



Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC/OECD) &
The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Final Summary

Workshop of Appropriation, Dissemination and Implementation of Regional
Instruments and Endogenous Democratic Governance and Conflict Prevention
Mechanisms in West Africa

Dakar & Saly, Senegal
16 - 19 October 2007

With the participation of the Women's Group and the Youth Coordination Group of
West Africa

With the support of



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Introduction

The *Workshop of Appropriation, Dissemination and Implementation of Regional Instruments and Endogenous Democratic Governance and Conflict Prevention Mechanisms in West Africa* was held in Dakar and Saly Portudal, Senegal from 16 to 19 October 2007. It was organised by the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD in partnership with ECOWAS and with the financial support of the French Development Agency¹ (AFD), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the International Organisation of French-speaking Countries² (OIF).

Opening Ceremony and Tribute to Saliou KANDJI

Following the introductory intervention by Mr. Massaër DIALLO (Head of the Governance, Conflict Prevention, Peace and Security Unit, SWAC/OECD) in which the issues at hand as well as the objectives of the workshop were set out, the AFD, CIDA and OIF representatives expressed their interest and support for this joint ECOWAS/SWAC action for the appropriation and dissemination of instruments for governance conflict prevention in West Africa.

This Workshop was presided by **Mr Cheikh Aguibou SOUMARE, Prime Minister of Senegal**, represented by the **Senegalese Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal, Dr. Cheikh Tidiane GADIO** who chaired the opening session. He paid homage to Saliou KANDJI, former Ambassador of Senegal, historian and humanist who had endeavoured to clarify the role of women within history and regional societies. Saliou KANDJI passed away, on 27 August 2006, approximately one month after participating in and making an important contribution to the *Inter-generational Forum on Endogenous Governance* (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso June 2006, organised by the SWAC). Tribute was then paid to Saliou KANDJI by Mr. Massaër DIALLO on behalf of the SWAC/OECD, followed by Mr. Babacar DIOP representing civil society and researchers, Mrs. Bintou SANANKOUA on behalf of the Women's Group of West Africa, Mr. Babacar Sedikh DIOUF on behalf of his former and close colleagues, Mr. Mody NDIAYE for the Youth Coordination Group of West Africa and the Minister of State, Dr. Cheikh Tidiane GADIO on behalf of the Senegalese Government.

Besides participants from 15 West African countries, a broad range of personalities also took part in this ceremony:

- Colonel Yoro KONE, Director of the ECOWAS Early Warning/Observation Monitoring Centre, representing the Commissioner of the ECOWAS Political Affairs, Peace and Security Commission; Mr. Pierre BASSOLE, Director of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA); Mr. José MONTABES, Deputy Director of the CIDA programme in Senegal; Mr. Jean-Marc GRAVELLINI, representing AFD; Mr. Boubacar Issa ABDOURHAMANE, representing the OIF; Mr. Mohamed H'MIDOUCHE, Representative from the African Development Bank (AfDb); Mr. Hervé DE LYS, Director of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA); Mrs. Aminata DIBBA, Interim Director of the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre based in Dakar; Professor Abdou Salam SALL, Chief Education Officer of the University Cheikh Anta

¹ Agence Française de Développement

² Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie

Diop in Dakar; Mr. Mangoné NIANG, Director of the African Union’s CELHTO; Mr. Oumar NDONGO, Secretary-General of the West African Civil Society Forum (WASCOF); the late Saliou KANDJI family as well as many personalities and actors from Senegalese civil society, media and academia participated in this ceremony preceding the work undertaken in Saly. The opening ceremony was widely covered by the national, regional and international press.

Press Conference on Conflict Prevention and Elections in West Africa

The opening ceremony was followed by a **thematic press conference** which was attended by more than 20 national, regional and international press agencies on *Conflict Prevention and Elections in West Africa*. The press conference was led by Mr. Massaer DIALLO with the participation of Colonel KONE, Mrs. Macaria BARAI (Guinea Bissau) and Mrs. Salimata PORQUET (Côte d’Ivoire) of the Women’s Group of West Africa and Mr. Mohamed TOURE (Guinea) of Youth Coordination Group.

I. Schedule of Sessions

A. Background

In July 2004, ECOWAS asked the SWAC/OECD, to contribute, through partnership and joint actions, to developing a strategy and initiatives with a view towards the promotion, ratification, appropriation and implementation of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. This instrument had been developed three years earlier supplementing the mechanism on conflict prevention in West Africa. This partnership has taken form over the years through various joint initiatives developed by the two organisations.

In 2005, the *Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa* was an important step in ECOWAS' political dialogue with actors of the region concerning peace-building and strengthening democracy.

In April 2006, the SWAC in collaboration with the Women's Group of West Africa organised a workshop entitled, "*Women, Endogenous Governance and Conflict Prevention in West Africa*". This meeting brought to light that the appropriation and dissemination of regional instruments as well as endogenous governance and conflict prevention mechanisms was important and essential for women and other actors. This eagerness was shared by the Youth Coordination Group of West Africa at the *Inter-generational Forum on Endogenous Governance* (organised by the SWAC in Ouagadougou, June 2006) , which was a result of a recommendation made at the workshop entitled, "*Initiative Capitalising on Endogenous Governance and Conflict Prevention Capacities*" held in Conakry in March 2005.

The Dakar-Saly Workshop was thus a new step in capitalising on regional internal capacities, appropriating regional instruments aimed at improving governance and democracy as well as implementing warning systems by involving a wide-range of actors at the local, national and regional levels.

The Workshop's objectives were to make the instruments known and facilitate their appropriation by actors as well as contribute to the implementation of these instruments promoting peace, security and democratic governance in West Africa. It highlighted the regional challenges to be faced with regard to these instruments which are not only an opportunity but a necessity.

Also to be taken into account:

- 10 out of 15 ECOWAS countries have the potential to enter into violent crises, or are/have been subjected to and/or exiting from violent conflict.
- Disturbances persist in democratic processes coupled with poorly resolved contentious elections and/or non-constitutional attempts to devolve political power.

- The uncontrolled circulation of light arms remains a concern. There are approximately 8 million of which half are not held legally nor publicly owned.

B. The Work

1) Participants

English-speaking, French-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries participated in which the political situation varies greatly in each. Approximately 55 participants involved in democratic governance and conflict prevention represented 15 countries of the region (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone). Also participating in the work in Saly along with the SWAC/OECD and ECOWAS were 5 representatives of regional and international organisations (CELHTO/AU, CIDA, OIF, UNOWA and WASCOF). There were 7 participants from the national and regional press also taking part in the Workshop which received full media coverage from a regional and international TV channel AITV.

2) Objectives

- **To contribute to strengthening** regional actors' capacities primarily those of civil society, women and youth so that they may be mobilised to carry out and disseminate advocacy actions promoting governance and conflict prevention instruments in West Africa.
- **To capitalise on crisis mediation capacities and mechanisms** and solutions based on endogenous values and cultures.
- **To support the ECOWAS early warning system through network-based actions, the circulation of information, and awareness-raising initiatives.**
- **To improve the functioning and involvement** of the Women's Group and the Youth Coordination Group.

3) Issues examined

The Workshop examined both ECOWAS instruments specifically geared towards West Africa as well as those of the African Union and the OIF. Participants were able to have a better understanding of the following instruments so that they could be decisively appropriated:

- **ECOWAS Instruments:**
 - Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security;
 - Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance;
 - Convention on light arms and small weapons.
- **AU Instruments:**
 - African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;
 - African Youth Charter;

- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.
- **Endogenous Instrument as part of West African History:**
 - Kurukan Fuga Charter (Mande Charter)
- **OIF Instruments:**
 - Bamako Declaration;
 - Saint Boniface Declaration.

The interventions were followed by fruitful exchanges of views and in-depth work which led to proposals for strategies and actions. The synthesis of these proposals and recommendations will serve as a basis to develop a finalised Action Plan of which the salient points were discussed and adopted during the workshop’s last session.

4) Press Coverage at the Workshop: Place and Role of the Media

Among the Workshop’s objectives was to make the media an absolute necessity in the dissemination process. It is important to note that the various press agencies’ involvement was two-fold: as journalists covering the meeting, as well as participants called upon to be actors in the dissemination process.

The opening ceremony and tribute to the late Saliou Kandji was covered by **26 journalists representing 20 press agencies**, striking the balance between coverage (national, regional and international) and the type of support (written, radio and television). In Saly, 7 journalists on special assignment (Panafrican press agencies, written press, Senegalese radio, Panafrican TV) covered the workshop and thus provided wide-range (international, regional and national) media coverage.

RFI recorded a special programme for the “African Debate” (hosted by Madeleine Mukamabano) which focused on the Workshop with the participation of the SWAC/OECD, ECOWAS and one civil society representative, representing West Africa Women’s Group . This programme was broadcasted on 21 October.

II. Conclusions and Future Work

A. Decisions and Recommendations

- The work provided an overview of the wide-range of regional instruments and endogenous mechanisms on democratic governance and conflict prevention. It was agreed that their effective application would greatly contribute to sustainable peace, stability and democracy;
- The Workshop brought to the forefront that these instruments are poorly understood at the regional and national levels within ECOWAS member countries as well as at the international level within partner States of the region;
- The perceived importance of these instruments led to the development within the Workshop of a Regional Action Plan for their dissemination and appropriation by actors as well as their implementation with a view to contributing to strengthening democracy and peace in West Africa;
- These instruments respond to the governance and conflict prevention challenges of the region. The work carried out highlighted their complementarity for capacity building in West Africa and preventing and resolving violent conflict, promoting democratic and equitable governance to support development in order to benefit populations. Participants concluded that isolation and dispersion of actions should be avoided in the promotion and implementation of these instruments.
- Implementation of these instruments should not be left only to the States and ECOWAS. Civil society plays an important role at the regional as well as at the national level as was confirmed in ECOWAS' new 2007-2010 Strategic Plan. Mobilising civil society requires capacity building. Civil society should also be involved in building democracy. In order for civil society to effectively contribute to mediation and prevention, it needs to be independent, pro-active and able to establish synergies with other actors (the media, States, political actors).
- The three types of civil society representatives present at the workshop³ raised, along with ECOWAS, the SWAC and other institutional and individual participants, the need for a *permanent framework in order to build sustainable synergies among actors*.

³ i) the Regional Forum of Civil Society Organisations of West Africa and various national organisations; ii)-the West Africa Women's Group ; and iii)-the Youth Coordination Group of West Africa formed following the Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa

B. Future Work

One of the main achievements at the Workshop was to identify the broad lines of the Regional Action Plan for the dissemination of regional instruments with a view towards their effective implementation.

Participants stressed the importance to place this Action Plan within the context of the ECOWAS 2007-2010 Strategic Plan, of which one of its main areas of work is: *“the consolidation of peace and security, promotion of democracy and good governance aimed at strengthening social cohesion”*.

The Workshop’s two distinct anchoring points were: i) the realities of the region and the challenges to be met while supporting its strengths and opportunities; and ii) the references in the ECOWAS Strategic Plan which has some of the following objectives⁴ :

- *The implementation of ECOWAS instruments and mechanisms to support crisis prevention, peace construction, democracy and sustainable security in West Africa. [...].*
- *Promotion of culture and practice of dialogue and peace between actors.*
- *Increased involvement of the Youth, through a system of inclusive governance, in the construction of its future within the region.*
- *Strengthen culture and the factors of peace in society.*
- *Strengthen democracy through participatory approaches and a spirit of enhanced dialogue in the region’s cultures. [...]*

The development of the Regional Action Plan is also in line with the strong partnership between ECOWAS and the SWAC. It refers to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security, in particular the Articles on the involvement of civil society. The Regional Action Plan’s objectives are based on this mechanism and all subsequent mechanisms

Regional Action Plan’s main areas of concentration

The Regional Action Plan contains priority actions. Areas of concentration around which the work will be structured were defined in the Workshop:

Action No.1: Set up a permanent framework for the sharing of information, exchange of views and coordination among various actors of the region.

Action No.2: Capacity building

Action No.3: Develop a sub-regional database

Action No.4: Advocacy

Action No.5: Dissemination of regional instruments and raising-awareness actions

Action No.6: Election Monitoring

Action No.7: Set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan

⁴ Extract from the *ECOWAS 2007-2010 Strategic Plan (2007)*

Action No.1: Set up a permanent framework for the sharing of information, exchange of views and coordination among various actors of the region.

Two recommendations with a view to achieving this objective:

1. Set up a network of all the Dakar/Saly Workshop participants;
 2. Set up a restricted working group to finalise the Regional Action Plan. The working group will be composed of representatives from ECOWAS, the SWAC, the Women's Group and the Youth Coordination Group.
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Action No.2: Capacity building

Civil society shall be able to play its political counterpoint role which is in the strengthening of democracy and shall avoid being limited to a technical role.

Action No.3: Develop a sub-regional database

The database, being a source of reliable information, will contribute to decompartmentalisation and provide information on the experiences enabling lessons to be learned, good practices to be shared and facilitating the mobilisation of expertise in the sub-region on crisis prevention and governance issues.

Action No.4: Advocacy

Advocacy actions, disseminating information and raising-awareness should be carried out at various levels:

- at the national level, this involves setting up a strategy and advocacy programmes for the ratification, appropriation and synergistic implementation of instruments.
 - at the international level and with development partners in order for West African instruments to be taken into account in their policies and actions regarding the region..
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Action No.5: Dissemination of regional instruments and raising-awareness actions

- What actions would facilitate the appropriation of governance and conflict prevention instruments?
 - What are the specific roles and complementarities of the different categories of actors?
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Action No.6: Election Monitoring

- How to strengthen ECOWAS' authority, political and technical capacity so that it can monitor elections with a view to regulating and consolidating democracy?

This will involve actions and programmes contributing to the strengthening of expertise of civil society providing support to ECOWAS. This will also involve creating conditions so that ECOWAS is more credible in its monitoring process for it to be able to produce reliable reports independently and without direct or indirect pressure.

Action No.7: Set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan

Participants undertook to develop a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan, respecting the timetable and deadlines while highlighting priority actions.

- **ECOWAS and the SWAC were asked at the Workshop to** relay its results to ECOWAS member countries, the African Union, OECD and its member countries.
- **International agencies and organisations involved in its work were asked** to provide political, intellectual and financial support to the Regional Action Plan resulting from the work undertaken in Saly.
- **The regional and national media** involved in the work and subsequently joining the Network were asked to play their role in the dissemination of instruments and mechanisms dedicated to democratic governance and conflict prevention such as the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.
- **The African Union and their member states as well as ECOWAS were asked** to translate the instruments into the various national languages of their member countries in order to broadly disseminate the instruments and guarantee citizen appropriation.

IV. Final Observations and Acknowledgements

The meeting allowed an effective mobilisation of international and regional organisations, citizens, institutions, women and youth with regard to regional instruments.

A two-fold approach was chosen:

- **A regional approach** expanded to include all of West Africa;
- This regional approach should be extended to the **national level** within the country. It should bring together all actors concerned around a platform enabling the linking up of actions at the national and regional levels.

At the end of the work, participants agreed to carry out a certain number of short-term actions:

- **Present in their respective countries a restitution of the work** carried out within the Workshop;
- **Share at the national level the actions** among the Youth and Women's Groups while implicating the national media;
- **Create a network composed of the participants** by creating a virtual electronic space enabling the circulation of information on best practices and consultations among various actors.

Acknowledgements

Participants expressed their gratitude to His Excellency President Abdoulaye WADE for allowing the workshop to be held in his country and for authorising the Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Cheikh Tidiane GADIO to Chair the opening ceremony; to the SWAC/OECD and ECOWAS for organising the workshop; to financial partners, notably, ADF, CIDA and OIF for their support.

The SWAC was authorised to officially present its gratitude to the organisations and authorities concerned.

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