



# West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

Accra, Ghana

**From  
the  
Field**

## ECOWAS' Sub-regional Conflict Prevention: Learning through Experience

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## About the Author



Takwa Zebulon Suifon is WANEP Liaison Officer to ECOWAS in Abuja. He joined the peace building family in 1998 and since 2000, he has been a WANEP staff where he has served in many capacities. He has distinguished himself as an early warning analyst for West Africa. Most of his research are in manuscripts and will soon be published. He also served as an editor and feature staff writer in *The Herald* newspaper in Cameroon where he further developed his writing skills. Takwa holds an M.A. in History of International Relations (1991) and D.E.A (History, 1992) from the University of Yaounde, Cameroon. He is expected to present his Ph.D thesis in History at the same University soon.

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The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) was born in September 1998 to promote an indigenous culture of peace, strengthen the capacity of peacebuilding practitioners and institutions, develop conflict prevention networks and mechanisms and advocate for just socio-politico-economic structures. Its membership covers a wide spectrum of local and national peacebuilding institutions as well as other peace-related NGOs in West and Central Africa.

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**INTRODUCTION**

In the framework of the Capacity-Building Programme for Conflict Prevention and Good Governance for ECOWAS and Civil Society Organizations in West Africa, WANEP was commissioned to conduct an assessment of ECOWAS' Conflict Prevention Mechanism, both capacity and training needs.

Although looking at the larger context of ECOWAS as an institution, this assessment will focus on ECOWAS' Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security; and ECOWAS' supplementary (to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention) protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

Assessing the mechanism for collective security and peace otherwise called the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution and Security and the additional portocol on Democracy and Good Governance constitute the base of our ability to determine the effectiveness of ECOWAS' institutional capacity for Conflict Prevention and Good Governance. The assessment would provide a clear picture of the material, human, financial and technical resources. Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the Mechanism<sup>1</sup> and having a deeper understanding of the issues at stake would serve as the benchmark for the development of effective and appropriate capacity building interventions.

The institutional assessment can also serve as a useful tool for the Mechanism through a process of self introspection, thinking, learning and evaluation of own weaknesses and strengths and generation of new policy options in a changing environment. In so doing, indicators can be developed to monitor and evaluate improvements in the Mechanism's effectiveness and the role of capacity building in this regard. It should be stressed that WANEP does not claim to 'build the capacity' of the Mechanism, but would rather build on the existing capacity by reinforcing it through training, provision of technical input, experience and knowledge sharing, building of coalitions, analyses, and collective generation of appropriate responses and policy options.

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<sup>1</sup> Mechanism would henceforth refer to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security as well as the additional protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.