



**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION (CSO) SENSITIZATION
WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECPF IN
MEMBER STATES**

19 – 20 AUGUST, 2015

ACCRA, GHANA

FINAL REPORT

Accra, Ghana

Executive Summary

From 19 to 20 August, 2015 in Accra, Ghana, the Directorate of Political Affairs organized the Civil Society Organization (CSO) Sensitization Workshop on the Implementation of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) in Member States. The meeting, which was attended by 44 CSOs from 14 countries, was an opportunity for CSOs to have an overview of the peace and security situation in the region that justified the need to understand and implement the ECPF at multi dimension levels with keys actors such as ECOWAS, Member States, Civil Society Organizations and Development Partners. The Meeting was being organized by 7 staff of the ECOWAS Commission and 4 expert facilitators, namely, Mr. Emmanuel Bombande, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze, Dr. Thomas Jaye, and Mrs. Fatoumata Zossou.

The participants heard presentations on the peace and security situation in West Africa and defining the concept of conflict prevention in line with the ECPF, overview of the ECPF as a practical guideline on conflict prevention activities, the role of CSOs in conflict prevention, and resource mobilization strategies. The participants were asked to make individual presentations on the conflict prevention activities being carried out by their respective organizations. This was followed by a group exercise where participants were divided according to their countries and asked to describe the peace and security challenges and interventions being done in their countries, the institutions involved and the resource mobilization strategies employed. The groups made presentations of their work to the rest of the participants in order to share the experiences, gaps and resources mobilization techniques adopted by the different CSOs represented at the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, the participants agreed that CSOs can play a greater role in the prevention of conflicts in Member States. They also agreed on the need for CSOs to make a more meaningful impact in terms of conflict prevention initiatives through its partnership with the State. They acknowledged the importance of continued collaboration between country level work and the ECOWAS Commission. The participants were asked to identify lead institutions and other CSOs to collaborate with at country level towards the implementation of the ECPF. The participants recognised that conflicts are more intra-state as they are not limited to borders and therefore, there is a need to view conflicts from a collective regional approach.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Civil Society Organization (CSO) Sensitization Workshop on the Implementation of the ECPF in Member States took place from 19 to 20 August, 2015 in Accra, Ghana. The purpose of the Sensitization Workshop was to strengthen the capacity of Member States and Civil Society Organizations to enhance their roles as actors in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the region.
2. The objectives of the Technical Meeting were: to popularize the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) among the CSOs working on conflict prevention, peace and security themes, align existing activities of the CSOs to the ECPF's priorities and timeline, foster collaborative efforts towards the operationalization of the ECPF, encourage the establishment of a CSO platform for the coordination of ECPF implementation and develop modalities for monitoring the implementation of ECPF-related activities by the CSOs.
3. Prior to the Training and in order to meet the above-listed objectives, comprehensive presentations were developed by the facilitators of the meeting in collaboration with ECOWAS staff within the Political Affairs Directorate.

II. PARTICIPANTS

4. The two-day Sensitization Workshop in Accra, Ghana was attended by 42 CSO representatives, 4 experts and 7 staff from the ECOWAS Commission. The Workshop was facilitated by Mr. Emmanuel Bombande, co-founder, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and Chair, Board of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze, Executive Director of WANEP, Dr. Thomas Jaye, Deputy Director for Research, Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and Mrs. Fatoumata Zossou, Head of the National Coalition for Peace, Republic of Benin.

III. OPENING CEREMONY

5. The opening session was facilitated by Mr. Constant C. Gnacadja, Programme Officer, Conflict Prevention, ECOWAS Commission, who welcomed all of the participants to the Sensitization Workshop and facilitated the introduction of the participants by asking all participants to introduce themselves and list their expectations for the meeting. Among the expectations listed by the participants were: to better understand the ECPF, to have a better knowledge of ECOWAS and its Mechanisms, and to be informed about opportunities/avenues for collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission on conflict prevention activities in the region.

6. Following the introduction of the participants, the Welcome Address was delivered by the ECOWAS Director of Political Affairs. He noted that the presence of the participants in numbers demonstrated their commitment and dedication to the collective determination to transform West Africa into a zone of prosperity, peace and tranquillity and governed by the rule of law. He acknowledged that while ECOWAS is well aware that many of the CSOs are already embarking on aspects of the ECPF, the Meeting aimed to inject cohesiveness, coherence and joint action in the activities of the CSOs. He emphasized ECOWAS' readiness to partner with the CSOs in that endeavour. In closing, Dr. Ajibewa expressed optimism that the participants approach the exercise with the seriousness required and at the end of the workshop, the meeting produces concrete and realistic initiatives and sustainable networks for their harmonized implementation.

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND PRESENTATION OF OBJECTIVES

7. Mr. Emmanuel Bombande encouraged all participants to familiarize themselves with the ECPF. He emphasized the critical role of CSOs in the execution of conflict prevention initiatives in the region. He stressed on the need for the CSOs to view themselves as partners with ECOWAS and reminded the participants to remain active during the meeting. Mr. Bombande went on to present the agenda of the meeting and called for its adoption. Once the agenda was adopted, Mr. Gnacadja offered a brief summary of the objectives of the Meeting.

V. SESSION I: PEACE AND SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA & THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT PREVENTION

8. The first session of the Workshop entailed a presentation and discussions on the topic of Peace and Security in West Africa and the concept on conflict prevention. The session was moderated by Madam Fatoumata Zossou. The purpose of the session was to present the peace and security situation in the region, to define the concept of conflict prevention and discuss the background of the conflict prevention initiatives in the region and the benefits of CSO involvement in the maintenance and sustenance of peace and security in Member States.

PRESENTATION: UPDATE ON PEACE AND SECURITY SITUATION IN WEST AFRICA AND DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT PREVENTION IN LINE WITH THE ECPF

9. In his presentation, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze informed the participants about CSO entry points into peace and security initiatives through the usage of the ECOWAS normative frameworks. He also listed the strengths of CSO entry points into peace and security

initiatives which include: the establishment of a niche in peace and security, credibility of management and staff, accountability, proved track record, regional reach, established foothold in ECOWAS, gender sensitivity, ability to develop bankable projects, and confidence of development partners, Member States and peer NGOs. He further noted that by mobilizing 'people's power', CSOs can put pressure on decision-makers to reach a peaceful settlement. Furthermore, he mentioned that CSOs can also push for policies and practices designed to address the root causes of conflict.

VI. SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING THE ECOWAS CONFLICT PREVENTION FRAMEWORK (ECPF)

10. Session two of the Workshop entailed a presentation and discussions on the topic of Understanding the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). The session was moderated by Dr. Thomas Jaye. The purpose of the session was to sensitize the participants on the ECPF and the three-year priority plan for the implementation of the ECPF by ECOWAS Directorates.

'OVERVIEW OF ECPF AS A PRACTICAL GUIDELINE ON CONFLICT PREVENTION ACTIVITIES'; PRESENTATION OF THE 15 COMPONENTS AND 3-YEAR PRIORITY PLANS OF ACTION OF THE ECPF

11. Mr. Constant Gnacadja conducted the presentation on the ECPF as a Practical Guideline on conflict prevention activities. He described the ECPF as an operational tool for the implementation of the provisions of extant ECOWAS Protocols on peace and security, particularly the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management Resolution Peacekeeping and Security (1999). He introduced the participants to the 15 components of the ECPF, the methodology adopted by the ECOWAS Commission to develop the ECPF and illustrated the 3-year action plan for the implementation of the ECPF components by ECOWAS directorates. He concluded by stating the ECPF is a contract between ECOWAS, Member States, Civil Society Organizations, and Development Partners for them to work in collaboration to reduce conflict and promote development.

VII. SESSION 3: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF CSOS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION

12. Session three of the Workshop entailed a presentation and discussions on the topic of Understanding the Roles of CSOs in Conflict Prevention. The session was moderated by Mr. Emmanuel Bombande. The purpose of the session was to inform the CSOs of the importance of working alongside the State to tackle peace and security issues.

THE ROLES OF CSOS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION

13. In her presentation on the Role of CSOs in Conflict Prevention, Mrs. Fatoumata Zossou defined Civil Society as a group of people who are impartial and protect the overall interest of the community. She also explained that Civil Society is meant to be a link between government and society. CSOs are often dependent on external financing, therefore, Mrs. Zossou proposed that governments are encouraged to allocate budgetary resources towards CSOs. She also stated that civil society has an ability to quickly identify threats to peace in the region. She concluded by stating that the CSOs should be partners with the State as it is through the CSOs' collaboration with the State that can lead to the actualization of conflict prevention initiatives.

PRESENTATION OF ACTIVITIES ON CONFLICT PREVENTION PER COUNTRY

14. Participants were requested to make brief presentations on the conflict prevention activities being implemented in their respective countries. During the presentations, the meeting observed that most of the participants reported on implementing some selected components of the ECPF. These components are: Early Warning, Democracy and Political Governance, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Women, Peace and Security, Youth Empowerment and Peace Education. However, there were also minimal activities reported on components such as Natural Resource Governance, Security Governance and Practical Disarmament.

DAY 2

VIII. RECAP OF DAY 1

15. Mr. Bombande welcomed the participants to Day 2 of the meeting. Ms. Sa'adatu Shuaibu, one of the rapporteurs for the meeting, gave a brief review of day 1 of the Technical meeting. Mr. Bombande introduced the Session 4 of the meeting which would involve a group exercise on identifying the missing links from countries conflict prevention activities. Mr. Bombande encouraged the CSOs to keep in mind the structural causes of conflicts such as natural resources, ethnic conflicts, and human rights issues.

IX. SESSION 4: GROUP EXERCISE - MISSING LINKS FROM COUNTRIES CONFLICT PREVENTION ACTIVITIES /ECPF

16. Mrs. Fatoumata Zossou, who was the moderator for the session, explained that for the group exercise, CSOs should divide themselves according to their countries. She further explained that groups were required to fill in a template which requests for the following information:

- a. Key peace and security challenges in your country;
- b. Current CSO actions in line with the ECPF which seek to address the country challenges;
- c. The gaps in the CSOs implementation of conflict prevention activities;
- d. Proposals for a more efficient/effective response to conflict prevention related issues;
- e. Modalities for engagement/partnerships;
- f. Resource Mobilization Strategies;
- g. Lead Institutions for conflict prevention in your country.

17. Following Mrs. Fatoumata Zossou's explanation of the group exercise, the participants broke into groups according to their respective countries. The details of the group exercise are attached in Annex I of this report.

X. SESSION 5: STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CSOS TO LEVERAGE ON RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

18. Session five of the Workshop entailed a presentation and discussions on the topic of Resource Mobilization Strategies. The purpose of the session was to sensitize CSOs on strategies to use to be eligible on donors funds.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES

19. Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze, in his presentation, explained that enormous resources would be required to undertake conflict prevention and management strategies aimed at promoting peace. He also noted that over the years, CSOs have relied on the generosity of donors to support their project activities through grants and donations. He explained further that when the costs of an NGO's core activities exceed the inflow of grants and donations, it is forced to either reduce the quantity and/or quality of its work, or to find new sources of funds to cover the difference. Therefore, he explained that reaching out to new donors with innovative fund-raising approaches is usually the first step and redesigning program activities to include cost recovery components, whereby the beneficiaries or clients of the NGO pay part of program costs, is a second approach and a third alternative is for the NGO to make money through commercial ventures.

XI. CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING

20. At the end of the meeting, the following conclusions were reached:

- a. CSOs can play a greater role in the prevention of conflicts in Member States;

- b. CSOs to make more meaningful impact in terms of conflict prevention initiatives through its partnership with the State;
- c. Need for continued collaboration between country level work and the ECOWAS Commission;
- d. CSO participants to identify lead institutions and other CSOs to collaborate with at country level towards the implementation of the ECPF;
- e. The Enabling Mechanism, the 15th component of the ECPF, is one of the key objectives of the workshop; The Enabling Mechanism is the linchpin and the pillar to ensuring the successful implementation of the 14 components. It includes advocacy and communication, branding, documentation, partnership, resource mobilization, cooperation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.
- f. Need for consolidation of gains through the resolution of African problems by Africans; we should begin to solve our own problems. We should pool our resources and energies together;
- g. Conflicts should be viewed from a collective regional approach. There is a need to move from a state centric concept of state security to supra-nationality that is human security centred;
- h. Conflicts are now more intra-state, they are not limited to borders. Therefore, there is a need to deconstruct our understanding of the state. We need to begin to see each other as Africans;
- i. Need to evaluate local ownership and how it fits in on a regional level which must happen in a framework of sustainability.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

21. On behalf of the ECOWAS Commission and the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Dr. Ajibewa, Director of Political Affairs, thanked the participants for attending the meeting. He expressed his hope that the participants will put into action the components of the ECPF. He also noted that he will inform the ECPF Focal Point Directorates on the conclusions reached at the meeting.

ANNEX

1. Response to Questionnaire for CSOs
2. Country Group Presentations
3. List of Attendees
4. Group Picture