

REPORT SAHEL-SAHARA DIALOGUE #1

How to engage and with whom towards collective security in the Sahelo-Saharan region and in West Africa?

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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Peace and Security
Centre of Competence Sub-Saharan Africa
Point E, boulevard de l'Est, Villa n°30
P.O. Box 15416 Dakar-Fann, Senegal
Tel.: +221 33 859 20 02
Fax: +221 33 864 49 31
Email: info@fes-pscc.org
www.fes-pscc.org

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Acronyms

AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
CICAD	Abdou Diouf International Conference Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDR	Demobilisation Disarmament and Reintegration
DSF	Defence and Security Forces
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group
EU	European Union
G-5	Group of five Sahel countries: Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NICT	New Information and Communication Technologies
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIL	Public International Law
PKO	Peacekeeping Operation
PMCT	Military Partnership for Crossborder Cooperation
REC	Regional Economic Communities
REPSFECO	ECOWAS Women Peace and Security Network
SAF	Standby Armed Forces
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



Context

For years, the Sahel countries have been grappling with a succession of political and humanitarian crises and security challenges which have negatively affected peace and development in this region. The precarious nature of governance and repeated political instability, attested by violent social upheavals, are widening the gap between the society and the State. The situation is leaving the countries in this region increasingly vulnerable to insecurity from armed conflicts, terrorist activities, illicit trafficking and organised crime. Apparent linkages are forming between crime syndicates involved in drug trafficking and other forms of organised crime, on one hand, and, on the other, with non-State armed groups activity in the region. All this is posing severe threats not only to homeland security in the States of this region, but also and especially to those in West Africa.

The extensive and porous nature of the borders makes it extremely difficult to keep them under control. This encourages the spread of organised crime, extremist movements, and the trafficking of persons, drugs, small arms and light weapons often by organisations outside the Sahel or even on the African continent.

It will be necessary, therefore, to act in a flexible and inclusive manner, and to obtain the support of the governments and people in this region. States in the Sahel-Sahara zone in particular, and those in West Africa in general, are called upon consequently to coordinate their actions and policies to prevent their territory from serving as the backyard for criminal and terrorist groups that are taking advantage of the fragile institutions in the countries and exacerbating the region's already precarious security situation. The recurrent conflicts and instability in the Sahel-Sahara

region undermine all efforts for positive peace.

Hence, initiatives are underway at sub-regional, continental and international level to tackle the interwoven roots of new security threats that hinder the implementation of lasting peace and security in the Sahel and West Africa.

ECOWAS has developed detailed frameworks to promote development, peace and security. These include the ECOWAS Strategic Framework for Conflict Prevention, the Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability in West Africa, the ECOWAS Political Declaration and Regional Action Plan for the Fight against Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organised Crime and Drug Abuse, and the Political Declaration on a Common Position against Terrorism, which includes a strategy and an implementation plan on the fight against terrorism. The African Union (AU), on its side, contributes to secure and stabilise the Sahel and West Africa through the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). However, it is difficult to effectively implement APSA. There is need therefore to improve the African Union's interaction with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and to reduce Africa's financial dependence in implementing APSA. At international level, the European Union has launched its Sahel security and development strategy and appointed a special representative for the Sahel to contribute to regional and international efforts for peace, security and sustainable development in the Sahel.

Unfortunately, regional cooperation is still very limited. Despite all the efforts made, the Sahel still has a fragile security situation with rising terrorism, illicit trafficking and organised crime jeopardizing peace in the area. Similarly, there is no clarity on the objectives and interests that in-

international partners have on APSA, ECOWAS or even the G-5 Sahel, and whether these are compatible with those of their African counterparts. This creates an urgent need for coordinated and collective regional approaches to the root causes of the current crises. Indeed, the inconsistency in the approaches international partners have been using to deal with security crises in the region have caused misunderstandings and undermined the will to collectively resolve common security challenges in the region. Consequently, several regional and international efforts have failed so far to effectively establish lasting peace and security in the region.

It is imperative, therefore, to design more innovative approaches so as to strengthen collective security in the Sahel-Sahara zone and in West Africa, given the dynamic and multi-layered nature of the threats. More inclusive mechanisms for dialogue should be added to current intergovernmental arrangements. The criteria for such complementary mechanisms, their objectives and stakeholders must be defined more clearly.

The 1st edition of the Sahel-Sahara Dialogue took place from 4 to 5 December 2017 in Dakar. It was attended by experts, academics, researchers, representatives of civil society organisations and of national, sub-regional and international institutions from over fifteen African and European countries working on security issues in the Sahel, West Africa and the African continent. The conference attempted to tease out ideas for more forward-looking strategies and mechanisms for conflict prevention and the fight against security threats.

With the objective of triggering strategic dialogue between countries South of the Sahara and those North of the Sahara which are facing hybrid, multi-dimensional crossborder security challenges, the conference dwelt on “How to engage and with whom towards collective security in the Sahelo-Saharan region and in West Africa?”.

To provide adequate responses to this question, five panel sessions were structured as follows:

1. **Panel 1:** Looking back: what are the normative underpinnings of conflict engagement and which regional formats of conflict prevention and management are actually working?
2. **Panel 2:** What are the realistic conditions, criteria and objectives for conflict management and an effective response to current security threats in the Sahelo-Saharan region and West Africa?
3. **Panel 3:** Who are the relevant stakeholders for sustainable engagement in conflict prevention and the fight against asymmetric threats in the Sahel and West Africa and who is missing?
4. **Panel 4:** What works? Different forms of international engagement: who guarantees peace and what are the criteria?
5. **Panel 5:** How to engage for collective security in the Sahelo-Saharan region and West Africa?



Panel 01 :

Looking back: what are the normative underpinnings of conflict engagement and which formats of conflict prevention and management are actually working?

Before discussing a complementary mechanism that could promote development, peace and security in the Sahelo-Saharan region, it is important to look at the impact of existing inter-governmental mechanisms for conflict prevention and management at regional level (e.g. within ECOWAS) and the continental level (APSA). Harmonizing the ambitious normative goals of these regional and continental conflict prevention and regulation processes with the current reality in the Sahel and West Africa may yield a better understanding and inform efforts towards more effective collective security mechanisms in the region. Positive examples of conflict prevention and management could also provide more clarity.

This panel explored the impact of existing regional mechanisms (ECOWAS and AU) on conflict prevention and management, including:

- ➔ The normative underpinnings and guiding principles of conflict engagement in West Africa and the Sahelo-Saharan region;
- ➔ The lessons learned from developing the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and its suitability or not in responding adequately to the multi-dimensional threats in the Sahelo-Saharan region and West Africa;
- ➔ Good practices or positive examples of conflict prevention or conflict resolution in the region and the reasons for their success

Based on the discussions, Africa can look after itself on condition it identifies its weaknesses. For

Africa to achieve collective security, the ambitious normative goals in regional conflict prevention and resolution processes should be harmonised to improve effectiveness in current security efforts within the Sahel and West Africa. In this regard, preventive diplomacy could be a very effective conflict management instrument in the context of the ECOWAS peace and security infrastructure. It would be unproductive, therefore, to multiply overlapping initiatives (G5, APSA, FMM...). This implies that the concept of collective security is to be Africanized by enhancing capabilities for conflict management and peacekeeping. APSA is a mechanism which corresponds to African ownership of security issues, for it gives African bodies control over decision-making and the priority to mastermind the security agenda. Chapter eight (08) of the United Nations Charter sets out the principle of subsidiarity that consists in according priority to the smaller group. This allows for more effective regional commitment based on comparative advantage. The fact that RECs are near to conflict zones allows for financial optimization. This principle of subsidiarity was crafted into an MoU and signed in 2008 between the AU and the RECs. The MoU recognises the prime responsibility of the AU and makes reference, at the same time, to the principle of complementarity. But in practice, it has turned out rather to be a source of competition. Further, multidimensional conflicts have compelled States to vary their intervention mechanisms, with a problem of rapid deployment. There are no one-off solutions, given the requirements for cost-effectiveness, visibility and credibility. It will take long-term commitment, as advocated by the Kagame report. It

is important, therefore, to coordinate the actions of the G-5 Sahel and ECOWAS mechanisms to bring them into the AU mechanism for political expediency in conflicts management.

A highlight from the discussions was the encouraging experience ECOWAS had registered in conflict resolution (examples from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau with the signing of the Conakry peace agreement, Mali and The Gambia, more recently). However, difficulties still exist in implementation, and these are mainly around the financing of regional organisations. Another obstacle to Africa First is the failed State. This has been a driver in the activity of militias who, to establish their legitimacy, position themselves as a vehicle for combating injustice and the lack of employment for the youth. This situation encourages a rise in crime. That is why it is important, in conflict management, to consider issues pertaining to rebel activity, organized crime and violent extremism. In this context, the intervention of the G5 Sahel may be an innovative experience to consider. But questions remain over its financing.

Recommendations

- Explore the possibilities of combining military and diplomatic initiatives, especially in a context where resources for military solutions are lacking.
- Human security has to be the emphasis in approaches to security.
- Integrate the historical and anthropological dimension in conflict management analysis, because States act only from the top by seeking external legitimacy for local solutions.
- Improve the legal framework of RECs by establishing terms to implement collective security at regional level and establish inter-institutional coordination of asymmetric threats.
- Include communities in efforts to seek solutions, because the central State can no longer cope alone with new crime phenomena.



Panel 02 :

What are the realistic conditions, criteria and objectives for conflict management and an effective response to current security threats in the Sahelo-Saharan region and West Africa?

Rules of engagement, a clear timetable, cohesion and clear objectives are all key success factors in conflict transformation. Regional efforts in the Sahel and West Africa show how difficult it is to engage collectively and consistently over a long period of time. This could reflect differences in national interests, which often take precedence over regional cohesion, and also institutional challenges, such as the difficulty in coordinating between neighbouring countries, G-5 Sahel, ECOWAS and the AU. Regional actors agreed on the imperative need for better coordination. But it is important to know how to achieve this and under what conditions.


This panel clearly defined the aspects that contribute to conflict resolution:

- ➔ The different stages of political strife, the objectives and right moment for the region to get involved.
- ➔ The circumstances under which peace agreements can be adopted.
- ➔ How to deal with the differences in agendas for lasting peace and security in the Sahelo-Saharan region and West Africa;
- ➔ The necessary follow-up;
- ➔ The role of initiatives for national dialogue (e.g. the peace agreement in Mali).

In the Sahel and West Africa, regional organizations (G5, ECOWAS and AU) generally face

difficulties tied to the coordination woes experienced in managing conflicts and promoting peace and security on the continent. In the face of challenges that mostly occur across national borders, it is imperative to establish better coordination within the same State and also in the collaborative efforts between states. Even though progress has been made within the ECOWAS and G-5 Sahel, some difficulties still need to be addressed (between criminal justice chains, the armed forces and the various judicial systems). Opportunities for effective intervention are undermined by conflicts of interest among States, and such interferences affect conflicts. This calls for a review of the global and regional partnership model, which should be more coherent in and critical of this situation. The experience of the Alliance of States (Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria) combating Boko Haram has shown that it is always possible to fight terrorism, even with limited resources. Having a good strategy to work from is enough. Indeed, it is through long-term commitment that the region can achieve stability. The United Nations cannot be the sole peacemaker in the Sahel, because peace agreements are increasingly difficult to implement. Other actors have to be involved.

The geopolitical particularities in the Sahel influence the effectiveness of security measures. There is a multiplicity of initiatives (nearly a dozen Sahel strategies or more) because the concept of collective security has been misinterpreted. Looking at the political economy of the actors, each State belongs to several security mechanisms (G5, AU, ECOWAS ...), but no single agenda has been set.



To deal with this complex situation, establishing synergy in the Sahel to meet the pressing need for security is becoming a matter of urgency. To achieve this, there must be reliable South-South and North-South information sharing between intelligence services. And this should be coupled with logistical support. The increase in the number of stakeholders should necessarily bring about a diversification of conflict management methods in Africa. For example, the G-5 Sahel's mission to promote development hand in hand with military action needs to be up-scaled, because the African Standby Force (ASF) deals only with security aspects. Therefore, conflict resolution must not be about the use of force alone.

Recommendations

To improve peace management in the Sahel-Saharan zone:

- International partners must make a long-term commitment;
- Promote dialogue;
- Build awareness of and train all legal actors;
- Devote efforts to practice change;
- Examine the opportunities for coordinating between the G-5 Sahel and Operation Barkhane;
- Reintegrate young Boko Haram recruits who have deserted the movement so that they do not return to the bush to commit other crimes;
- Strengthen the capacity of the State;
- Pursue a systemic reconstitution of security that would involve addressing this sector as a priority in the search for peace;
- Restore trust between the military and the population, and between the citizens and State authorities to fight effectively against insecurity;
- Establish specialized research centres on security issues;
- Increase the involvement of local authorities who have experience and an age-old culture of mediation;
- Work to consolidate civil society.



Panel 03 :


Who are the relevant stakeholders for sustainable engagement in conflict prevention and the fight against asymmetric threats in the Sahel and West Africa and who is missing?

Regional and international conflict management mechanisms tend to engage with the same group of actors (governments, armed groups and organised civil society). At the same time, there seems to be a proliferation of mediation mechanisms involving different actors. But it may be necessary to involve other actors (community leaders, young people, political parties, private sector) to secure a lasting commitment and even more to maximize the potential for lasting peace. The challenge is to create conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms that are inclusive enough to ensure deliberations and outcomes are legitimate. This begs the following questions:

- ➔ What should be done and how in identifying other key players in a long-term process?
- ➔ How to involve young people and women who are not part of these processes?
- ➔ How is the legitimacy of actors and results in conflict prevention guaranteed?

Although all agree security is traditionally the prerogative of States, the discussants demonstrated that traditional actors are no longer able to consolidate peace and stability amid the dynamics of new security threats (violent extremism and criminal groups in general). With the recurrent insecurity and asymmetric security threats in the Sahel zone and West Africa, traditional actors (local, regional and international institutions) are struggling to put forward appropriate solutions to prevent, fight and solve these security challenges in a sustainable way. It is imperative, therefore, to

change the approach by diversifying and involving other non-traditional actors in conflict management (women, youth, community leaders, the private sector and the media). They are closer to social realities and, by implication, to conflict resolution. Women play this role in the family and social base, while young people do so for the new generation they symbolise. In traditional African societies, women have always and naturally played this mediating role, even though this is not recognised publicly. Moreover, resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” underlines the importance of women’s equal participation in conflict resolution, peace building and peacekeeping. The same is true for the ECOWAS Commission’s new orientation in the five-year programme (2015-2020) on gender, peace and security. Women have taken part actively in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts in Senegal (with Eutou Jam and the Women’s Platform for Peace in Casamance). They have done so also through the Mano River Women’s Network for Peace, Women of Jos in Nigeria, the ECOWAS Women’s Peace and Security Network (REPSFECO) and the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace. Evidence suggests that youth empowerment and involvement in conflict management has been low, although legal instruments on strategy and action have been developed to involve them effectively in peacebuilding processes (United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 for the involvement of youth in peacebuilding and the fight against radicalism, the 2030 Agenda adopted by UNGA, the AU’s Agenda 2063 and the African Youth Charter adopted in 2006 in Banjul).



Involving and expanding non-traditional actors in solution-seeking can help strengthen community resilience to harmful ideologies and to networks that promote radicalization. At the same time, it can make them true ambassadors for conflict prevention, peace consolidation and the fight against radicalization in the Sahel. Ghana, for example, has institutionalised a civil society council with a significant role in conflict prevention. To do so, the youth need training that gives them the necessary skills and raises their awareness.

Recommendations

These panel discussions led to the following proposals:

- Use nomads in the Sahel-Sahara zone as mediums for gathering information;
- Consider using intergenerational dialogue to properly interpret religion;
- Develop endogenous processes by establishing appropriate mechanisms for women and youth to become “active” players in the peace process with due respect for dignity and cultural pluralism;
- Establish local, national and international partnerships and conduct mobilisation for peace and networking like the platform for consultation and formal learning established by the 9 French-speaking Member States of ECOWAS.
- Culture appears in the various presentations as a mean for resolving conflicts and talking to one another in national languages, which reflects a common way of life;
- Consider the women and youth dimension in tackling the problem of violent extremism aimed at the truly excluded, such as rural communities, by using Muslim and Christian preachers for whom families open their doors more easily.



Panel 04 :

What works? Different forms of international engagement: who guarantees peace and what are the criteria?

The international community has been committed to resolving the complex crises in the Sahelo-Saharan region and West Africa. Spurred by domestic political pressure to reduce migration to Europe and the number of refugees leaving the region, the EU and its Member States and other OECD countries have supported several regional and international efforts and equipped the Sahel and West African countries to exercise tighter border controls, respond effectively to terrorism and organised crime, and secure peace in this region. However, the initiatives conducted so far have not produced the results expected. Both the MINUSMA and G-5 Sahel in particular continue to face immense challenges in their stated objectives, influence and real ability to maintain peace on the ground. This has raised questions about the real effectiveness of the ways by which international engagement is delivered, and about the consistency of the various efforts made to find lasting solutions to the region's complex conflicts. It has been observed that the various initiatives are yet to achieve the expected results.

The panel made it possible to:

- ➔ Know the perception in the region on the various forms of international engagement for lasting peace and security in the Sahel and West Africa;
- ➔ Understand the role and limitations of peacekeeping in this region;
- ➔ Inquire about the lessons learned from MINUSMA and G-5 Sahel;

- ➔ Discuss the future of peacekeeping in the region;
- ➔ Set criteria for effective international intervention and the actors that should be more involved.

The historical approach to collective security shows that, after the period of independence that witnessed the hasty construction of new nations, the people North of the Sahel were geographically isolated and "forgotten" by the newly established States. Azawad is one example of a real no man's land. The Sahel became a breeding ground for crime and all forms of trafficking. Then came the period of unrest in some States (Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, etc.). This led subsequently to perception of collective, individual and solitary security based on polarizing military aspects to the detriment of social determinants. In this regard, the G-5 Sahel understands that development is closely linked to security, and it aims to also target development, resilience, governance and security. This made it possible, during the G-5 Sahel inaugural signing ceremony in Nouakchott, to establish a very pragmatic structure for the G-5 Sahel, which seeks to restore the State and strengthen the capabilities of the armed forces, mindful that there is need to readapt the security forces (Advanced Technology).

Getting the various actors (G-5 Sahel, ECOWAS, AU, MINUSMA) to dwell together is not always easy. To improve border control and ensure an effective fight against organised crime and violent extremism in the Sahel and West Africa, all these actors have to design a model for collective

security. These regional organizations pursue the same goal and need to build synergies instead of acting as rivals. This requires collaboration and concerted collaborative processes conducive to the context. This probably explains why ECOWAS transformed ECOMOG into FAC.

At the United Nations, several resolutions have been adopted to:

- Promote dialogue between religions, civilizations and cultures so as to prevent violent extremism (Resolutions N°59/23 of 11/11/2004; 60/10 of 03/11/2005; and 60/11 of 03/11/2005);
- Prevent and repress acts of terror (Resolution N°1373 of 28/09/2001);
- Devise a global strategy against terrorism (Resolutions N°60/288 of 09/09/2006; 62/272 and 64/297 instituted in 2010 and whose implementation report was reviewed in September 2012 by the UNGA).
- Encourage civil society, especially non-governmental organisations, to pursue efforts aimed at strengthening the actions taken to apply the Strategy, including by consulting with the Member States and the United Nations System (Point 8 under Resolution 66/282 of 29 June 2012).

Recommendations

- Democratize conflict resolution mechanisms for civil society and develop “new approaches to collective security”.
- Establish a holistic strategy that consists in synergizing Defence – Security, Diplomacy, Development;
- Support the G-5 Sahel that appears as an alternative to the limitations of ECOWAS;
- Design a new approach that involves community actors;
- Develop strategies to integrate the Sahel’s most remote communities in their national dynamics so that they have control over their security. This will require analysis of their cultural ways of life to know how to approach them and create such togetherness;
- Build synergies between regional organisations.



Panel 05 :

How do we engage for collective security in the Sahel-Sahara region and West Africa?

The scenario of contemporary threats in the Sahel and West Africa lends a new sense of urgency to efforts directed at developing innovative approaches to collective security that go beyond the existing intergovernmental arrangements. Current mechanisms for resolving conflict and addressing asymmetric threats in this area seem to lack predictability on how “others” behave in a situation where security is deteriorating. The complementary regional mechanism should critically involve non-state actors at the local, national, regional and international levels during conflict prevention and regulation work. There are questions on how regional mechanisms can involve non-violent actors more effectively. Who should be around the table for peace negotiations to continue and reduce incitement to violence? Potentially, more flexible forms of dialogue that can bring together different actors are needed. In this context, it is necessary to think about relevant regulatory mechanisms, knowing that violent actors often exclude themselves from talks and dialogues.

The trends observed in the panel discussions were:

- ➔ The close relationship between peace and security;
- ➔ The indivisibility of collective security;
- ➔ The need for solidarity in synergizing all interventions;
- ➔ The inclusive and vital nature of contributions from non-state actors.

The polymorphic nature of asymmetric threats in the Sahel and West Africa requires us to develop new approaches for collective security. These new mechanisms must go beyond the intergovernmental arrangements which have been limited in their ability to consider non-state actors for inclusive peace-making dialogues at the local, national, regional, and international levels. There are a multitude of overlapping peace initiatives. The appropriate framework designed to enhance collective security continues to be the AU, with different forms of synergistic arrangements such as the G-5 Sahel and the RECs.

That is why military intervention is not the only solution, for the causes of insecurity in the Sahel region are often linked to development and governance. Such interventions have their limitations in many respects, firstly because African armies have limited budgets for peace-keeping and security, and they lack resources. Beyond the military aspect, there are development projects to be established in cross-border areas and these must be developed on a model of independence. Indeed, the way territories are organised from State capitals is a problem that deserves to be resolved, taking account of the surrounding regions. Similarly, democratizing the security sector seems essential for mechanisms to on-board actors such as labour unions and civil society organisations that play a central role in any response.

States should have better coverage of their territory, considering the security context on the Sahel strip. In fact, one observes, from the absence of its attributes, that the State has a somewhat

weak presence in areas very far from the centre. However, because of the strong transhumance across large expanses of land, facilitated by the porous nature of borders and the lack of GSM coverage, this situation can be a source of insecurity and these areas can serve as hideouts for criminals. These determinant factors, coupled with the lack of resources armies are experiencing, make the Sahel fertile ground for crime. The Sahel makes it easy to develop the illegal activities of criminal groups seeking to blend culturally into the various local communities. Hence, to eradicate these burdens or at least limit their harmful effects, States must have control over their territories by effectively maintaining a presence. This presence could be demonstrated by intensifying patrols, addressing basic social needs (health, education, savings, etc.) and raising awareness of previously identified risk factors that might trigger and propagate social tensions.

Recommendations

In the fight against the current security threats, using heavy weaponry such as tanks and warplanes would not be appropriate. The modus operandi for terrorism, for example, require only two motorcycles, two mobile phones, and two weapons to achieve their goal. To overcome these threats, we must recalibrate the issue of resources:

- Promote coherent and coordinated inclusive approaches that governments should synergise and capitalise on by consulting research institutes (Think Tanks) that have significant analysis and foresight capacity. This will help them to better understand the persistent nature of conflicts and make it easier to implement effective and adapted responses;
- Ensure that the zones are covered through regular State presence and involve local communities through local initiatives to maintain contact regularly with the traditional chiefs;
- Establish an early warning system at the national level to identify factors that could compromise peace and security;
- Involve pressure groups (unions) that will be responsible for promoting employment in the interests of workers and social peace. They should also advocate and promote good governance and democracy by contributing to education and peace;
- Form a collective of civil society organisations and religious leaders who will be in charge of raising awareness and playing a moderating role on issues of national interest that can cause a certain stir in the population;



- It would be important also to establish cross-border village committees including customary chiefs and opinion leaders whose role will be to discuss with DSF and border administration authorities in the countries concerned with the underlying causes of conflicts;
- States should also draw up a communication plan on social media networks to raise awareness among the youth at risk and inform them on the role they must play in the context of a culture of peace and tolerance;
- International stakeholders should have a monitoring and support role in equipping, financing and training human resources by building the capacity of African armies in intelligence, strategy (the enemy is flexible) and infrastructure;
- Build endogenous capacities by according a place of choice to women's role as mothers who should, through home education, inculcate in their children the values of loyalty, honesty, peace, tolerance and also the meaning of the nation and the spirit of civic behaviour;
- Share experiences between political authorities, religious leaders, academics, media, and civil society actors in the region;
- Give border authorities a more active role, for the incumbents do draft monographs that are information mines to tap into;
- Have a thorough approach to conflict prevention via development, rather than just military interventions. More attention should be paid to development with security issues playing a complementary role. So, there should be no security without development policy.

Synopsis of the panel discussions

Working from the theme “How to engage and with whom for a new approach to collective security in the Sahel-Sahara zone and West Africa?”, the discussants highlighted two sets of measures.

First, internal and external factors are at the root of conflict. When combined in a holistic approach, they determine the model for security and peace. Therefore, the priority has to be on restoring the State, re-instating its presence and reasserting its authority in the most remote areas of the Sahel.

Secondly, most discussants and participants dwelt extensively on the anthropological approach to this matter.

Synergizing and coordinating different initiatives is a major challenge for the global community because the threats to peace are transnational in nature. Significant results against terrorism have been recorded in this regard through good coordination (e.g. the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram) and despite the lack of resources.

Based on the debates, peace and security are issues pertaining to development and governance strategy, and can therefore not be resolved by military action alone.

On the last point on engaging with whom?

The issue of democratizing the security system sums up the main direction that debates followed.

At national level, relevant avenues for inclusive models, which involve local authorities and address gender specific needs, were explored to examine possible ways of establishing mediums for dialogue and networking. Further, the capitalization of experiences from experts and researchers is to be encouraged by African States that cannot afford to isolate them, so that they too have a good understanding of the security threats and can provide appropriate responses to them.

At sub-regional and international level, one of the salient outcomes of the discussions was the recommendation to establish a more impartial, balanced and sustainable partnership with TFPs and to raise the delicate issue of financing activities at the same time.

The discussants advocated that this type of high-level dialogue, initiated by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, should continue for proper monitoring and evaluation, since this is a matter of developing Africa’s immense potential and of promoting and guaranteeing peace, security and global stability.



Summary of salient points from the conference

In his statement, the German Ambassador to Senegal, His Excellency Stephan Röken, pointed out the interest Germany has in collective peace and security issues in Africa, working in synergy with the AU and ECOWAS. In doing so, he also highlighted the attention that the EU and African regional organisations pay to conflict resolution.

Based on the discussions, experiences shared and debates, the findings were that:

- Efforts for peacebuilding and peacekeeping face constraints, including difficulties in the long-term coordination of organizations working for the same objective, such as the G5, ECOWAS and AU.
- There are real obstacles to implement the Algiers agreement due to its high cost, the lack of extension activities for the ownership of its content by State institutions, and the absence of consistency in monitoring its Implementation.
- Coordination between Sahel-Sahara States facing essentially transnational challenges is low or even non-existent. The particularities of the Maghreb States and rivalry between Morocco and Algeria interfere in the negotiation process and have further divided the States in the north and those in the Sahel region.
- There is an urgent need to bring in other actors (civil society, youth, women, community leaders), because the AU is not proactive enough in seeking peace and States are overwhelmed by the woes in the Sahel.
- Several initiatives are underway because the collective security concept is misinterpreted, and there is no definition of synergy for the Sahel, even though there is an urgent need for security (G5, AU, EU, ECOWAS, FMM ...).
- There is poor empowerment and participation of women and youth in processes for peacebuilding and peacekeeping, conflict management and the fight against violent extremism and radicalization, despite the adoption of legal instruments at international level (Resolution 2250 and UNGA 2030 programme) and regional level (AU Agenda 2063 and African Youth Charter).
- The AU is not implementing the principle of subsidiarity vis-à-vis ECOWAS, and the two organizations hold contradictory positions. This was the case during the crisis in Burkina Faso.
- The perceptions of individual and collective security and solidarity are based on a framework that polarizes the military aspect to the detriment of social determinants.
- The weak points of the G5 Sahel include the lack of cooperation from the Maghreb countries because there is no integrated interface mechanism.
- The G5 Sahel and ECOWAS pursue the same goal and need to work in synergy.
- The polymorphic nature of asymmetric threats in the Sahel and West Africa should transcend intergovernmental arrangements, which have shown their limitations, and bring non-state actors into dialogue at the

local, national, regional and international levels to develop new approaches to collective security.

- The sources of conflict in Africa south of the Sahara include an absence of the State and its attributes, crossborder transhumance facilitated by the porous nature of the borders, the immense size of States and the permeable nature of the Sahel which serves as a hideout for criminals and makes the area a fertile ground for crime.

Avenues proposed for solutions on collective security in the Sahel and West Africa

- Avoid over-reliance on military solutions and manage conflicts by including the historical and anthropological dimension, while taking their local particularities into account.
- In view of the progress made in the fight against Boko Haram, set criteria for coordinating the actions of Sahel-Sahara States, given the cross-border nature of the threats, by building synergies between regional organisations facing essentially transnational challenges.
- Restore the authority of the State by providing coverage of the areas in the Sahel through regular State presence, and by involving local communities through neighbourhood initiatives that ensure regular contact with the traditional chiefs. States should have control over their territories and make sure they effectively maintain a presence by intensifying patrols, addressing basic social needs (health,

education, savings ...) and raising awareness of risk factors that maintain social tensions.

- Human security should be given the emphasis in security approaches. Improve REC legal frameworks by setting modalities for collective security at regional level, and establishing inter-institutional coordination of efforts dealing with asymmetric threats.
- Restore trust between the military and the communities and between citizens and their State authorities to fight effectively against insecurity.
- Include the gender and youth dimension in issues of violent extremism by establishing appropriate mechanisms for this category of stakeholders to become "active" players in peace and security processes.
- Develop strategies for integrating the most remote populations of the Sahel in national dynamics so that they have control over their security. This means giving local authorities and communities a more active role in the search for solutions, because the central State is no longer able to cope alone with new crime phenomena. Set up cross-border village committees that can discuss with the DSF and border administration authorities in the countries concerned about the underlying causes of conflicts and potential threats.
- Encourage coherent and coordinated inclusive approaches around which governments can build synergies and capitalize upon by establishing research institutes (Think Tanks) with significant analytical and foresight capacity, so that they can enable them to



better understand the persistent nature of conflicts and more easily establish effective and adapted responses.

- Democratize conflict resolution mechanisms and develop “new approaches to collective security” by diversifying actors, because traditional actors are no longer able to ensure peace and stability alone. A collective of civil society organisations (opinion leaders, unions, women, youth, media, etc.) should be formed to raise awareness and prevent threats to peace.
- States should also design a communication plan to raise awareness among the youth and inform them about their role in a culture of peace and tolerance.
- International actors should have a monitoring and support role in equipping, financing and training human resources by building the capacity of African armies in terms of intelligence, strategy (the enemy is flexible) and infrastructure.
- Share experiences between the political authorities, religious leaders, academics, media, and civil society actors in the region;
- Give the Border Authorities a more active role, for the incumbents do craft monographs which are information mines to tap into.
- Establish a holistic strategy for synergizing Defence-Security, Diplomacy, Development rather than military interventions only. More attention needs to be paid to development. Security issues should come as an addition, for security without development policy is hard to guarantee.

