

THE ROLE OF CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN DIPLOMACY

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ABSTRACT

Conflict prevention and resolution roles in diplomacy is a great task to achieve amongst nations of the world. The notion of conflict prevention includes numerous activities such as conflict avoidance and conflict resolution, with techniques such as mediation, peace-keeping, peacemaking, confidence-building measures. Preventive diplomacy has been a long time idea perceived by the United Nations for many decades.

The fact that the overwhelming majority of conflicts are internal struggles has an important impact on how the state, sub region, region and international community can address such conflicts; intra-state conflicts do require method of early warning, adherence of avowed democratic principles and intervention of civil society organization.

The theory of conflict preventions and resolution as preventive diplomacy is a total control and management of peace to a zero level. The Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS) attempt to bring peace in the sub-region has proved insurmountable. The best conflict prevention and resolution which is now widely advocated, is by the use of a practical democratic principles that provides the immediate needs, and desires of the people such as employment, education, social amenities etc. These principles must be articulated by ECOWAS member states to achieving the desired conflict prevention in the sub-region. There are cogent reasons for renewed interest in preventive diplomacy, one of which is to forestall the recurring and devastating impact of armed conflict on individuals, societies and economies of nations. This work examines the challenges the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS are currently facing in conducting preventive diplomacy in a changing political and security actions.

This will focus on diplomatic action to be taken in other to prevent or mitigate the spread of armed conflict. Preventive diplomacy is a broader strategy relevant in the promotion of peace. This writing dealt on the growing expectations placed on the ECOWAS in the area of conflict prevention in the sub region and the need to partner with other organizations to achieve a desired goal. It discusses the obstacles that

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hamper the efforts of the application of preventive diplomacy, the past and current conflict prevention activities by ECOWAS search light governance, governance under pressure, governance and security challenges in ECOWAS member states, security sector reform in ECOWAS towards effective conflict prevention and resolution, civil society contribution to conflict prevention and resolution in West African sub region, practical contribution of Civil Society to preventing conflict, civil society early warning, diplomacy and security cooperation and on any more. The paper concludes with the recommendation among others that ECOWAS should strive to uphold its democratic principles and zero Tolerance to any undemocratic principles in the sub region, thereby strengthen its preventive diplomacy capacity.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict prevention and resolution management among community of nations with the contemporary modern diplomacy is highly challenging. As nations continue to interact with one another economically or politically, there must be acceptable method of conducting inter-state relations involving discussions and negotiations. This act is performed by Heads of state or their representatives in order to advance national interests.

In the course of the interstate relations or intra-state confrontations, certain diplomatic approach are advocated by international community to resolving such conflicts. Issues such as sovereignty, local rivalries and bad neighborhood can make use of preventive diplomacy towards State prone to civil war very difficult¹ Conflict prevention presents definitional challenges. The former UN secretary General **Boutros Boutros - Ghali** described conflict prevention as preventive diplomacy, “an action to prevent disputes from arising between parties to prevent existing disputes escalating into conflicts and limit the spread of the latter when they occur²”.

Conflict resolution is about activities that seek to discover, identify and resolve the underlying root causes of the conflicts³.

This work seeks to explore the extent sub regional organizations, ECOWAS states and non-state entities are prepared and able to engage in a coordinated system of multilateral preventive diplomacy.

¹Leathermen J, William D, Breaking Cycles of Violence, Kumerian Press, West Hartford, 1999, R3

²An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peace Making and UN document A/4/277 – S/24111
17 June 1992, Paragraph 20, <http://www.CFC.org/resources/documents/misc/570992..htm>, Accessed 20th June 2011

³Ladan T: A. Introduction to International Human Right and Humanitarian laws

The paper will also explore the balancing act as to their efforts to curb or avert violence and deadly conflicts in West African sub region.

PAST AND CURRENT CONFLICT PREVENTION ACTIVITIES ECOWAS SEARCH LIGHT GOVERNANCE

i. The ECOWAS Response. It is imperative to note that ECOWAS has become an active regional player in preventive diplomacy. In West Africa sub-region, the issue of governance has been one of the most critical and challenging aspects of its post-independence political history. **The lack of transparent governance** processes has resulted in political violence ending in military coups de'atat as well as violent and destructive intra-state conflicts. The outbreak of conflicts over the 'democratic deficit' in the post cold war period resulted in the first military intervention by the Economic community of West Africa States via its (ECOMOG) deployment to Liberia in 1990.

Liberia under the leadership of Samuel Doe (after a military coup in 1980, Master Sergeant Doe killing President William Tolbert) experienced a gross human rights abuses resulting into economic strangulation. It was like a tribal problem, a reciprocal tribal vendetta between Samuel Doe tribe against Gio and Mano tribes. The crises escalated into a full war resulting ECOWAS meeting in Banjul, the Gambia capital by the five leaders of Mediation committee of ECOWAS and the two ordinary country members in 6th August, 1990. It was the aftermath of this meeting that a peace keeping force known as the Economic Community of West Africa States monitoring group (ECOMOG) was created mandated to end destruction of life and property, stabilize (the situation in Liberia and maintain an environment conducive for democratic election, and finally to monitor peace when attained⁴. ECOWAS has since Liberia case, mounted several peace operations often in partnership with the United Nations⁵.

But the controversies surrounding the intervention, the need to understand the root causes that precipitated the collapse of several ECOWAS member states forced ECOWAS to (a) take stock of the nature of political instability and insecurity in West Africa, and (b) response to the rising societal demands for democratization recognizing that individual security, good governance and accountability is linked to the security and stability of the whole sub-region.

This piecemeal but rather monumental step gave way to a new dawn of re-democratization process, spearheaded by first ECOWAS as a critical component of peace building in the sub-region.

⁴Gasiokwu MOU *International Law and Diplomacy (Selected Essay)* 1st Edition, (Enugu: Chenglo Limited: 2004 (pp288-291).

⁵Article 5 see NEPAD Document, Section (ii) subsection 80.

This resulted to the declaration of ECOWAS political Principles signed in Abuja in July 1991⁶ which reflects a consolidation of political ideas that had been germinating in the sub region for sometime now. This document sought to acknowledge the renewed pre-occupation with and reassertion of the fundamental right and freedom of the individual. Respect the fundament human rights of (ECOWAS Citizens) as embodied in universally recognized international instruments of human rights and in the African charter on human rights and people's right⁷.

These constitutive principles have been principles such as the affirmation by the ECOWAS leaders that they are going to ensure the liberty of the individual and his inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic process the framing of society in which he lives... "committing to"... encourage and promote in each of our countries, political pluralism and those representatives institutions and guarantee for personal safety and freedom under the law of our common heritage.

These constitutive principles as envisaged by ECOWAS body is further encapsulated in ECOWAS adoption of a supplementary protocol in good governance and democracy at the 25th Summit of Heads of State and Government in Dakar in December 2001⁸.

The Protocol emphasized the need for separation of powers, most importantly; it stated that access to power must be through free, fair and transparent elections, with zero tolerance for power obtained through unconstitutional means, strict adherence to democratic principles and centralization of power at all level.

However, be it as it may be, there is slowness by member states in ratification and domestication of these agreed protocol as many are yet to satisfy and incorporate it into their national law to enable it become enforceable.

ECOWAS have a replica of faulty elections such as in Nigeria, Guinea, Togo and the less than satisfactory ones in Senegal and Guinea Bassau.

This realization of weak elections by ECOWAS leaders and civil societies that a functional region would need to improve on its governance practices consequently, ECOWAS approach to dealing with broader conflict prevention issues is governance led.

The new ECOWAS conflict prevention framework (ECPF) emergence classifies conflict prevention into two categories.

- i. Operational prevention, including warning, mediation,

⁶Ibid, 1.

⁷Article 9 NEPAD Document Section A (ii), 7a.<http://www.mapstrategy.com/home0asp> and <http://www.98.91.ca/juli-21-01-e.asp>.

⁸Article 4 (j).

conciliation, preventive deployment using interactive means such as good offices and the ECOWAS standby Force, and

- ii. Structural prevention, often elaborated under place-building initiatives and comprising political, institutional (governance) and develop mental reforms, capacity enhancement and advocacy on the culture of peace.

The ECPF comprises fourteen components that span the chain of initiatives designed to strengthen human security and incorporate conflict prevention and possible resolution activities as well as aspects of peace building.⁹

There are two issues that stand out having these mechanisms in mind namely:

- (a) The need for improved coordination between ECOWAS institution and agencies on conflict prevention; and (b) improved collaboration between multi-sectors and actors¹⁰.

However, despite the adoption of this framework we foresee several possible challenges to its successful implementation. First, there is need to maintain a common political ideology envisaged and structured under a common principle acceptable by every member state. A situation where some ECOWAS States operate a parallel political principle is unacceptable e.g. ECOWAS overturning of military coups in Sierra Leone (1998) Guinea-Bissau (2003) and Togo (2005), and negotiated the departure of Charles Taylor from Liberia is a clear understanding of common political ideology framework acceptable by all.

Secondly, non-implementation of ECOWAS Protocol as envisaged under the declaration of ECOWAS principles into the State domestic law towards solving immediate or distant conflict preventive solution, ECOWAS inability to handle the political crisis in Togo (2005) and Guinea (2007) was the most striking display of its ability to invoke its new instruments to deal with intra-state conflicts before they erupt¹¹.

GOVERNANCE UNDER PRESSURE

While there are reasons to question how effectively ECOWAS stated principles translate from theory to action, ECOWAS have undeniably been very active in promoting regional security.

As earlier on advanced, the adoption of the protocol, ECOWAS

⁹ ECOWAS: Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, Executive Secretariat, Dakar, December 2001.

¹⁰ Ekiyor, (2008) ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF): A New Approach to An Old Challenge WAL/Op.Cit.

¹¹ [http://www.cicnyu.edu/lead%20page%20PDF/SSR W.Africa.pdf](http://www.cicnyu.edu/lead%20page%20PDF/SSR%20W.Africa.pdf).

have overturned military coups in Sierra Leone (1998) Guinea Bissau (2003), and Togo (2005), and negotiated the departure of Charles Taylor from Liberia operationally, ECOWAS has deployed two peace operations. The ECOWAS mission in Cote d'Ivoire (2003) and the ECOWAS mission in Liberia (2003); ECOWAS collaborated with the United Nations (UN), France and the United States of America in the deployments with troops from both missions subsequently re-hatted to the follow-on UN led missions.

Despite the attention given to ECOWAS collaboration with the UN and others for its deployments in these countries within the sub-region ECOWAS played two vital roles in conflict prevention and a possible resolution in resolving the political crisis in Togo (2005) and Guinea (2007).

ECOWAS role was a great display of its ability to deal with intra state conflicts before they erupt. ECOWAS engagement in Togo and Guinea was credited for averting the eruption of further violence in both countries.

The case of Liberia and Cote D'Ivoire, ECOWAS intervention came after the escalation or aftermath of violence.

ECOWAS through its insistence of zero tolerance policy to unconstitutional change of government enforced its protocol agenda prevailed against Faure Gnassingbe assumption of power on the death of his father, President Gnassingbe Eyadema in 2005. This principle of zero tolerance policy against unconstitutional change of Government succeeded in brokering a deal that gave way Faure relinquishing power and organizing an election within sixty days. Faure Gnassingbe won.

It was through strong and high level mediation role that ECOWAS was able to combat the January 2007, Guinea Civil opposition against the government in power.¹² The mediatory role by the ECOWAS team dispatched led former Nigeria President General Ibrahim Babangida pave way to peace.¹³ For improved effectiveness, ECOWAS will need to design better functioning follow-up mechanism for any future mediation processes both in Guinea and other ECOWAS States.

GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN WEST AFRICA (ECOWAS MEMBER STATES)

There is an urgent need for National security Services to remain neutral of internal political processes. This becomes highly imperative now that more and more ECOWAS member states embrace political pluralism. This is a glaring move towards Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSR/G) and examines the extent to which the demands for either better management, reform transformation or governance is driven by domestic imperative for change or are occurring as result of external conditionalities.

In West African sub-region, the proximate causes of conflict often

¹² Ibe P, "Guinea Bissau: The Thai link in killings," *This Day*, 2009. This Articles can be accessed at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200903080001.htmh>. Accessed in April 2011, printed 19th Oct, 2011

¹³ Ibid.

result from deliberate decisions by determined leaders or political demagogues to make violent responses to contentious issues.¹⁴ Bad leadership can exploit insecurity, the vulnerability of certain groups and socio-economic cleavages to the extent that violence becomes a means to strengthen the hold of demagogues on power. **Stephen Stedman** argues that “the humanitarian tragedies of today were caused mainly by leaders who were interested in neither reaching non-violent resolutions to conflicts nor making concessions”.

There is security resistance from 1982 to 1992 by some member states of ECOWAS over the donors demand to reform the ECOWAS security sector as part of the general public sector reforms in 1980s and 1990s.

However, despite these series of resistance as stated above, during this period a good record of extensive reforms took place in several West Africa public which lead to some instances of national institutional Renewal programmes (NIRP) which was founded by different donor but usually placed under the direct control of the presidencies it is now obvious that the security institutions in general, the police and military in particular, also require extensive reform to meet the required conflict preventive means.¹⁵

The insistence of ECOWAS member States over adopting SSR measures is because of the long history of unconstitutional involvement of the security sectors in ECOWAS States.

It is however opined that the question as to the use of force is essential for assuring effective conflict prevention or the successful implementation of peace settlements. Given the notoriety of bad leaders and deliberate hindrance of conflict prevention and conflict termination, the international community not only ECOWAS is faced with the critical question whether coercive measures should substitute an integral part of conflict prevention.¹⁶ E.g. Can Boko Haram cause security risk?.

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN ECOWAS TOWARDS EFFECTIVE CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION

The SSR processes in the sub-region is another veritable means of both preventive and post conflict reconstruction process diplomacy.

In this vein, two facts stand out first, all conflicts in the sub-region Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Cote d'Ivoire have all occurred partly because of poor management of the security sector. Even in relatively stable states, such as Niger, Nigeria and Togo, the role

¹⁴ Stephen Stedman “Aichemy for new world order over selling preventive diplomacy”. Foreign Affairs S. Vol. 74, May 1995, P.18.

¹⁵ Jake S, 2009. Strengthening Security Sector Governance in West Africa (New York Centre for international Corporation) March at <http://www.eic.nyu.edu/lead%20page%20PDF/SSR W.Faricapdf>.

¹⁶ Op. Cit.

of the security sector, particularly the armed forces, in generating instances of instability are frequent. In Benin, Senegal and Ghana, improved governance of security sector that were introduced as part of larger public sector reform process albeit later than what had taken place in civil society have contributed to ensuring stability.

Improved security sector management will enhance better conflict prevention and resolution principles, even though there are differences across West African States. It is important to recognize the broad species of SSR process in both post conflict and stable states. In West African States, with exception of Senegal, the defining character of these processes is the antagonist civil military relationship. Senegal is unique because it has never experienced a military take over. The SSR is a long arm to preventive diplomacy stopping wars before they start peace taking and peace keeping through SSR approach and other methods is just bet to conflict prevention and resolution in the West African sub-region.

The overall impediment of security sector reform in ECOWAS centres, on knowledge sharing experience among developed SSR actors in ECOWAS States with those states emerging from conflict or one party dictatorship.¹⁷

CIVIL SOCIETY CONTRIBUTION TO CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN WEST AFRICAN SUB-REGION

Civil Society's visibility and influence in conflict prevention and peacemaking has grown globally and not only in West Africa sub-region, civil society in all ramifications include social groups, professional groups; NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) voluntary organization cultural organizations, children and women groups.¹⁸

- PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY TO PREVENTING CONFLICT

Civil Society in West Africa has played key roles in preventing violent conflict in a number of ways. These include being involved in early warning and response, advocating against the proliferation of small arms, ensuring that peace processes yield conclusive agreements, contributing towards post conflict reconstruction, and promoting the involvement of women in peace building.

- CIVIL SOCIETY EARLY WARNING

Conflict early warning and response has been described as the sine qua non of conflict prevention. It consists of the systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crisis for the purposes of anticipating the escalation of violent conflict developing strategic response to crises, and the presentation of

¹⁷ <http://www.letogolais.com/article.html?nid=1520>.last accessed 12/17/07. Printed today 19/10/2011.

¹⁸ ECOSO CC's web site, at <www.africa-union.org/ECOSOC/home.htm>

options to critical actors for decision making.

In West Africa, Civil Society Organization (CSO) have played pivotal roles in the development of the regions fame work for early conflict prevention and response. For example the West Africa network for peace building (WANEP) has been instrumental in “on the ground” conflict monitoring as part of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWANEP). ECOWAS realized that it lacked the institutional and technical capacity to implement an early warning system, which was central component of its conflict prevention mechanism. WANEP capitalized on this opportunity to fill the vacuum by utilizing its network to develop grass root early warning system that passes information to ECOWAS mechanism.

This grassroots network is the critical web that feeds into four zonal bureau and the observation and monitoring centre at the ECOWAS secretariat Abuja Nigeria. Through WANEP, civil society is thus involved in flittering, monitoring and analyzing conflict information at the community and national levels.¹⁹

ECOWAS Collaboration with these organizations demonstrates the importance of strategic partnerships between civil society and governments. In this regard, the role of civil society has gone beyond the traditional activities of monitoring and policing governments to that of providing a credible bridge between policy makers and their constituents. The positive results emanating from such healthy partnerships should not be confined to the West Africa sub-region but should serve as examples of best practice for the rest of the continent.²⁰

INTER-STATE ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Regional economic cooperation in West African began in 1959 when the seven states of ex-French West Africa Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali Mauritania, Niger and Senegal signed a convention in Paris creating the West African Customs Union (WACU) with its headquarters in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. The Union soon ran into difficulties because of distribution of revenue collected on imports. WACU was later replaced with WAECU, West African Economic and Customs Community maintaining the same membership, in 1966. In 1970 at Bamako Mali summit, the same seven States formed West African Economic and Customs Community (WAECC) sharing one common convertible currency, CFA France, pegged to French France fully convertible at a rate of IFf to 50 CFAf. There was a large intra-state growth of

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See Orji N, 2003, 'Conventional' Notion of Civil Society, International Civil Society organization and the Development of Civil Society in Africa . Ebonyi State University Press, at <www.gdnet.org/fulltext/orji.pdf>

resources, however, in 1994 after the CFA France was devalued by 100 percent WAECF was replaced by the West African Economic and Monetary union with Togo as additional member. A number of other small inter-state organizations based on functional concerns like river basin management have been formed as well as the organization of Senegal River States and the lake Chad Basin Commission.

In 1975, West Africa's most comprehensive sub-region economic organization and one of the largest of its kind in the world was formed, When fifteen countries Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory-Cost, Senegal, the Gambia, Mauritania, Mali, Barkina Faso?, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Sierra Leone, Liberia, Benin and Togo signed the treaty of Lagos establishing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Cape Verde became the sixteenth member in 1977.

The purpose of the formation of ECOWAS is to promote cooperation and development in all fields, increase standard of living of the citizenry of West Africa people economic stability to strengthen relations between its members and above all to contribute to development to African continents (Art. 2). This is to go with trade promotion and liberation increased freedom of its populations, a common unity of the countries of West African.

However, ECOWAS was unable to achieve much in realizing its Article 2 (2d) and 27(1,2) of ECOWAS treaty encourage inter-regional migration. In 1979, ECOWAS adopted "protocol on the free movement of persons, and the Right of Residence and Establishment". But as a result, migrant labourers from Niger, Benin, Togo, and Ghana were sucked into the larger Nigerian Economy and from land-locked Bukina Faso into Ivory Coast and Ghana. Then in January 1983 and April 1985, economic crises, and unemployment prompted Nigeria to unilaterally deport about two million aliens and close its borders until January 1986.

Despite these steps taken in consolidating a strong and virile economic front amongst in the ECOWAS sub-region, some countries fear others for dominance and this inhibit the original idea of a strong united regional body.²¹

DIPLOMACY AND SECURITY COOPERATION

Most actors who have become involved as a third parties in seeking to mediate the region's conflicts are not multilateral or region-wide in character, but originate in this or that state or society. ECOWAS has by

²¹[Http://conflict-prevention.net/print articles. php?id=3-8/23/2011,6.02pm](http://conflict-prevention.net/print%20articles.php?id=3-8/23/2011,6.02pm)

no means become the main African Governmental actor involved.

In 1978, the supreme body of ECOWAS, known as the authority, adopted a protocol intended to discourage armed attack among member states and confirm recognition of their mutual boundaries. The subsequent defence protocol 1981 proposed a collective security regime which member states pledge to meet to consider mutual assistance in the event of an attack by a non-member or if conflicts arose between member states. In the latter instance, it envisaged the creation of peace keeping force to restore order. ECOWAS also was to consider military action where a domestic conflict is apparently supported from outsider a country and could endanger the region's peace and security. Much was often resorted to in West Africa was and remains various negotiated bilateral, trilateral or quadripartite security agreements or consultation focused on specific inter-states disputes. The inter state conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over the sovereignty of the energy-rich Bakassi Peninsula; Senegal and Guinea-Bissau following the latter's support for separatist in Senegal's Casamance region; the Nigeria and Mali border conflict; and a three-party conflict along the Malian, Mauritanian, and Senegalese borders. Although most of these trouble spots persist, diverse diplomatic efforts have been made at bilateral and multilateral levels to manage them.²²

The Charles Taylor rebel led National Patriotic Front Liberia (NPFL) evasion of Liberia from its Ivory Coast border on 24/12/1989 created suspicion as to security of member states border between each other. Many Liberia Civilians were slaughtered from **Gio** and **Mano** tribes accused of supporting Taylor's rebellion, many others were forced to go on and seek refuge in the neighboring West African States.

ECOWAS in May 1990, with establishment of a Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) consisting of the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo; foreign ministers of members of the SMC held a meeting on 5th July, 1990 worked out modalities of a cease fire and a peace plan, after which a decision was made to deploy a peace-keeping force, to Liberia in order to seal off the exploding military situation until the basis of a more durable settlement could be established. The Economic community cease-fire monitoring group (ECOMOG) managed to maintain a fragile peace despite the fact that series of agreements were made and broken with the constant emergence of new whirring factions.

However, after the end of the civil war in Liberia in June 1991, a committee of five which completed the original Studying Mediation Committee (SMC) and monitored the implementation of the cease-fire is a considered mediatory role of ECOWAS in the sub-region toward peace building and conflict prevention solution diplomacy.²¹

ECOWAS countries took visible steps towards expanding sub-

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

regional collaboration with other security areas, notably policing and crime control. There was a resolve at a meeting of West African ministers in Abuja in-charge of Police and security in March 1997, a proposal for prosecution of criminals in the sub-region. There is strong prospects of increase cross boarder measures; criminal investigation, extradition treaties, joint judicial programmes for the eradication of illegal circulation of fire arms; drug-trafficking, trafficking in stolen vehicles; armed robbery; and theft of works of art.

More encouraging still, on July 21, 1999 it was announced that the European Union is to provide US \$ 2.03 million for the development of an ECOWAS mechanism for conflict prevention and resolution, under an agreement between the two organization signed in the Nigerian capital Abuja.

The envisaged ECOWAS mechanism provides for the creation of a judicial instrument establishment of an early warning system, conflict prevention, observations, a council of elders, and meditation committees. The command and control structure for a stand-by intervention force has been outlined.

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALW)

The ECOWAS moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons adopted in May, 1998 and the convention represent a normative and practical framework designed to ensure the effective implementation various national and sub-regional initiatives. These include, among other things, transfer, conditions of exemption for transfers, control measures for the manufacture of SALW, transparency and exchange of information including the establishment of national and ECOWAS databases and registers.

An innovation aspect of this normative framework is dialoguing with artisanal manufactures and civilians who possesses such weapons, as well as visitors' certificates, managing and securing stockpiles, collection and destruction, making, tracing, brokering, harmonization of legislative provisions, strengthening of boarder controls and public education and awareness programmes.²⁴

Compliance in some states like Ghana, Senegal, Mali, and Nigeria has been visionary, while Liberia and Nigeria have not fulfilled all their obligations.

There is however, significant resistance (in Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria) at the local level to implementing the convention because the manufacture of these guns plays several roles fanatical, cultural, and economic roles which makes them difficult to ban.

²⁴ ECOWAS Convention 2006 Article 23.

Musah, Abdul Fatau. 2002 'Small Arms': A time bomb under West African democratization process' Brown Journal of World Affairs, vol. 9, No.1, Spring Bal, Alhaji, M.S. Micro-disarmament in West Africa. The ECOWAS

moratorium on small Arms and light weapons: African Security Review Vol 3. 2004.

It is therefore clear that, in the sub-regions, SALW are contributing to a culture of violence and an increase in firearms-related crimes.²² ECOWAS should therefore ensure that efforts to deal with SALW as closely linked with emerging transitional threats, most notably drug trafficking, and this can be achieved through the provision for training and support for the national commissions on small Arms.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The framework for peace and security established by ECOWAS towards a conflict prevention and resolution is probably the most important contributing factor to establishing peace, stability and security in the sub-region.

ECOWAS ability to transition from a moratorium to a building convention on small arms and light weapons is important step progress in this area should be replicated in the efforts to stem the tide of drug trafficking and improving governance including thorough security sector reform.

It is proved and shown that CSOs W/C as organization have been involved in formal conflict prevention and conflict resolution, post conflict, post conflict reconstruction efforts etc.

ECOWAS has undoubtedly begun a process of institutionalizing security, democracy and other forms of cooperative behaviour in expectation of reforms amongst its member states.

It is therefore hoped that these initiatives would minimize the chances of countries within the sub-region sliding into violence. This is because ECOWAS is still institutionally weak its capacities to sanction and punish are feeble, it is hoped that the development of strong building norms would help to serve as a check on the actions and activities of the bigger and stronger members that may be inclined to ignore pressure from smaller members, thereby reducing the risk of the outbreak of conflicts in the sub-region. More actions are expected of ECOWAS and other regional organizations for a shift to more proactive diplomacy in different regions of the world.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

For fervid actualization of conflict prevention and resolution in ECOWAS sub-region, ECOWAS governments must not disregard its democratic principles in the sub-region.

It is submitted that municipal governments should be educated on the fact that civil societies do not constitute an opposition, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) ability to mobilize funds from foreign

²⁴ Musah, Abdul Fatau. 2002 'Small Arms': A time bomb under West African democratization process' *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, vol. 9, No.1, Spring Bal, Alhaji, M.S. Micro-disarmament in West Africa. The ECOWAS moratorium on small Arms and light weapons: *African Security Review* Vol 3. 2004.

governments and donors also implies that they can be direct rivals to states in the competition for resources. Though if positively used helps in the prevention of conflicts both internal and external.

This also limit conflict prevention skill personnel within ECOWAS member States. Government should encourage conflict prevention and peace building practitioners in the sub-region who will be wholly dedicated to selfless service in preventing conflict and proffering resolution.

ECOWAS, should as a matter of urgency extend its zero tolerance for unconstitutional change of government to those governments that hamper with their constitution to prolong their stay in power.

It is also submitted that ECOWAS should ensure that efforts to deal with SALW are closely linked with emerging trans-national threat, most notably drug trafficking.

We further recommend that ECOWAS should build an over encompassing democratic institution, its resolve being institution of true democracy targeted to meet the peoples needs or demand with zero-tolerance to any undemocratic principles. This truce should be empowered by the common ECOWAS Government established in line to use ECOWAS notice and courts to enforce any of the decisions taken against an ailing member state.

It is the task of member states to see that internal conflicts that might degenerate into violent or wars be avoided by communicating same to ECOWAS office within the local jurisdiction. It is hereby the stakeholders to apply early warning system, raid response, use of special envoys and partnership to defuse tensions in escalating crises and assist in peaceful resolution of disputes