

# CONFLICT PREVENTION FROM THE GROUND

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR CLOSER  
COOPERATION BETWEEN AU, RECs AND CIVIL SOCIETY  
ON CONFLICT PREVENTION IN EASTERN AFRICA

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Eastern Africa CSOs are encouraged to create a platform like WANEP to coordinate their peace and security agenda.



AU should urge Member States to work with CSOs by sharing relevant information and relaxing rigidity.



Regional networks of collaborating entities should be built to share knowledge and coordinate activities – thereby preventing duplication of programs and initiatives.



## CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER I</b>	2
<b>Introduction</b>	
A. Overview	2
B. How the Study was Conducted	2
C. Rationale of the Study	3
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	3
<b>Context</b>	
<b>Chapter III</b>	4
<b>Existing Frameworks and Tools for Collaboration in Eastern Africa</b>	
A. African Peace & Security Architecture (APSA)	4
B. Legal and Institutional Frameworks	4
<b>CHAPTER IV</b>	6
<b>Key Findings</b>	
A. CSOs, REWUs and Other Stakeholders Working in the Area of Peace and Security in Eastern Africa	6
B. Current Status of Data Collected by CSOs	8
C. Challenges Inhibiting the AU, REWUs, CEWS and CSOs in Playing their Roles in Conflict Prevention and Promotion of Peace in Eastern Africa	9
D. Duplication of Efforts between the AU and the RECs in their Engagements with CSOs	10
<b>CHAPTER V</b>	11
<b>Recommendations</b>	
A. Addressing the Gaps and Challenges in the Current Frameworks for Collaboration Between AU and RECs with CSOs in Eastern Africa	11
B. How to Strengthen the Collection and Sharing of Data Among Various CSOs and with AU and RECs	11
C. Recommendations on How CSOs Can Overcome Challenges of Collecting and Sharing Early Warning Data in Eastern Africa	12
D. Recommendations on Systematic and Practical Ways to Institutionalize a Structure for Coordinated Engagement with CSOs to Enhance Conflict Prevention, Early Warning and Early Response in the Region	12
<b>CHAPTER VI</b>	14
<b>Best Practices and Lessons Learned</b>	
A. The West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)	14
B. The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)	14
C. ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN)	15
<b>CHAPTER VII</b>	15
<b>Guide for Setting Up a Network for EWER CSOs in Eastern Africa</b>	
<b>CHAPTER VIII</b>	17
<b>Conclusion</b>	

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

### A. OVERVIEW

The Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council" (PSC Protocol) not only gives the AU "the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa" but also equips it with an architecture that includes institutions, processes, legal instruments, guiding principles, norms and values. In order to perform its function of "early warning and preventive diplomacy," the PSC was given the powers to "anticipate and prevent disputes and conflicts." This is to be done through "a Continental Early Warning System to be known as"the Early Warning System." This system (CEWS) is supposed to "function by collaborating with the United Nations, its agencies, other relevant international organizations, research centers, academic institutions and NGOs."

Given the above situation, it is necessary for the CEWS to be fully operationalized by establishing and strengthening its partnership and collaboration with other stakeholders, particularly with regional economic communities/regional mechanisms (REC/RMs) and civil society organizations (CSOs). Although the CEWS has forged a close working relationship with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in West Africa, it has not been as successful in doing the same with other RECs and CSOs. To bridge this gap, this

study proposes a guide to build, strengthen and maintain the partnerships among these key players in the promotion of peace and security, particularly conflict prevention.

Current interest in fully operationalizing APSA requires systematic reviews and evidence- informed reports to guide the AU's efforts in promoting its peace and security agenda. This study will evaluate and determine the effectiveness of early warning, the level of collaboration between partners, the modalities of working relations, challenges in these relations, and how engagements can be strengthened and made more effective. The output of the study is a set of recommendations on how AU, RECs & CSOs can work collaboratively to prevent conflicts in Eastern Africa.

This report aims to explain key findings of a field research that was conducted across Eastern Africa region into CSOs working in conflict prevention, their respective capacities and the overall collaborative relationship that exists between them and the AU and RECs. It also sheds light on the relevance of CSOs in policy formulation and implementation as well as the enabling factors and barriers to current CSO engagement with the AU and RECs. This report also helps key players gain a better understanding of how best to engage and support CSOs in preventing conflicts in the region.

### B. HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The study had the following objectives.

- i. To map CSOs and other stakeholders that are working in the area of peace and security in Eastern African region;
- ii. To review existing collaboration structures with CSOs both at the AU and RECs level;
- iii. To recommend systematic and practical ways to institutionalize a structure for a coordinated engagement with CSOs to enhance conflict prevention, early warning and early response in the region

#### **Variables of the Study**

- I. The study was guided by three sets of variables.
- II. General background/information including understanding of peace and security agenda in Eastern Africa; Institutional arrangement and relations between key partners in preventing conflicts in Eastern Africa; and
- III. Working modalities and challenges facing partners in preventing conflicts in Eastern Africa.

#### **Methodology of the Study**

The following methods & techniques were used to collect and analyze data.

- I. Desktop research-review of official documents and published material; and
- II. Field research that collected data from the AU, Regional Early Warning Units (REWUs), CSOs and researchers. This included face-to-face in-depth interviews, questionnaires and observations. Interviews were conducted in Addis Ababa with CEWS, the PSC Secretariat and CEWARN; in Arusha with EACWARN; in Lusaka with COMWARN; in Nairobi with EAWARN and in Accra with WANEP. Face-to- face interviews were conducted with CSOs in Nairobi, Kampala and Lusaka while questionnaires were mailed to CSOs in Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. Total of 61 CSOs were requested to participate in the study. However, but only 21 participated did. Of the 10 researchers were approached and only 4 responded.

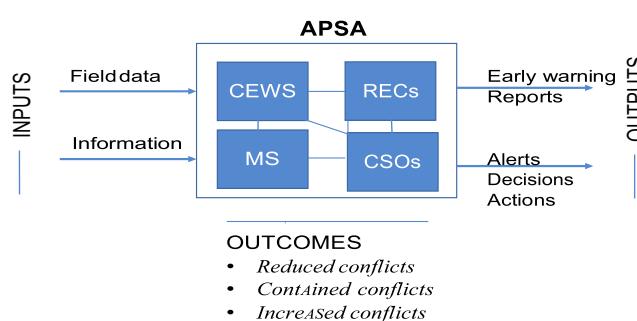
## C. RATIONALES OF THE STUDY

Current interest in fully operationalizing APSA requires systematic reviews and evidence based reports to guide AU efforts in promoting its peace and security agenda. Institutions such as CEWS, set up to prevent conflicts, are required to provide decision makers with up-to-date and reliable evidence by collecting, processing, analyzing and disseminating information from its partners. The partners need to collaborate to develop systems and methods in conflict prevention interventions especially in early warning and early response.

The AU is faced with challenges of fully operationalizing the CEWS and key APSA institutions. This study reveals the challenges of forging a working partnership between the AU-RECs and CSOs in promoting peace and security through conflict prevention in Eastern Africa and propose measures for overcoming them.

APSA is treated as a system composed of structures and parts operating under a conducive environment that enables it to promote peace and maintain security in Africa (see Figure 1). In order for the system to function effectively the parts need to relate to each other and work in synchronization. A malfunction in one part affects how the whole system works. APSA is conceptualized as open systems that must interact with their environments in order to perform their functions. The environment in which APSA institutions operate greatly influences their performances in the promotion of peace and security agenda in Africa. CEWS is the fulcrum of these institutions.

Figure 1: APSA Conflict Prevention Systems



CEWS is an open system that relies on repeated cycles of input, throughput, output, and feedback between the AU, the RECs & CSOs and their external environments. These systems receive input (information) from the environment. Once processed, the information becomes throughput (data), and is released as outputs (early warning) into the environment in an attempt to prevent conflicts. The system then receives feedback to determine effectiveness of the output in preventing conflicts.

Performance of CEWS is determined by ability of the parts to exchange information. The effectiveness of CEWS is measured

by its capability to maintain homeostasis that is not just its survival but also its growth as well as its ability to interact well with other partners in the prevention of conflict in Africa. This study highlights obstacles to information generation, processing & sharing among key players working to prevent conflicts in Eastern Africa.

## 2

### CONTEXT

#### A. THE REGION

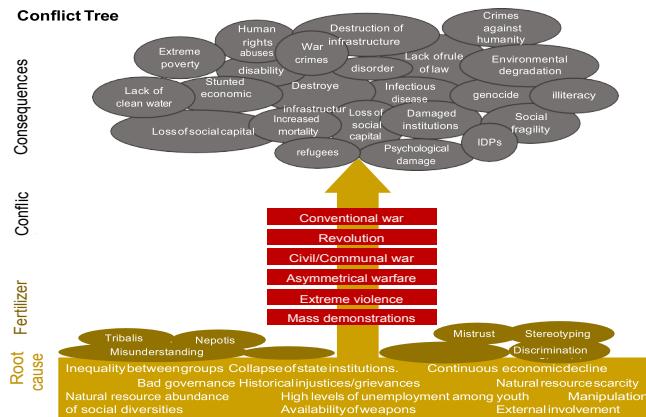
Eastern Africa is a region of 363 million people, that is 29% of Africa's population. There are over 570 ethnic and racial groups, that is 34% of Africa's ethnic groups. It is one of the AU's six designated regions and is comprised of 14 AU member-states – Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The study will, however, mainly concentrate on mainland countries and include Burundi which falls under the Central Africa region.

#### B. CURRENT PEACE & SECURITY SITUATION IN THE EASTERN AFRICAN REGION

Eastern Africa has a history of inter-state wars, internal civil strife, political violence, terrorism, piracy, violations of human rights, weak and failed states, and other forms of human insecurities. The region has some of the most conflict-prone countries on the continent. Countries in the region are also challenged by territorial and boundary disputes.

As the conflict tree below in figure 2 shows, conflict and violence are traceable to state mismanagement, bad governance, high-level corruption, historical injustices, poor handling of electoral processes, foreign interference, and so forth. The root causes of conflicts, when fueled by tribalism, discrimination and stereotyping, have engendered public economic downturns, disorder, and violence.

Figure 2: Conflict Tree



Amidst all of these challenges there are positive developments. The AU and the three RECs are committed to preventing conflicts and building peace in the region.

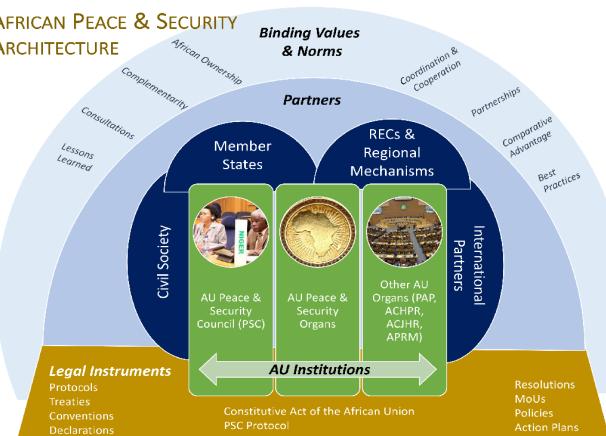
## 3

### EXISTING FRAMEWORKS & TOOLS FOR COLLABORATION IN EASTERN AFRICA

#### A. AFRICAN PEACE & SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (APSA)

There is a dire need for APSA to be fully operationalized in Eastern Africa to enable its population to benefit from peace dividends. Accordingly, it is important to find out whether and how component parts of the APSA (CEWS, RECs and CSOs) in Eastern Africa are working and interacting with each other to accomplish their mandates.

Figure 3: APSA



APSA is a complex system for promoting AU's peace and security agenda that includes conflict prevention. It is anchored

on multiple legal instruments that include the Constitutive Act, the PSC Protocol, treaties, conventions, MoUs, declarations, policies and action plans. Key partners such as CSOs, Member States, and RECs/RMs are expected to collaborate and coordinate with AU institutions such as the PSC and CEWS to promote peace and security on the continent. These partners are glued together by values, norms and guiding principles that include complementarity, comparative advantage, consultations, African ownership and so forth.

## B. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

The AU in its Constitutive Act, declared in 2001, identified building "partnership between governments and all segments of civil society" and promoting "participation of the African peoples in the activities of the Union" as one of the essential objectives of the Union. Primarily, African CSOs are to contribute to the promotion of African peace and security agenda through the following six channels: the CEWS, the PSC, the REWUS, ECOSOCC, the Pan-African African Parliament (PAP) and Member States.

#### a. The PSC Protocol

The PSC Protocol prescribes the following ways in which CSOs can contribute towards the promotion of the AU peace and security agenda.

- i. The Peace and Security Council may decide to hold open meetings in which civil society organizations involved and/or interested in a conflict or a situation under consideration by the Peace and Security Council may be invited to participate, without the right to vote, in the discussion relating to that conflict or situation : Article 8(11) (c).
- ii. The PSC is expected to hold informal consultations with CSOs as may be needed for the discharge of its responsibilities : Article 8(11).
- iii. The (AU) Commission shall collaborate with research centers, academic institutions and NGOs to facilitate effective functioning of the Early Warning System : Article 12(3).
- iv. In undertaking its functions, the African Standby Force, shall where appropriate, cooperate with NGOs : Article 13(4).
- v. The PSC shall encourage non - governmental organizations, community - based & other civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations, to participate actively in the efforts aimed at promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. When required, such organizations may be invited to address the Peace and Security Council : Article 20.

**b. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities, and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa (2008)**

According to this MoU, the parties:

- vi. commit themselves to harmonize and coordinate their efforts with respect to their interaction with civil society organizations and the private sector in furtherance of the continental peace and security agenda : Article XXII.
- vii. are called upon to regularly exchange information, analysis and assessments on the issues of peace and security : Article XVI.
- viii. are expected to scrupulously observe the principles and provisions of the Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol as well as other relevant instruments agreed to at continental level : Article IV.

**c. ECOSOCC**

Among the objectives of ECOSOCC, according to Article 2 of its Statute, is to promote the participation of African civil society in the implementation of the policies and programmes of the Union and to support policies and programmes that will promote peace, security and stability in Africa and foster development and integration of the continent. This institutional arrangement, which does not mention Article 20 of the PSC Protocol, requires representatives of accredited CSOs to engage the PSC through the sectoral cluster committee on peace and security.

**d. The Livingstone Formula**

In explicating the workings of the above arrangement the Formula calls on CSOs to:

- ix. provide technical support to AU field and fact-finding missions and REWUs by undertaking early warning reporting & situation analysis;
- x. assist in enhancing the research and analysis process that feeds information into the decision-making process of the PSC;
- xi. assist and advise mediation teams during negotiations by providing information to Special Envoys/Representatives of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union in the execution of their work;
- xii. participate in giving publicity to the peace-making process to make the wider population to be informed of the ongoing efforts to broker peace in the country;
- xiii. provide trainings sessions and workshops to impart skills

and knowledge on peace building for specific parties or for countries and regions that require such trainings;

- xiv. backstop mediation efforts by providing appropriate information required on particular aspects, objectives, and procedures of the mediation process;
- xv. contribute to monitoring of the implementation of PSC decisions, particularly those relating to peace agreements and provide independent evaluation reports and briefs that would help the PSC in reviewing the situation;
- xvi. engage in peace-making and peace-building, humanitarian assistance; addressing basic needs of returnees and internally-displaced persons; economic recovery and rehabilitation of ex-combatants; rebuilding the administrative infrastructure, disarmament and demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, especially child soldiers, as well as providing counsel and moral support to victims of violence and other members of the community affected by war; and
- xvii. play a complementary role in the advocacy of AU-PSC decisions and activities, using their wide continental and international networks, to contribute to a better understanding of PSC decisions by the population.

**e. Maseru Conclusions**

The PSC held its sixth retreat in Maseru, Lesotho, in February 2014 under the theme "Challenges and Opportunities in the implementation of the Livingstone Formula for the Interaction between the PSC and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa." These conclusions called, inter alia, CSOs to :

- actively participate, on a regular basis, in PSC's attempts to boost efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts;
- make quarterly briefings which focus on an early warning to the PSC;
- review potential risks of conflict and violence in the continent and identify ways of intervention to prevent and advise the PSC Secretariat accordingly. PSC was to dedicate sessions on quarterly basis for assessment of joint findings of CSOs and its departments;
- work closely with the PSC in conflict prevention and propose policy options for better management of present and potentially emerging conflicts by enriching deliberations of the PSC through participating in open sessions; and
- advice and support AU Special Envoys in execution of their work to make peace and mediate conflict.

## f. Swakopmund Conclusions

The PSC, during its 7<sup>th</sup> retreat on Issues and Challenges in Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa held in Swakopmund, Namibia, in May 2015, reached, among others, the following conclusions relating to collaboration between the AU, RECs/REMs and CSOs on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Africa.

- a. collaboration and coherence between the PSC and REWUs in conflict prevention, management and resolution was to be enhanced by holding consultative meetings; and
- b. conflicts were to be prevented by addressing their root causes, receiving regular briefs on early warning information and advancing cooperation among various stakeholders and partners.

The PSC also reiterated the importance of enhancing collaboration with ECOSOCC, which it emphasized to be the AU organ responsible for facilitating interaction between the AU and CSOs working in the area of peace and security. The PSC, in consultation with ECOSOCC, was to launch and sustain annual consultation with CSOs on the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa.

## g. EAC Treaty

No other REC/RM, apart from the EAC, specifically stipulates the role of CSOs in their promotion of peace and security in the region. Article 127 of the EAC Treaty requires creation of an environment that enables CSOs to contribute towards this goal by providing a forum for CSOs to engage with appropriate institutions of the Community. CSOs are guaranteed an enabling space to carry out their functions without political interference. It is on this basis that the East African Civil Society Forum (EACSOF) was created.

## h. COMESA Treaty

The COMESA Treaty reiterates the importance of peace and security in realizing economic development and regional integration. Article 163 of the Treaty states that member states agree that regional peace and security are prerequisites to social and economic development and vital to achieve regional economic integration objectives of the common market. In this regard, the member states agree to foster and maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to peace and security through cooperation and consultations on issues pertaining to peace and security of the member states with a view to preventing, better managing and resolving inter-state or intra-state conflicts.

# 4

## KEY FINDINGS

### A. CSOS, REWUS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS WORKING IN THE AREA OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN EASTERN AFRICA

#### (a) CSOs General Background

It is not clear how many CSOs are actively involved in preventing conflicts in Eastern Africa. There is no portal of registered peace and security CSOs, or a mechanism to monitor and coordinate their engagement with CEWS and REWUs. A total of 62 CSOs were contacted to participate in the study but only 21 responded to the mailed questionnaire or met with the researcher face-to-face.

PERIOD OF EXISTENCE/REGISTRATION (%)	
0 – 5 years	24
6 – 10 years	19
11 – 20 years	53
Over 20 years	4

Most CSOs (53%) that participated in the study have been in existence for more than 10 years; while 24% have been in existence for less than 5 years. 19% have been in existence for less than 10 years and 4% for more than 20 years. All of them are registered in their respective countries and have governance structures. 29% classified themselves as CSOs active in research, information dissemination, education and training; while 19% as active in advocacy., 19% classified themselves as national NGOs; 10% as youth-led and 10% as faith-based organization. 5% identified themselves as women's group; 5% as developmental CSOs and the remaining 5% as community-based organizations.

CLASSIFICATION (%)	
Research, Information Dissemination, Education & Training	29
Advocacy	19
National CSOs	19
Youth-led	10
Faith-based	10
Women's Group	5
Developmental	5
Community-based Organizations	5

Majority of the CSOs (52%) regard advocacy as their core business while 19% are in research and training. 14% of the CSOs are in advocacy and training; 10% are in advocacy and service provision and only 5% are in service provision. In terms of their main areas of work, 38% stated that they focus on governance while 19% combine governance, civic, research and training work. 14% CSOs are providing social services; 14% are engaged in development activities and 15% are engaged in research and training.

CORE BUSINESS (%)	
Advocacy	52
Research and Training	19
Advocacy and Training	14
Advocacy and Service Provision	10
Service Provision	5

Most CSOs in the region depend on external donor support. Others supported their activities from a combination of sources such as donations and consultancies. Of the CSOs interviewed, none were auto-financing or received any funds from the government.

SOURCE OF SUPPORT (%)	
External   Donor Funding	89
Donations   Consultancies	11
Auto - financing	0
Government Funded	0

In terms of staffing, 62% of the CSOs had paid staff and volunteers while 15% had paid staff; 13% had volunteers and 10% had interns.

STAFFING (%)	
Paid Staff and Volunteers	62
Paid Staff	15
Volunteers	13
Interns	10

Fifty-seven of the CSOs said they have structures and capacities to collaborate with CEWS; 43% have structures and capacities to collaborate with REWUs in Eastern Africa and 52% have structures and capacities to collaborate with other CSOs. However, only 2 CSOs have agreements or MoUs with IGAD and 1 with the EAC while none have any agreements with the AU and COMESA.

MOUS & OTHER LEGAL INSTRUMENTS WITH (%)	
AU & CEWS	0
Other CSOs	0
IGAD	10
EAC	5
COMESA	5

## (b). REWUs General Background

The PSC Protocol states that REWUs are to be fully involved in the establishment and effective functioning of the Early Warning System by collecting, processing and transmitting data to the Situation Room. Eastern Africa has more REWUs than any other region in the continent. Despite proliferation of peace and security mechanisms in the region, there is

insufficient coherence, collaboration, and cooperation among them, thus, affecting their effective promotion of peace and security in the region.

Unlike other regions with one lead REC, Eastern Africa has the following RECs and RMs and their respective REWUs.

- I. IGAD's CEWARN collects and analyses data and recommends action at local, national and regional levels.
- II. EACWARN is EAC's unit charged with addressing and preventing conflicts in East Africa.
- III. COMWARN is COMESA's EWU with the primary function of producing reports on existing or emerging threats to peace and security in the region and recommending actions to be taken.
- IV. The region also has two regional mechanisms. They are: International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) established in 2004 and East African Standby Force (EASF) established in 2007. EWARN is EASF's EWU established in 2007 to observe and monitor areas of possible conflict, security issues and emerging crises in 3 zones—Great Lakes, Horn of Africa and Oceania.

### (c). AU CEWS Background

The principal mandate for CEWS, operational since 2007, is to anticipate and prevent conflicts in Africa by collecting, processing and analyzing data. PSC Protocol states that CEWS is to perform this function by collaborating with RECs, the UN, other international organizations, research centers, academic institutions and NGOs. The AU and the partners are also expected to work out the practical details for establishment of the CEWS and to take all the steps required for its effective functioning.

### (d). Peace & Security Issues Tracked & Monitored

CSOs in Eastern Africa are working on a motley of peace and security-related issues including human rights, inter-communal dialogue, security sector reform, conflict-sensitive development, refugees and returnees, election monitoring, promotion of gender equality and post-conflict reconstruction. They collect data on violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism, electoral violence, poverty and unemployment, human rights abuses, radicalization of the youth and vulnerable populations, intercommunal conflicts, sexual and gender-based violence, land conflicts and boundary disputes, national and transnational crime, natural resource allocation and environmental management, illegal cross-border trade, and cultural practices that are a threat to peace and security.

In comparison, REWUs monitor election tensions, inter-communal conflicts, border disputes, constitutional manipulation, human rights abuses, failed peace agreements, pastoralist conflicts, governance, transnational crimes, coups and rebel groups' activities. On its part, CEWS tracks election-related violence, SALW, piracy, drug trafficking, inter and intra-state conflicts and transhumance-related conflicts.

### (e). Participation in Conflict Prevention

CSOs pointed out that they have participated in the following conflict prevention activities since their inception.

They are: peace negotiations, preparation of national strategies for preventing violent extremism, peace building meetings, reconciliation after armed conflicts and youth deradicalization, peace education, reporting and analysis of threats to peace, elections monitoring, sensitization of communities on the prevention of communal conflicts and research and data collection on threats to peace and security in the region.

Despite the low level of collaboration between RECs and CSOs in conflict intervention, all REWUs pointed out that collaborative efforts with other partners were fruitful. They recommended that future engagements be improved through informed cooperation agreements and regular consultations to share ideas and avoid duplication of efforts and resources.

## B. CURRENT STATUS OF DATA COLLECTED BY CSOS

### (a). CSOs Data Collection, Handling and Sharing

Some CSOs collect primary, often sensitive, data related to real-time incidents. Most do not collect information directly from the field but use field monitors, interview sources, observe events and facilitate focus group discussions. Other sources include social media, research publications, symposiums and seminars. Some CSOs recruit other CSOs to collect information on their behalf. It was found that 86% of the CSOs do not have standards, guidelines and policies governing data collection and sharing. Those that claimed to have these policies could not share them but cited national and international standards and guidelines, manuals and the IGAD-CEWARN Data Collection Manual for Field Monitors and Situation Room Officers.

Most CSOs interviewed did not have clear means of verifying collected information or monitoring its quality. Quality of data is assured through verification and double checking by comparing with other sources. Although some CSOs claimed to have manuals on quality assurance, none of them shared any. Some CSOs do not monitor quality of their data, depending on credibility of the providers. It was found out 76% of CSOs do not have established processes of monitoring quality of the data they collect.

CSOs store their data in electronic databases with external backups, hard copies, soft copies, Dropbox, Google Cloud and servers. Some CSOs store data for up to 2-3 years; some for 5 years; others for at least 20 years while others do not have limited duration for which data is stored.

The level of CSOs sharing data on conflict prevention, early warning and early response in Eastern Africa is very low. Only 3 shared with EACWARN; 2 with COMWARN; 5 with CEWARN and 4 with CEWS. However, 12 CSOs reported to be sharing data with other CSOs; 2 with donors and 1 with government.

## C. CHALLENGES INHIBITING THE AU, REWUS, CEWS AND CSOS IN PLAYING THEIR ROLES IN CONFLICT PREVENTION & PROMOTION OF PEACE IN EASTERN AFRICA

### (a). General Challenges

There is lack of collaboration between CEWS, REWUs and CSOs in preventing conflict in the region due to the following general challenges.

- APSA is vaguely understood across the board. CEWS, REWUs and CSOs have their own particular interpretations of its structures and how they relate to each other.
- Most CSOs reported that their critical roles in conflict prevention are not recognized and appreciated by other partners.
- There is no common understanding among CEWS, REWUs and CSOs of what constitutes threats to peace and security and how they are being addressed notwithstanding the specification in the 2008 MoU.
- There is lack of conceptual understanding and appreciation of early warning as a means of conflict prevention.
- There is no common structure in place to collect data from CSOs in the region.
- There is no common response strategy and systems for joint conflict prevention. Most interventions are usually reactionary rather than preventive.
- Lack of sustainable long-term relations leads most CSOs to shift their focus from peace and conflict prevention.
- There is a state of fear and lack of trust between citizens and government officials on matters of peace and security, thus, undermining coordination and collaboration.
- There is generally low understanding of legal frameworks establishing EWUs and guiding their work. Most of these frameworks do not define the engagement with or the role of CSOs.
- The Livingstone Formula has not been fully implemented. To date, CSOs and the PSC still do not have direct and regular contacts.

### (b). Challenges Facing CEWS

CEWS faces the following challenges.

- CEWS does not have a roster of peace and security CSOs in Eastern Africa and does not know which or how many are working on conflict prevention in the region.
- There are no direct & properly institutionalized PSC-CEWS interactions.

- CEWS lacks sufficient funds to support REWUs' and CSOs' activities.
- CEWS has no legal instruments, guidelines, standards and policies to govern collection and sharing of data with CSOs.

Complaints made by the AU on working with CSOs.

- Engagements with CSOs from Eastern Africa have been on ad-hoc basis and not instituted.
- There are many CSOs that are competitive and fight with each other, making it difficult for the PSC engage with them.
- There is no database for CSOs involved in conflict prevention which makes it difficult to identify the CSOs to engage with
- Some CSOs have shifting mandates and their focus depends on the agenda set by external donors making it hard to develop long-term collaborations
- Most CSOs engage in activism without tangible proposals on how to best approach challenges facing the continent in preventing conflict.

### (c). Challenges Facing REWUs

REWUs have faced the following challenges in preventing conflicts in the region.

- There is no defined and commonly agreed-upon regional peace and security agenda.
- Poor partnership and linkage between CSOs and government agencies/systems have affected how CSOs engage REWUs since they are state-centric.
- Most REWUs, like CSOs, have inadequate financial and human resources technical capacity and technological infrastructure to generate early warnings and carry out early responses.
- While some REWUs have made attempts to identify CSOs to work with, others had identified a few but let the ties lapse without renewing them.
- While the 2008 MoU is generally overlooked, structures and capacities of REWUs to collaborate with CEWs are not clearly defined and clearly understood.
- The abundance of RECs and RMs who operate independently with overlapping mandates and limited resources has neither increased their effectiveness nor noticeably reduced conflicts in the region.
- Similar to CSOs, there is no forum whatsoever that brings together REWUs to discuss issues of, or work together on, conflict prevention.
- There is lack of political will on the part of member states to accept warning alerts from REWUs.

REWUs had the following complaints on working with CSOs.

- Lack of formalized channels to engage CSOs;
- Lack of dedication and long-term commitment poses a challenge for sustained partnerships; and
- Due to multiplicity and shifting focuses of CSOs, RECs are often challenged in identifying the right CSOs to work with.

#### (d). Challenges Facing CSOs

CSOs have faced the following challenges in preventing conflicts in the region.

- There is no commonly agreed upon definition of conflict prevention, early warning and early response among CSOs.
- CSOs working on projects relating to peace and security issues are eschewed and treated with suspicion by most governments in the region.
- There are no laws allowing access to public information and CSOs have to rely on goodwill of some government officials who share information at great risks to their lives and careers.
- There are poor relations between governments and CSOs who are suspected to be aligned to the opposition or to push its agenda.
- Most CSOs in Eastern Africa do not have requisite skills to monitor threats to peace and security and to engage in early response initiatives.
- CSOs find it difficult to work in situations with raised political tensions where the community shun peace monitors or share biased information.
- CSOs not only lack common work plan but often duplicate their efforts as they compete against one another to attract donor funds, thus, inhibiting collaboration.
- Heavy dependence on foreign donors has caused most CSOs to refocus from peace and security activities to areas of donor interest such as countering violent extremism.
- Poverty and unemployment frustrate efforts of field monitors who are often denied crucial data and information by locals who demand payments for information shared.
- Most CSOs lack networks and resources and others have been impeded by their unprofessional practices such as poor engagement and communication habits.
- Limited budgets prevent many CSOs from hiring qualified and paid staff and most have to rely on volunteers and interns, consequently, diminishing quality of their output.
- Collecting information for EW can be dangerous and challenging. Some CSOs wonder whether the information

they share makes any difference.

CSOs made the following complaints on their working relationship with CEWS.

- Many CSOs, particularly the newly founded ones, regard engaging with the AU and other RECs as an intimidating task due to their bureaucracies which restrict channels of access and engagement. One CSO characterized the AU as being elitist and distant from the people.
- Most CSOs feel ECOSOCC restrictive requirements deter them from contributing to the AU conflict prevention initiatives.

CSOs had the following complaints on working with REWUs.

- Like the AU, REWUs are bureaucratic with restricted channels of access and engagement.
- REWUs, similar to RECs, have turned a blind eye to governments that shrink civic spaces, making it hard for CSOs to function.
- Some CSOs are wary of collaborating with a REWU which prefers to collect intelligence-driven over public-sourced information.
- CSOs lose confidence in REWUs whom they share early warnings with, but delay to, or do not, take any preventive action.
- CSOs feel their engagement with REWUs has been on ad-hoc basis rather than long-lasting.

CSOs made the following complaints on working with governments.

- Governments have not utilized them to respond quickly to peace and security challenges, including early response.
- Governments have not provided environments for CSOs to be effectively involved in conflict prevention processes. CSOs have been targeted by governments that criticize them for undermining state security.

#### D. DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS BETWEEN THE AU AND RECS IN THEIR ENGAGEMENTS WITH CSOS

Overlapping of activities and programs between the AU and RECs in their collaboration with CSOs is one of the factors that inhibit their overall performance in preventing conflicts. With five RECs and RMs claiming mandates to prevent conflicts and in view of the region's geopolitics, Eastern Africa could end up with 5 umbrellas of CSOs under each of the REC and RM. This will not only drain and waste resources but also usher in cut-throat competition that will severely undermine conflict prevention.

# 5

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. ADDRESSING THE GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN THE CURRENT FRAMEWORKS FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN AU AND RECS WITH CSOS IN EASTERN AFRICA

Challenges facing collaboration in conflict prevention in Eastern Africa can be addressed by:

- creating a common understanding of peace and security issues and agenda in the region.
- setting up a portal to register CSOs that are actively involved in preventing conflicts and establishing a mechanism to monitor them and coordinate their engagements.
- promoting culture of openness and access to information particularly for conflict prevention.
- sensitizing governments to recognize the important roles played by CSOs in preventing conflicts and promoting peace and security within the APSA framework.
- creating strategic partnership through a platform for sharing technical expertise and experiences among EWER CSOs and engaging CEWS under Article 12 of PSC Protocol.
- improving working relationships between CSOs, REWUs, CEWS and AU member states.
- changing the narrow top-bottom approach of addressing threats to peace and security in the region.
- shifting approach of investing resources in prevention instead of reaction.
- sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learned from within and outside the region.
- encouraging governments that have not yet done so to develop national early warning and early response mechanisms.

CSOs in Eastern Africa can learn the following lessons from WANEP.

- Conduct continuous evaluations to measure quality of output;
- Enhance innovativeness and creativity in program design by developing own software and cutting costs;
- Bolster capacities of their personnel through training and exchange of experiences between field monitors;
- Produce high quality, credible and respectable reports;

- Provide alternatives rather than heaping responsibility on other actors;
- Improve their relationship with governments;
- Encourage RECs and RMs to improve the spaces in which they work;
- Ensure transparency, openness of programs, strategic planning, decision-making and implementation;
- Enhance data collection & sharing; and
- Create a platform like WANEPs to support their agenda and to effectively contribute to peace and security in the region.

### B. HOW TO STRENGTHEN COLLECTION AND SHARING OF DATA AMONG VARIOUS CSOS AND WITH AU AND RECS

In order to enhance data collection and overcome the remarkable display of lack of common practices and culture of information exchange among APSA partners, the following measures are highly recommended.

- Establishing a central information sharing system or common database on conflict prevention and peacebuilding at the continental, regional and national levels;
- Balancing the capabilities, capacities and mandate of partners in joint activities to avoid mismatch in data collection and processing;
- Harmonizing and standardizing indicators for collecting data and collection methodologies on early warning – template should be available to all;
- Motivating CSOs to collect data by providing them with technical support that includes data storage;
- Training volunteers on methodologies of data collection and data recording systems;
- Enhancing diligence and verification methods by engaging multiple sources of information;
- Building confidence of information sources by giving assurances that the information provided will be confidential and will be used to bring positive change.

## C. RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW CSOS CAN OVERCOME CHALLENGES OF COLLECTING AND SHARING EARLY WARNING DATA IN EASTERN AFRICA

In order to overcome the challenges that CSOs are facing in collecting and sharing early warning data in the region the following measures are recommended.

- CSOs and governments should understand their mandates in peace and security by establishing consultative and coordination structures.
- The AU and other bodies should urge member states to work with CSOs by relaxing their rigidity and sharing relevant and specific information requested by CSOs.
- Mobilize resources for data collection by creating a common fund for financing CSOs in Eastern Africa;
- Guarantee security of field monitors so that they are not victimized when observing situations and collecting information or conducting surveys;
- Ensure CSOs provide information that is credible, accurate, reliable, transparent and objective;
- Establish linkages and mechanisms of information sharing;
- Develop templates for information gathering that reflect objectives of conflict prevention.

## D. RECOMMENDATIONS ON SYSTEMATIC AND PRACTICAL WAYS TO INSTITUTIONALIZE A STRUCTURE FOR COORDINATED ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOS TO ENHANCE CONFLICT PREVENTION, EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RESPONSE IN THE REGION

### (a). General Recommendations

- ◊ CSOs to sign MoUs with RECs and the AU defining channels of communication, relations, responsibilities and methods of working together.
- ◊ Build regional networks of collaborating entities across the region to ensure regional bodies and intergovernmental organizations share knowledge in similar areas and help coordinate their activities, thus, preventing duplication of programs and initiatives.
- ◊ Implement modalities for interaction prescribed by the Livingstone Formula. PSC and ECOSOCC should maintain steady relations from which CSOs will be able to establish lasting relationships.
- ◊ Establish a platform for collaboration in promoting regional peace and security agenda and for appraising the outcomes for joint efforts within a governance structure for APSA's conflict prevention system. This will be composed

of representatives of CEWS, REWUs, NEWUs and CSOs.

- ◊ Set up a common network in which governments, REWUs and CSOs collaborate and work in partnership to build peace as is the case in West Africa. This will require CEWS, REWUs and CSOs to:
  - develop a common regional peace and security agenda and strategy with clarification of contributions of the partners.
  - change attitude of governments towards CSOs working on peace and security issues.
  - promote partnership culture by providing incentives for CSOs to collect and report data in the region.
  - create more elaborate communication channels by incentivizing CSOs to collect and report data. The issue of data ownership and use also needs to be addressed.
  - create a roster of credible and active CSOs working on peace and security in the region and formalize working relations with CEWS & REWUs.
  - support CSOs to sustain themselves. Donor funds for APSA conflict prevention component should have provisions for supporting CSOs; similar to those supporting CEWS and REWUs.
  - respect letters and spirits of the AU, EAC and COMESA legal instruments recognizing the role of CSOs to contribute to conflict prevention.

### (b). Recommendations for CEWS

- CEWS should play a central/leadership role of coordinating the APSA conflict prevention system.
- It is recommended that CEWS, RECs and RMs scrupulously adhere to CAAU and APSA principles and norms, PSC Protocol, 2008 MoU, the Livingstone Formula and other legal instruments that undergird APSA. There is a need for the PSC Protocol to be revised to allow direct CEWS-PSC interactions.
- CEWS should sensitize AU member states not to treat CSOs with hostility. CISSA needs to sensitize its members on functions of CEWS and importance of engaging CSOs as stipulated in the AU legal instruments. This was strongly alluded by CSOs.
- Improve CEWS-PSC relations so as to tie information generation, sharing, analysis and dissemination. CEWS should strengthen data collection—diagnosis and prognosis—warnings—dissemination—response/action chain.
- Work closely with REWUs in Eastern Africa to create a platform to coordinate the collection, collation, analysis, interpretation & dissemination of information on early warning.

### (c). Recommendations for REWUs

- REWUs need to provide structures and improve capabilities for early response in order to inspire CSOs to share information/contribute toward that goal.
- In order to harmonize efforts geared towards conflict prevention in Eastern Africa existing RECs and RMs should invoke Article XXIII of the 2008 MoU to enter into inter-organizational arrangements.
- In order for REWUs to effectively engage with the AU and CSOs to promote peace and security they should:
  - ◊ maintain steady operationalization of APSA and its components and keep abreast with its developments.
  - ◊ develop sustainable partnerships with CSOs especially in development of early warning systems; understand the needs of CSOs and their activities and provide financial assistance to those that require.
  - ◊ create an enabling environment for CSOs by encouraging member states to promote freedom of association, right to information and encourage political will, commitment and legal recognition of CSOs.

### (d). Recommendations for CSOs

- Have a properly structured civil dialogue with one another or with other stakeholders at both continental, regional and national levels to reinforce legitimacy, accountability and adequacy of measures proposed.
- Since CSOs are closest to the theatre of violence, they are best positioned in terms of local knowledge and tactical options to immediately react to warnings. Well-organized CSOs can accelerate government, RECs and AU responsiveness to threats to peace and security.
- For CSOs to effectively contribute to conflict prevention they need to forge strategic partnerships with governments, REWUs and CEWS.
- Setting up a network of CSOs in Eastern Africa will ensure formal and predictable relations on a permanent rather than ad hoc basis.
- Due to their presence and closeness to the grassroots CSOs are needed in data collection for conflict prevention. This proximity to the conflict situations also makes CSOs important partners in response measures.
- CSOs can invoke Article 20 of PSC Protocol to make appearances before PSC to present joint reports and give briefings on situations on the ground.
- CSOs' capacities will need to be built through training, experience sharing, resource mobilization and methodology development.

- The issue of sensitivities of security related information that is often invoked by governments to deny CSOs to collect data on early warning can be addressed through a Framework document that defines the parameters, timing, recipients and handling of shared data.
- In order for CSOs to effectively engage with the AU and RECs to prevent conflict in Eastern Africa they should:
  - ◊ clearly understand the AU-RECs peace and security agenda.
  - ◊ be more organized and professional.
  - ◊ be inclusive, participatory and transparent in their operations.
  - ◊ work within a framework and agreed upon modalities and be considered legitimate actors.

### (e). Recommendations for Governments

The following actions are recommended for governments to benefit from CSOs' contributions to conflict prevention.

- Governments need to guarantee freedom of association and recognition of CSOs as partners rather than opponents. They should create civic spaces for them to work in.
- Governments/policy makers should be open to discuss issues of peace and security and share valuable data with researchers.

# 6

## BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### A. WEST AFRICAN NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING (WANEP)

- ◊ Established in 1998, WANEP has its regional headquarters in Accra and is governed by Ghanaian laws with its network members registered in the countries they operate in. The regional office coordinates all its activities. Its primary activities include, but not limited to: policy formulation, research on violent extremism, community engagement, briefing policy makers (ECOWAS, government officials and AU), empowering women and promoting peace and enhancing capacity building and support. For further information, please refer to <http://www.wanep.org/wanep/>.
- ◊ To enhance its collaborative efforts WANEP has a MoU with ECOWAS that is renewed every 5 years and one with the AU which has an indefinite term. It has a standing relationship with the AU Political Affairs Department and Gender Directorate. It is expected in its MoU obligations to support establishment of national EWCs in 10 countries by 2019 and to continually build capacities of those NEWCs. Its MoU with ECOWAS requires it to provide data/information to ECOWARN; provide analysis to support its recommendations given to ECOWAS president; and to support implementation of West African peace education strategy.
- ◊ WANEP gets its funding from foreign donors such as SIDA, DANIDA, EU, USAID among others. Its work plans guide its funding strategies. National networks get direct support from sources such as Oxfam, CRS and DFID. Network and affiliates do not receive funds from national governments.
- ◊ WANEP's data is collected from open sources (newspapers and field observations) and stored on secure servers. Quality and accuracy of data is assured through verification and peer reviewing to check anomalies. There are quality mechanisms installed at community, national and regional level where analysts scrutinize and make corrections before the information is fed into the system and shared with ECOWAS and the AU.
- ◊ WANEP has efficient methodologies and policies governing data collection and dissemination. Field reports are received from ground monitors which are then submitted to Peace Information Centre and stored in a WANEP-designed data management system.
- ◊ Once the information is processed and analyzed, findings are shared with ECOWAS through email, briefings of ambassadors in Accra and Abuja and publication of reports on WANEP website with the exception of reports that are for ECOWAS' only consumption or for platforms established for specific threats.
- ◊ In fruitful and mutually beneficial engagements with ECOWAS, WANEP uses its relations to raise funds while ECOWAS relies on its reports to address challenges to peace and security in the region. It has also fostered good relations with the AU and organizations from ECOWAS member states. Its relations with ECOWAS and AU have been improved through regular feedbacks.
- ◊ WANEP has a network of more than 550 CSOs ranging from CBOs to national organizations. It has institutionalized its membership structure by requiring prospective members to prove that 40% of their work is on peacebuilding. The board considers applications and presents qualified CSOs to the General Assembly for consideration and subsequent admittance. Once the membership criteria are fulfilled, an organization is issued with a certificate and included in WANEP's database. Thereafter, the organizations participate in WANEP's decision-making and program execution. Membership is denied to applicants who are without legal registration and focus on peacebuilding.
- ◊ CSOs have a stake in the management of the national networks and regional network through general assemblies in each country. The assemblies, in their meetings, agree on their strategic plans that are then shared at the regional level and harmonized into a regional strategic plan. The network maintains emphasis on community-level approach in intervention & peacebuilding in general.
- ◊ Since its inception, WANEP has contributed to development of a regional peace architecture generation and maintenance of a pool of expertise on peace and security that is relied upon by policy makers, generated experiences and lessons; built capacities of other institutions and government in peacebuilding; conducted research that informs policy action; worked with election managing bodies to prevent election-related violence; helped 8 countries develop their national action plans and produced reports that have been used to issue travel advisories to citizens in West African states and beyond.
- ◊ Some of WANEP's success factors are:
  - WANEP's style of engagement makes it to be seen as a strategic partner and contributor to enhancing ECOWAS' objectives of promoting peace and security in the region.
  - Taking lead in locally-driven initiatives and enriching partnership with local actors.
  - Avoiding activism and, instead, offering solutions that ensure mutually beneficial outcomes.
  - Complementing what states do by offering solutions to problems.

### B. GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR T PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT (GPPAC)

GPPAC is a network of local, regional and international civil society organizations and networks involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. The network links civil

society with relevant local, national, regional and international actors and institutions to collectively pursue conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. For further information, please refer to: <https://www.gppac.net/>.

The global network consists of fifteen regional networks of local organizations with their own priorities, character and agenda. These regional networks are represented in the International Steering Group which jointly determines members' global priorities and actions for their conflict prevention and peacebuilding work.

GPPAC supports capacity of the regional networks for collaborative action by facilitating regional and global exchanges. Members from diverse regions meet to learn from each other's experiences. GPPAC members also connect with other actors including the UN, regional intergovernmental organizations such as League of Arab States, state actors, the media and academia. This has resulted in unique initiatives showing its ability to bridge global policymaking with local ownership and practice on the ground.

### C. ECOWAS WARNING AND RESPONSE NETWORK (ECOWARN)

- ◊ ECOWARN was established in 1999 as a sub-regional peace and security observation system after adoption of the 1999 Protocol relating to mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security. It is an institutional mechanism to prevent conflict in West Africa through engaging civil society actors and community participation in collecting, sharing and disseminating data relevant in suppression and prevention of conflict.
- ◊ ECOWARN's system consists of an Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC) which is based at the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria. It also consists of four zonal offices that collect information from their focal areas on daily basis and report to the OMC. Zonal office located in Banjul covers Gambia, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Senegal; in Ouagadougou covers Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger; in Monrovia covers Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ghana and in Cotonou covers Benin, Nigeria and Togo.
- ◊ Continued calls led to ECOWARN's partnership with governments and civil society to ensure a more coordinated approach to prevent conflict and maintain peace in the region. It partnered with WANEP, a civil society actor, and the two have made a series of consultations with other relevant stakeholders in the region and developed joint indicators to support field reporting and analysis of conflict. Working with representatives from WANEP, ECOWARN collects and analyzes field data, OMC compiles reports based on these analyses and then submits them to the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS for action.
- ◊ ECOWARN and WANEP draw governmental support from the member states who are required to input critical data into the Early Warning System.

- ◊ ECOWARN has made considerable strides over the years with its EWS being cited as a good example of how data driven systems are supposed. Most of ECOWARN's success is credited to its structural efficiency in monitoring and collecting early warning data and its analysis indicators. ECOWARN's system is capacitated with field monitors and state-of-the-art technology to provide real-time collection and analysis of data. It also enjoys numerous data and information sources due to its institutional linkages to ECOWAS and member states. This has helped promote credibility of its situational reports.

## 7

### GUIDE LINES FOR SETTING UP A NETWORK FOR EVER CSOS IN EASTERN AFRICA

Conducted research to establish need for a formal network. This involved wide consultation with CSOs to identify their strengths, weaknesses and challenges and then recommending what will work best in the prevailing environment.

#### FORMAL NETWORK:

- a. Composed of interrelated independent CSOs in Eastern Africa working in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- b. Members who share a set of common activities and meet regularly.
- c. CSOs with legal status and have subscribed to the network.
- d. Based on common needs of CSOs and a goal of promoting peace in their own contexts.
- e. Governance structure to provide strategic guidance to those managing the network.
- f. Bottom-up approach processes so CSOs can feel a sense of ownership.
- g. Organizational structure which is proportionate to this purpose and one in which decisions can be made and implemented in an effective and inclusive way.
- h. Consists of NGOs, research institutes, CBOs and other organizations under the CSOs rubric working in conflict prevention field.
- i. A formal network has:
  - i. a common purpose derived from shared and perceived need for action
  - ii. clear objectives and focus
  - iii. a hierarchical structure

## OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF A NETWORK

The general objectives of a network are to:

- a. focus on goal and commit resources—the shared vision/mission aspect.
- b. facilitate shared space for exchange, learning, development – the capacity building aspect.
- c. act for change in areas where none of the members are working in a systematic way – the organizational aspect.
- d. include a range of stakeholders – the diversity/ broad-reach aspect.

Rationale for establishing a network of conflict prevention CSOs in Eastern Africa is to provide a platform for:

- a. bringing together many stakeholders in the field of peacebuilding;
- b. sharing information and knowledge on peacebuilding;
- c. promoting communication between stakeholders;
- d. acting as effective catalysts for building up relationships and commitment among conflict prevention stakeholders in Eastern Africa;
- e. promoting coordination at local, national, regional and international levels;
- f. building trusting relationships among stakeholders;
- g. serving as mutual learning and capacity building mechanism; and
- h. activating the interface between early warning and early action in conflict prevention

The network will encourage:

- a. Voluntary participation and commitment
- b. The input of resources by members for the benefit of all
- c. Linkages between systems in the conflict prevention system of APSA

Principles and values of the network.

- a. Building participation
  - i. Knowing the membership, what each can put in, and what each seeks to gain
  - ii. Valuing what people can put in and making it possible for them to contribute to a common cause
  - iii. Seeking commitment to a minimum contribution

- iv. Ensuring membership is appropriate to the purpose and tasks
- v. Encouraging members to be realistic about what they can give
- vi. Ensuring access to decision making and opportunities to reflect on achievements
- vii. Keeping internal structural and governance requirements to a necessary minimum.
- viii. Keeping internal structural and governance requirements to a necessary minimum.
- b. Building relationships and trust
  - i. Spending time on members getting to know each other, especially face- to-face interactions
  - ii. Coordination point/secretariat has relationship-building as vital part of work
  - iii. Members/secretariat build relations with others outside network - strategic individuals and institutions
- c. Facilitative leadership (may be one person, or rotating, or a team)
  - i. Emphasis on quality of input rather than control
  - ii. Knowledgeable about issues, context and opportunities
  - iii. Enabling members to contribute and participate in decision making
  - iv. Defining vision and articulating aims
  - v. Balancing creation of forward momentum and action, with generating consensus
  - vi. Understanding dynamics of conflict and how to transform relations
  - vii. Promoting regular monitoring and participatory evaluation
- d. Fostering diversity and dynamism
  - i. Avoid a structure that is too loose to drain potential and continuity and a heavy one that stifles initiative and innovation.
  - ii. Have the minimum structure and rules necessary to do the work. Ensure governance is light, not strangling.
  - iii. Give members the space to be dynamic.
  - iv. Encourage all those who can make contributions to the overall goal, however small they may be.

- e. Working toward decentralized and democratic governance
  - i. At the center, make only the decisions that are vital to continued functioning. Push decision making outwards.
  - ii. Ensure that those with less resources and power have the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way.
- f. Building capacity by encouraging all to share the expertise they have to offer.

How members will contribute to the achievement of the network's aims and objectives :

- a. Share a common vision
- b. Participate in decision-making processes
- c. Voluntary membership
- d. Clearly defined/specify roles of members
- e. Mutual trust among members and other stakeholders
- f. Selection of network leadership through a transparent and fair process
- g. Agreed upon structure and control of network
- h. Diversity and dynamism among members
- i. Democracy-equal access to the resources and participation in governance

High levels of mutual trust in the network will be realized through:

- a. meetings and communication
- b. membership and commitment
- c. consensus and autonomy

Steps for setting up network.

- a. Establish a rationale for the network
- b. Hold a meeting of East African CSOs with the agenda to:
  - i. discuss importance of working together in Eastern Africa to prevent conflicts and build peace
  - ii. review types and models of partnerships, including networks and platforms, for collaboration in conflict prevention
  - iii. explore the development of a network/platform for Eastern Africa CSOs
  - iv. discuss potential benefits, limits and limitations of networks/platforms

- v. consider governance structures appropriate for CSOs in Eastern Africa
- vi. understand the link between a successful CSO network and a peaceful region
- vii. agree on a name for the network/platform
- viii. set up a steering committee to establish the network
- ix. develop terms of reference for the steering committee

- c. Steering committee meets to adopt work plan and roadmap

- d. Draft constitution for members of the network.

The constitution should ensure that members of the network commit to the following.

- i. Active participation
- ii. Agree and respect alliance principles
- iii. Sell objectives of the network to their own organizations
- iv. Provide expertise
- v. Keep formal and informal communications open
- vi. Deliver their mandates
- e. Draft constitution is circulated among CSOs
- f. CSOs meet to review and adopt constitution of the network
- g. Network is inaugurated

## 8

### CONCLUSION

- ◊ This study has revealed a myriad of challenges facing the AU, RECs/RMs and CSOs in preventing conflicts in Eastern Africa and generated concrete recommendations on how to address them. The study by using systems analysis model ably demonstrates that the AU, RECs, governments and CSOs need to work in partnership to prevent conflict in Eastern Africa. Instead of using state-centric model that restricts involvement of CSOs in management of conflicts, the AU, RECs and governments can find ways of cooperating in mutually beneficial ways.
- ◊ Besides identifying and explaining key roles played by AU, CEWS, REWUs and CSOs in promoting peace and stability through conflict prevention in the Eastern Africa

region and Africa as a whole, the study has increased the conceptual understanding of the role played by CSOs and their interaction with other actors. Further, the study has identified lessons learned and provided specific recommendations that are expected to be used for future benefit of various actors engaged in peacebuilding by preventing conflict.

- ◊ Despite recognition of the key roles CSOs play in promoting peace, particularly conflict prevention, their contributions are not harnessed and they are not formally included in CEWS and RECs early warning and early response efforts in Eastern Africa. The AU, RECs and governments have to do more to tap into civil societies' comparative advantages, namely closeness to and a deeper understanding of the ground. CSOs have access to the parties involved in conflict and the ability to bring parties to dialogue. They are well positioned in society to induce local communities to get involved in long-term reconciliation efforts. By working directly with local communities on the ground, CSOs are able to assess situations more effectively than top levels of governance or external actors.
- ◊ CSOs have the capability to identify new threats and challenges to peace and security faster than the AU and RECs can and are drivers of "track-two" and "people-to-people" diplomacy, which is integral to successful early response and subsequent resolution of conflict or confrontation of security threats. CSOs can also reach parties on the ground that governments cannot reach and complement the work of AU and RECs by offering valuable analysis originating from the field. For these reasons, CSOs have an important role to play in the operation of APSA and achievement of the AU peace and security agenda. Governments, RECs and the AU need to build a strategic partnership in conflict prevention, particularly early warning and early response.
- ◊ It is important to be aware of the limitations CSOs have and the challenges they face in the region in promoting peace, particularly conflict prevention. The outcomes of early warning are difficult to observe or to be publicized. Sometimes, CSOs' engagement can exacerbate conflicts if they are poorly equipped to carry out the tasks of monitoring and analyzing threats to peace and security. In most violent contexts, CSOs lack the capacities to handle complexities of conflict although they might attempt to engage with the best intentions. In this connection, CSOs need to adopt the principle of "do-no-harm" in their work.
- ◊ Duplication of peacebuilding activities is unhealthy as it creates a sense of competition and rivalry among the actors. It also limits the focus areas where the players share information on peacebuilding activities they have undertaken. Future engagements between the AU, RECs and CSOs can be enriched through cooperation pacts and systematic consultation forums to enable sharing of common ideas and to prevent duplication of roles. The resources employed in such efforts would also be commonly utilized and will avoid wastage. Harmonization of engagement efforts will help minimize duplication and redundancy and also enhance cohesion.
- ◊ There is a need to have a better structured umbrella organization and network dedicated to bridge the existing cooperation gaps between the AU, CEWS, RECs and CSOs. The region requires an organization like WANEP to coordinate peace and security actions of all CSOs involved in peacebuilding. Such an umbrella body would be essential in monitoring the activities undertaken by relevant actors, facilitating mediation and dialogue, conducting peace campaigns, capacitating and training stakeholders. Under it, CSOs would have a better chance to survive politicization and maintain focus on people-centered agenda. A properly structured regional organization such as WANEP would broaden the scope of work done in peacebuilding by CSOs by promoting information sharing through structured exchange programs and strengthening coalitions and networks in the region. Most of the successes achieved by West African CSOs have been credited to WANEP. It has managed to create safe work spaces for CSOs by sustaining good relations with West African states through its strategic partnership with ECOWAS. On their own, some CSOs have limited resources to impact policy change. But their contributions are enormous in a network. A regional network would help such CSOs build stronger alliances and influence policy dialogue. Additionally, operating under a common organization helps streamline mandates, utilize resources, ensure clear responsibilities and avoid duplication of roles.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CAAU	Constitutive Act of the African Union
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning & Response Mechanism
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CIDO	Citizens and Diaspora Directorate
CISSA	Committee of Intelligence and Security Service of Africa
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern & Southern Africa
COMWARN	COMESA Early Warning System
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EAC	East African Community
EACWARN	East African Community Early Warning System
EASF	Eastern Africa Standby Force
EAWARN	Network for Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social & Cultural Council
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Warning & Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EW	Early Warning
EWS	Early Warning System
ICGLR	International Conference for the Great Lakes Region
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEWUs	National Early Warning Units
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PoW	Panel of the Wise
PSC	Peace & Security Council
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
REWUs	Regional (RECs) Early Warning Units
RMs	Regional Mechanisms
UN	United Nations
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## COORDINATED AND HARMONIZED STRUCTURE OF ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOS

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AU, RECS, RMS CONFLICT PREVENTION, EARLY WARNING / RESPONSE MECHANISMS



Create a platform like WANEP to support the agenda of Eastern Africa CSOs and to effectively contribute to peace and security in the region.



The AU and other bodies should urge member states to work with CSOs by relaxing their rigidity and sharing relevant and specific information requested by CSOs.



Build regional networks of collaborating entities across the region to ensure that regional bodies and intergovernmental organizations share knowledge in similar areas and help coordinate their activities, thus, preventing duplication of programs and initiatives.

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