. The Protocol, under Article 22, makes ECOMOG the military arm of ECOWAS human security architecture – a standby peacekeeping force made up of civilian and military elements, with one battalion drawn from each member state to make up a total of 15 battalions. It is entrusted with observation and monitoring, peacekeeping and restoration of peace; humanitarian intervention in support of humanitarian disaster; enforcement of sanctions; and preventive deployment. Other functions include peace building, disarmament and demobilisation; policing activities, including the control of fraud and organised crime; and other operations mandated by the Mediation and Security Council.

The Protocol, under Chapter IV, also establishes an Early Warning System (made up of four zonal bureau) to monitor, process and report data relating to conflict and insecurity in fulfilment of Article 58 of the revised treaty. Other key human security elements of the protocol include the organisation's declared role in combating humanitarian emergencies (disasters) under Article 40; peace-building obligations in societies torn by war and those recovering from upheavals under Articles 42 to 45; control of trans-border crime under Article 46; and its readiness to combat the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons under Articles 50 and 51. The ECOWAS human security architecture is reinforced by its 2006 Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and its draft 2007 Conflict Prevention Framework that seeks to create a composite groups of actors in the promotion of human security, including civil society groups, the private sector, media, and community groups.

The 2008 ECPF builds on previous protocols with a clearer and more expansive focus on human security. Under the 2008 Conflict Prevention Framework, ECOWAS affirms human (as opposed to regime) security to be the underlining principle. Under Section II(6), the ECPF expressly defines human security as '...the creation of conditions to eliminate pervasive threats to people's and individual rights, livelihoods, safety and life; the protection of human and democratic rights and the promotion of human development to ensure freedom from fear and freedom from want'. This is reinforced in Section V(26) where emphasis is placed on promoting democracy and sustainable development as part of conflict prevention and peace building, and promoting region-wide humanitarian crisis prevention and preparedness.

Overall, the ECPF has 14 focus areas that reflect its broad human security definition – early warning, preventive diplomacy, democracy and political governance, human rights and the rule of law, and media. Others are natural resource governance, cross-border initiatives, security governance, practical disarmament, women, peace and security, youth empowerment, ECOWAS Standby force, humanitarian assistance, and peace education. Impressively, these focus areas reflect the interconnectedness of social, economic, political and security (conflict), as well as key issues that have ignited armed conflicts and political instability in the sub-region since the end of the Cold War. Also novel is the ECPF's clear identification of objectives, benchmarks and requisites for each of the 14 focus areas, thereby improving the basis for implementation, monitoring, assessment, and evaluation.

Despite the elaborate plans and impressive human security architecture, I make four important observations and perhaps limitations. The first relates to questions on the extent to which the normative aspect of human security (the will and readiness to actively intervene and protect people in theatres of physical danger) is embedded in the actual practice of security by the organisation. The current architecture, as stated under Articles 25 and 26 of the 1999 Mechanism, can only be triggered by cases of aggression or conflict in any member state; inter-state conflict within the community; internal conflicts that threaten a humanitarian disaster or poses a serious threat to peace and security in the sub-region; in the event of massive violation of human rights; illegal overthrow of constitutional regimes; or by the order of the Mediation and Security Council. While this covers the broad spectrum of physical threats to people in the sub-region, the record of application belies its practical manifestation. It appears that it is only in Liberia that the ECOMOG has intervened following the 1999 protocol. Extra-regional institutions and actors appear to have taken the lead in promoting human security in Cote d'Ivoire (France), Niger and Chad[219] (European Union). Similarly, the organisation has been quiet and inactive in a majority of the afore-listed emerging threats to human security in the sub-region.

There has been no record or very minute involvement of ECOWAS at the level of mediation or active negotiation or physical deployment, for instance, in the crises in Nigeria' Niger Delta region, Northern Ghana, Tuareg crises in Niger, and Casammance region of Senegal. A majority of the crises continued to be rationalised as internal security matters of member-states, thereby exposing the poor internalisation and commitment to the normative elements of human security.

Second, the majority of emerging threats to human security in the sub-region and the organisation's inertia in responding to them suggest that the actual understanding and practice of security is still rooted in traditional notions of security. It appears that the security architecture is still structured to reflect intentions and readiness to intervene in 'classical' civil war situations, similar to Liberia

and Sierra Leone in the 1990s. Notwithstanding the mention of humanitarian intervention, violation of human rights and internal conflicts as triggers of the 1999 protocol, the reality suggests the overtly political and politicisation of human security concerns. Although the draft Conflict Prevention Framework is expected to provide alternative platforms for non-military intervention in internal crises through coalitions of civil society groups, it is still early days and it is doubtful if this will overcome the age-old traditionalisation of security and systemic obsessions with sovereignty and territorial inviolability.

Third is the perennial role of national security forces in causing, threatening and exacerbating human security concerns. This, again, is rooted in the delicate imbalance between regime and human security, avowedly skewed in favour of the former. More importantly, it points to a lack of common, coordinated and standardised defence (human security) doctrine among the member-states' armed forces. The DSC is ostensibly to plan joint missions, as opposed to coordinate common defence doctrines, military ethos, and rules of engagement in internal security operations. Regime brutality that threatens human security appears to be tolerated within the context of sovereignty as authority, and it saves the organisation the burden of peacekeeping intervention (through punitive quelling of internal security).

Finally, in spite of the broad definition and the expansive 14 focus areas of the ECPF, there is an embedded recognition and over-prioritisation of violent conflicts as the key element in ECOWAS human security agenda. Clearly, the framing and embedding of human security in a conflict prevention framework decidedly equates preventing armed conflict to human security. For instance, the ECPF is intended 'to serve as a reference for the ECOWAS system and Member States in their efforts to strengthen human security in the region ... [through] durable cooperative interventions to prevent violent conflicts within and between States, and to support peace-building in post-conflict environments'.[220] Section II (7) reaffirms conflict prevention as the key human security driver in West Africa through emphasis on transforming conflicts, achieving organisational synergy in conflict prevention, and enlarging the scope of actors and participants in conflict prevention.

Furthermore, Section IV highlights the ECPF focus to be on operational (early warning, mediation and reconciliation, preventive deployment, etc) and structural (peace-building, governance, culture of peace and developmental reforms) issues in conflict prevention. While the havoc occasioned by violent conflicts in the sub-region cannot be denied, emerging threats to human security appear to transcend civil wars (as indicated in aspects of the ECPF).

ECOWAS and Human Security Challenges: Opportunities and Limitations

It is important to restate that ECOWAS at the level of policy articulation has made substantial progress in addressing specific human security issues as reflected in its 1999 Protocol and 2008 ECPF. For instance, it launched initiatives covering cross-border crime, small arms, security governance and interventions in civil war situations as witnessed in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The organisation's elaborate and still evolving peace and security architecture thus provides an invaluable take-off point for formulating a coherent human security policy. This will involve incorporating human security specifically as a supplementary but a key cosmopolitan principle into existing protocols and active engagement in emerging human security challenges, especially disaster prevention, monitoring and management, cross-border militia activities, and coordinated military and defence doctrines founded on common security sector reform programmes.[221] The second opportunity for enhanced human security promotion in the sub-region lies in ECOWAS emerging supranationality, a development that can provide for systematic embedding of human security normative values in the textual and practical promotion of human security.

The transformation of the organisation's secretariat into a commission in 2006, the inauguration of a sub-regional parliamentary and court system, the assumption of supranational powers in line with the 1993 revised treaty, and the acknowledged linkages between security and development issues harbours considerable potentials for enhancing human security in the sub-region. To this extent, ECOWAS supranationality offers an alternative voice and legitimising device for human security actions (sanctions). The third opportunity for promoting human security lies in the organisation's increasing recognition of non-state actors as important stakeholders and providers of human security.

The formation of civil society groups and their representation (participation) together with the private sector in ECOWAS summits and their envisaged active and collective role under the draft conflict prevention framework is another resource for promoting human security in the sub-region. The role of civil society groups, especially non-governmental organisations and the media can serve to expose and check the excesses of national regimes (through active reporting) in undermining human security. Perhaps, building on the existing West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) framework, and with improved institutionalisation and coordination with ECOWAS Commission, this can be transformed into a sub-regional human security partnership or network on human security.

The constraints and limitations to human security in the sub-region include changing the perception and understanding of member-states as the principal providers of human security in the sub-region. This relates to the loose

institutionalisation of the normative component of human security. The extent to which the role of member states could be changed from providers to facilitators of human security (through the creation of enabling socio-economic, political and safe environment), and from a traditional understanding and practice of security remains an overwhelming challenge.[222] The second limitation lies in coordinating the internal conduct, ethos and rules of engagement for national armies involved in internal security operations. The prospect of a standard common defence doctrine through coordinated security sector reform programmes appear weak considering the strong influence of former colonial powers and legacies across the sub-region.

Another limitation to human security promotion in the sub-region is the often-slow responses to, or indecision over or continued politicisation, of clear human security issues. This underlines the continued failure of ECOWAS to adequately respond to human security needs in Chad and Niger on account of ostensible connections to regional and extra-regional territories and actors. Moreover, the failure to constructively engage in cases of internal clashes between groups and those involving the state underscores the continued toleration and, perhaps, the rationalisation of human insecurity within the context of sovereignty and non-interference. The reality suggests that, in a majority of cases, the state, itself, is either the object of claim or a party to the clashes, thus requiring the intervention of an alternative authority to mediate and guarantee the fears and safety of populations.

In fact, Hussein, Gnisci and Wanjiru (2004) list the challenges to human security in West Africa to include translating the concept into practice; enhancing security system reform; laying the foundation for a coherent security regime in Africa; operationalising the role of ECOWAS in stabilisation and peacekeeping efforts; and achieving greater self-sufficiency in peace-keeping operations. Other are coordinating military assistance on a regional level and enhanced effort to halt the proliferation of small arms, light weapons and anti-personnel mines.[223]

Admittedly, it could be argued that the 2003 creation of WACSOF (involving organisations like the West African Network for Peace – WANEP) could potentially offset some of ECOWAS limitations in relation to human security. This appears latent in WACSOF's goal of galvanising the initiatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) and partner with ECOWAS for the improvement of human security, regional integration, as well as economic and social development in West Africa. The organisation also aims to strengthen and institutionalise a relationship between West African civil society and ECOWAS; hold a biennial People's Forum for members of WACSOF with the purpose of submitting recommendations to West African ministers and heads of state on human security issues; audit the implementation and legislative domestication of ECOWAS treaties, protocols

and decisions relating to human security and peace in the region; establish national and sub-regional monitoring mechanisms on the status of human security in West Africa; popularise ECOWAS in the consciousness of West Africans – particularly youth – through appropriate programmes such as popular media; and to actively promote a sense of community citizenship between ECOWAS member states and CSOs.[224] While the potential role of civil society groups like WACSOF in advancing human security cannot be underestimated, the challenge requires strong organisation, strategic direction and leadership inherently lacking in ECOWAS. Moreover, WACSOF appears to suffer from acute lack of capacity, marked by its poor institutionalisation, monitoring and reporting incapacity, and poor coordination between different national chapters. Also, there is a seeming tension and unease by national governments in relation to WACSOF at national and sub-regional levels. Also, the institutionalisation of the normative elements of human security in the sub-region transcends a single organisation. This process calls for – and merits – partnerships.

Finally, there are acute organisational capacity needs, such as financial resources, and lack of capacity for effective advocacy and communication strategies, monitoring and evaluation required for enhanced human security promotion by ECOWAS.[225] This has been a perennial problem across the broad spectrum of ECOWAS activities, including its military and peacekeeping missions. Although a Peace Fund was created under the 1999 Protocol, and donor countries and agencies have intervened in specific areas of capacity building in recent years, however, the enormity of institutional capacity needs to undertake an effective human security strategy remains massive.

Conclusion

This chapter has raised the scale of human security challenges in the ECOWAS sub-region. It argues that while ECOWAS' current security architecture provides an invaluable asset to promoting human security, this is only in potential and less in reality. Critically, the 2008 ECPF represents an innovative milestone in addressing insecurities connected to violent conflicts. However, the sub-region's overall security architecture cannot be said to conclusively insulate or protect its populations from emerging, let alone old, threats to human physical security. In spite of the possible adaptability of the ECPF and other protocols to emergent human security threats, it is least contestable to say the people of West Africa are hardly safer from physical insecurity compared to the 1990s. The level of civilian casualties (deaths, injuries, dislocations and deprivations) parallels those of the 1990s, although the sources and types of threats have either changed or mutated into new forms. Perhaps, the sovereignty of member states and ruling regimes remain more protected (and has been strengthened) than, and at the expense of the, security of

the population. It can be argued that the sub-region's security architecture falls short on account of lack of a clearly defined human security agenda and strategy, and poor embedding of the normative elements of human security.

This chapter has highlighted the need to transform the state from current roles as the sole providers to facilitators of human security, and the need for existing security plans to transcend regular peacekeeping roles. Finally, it is suggested that a clearly defined human security charter with specific priorities be formulated for the sub-region. Such a West African perspective will build on existing structures and protocols to highlight and prioritise extant and emerging threats to human security (beyond armed conflicts), enhance the institutionalisation of human security norms and create a periodic (annual) monitoring and reporting mechanisms (beyond the current early warning system is appears to be dedicated to regular civil war scenarios). This does not suggest the absence of old and new human security challenges on ECOWAS's policy agenda, however, they appear to still be poorly coordinated and there is a lack a coherent strategy for dealing with them in a crosscutting manner.

11

Reflections on Our Knowledge
in Peacemaking

Ishola Williams

Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living, the other helps you make a life – Sandra Carey

Theory is when things do not work and we tried to find reasons; practice is when things work and we do not know why – Albert Einstein

The local blind man knows the local bush paths more than any stranger – a Zambian proverb

Introduction

In the last three decades, Africa in general and West Africa in particular went through a simultaneous decline in inter-state and an increase in intra-state conflicts in the form of political crises in Guinea-Conakry and civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau. There are isolated but deadly continuums of skirmishes in the Cassamance region in Senegal and in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria to mention but a few. On the other hand, we have seen a mix of regional, sub-regional institutional with personality and leverage based interventions succeeding in preventing the escalation of political crises into deadly civil wars as in the case of Guinea-Conakry and also in restoring political stability to Liberia and Sierra Leone. This mix has already provided motivation for internal resolutions of the crises cum conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau. It is also obvious that ECOWAS, its member states and CSO's could not say that we have succeeded in preventing many conflicts.

The reasons for these successes and failures are many and multifaceted. However, it is important to state at this juncture, what we mean by peacemaking and what we expect from peacemaking as the end product of a continuum of activities.

I borrow from the reflections of Col. A. J. Rossouw of SANDF in an occa-
sional paper on "Peace Mission" in which he says '… and organisations now
attach different meanings to certain terms and definitions'. He argued for a
common and clear understanding leading to mutual agreement in Africa on the
'exact meaning' of these 'terms, terminology and definitions'. To him, peace
missions have the following components: 'Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking
and peace enforcement'. He excluded peace-building. What is of importance to
us is his definition of peacemaking which is 'primarily a political process designed
to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement through peaceful means'. This
process which is mandated by Chapter 6 of the UN Charter may also require
military support for an enabling environment for the political process.

This definition does not only provide the meaning but also what the end
product is to an extent. It would appear that, in West Africa most negotiated
agreements are not respected. Therefore, many agreements have to be negotiated
over a period of many years before the acceptable end product, which is when
the peace accord is signed. That end product, to me, should be stability. By stability
I mean the continuum in which a conflict or a crisis-ridden state moves from
chaos or 'ungovernability' to a stable political environment based on the restoration
of social capital. The latter is obligatory, because it is the loss of trust and
confidence by the various interest groups within a country which leads to crises,
strife and deadly conflicts. It is also the most difficult to restore or rebuild in
African conflicts.

In most accords, more attention is paid to the political process, thus neglecting
the social capital restoration process which is obligatory to:

• establishing law and order and freedom from fear and want

• sustaining the right to life through regeneration of economy and relief of
  suffering.

In short, peace is an abstract situation that in the real world may never exist.
Therefore, I argue that Stability Restoration Missions is what we are doing in
Africa especially because since, before and after colonialism there has been no
peace to manage, keep or build. Lowering our ambitions from Peace to stability,
based on social capital may help us to deal with African crises and conflicts in a
better way.

Having said the above, where and how does all this Western theory blend
with traditional African practices that African academics have been studying? Why
have we neglected our philosophical and cultural heritage in using Western Template
for negotiating agreements and before the agreements ceasefires that do not hold?

The Western academics have for long given theoretical explanations for these
failures while developing new principles and methodologies which are tried out
in workshops and in negotiations worldwide. The success of this methodology

is also mixed. However, it has never resulted in infallibility of Peace Accords or final agreements signed once and for all.

It is obvious to all academics, students and practitioners of peace making in Africa that the western philosophy and methodology dominates up to the point that most of the negotiated processes follow the same method, the same template and most of the Peace Accords are very similar'.[227] The CHD Report on Charting the Roads to Peace, Facts, Figures and Trends in Conflict Resolution' Western styles of mediation were examined and it concluded that there are three main types of intervention i.e. Facilitation in which the mediation team provides the enabling environment and open communications channels for all parties while overseeing leading to the resolution of the conflicts by themselves. The second is the Formulation where the mediation team suggests ideas and options to all sides for resolving the conflict. The third is Manipulation in which the mediation team backed by the UN and major western countries use that influence and power to get the parties to sign an agreement. We have seen examples in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire.

Nearly all agreements end up with an interim government with rebels who then go on to contest elections. Some win and some lose and some try to go back to war. In the case of Liberia unlike other peace agreements, the rebel leaders neither served as Head or Deputy Head of State or government and those who served in other positions did not contest the post interim Government elections. They were discouraged from transforming rebel movements into political parties. They were levered into joining existing political parties.

There is no doubt that the mediator team at the Liberian Peace Talks succeeded because of the full backing of the Western countries, especially USA and the European Union, while Nigeria and Ghana played a highly commendable role. Unlike the Liberian case, many of these agreements are not respected because when Rebels negotiate, they are pressurised to sign with the carrot-and-stick incentives knowing that this is not what they want. It is from these well-known observations as a practitioner both at national and sub-regional levels that one can discuss peacemaking under these headings, namely, Instruments, Institutions, Resources and Capacity. In what follows, I examine each of these elements one after the other.

Resources

In discussing the subject of resources, I am considering the financial and human resources that are obligatory for the peacemaking process. While Africa is not short of human resources, we pretend to be short of financial resources as I will discuss later. This pretension has made us to act as if we do not have the human resources such as knowledge and wisdom.

If we accept that knowledge is what is known and embedded in language, culture and tradition, it can also be situational and contextual. As the Zambia proverb says, Africans cannot but understand their own past and contemporary situations and contexts better than outsiders. Is this the case, knowledge is power, when it is based on truth and belief, and becomes a foundation for accumulating experience over time. The combination helps to demonstrate confidence in peacemaking. In Africa, age, personality and political position determine the choice of a peacemaker. This is why present and ex-Heads of States or ex-Ministers or ex-Chief Executives of Inter governmental Organisations are mostly accepted as heads of peacemaking/mediation teams or as key persons in the mediation process. We have had so many successful examples that maybe ECOWAS Council of Elders should include only former Ex-Heads of States or ex-Presidents of the ECOWAS Commissions. We have seen the recent successes of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria in brokering the appointment of ex-ECOWAS Chief Executive as Prime Minister in the then turbulent Republic of Guinea.

President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso also played a role in getting President Gbagbo and his 'enemy' Guillaume Soro to negotiate and agree to co-habit as President and Prime Minister respectively in the hope that the battle line between North and South will disappear. We have also had Gen. Abdulsalaam Abubakar doing the same in Liberia which is gradually becoming a stable state.

One should recall the roles of the late Presidents Gassingbe Eyadema of Togo who was the host and facilitator of the Sierra Leone Peace talks that led to and Accord and Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire who introduced an annual Peace Prize before he died. All these high-profile mediators mentioned above are usually advised by a group of diplomats, and sometimes academics with the knowledge and local understanding or on the ground experience before and during the crises and civil wars. In most cases personalities, leverage, wisdom and respect by all sides of the divide are the key factors that determine failure or success. So far ECOWAS has succeeded in the choices of these groups of mediators, giving them all the free hand to choose their advisers with the knowledge and sometimes negotiating experience too.

It is crucial to point out here that ECOWAS with these mediators do not really succeed in preventing escalations of crises up to the point of deadly riots or even civil wars. ECOWAS through Gen. Obasanjo of Nigeria did succeed in bullying the General and his officers in Guinea-Bissau to form an interim civilian government rather than a Military Ruling Council. On the other hand, the pre-emptive interventions conflict in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea-Conakry and even in Liberia with Charles Taylor could not succeed. Therefore, there is need to develop new methodology for dealing with this important process of having successful pre-emptive intervention. In addition, the success of President Blaise Compaore in brokering the Ivorian Peace Process demonstrate that a former

'enemy' to one side and a 'friend' to the other can become a facilitator in recon-
ciling the two. Above all, while guidelines and timelines are good for the process
of negotiating accords or agreements, rigid templates and models are to be
avoided. This is because, getting parties to agree cannot be determined by time
even by formulation and manipulation because deadly conflict is a result of loss
of social capital and complete breakdown of National and Traditional Conflict
Management Mechanism. In addition, parties want to be in a vantage political
position and thereafter derive economic benefits from the agreement. We must
not forget as it was demonstrated in Lomé (RUF rebels from Sierra Leone) and
in Accra. (The Lord and Model from Liberia) living in a 5-star hotel with free
meals and daily allowances is an enabling environment for talks not to end quickly.
Where parties have been manipulated into signing Peace Accords (and in some
cases some refusing to sign), the parties always go back to war. In most cases,
enough time is not given to deal with the issues of social capital and consensual
management of local resources.

It is also true that negotiations are costly and cannot go on forever. It is better
to reduce costs by suspending talks as it was done with the Liberian case and
spend more time to reach an agreement acceptable to all sides outside the full
negotiating meetings. It is also obligatory for agreements or Accords to be
situational and contextual.

In concluding this part, ECOWAS has confirmed the adage that West African
Heads of States can douse the fire in the West African neighbourhood. In fact,
the Cote d'Ivoire experience demonstrated that we can find African solutions to
African problems despite the post election situation. The Somali did that in
Somaliland while the other Somalia with outside intervention is still in chaos, as
long as the warlords are supported financially and with arms by outsiders and
Somalis in Diaspora.

However, any conclusion has to take into consideration what I have earlier
said with respect to finance and leverage. To some extent, very few African
countries have the finance and the leverage to broker agreements and accords. In
West Africa, it is only Nigeria while Ghana did support the Liberian Peace talks
and Togo did same for Sierra Leone. In all cases, the United States as *primus inter
pares* followed by the European Union, former colonial masters France and UK,
depending on the country, are usually part of the mediation team and the
International Contact Group. These Western countries not only put down the
money but also want to influence the process and the end product. This is because
they also put down the money for post-conflict peace building activities including
DDR and reconstruction. PANAFSTRAG is working hard to get West African
Businesses to take up their own responsibilities too in these exercises.[228] It is in line
with this exercise, PANAFSTRAG in partnership with the ECOWAS and the
African Business Roundtable (West African Chapter) facilitated a West African

Roundtable in Lagos on Peacebuilding and Economic Development in West Africa' on 5 and 6 September, 2006.[229]

There were Economy, Finance and Defence Ministers and officials, operators in the private sector and other stakeholders. This was followed by another meeting in Abidjan in April 2007 with NEPAD Business Groups from Togo, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau. There is now a NEPAD (WA) Business Forum which was recently inaugurated in Abuja. It had its first International Business Forum in Abidjan in the first week of March 2008.

It is obvious that the support of the major western countries and their financial contribution to the Swiss fund have helped ECOWAS engagement in Peace-making this is apart from other omitted activities funded by EU, Canada, and USA etc. Whereas many of our Heads of States with their domestic resources can afford to fund these activities, they are reluctant to do so except these are on a bilateral basis. Most member-countries have refused to contribute their own quota because of lack of cum dependencies on external budgetary aid, other domestic priorities and the belief that the international community and UN will provide the support required under the umbrella of maintaining global peace and security. Sometimes you wonder whether a presidential jet is a priority when, in actual fact, such countries can contribute the equivalent of the maintenance cost of that jet to the Peace Fund. In short, we cannot become self-reliant in terms of complete ownership of the negotiating process, the peace accords or agreements, the implementation of the agreements and post-conflict reconstruction. While these Presidents-mediators may have done an admirable job in respect to the sub-region, their track records at home are conflict-prone rather than conflict-preventive. In addition, they crave more for respect abroad and do not respect or care for the admiration or respect from their compatriots except the interest groups that share mutual benefits with them for political or business reasons at home. Increased Corporate Responsibility from the level of the small local private sector operators to trans-national corporations are important to bring about the changes we need now.

Capacity

The discussion so far does demonstrate that we have the capacity to carry out stability restoration operations by diplomatic and/or military means. I have avoided discussing the military because peace support operation is a huge subject on its own with millions of words on paper on ECOMOG role from Liberia to Guinea-Bissau.

However, we need to come up with the tools and the techniques/ methodologies for succeeding with pre-emptive intervention, which can avoid the situation we had in Cote d'Ivoire with President Henrie Bedie and in Guinea Conakry with President Lansana Conte. Lives were lost (more in Cote d'Ivoire

through civil war) in both cases. We are yet to have Constitutions that are conflict preventive rather than conflict inducing, in giving powers to the President who do not know how to manage it and in promoting the rule of law while having social justice within a liberal economic system. There is also the decreasing role of Labour Unions, the weak linkage of political parties to the citizens they represent, the intolerance of opposition by the party in power and the wish of the opposition parties to be part of a government of national unity so as to share the spoils of office.

Political parties in the sub-region are dominated by the rich as other members are not ready or encouraged to contribute financially or voluntarily to building the party in order to have good internal governance that can be transferred to government on winning elections. Whether it is elections or negotiations or implementiation of peace accords, we are suffering from double AIDS, i.e. Acute and Increasing Dependency Syndrome on Western and Arab money and Acute Integrity Deficiency Syndrome in politics and business where bad and old politicians refuse to quit the scene and are provided with the financial but illegitimate support by the business groups that benefit from the corrupt liberal economic system in place. It is, therefore, surprising that business groups in our countries and their overseas partners and friends are left out of peacemaking, the implementation of peace accords and in post-conflict reconstruction.

Coming back to the tools and techniques, ECOWAS, the academic community and sometimes the countries involved in conflict and those involved in the mediation are yet to understand the importance of 'lessons learnt' exercises as a feedback to better performance in the immediate future through non-repetition of the mistakes of past efforts. The UN, unlike AU and ECOWAS, has a Lessons Learnt Unit for feedback and learning.

On the academic side, our conflict prevention and management theoreticians, for lack of the above, do not analyse these lessons enough in order to develop case studies for the students and, much more, so in developing new tools and techniques within our situation and context, based on our traditional system. In fact there is need to develop a toolbox of African conflict management techniques and methods with flexible models and templates that we can use in re-building national and local conflict management mechanisms in our various countries. The success of this development will enhance ECOWAS conflict prevention capacity and may make intervention unnecessary.

In short, there is need to capacitate ourselves without ECOWAS through regular interaction between academics, students, practitioners-diplomats and non-diplomats, military officers etc to develop case studies, develop better techniques and methods, conduct simulation exercises and share knowledge and experience through workshops and seminars, nationally and sub-regionally.

As it is structured, ECOWAS, like EU, is a bureaucracy and cannot think but need inputs from outside to initiate policies, gets its summit to decide, for the bureaucrats to implement with the monitoring and feedback into the bureaucracy by NGOs cum think tanks and other relevant institutions.

Institutions

Discussing capacity cannot be concluded without looking at ECOWAS as an intergovernmental body and its member countries. A South African academic, Anthoni Van Nieuwkerk, examined the whole issue of transforming African conflicts into 'Peace' through the regional or sub-regional intergovernmental organisations in his article entitled 'Regionalism into Globalism War into Peace'. He compared SADC and ECOWAS and rightly called both of them 'hegemonic regional organisations'. This form of hegemonic regionalism emphasise realist thinkers' view of the role of regional great powers like Nigeria in ECOWAS and South Africa in SADC and what they offer to small and weak countries. He gave the reasons for this dominance as

a. UN and AU not living up to their promise of ensuring global and continental security. In fact, UN and AU flag does not stop violence in itself amongst factions nor against itself.

b. Non hegemonic regional groups from the South do not have effective alliance with roles as in the North e.g. EU, OSCE, NATO. This missing gap – according to Van Nieuwkerk in the same article quoted above – has led to the degeneration of mediation into highly personalised and politicised process of diplomacy that achieved little success in settling the myriad interstate conflicts such as civil wars.

This statement may be partly true for Africa but not for West Africa as discussed above under resources. However, we have had more successes than failure through the 'personalised and politicised process'. However, I do agree that we must also develop institutional approach for this process through the Council of Elders, now The Wise. The establishment of the Council of Elders by the AU and the ECOWAS has not been too successful but can institutionally evolve. There is now an African Forum, made up of individuals who are ex-Heads of States, with more influence and leverage than the present 'Council of the Wise'. It is a newly created forum of former African Heads of states with 'good governance' credentials. The forum can replace the Council of Wise at African Union and at sub-regional organisations, i.e. SADC, IGAD, ECOWAS, etc. The forum can be maintained from the Peace Fund and by African-owned foundations, e.g. MOI FOUNDATION in London. When these national leaders are elevated to the level of seeing the bigger picture than their own country, they are also in a better position, singly or collectively, to take pre-emptive actions in an institutionalised

manner. No matter the development of institutional approaches, personality, leverage, influence, etc, are still key factors while at the same time developing obligatory national internal mechanisms based on local cultures and practices.

National institutions that are either weakened or destroyed by crises and conflicts have to be strengthened or rebuilt in order to be able to implement the peace accords or agreements. In many cases, some new institutions have to be put in place as recommended by the agreements or accords.

The key area that is of priority within the public sector which consists of the Executive, the Parliament and the Judiciary is the machine that runs the three arms i.e. the Civil Service. The restructuring and strengthening of the civil service after crises and wars have not been given the same priority as the security sector. In fact, in spite of all the reforms in the public sector, the civil service is still too bureaucratic, ineffective and inefficient in the delivery of services. In addition to the civil service, there are other service delivery agencies of the government which are part of the public sector. Most governments in West Africa are now privatising these agencies and setting up regulatory agencies which is another bureaucracy if not structured to be lean and efficient.

The security sector has got the priority it deserves but again it also depends on the civil service machinery for administrative and budgetary support. This means that the DDR exercise cannot be seen as successful when there is no harmony between the DDR and the Civil Service. Presently, no government is thinking of privatising the national security agencies. In fact, most countries are increasing the number of policemen and introducing community policing. In order to provide employment for demobilised armed men, women and youth, many private security companies have now been set up and the number is increasing because the public-owned security agencies no longer enjoy the confidence of the people in providing safety for them.

The judiciary has also seen its role increasing in order to ensure that the rule of law is respected. Peace agreements or accords and security sector experts do mention them but not in details, since these agreements are in themselves interim constitutions of the various countries where part of the constitutions have to be suspended. The experience so far is that even though the revision of constitution is envisaged when the agreements end with the elections, the new government is always resistant to change the status quo instead, and the powers of the presidency are increased with the resultant crises.

Presently, NGOs are increasingly becoming involved in mediation but more in a supporting role because they do not have the resources, the leverage and the influence and in most cases they are dependent on financial support from western governments, institutions and foundations. African NGOs do claim some achievements, as in the case of women impact on the Sierra Leone and Liberia Peace Talks. There was much more impact in Sierra Leone than in Liberia. Putting

it succinctly, Chester Crocker in 'Lessons on Intervention in Managing Conflict in the Post-Cold World, The Role of Intervention'[230] at the Aspen Institute Conference wrote that NGO interventions are likely to be more effective than governments give them credit for but are somewhat less effective than they themselves claim to be. This is an experience from the West's point of view. However, if the NGO terminology is expanded to include think tanks and other NGOs with experience and if provided with the Resources, they can play more than the limited role Northern NGOs such as Saint Egido in Italy and the Carter Centre in USA is playing.

At the Regional level, only one country – Nigeria – has played a veritable hegemonic role. Cote d'Ivoire, had elections in October with the run in November 2010, with the results becoming, unfortunately, an object of intense national and international contestation after from deadly ethnic conflict. However, the country can still become a future competitive hegemony with reasonable resources. Senegal has the human capital but appears to be too dependent on external financial resources.

When we add up the resources available to ECOWAS through cut-off percentage on imported goods from outside the sub-region, the resources in member countries especially Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal and some of the NGOs, including think-tanks, the enhanced capacity is there for peacemaking.

In addition, hundreds of training workshops, seminars, conferences, programmes, diploma, graduate and post-graduate courses have been done and are on-going especially on Western concepts, philosophy and cultural approach to Peacemaking. In fact, western style mediation is being professionalised in Africa today. Simultaneously, however, a lot of studies are now on-going on traditional and cultural practices. It is also well-known that many Africans in the rural areas still rely on their traditional leaders and chiefs to resolve crises and conflicts between individuals and groups. A visit to a traditional ruler's palace in Ibadan or Kumasi will confirm that in urban areas – let alone in rural areas – the traditional dispute resolution mechanism is still very much alive. Efforts are ongoing to strengthen the customary laws and practices.

The gap to be filled by both academics and practitioners is how to translate these practices into a national socio-political mechanism which is non-adversarial. Adapting local practices will go a long way to enhancing our capacity at the national, sub-regional and continental level in producing implementable peace accords/agreements that are respected by all parties.

Instruments

Peacemaking is successful when the opposing sides agree that they want stability to be restored. Therefore, in a situation where one of the two parties in a conflict situation does not accept the existing legal *status quo* instruments and institutions, a

new legal framework has to be developed. It is important that the framework should first and foremost be legitimate and acceptable to all sides in which all can participate fully in formulating, concretising and finalising the legal framework.

Therefore in developing peace instruments, we must first seek legitimacy and acceptability before making them legal and binding through signatures. Most of the legal instruments are not usually respected because of their illegitimacy and non-acceptability by all sides. This is because there is the mistaken notion that there are key and minor actors even though it is well known that minor actors have little more than a nuisance value in ceasefires and all forms of agreements. I must say that the determination of a legitimate instrument is both easy and difficult.

It is easy when there are agreements to key articles in the accords by all the sides. In addition, on many occasions, the Western countries use the carrot-and-stick approach to pressurise the parties into signing the peace accord within a particular date and time. A good example was the Lomé Peace Accord for Sierra Leone and many of the previous agreements in Liberia or even Cassamance in Senegal or Niger Delta in Nigeria. In this case, refusal to take hard political decisions on the issue of decentralisation of political and economic powers and implementation by the Government of the day is also a stumbling block. This, in itself, creates enormous difficulties.

The implementation of instruments requires huge human and financial resources which the country itself cannot generate. Therefore, the success or failures are not dependent on the signatories alone but, much more so, on the fulfilment of pledges made at the Western Donors (with Japan) Conference. There are no African donors' conferences by African countries for their own development without external participation and it is very rare to find countries like Russia, China, India and South Korea, which benefit from trade with African countries, participate in these conferences where pledges are made. Even with these pledges, only few countries deliver and hardly up to the level of the amount that is pledged.

Conclusion

The challenge and the work cut out for us, as Africans, is not only to restore the best of our local traditional mechanism but also to develop from this mechanism a national template for resolving our internal conflicts, with collaboration from CSOs and political parties, the private sector and other stakeholders. This is a mechanism that may not be perfect but it has traditional and cultural foundation.

Restoration allows for taking the best from other cultures in preventing and managing conflicts in the continent's own situation and context. Even within a globalised world, culture and traditions continue to assert itself and, to that extent, can form the foundation of our reflections as we continue to develop our knowledge in peacemaking in West Africa.

12

Consolidating Regional Security:
Security Sector Reform and Beyond

Thomas Jaye

Introduction

The call for a collective and regional approach to addressing security issues in West Africa is not new; it predates 1975, the year ECOWAS was formed. Historically, it constituted one of the basic ingredients of early Pan-Africanism and the debates which started in the 19th century for the total liberation of Africa from colonial rule. One of the torchbearers of such ideas was the elderly Liberian statesman, Edward Wilmot Blyden, who called for a West African state. In a lecture delivered in Sierra Leone in the 1880s and entitled 'Sierra Leone and Liberia', Blyden argued that the future of the colony lay within a larger West African state. He also pointed out that 'the two peoples are one in origin and one destiny and, in spite of themselves, in spite of local prejudices, they must cooperate.[231] Continuing on this issue, initially, Blyden felt strongly that Lagos had become the most progressive place in West Africa and therefore looked upon it as the new centre for West African nationalism. Later he realised that it was no different from Liberia and Sierra Leone, which were paralysed by divisions and local loyalties among Africans which made cooperative effort difficult.[232]

Nevertheless, by 1975, Blyden's prophecies had become a reality when ECOWAS was headquartered in Lagos before transferring to Abuja, Nigeria. He was also right in his observation about the divisions among Africans, which continue to hamper the efforts towards addressing West African issues through regional approaches. Today, the legacy of colonialism, which manifests itself more pronouncedly in the form of chronic dependency, and the lack of political will, makes it relatively difficult to pursue cooperation.

Against this background, it can plausibly be argued that the formation of ECOWAS in the mid-1970s was a continuation of the call to address African issues through solidarity and collective African efforts. Such notion has implications for consolidating regional security in West Africa. When ECOWAS was established, one of its principal objectives was to integrate the region economically. The need for economic integration was dictated by the existing post-colonial realities. However, by the 1990s, the organisation was pre-occupied with managing and resolving intra-state conflicts. Thus, in the existing literature on ECOWAS, there continues to be recurring references to the fact that ECOWAS has shifted from its original objective of promoting regional economic integration to addressing security issues. While it is true that efforts towards economic integration and development have suffered because of the organisation's focus on conflict management and resolution, this paper argues that, conceptually, this notion is untenable and problematic. Conceptually, it is difficult to divorce economic issues from security issues. Security, when conceived broadly, includes political, economic, social, cultural, cultural and environmental issues; it is not just about the military and state or regime in power; it is also about the people and non-military issues.

Consequently, what has changed is not so much the organisation's focus as the realisation that economic integration could not be divorced from other broader security issues. This view is shared by the former Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, Abass Bundu, who pointed out that, with foresight, the founders of ECOWAS had realised very soon that it was impossible to integrate the region economically without political integration; as security issues were central to this debate. Thus, the latter had to be taken into serious consideration three years after the formation of the organisation.[233] The protocols on Non-Aggression (1978) and Mutual Assistance on Defence (1981) attest to this reality. As David Wippman has asserted, these protocols originated from the realisation that political and security issues could not be divorced from economic integration.[234]

A former Nigerian Foreign Minister, Ike Nwachukwu, also writes that developments in the sub-region exposed the weaknesses of the narrow militaristic notion of security because other dimensions of security hindered the integration of West Africa.[235] These ideas emerged out of the realisation of the need to face the challenges of post-independence realities, which were characterised by military and non-military dimensions of security.

The link between economic development and security was later strongly identified in the revised Treaty of ECOWAS adopted in 1993.[236] This point was reinforced in Article 2 of the *Protocol Relating to the Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security* in which it was stated that the economic and social development of the peoples and states are inextricably linked.[237]

Thus, the way we conceive security has serious implications for the way we understand and explain the role of ECOWAS in West Africa. One way to address this issue is to locate ECOWAS' security role within the context of what has transpired over the last two decades years. Confronted by the harsh realities of managing armed violent conflicts, which started with the Liberian civil war (1989–2003), ECOWAS adopted a peace support role. As discussed below, however, peacekeeping, by itself, cannot resolve the underlying basis for conflicts. The process of post-war reconstruction involves economic recovery, and rebuilding of collapsed states. State rebuilding also involves disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of ex-fighters; reforming of the security sector; legal and judicial reform; public sector reform and the overall strengthening of the capacity of state institutions in ways that will make them relevant, legitimate, effective, efficient, and professional. In all its work thus far, ECOWAS has tended to focus narrowly on the peacekeeping element; but in order to consolidate regional security, the organisation must address the broader security threats facing West Africa.

This chapter argues that it is only through regional efforts that peace and security can be consolidated in West Africa. This is based on the assumption that the security of any one state or country is indivisible from the rest of ECOWAS member states. Further, the chapter stresses that the reforming of a country's security sector should not be limited to post-conflict societies but every country in the region should undertake this programme. This point is important because of the nature, scope and dimension of transnational security threats and dilemmas facing the region. Finally, the chapter argues that as important as a regional approach to security sector reform is, it will remain inadequate to address the broader security needs of the people in the absence of a regional approach to people-centred economic development. There is a need to bring development back into the debate.

Regional Security Challenges

There are a number of reasons why the consolidation of regional security constitutes an integral part of ECOWAS' role in West Africa. One of the reasons is firmly rooted in the understanding that there are security challenges that cut across the entire region and even beyond. Hence, if the process of consolidating security must become sustainable, the first place to begin is a discussion of the security challenges facing the region.

As discussed in other chapters throughout this book, from 1989 onwards, the region experienced protracted and complex armed violent conflicts in Liberia (1989), Sierra Leone (1992), and Cote d'Ivoire (2002). These conflicts led to state and societal collapse; death of innocent civilians, mainly women, children, the elderly and other vulnerable people in these countries; encroached upon the fragile economies and environment; produced thousands of fighters, mainly young people; and destroyed the infrastructure beyond imagination. Although Liberia and Sierra

Leone have since held post-conflict elections and begun the process of peace-building, the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire remains in a perpetual state of no war and no peace.

There are also armed violent conflicts in Nigeria (Niger Delta), Senegal (Cassamance), Ghana (Dagomas and Komkomas) and Mali (Tuareg), which have the potential to degenerate into the kind of violent conflicts experienced in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. Unfortunately, they have received less coverage and perhaps less attention by ECOWAS than the previous ones perhaps because they are not national in their scale but are viewed rather as localised low intensity conflicts.

The only notable exception is the Niger Delta crisis, which has received considerable media coverage because of oil and the continuous taking of hostages.

The first type of conflicts has been regional in character and dimension. Thus, ECOWAS has intervened both militarily and diplomatically to manage and resolve them. ECOMOG was formed in early 1990s because of these conflicts and, currently, in 2011 the organisation has created a military unit to deal with similar conflicts and other problems in the region. It is also working towards ensuring that there is a civilian dimension to the Standby Force as part of the overall African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

Regrettably, in the case of the second type of conflicts, the role of ECOWAS has been negligible or non-existent. As will be argued later, although ECOWAS has been involved with peacekeeping in the first type of conflicts its role in peace-building remains questionable.

The region also faces the challenge of addressing trans-border crimes including money laundering, human trafficking, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, drugs trafficking, spread of HIV/AIDS and other related issues. From a broader security perspective, there is rising youth unemployment, economic decline, environmental degradation, declining health and educational services throughout the region. This reinforces the point that in post-conflicts contexts, there are broader security issues that are associated with or are integral to peace-building. If left unaddressed, these could derail the peace process and even create the basis for relapse into violent conflicts. In essence, consolidating regional security in West Africa requires addressing the problems that lead to conflict; threaten the physical survival of individuals and entire communities, and encroaches upon the process of democratic change. Many of these issues are certainly beyond security sector reform.

In summary, the nature of conflicts, trans-border crimes and the other broader security issues such as pervasive poverty, youth unemployment, declining health and educational opportunities, environmental degradation and others outlined above constitute a major challenge for the ECOWAS Commission and the region

as a whole. The impact of these threats on human lives, economic development and governance and democracy makes it imperative for ECOWAS to begin to examine its role not just in post-conflict situations but in countries in democratic transitions. While ECOWAS has begun to think about ways and means of addressing some of these problems, implementing its programmes remains a major weakness and challenge for the organisation.

Existing Regional Security Efforts

Since its formation, ECOWAS has undertaken a number of security efforts aimed at ensuring peace and security in West Africa. As briefly discussed earlier in this chapter, ECOWAS intervened in intra-state conflicts and based upon this experience, in 1999, the organisation adopted the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, which provides the framework for the pursuit and consolidation of regional security. Subsequently, it adopted the Supplementary Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy. Prior to these instruments, the organisation, as far back as 1978 and 1981, adopted the Protocols on Non Aggression and Mutual Assistance on Defence respectively. Although the appropriate measures proposed in these documents were not put in place before ECOMOG intervened in Liberia, they offered a starting point for addressing security issues collectively.

The Mechanism constitutes a major step in the right direction because it provides the normative framework and institutional basis for addressing security issues in West Africa. The key institutions established by the Protocol include the following:

a) The Authority of Heads of State and Government
b) The Mediation and Security Council
c) The Executive Secretariat (now the Commission).

The Mediation and Security Council is crucial to the debate on consolidating regional security in West Africa because it makes key decisions on this issue. It comprises nine members of which the Authority can elect seven whereas the other two shall be the current chair and the immediate past chair of the Authority.[238]

In keeping with Article 10 of the Mechanism, the Council takes decisions on issues of peace and security in the sub-region on behalf of the Authority and has the following functions:

a) decide on all matters relating to peace and security
b) decide and implement all policies for conflict prevention, management and resolution, peacekeeping and security
c) authorise all forms of intervention and decide particularly on the deployment of political and military missions
d) approve mandates and terms of reference for such missions

    d) review the mandates and terms of reference periodically, on the basis of evolving situations

    e) on recommendation of the Executive Secretary (now President), appoint the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary and the Force Commander.[239]

In fulfilment of the above, the following organs were established to support the Mediation and Security Council:

    a) The Defence and Security Commission

    b) The Council of Elders

    c) ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).[240]

Thus, in theory, ECOWAS has put in place institutions that can serve as essential entry points for regionalising security agenda and working towards the consolidation of regional security in West Africa. For example, the *Mechanism* provides the basis for bringing synergy into the peace and security initiatives in the region. This can be done through the Defence and Security Commission, which brings together critical defence and security actors in the region. The regular meetings of West African defence and security personnel at the highest level provide a forum for sharing of knowledge, experiences and also to create networks for addressing transnational security issues.

Currently, the organisation is working assiduously on a standby force that will feed into the AU standby force. While the latter is not a panacea to the region's problems and cannot address trans-national security challenges on its own, it can contribute immensely to African peace support operations. Such operations will require both military and civilian personnel.

ECOMOG, which will inevitably serve as the fulcrum of this force, is supposed to engage in humanitarian intervention in situations of humanitarian disaster; engage in preventive deployment; engage in peace-building, disarmament and demobilisation and other peacekeeping and restoration activities.[241] Thus, as will be argued later, the future of the Commission's role in West Africa will need to extend beyond the remit of narrow traditional peacekeeping to broader peace-building efforts.

Synergising Regional Security Efforts: SSR

In order to consolidate regional security in West Africa, it is important to bring synergy and harmony into regional peace and security efforts including Security Sector Reform (SSR) undertakings. But before addressing the specific issue of SSR, I think it is also important to stress that there is an entry point for ensuring synergy and harmonisation of security practices and thinking. The Defence and Security Commission, which falls under the authority of the Mediation and Security Council brings together the following key security actors in the region:

a) Chiefs of Defence Staff or equivalent
b) Officers responsible for Internal Affairs and Security
c) Experts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Depending on the Agenda, heads of the following agencies may be invited:

a) Immigration
b) Customs
c) Drug/Narcotic Agencies
d) Border Guards; and
e) Civil Protection Force.[242]

All of these institutions are critical to the process of consolidating regional security in West Africa. Their collective role is crucial to maintaining peace and security, and points out the need for a regional approach to SSR initiatives in West Africa.

In order to achieve a regional approach, it is important to stress from the onset that SSR programmes in West Africa should not be based merely on downsising and reducing the budgets of security agencies, particularly the armed forces. In almost all the countries of the region, the security forces are experiencing institutional and professional weaknesses; and often they are bloated both in terms of sheer size and the cost involved in maintaining them. Hence, it is easily attractive to begin with the downsising or reduction of budgets. Such measures should, however, be undertaken within the specific contexts of individual countries. Depending on the local situation, these measures can either lead to efficiency, stability, and an improvement in civil-military relations or this can also lead to instability and worsen civil-military relations.

One of the things that should be taken into consideration in the pursuit of regional approach SSR is the need to do what Rocky Williams refers to as indigenisation of the programme. As Williams argues, unless security reform initiatives are thoroughly indigenised and imbued with practical, local contents, African civil-military relations will be no more than a sordid imitation or poor reflection of imported non-African systems.[243] Williams also argues that SSR efforts should focus on 'national decision-making process, the role of government, parliament and the armed forces within this process, and the inculcation of normative principles of civil-military relations within the officer corps of the African armed forces'.[244]

In light of the above, it is important to ensure that the constitutional principles upon which the forces will be managed should be clarified. This process should include clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the different elements of the sector in the Constitution. There is the need to ensure that there is clear policy framework and that, in the higher ranks of the armed forces, there are constitutionally minded officers.[245]

Further, there are a number of measures that must be taken and certain key issues that must be considered in order to bring synergy into any regional approach to SSR. One of the measures required for this process is the need to harmonise security legislation, thinking and practices in the sub-region. Unless this is done, the chances of addressing transnational security issues will remain extremely weak.

As Adedeji Ebo also suggests, SSR in individual states and the region is a dynamic and mutually reinforcing process. Thus, SSR in member states can impact on collective security arrangements while the latter also impacts on what occurs in member states.[246] If there were reforming states within the sub-region, such project could be undertaken but as Ebo argues, such states remain lacking.[247] With the exception of the countries emerging out of conflict situations where there are efforts to reform the security sector, most of the West Africa states have never carried out any comprehensive reforms in this direction.

In terms of regional institutions, the ECOWAS Commission has a critical role to play in ensuring that SSR is considered at the regional level. The ECOWAS Commission, Authority of Heads of State and Governments, ECOWAS Parliament and the Defence and Security Commission, serve as an integral part of the evolving ECOWAS security architecture. All of these have oversight responsibilities over the emerging ESF. The emerging civil society bodies such as the West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) do have a role to play in ensuring that even at the level of individual states, its affiliate organisations and others provide some sort of oversight responsibilities.

Beyond Security Sector Reform

As important as the transformation of the security sector is crucial to the overall process of consolidating regional security, the point should also be made that a reformed and transformed security sector by itself cannot ensure peace and security. It can certainly contribute towards the consolidation of regional security, but in order for ECOWAS to be effective in its regional security initiatives, particularly within the contexts of post-conflict situations, the organisation must begin to look at broader security issues. As Ebo has argued, 'in the context of underdevelopment, any viable change in the governance of the security sector would need to address issues of poverty alleviation, predicated on a human security agenda'.[248]

Conceptually, the human security agenda entails more than physical survival. Emancipation from oppressive power structures – be they global, regional, national or local in origin and scope – is necessary for human security.[249] According to Caroline Thomas, in as much as human security is about meeting the basic material needs of the people; it is also about achieving human dignity. This incorporates personal autonomy, control over one's life, and unhindered participation in the life of the community.[250]

Therefore, the missing link in the peace and security efforts of ECOWAS is the failure to promote the broader human security agenda. Given its role in post-conflict situations and because of the dynamics of the West African security situation, there is the dire need to begin to think about the Commission's intervention beyond traditional peacekeeping. As peace-building features in the recent documents adopted by the Commission, issues of post-war economic recovery; state rebuilding and transformation; democratic governance; natural resource management, and others should be included in the agenda of ECOWAS. ECOWAS must begin to rethink its notion of regional security by moving towards 'developmental regionalism' that will be all encompassing to include social, economic, political and cultural processes. However, the first real challenge has to do with achieving these within the context of the inadequacies of the neo-liberal economy and procedural democracy. Second challenge is that many African leaders are either unwilling or unable to think outside the neo-colonial box.

If we take the issue of economic recovery, it is clear that it is not only countries emerging out of conflict situations that require attention. The vast majority of the countries in the sub-region are going through economic crises, which are manifested in economic decline and stagnation, high unemployment, poverty and other associated problems. It is important to stress from the beginning that in terms of origins and causes, the factors that continue to undermine economic development are both external and internal.

Externally, colonial legacy and the integration of our economies into the global capitalist economy have adverse effects on economic development because of the unequal international trade regimes. For example, the conditionalities imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions are factors that have been discussed in the literature on economic development in our part of the world. Moreover, although the scramble for oil in the Gulf of Guinea has led to renewed interest in Africa by the big powers immediately after the Cold War, Africa was placed on the margins of world politics by the so-called big powers who did not need it as a battle ground for its proxy wars; remained marginalised within the global capitalist economy; it is left behind in the global development process; and all the recipes that were offered by the IMF and World Bank for growth and development for Africa have yielded no fruitful results.

What we continue to see in our region are deepening crises in the social, economic and political realms. The flow of refugees in different parts of the region; the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who receive less attention; increasing unemployment, particularly among the youth population; and increasing decline in access to education and health care constitute real problems for the people of the region. The flows of young Africans to Europe and America under gruesome, unbearable, and life-threatening conditions say a lot about the plight of the people. Indeed, the impact of this is manifested in the brain drain

of Africa, which has adverse effect on development and security. About 20,000 African professionals leave the continent each year. About a dozen countries including Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Kenya have lost 40 per cent of their professionals or even more.[251] Nigeria also falls into this category of states. As argued elsewhere in this book, some of the Africans who are forced to live in the Diaspora have direct link with conflict situations in the sub-region. In an effort to escape the sufferings and humiliation in the Diaspora, some of them would rather support armed rebellions in order to return home as state officials.

Unfortunately, some of these individuals are not interested in replacing the status quo ante. On the contrary, they do exactly what the old regimes they replace were doing to undermine development and security. They are neither interested in promoting the broader security of the people nor in the looting of the fragile economies through corruption.

Externally-driven agendas also undermine African initiatives. Thus, as Thomas suggests:

> although it is true that most African states are responding to the external pressures of the international financial institutions, their governments still bear responsibility for promoting an approach to development that in its adulation of all things modern sometimes fails to understand and value African socioeconomic systems that have evolved over generations. Some such systems have evolved to manage the risks inherent in pursuing self-sufficiency in harsh climatic conditions. The simple but important point is that just as all things modern are not necessarily helpful in human security terms, all things traditional are not necessarily unhelpful. Attention to specifics is important.[252]

Internally, the lack of good governance which expresses itself in poor resource management and corruption explain why the sub-region is also going through crises. However, by focusing on economic and monetary integration and, ultimately, development, ECOWAS will be dealing with the capacity and 'credibility deficit' generated by programmes that have had little impact on the living conditions of West Africa's 230 million people.[253] On the issue of the relationship between politics and economics, Claude Ake argues that the former is the greatest enemy to economic development in Africa. West Africa is no exception to this.

One of the challenges of bringing economic development back into the ECOWAS agenda is the attitude of the leaders in the region. Most regimes in the sub-region are more interested in maintaining the status quo than pursuing those things that could address the broader security needs of the people; than to pursue development, which improves the living conditions of the people. For example, it should be recalled that most states in the sub-region replaced the former colonial states without necessarily transforming the institutions they inherited. This view is shared by Christopher Clapham, who argues that:

like the colonial state from which it is descended, the third world state has to main-
tain itself by extracting resources from the domestic economy, and especially from
the trade generated by the economy's incorporation into a global structure of ex-
change. Whereas the developmental functions of the state are often patchy and
inadequate, sometimes almost non-existent, its extractive ones are omnipresent.[254]

Such behaviour has serious implications for security and development because it
makes the state highly vulnerable to shocks in the global economy and also to its
people because it has no capacity to address their broader security needs: health,
education and other social services, which are vital for the survival of the
population. They trample upon human dignity.

Clapham also argues strongly that in many third world states, economic
management is concerned with political control through the imposition of force
and the manipulation of economic reward and in states where authority is fragile
and force consequently dangerous and difficult to impose, economic manipulation
provides a vastly preferable option.[255] Thus, rather then create an enabling
environment for gainful employment of the people and therefore enhance political
stability, they are concerned about how long they will stay in power.

Moreover, one of the instruments of political manipulation and the pursuit
of narrow political objectives is foreign aid. Too much dependence on international
trade and investment is easily encouraged to the detriment of meeting the real
development needs of the people.

As Ake would argue, 'dependent development' is a politically driven decision
for the purpose of political survival – even though it, ironically, illustrates that
many of these leaders are committed to development. With few exceptions,
African countries came to independence with hardly any discernible vision of
development and no agenda for its realisation. He further explains that most of
the newly independent countries relied heavily on expatriates for their development
plans, which were usually collections of policy targets and programmes that took
for granted the validity of the inherited economic structure.[256] What we fail to
realise in West Africa is that the dependence on externally-generated revenues has
direct political consequences. The most basic is that it becomes almost impossible
for most states to contemplate any strategy for economic development that will
result into any substantial reduction in their participation in international trade.[257]
Thus, this is not about autarky but the refusal to uncritically accept, institutionalise
and implement the World Bank's and International Monetary Fund's orthodox
market reforms, which to an extent can be both anti-developmental and people-
unfriendly.

Currently, the issue of donor driven development agendas continues to haunt
every country in the sub-region with catastrophic effects. Because these agendas
are not rooted in the national contexts of the recipient countries; they are based
on 'one-size-fits-all' and generic development recipes and flawed assumptions.

This point is reinforced by Ake who also writes that development strategies are not made and carried out in a political vacuum, especially since development is a collective enterprise. Every development strategy is always contextualised in a particular state, social structure, culture, and meaning. It implies a structure of politics, but it also influences political interactions, practices and outcomes.[258] Such practice corroborates the assumption that if you manage and control the economy, then you also control and manage the people in it.

As Ake pointed out, what have really passed for development plans were, regrettably, mere aggregations of projects and objectives informed by the latest fads of the international development community such as import substitution and export promotion. He stressed that as these fads changed in the larger world, so were they abandoned in Africa.[259] This critical observation has serious implications for the pursuit of development in West Africa. Certainly, we should bear in mind that development is not just about increasing wealth but increasing the welfare of the people. This means that development agendas must put at their forefront social issues such as education, health, employment, rural development including the improvement of agricultural production. With the vast majority of the people still living in the rural areas, ECOWAS must realise that incentives to rural farmers constitute the most important contribution to private investment in our part of the world.

Thus, if West Africa is to comprehensively deal with the dynamics of conflicts including their rooted causes, then the issue of development must be brought into the debate about the future of the sub-region. Maybe it is about time that West African states revisit the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 whose basic tenets are very much valid and relevant today. This plan was designed to restructure the African economies on two basic principles: self-reliance (national and collective) and self-sustaining development. To restructure along the lines of self-reliance entailed changing the position of our economies within the global capitalist economy and its unequal division of labour; changing from primary goods and commodities to manufactured goods; and relying on internal sources of raw materials, spare parts, management, finance and technology.[260] Achieving this will require collective security efforts in the broader sense of the word because this is the only way that Africa's vulnerability to the global capitalist economy and the donor community can be reduced. We need to make use of our natural resources and promote trade and cooperation within the sub-region in order to consolidate peace and security. We have to realise that most of what we have tried to do as countries and people have partly failed because it has become clear that we are saddled with development agendas and strategies in which our leaders and people do not believe. They only pursue some of these agendas for continuing donor support. As argued elsewhere in this book, African leaders should begin to believe the states they run by being committed to people-oriented development.

In light of the above, it is correct to argue that development is not a project but a process; through which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realise higher levels of civilisation in accordance with their own choices and values. Thus, the people are the means and ends as well as targets and agents of development but others can facilitate it.[261] The issue, therefore, is not whether this has been done or is possible now; it is more about what can be done in order for the African people to save their skins, dignity and integrity. This point is valid because a process that is not emancipatory cannot be conducive to development.[262]

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is vital to stress that the issue of regionalisation and regional security is not a new debate; it started long before ECOWAS was conceived. In fact, ECOWAS is a product of the debates about creating a West Africa community. As argued in the introductory section to this chapter, Blyden championed this cause and it was a response to the colonial subjugation faced by the peoples of this part of Africa. Like today, they sought to create a cohesive community that would respond to the challenge of addressing the broader security needs of the people.

When ECOWAS was formed, it focused on a narrow aspect of security: economic integration. To many writers, the intervention of ECOWAS in intra-state conflicts constituted a shift from its previous focus on integration. This chapter argues that ECOWAS has not shifted from its original focus. What has changed is the perception about security. While initially conceiving security in militaristic and state-centrist terms, ECOWAS soon realised that security was more than this; it has non-military dimensions that are crucial to address in order to manage and resolve conflicts in sub-region. In essence, ECOWAS has not abandoned its efforts towards economic integration; only that this also hinges on peace and security. It is a realisation of the nexus between security and development that informs ECOWAS's priorities in the sub-region.

Regional efforts have been undertaken to implement peace support operations in conflict and post-conflict situations. But the Commission has not developed the capacity to address the issue of peace-building in a holistic way. It is one thing to go into a conflict area and create a buffer between armed factions; but it is totally a different thing to settle the conflict and create an enabling environment for addressing the root causes of the conflict through sustainable peace-building initiatives. Security Sector Reform is an important element of the overall post-war peace-building process because of the role of the sector in fuelling and conducting wars. As discussed above, SSR is characterised by inherent challenges that must be addressed in order to become effective. To begin with, the SSR should be conceived within the broader governance agenda in every West African

country. Accordingly, it should be fully concerned with processes and not just structures or mere institutional reforms. It should be about the role that ordinary people can play in making decisions about the sector.

Moreover, because this is a highly political process, it is important to note that it is often characterised by resistance because there will always be those who see themselves as losers and others as winners in this process. How you strike a balance between these two extreme thoughts and positions constitutes a major challenge for SSR practitioners. There is the need to pay close attention to the politics of pursuing SSR.

In a sub-region that is emerging out of long years of one party rule, military rule and authoritarianism, to begin to talk about, let alone to carry out, wide ranging reforms that will lead to civilian democratic oversight of the security sector is a major challenge. Often, the consequent lack of political will coupled with the culture of militarism that have permeated the fabric of West Africa political practices and the lack of expertise in the area also constitute a major challenge.

In addition to SSR efforts, ECOWAS must consider placing on its agenda development issues because security and development are inextricably linked. This will require, as suggested in Olawale Ismail's chapters, mainstreaming human security issues. Human security is not just about meeting the basic needs of people; it is also about transforming the oppressive power structures of society and so is about emancipation. Therefore, it is about change and processes.

None of the above programmes can be achieved without the resources to implement them. This is where ECOWAS has proved inadequate because it continues to rely on external donors in order to carry out most of its work. If the sub-region must move forward in consolidating regional security in the broader sense of the word, then the issues of security and development should feature high on its agenda. The sub-region has registered electoral democratic gains but all will remain quadrennial bonanzas if the security needs of the people are not addressed.

Notes

1. DCAF, 2007

2. He argued this thesis at some length in his book, *Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa: Tragedy of Endowment*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007.

3. Bartos, Otomar J. and Paul Wehr, *Using Conflict Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 13.

4. The deployment by the UN, of an Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in 1994, marked the first time that the UN deployed a peace mission alongside a regional peacekeeping mission operating on the ground. See, for example, 'Funmi Olonisakin, 'UN Co-operation with Regional Organizations in Peacekeeping: The Experience of ECOMOG and UNOMIL in Liberia', *International Peacekeeping,* Vol.3, No.3, Autumn 1996, pp. 33-51.

5. For more on ECOWAS and peacekeeping see, among others Adeleke Ademola, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 33, No. 4, 1995; Abiodun Alao, John Mackinlay and Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeepers, Politicians and Warlords: The Liberian Peace Process,* Tokyo and New York: United Nations University Press. 1999; Funmi Olonisakin, Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa: Conceptual and Legal Issues in ECOMOG Operations; Adekeye Adebajo, Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2003.

6. See, Comfort Ero, *ECOMOG: A Model for Africa?* ISS Monograph Series, February 2000.

7. President Thabo Mbeki was appointed by the AU in November 2004 to mediate in the Cote d'Ivoire conflict. For more on the grounds for rejecting his recommendations, see, *Africa* (Weekly Magazine), 12 October 2006.

8. See, for example, Necla Tshirgi, "The Evolution of Peace-building", IPA Occassional Paper, 2003; 'Funmi Olonisakin, "Post-Conflict Reconstruction and State Building", Background Paper for the International Training Course, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), November 2007.

9. Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, UN Doc. A55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.

10. See, *A more Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. UN Doc. A/59/565, 02 December 2004.

11. Roy Licklider, "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-93", American Political Science Review, vol. 89, no. 3: 1995, 681-90.

12. See, for example, Donald Rothchild and Elisabeth M. Cousens, Ending Civil Wars, Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002.

13. John Paul Lederach, *Justpeace – The Challenge of the Twenty-First Century,* European Center for Conflict Prevention, Utrecht: People Building Peace, www.gppac.net

14. Ibid. See also, Robert Picciotto, 'Funmi Olonisakin and Michael Clarke, Global Development and Human Security, New Brunswick and New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2007.

15. This categorisation is taken from *The Challenges of Restoring Governance in Crisis and Post-Conflict Countries,* published by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for the 7th Global Forum on Reinventing Governance Vienna, 26-29 June 2007. See pp. 14-17.

16. See for example, 'Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL,* Boulder CO and London: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2007.

17. This Centre has subsequently been named the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation.

18. See Adedeji Ebo, The Challenges of Security Sector Reform in Liberia, DCAF, 2006; and Thomas Jaye, Security Sector Reform in Liberia, in Alan Bryden, Boubacar Ndiaye and 'Funmi Olonisakin (eds), *The Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa*, Lit Verlag, 2008.

19. Draft ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), ECOWAS, Abuja, October 2007 p. 3.

20. President Thabo Mbeki quoted in Garth Le Pere and Anthoni van Nieuwkerk, "Making Foreign Policy in South Africa", in Philip Nel and Patrick McGowan (eds.) *Power, Wealth and Global Order*, Cape Town, University of Cape Town Press, 1999, p. 205.

21. See Adekeye Adebajo and Ismail Rashid (eds.), West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in troubled region, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2004.

22. For a good critique of some of these "anthropological," 'dark continent' mentality derived diagnoses, see Eboe Hutchful and Kwesi Aning, "The Political Economy of Conflict", in Adekeye Adebajo and Ismail Rashid, eds., *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region*, Boulder, Color., Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004, 197-206.

23. Arie M. Kacowicz, "'Negative' International Peace and Domestic Conflicts, West Africa, 1957-96," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35 (3) 1997, 367-385.

24. Bartos, Otomar J. and Paul Wehr, *Using Conflict Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 13.

25. While Mauritania withdrew from ECOWAS in 2000, its new political dispensation which resulted from the August 2005 military coup and transition, and the pronouncements of its new leaders strongly suggests that it will soon return to the regional organization. Besides, as this author has argued all along, withdrawing from ECOWAS never meant that Mauritania left the neighborhood, since any crisis in that country was bound to – and did – affect its immediate neighbor-members of ECOWAS, hence the entire organization.

26. For an excellent analysis of the ideological rivalries and their implication for the evolution of West Africa, see Peter Schwab, *Designing West Africa: Prelude to 21st Century Calamity*, New York, Palgrave McMillan, 2004.

27. Schwab, 135.

28. Sharon Wiharta, "Peace-building: the new international focus," *SIPRI Yearbook 2006*, Stockholm, Oxford University Press, 2006, 146.

29. Pita Agbese and George Kieh, Jr, "Introduction: Democratizing States and State Reconstruction in Africa," in Pita Agbese and George Kieh, Jr. (eds.) *Reconstructing the State in Africa*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007, 4-5.

30. Agbese and Kieh, 5.

31. See Adedeji Ebo, *The Challenges and Opportunities of Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Liberia*, Geneva, DCAF Occasional Papers No. 9, p. 4.

32 See Boubacar N'Diaye, "The State in Cote d'Ivoire: Evolution and Constraints," in Pita Agbese and George Kieh, Jr. (eds.) *Reconstructing the State in Africa*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007, pp.75-104.

33 Raymond Copson, *Africa's Wars and Prospects for Peace*, Armonk NY, M. E. Sharpe, 1994, 75.

34. Copson, 76.

35. Comfort Ero and Jonathan Temin, "Sources of Conflict in West Africa," in Chandra L. Sriran and Zoe Nielsen (eds.), *Exploring Subregional Conflict: Opportunities for Conflict Prevention*, Boulder, Colo., Lynne Rienner, 2004, 101-104.

36. William Zartman, "Introduction," in William Zartman, ed., *Governance as Conflict Management*, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 1.

37. Copson 78.

38. See for example, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Justice-Seeking and Loot-Seeking in Civil War (Washington, D.C., Development Economics Research Group, World Bank, 1999, Mimeo; also Paul Collier, "Doing Well out of War: An Economic Perspective," in "Mats Berdal and David Malone, eds., *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2000, 91-111.

39. African Development Bank, *African Development Report 2005*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2005, 100, 101. Statistics provided thereafter are, unless otherwise specified, derived from this report.

40. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *The Least Developed Countries Report 2006*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2006.

41. World bank, *2006 World Development Indicators*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2006.

42. World Bank, *African Development Indicators 2003*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, 311, 312.

43. Ero and Temin, 101.

44. See Boubacar N'Diaye, "Beyond the Berlin Conference/OAU Framework: A Pan-African Analysis of Africa's Security Crisis," *Journal of African Policy Studies*, 7 (1) 2002, 107-129

45. Boubacar N'Diaye, 'Not a Miracle After all… Cote d'Ivoire's Downfall: Flawed Civil-Military Relations and Missed Opportunities,' *Scientia Militaria* 33 (1) 2005, 105.

46. Copson, 104.

47. That is the epithet ominously attached to one of the most worrisome external dimension of conflict in the sub-region in a recent study. See Nicholas Florquin and Eric G. Bergman, eds., *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the ECOWAS region*, Geneva, small Arms Survey, 2005.

48. Copson, 104.

49. Quoted in Ero and Temin, 106.

50. Peter Schraeder, *African Politics and Society*, Belmont, CA, Wadsworth, 2004, 280-282.

51. For a thorough analysis of the evolution of Franco-African security relations, see Bouabcar N'Diaye, "Francophone Africa's Security Sector *Non*-Transformation," Paper presented at the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Chicago, October 2007.

52. The Licorne Force is the battalion of Marines France kept at Port Bouet in Cote d'Ivoire following defense agreements signed since independence. After the beginning of the crisis, the UN security Council resolution (January 10, 2007) 1739 integrated it to the other UN forces charged with peacekeeping in Cote d'Ivoire.

53. Eboe Hutchful, "Understanding the African Security Crisis," in Abdel-Fatau Musah and J. Kayode Fayemi, (eds.), *Mercenaries*, Londan, Pluto Press, 2000, 217-222.

54. Some of the latest studies on this include, Abiodun Alao, *Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007; Blench Roger, *Resource Conflict in Semi Arid Africa: An Essay with Annotated Bibliography* :London: ODI Working Paper, 1997; Cilliers Jakkie and Dietrich Christian, *Angola's War Economy: The Role of Oil and Diamonds*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2000; Cilliers Jakkie and Mason Peggy (eds.) *Peace, Profit or Plunder: The Privatisation of Security in War-Torn African Societies*, Half-Way House: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1999; Mat Berdal & David Mallone (eds.) *Greed and Grievance, Economic Agendas In Civil Wars*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000; Collier Paul and Hoeffler Anke, *Greed and Grievance in Civil Wars*, Oxford University Centre for the Study of African Economies, Working Paper 2002; *Waters of the Nile*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990; Hirsh John, *Sierra Leone: Diamonds and the Struggle for Democracy*, Boulder: Lynne Renner, 2007; Hodges, Tony, *Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State*, London: James Currey, 2003; Keen, David, *The Economics of Civil Conflicts*: Adelphi Papers, 1998; Kibble, Steve, *Land, Power and Poverty: Farm Workers and the Crisis in Zimbabwe*, London: Catholic Institute of International Relations, 2001; Lind Jeremy and Sturman Kathryn, *Scarcity and Surfeit: The Ecology of African Conflicts,* Pretoria: ISS, 2002.

55. I have argued this thesis at some length in my book, *Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa: Tragedy of Endowment*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007.

56. Ibid, p. 16.

57. I have decided to break mineral resources into solid mineral and oil to enable a detailed exploration of how both classifications are linked to conflict.

58. It needs to be pointed out though that although the listed conflicts had cases of rivalry over claims to portions of land, there are also other issues that underlined their conflicts.

59. For more on the conflict, see *African Research Bulletin*, (Political) February 1994, p. 11342

60. With a grant from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at the King's College London is undertaking a major study on Youth Vulnerability and Exclusion in West Africa.

61. The Konkumbas youth formed the Konkumba Youths Association (KOYA) and it was this group that was at the forefront of the group's cause.

62. See, Omon Julius Onabu, "Edo, Kogi Deputy Governors meet over land dispute", *This Day*, (Lagos) July 15 2003

63. See, *This Day*, (Lagos) 31 October 2004.

64. For more on the civil conflicts in Sierra Leone, see, among others, Krijn Peters and Paul Richard, "Why we Fight: Voices of Youth Combatants in Sierra Leone", *Africa: Journal of International African Institute,* Vol. 68, No. 2, 1998; "Sierra Leone Prisoners of War? Children Detained in Barracks and Prisons, Index: London: International Secretariat of Amnesty International; Paul Richards, "Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone: A Crisis of Youth?", in O. Furley (ed.), *Conflict in Africa* London*:* I. B. Tauris, 1995 and Ibrahim Abdullahi, "The Lumpen Proletariat and the Sierra Leone Conflict" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2, June 1998. These include David Shearer, *Private Armies and Military Intervention,* London: IISS Adelphi Paper; 1998, William Shawcross, "In Praise of Sandlines", *The Spectator*, August 1998; Funmi Olonisakin, "Mercenaries Fill the Vacuum", *World Today*, June 1998. Funmi Olonisakin, "Nigeria and the peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 1998; Paul Conton, "The Battle for Freetown", *West Africa,* 2 – 15 March 1998; Desmond Davies, "Peacekeeping: African Style", *West Africa* 4 – 17 May, 1998. See, among others, E. Garcia, *A Time of Hope and Transformation: Sierra Leone Peace Process Report and Reflection,* London: International Alert, 1997. On the Liberian civil war, studies include, Adekeye Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War: ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa*, Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002, Abiodun Alao: *The Burden of Collective Goodwill: International Involvement in the Liberian Civil War*; Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers, Funmi Olonisakin, Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa: Conceptual and Legal Issues in ECOMOG Operations.

65. I have discussed this in my book, "Natural Resources and Conflict … *op-cit.* The contract signed by the company and the Liberian Government was anonymously sent to me.

66. It is, of course, widely known that Taylor had contacts with countries such as Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, and these countries were believed to be some of the conduits through which he was able to gain access to international market.

67. Reno, in his book on Warlords pointed out that there was a time when Taylor was responsible for a significant percentage of logging coming to France. See, William Reno, Warlords.

68. Garba was Jetley's deputy, Kpamber and Khobe were both ECOMOG Commanders, and Adeniji was the UN Secretary General's Special Representative.

69. In 1953, the derivation formula was 100 per cent, as recommended by the Chucks Commission. This changed at independence, where the constitution stipulated 50 per cent, later reduced to 45 per cent under the Gowon administration. A retrogressive slide ensued after 1970, with the Murtala/ Obasanjo administration reducing it to 20 per cent and the Shagari administration dropping it to 2 per cent (and later 3 per cent after a court ruling). By 1984, it had been reduced to 1.5 per cent by the Buhari administration.

70. President Clinton as quoted in Devroy, Ann. 1994. "President Cautions Congress on 'Simple Ideas' in Foreign Policy," Washington Post*,* May 26, p. A31.

71. See a detailed discussion on the courses of conflicts in Africa in a UN report by the Secretary-General. Annan, K., The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, Report of the Secretary-General, (UN: April, 1998).

72. The situation of human rights in Africa is generally poor, and typically seen as an area of grave concern by the UN, governmental, and non-governmental observers. After the Cold War, the increase in civil strife and authoritarian rule, therefore, contributed to an

exponential growth of human rights commissions on the continent in the 1990s. See Human Rights Watch, "Protectors or Pretenders? Human Rights Commissions in Africa," http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/africa/overview/summary.html, accessed 03/02/ 07; See also "Human rights in Africa," Wekipedia Encyclopaedia, http:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_Africa, accessed 07/02/07.

73. Richard Kaplan. 'The Coming Anarchy', 'The Atlantic Monthly', 1994.

74. See Africa Recovery, July, 2003, p. 4; For detailed discussion of this, see Fawole Alade, W., "ECOWAS and the Crisis in Cote d'Ivoire: The Politics and Problems of Peace-Making in West Africa," *Journal of West African Affairs,* Vol.4, 2004.,pp.11-30; Cohen, H., "African Capabilities for Managing Conflict: The Role of the US," in Smock, D.R., and Crocker, C.A. (eds), *African Conflict Resolution: The US Role in Peacekeeping,* Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1995), pp. 95ff; and also Pfaff, W., "A New Colonialism: Europe Must Go Back into Africa," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74 (1), 1995, pp.4ff. Africa Recovery, July, 2003, p. 4.

75. Proponents of this argument include Valerie Hudson and Andrea den Boer. See Hudson, Valerie, & Andrea den Boer, *Bare Branches: The Security Implications of Asia's Surplus Male Population.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

76. Huntington, S. P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

77. Cincotta, R. P., Engelman, R., and Anastasion, D., *The Security Demographic: Population and Civil Conflict after the Cold War*, (Washington D.C.: Population Action International, 2003.), p. 32.

78. Ibid, pp.13ff.

79. Ibid, p.13.

80. See Paul Collier & Anke Hoeffler.

81. Ibid, p.13.

82. Several historical studies lend credence to the argument that in periods when young adults comprise an abnormally large proportion of populations have tended to coincide with rebellions and military campaigns. In modern European history, rise in the number of young men entering adulthood have contributed to cycles of rebellion. Based on such observation, Herbert Moller hypothesised that a bulge in the population of elite young adults is a potential destabiliser of countries. In his view, rebellions and religious movements of the 16th and 17th centuries were led by young men who, upon arriving at adulthood, decided to force their ways into social affluence and relevance upon realising the non-existence of opportunities to advance their goals and also reward their efforts. See Moller, H., "Youth as a Force in the Modern World" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 10: 1967/68, pp. 237–260; Cincotta, Engelman, and Anastasion, op. cit., pp. 44ff.; Goldstone, op. cit.

83. Christian Mesquida and Neil Weiner argue that youth-laden populations in conflict-torn regions such as the Balkans and Central Asia are more likely to experience highly intense conflicts (measured in battle-related deaths per thousand people) than less youthful populations. See Mesquida C.G., Wiener N.I., "Human Collective Aggression: a Behavioral Ecology Perspective" in *Ethology and Sociobiology* 17: 1996, pp. 247–262; Mesquida C.G., Wiener N.I., "Male Age Composition and the Severity of Conflicts", *Politics in the Life Sciences* 18(2): 1999, pp. 181–189.

84. Cincotta, R. P., "State of the World 2005 Global Security Brief #2: Youth Bulge, Under-employment Raise Risks of Civil Conflict", http://www.worldwatch.org/node/76, accessed 02/02/07.

85. Quoted in Hendrixson, A., 2003. 'The Youth Bulge..." ZNet Daily Commentaries (March 14). [http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2003-03/14hendrixson.cfm], accessed 02/03/07.

86. As quoted in World Bank Research, "World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation," *World Bank Research E-Newsletter* September, 2006, http://newsletters.worldbank.org/external/default/main?menuPK=615289&theSitePK=615281&pagePK=64133601&contentMDK=21052980&piPK= 64129599, accessed 02/02/07.

87. US Census Bureau International Database, http://www.census.gov, accessed 9/18/2007

88. Mastny, L., "The Hazards of Youth," World Watch Magazine, (September/October, 2004), pp.18-21.

89. Human Rights Watch, "Summary", http://hrw.org/reports/2005/westafrica0405/1.htm, accessed 18/02/07.

90. Staveteig, S., "The Young and the Restless: Population" in Environmental Change and Security Program- ECSP Report 2005, Issue 11, pp.12ff.

91. Gourevitch, P., *We Wish to Inform you that Tomorrow we will be Killed with our Families: Stories from Rwanda.* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998).

92. US Census Bureau International Database, http://www.census.gov, accessed 9/18/2007.

93. See also population pyramids available from the U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base. Further reading see www.census.gov/www/idbpyr.html, accessed 05/02/2007.

94. Herbert Moller argues that wars in pre-modern and present-day Europe, including the rise of the Nazi party in Germany, corresponded with increases in the proportion of young men in the population. Similarly, High rates of youth contributed to the Bolshevik Revolution, the Iranian Revolution, and the current unrest in the Middle East. For more on this argument, see Moller, H., "Youth as a Force in the Modern World" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 10: 1968, pp. 237–260.

95. See Collier, P., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*, (Washington, DC: Oxford University Press, 2003).

96. Braungart, R. G., 'Historical and Generational Patterns of Youth Movements: A Global Perspective', *Comparative Social Research* 7(1): 1984, pp. 3–62.

97. Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99. Ibid.

100. Ball, N., "Demobilizing and Reintegrating Soldiers: Lessons from Africa", in Krishna Kumar (ed.): *Rebuilding Societies after Civil War. Critical Roles for International Assistance* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997), pp. 85ff; Mashike, L. "Standing Down or Standing Out? Demobilising or Reintegrating Former Soldiers", *African Security Review*, vol. 9, no.5/6 (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2000.), pp. 64ff; Malan, M. "Disarming and Demobilizing Child Soldiers: The Underlying Challenges", *African Security Review*, vol. 9, no.5/6, 2000, pp. 35ff.

101. Adepoju, A. "Migration in West Africa," Paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration, September, 2005. p. 4.

102. In an interview conducted by Hamza Lansah Lolly, reporter of the Statesman Newspaper one herdsman traced his migration into Ghana to about 50 years ago. According to him "some of us have been in Ghana for the past 50 years …" See Hamza Lansah Lolly , "Fulani herdsmen to cooperate with REGSEC," Statesman Newspaper, 25/09/2006, http://www.thestatesmanonline.com/pages/news_detail.php?section=1&newsid=653

103. Survey conducted by The Network of Surveys on Migration and Urbanization in West Africa (NESMUWA) with data from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. Bocquier P. and S. Traoré. 2000. "Urbanisation et dynamique migratoire en Afrique de l'Ouest. La croissance urbaine en panne". L'Harmattan. In Decaluwé, B., J-C. Dumont, S. Mesplé-Somps, V. Robichaud. *Union économique et mobilité des facteurs: le cas de l'UEMOA.* http://www.crefa.ecn.ulaval.ca/cahier/liste00.html, quoted in Konseiga, A. "New Patterns of Migration in West Africa," Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien Nr. 8/2005, 5. Jg. http://www.univie.ac.at/ecco/stichproben/Nr8_Konseiga.pdf

104. Bocquier, P., and S. Traoré. 1996. *Migrations en Afrique de l'Ouest: de nouvelles tendances. La chronique du CEPED 20.,* quoted in Konseiga, A. "New Patterns of Migration in West Africa," Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien Nr. 8/2005, 5. Jg. http://www.univie.ac.at/ecco/stichproben/Nr8_Konseiga.pdf

105. Leighton, M., "Desertification + Migration = Conflict?" in Gardner, M., and Nicklas, U. (eds.), "Desertification: a security threat? – Analysis of risks and challenges," *Specialist Conference Report (*Eschborn: GTZ, 2007), p. 21ff.

106. BusinessGhana, "Fulani herdsman granted bail" 25th September 2007, http://www.businessghana.com/portal/news/index.php?op=getNews&news_cat_id=&id=71141

107. See Hamza Lansah Lolly, "Fulani herdsmen to cooperate with REGSEC," Statesman Newspaper, 25/09/2006, http://www.thestatesmanonline.com/pages/news_detail.php?section=1&newsid=653

108. The onset of the political instability in Côte d'Ivoire distorted migration patterns in three major ways: It (a) influenced the patterns of internal displacements by forcing people to move towards the more peaceful south of the country, (b) the extent of atrocities associated with the civil war led to the movement of Ivorians as refugees into neighbouring and other countries, and (c) the extent of insecurity in the country had implications on the migration patterns into the country as insecurity generally influences the decisions of migrants into any country and hence Côte d'Ivoire.

109. Alade Fawole, op. cit., p. 17; Gberie, L., and Addo, P., "Challenges of Peace implementation in Cote d'Ivoire," Report on an expert Workshop presented by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Collaboration with the Zentrum fur Internationale Friedenseinsatze (ZIF), 2004.

110. Ibid, p.15.

111. Fulgence Zamblé "Ivory Coast: From Desertification, to Migration, to Conflict," *L'OCCIDENTAL - Afrique occidentale*, Saturday 6 January 2007, *http://www.loccidental.net/*

english/spip.php?article168; http://intercontinentalcry.org/west-africa-from-desertification-to-migration-to-conflict/, acessed 25/9/2007.

112. Neill W., and Enda S., "Real-time evaluation of UNHCR's IDP Operation in Liberia," PDES/2007/02 - RTE 2, (Geneva: UNHCR, 2007), p.77ff.

113. These statistics were taken from the August 2, 2007 edition of UNHCR's chart on displaced people in West Africa. http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Af.nsf/luFullMap/AB115AB0C46233DE85257356004DACFD/$File/ocha_IDP_afr070913.pdf?OpenElement

114. UNFPAhttp://www.unfpa.org/profile/liberia.cfm?Section=1

115. United Nations, 2006, http://unstats.un.org/pop/dVariables/DRetrieval.aspx

116. Ibid.

117. See Westing, H. A., Fox, W., and Renner, M., "Environmental Degradation as both Consequence and Cause of Armed Conflict," Working paper prepared for Nobel Peace Laureate Forum participants by PREPCOM subcommittee on Environmental Degradation, June 2001, http://www.institute-for-nonviolence.com.au/downloads/pdf/EnvirDegrad.pdf; page 5 of 16; accessed 28/9/07.

118. Leighton, M., op.cit., p. 21ff.

119. State of the World's Forests, 2001

120. Fulgence Zamblé "Ivory Coast: From Desertification, to Migration, to Conflict," l'occidental - afrique occidentale, Saturday 6 January 2007, *http://www.loccidental.net/english/spip.php?article168; http://intercontinentalcry.org/west-africa-from-desertification-to-migration-to-conflict/,* accessed 25/9/2007.

121. UNDP, *Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis* (New York: UNDP, 2006), pp. 160ff.

122. Ibid, p.165; See Nyong, A., 2007. "Drought and Conflict in the West African Sahel: Developing Conflict Management Strategies," http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?event_id=146065&fuseaction=events.event_summary.(accessed 11/10/07).

123. FAO, "Irrigation potential in Africa: A basin approach," *FAO Land and Water Bulletin* 4, 1997, http://www.fao.org/docrep/W4347E/w4347e0u.htm, accessed 9/10/2007.

124. Some media reports also blamed the Bagri Dam in neighbouring Burkina Faso for worsening the flow situation that hit parts of northern Ghana in September 2007. See Gyebi, E., "Ghana: Food Shortage Predicted" *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 11 September 2007, http://allafrica.com/stories/200709110940.html, accessed 9/10/2007.

125. Squire, C., *Sierra Leone's Biodiversity and the Civil War*, (Washington, DC: Biodiversity Support Program, 2001), pp. 21–22.

126. See R. M. Nkandawire, "Experience in Youth Policy and Programme in Commonwealth Africa", Policy Document prepared for the Commonwealth Youth Programme Department (Unpublished), 1996. It is doubtful if 'legal marriage' is the right tern to use here, because while marriage is a key feature of adulthood, not all adults are interested in it. These authors would rather prefer 'independent life'.

127. Francis Chigunta, "The Socio-Economic of Youth in Africa: Problems, Prospect and Options", SSA, 2002.

128 Ibid.

129. United Nations Development Program, *Youth and Violent Conflict: Society and Development in Crisis?, United Nations Development Programme, New York, 2006, p.12.*

130. Ibid, p.13.

131. See CODESRIA Report on the Child and Youth Institute Inaugural Session, 7-31 October, 2002.

132. Cyril I. Obi, "Re-Examining the Roots of War in West Africa in a Globalising World," revised version of a paper presented at Conference on *Globalisation and Peace-building*, organised by the Swedish Network of Peace, Conflict and Development Research, Uppsala 6-8 November 2006.

133. See *Youth, Poverty and blood: The Lethal Legacy of West Africa's Regional Warriors*, Human Rights Watch Report, New York, April 13, 2005.

134. Angela Mclntyre, Emmanuel Kwesi Aning & Prosper Nii Nortey Addo, "Politics, War and Youth Culture in Sierra Leone: An alternative Interpretation", *Africa Security Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2002.

135. D.S. Garuba, "Survival at the Margins: Economic Crisis and Coping Mechanisms in Rural Nigeria", *Local Environment*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2006, p.20.

136. Ibid.

137. "Cote d'Ivoire", *Child Soldier Global Report 2004*.

138. Report of the UN Secretary General on children and armed conflict, UN Document A/58/546-/S/2003/1053, November 2003, http://www.reliefweb.int

139. Statement , 9 December 2003, http://www.reliefweb.int

140. Kalifa Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali", Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, United States, 1998.

141. This Republic has just been declared with Agedes as Capital on September 20, 2007.

142. The National Pact was signed in April 1992 was the climax of the Accords of Tamanrasset signed in January 6, 1991 under a mediation brokered by Algerian government.

143. While Mali had moved quite faster in implementing the content of the pact signed with the young Touareg rebels in its northern territory, Nigerien authorities have simply dumped its agreement with Nigerien Touareg rebels and even refer to the rebels as arm bandits and criminals.

144. IRIN News, "Senegal: West Africa's Forgotten Conflict Lingers on", http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=41947

145. Krijn Peters, Paul Richards & Koen Vlassenroot, *What Happens to Youth During and After Wars? A Preliminary Review of Literature on Africa and an Assessment of the Debate*, RADOO Working Paper, October 2003.

146. Bram Posthumus, "Senegal: An End in Sight to Casamance Violence?", *Searching For Peace in Africa*, 2000, http://www.conflict-prevention.net page.php?id=40&action=show&surveyid=57

147. Amnesty International, "Senegal: Climate of Terror in Casamance", AI Index AFR 49/01/98.

148. Dauda S. Garuba, "Contractual Breakdown: Small Arms, Intolerance and Tragedy in Nigeria's Delta Region", *AfricaFile, At Issue Elzine*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Canada, 2007, p.3; http://www.africafiles.org/atissueezine.asp#art1

149. This loss continues to translate into a needless budget deficit with a snowballing effect on not only the people of Niger Delta, but also on the Nigerian population as a whole.

150. This is defined in the series of historic documents as: Ogoni Bill of Rights, Kaiama Declaration of the Ijaw, Oron Bill of Rights, Ikwerre Charter of Demands, Aklaka Declaration of the Egi People, Urhobo Economic Summit Resolutions, etc.

151. There are numerous militia groups, such as the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force, the Niger Delta Vigilante Service, the Bush Boys, the Membutu Boys, Movement for the Emancipations of the Niger Delta, the Martyrs Brigade and the Coalition for Militant Action in the Niger Delta. Besides these, there are numerous community, clan, ethnic, sub-ethnic and regional militias, armed militant groups, armed gangs, armed cults, pirates, armed networks and warlords and private armies in the region. See Ikelegbe 2005B, 2007A; 2007B, *Op Cit.*

152. The Geneva Convention was declared in 1949 to protect and guarantee the lives and rights of civilians in war times.

153. See http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1019672556734. Also see Jibrin Ibrahim & Dauda Garuba (Forthcoming), "From Fact-finding Mission to Intervention: Reflections on Civil Society Efforts in the Quest for Sustainable Peace in Cote d'Ivoire", chapter of an ongoing book on *Resolving West African Conflicts: Early Warning, Early Response.*

154. Dr. Adedeji Ebo, former Coordinator of Africa Working Group at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), is the Chief of the Security Sector Reform Team at the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations He has used this expression several times at the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) programmes for Liberian Legislature and Security Agencies on which one of the present authors, Dauda Garuba, represented the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD).

155. LTRC-DP, Online.

156. hearings (*Twin Cities Daily Planet* [online] Friday October 19, 2007).

157. It was passed unanimously on 31 October 2000, and known officially as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

158. Often however, women are 'pushed' into taking up arms as a result of abuses they have suffered or in order to protect their children. For example, in the case of the 'Black Diamond' phenomenon during the Liberian civil war, young girls took to arms as a result of being gang raped by undisciplined soldiers. See 'Liberia's Women killers'; available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3181529.stm accessed on 30 July, 2007, 12.00 GMT.

159. Tsejeard Bouta et al, 'Gender and Peacekeeping In the West African Context', Report of the Stakeholders' workshop, held at KAIPTC, Accra, 1-3 December, 2004, organised by KAIPTC and Natherlands Institute of international relations, Clingendael, page 13.

160. Statement by the African Union Chairperson, Professor Alpha Oumar Konare, In Celebration of the International Women's Day, 8 March, 2007.

161. Maria Nzomo,' From OAU to AU and NEPAD: Regional Integration processes in Africa and African Women', Keynote Address made at Regional Strategy Meeting on Women'd Political Participation and Gender mainstreaming in AU and NEPAD, Nairobi, 27-31 October, 2003. page 3.

162. Ibid.

163. Statement by Alpha Oumar Konare in Celebration of the International Women's day, 08 March, 2007.

164. See Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya (Eds.) *What Women Do in Wartime: Gender and Conflict in Africa,.* Zed Books, 1998.

165. It is estimated that as many as 40 per cent of Liberian women were raped during the 14 year civil war. See Liberia: Major Effort Needed to Address Gender Based Violence, Refugees International, 16 January, 2004. Available at http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/932

166. The three women currently on the ECOWAS Council of the Wise are Ms Theresa Leigh Sherman (Iiberia), Honourable Elizabeth Alpha-Lavalie (Sierra Leone) and Mme Sira Diop (Senegal).

167. Tsejeard Bouta et al, 'Gender and Peacekeeping In the West African Context', Report of the Stakeholders' workshop, held at KAIPTC, Accra, 1-3 December, 2004…op cit. p.19

168. Leymah Gbowee, 'Women Building Peace Through Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration' Beijing+10 Review Conference, 9 March. Available at: http://www.womenwarpeace.org/issues/ddr/ddrpanelcsw05.pdf

169. For further details of activities of the UNMIL Office of Gender Advisor, see 'OUTCOMES OF Gender Mainstreaming by the Office of the Gender Advisor: UNMIL 2004-2006'. Available at: http://unmil.org/documents/OGA_Achievement_2004_2006.pdf

170. See UN News Centre. http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp? NewsID=21391&Cr=Liberia&Cr1

171. Maja Edfast (ed), 'Operation 1325 and Resolution 1325: An Overview', October, 2006.

172. The components of the ECPF are Early Warning; Preventive Diplomacy; Democracy and Political Governance; Natural Resource Governance; Cross-Border Initiatives; Security; Women in Peace and Security; Micro-Disarmament; Youth Empowerment;, ECOWAS Standby Force, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Humanitarian Assistance. See Draft ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECOWAS), ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, as revised at the Experts' Meeting on the ECPF, Banjul, Gambia, 24-28 June, 2007

173. See http://www.peacewomen.org/1325inaction/index.html

174. See http://www.wanep.org/programs/wipnet.html. Accessed on 02 October, 2007, 2320 GMT.

175. This part of the paper is based on the Report of the Forum. See Tema Agera and Awa Ceesay-Ebo, Report of the Strategic Reflection Forum for Women in Peace-building, Institutionalizing Women Peace and Security in Africa, hosted by WIPSEN-Africa, held at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana, 21-24 May 2007. See also http://www.wipsen-africa.org

176. See http://www.wacsof.org/background.html

177. Other programme areas are Peace & Security, Food, Agriculture & Environment, Youth, Regional Integration, Economic Development, Trade & Investment, Democracy, Good Governance & Human Rights.

178. See Recommendations of The West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) To The ECOWAS Council of Ministers' Meeting In Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 18th - 19th December, 2006. Available at http://www.wacsof.org/info/WAFSOC%20FORA%20COMMUNIQUE/WACSOF_4th_Forum_Communique%5B1%5D.doc

179. Report of the Secretary General on Women Peace and Security, United Nations Security Council, 27 September, 2006. S/2006/770, page 9.

180. Yaliwe Clarke and Helen Scanlon, 'Women and Peace-building in Africa', Report of Seminar Hosted by the Centre for Conflict Resolution and UNIFEM, Vineyard Hotel, Cape Town, 27-28 October, 2005.

181. Terriff, T. et al (1999) *Security Studies Today*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 172.

182. The wide-ranging definition and embedded contestation about human security was reinforced by the 2003 UN-CHS definition that includes wide-ranging non-military (human rights, cultural and identity issues) and non-state actors. For instance, countries such as Japan actively pursue the security from want perspective, paralleling the practice of comprehensive security in Asia. See Knudsen, O. (2001) "Post-Copenhagen Security Studies: Desecuritizing Securitization", *Security Dialogue* Vol. 32(3), p. 355.

183. Liotta, P.H. (2002) "Converging Interests and Agendas: The Boomerang Returns", *Security Dialogue,* Vol. 33(4), p. 477.

184. Terriff, T. et al (1999), p. 1.

185. I acknowledge the subtle differences between core realism and neo-realism, but I use the two terms interchangeably. I am also aware of more than one version of the realist/neo-realist theory with important methodological and theoretical divergence amongst the various versions; however, I restrict my analysis to the dominant Waltzian version formulated by Kenneth Waltz (2001). See Waltz, K. (2001) *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, New York: Columbia University Press.

186. Terriff et al, (1999), pp. 31-32.

187. It is important to emphasise that concerns expressed in the report, and even its potential linkage to security, predate 1994. For instance, Acharya (2001: 450) has compared it to the notion of "Comprehensive Security" prevalent in Asia even during the Cold War. Similarly, Caroline Thomas (2004: 353) contends that human security is nothing but a repackaging of a Marxist "Liberal Humanitarian Order." See Acharya, A. (2001) "Human Security: East versus West", *International Journal*, Summer 2001, pp. 442-460.

188. Dalby, S. (1997) Contesting an Essential Concept: Reading the Dilemmas in Contemporary Security Discourse. In Krause, K. & Williams, M. (eds) *Critical Security Studies; Concepts and Cases*, London: Routledge, p. 4.

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191. Robert Jackson coined the term to describe the difference between states in Western Europe and the Third World. He defines juridical statehood as externally validated or legitimised statehood wherein the mere membership of the international system, as opposed to the developed capacity to carry out governance tasks, became the basis of statehood. See Jackson, R (1993) *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World,* UK: Cambridge University Press.

192. Acharya (1997), pp. 301-314.

193. These include critical Security Studies, Post-Modernist security perspective and Feminist security perspectives.

194. The contestation surrounding human security is evidenced by the almost complete divergence of views expressed by over twenty leading scholars, advocates, and practitioners of security in a 2004 (Vol. 35, No, 3) Special Edition of the influential *Security Dialogue* journal.

195. United Nations Commission on Human Security (UNCHS) (2003) *Human Security Now*, New York, p. 274.

196. See for example, Buzan, B. (1991) *People, States and Fear. An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Second Edition) Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner.

197. Bellamy, A. & McDonald, M. (2002) "'The Utility of Human Security': Which Humans? What Security? A Reply to Thomas & Tow", *Security Dialogue* Vol. 33(3), p. 374.

198. This view is encapsulated in Canada's (a leading advocate of human security) policy framework, which limits human security to the protection of people from armed violence. See Suhrke, A. (1999) "Human Security and the Interests of States", *Security Dialogue* 30 (September), pp. 265-276.

199. Alkire, S. (2004) "A Vital Core that Must be Treated with the Same Gravitas as Traditional Security Threats", *Security Dialogue* Vol. 35, No. 3, September 2004, p. 359.

200. Cilliers, J. (2004) *Human Security in Africa: A Conceptual framework for review*. ISS Monograph, p. 11.

201. See report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), 2001.

202. Welsh, J. (2002) "From Right to Responsibility: Humanitarian Intervention and International Society", *Global Governance* 8(2002), p. 511.

203. Oberleitner, G. (2005) "Human Security: A Challenge to International Law?", *Global Governance* 11(2005), p. 194.

204. See World Bank (2007) *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation,* Washington: World Bank Group, p. 33. Also, see Cincotta, R., Engelman, R. & Anastasion, D. (2003) *The Security Demographic: Population and Civil Conflict After the Cold War*, Washington: Population Action International, p. 48.

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210. "Ghana: North versus South", *African Confidential*, Vol. 36, No. 14, 7 July 1995, p. 4.

211. World Disaster Report, 2006: 197.

212. All cited data relating to disasters are from World Disaster Report, 2006.

213. Aidara, N. (2006) 'The Joola Tragedy in Senegal: Governance problems and a disaster's social roots'. Paper presented at conference on Human Security in West Africa: Challenges, Synergies and Action for a Regional Agenda, organised by Sahel and West Africa Club/ OECD, Lome (Togo), 26-28 March 2006, p. 116.

214. See BBC News/Africa "New Taleban Clashes in Nigeria", 07 January 2004. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3376979.stm

215. See BBC News/Africa "Ethnic Clashes in Northern Ghana", 04 December 2001. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1690746.stm

216. See BBC News/Africa "Chad: State of Emergency Imposed", 16 October 2007. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7047472.stm

217. Human Rights Watch (April 2007) Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike" report Vol. 19, No. 5(A), p. 4.

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219. I acknowledge that Chad is officially not a member state of ECOWAS; however, it shares contiguous borders, similar socio-political (ethnic and religious) formations and dynamics with a number of ECOWAS member states. Perhaps, the lack of a framework for dealing with insecurity in neighboring (non-ECOWAS) states is also a limitation of current human security regimes.

220. ECOWAS (2008) ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, Section 11(5).

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226. Col. A.J. Rossouw SANDF, Accord Occasional Paper No. 2/98, Durban South Africa.

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244. Rocky Williams, p. 61.
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246. Adedeji Ebo, 79.
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249. Caroline Thomas, in Globalization and Human Security, p. 3.
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251. See Scott Bobb, Migration of African professionals Worries African Leaders, VOA News Article, 8 November 2007.
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