4 Towards a human security-centred approach to peacebuilding

ECOWAS's experiences and lessons

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Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the Economic Community of West African States's (ECOWAS's) peacebuilding experiences, focusing on the human security-centred peacebuilding objectives enumerated in its Vision 2020 Strategy and the practical approach which emphasises the increased participation of civil society in early-warning, conflict prevention, and resolution. Debates about long-term initiatives which recognise institutional and structural approaches to peacebuilding have evolved to include actions aimed at building social relationships and the participation of the people in the governance process. ECOWAS, in furtherance of its human security and strategic objectives, has adopted a bottom-up approach which seeks to transform the region from "an ECOWAS of states" to "an ECOWAS of peoples." This chapter commences by briefly documenting the shift from state-centric to community-based approaches to peacebuilding in West Africa. It then discusses ECOWAS's experience in pursuing its Vision 2020 human security-centred objectives. This is followed by a discussion of ECOWAS's approach to peacebuilding, including lessons learned from its partnership with CSOs to achieve human security-centred regional peacebuilding, and how these can be shared with other African Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

From state-centric to community-based approaches

The current strategic vision of ECOWAS is to create a peaceful, prosperous, and cohesive West Africa based on a people-centred vision. Barely a decade after the creation of ECOWAS in 1975, conflicts emerged starting from 1989 within and across the borders of ECOWAS member states.¹ These conflicts assumed dimensions that the existing ECOWAS framework, which had its primary focus on economic integration, could not manage.² The need to respond to the conflicts, as well as a global push for preventive diplomacy, precipitated a gradual evolution of the ECOWAS peace and security framework towards the introduction of institutional, structural, and human security approaches to regional peacebuilding (Adebajo and Rashid, 2004; Musah, 2009, 1–5).

ECOWAS needed a functional peacebuilding and security mandate in recognition of the nexus between peace and security and economic development in West Africa. The ECOWAS Treaty articles of establishment were revised in 1992 to reflect the demand for peace and security in the integration process. However, the peacebuilding interventions during that period were state-centric in approach. These include the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) interventions between 1990 and 2003,³ and numerous high-level mediation missions by heads of state. These approaches were generally criticised for their short-term focus, militarised approaches, neglect of human rights, and lack of inclusiveness.

Global events, including the end of the Cold War and the global push for preventive diplomacy outlined in the 1992 UN “Agenda for Peace” and a wave of democratisation, signalled gradual ECOWAS departure from state-centric approaches towards broader approaches involving a wider range of actors. Conflict management transitioned to preventive diplomacy, peace-making, and peacebuilding.⁴ The revised ECOWAS Treaty was complemented by several frameworks which promoted these broader approaches, including the 1999 Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security;⁵ the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance;⁶ and the 2008 ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF).⁷ These frameworks supported the broader participation of actors at various levels in peacebuilding, notably civil society organisations (CSOs).⁸ Civil society since then has increasingly been recognised as key to the transformative participatory processes of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. As highlighted by Ekiyor (2008, 27), “Over 3,000 CSOs work at different levels within West Africa. Organisations work on various conflict prevention issues including human rights, education, promoting dialogue, security sector reform, conflict-sensitive development, election monitoring, gender equality and post-conflict reconstruction.”

Conceptualising a human security approach

The concept of community peacebuilding is relevant to the subject of human security within the context of ECOWAS. While it is important to note that what peacebuilding entails and its practical application, vis-à-vis the role of the relevant actors, remain an ongoing debate, Lederach, Culbertson, and Neufeld (2007, 9) define peacebuilding as

the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. It aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. Conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation are all part of peacebuilding.

(Lederach et al., 2007, 9)

Lederach's "peacebuilding pyramid," complemented by Pearce's (2005, 45–49) identification of several phases⁹ at which peacebuilding has manifested globally, provides an overview of the levels in which peacebuilding has developed and the range of actors involved. Both Lederach (1997) and Pearce (2005) acknowledge the role and expansion of the "community" or grassroots where the conditions of a peaceful society are best generated. Community participation supports local ownership of the peacebuilding process, promotion of sustainable outcomes in the long term, improvement in social cohesion towards addressing common challenges, and strengthening of the global public sphere. Community participation is also important because of the integration of development and peace approaches.

Local ownership is hinged on the community as the object of peace interventions and preventive engagement. Lederach (1997, 4) proposed a grassroots approach where local leaders, NGOs, and international players take part in creating peace. The limitations on the duration of the international community's effort at sustaining peacekeeping implies that peacebuilding efforts should be viewed as an investment in sustainability in which the communities are direct beneficiaries and should have a stake. Community participation in peacebuilding is also a socialisation process that should consider the indigenous knowledge and practices of the concerned communities, promoting social cohesion and cross-learning and peer review. In just the same way as peacebuilding intervention models are applicable though not entirely wholesale, communities should be able to learn from other experiences and consider other models. This resocialisation of peacebuilding is consistent with arguments on structural transformation promoted by Galtung (1996).¹⁰

The notion of a public sphere has gained momentum among various groups and its relevance continues to increase, especially where the human rights and lives of people are concerned.¹¹ Globalisation, the spread of information, and the growth of technology have ensured that events do not remain boxed within the traditional boundaries of the state. Communities and civil society organisations (CSOs) have networks whose influence cuts across sovereign state borders. Indeed, one may argue that there is a supranational voice through which citizens in one state rely on networks of global public opinion to highlight issues affecting them, as well as evoke a response. Lessons from the Arab Spring, and global reaction and support for several causes including the "#MeToo movement" and "Justice for George Floyd" campaigns reveal a trend where events in one part of the globe spark reactions in other places.¹²

ECOWAS peacebuilding is aimed at promoting sustainable peace, which is complemented by preventive diplomacy and peace-making. While ECOWAS peacekeeping efforts over the years has expanded to include election-monitoring and humanitarian assistance, it has been confronted with some limitations including funding and resource constraints, a lack of consensus among member states on priorities, a lack of decisive action, and a state-centric approach. Relevant ECOWAS frameworks, especially the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) and the Vision 2020 strategy, therefore had to be introduced to address these gaps. The ECPF consists of 15 components that underpin ECOWAS's

approach to conflict prevention¹³ and peacebuilding,¹⁴ and these emphasise the role of a wide range of actors.

The arguments for a change in approach have been noted by Sen (2013, 26–27) who frames the human security-centred approach thus:

A human security-centred approach recognises the limitations of a state-centric notion of security, arguing for a holistic approach that involves coordination of different capacities and actors in the peace process. The state remains the fundamental purveyor of security. Yet it often fails to fulfil its security obligations – and at times has even become a source of threat to its own people. That is why attention must now shift from the security of the state to the security of the people – to human security [...] Human security thus brings together the human elements of security, of rights, of development.

(Sen, 2013, 26–27)

ECOWAS has also been involved in initiatives focused on building the capacity of community actors in peacebuilding. It has designated various research institutions as training centres, which have been certified as centres of excellence: the National Defence College Nigeria, KAIPTC in Ghana, and the “Ecole de Maintien de la Paix” Alioune Blondin Beye (EMP) in Mali. ECOWAS has developed technical collaboration with these institutions (ECOWAS-KAIPTC, ECOWAS-WACSI, ECOWAS-WANEP) to work on thematic areas and investigate areas of synergy and cooperation. ECOWAS also developed agreements with King’s College London and the latter has deployed some of its researchers to serve in the ECOWAS Political Affairs Directorate.¹⁵

ECOWAS’s and community-based peacebuilding

The strategic vision of ECOWAS focuses on development processes that are people-oriented and people-driven. The objectives of ECOWAS Vision 2020, as adopted in Abuja on 15 June 2007, aim to address four main challenges:

- Peace-building and security, promotion of the principle of good governance and democracy;
- Deepening of the integration process via the establishment of the ECOWAS common market and the interconnectivity of the markets through appropriate infrastructure;
- Integration into the global economy through improved regional competitiveness and the definition of common response strategies in particular as a way of addressing the different crises relating to the international economic situation; and
- Pursuit of the institutional reform of our organisation by providing it with resources to perform effectively and to carry out its mandate.

(ECOWAS, 2009, 3)

In a bid to meet these different challenges, the ECOWAS Commission in 2009 elected to focus its action on six priority areas, one of which is the promotion of peace and security, dialogue, and preventive diplomacy and the establishment of peacekeeping support structures through greater involvement of member states.¹⁶ It was predicted that if these short-term objectives were achieved, they would certainly strengthen the regional integration process and political stability in the region. In achieving the strategic goals, civil society remains an important partner and must be heavily involved in the promotion of good governance and regional integration. In this regard, the ECOWAS Vision 2020 strategy¹⁷ seeks to transform the region from an ECOWAS of states into an ECOWAS of peoples.

The participation of civil society is a key input in achieving the strategic vision of ECOWAS.¹⁸ ECOWAS's relationship with CSOs, stipulated in the ECPF and supported by ECOWAS Vision 2020, is defined in terms of creating awareness and strengthening capacity within member states and civil society to enhance their role as principal constituencies and actors in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. For example, the West Africa Network for Peace (WANEP)'s partnership with ECOWAS,¹⁹ which was formalised through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2003, reviewed on several occasions and renewed in 2014²⁰ for a further five years, is derived from this mandate. Under this MOU, WANEP works in close collaboration with ECOWAS in conceptualising and implementing activities leading to the promotion of peace and security in the region, and is currently the civil society partner of ECOWAS in the operationalisation of the ECOWAS Early Warning Network (ECOWARN). Other examples of community participation include the engagement, dialogue forums, research, and capacity-building undertaken by ECOWAS-recognised CSOs who have formalised relationships with the various directorates in ECOWAS.²¹

CSOs can mobilise wide support for a common cause,²² influence the implementation of policies, participate in transitions and electoral processes, and serve as a vehicle for the dissemination of credible information and ideas. ECOWAS has recognised the importance of establishing comprehensive dialogue and partnership for agenda-shaping in collaboration with CSOs within West Africa. It has built and formalised partnerships with civil society through agreements, which makes collaboration easier and more effective. Furthermore, ECOWAS policies are not adopted without inputs from civil society platforms. In pursuance of the goals of increased engagement with civil society, ECOWAS supported the formation of the West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOFF).²³ In December 2014, over 50 civil society delegates representing the 15 ECOWAS countries attended the First Annual West Africa Civil Society Conference in Accra, Ghana. Part of the deliberations included engaging ECOWAS in achieving Vision 2020 in areas including promoting education and health; democratic governance, including transparency and accountability; women's political participation and representation; natural resource management; youth development; and free movement of people and goods.²⁴

The ECOWAS Mediation Facilitation Division under the Directorate of Political Affairs was established in 2015 to support the work of ECOWAS's mediators; generate, document, and disseminate knowledge; and ensure active civil society collaboration in the area of peace mediation in West Africa. The coming into being of this division was in fulfilment of the preventive diplomacy component of the ECPF and one of the key recommendations that emanated from the 2010 ECOWAS International Conference in Monrovia, Liberia, known as the Monrovia Declaration. Subsequently, the Mali After-Action Review, which was held in Accra in 2013 to review and draw lessons from ECOWAS's intervention in Mali,²⁵ in the aftermath of the conflict in that country, also echoed what had been recommended at the Monrovia conference. The challenge now is for ECOWAS to actively engage West African civil society in consolidating peace mediation interventions to fulfil the objective of the Mediation Facilitation Division. To do that, WACSOFF needs to be strengthened.

CSO participation in the election-monitoring process has also proved to be valuable. In addition to sensitising the general public and educating the electorate on convergence principles (e.g. human rights, term limits, and governance issues), CSOs provide independent observation of the electoral process²⁶ and can also alert authorities of the potential for outbreaks of violence. Recent trends show the involvement of coalitions of CSOs in monitoring electoral transition processes in West African countries. The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), a coalition made up of over 500 CSOs, was for instance involved in monitoring Nigeria's 2015 general election. The TMG has observers in every local government of the Nigerian federation and transmits election-related information using information technologies to a command centre, known as the "situation room." Thus, the TMG provides independent verification of elections in Nigeria.

Apart from capacity-building activities by ECOWAS institutions, the organisation also engages in inclusion strategies aimed at building the networks and capacity of civil society through experience-sharing. Activities include involving community experts in the areas of peace, security, and elections, as well as gender experts from the training centres of excellence on technical teams and in election observation missions. For instance, ECOWAS allocates a quota for experts from training centres of excellence to participate in election observation and monitoring. During missions, civil society experts from WANEP, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) West Africa, WACSOFF, and other similar organisations are able to share knowledge with their counterparts in the country where they have been deployed on mission, while also learning about best practices. For instance, in elections in Niger (2016), Cape Verde (2017), and Ghana (2016), experts independently learned about the workings of the media and how the respective countries' regulatory authorities were able to maintain the transparency and independence of the media. The experts were also able to individually share some of their experiences on how female participation in politics could be enhanced by including women's associations.

Challenges of community participation peacebuilding in ECOWAS

Despite the instrumentality of civil society in achieving the ECOWAS peacebuilding agenda as outlined in Vision 2020, it still faces challenges. These challenges include funding, documentation of successes, institutional and technical capacity, information flow, and coordination between vital CSO groups and ECOWAS. In addressing these issues, ECOWAS has devised innovative approaches within its existing capabilities and relationships to improve community participation in peacebuilding. This has been mainly through partnerships, networking, lessons learned, and the promotion of experience-sharing among community actors.

The funding challenges faced by CSOs have impacted their ability to contribute to peacebuilding efforts. Competition for donor funding among organisations undermines cooperation and coordination leading to duplication of effort and initiatives. To resolve the funding challenges, ECOWAS devised two strategies: incorporating provisions into the ECOWAS line budget to fund CSOs, and channelling donor funds to West African CSOs for their capacity-building activities. In June 2016, ECOWAS and CSOs in Accra, Ghana, discussed the Community Strategic Framework (CSF) 2016–2020 and the dedication of a portion of the ECOWAS community levy to ensure sustainable financing of the CSF's implementation activities by CSOs. This includes the provision of a budget line for CSOs within the ECOWAS annual budget which will complement donated funds from emerging African foundations, indigenous philanthropists, and the diaspora. ECOWAS also channelled external donor funding to CSO programs. An example is the 2014–2017 Kingdom of Denmark's Africa Programme for Peace (APP),²⁷ through which WANEP and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) received direct financial support for their activities.

Funding and the prioritisation of resources play a huge role in achieving ECOWAS's community objectives. Although ECOWAS in 2003 created the Peace Fund, to ensure a timely response to urgent peace and security challenges, very little of its resources are used for non-emergency peace and security activities, such as policy development work and engagement with the broader policy community. Peacebuilding activities are to be emphasised rather than mitigation efforts, which requires much effort and attention as the stakes are higher.

Documentation of ECOWAS successes in peacebuilding has not been followed up over the years. ECOWAS convened conferences in 2005,²⁸ 2010,²⁹ and 2014³⁰ to discuss progress made by the broader peace and security policy community in the sphere of peace and security in the region and to review ECOWAS's peace and security activities. These conferences have only been held periodically. They do not follow the same themes and it is unclear if conference proceedings are kept for future reference. On the civil society side, its contribution to conflict prevention needs to be further strengthened by the development of a documentation culture among CSOs. The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)³¹ is positioning itself to become a civil society knowledge-sharing hub and a credible centre for learning, with international recognition and accreditation.

There is also a need for improved cohesiveness with CSOs playing a more active role in ECOWAS early-warning to early-response efforts. CSOs constitute the lower level of the early-warning architecture, feeding into the information shared with the ECOWAS leadership through Zonal Bureaus. CSOs also issue regular declarations on the political situation in West Africa.³² For instance, in 2011 CSOs voiced their concern over the fragility of the transition process, prompting action on the part of ECOWAS to intervene following Laurent Gbagbo's refusal to leave power despite losing the November 2010 presidential elections of Cote d'Ivoire. While there has been a decentralisation of the early-warning system, CSOs only feed information and recommend action-oriented interventions into the ECPF, not necessarily reflecting ECOWAS decisions which are still centred on the ECOWAS Commission and authority.

ECOWAS is taking steps to create courses and training modules on the major challenges in institutional and capacity-building. According to Ismail (2013, 28):

On the supply side, the [training centre of excellence], mainstream academic and research institutions, and civil society coalitions in West Africa could explore and create specialised modules and training courses focused on ECOWAS as an institution and broaden and improve existing courses on peace and security issues (for example, electoral management, disarmament, and demobilisation and reintegration).

The ECOWAS Directorate of Political Affairs is slowly taking steps in this direction, an example being the workshop on the Review and Validation of Training Modules for Political Parties in ECOWAS Member States.³³ The workshop, which had inputs from CSOs and experts across the region, aimed to produce training modules to address challenges in financial management, administrative structures, and democracy at the level of political parties in the region. Some of the course modules developed during the same workshop were used at a training workshop in July 2016. The training, held in Ghana, was organised with the objective of enhancing the capacity of political parties in Ghana in the areas of media relations and effective campaign strategies, internal party democracy and administrative processes, political party financing, and mainstreaming youth and women in political party activities. Youth across West Africa have not been left out of the process of capacity-building. ECOWAS in 2016 collaborated with the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation to organise a working session with journalists from member states.³⁴ The training provided an opportunity for participants to gain insights into the role of the media in nation-building and development in West Africa.

Conclusion and policy recommendations

The increased role of regional organisations and communities in peacebuilding are important features of the emerging post-Cold War system. However, more important is the inclusion of civil society in consultations and that help shape

their peacebuilding efforts and outcomes. The initiatives by CSOs like CDD, WANEP, and WACSOF in promoting people-centred approaches to peacebuilding are commendable but need to be supported and built upon by ECOWAS and the wider community. Increased efforts towards ensuring capacity-building and documentation should pay equal attention to improvements in early-warning and response, funding and peer-learning, and the potential for the exchange of ideas with other African regional economic communities (RECs).

CSOs should be better integrated into the early-warning and response action. Their contributions should go beyond feeding into the early warning mechanisms to joint analysis and planning of response efforts. Mainstreaming gender, youth, and the inputs of marginalised groups and analysing the impact of interventions on group dynamics will help improve outcomes. Response efforts should also include provisions for after-action reviews involving civil society so that lessons learned from the process can help inform future actions.

Funding challenges could be addressed with the active contributions of ECOWAS member states to the ECOWAS levy. Also, the people should recognise they need to play a greater role towards building the future ECOWAS of their dreams. The need for localised sources of funding including from local businesses, the private sector, and willing volunteers should be encouraged. Funding limitations should also be mitigated with increased investments in the use of technology to promote communication, cross-learning, and coordination of efforts.

The lessons of ECOWAS's efforts towards a human security and people-centred approach to regional peacebuilding are relevant to other African RECs, particularly against the background of efforts to facilitate inter-REC collaboration over the past decade. In 2008, the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue facilitated a working exchange between ECOWAS and IGAD, with a focus on peace and security matters. Both organisations held fruitful exchanges and agreed to seek areas of future collaboration. The AU in 2012 held a retreat of the Panel of the Wise which brought together intergovernmental organisations, regional economic communities (RECs), civil society organisations (CSOs), governments, and experts to discuss the peace and security landscape in Africa. The meeting also highlighted the nexus between security and development. Similarly, during the July 2016 AU Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda, ECOWAS pledged to host an inaugural inter-REC Retreat towards the end of 2017 to advance a culture of experience-sharing and cooperation among African RECs though this is yet to take place.

Notes

- 1 Liberia and Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Burkina Faso.
- 2 Notwithstanding the fact that ECOWAS had by 1978 adopted the Protocol on Non-Aggression, followed in 1981 by the Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence, it was also evident by the end of the 1980s that there was a missing link in the equation for regional integration: peace and security.

- 3 In August 1990, ECOMOG deployed for its first intervention in Liberia, and as of 2003 ECOMOG had been deployed on five missions in Liberia, Guinea Bissau, and Sierra Leone.
- 4 The agenda recommended the continual dispatch of fact-finding missions and use of eminent and qualified experts in fact-finding and other missions, selected on as wide a geographical basis as possible, taking into account candidates with the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity.
- 5 A/SP1/12/01.
- 6 The 2001 Protocol is supplementary to the 1999 Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security.
- 7 These Protocols have given ECOWAS a mandate to intervene in issues of elections and accession to power, decentralisation of power and participatory democracy, poverty alleviation, human rights, and education. In this vein, ECOWAS has successfully contributed to violence-free and fair elections in the region.
- 8 The ECPF, with its 14 components and the 15th being enabling mechanisms. The second definition of civil society fits the West African context. This school of thought defines civil society as the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, where people associate to advance common interests. In West Africa, these actors may include women's organisations, traditional rulers, queen mother associations, youth organisations, faith-based organisations, trade unions, the media, and academia.
- 9 First phase is the Agenda for Peace, which saw the role of multilateral institutions in peacekeeping and maintaining world order, second phase is the post-war reconstruction focus on development as a way of maintaining peace. This phase focused on institution-building and democratic enhancement, despite the attendant criticisms of this approach as fostering a Cold War pro-democracy agenda. The third phase is peacebuilding from below expounded by Lederach's multi-track and multi-dimensional approaches which emphasise the grassroots approach to peacebuilding.
- 10 See also Conteh-Morgan (2005).
- 11 The public sphere is

crucial to identifying the public good and to shaping both public and private strategies for pursuing it. The public sphere is also important where civil society is seen mainly in terms of the direct action of citizens – organized informally in communities or more formally in voluntary associations. Public communication shapes what civil society organizations [...] address, from poverty to the environment. Not only do issues go in or out of fashion, the very forms and strategies of civil society organizations are matters of public knowledge, circulating in the media and first-hand reports, and offering a repertoire of models to each new organizing effort. Public discussion is also vital to evaluating the extent to which different civil society organizations – or social movements – do in fact serve the public good. The public sphere takes on its most specifically political import when civil society is seen as centrally related to the state. Calhoun.

(2011, 311–323)

- 12 See Drury et al. (2005).
- 13 ECPF has operational and structural preventive approaches. Operational prevention focuses on methods such as early warning/response, mediation, conciliation, disarmament, and peacekeeping through the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). Structural prevention, on the other hand, focuses on peacebuilding through political and institutional reforms, capacity building, justice and the rule of law, reconciliation and reintegration, and peace education.
- 14 These frameworks include provisions for early-warning; preventive diplomacy; democracy and political governance; human rights and rule of law; media; natural resource governance; cross-border initiatives; youth empowerment; the ESF; humanitarian assistance; peace education (culture of peace); and the enabling mechanism (with

a focus on resource mobilisation and cooperation between member states and civil society organisations [CSOs]).

- 15 The relationship covers the provision of technical advice and support, support for capacity building, and incorporating findings from peace and security research and analysis into ECOWAS activities. For instance, researchers at the Conflict, Security, and Development Group (CSDG) contributed to the development of the ECPF and its activity plans, especially thematic strands on security sector reform, natural resource management, and women, peace, and security. Also, since 2008, the CSDG has consistently deployed young West African professionals in peace and security to ECOWAS to support its operational efficiency; ECOWAS has absorbed some of them into its service. Similarly, in 2013, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue supported ECOWAS's creation of a Mediation Facilitation Division in the Political Affairs Directorate by deploying consultants to undertake background research and develop operational mandates, procedures, and staff profiles.
- 16 Others include: the establishment of the customs union; facilitation of the signing of an equitable, balanced, and development-oriented Economic Partnership Agreement; pursuit of the agricultural and environment policy; implementation of adopted action plans; regional infrastructure; making the free trade area function effectively by establishing the common external tariff; and encouraging member states to honour their commitments to effectively implement the provisions of the protocol relating to the community levy.
- 17 <https://www.ecowas.int/about-ecowas/vision-2020/#:~:text=The%20ECOWAS%20Vision%202020%20is,for%20many%20years%20to%20come.>
- 18 This is captured by Aryeetey (2001). In narrating the experience of CSOs: "The revised 1993 ECOWAS Treaty called on the regional community to co-operate with regional CSOs and encourage the broad participation of citizens in the integration process."
- 19 WANEP builds the capacity of peacebuilding, development, and human rights practitioners in Africa and worldwide on peace and security issues to promote and protect human security through context-specific tools and indigenous techniques.
- 20 https://wanep.org/wanep/attachments/article/658/pr_sept_2014_WANEP-ECOWAS_mou.pdf.
- 21 Other initiatives have been formed, which are discussed in brief by Ekiyor (2008). They include the West African CSO Forum (WACSOFF) Forum of Associations Recognized by ECOWAS (FARE), the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), the West Africa Network for Peace (WANEP), the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa, and the West Africa Women's Association, working with ECOWAS on issues of governance, early-warning, small arms proliferation, and gender, respectively.
- 22 Civil society can put pressure on states to implement policies through close monitoring of the ratification and implementation of agreements that have been signed by the states. One way CSOs influence policy is through the mobilisation of the public in providing a common voice concerning issues affecting the welfare of citizens in a particular state and in the region. The role of civil society in early-warning cannot be overemphasised.
- 23 Created in 2003, WACSOFF is the umbrella body of civil society organisations created as the institutionalised channel of dialogue between ECOWAS and civil society organisations. <http://wacsoff.net/index.php/en/who-we-are/about-wacsoff>.
- 24 Communique adopted here: <http://commonwealthfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Communique%20%20201st%20West%20Africa%20Civil%20Society%20Conference%20Accra%20-%20December%208-9%202014.pdf>.
- 25 <https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/70571/1192305>, also see <https://realnewsmagazine.net/africa/ecowas-interventions-in-mali-reviewed/>.
- 26 Elections are among the most important barometers of democracy. However, they are also a potential source of conflict and threat to peace and security. In line with the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and in

- accordance with the Decision of Heads of State and Government at the 26th session held in Dakar, Senegal, on 31 January 2003, the ECOWAS Commission dispatched fact-finding missions to relevant countries in advance of elections, in order to ascertain the status of preparations.
- 27 http://www.netpublikationer.dk/UM/evaluation_africa_programme_for_peace_2004-2017/Html/kap05.html.
 - 28 A workshop on “Lessons from ECOWAS Peacekeeping Operations: 1990–2004,” held in February in Accra, Ghana, included ECOWAS staff and regional and internal experts.
 - 29 In March 2010, a conference on “Two Decades of Peace Processes in West Africa: Achievement, Failures, and Lessons” in Monrovia, Liberia, included over 150 participants, including former heads of state, ministers, government officials, researchers, media members, civil society activists, and policy actors from within and outside the region.
 - 30 The February 2014 “Experts’ After-Action Review of ECOWAS’s Intervention in Mali,” held in Akosombo, Ghana, was organised to assess and draw lessons and recommendations from ECOWAS’s role in Mali’s multidimensional crises. Participants included researchers and experts in political, military, and security issues, civil society organisations, research institutions, and training centres of excellence.
 - 31 <https://www.wacsi.org/reports>.
 - 32 See https://wanep.org/wanep/attachments/article/658/pr_sept_2014_WANEP-ECOWAS_mou.pdf.
 - 33 See: <https://allafrica.com/stories/201509170892.html>.
 - 34 <https://www.ecowas.int/ecowas-fes-emphasize-role-of-the-media-in-west-african-integration/>.

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