

The Forum of Political Parties,
the Media and Civil Society
in West Africa

Acts
November 2005

Building Peace and Democracy in West Africa



Building Peace and Democracy in West Africa



The Forum of Political Parties, the Media
and Civil Society in West Africa

Co-organised by the Sahel and West Africa Club and the Strategic Watch Club
for Peace in West Africa

Cotonou (Benin)

28 June -1 July 2005

ACTS

Edited by the Sahel and West Africa Club

November 2005

The Sahel and West Africa Club

The Club du Sahel was created in 1976 by Member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in collaboration with African leaders from Sahelian countries as a forum for the International Community to discuss and encourage strong support over the long-term for countries in the Sahelian region, victims of the drought.

In 2001, taking into account the interdependence and complementarity of the Sahel with other countries of West Africa, the Sahel Club's Strategy and Policy Group decided to expand its geographic coverage. The Club then became the Sahel and West Africa Club.

As a facilitator, moderator and leader of open constructive exchanges, the Club plays a bridging role, an interface between West African actors and OECD Member countries. Its main objectives are to:

- Help identify strategic questions related to medium- and long-term development in West Africa;
- Facilitate exchanges between regional actors and OECD Member countries;
- Promote constructive debates that lead to innovative decisions within and outside the region aimed at building a better future for the region.

The Club works within a network consisting of West African government representatives, actors from civil society, the private sector as well as development and research agencies. The Club also works in close collaboration with West African development partners and with international and regional organisations notably ROPPA, the CILSS, the WAEMU, and ECOWAS, its principal partner in the region.

As a member of the OECD's Development Cluster, the Club has also developed synergies with other Directorates.

SAH/D(2005)552

Cover and interior layout: Marie Moncet

© Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD

Le Seine Saint-Germain,

4, boulevard des Isles, 92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux, France

Postal address: 2, rue André Pascal- 75016 Paris, France

Tel.: + 33 1 45 24 89 87 - Fax.: +33 1 45 24 90 31

Email: sahel.contact@oecd.org

Website: www.oecd.org/sah

The views expressed in this document are those solely of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD.

List of Acronyms

ADR	African Democratic Rally (<i>Rassemblement démocratique africain</i>)
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIP	African Independence Party (<i>Parti africain de l'indépendance</i>)
ARP	African Rally Party (<i>Parti du rassemblement africain</i>)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CILSS	Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel (Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECOMOG	Economic Community Monitoring Observer Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FOSCAO	Forum des organisations de la société civile de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development (<i>Nouveau partenariat pour le développement de l'Afrique</i>)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NICT	New Information and Communication Technology
OHADA	Organisation pour l'harmonisation en Afrique du droit des affaires
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
ROPPA	West African Network of Farmers' organisations and agricultural producers (Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest)
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SME	Small- and Medium-size Enterprises
SWAC	Sahel and West Africa Club (OECD)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOWA	United Nations Office for West Africa
VAT	Value Added Tax
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding



Before going to press with this document, we learned of the death of General Cheick Oumar Diarra, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, in an airplane crash. General Diarra was a friend of the Sahel and West Africa Club. We dedicate these Acts to his memory in his fight for peace and democracy in Africa.

Foreword

West Africa, solidarity for peace, solidarity for democracy, solidarity for regional integration

The aim of this Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society of Cotonou is to provide democrats, men and women working for peace and wanting democratic principles to guide public life, the opportunity to speak; to listen to citizens' analyses and accounts.

This meeting was also a moment to re-forge African solidarities. The difficult and powerful moments cannot be forgotten: militants questioning regional leaders; a general elucidating before citizens; participants, separated, practically enemies in their countries in crisis, finding with emotion brotherhoods once lost. Each will hold on to the strength that gives hope, nearing reconciliations going beyond the fractures of history and the inequalities of development.

For all of those accounts, I thank all of those who gave this Forum existence, who have fed the strategic thinking, who accepted the debate regardless of their institutional position.

In Cotonou, the approximately three hundred participants, coming from eighteen countries, political practitioners, associative actors, journalists, political scientists, national and regional leaders, have proven through their debates, just as dynamic as during the National Conferences of the 1990s, that peace and democracy "is their business". Provided that each of us, in these approaches and practices have confidence in those who take the risk to refuse violence and the arbitrary; provided that each of us refuses that might is right.

To be democratic in Africa, as elsewhere, and whatever the institutional ways, it is the populations' desire to participate in the decisions which concern them and be committed to their childrens' future. The Forum's Final Declaration reminds us that development does not exist without civil peace and there is no civil peace without democracy. It is here that African citizens have so declared. It is also an appeal for a common future for the region, because civil peace is a common regional good. Regional integration is the populations' consensual wish.

Youth associations, who spoke in Cotonou, live a solidarity without borders. They re-affirmed that they would like to live and hope in Africa. What type of world are we preparing for them?

We must unite again and to debate in order to outline the shared hopeful paths. This Forum is a beginning.

Thérèse Pujolle,
President of the Sahel and West Africa Club
Cotonou, July 2005

Table of Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS	3
FOREWORD	5
MESSAGES FROM THE CHAMPIONS	11
I. THE FINAL DECLARATION OF THE FORUM OF POLITICAL PARTIES, THE MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY	13
II. BUILDING PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN WEST AFRICA	21
1. "Democracy in West Africa: An Appraisal" <i>Professor Abdoulaye Bathily</i>	23
2. "Role and Responsibilities of Political Parties in the Building of Democracy and Peace in West Africa" <i>Mr. Massaër Diallo, Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat</i>	33
3. "Civil Society's place and role in Building Democracy and Peace" <i>Mr. John Igué, Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa</i>	43
4. "The Media, Conflict, Peace and Democracy in West Africa" <i>Mr. Chérif Elvalide Seye, Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa</i>	55
5. "ECOWAS and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in the Building of Peace and Democracy" <i>General Cheick Oumar Diarra, ECOWAS' Deputy Executive Secretary of Political Affairs, Defence and Security</i>	63
6. Text of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance	69

III. THE WORK UNDERTAKEN AT THE FORUM	87
Acknowledgements	89
Presentation Note of the Forum	90
1. Opening Statements	93
• Introduction by Mr. Normand Lauzon, Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat	93
• Statement by Mr. John Igué, President of the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa	99
• Speech by Mr. Pierre Osho, Minister of National Defence representing His Excellency Mr. Mathieu Kérékou, President of the Republic of Benin	103
• Intervention by Professor Ali Nouhoum Diallo, President of ECOWAS Parliament	109
2. Reports by the Working Groups	113
• Synthesis of the discussions of the first working group of Political Parties	113
• Synthesis of the discussions of the second working group on Political Parties	119
• Synthesis of the discussions of the first working group on Civil Society	123
• Synthesis of the discussions of the second working group on Civil Society	125
• Synthesis of the discussions of the working group on the Media	131
3. Conclusion of The Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa	137
Final Synthesis of the discussions	137
Closing speech	143
IV. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	145

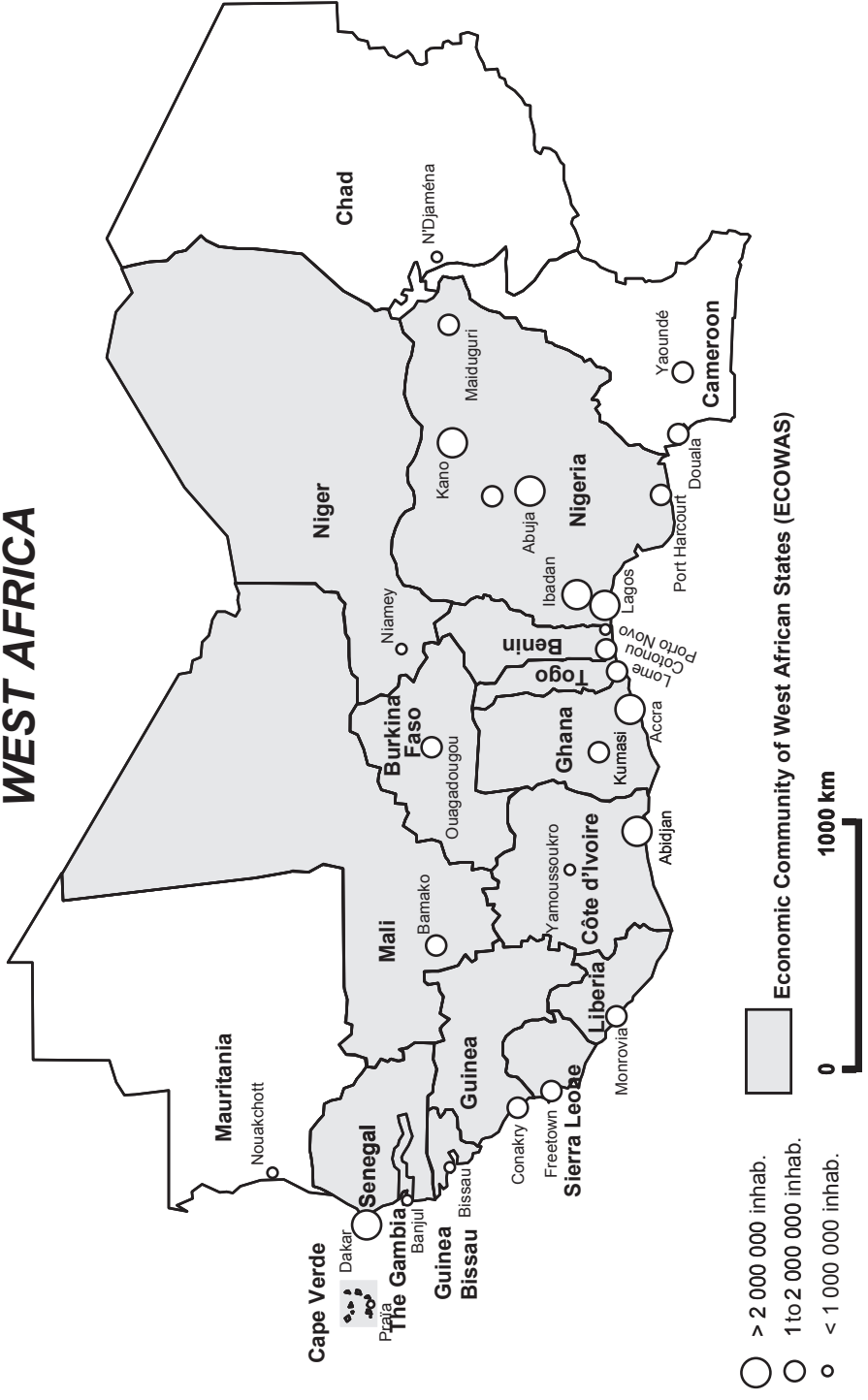
Typology of documents

This document assembles all of the documents drafted prior to and during the Forum*.

- ▶ The **Final Declaration** was drafted by a restricted team composed of the Forum's organisers as well as the working groups' chairpersons and rapporteurs. This Declaration was the focus of a debate by the Forum's 250 participants during which the participants were able to amend the text via consensus;
- ▶ **Opening Interventions** on the Forum's central theme, "Building peace and democracy in West Africa" constitute the introductory texts to the different working groups organised during the Forum. These documents reflect essentially the authors' point of view. Each of these documents was then the focus of a discussion either in a plenary session or within a working group;
- ▶ The entire text of the **Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance** presented and commented on by General Diarra, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECOWAS of Political Affairs, Security and Defence.
- ▶ The **Information Note** setting out the Forum's stakes and providing practical information as regards the organisation of the event;
- ▶ The **Introductory speeches** for the work to be undertaken during the Forum including the opening and closing speeches reproduced in their entirety by representatives of President Mathieu Kérékou;
- ▶ The **Synthesis of the work** carried out in the five working groups (2 on political parties; 2 on civil society; and 1 on the media) taking the basic points of the discussions in each of the working groups, and drafted by the working groups' chairpersons and rapporteurs chosen from among the participants;
- ▶ The **List of participants** which specifies exactly who participated and thus differs from the list of invitees. For editorial reasons, we have not listed all of the participants' details. This information is available from the Club upon request.

** Except for the synthesis of the discussions of the first working group on Political Parties, the original documents are in French.*

WEST AFRICA



- > 2 000 000 inhab.
- 1 to 2 000 000 inhab.
- < 1 000 000 inhab.

█ Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

0 1000 km

Messages from the Champions

**President Alpha Oumar Konaré,
President of the Commission of the African Union**

"I would like to welcome this initiative that you have undertaken in organising such an important Forum and above all the relevance of its objectives which you have set out. The theme, which is primarily linked to the stakes of peace and democracy, is a vital issue for our continent.

Also, by this statement, I would like to inform you of my acceptance to be counted among the champions of this event.

Wishing the Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society of West Africa plenty of success"

**President Mamadou Tandja,
President of Niger and Acting Chairman of ECOWAS**

"Unable to take part in this event due to prior engagements, the Head of State, who willingly accepts to be counted among the champions of your Forum, has asked me to convey to you his congratulations and his encouragement for your initiative in promoting democracy, peace and development on the African continent."

**President Aristides Pereira,
Former President of the Cape Verde Republic**

"I was very moved by your invitation to champion The Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society, whose objectives are of great interest to our sub-region.

For me it is a great honour and it is with satisfaction that I accept your appeal..."

1 Extract of the letter 00141/PRN/DIR/CAB of 24 June 2005 sent by Mr. Mamane Bachir Yahaya, Head of the Private Office of H.E. Mamadou Tandja, President of the Republic of Niger to Mr. Normand Lauzon, Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat.

I. The Final Declaration of The Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society

Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa

Final Declaration

Cotonou (Benin) 28 June to 1 July 2005

Preamble

1. Approximately 250 representatives of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society from the 15 ECOWAS member countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo) plus Mauritania, Cameroon and Chad met at the Palais des Congrès in Cotonou from 28 June to 1 July 2005. This Forum was co-organised by the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD and the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa.
2. This Forum's main objectives were to facilitate dialogue and interaction at the regional level between the three categories of actors as regards their respective and common roles in the prevention of conflict, the building and strengthening of peace and democracy at the local, national and regional levels. This Forum's aim was also to help establish a network of these diverse actors and facilitate their concerted involvement in actions to be carried out.

Acknowledgements

3. The opening ceremony was placed under the Chairmanship of His Excellency, Mr. Mathieu Kérékou, President of the Republic of Benin. Mr. Pierre Osho, Minister of State for National Defence made the opening statement on behalf of President Kérékou. Mr. Osho reviewed the progress achieved over the last decades and the challenges to be faced by each category of actor. He then invited the participants to draw up a consensual, rigorous and coherent platform of the major actions to be carried out in support of peace and democracy in West Africa.
4. During the opening ceremony, Mr. John Igué, President of the Strategic Watch Club, expressed, on behalf of all the participants, his sincere gratitude to the President and Government of the Republic of Benin for having accepted and facilitated the organisation of this Forum in Benin. He reiterated that peace and good governance constitute the principal pillars of development and he invited the participants to find the means

to overcome all types of obstacles in order to identify common approaches towards solidarity and sustainable peace in the region. Mr. Normand Lauzon, Director of the Sahel and West African Club Secretariat, warmly thanked Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of the Commission of the African Union, Mr. Mamadou Tandja, President of Niger and Acting Chairman of ECOWAS and Mr. Aristides Pereira, former President of Cape-Verde to have graciously accepted to endorse this Forum. Furthermore, he recalled that West Africa has undergone profound changes over the last decades. Accordingly, this region should not be perceived as stagnant but rather as a region in constant evolution, and capable of adaptation and change.

The course of work

5. The Forum's work was organised in the following manner:
 - a) Presentation and exchange of views on the document prepared by Professor Abdoulaye Bathily on the state of democracy in West Africa;
 - b) Presentation and exchange of views on ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. General Cheick Oumar Diarra, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, led this session. Also participating at this meeting was ECOWAS' Parliament, represented by its President, Professor Ali Nouhoum Diallo, as well as the Honourable Assan Seibou, Parliamentary First Secretary;
 - c) Exchange of views and recommendations on the place and role of the three categories of actors participating in the Forum as regards the building of peace and democracy in West Africa; each working group received an introductory document prepared respectively by Messrs. Massaër Diallo on political parties, John Igué on civil society and Chérif Elvalide Seye on the media;
 - d) Restitution of the working groups' work and debates in the plenary sessions;
 - e) Review of the Synthesis Report and adoption of the Forum's Final Declaration.
6. The summary of the exchanges in workshops and debates in the plenary sessions reflect the convergence and the complementarities of the actors in their diversity and specificity. The dynamics of exchange revealed a determination towards decompartmentalisation and synergy in order to attain the common objectives for ensuring peace and strengthening democracy within the region.

Recommendations

7. The Forum's participants adopted the following recommendations which they wish to be implemented effectively:

General Recommendations

- a. The dialogue between the three categories of actors must be strengthened at the regional as well as the national level;
- b. It is important to take into account African socio-cultural contexts and to give high priority to national languages as an essential communications pillar for the anchoring and appropriation of universal values of democracy;
- c. Utmost importance must be given to training all categories of actors as citizens and to provide education with regard to peace and democracy, particularly with regard to moral standards in public life and respect for human rights;
- d. ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance must be ratified as soon as possible by its member States who have not yet done so;
- e. The three categories of actors (political parties, the media and civil society) are committed to examining the possibility of organising this same type of Forum at the national level;
- f. The Forum's conclusions will be brought to the attention of the States by appropriate channels and notably through ECOWAS for its member countries, and disseminated in other participating countries and beyond;
- g. Participants have asked the Strategic Watch Club for Peace and the Sahel and West Africa Club to strengthen their partnership in order to ensure the Forum's sustainability on the basis of a wide consultation process.

Recommendations with regard to Political Parties

- a. The respect of the democratically adopted Constitution must constitute the rule to follow; its modification should only take place within the framework of the arrangements foreseen in the Constitution;
- b. The participants asked that the monolithic practices inherited from single-party regimes be abandoned, notably in the areas of political governance and the public media;
- c. It is desirable for measures to be adopted (consensual electoral code, permanent consultation framework, opposition status, ex-Heads of State status) in order to build actors' confidence and provide them with the necessary assurance needed so as to stabilise and anchor democracy;

- d. The establishment of credible and impartial structures by all concerned must be set up throughout the region with a view to organising transparent and regular elections throughout West Africa;
- e. In order to ensure the establishment of the Rule of Law and administrations' neutrality, it is desirable to separate the functions of the Head of State and the Head of the political party;
- f. Political parties must develop a vision for society and programmes consistent with the democratic values, norms and principles not allowing for any religious, ethnic, regionalist, or sexist discrimination.

Recommendations with regard to Civil Society

- a. Participants reaffirmed the vital role of civil society in the building and strengthening of peace and democracy;
- b. Civil society must be associated in all of the consultation processes inherent to democratic life;
- c. Greater priority must be given to civic and political education of youth through the formal and informal education systems;
- d. It has been asked that a pro-active policy for the promotion and strengthened inclusion of women must be developed notably through their participation in the decision-making process.

Recommendations with regard to the Media

- a. Participants asked that a regulatory authority be established in the information and communication sectors at the national and regional levels;
- b. They encouraged the promotion of free press by training journalists, protecting their civil liberties respecting the legal framework and the professional code of ethics, and by the pluralism of the media, more specifically in the audio-visual press;
- c. They reaffirmed the need for all the actors to have equitable access to public media with a view to strengthening democracy.

General Remarks

- ▶ Participants had a consensual approach on the importance of regional integration in order to promote conflict resolution, the preservation of peace and the anchoring of democracy;
- ▶ Participants reaffirmed the inextricable links between Peace, Democracy and Development as well as a better distribution of wealth;

- ▶ The use of violence or arbitrary measures in whatever form must never constitute a way to seek or exercise power. Participants stated their allegiance to negotiations, consultations and consensual search for compromise for the benefit of the majority in order to strengthen democracy in its fundamental principles and in order to resolve conflicts.

The Participants, Cotonou, 1st July, 2005.

II. Building Peace and Democracy in West Africa

1. "Democracy in West Africa: An Appraisal",
by Professor Abdoulaye Bathily _____ 23
2. "Role and Responsibilities of Political Parties
in the Building of Democracy and Peace in West Africa",
by Mr. Massaër Diallo,
Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat _____ 33
3. "Civil Society's Place and Role in Building Democracy
and Peace", by Mr. John Igué, *Strategic Watch Club
for Peace in West Africa* _____ 43
4. "The Media, Conflict, Peace and Democracy in West
Africa", by Mr. Chérif Elvalide Seye, *Strategic Watch Club
for Peace in West Africa* _____ 55
5. "ECOWAS and the Supplementary Protocol on
Democracy and Good Governance in the Building
of Peace and Democracy", by General Cheick Oumar Diarra,
*Deputy Executive Secretary of ECOWAS for Political Affairs,
Defence and Security* _____ 63
6. The Text of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy
and Good Governance _____ 69

1. “Democracy in West Africa: An Appraisal”

| Professor Abdoulaye Bathily

Former Vice President of Senegal’s National Assembly, History Professor at Cheikh Anta Diop University, today Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily is a Member of the Senegalese Parliament and Parliamentarian to ECOWAS. In his introductory speech, Mr. Bathily assesses democracy in Africa and challenges certain generally accepted ideas on the exogenous origin of the democratic wind that blew through West Africa at the beginning of the 1990s.

Introduction

Over the last twenty years, West Africa has undergone unprecedented changes in the relations between States and their own domestic politics. Actors intervening in different socio-political sectors have taken part, in different ways and in various forms of mediation, in fundamental transformations and a certain redefinition of positions and roles. In other words, the sub-region has undergone a relative democratisation. The mid-term review of this democratisation process enables us to follow the nature, scope and prospects of these changes.

At least four fundamental dimensions of the challenges of democratisation in the sub-region can be identified:

- ▶ The historical background of democratisation in Africa;
- ▶ The specific characteristics of the process as democratisation transpired in West Africa;
- ▶ The current review of the democratic dynamic in the sub-region;
- ▶ Possible prospects of the democratisation process underway.

Historical background of democratisation in Africa

At the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s, discussions on democratisation in Africa were dominated by the controversy over the respective influence of external and internal factors that triggered this historical phenomenon. While, in this initial period, a number of observers

2. See footnote 20 on page 45.

seemed to pay much more attention to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the speech made by President François Mitterrand in La Baule² as decisive factors for democratisation, more detailed analyses of African realities already pointed towards the primarily endogenous nature of the changes taking place. The above-mentioned external factors were more like catalysts for this process.

The demand for democracy as illustrated by today's political and identity-related pluralism is rooted in the failure of the single-party system as an instrument for building the Nation-State, which had been the political mission of anti-colonial freedom-fighting coalitions. Almost everywhere in post-colonial countries, single-parties or so-called dominant parties ended up with a ideological imitation, in personality cults of the "father of the nation" or military dictator and, as a result, stifled political ideas, oppressed identities considered as minorities in the 'national' public arena.

Instead of being based on a strategy of dynamic and consolidated development of political sensibilities and social and cultural identities, nation-building efforts followed a more Jacobin path, which fostered and nurtured increasingly acute tensions in the long run and which eventually annihilated the political objective of building a homogenous nation. Moreover, the free fall in raw material prices from the mid-1960s that sounded a death-knell to the optimism born in Bandung, added to the debt burden, leading to the deterioration of the economic climate and instigating the erosion of the foundations of the political nation-building project. Despite short periods of prosperity – threatened, in particular, by the ephemeral growth of certain privileged countries that experienced periodic rises in a few raw materials (cocoa, coffee, peanuts, phosphate, uranium) –, the 1960s-1970s were marked by a crisis with the most dramatic event being the implementation of stabilisation plans followed by structural adjustment plans in the 1980s.

There is no doubt that a complete appraisal of the results of structural adjustment programmes (SAP) still remains to be done. But the most relevant studies agree that nowhere did they lead to sustained economic prosperity or lay the foundations of sustainable economic development and political and social stability. The poverty reduction strategy, that has lately become obligatory for countries that have gone through twenty years of adjustment, merely illustrates the exacerbation of the African crisis.

The demand for democracy has therefore been impelled primarily by a vast resistance movement by actors from different sectors of African society, in reaction to the deterioration of their living conditions as a result of the combined effects of the failure of the nation-building project and structural adjustment programmes. In other words, the democratisation process reflects an extremely contradictory dissenting attitude. It is based on the rejection of the authoritarianism of the “nationalist” regimes stemming from decolonisation. But at the same time, it expresses a revolt against the economic and social effects of the liberal policies implemented by structural adjustment programmes.

The declining agricultural and industrial production caused by liberal globalisation, increasing unemployment, falling social budgets and increasing debt burden broke down social patterns at an even greater pace as natural disasters (drought and desertification) made life in the countryside even more precarious. The endemic social crisis of the last few decades has triggered a dynamic of de-legitimisation of the State, which, in turn, has opened the floodgates to different forms of protest against the established order.

It is in the light of the Leviathan of Africa’s public arena in recent times that the particularities and modalities of the democratic process’ deployment in West Africa can be traced.

Specificities of West Africa’s democratic process

Apart from the Great Lakes region with the genocide in Rwanda, the democratisation process has been more turbulent in West Africa than anywhere else on the African continent. In fact, over the last twenty years, this sub-region has witnessed the longest and bloodiest conflicts.

In Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d’Ivoire, the democratisation process has been unfurling against the background of a civil war, which has had a devastating effect on all aspects of people’s lives. In other countries, such as Senegal, the Casamance has faced a rebellion since 1982, which the authorities have had to handle carefully to this day. While Mali and Niger have succeeded in putting an end to the Tuareg insurrections, the entire Sahel belt, from Mauritania to Niger, remains a circle of fire around the sub-region. The withdrawal of certain armed “Islamist” groups that may or may not be linked to the Al Qaeda in the Sahara, with their ideologies and expertise in warfare, poses a permanent threat to the stability of all Sahel countries.

The countries that have been spared any direct armed internal conflicts have not, however, been safeguarded from the indirect and domino effects of such conflicts. Within each country, tensions are, without exception, more or less high depending on the seriousness of the economic and social crisis within their borders. West Africa may be compared to a volcanic area with blowouts here and there and other hotspots waiting to erupt. Each national territory contains the ingredients of a cocktail that only needs a spark to explode.

The fact that these conflicts have been taking place at the same time as the democratic process has emerged has led some observers who are not very conversant with African realities to reach certain reductionist conclusions about the nature of these conflicts. For some, these conflicts are merely a reflection of “traditional tribal or inter-ethnic wars”, while others see them as an expression of religious intolerance generated by Islamic fundamentalism and, to a lesser degree, Christian fundamentalism.

However, in reality, these conflicts are rooted in the economic, social and political substrata forged by history. A case-by-case examination of West African conflicts would reveal the importance of these historical factors. These conflicts are the result of the sedimentation of the processes to which economic and social formations have been subject over a long period.

Colonisation and the post-colonial Nation-State forced themselves on to the political and socio-cultural realities of these areas and insidiously continued to affect people’s lives. The borders that resulted after the colonial division of the region, which the Nation-States attempted to strengthen, hindered the previous political and cultural dynamics by confining a number of communities to a ghettoised life, as compared to the extensive mobility that characterised the pre-colonial area. Major upheavals took place as a result, worsened by “mise en valeur” policies and a discriminatory management of people within colonial territories (nomadic/sedentary population – economically useful zones/reserve areas – central colonies/peripheral colonies, etc.). To a large extent, these conflicts are the results of several types of marginalisation. And in most cases, independence did not lead to any major changes in colonial demographic management strategies.

The ideological discourse of Nation-States, spread by the reigning elite, barely had an effect on the majority of the population. Apart from football fields when one “national” team goes up against another “national” team, the rulers and the people are constantly at odds with each other.

An analysis of the underlying causes of different conflicts reveals the decisive role of domestic policies that led to the marginalisation of certain groups or categories of the population within the “national” territory. Marginalisation came in various guises, reflecting failure in the construction of a Nation-State based on the European model. Sometimes due to a deliberate partisan leaning, at others due to the desire to “modernise” politics, the ruling elite has developed exclusionary policies that have pushed several groups and communities to the periphery of the national arena, thereby excluding them from any significant participation in managing their country’s affairs.

Almost everywhere, a minority has appropriated power and has remained in power through more or less violent means (by manipulating the constitution – massive electoral fraud – coups d’état –by exacerbating specificities). This has resulted in diverse forms of reaction from passive resistance to periodic insurrections and even armed revolt.

The entire new citizenship experience brought about by the post-colonial State’s borders has been traumatic for people at the grassroots level. It is “out of step” with the populations’ history and day-to-day aspirations, as they were used to the free movement of people and goods all their lives.

While colonialism brought about a certain sub-regional integration (French West Africa – British West Africa) according to certain modalities to fulfil its own interests, the independence negotiated within a framework of balkanisation led to a dynamic of tensions between and within the States, among people who were constrained to build a new identity according to the injudicious discourses and attitudes of the leading groups. The rejection of all that was foreign as defined by selective historical criteria characterised the stand taken by some political leaders who lacked legitimacy faced with an economic debacle and social disarray, attributable not to foreign countries, but rather to the “development” strategy underway.

In countries affected by armed revolt, the civil war corrupted State institutions. The armed and security forces, the judicial system and all regulatory instruments that enable the republican functioning of a State were stripped of their role of national integration and remained mere tools at the service of a host of ethnic or regional factions and groups. Under these conditions, the democratic system found itself permanently trapped.

In fact, the Liberian, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire conflicts, to mention just a few of the most violent, stemmed from marginalisation policies if not real

exclusion, or were at least perceived as such by more or less large segments of the population. Opposition between ethnic groups, natives of different geographical areas or religious conflicts stemmed, above all, from the instrumentalisation of identity-based categories by political leaders in their race to seize or hold on to power. These forms of instrumentalisation of the political process follow the same logic that the extreme right in developed countries has adopted in times of crisis, by exploiting xenophobia, racism or anti-Semitism. The economic and social effects of structural adjustment programmes mentioned above are a breeding ground for such conflicts in West Africa, as in other countries.

Given the changes currently underway, far more than other sub-regions, West Africa is going through a tumultuous democratic process, whose continuity is itself under constant threat. The uniqueness of this process is the result of the conjunction of a number of historical phenomena.

Review of democratisation in West Africa

At the end of almost two decades, the outcome of the democratisation process still contains sharp contrasts. Almost all the sub-region's countries show several signs of lasting political instability. Some of them are victims of still unresolved conflicts (Côte d'Ivoire); others are, with difficulty, treading the path of civil peace with the international community's support, (Liberia – Sierra Leone – Guinea Bissau); while still others have had a fairly rough ride and continue to suffer the after-effects of these exceptional periods. For some time now, even Senegal, which has witnessed a relatively stable evolution towards peaceful democratic change, has been showing signs of instability, and only the future will reveal all its dimensions. All in all, West Africa is witnessing a period of particularly difficult democratic transition.

In countries devastated by armed conflicts, the democratic process is hindered by a series of factors on which the overall development of society will undoubtedly depend for some time to come. The crystallization of ethnic and/or regional identities generated by these conflicts has distorted the nature of political competition between the various actors. Competition between the latter, which should have been focused on society-building projects based on the inclusion of different segments of the national community, has been reduced to a battle for the exclusion of others. The war-induced economic disaster, the disintegration of the social fabric due to forced population displacements, not to mention widespread violence, have furthered the tendency of mutual exclusion even more.

In such a context of systematic mistrust, the development of the democratic debate can only be an illusion. Henceforth, it would not be pessimistic to declare that countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire will need time to move beyond the traumatic times they have gone through. In other words, the pace of democratisation will undoubtedly be fairly slow.

In Togo and Guinea (Conakry), the democratisation process still remains strongly characterised by the powerful after-effects of the old single-party system, with militarism having a stronger influence here than anywhere else. In these two countries, despite having a multi-party system for several decades, the armed forces still play a decisive role in the devolvement of power and people management mechanisms at all levels, as demonstrated by the crises that have shaken the regimes in power. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, which have also witnessed a transition from particular systems to multi-party systems, are showing signs for the moment of a faster adaptation to the constraints of democratisation, despite a few tragic incidents. In Nigeria, the heavy military culture and the influence of oligarchic groups that propagate identity-related discourses (ethnic or religious) remain a handicap for the democratic process underway.

Although often praised as an example of stable democratic progress, the so-called Senegalese exception has witnessed some setbacks. Indeed, the change in power that occurred on 19 March 2000 paved the way for a new period of unrelenting tension between political actors. This clearly illustrates that the democratic progress achieved remains an incomplete process.

In a context of soaring poverty, political democracy is under constant threat. Apart from conflicts and poverty, there is a third factor that is unfavourable to the democratic process, one that relates to political leaders. The latter, particularly those in power, waste no time in signing international commitments on principles of good governance (ECOWAS – NEPAD's Peer Review Mechanism – African Union – United Nations – etc.), but in practice, they often engage in manipulating the Constitution and electoral laws and regulations in order to remain in power (forever). Where electoral frauds do not suffice, they resort to exclusion strategies, which undermine the State's legal and legitimate foundations, thereby paving the way for destabilisation in the country, as mentioned above.

However, the leaders of the opposition, who never fail to condemn such illegal acts by those in power, are not totally blameless either. What is worse, some of them indulge in the same poor practices with as much, if not more zeal, once they are in power.

Thus, the democratisation process, as it is transpiring, raises a general question about African leadership's credibility. The coherency between their discourse and political practices is questioned. In other words, many questions relate to the relevance of several political projects in relation to the challenges of sustainable development. Furthermore, the current economic policies, which remain characterised by conditionalities (privatisation for the exclusive benefit of multinational firms – the abolition of subsidies in vital economic sectors such as health and education), are equally obvious obstacles to democratisation. Democracy that brings about the power of representation is meaningless if it does not go hand-in-hand with the freedom to define economic and social choices, in accordance with the true needs and aspirations of the people. However, in the current state of affairs, structural adjustment programmes such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), are formulae that are concocted more by donor agencies than national actors, including executive and legislative bodies, which are happy to endorse them as laws and/or decisions to be implemented. During such exercises, the population's participation is often a mere formality. For the most part, every decision is made without their knowledge. The outcome is obviously rejection, mistrust or, at best, indifference with regard to such initiatives.

Despite the above-mentioned obstacles, other factors that have gained importance over the last decade have nonetheless contributed towards our sub-region's march towards peaceful democracy. Public opinion has taken shape in all countries and has been increasingly strengthening as a moral factor that weighs heavily on governments and actors from all over. The ideas promoted and spread by the means of mass communication and today's accelerated urbanisation are playing a decisive role in this regard. Echoes of people's struggles throughout the world, reported by the media, undoubtedly have an impact on the conduct of African political opinion, on the whole.

Although the private and independent press (written and audiovisual) is limited and lacks professionalism, it does have an impact on the course of events. Indeed, media pluralism is a positive outcome of democratisation

in all the sub-region's countries. But it has not developed in the same way in terms of quantity and quality. Unlike the situation in East Africa where African national language newspapers (Swahili, for instance) have begun to surface, the written press in West Africa almost exclusively uses the coloniser's languages (French – English – Portuguese). Its influence is relatively limited as compared to the audiovisual media that broadcasts in the national languages. The influence of television is by far more powerful than that of any other media. However, the *de facto* monopoly over the media by the regimes in power does not help accelerate the democratisation process. Despite the establishment of regulatory bodies almost all over, veritable pluralism has yet to set in fully. In all the countries, television remains above all a propaganda tool serving those in power. No doubt in the course of the debates, media representatives will edify us further on this aspect of democratisation in our sub-region.

In addition, a rise in citizens' movements can be witnessed everywhere in West Africa, along with the expansion and capacity-building of civil society, although these capacities are still dependent on outside support for the most part. Along with certain political forces and unions, human rights defence organisations have played a part in mitigating the arbitrariness of the powers-that-be. Consumers' associations and other forms of organisations defending economic interests have also assumed the role of credible intermediaries for certain claims of the States or other economic sectors (farmers) of society. The revolt against the VAT in Niger, the struggle for fair trade especially with regard to cotton as well as the debt issue, which has just won its first victory with the G-8 Ministers' decision to cancel the debt of the HIPC's, are some such cases.

Prospects of democratisation in West Africa

A turbulent history and the disquieting state of the democratic process do not encourage any over-optimism. But they are not an invitation to indulge in Afro-pessimism either. An analysis of the phenomena that have unfurled over time would call for a more optimistic vision.

There is an increasing awareness in several sectors of society that wish to see the implementation of development projects based on alternative strategies. In this regard, regional integration is unanimously seen as a necessary option that will make it possible to transcend the legacy of Berlin and colonisation, but also the harmful consequences of rash globalisation.

There is an increasing understanding of the need to combine democratisation within national borders with a unified option of political integration, which would alone help Africa rise as a new and full-fledged partner within the international strategic mechanism. Political democracy must go hand-in-hand with the fight for economic democracy, for these two are inextricably intertwined.

Fortunately, despite the various fits and starts noted here and there from time to time, the deep-rooted dynamics underway seem irreversible. If that is so, they can only lead to strengthening the democratic process. As a result, all the creative energies of the different components of these nations could be called and capitalised upon for the sustained development of our States and our people.

These prospects call upon the responsibility of Africa's leadership, above all.

An autonomous and dynamic citizens' movement can and should also play a role, by constantly pushing for the emergence of an awareness and responsible leadership.

2. “Role and Responsibilities of Political Parties in the Building of Democracy and Peace in West Africa”

Mr. Massaër Diallo, Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat

Political scientist, Mr. Massaër Diallo is Head of the Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security Unit of the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD. Before joining the SWAC, he was in charge of the Université des Mutants de Gorée and taught anthropology and philosophy at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar. His introductory intervention addresses the place and function of political parties in the history and transformations in the region, and the responsibility of political parties in maintaining civil peace and building democracy.

Regional context and challenges

Political parties are key actors in the public arena. Their functions, activities and problems are largely determined by the context³. This is indeed shaped nationally but also depends greatly on the regional dynamics at the historic, political, economic, and socio-cultural levels. Moreover, a good number of the political parties involved in the transition period of colonisation to independence and the beginning of the post-colonial era were regionally anchored, of a regional nature, or had regional links.

Until the 1990s, the region remained dominated by a one-party system known as the “One-party-State”⁴. The emerging process of a liberal democratic post-colonial model⁵ had undergone an acceleration phase during the 1990s when the National Conferences were held. These Conferences gave way to a period where democratic pluralism was beginning in a region undergoing a strong population explosion with substantial rejuvenation.

3. The political partisan phenomenon appears historically exogenous; in West Africa, its creation is linked to the extension of the colonial capital's politics within the colonies as well as to the emergence of an endogenous elite in a position to fight for their independence.

4. In the One-party-State the political power as well as the administration were managed exclusively by one sole party recognised as the State's legitimate platform. This single party at the legal level was an obligatory framework for all those who applied for political or even technical leadership positions. These stigmas, many of the countries' State's systems and the enduring rationale of a good number of parties in power's conduct in the current era are significant factors in the contemporary government crisis.

5. During the colonial era, most of the countries in the region had a multi-party system which was only an extension of the colonial capital's politics; from this has emerged a restricted internal political class linked to the political configuration of the power dominating the countries.

6. All of the demographic data comes from an analysis carried out by L. Bossard and P. Heinrigs: Regional Analysis of West African Socio-Economics, WABI and the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD, Paris, Sept. 2004.

7. "It is true that food availability per person is more or less the same today as it was forty years ago" we should know that "to maintain this level of availability per person, the region's inhabitants have had to increase production by 300%" notably faced with the challenge of the highest population growth in the world. SWAC Presentation Note January 2005.

8. It is a matter, as stated by Laurent Bossard in a SWAC document, of a "transition democracy and a democratic transition": the paradoxical characteristic is a limit relative to the electoral body which is approximately 50% of the population (those who are 18 years old or older) whereas in India, 25% of the population is less than 18 years old, the electoral body is made up of 75% of the population.

Currently at 295 million inhabitants, the region's population will reach 430 million by the year 2020⁶. Those under 15 years of age constitute 45% of the population.

Characterised by a high rate of poverty which affects almost 50% of the population, the region nevertheless has great human, cultural and natural potential. Silently, away from concerted and comprehensive politics, the population has demonstrated a tremendous capacity to face huge food⁷ and demographic challenges.

What can and should politics do in order to develop these social and economic dynamics so as to capitalise on this energy and these potentials and face the challenges?

From this perspective, what action must political parties take in order to be able to better represent the population in their demand for peace, freedom, democracy and economic and social progress?

West African politics is not only subject to social and demographic constraints. It is also done in by the obstacles raised by the intermittent and unattained democratisation process, demonstrated by:

- ▶ The resurgence of the overthrowing of governments in certain countries;
- ▶ The recurrence of devolution of power crises which indicate the difficulties of democratic alternation in order for democracies founded on Constitutions to be operational and credible;
- ▶ The threats to citizens' rights and freedoms within and beyond crisis situations (arrests, imprisonment, even assassinations of journalists or opponents, etc.);
- ▶ A lack of societal projects and specific programmes that encourage healthy competition in the political game;
- ▶ A huge deficiency of citizenship and democratic culture which encourages intolerance and mistrust;
- ▶ A lack of financial autonomy which hinders freedom and/or solidity of parties and encourages militants' dependency;
- ▶ A weakening or questioning of civil peace by violent conflict, uprisings or political rivalries going as far as antagonism.

Socio-political and demographic data indicate a double transition already underway⁸ which multiplies the challenges faced by the region and its actors. These actors, in their various roles, are concerned by the need to react in order to:

- 1) Build democracy with a very young population. Almost half of the regional population does not have direct electoral impact (not old enough to vote) while having strong social demands (health, food, education and training among others). A lack of pertinent policies offering this age group proper care and a stable socio-cultural framework adds to the growing scourge of children exposed to the enrolment in armed conflicts, begging in rapidly expanding towns and all sorts of international traffic which exploits the destabilisation of societies in crisis. The region's demographic structure also reveals a need for urgent support as the 59+ age group hardly makes up 3% of the population while continuing to greatly influence the political scene by its dominant power at the State level and within political parties.
- 2) Manage development efficiently by providing operational responses to the pivotal question of where and how will the 430 million West Africans⁹ live in the next fifteen years, that is to say the period of two seven-year Presidential terms of office or three five-year legislation terms.
- 3) Prevent and peacefully resolve conflicts that are destabilising the region, affecting at least half of the countries and tearing apart societies while counterbalancing energies essential to development and winning the fight against poverty.
- 4) Face the States' fragility, the underlying weakening of the political class leadership in numerous countries accompanied by the development of armed rebellions as well as various forms of dissidence bringing about dismantling at the national and territorial levels.
- 5) Take in hand and solve the chronic governance crisis which exacerbates the underdevelopment and loss of legitimacy of Nation States facing great hardships.
- 6) Strengthen pluralistic democracy while averting extreme political splintering which affects the region.¹⁰
- 7) Take into account and resolve the serious crises of the devolution of power and political takeovers which affect a growing number of countries¹¹; Rely on ancient African traditions in order to bring about democratic governance by respecting Constitutions and the rule of law.

Facing these challenges assumes involvement and management of processes and changes of which they are comprised. How can political parties effectively be drivers of change for West Africa within the diversity of these countries?

Sustainable peace is one of the essential conditions for democracy and development. In this respective, what role can political parties play?

9. This question is relevant to all of the countries and is illustrated in the fierce tensions in the areas attracting regional migration as in Côte d'Ivoire. There can only be a regional solution which involves acute regional awareness by actors on the one hand, and a strong political willingness of the dynamics of integration, on the other.

10. A country like Benin has approximately 150 political parties of which only 27 appear to conform to the principles and criteria set out in the official Charter; these principles and criteria help distinguish the difference between what is allowed by the law and the effective political reality of each party.

11. When it comes to respecting the democratic alternation, some parties and leaders having democratically attained power or not, are procrastinating. The democratic alternation is possibly tempered by a devolution of family or clan-like republican political power. Political leaders today easily take more liberties with democratic rules setting out political succession than their counterparts of traditional Africa who hardly violated the principles and sacred means of change over or access to power.

Political parties' role and responsibilities in civil peace

With various titles, organisation and statutes, in principle political parties are frameworks and mobilisation organisations for the conquest and exercise of political power. This aim distinguishes them from other types of actors evolving in the public domain. This function also determines the range of political parties' responsibilities. In some ways they are directly or indirectly accountable for governance issues as well as problems linked to civil peace.

12. Above all, because the direct control of central political power (or the creation of an illegal restricted "sovereignty" space forced on territories having desirable resources) is one of the main ways to obtain access to natural resources, which is one of the major stakes in conflict – as illustrated in all of the conflicts in the region.

When looking at the origin of conflicts in Africa, political power is among the principal causes.¹² The defeat of political power (over colonial powers or rival forces) has taken on various forms linked to the contexts and/or nature of the political parties: armed or peaceful, clandestine or open, carried out alone or in alliance with other social and political forces. The parties are inherently intended to win and manage power; in certain cases, they did so by military force or by means of violence. This phenomenon illustrated by the cases of anti-colonial freedom movements, has endured under different forms and for different reasons. This can be seen in the militarisation of politics in conflict, which currently affects certain parties in West Africa which is a major challenge to be faced.

- ▶ What is political parties' responsibility in civil peace at the local, national and regional levels?
- ▶ How can the politically peaceful nature of politics be restored in democracy and how can standard values be effectively shared by all of the parties whether they are incumbent or in opposition?
- ▶ How can political actors together stop the violence and promote democracy as a regulatory framework and peaceful expression of contradictions and differences?
- ▶ In this perspective, what is the role of political parties in the West African context?

Political parties' role in democracy and good governance

In addition to the issue of societal projects over which parties dispute politically and oppose one another and/or align themselves, there remains a sensitive area of structural and consensual changes by which democracy and good governance can be anchored sustainably at the national, local and regional levels.

This change in which parties must not only participate but even play a decisive role, concern the need for all to:

- ▶ Reduce now and then eradicate poverty which affects one out of every two Africans;
- ▶ Bring the region out of the spiral of vicious and recurring conflicts; but also by way of democratic and consensual modalities, reduce the recurrent disputes at the electoral and post-electoral levels;
- ▶ Improve significantly democratic governance and the rule of law while supporting development in the region and in the various countries of which it is composed.

At the political governance and electoral democracy levels

West Africa cannot escape the governance crisis which affects the entire continent although the governance dynamic on the continent is undergoing progressive improvement.¹³ Within many West African countries the State has undergone a democratisation that has increased political freedom and stimulated the profusion of parties; but beforehand, it underwent a weakening even sinking process, with a loss of legitimacy, efficiency and authority in conflictual situations and/or chronic crisis within the Nation-State.

13. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's (UNECA) 2005 report takes this into account.

What contribution can political parties make to the reshaping of the State so as to fine-tune the democratic changeover and overcome the crisis of "poor governance" which is demonstrated throughout the region?

In order to anchor the African democratic State in society, a certain number of questions must be addressed which can serve as a guide for fair and appropriate governance:

- ▶ What should the attitude of parties be concerning ethnic issues?
- ▶ How can the manipulation of ethnicity and its impact on civil peace be avoided and how can the populations in the region be brought together?
- ▶ How can political inclusion, non discrimination and the respect for cultural diversity without prejudice, be put into practice in order for there to be positive dynamics of intermixing of ethnic groups from which a new citizenry will emerge?
- ▶ How to be aware of the cultural and religious diversity, involve the communities in democracy while averting clashes based on identity issues?

Despite current events, the region as well as the entire continent have already made significant progress in the process of ballot dependability and the progressive advent of fair and transparent elections. However, all countries are not yet at the same level. Nevertheless, democratisation has progressed electorally by the concurrence of three levels and types of action:

- 1) The international community (through neutral organisms and multilateral cooperation) which has not only contributed to strengthening actors' capacities but also to developing various categories of independent and external election observers;
- 2) Regional institutions, such as ECOWAS, demonstrate a presence in the region by combining its members States and civil society in the area of democratic elections and good governance. The improvement, ratification and implementation of ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance will be a very important step in the true regionalisation of democracy and political governance. This fundamental stake for development in the region requires the involvement of political parties, like other actors for a better understanding, possible improvement and appropriation of this tool;
- 3) National "autonomous" or "independent" electoral commissions according to the country, results of struggles and consensus, aimed at guaranteeing or aiding election transparency and standardisation.

The dynamisation of elections and their credibility are linked to the effectiveness of a multi-party system. However, two significant phenomena characterise this political pluralism in the region and illustrate the following problems:

- ▶ Despite the great number of political parties participating in presidential, legislative and local elections, there are at most three political parties that share, in most cases, more than 95% of the votes.
- ▶ The multi-party system allows an extraordinary proliferation of legally constituted parties, varying from 50 to 150 different parties, within countries having not more than 12 million inhabitants. In many cases, the right to exist (by the fact that such party is recognised) is not in line with the regional reality (by educating citizens and at least participating in elections and debates on the major issues).
- ▶ Is there a democratic solution to the proliferation of parties which have the tendency to splinter the region?
- ▶ Without trying to limit the number of political parties, what are the

democratic mechanisms and/or arrangements which would help, following the example of Benin's "Charter of Political Parties", improve a multi-party system and avoid threatening its creditability and functionality?

Civil democracy and political change-over

The West African population is one of the youngest in the world and will remain so for the next two decades.

- ▶ In this context, how, in only two Presidential seven-year terms of office or three legislative five-year terms, can politicians face this enormous demographic and democratic challenge?
- ▶ This is evident through a social and citizen demand going beyond the electoral body, by an emerging youth who are quite knowledgeable regarding globalisation and greatly innervate society. With the perspective of change-over and renewal, how can political parties implicate the youth more profoundly in building peace, democracy and integration?

The generational alternation that has existed in some African endogenous political systems¹⁴ tend not to be foreseen in the partisan world; this accounts for the lack of a well-organised change-over dynamic, which contributes to the emergence of a generation of youth uninterested in politics. The mobilisation by civil society and the enrolment in armed conflicts are two alternative factors which attract the youth rather than being involved in political parties.

14. In his work *Facing Mount Kenya*, Jomo Kenyatta emphasises that this type of alternation exists with the Kikuyu so that the existing endogenous traditions of rotating political power in Africa are recognised.

- ▶ How can the youth be more deeply and effectively implicated in forming the region's future? How can political parties meet the challenge of lastingly raising civil awareness?
- ▶ How can political parties, in power or in opposition, remain a dynamic framework of education, mobilisation and civil responsibility of political problems which are ultimately everyone's problems?

Political parties, regional integration and ECOWAS

Understanding the region and contributing to its political construction

The regional political dynamic exists: it is demonstrated by the extension and/or the deep entrenchment or overflowing of all national conflict into other neighbouring countries. Interactions are notoriously experienced between migratory regional dynamics, their impact on land and economics

and political behaviour which triggers or exacerbates conflict in some of the countries in the region. The Côte d'Ivoire crisis like the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia or the Guinea-Bissau crisis, the Taureg conflict or that of Casamance, the tensions in Guinea's forest are all examples illustrating the sub-regional dimensions at the origin or end of these crises. There is an interest and urgency for political actors to be aware of West Africa as a region and take that into account in their actions and projects.

In the past, some countries have seen the emergence of multi-national or regional parties like the African Democratic Rally (ADR) [Rassemblement démocratique africain (RDA)], The African Rally Party (ARP) [Parti du Rassemblement africain (PRA)] or the African Independence Party (AIP) [Parti Africain de l'indépendance (PAI)]. The political and union clash among the youth and railroad workers was of a highly regional nature.

From the 1960s onward, the predominance of Nation-State projects in many of the countries contributed to reshaping the political scene on a national basis.

The creation of ECOWAS contributed to re-introducing a regional dynamic. Established in 1975 for economic reasons, ECOWAS integrated *de facto* then conscientiously a political dimension. It has also become a space for joint management of peace, security and democracy in the region. The creation of ECOMOG, the establishment in 1999 of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, and the signing in 2001 of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance together are indicators of a turning point characterised by a strong tendency and a political construction dynamic in West Africa as a region. On their side, populations are linked through cross-border areas and comply with certain connections to the supranational dynamics determined by history, geography and geo-politics.

- ▶ What role must political parties play and how should they be implicated in this dynamic? How can the political parties strengthen the dynamics of integration at the political level with a view to building a vast space of peace, democracy and sustainable development? How can political parties play a catalysing role in integration and put into motion the free circulation of people and goods, economic and the socio-cultural opening up of populations?

- ▶ How must political action effectively handle the regional integration process contributing to the creation of a united Africa, well-ensconced in globalisation where its contribution and interests are better taken into account?
- ▶ What role must political parties play in strengthening the political community within the various ECOWAS member States?

This Forum seeks to respond to these questions by bringing together political parties and dynamic sectors of civil society and the media of West Africa.

With a view towards political parties' synergies and actions with civil society and the media

Political parties have a fundamental role to play in building democracy at the national, local and regional levels and within the complementarity and interactivity of these different levels. They have an important responsibility in restoring and/or strengthening civil peace and political stability.

As they are not the only actors concerned, political parties need to develop synergies with civil society, the media, the State and ECOWAS in order to:

- 1) Encourage Parliaments of their respective countries¹⁵ to ratify and implement the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in West Africa;
- 2) Prevent the crises of the devolution of power (of which their leaders are the protagonists) while respecting the principle of democratic alternation;
- 3) Contribute to the development and sustainable strengthening of management of the State excluding all forms of discrimination based on political or identity issues in the administration;
- 4) Seek consensus on the rules and management mechanisms of political stakes and establish peaceful, standard, transparent, and fair elections;
- 5) Contribute, with civil society and the media, to the development of a civil and participative democracy in West Africa;
- 6) Discourage and avert all political and/or ethnic and religious manipulation;
- 7) Support the effective development of leadership by the youth and women in political action at the party level and in society;
- 8) Face together the challenge of a sustainable solution for conflicts by promoting political dialogue and mediation;

15. Up to now, nine countries have ratified this Protocol: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. The Protocol must be ratified by a total of nine countries in order for it to be applicable to all.

- 9) Dynamise, capitalise and materialise traditions, cultures and policies in the prevention of conflicts at the local, national and regional levels;
- 10) Give high priority to education for the youth as regards democracy, citizenship and peace;
- 11) Contribute to the renewal and improvement of political governance, fighting corruption is one of the fundamental elements of the process of building a democratic and republican State to serve the populations and regional development.

3. “Civil Society’s place and role in Building Democracy and Peace”

Mr. John Igué, Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa

Currently President of the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa, Professor Igué manages the Laboratoire d’Analyse régionale et d’Expertise sociale (LARES) in Cotonou. In the past, was Minister of Industry and Small- and Medium-Size enterprises in Benin. In his introductory address he defines the form of civil society organisation’s interventions in West Africa. He emphasises what remains to be done in order for the political choices at the national and regional levels to have more weight and participate concretely in the building of peace and democracy.

Introduction

According to civil society experts, the concept of civil society harks back to ancient times¹⁶. As stated by Dominique Colas,¹⁷ the history of this notion leads to the belief that participative democracy during the Greco-roman era was based on civil society.

This concept has been raised by different political theorists from Saint Thomas d’Aquin to Durkheim via Gilles de Rome, Leonardo Bruni, Hobbes, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx just to cite a few.

Despite the notion of civil society’s antiquity, as from 1918 it has subsequently declined under the grip of colonial empires and the emergence of Marxist revolutionary movements in Eastern Europe. The colonial empires stifled peoples’ initiatives to participate in the construction and operation of the State whereas the advent of Communism in Eastern Europe developed into the Cold War and the East-West standoff.

During the lengthy colonisation period and the Cold War, the strong States were then the only social regulation structures and took the place of participative democracy. As people struggled for freedom in various

16. Refers to numerous contributions on the issue which have appeared in “Problèmes politiques et sociaux : la société civile en question” in La Documentation française No. 8888 – May 2003 and “Courrier de la Planète Solagral : société civile mondiale : la montée en puissance”, No.63, Vol. 3.

17. Dominique COLAS: Debated genealogy in “Problèmes politiques et sociaux : la société civile en question” in La Documentation française No. 8888 – May 2003, pp.15-17.

parts of the world, especially after the fall of the Communist Bloc there was a resurgence of participative democracy, which became fashionable, resulting from the new freedoms gained by the success of the market economy. Thus one can say that the end of communism encouraged democracy's emergence even if it evolved within in a context characterised by political concerns strongly revolving around the market.

Over the last fifteen years, three debates seem to dominate the international and African political scene:

- i. Participative democracy;
- ii. Liberalism and its political advantages (mainly in North America);
- iii. The Welfare State's future with the current crises and need to devise a new mode of governance.¹⁸

These present ways of thinking give the current idea of civil society particular importance with the emergence of several social organisations highly committed to the ongoing process of the democratisation of the State and society.

Despite the increasing role that these organisations currently play in the process of the democratisation of the State and society, the issue of defining civil society and its area of intervention as regards the various prerogatives of the Nation-State remains. As regards this definition, everyone agrees that there will not be unanimous consensus; some contest even the concept of civil society. But at the same time, everyone realises its topicality and significance.

According to the provisional definitions proposed by experts on the subject¹⁹, society is organised around a three-party scheme: government, market and NGOs. The government assures social regulation; production is assured by the market; whereas non-governmental organisations represent the tertiary non-productive sector.

Besides this classification which makes civil society a determining component of the market and the tertiary sector, other experts think that civil society is structured according to a rather two-fold approach made up of the public realm and the area of civil society which includes, on one hand, production of goods and services and on the other, the framework for confrontation and negotiation between authorities and various social entities, notably the different types of associations.

18. As regards the need to devise a new mode of State governance, refer to Antoine Sawadogo's "La refondation de l'Etat africain", Editions KARTHALA, 2001.

19. On this subject, please refer to the African Development Bank document "Cooperation with civil society organizations" - Tunis 2003.

Taking into account these two concerns, it can be said that by definition civil society covers a large distinct space within the State and organisations on which it relies like political parties and the market sector. For example, civil society would include a wide range of social partners, such as organisations representative of socio-economic sectors, advocacy associations, local associations, religious and intellectual bodies.

By nature, civil society is a composite diversified structure which takes on many forms and evolves according to its components. Civil society consists of a wide-range of associations acting in the public sector other than the State or market sector. It represents the voluntary expression of interests and aspirations by citizens' groups who share the same goals and the same moral and/or societal values.

This group of associations thus demands that the issue of civil society be raised within the framework of this Forum while keeping the following three aspects in mind:

- ▶ Its typology and how it functions;
- ▶ Its role in the current democratic process;
- ▶ Civil Society faced with the challenges of recurrent crises and sustainable peace.

Typology and the functioning of civil society in West Africa

Unlike the rest of the world where colonial empires quickly ceded to the emergence of independent Nation-States as a result of fights for freedom organised by social forces, West Africa has only experienced the emergence of civil society with the democratic process underway since 1990. Political and union forces previously largely dominated the political and social landscape. Unions mostly covered the rural sector around stakes related to cash crops like the Senegalese farmers' organisations regarding groundnuts and those in Nigeria concerning cocoa (e.g. the powerful union "AGBEKOYA").

African civil society's current situation results from that acquired by the democratic process started with the Address at La Baule²⁰. With this view, Sub-Saharan and West Africa benefited enormously from current debates on economic liberalism. One can deduce that these are new stakes for the market, dominated by a capitalist rationale which gives great weight to the emergence of civil society.

20. In 1989, at the France-Africa meeting organised in La Baule, France, President Mitterrand reminded African Heads of State attending this meeting, of the need to be concerned with democracy and the promotion of the rule of law which would then become a condition for development aid. From that point forward, democratisation has become the necessary corollary to structural adjustment programmes in West Africa which began in 1981.

The private actors are henceforth responsible for the main task of economic production and development. As for the State, it must promote the emergence of the private sector by developing adequate legal frameworks and by improving the incentives for private initiatives.

Faced with these new development requirements, it is important for new forces of society to emerge, capable of taking over the State in economic, social and cultural sectors, and assuring a particular vigilance as regards managing public affairs. This need is even more urgent as the colonial powers in Africa never encouraged the African private sector because of the stronghold of old trading companies and their intermediary of Syro-Lebanese origins.

One can say that the West African national level is shared by two categories of actors: public decision-makers responsible for political management and civil society represented by other levels of the population not engaged in political management. It is difficult to know from this classification when one is part of the political decision-makers because of the numerous and frequent changes that affect this class.

From the point of view of their typology, generally two civil society groups are distinguishable: the organised forces and the informal non-structured organisations. If this classification is convenient in the West where the social management process is very progressive, it deserves to be qualified in Africa taking into account the colonial heritage and its limited impact on the Nation-State building process. Thus, it appears more constructive to distinguish between the educated that constitute the elite class from the masses of non-educated, largely represented by the peasants.

The organisation strategy and the participation in the managing of society differ profoundly according to the two categories. The educated constitute the managing class despite being in the population's minority, hardly 1 to 10% depending upon the country. Their origin comes from the colonial school which very early on had a significant impact on African societies. However, from the point of view of its structure, the educated class has never been stable. At the beginning, it was made up of traditional African dignitaries' children and their close servants. Subsequently, free education spread throughout the African colonial territories where a new category of educated class who were originally peasants emerged. Currently, the ruling class are children of the first generation of traders and those who were educated. One can say that the educated class dominating the social

African landscape is very heterogeneous with deeply diverging interests in the dynamic process of building society. This educated class is currently shared among several groups:

- ▶ A group profoundly committed to political activities through different parties;
- ▶ A group which constitutes civil society within its organised form;
- ▶ A group which operates on the periphery of this framework and thus follows passively behind the first two groups.

Many of the uneducated have benefited from opportunities linked to urbanisation by becoming skilled traders. As skilled traders, they have been able to attain significant financial income hence having considerable impact in society. This group has formed alliances with the educated class in order to participate more actively at the political and social levels. The remainder of the uneducated in the rural or urban areas participate more informally in society although many contend with the educated through several forms of farmers' organisations, indigenous associations, community development organisations and religious congregations.

From the point of view of typology and its functioning, African civil society is homogeneous by origin and by the degree of understanding of the current stakes of democracy. This West African civil society is only truly active in States where there is a high level of education as for example in the English-speaking countries, and in those countries where the current democratic debate is relatively underway. In the first case, it is not the non-governmental organisations which are leading the social scene, but rather the indigenous associations and community development organisations who date back quite some time²¹, to which can be added several Christian or Muslim congregations. In the second case, where the democratic debate is relatively underway, it is rather the NGOs who are at the forefront. In the two cases, there is a lack of intellectual circles that play pivotal roles for democratic and scientific progress, as was the case in Europe during the 19th century. The lack of these intellectual circles leads to poor political debate in West Africa and civil society's feeble impact on political decision-makers.

West Africa civil society's configuration between the educated and the uneducated has unfortunate consequences on the role that civil society should play in governance, peace and a transparent and peaceful democracy.

21. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos : "Mauvaise gouvernance et ONG: l'exception nigériane", in *AUTREPART* No. 35 - 2005.

Civil Society's role in the current democratic process

The current democratic process is complex insofar as it serves as a vehicle for several concepts and values at the same time:

- ▶ A participative democracy in order to create a heightened production dynamic and improved social services within less-advanced societies, a condition for steady economic growth;
- ▶ A transparent governance geared towards fighting corruption and poor social practices, such as violence in the public and educational sectors, arms trafficking, prostitution, drug usage, child labour and trade;
- ▶ Poverty reduction;
- ▶ Restoration of peace from credible and reliable sources of information.

In order to lead to different actions which have the same objectives, i.e. defending human rights and promoting the poor, it is essential and urgent that every level of society be implicated. Faced with these demands, the following question is asked: which civil society actors should be promoted? In which public area should they be active? The answer is not ambiguous: a dynamic civil society, capable of taking on and carefully monitoring the "dishonest States".

Several actions are suggested for this undertaking:

- 1) Promoting civil society at the grassroots level, regrouping together those capable of contributing to building another economy, another politic and another culture where high priority is given to promoting local communities within a decentralisation framework;
- 2) Grassroots-level civil society must be capable of bearing great expectations and mobilising the maximum number of people for production;
- 3) It must distinguish itself by searching for alternative solutions and gaining new public sectors;
- 4) It must also support the emergence of a veritable national and regional citizenry necessary for a functional democracy;
- 5) Grassroots-level civil society must be decompartmentalised and actively contribute to civilization's progress insofar as it must participate in all of the current global changes whether they be economic, political or cultural.

From now on, these new requirements become the basis for contemporary civil society hence the reason why many NGOs are fundamentally committed to partnership programmes with the rest of the world. These requirements justify the numerous initiatives in which international institutions are highly involved.

However, the questions to ask as regards what is actually expected of civil society in the current democratic process is that of the efficiency of existing organisations in West Africa and their capacity to understand these new requirements. Several questions are raised in this respect:

- ▶ Does the nature of existing organisations conform to civil society's expected requirements?
- ▶ Is the relationship between these organisations and political powers sufficiently defined and transparent?
- ▶ Is the relationship between West African civil society and the international community also transparent and fair?

From the perspective of existing organisations' nature, their excessive splintering is a serious problem as regards the current demands and democracy. This fragmentation leads two situations unfavourable to democracy:

- ▶ The tribalisation of most of the organisations;
- ▶ The reliance of some of these organisations on incumbent political powers.

Concerning the tribalisation of most of the organisations, the excessive fragmentation of existing associations in most of the countries leads several NGOs and associations to limit the sphere of their action in relatively narrow geographical spaces. Their area of intervention does not very often go beyond the realm of the clan or the tribe, which is the case in particular of indigenous associations and the community development organisations. Some NGOs are in the same situation which explains why there are so many of them.

As far as the reliance of these organisations on the incumbent political powers, this is fundamentally linked to the lack of financial means needed to operate, with the exception of Nigeria where many NGOs are self-financed. West African civil society associations' greatest failing is their dependence as regards the States and the international donors. The need to obtain financial aid from the State or the international community has generated the emergence of so many NGOs and for some of them to be complacent as regards mediating different political interactions and truly defend the populations' interests.

This reliance has negative consequences on the role that we expect of civil society as regards governance and combating poor practices. As a result, several civil society organisations become incapable of mediating different

political manoeuvrings in West Africa. This explains the lack of any role for civil society organisations in controlling and tracking ballots during regularly organised elections in the region. Besides unions, few associations operate as veritable counter-power forces and protest strongly against poor practices.

West African civil society is currently at a cross-roads. It needs to be reoriented around a new mission other than that of participative democracy in order to better confront existing difficulties.

These problems take on several aspects already mentioned like excessive splintering of organisations, their unequal level of comprehension of the stakes of the current democratic process and the lack of autonomous financing needed to operate. Those issues raised here and which should be debated in the working groups can be summarised in three points:

- There is, first of all, a lack of sound and credible inter-regional civil society organisations which can take over the promotion of regional cooperation and integration from the political decision-makers. This lack goes against the concept of globalisation which impels civil society associations of Northern countries to regroup at the global level like the farmers fighting against the “bad food” around José Bové or the Global Social Forum. This Forum is in the process of becoming a real global civil society association based on the Charter established in April 2001 with fifteen items that set out its approach and areas of intervention. Following these examples, different West African associative movements would be able to develop a joint platform for the fight against poor democratic practices, poor governance and in favour of peace in the sub-region. Yet we observe the contrary: individual actions which are limited to only some countries.
- The second problem is that of the territorial and demographic scope of existing organisations in certain countries. According to a document entitled “The Associative Planet” published by Solagrail,²² West Africa hardly has 37 significant organisations whose respective scope covers only 10,000 inhabitants and the space of one commune or arrondissement. By comparison, a small country like Costa Rica has 45 such organisations, Brazil 113, Sri Lanka 54. Out of the 37 West African organisations having a particular territorial and demographic range, Burkina Faso has 17, followed close behind by Senegal, Benin and Mali. Elsewhere, the situation is relatively critical as in Togo, Guinea or Mauritania. This situation confirms that the existing associations do not yet go beyond the family or tribal sphere.

22. “La Planète associative”,
Courrier de la Planète No. 63,
volume III, 2001.

- ▲ The third problem is that of a strong external influence on civil society organisations which operate relatively well. Religious associations and those which serve as relays to certain internationally-based NGOs and sects fall into this category. This external influence turns into a certain dependence and driver of new ideologies of which many are unfavourable to peace: exclusionary ideologies characterised by a certain fanaticism. However, the most harmful aspect of this external influence is cultural. African moral values are no longer important to the youth. It is those values conveyed by new religious and philosophical beliefs which are important; as a result, this leads to an abandonment of traditional African values with their eventual diminishment, which will lead to a feeling of uprootedness and a loss of identity.

Much effort still needs to be made in order to build an independent African civil society, credible and capable of taking over the State in its various social regulation missions and effectively contribute to the establishment of sustainable peace in the sub-region.

Civil society faced with the challenges of recurrent crises and sustainable peace

In general, Sub-Saharan Africa and its western area in particular have experienced recurrent crises since independence. The situation that prevails in West Africa can be classified in the four following categories:

- ▲ The States having achieved considerable progress in handling violence, consequently enjoying relative stability, but with deep uncertainties, as regards the future of the democratic process (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Cape Verde, etc.);
- ▲ The States undermined from within by friction between elites and various political forces (Guinea, Mauritania, Nigeria, Togo, etc.);
- ▲ The States which have toppled in a limited or recurrent manner in the confusion and war (Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, etc.);
- ▲ The States which have difficulty exiting from many years of armed conflicts (Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, etc.).

This classification, however, is not impermeable where these conflictual situations have an effect on each other. The numerous conflicts, civil wars, cross-border disputes, mutinies, and government overthrows tend to go beyond borders and spread over larger areas than those where conflicts begin. That is to say, the sub-region henceforth faces serious risks, giving

thus a particular undertone to the search for sustainable peace. Several authorities are undertaking mediation operations in order to confront these risks.

Policy mediation, through:

- Inter-governmental consultations;
- Attempts made by regional cooperation institutions e.g. ECOWAS in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and most recently Togo.

Civil Society mediation, from several initiatives, notably:

- Religious;
- Charities;
- Humanitarian.

Development agency mediation with several actions such as those of:

- The European Community;
- The United Nations system (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA) that, since its creation, has set up relatively effective mediation and intervention services.

From these examples, it can be stated that civil society's role is still limited, despite the recent creation of a large number of associations whose intention is to be involved with establishing sustainable peace. Within the preparatory framework of this Forum, twenty or so associations dealing with peace in West Africa have been identified and apportioned as follows:

23. Some of the associations cited here: Renaissance Peace and Development, Kaduna (Nigeria); Women for Peace Initiative, Abuja (Nigeria); Niger Delta Women Forum for Peace, Calabar (Nigeria); Coalition Nationale de la Société Civile pour la Paix et la lutte contre la prolifération des armes légères, Bamako (Mali); Association pour la Promotion de la Femme, des Jeunes et de l'Enfant, Bamako (Mali); Mouvement national des Femmes pour la sauvegarde de la Paix, Bamako (Mali); Coalition nationale de la Société Civile pour la Paix, Bamako (Mali); Center for Media Studies and Peace Building, Monrovia (Liberia); Mano River Union Peace Forum, Freetown (Sierra Leone); Africa Peace, Cotonou (Benin); Mission des Jeunes pour la Prévention et la Gestion des Conflits, Cotonou (Benin); Vilita Peace International: Vivre longtemps avec la Paix, Cotonou (Benin); Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa, Cotonou (Benin); WANEP.

- Nigeria (5),
- Mali (5),
- Benin (3), etc.²³

Unfortunately, these numerous initiatives' contribution to peace in West Africa have plenty of intentions but remain rather limited in concrete actions because of the lack of funds and above all because of the complex nature of the task at hand. However, civil society seems from afar the best placed in order to create the best conditions for dialogue and information because of its neutrality and the fact that it is the first victim of conflict. Among these different means of action, three deserve mentioning:

Conflict prevention: This most often takes the form of local and regional analysis of various factors of the crises. This analysis helps assure the quality of information on the causes of conflict and above all their consequences.

Addressing conflictual situations: This is an effective approach on the condition that it involves all of the protagonists of conflict by organising a Forum.

Addressing exit from crisis: Re-establishing economic activities in post-conflict regions requires a minimum of security and socio-political stability. It is essential that conditions are established for dialogue and exchange of information between all of the public actors: political decision-makers, economic actors and development partners. Civil society must bring all of these people together around an action plan supporting development in the stricken regions.

In order to accomplish these various missions, civil society faces a certain number of challenges. For example:

- 1) The need to commit to further strategic thinking on the stakes for civil society in a society in democratic transition, deep in crisis and subject to the ravages of poverty as seen in West African societies;
- 2) The need to question the nature of civil society which the sub-region requires in order to play a significant role in social regulation. This aspect of the issue is important because of the profusion of current initiatives and their multitude in the area of intervention;
- 3) The urgency to assure the issue of financial autonomy in order for actions undertaken to be credible and above all in order to continue the various experiences underway. This issue also needs to take a harder look at the criticism of the associations and NGOs operating as corruption antechambers and engaging in poor practices;
- 4) The problem of relationships between West African civil society organisations and international donors. This relationship raises many issues which strongly hinder some nationalist States in supporting their civil society as intermediaries in the actual democratic process. Studies which are currently carried out on the situation of Nigeria's civil society clearly indicate the causes of this concern²⁴.

24. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *op.cit.*

Much remains to be done in order to make civil society an important State relay in economic liberalisation, poverty reduction and the promotion of good governance.

4. “The Media, Conflict, Peace and Democracy in West Africa”

Mr. Chérif Elvalide Seye, Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa

Mr. Chérif Elvalide Seye, journalist, ran a private radio station in Senegal before becoming Communications Counsellor to the Presidency of Senegal. Today he is the Development Director of PANAPRESS, the Pan African agency based in Dakar. He also is a member of the Strategic Watch Club.

In his introductory address Mr. Seye sets out, without concessions, the media situation in West Africa since the 1990s and their role in difficult crises and conflict situations. He also analyses the complex relationships between political parties in West Africa.

Introduction

Two sectors have experienced an unparalleled development in West Africa: political parties and the media. The democratisation process, which began in the 1990s, led to an increased number of political parties and media services. Today, every West African country has at least fifty parties and twenty or so daily newspapers.

Although the press entered Africa rather late (the world’s first newspaper was published in Germany four hundred years ago²⁵), the continent has managed to catch up fairly well. The history of the press in West Africa began in 1822 with the Royal Gold Coast Gazette and the Sierra Leone Gazette, both established by Governor Sir Charles MacCarthy (Moussa Paye, 2005). Soon after, Reverend Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society published the newspaper *Iwe Iroyin* in Nigeria in Yoruba in 1859. The paper’s objective was to educate and convert indigenous people to Christianity. In this regard, it is significant that the first Bible in Yoruba was printed three years later in 1862 by the same printing presses that printed this newspaper.²⁶

25. The Gutenberg Museum in Mainz, Germany, which owns the world’s first printing press, estimates that the “birth certificate” of the first newspaper ever printed, “Relation”, discovered in Strasbourg’s municipal records, was issued in the summer of 1605.

26. Uko Ndaeyo, *History and the Press: A Case Study of Australia and Nigeria*, *Etopric: Electronic journal of multidisciplinary studies in the tropics*, vol. 1, issue 2, 2002.

It was not long before a press more concerned with the continent's own problems came into being. In Ghana, the Accra Herald of the brothers Charles and Edmund Bannermann expressed nationalistic demands. On 3 September 1948, Kwame Nkrumah set up the Accra Evening News, which went on to become one of the main supports for nationalistic propaganda (Rooney, 1990 and Blay-Amihere, 1996). The colonial government did not fail to react. Kwame Nkrumah and several of his journalists were arrested, convicted for sedition and sentenced to three consecutive years in prison, the last for breach of the press laws.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the colonial justice system also rained fire on Le Réveil, the official organ of the "Rassemblement Démocratique Africain" (RDA or African Democratic Assembly), with the prosecutor, de Montera, demanding that parliamentary immunity be withdrawn from its Editor of publications, Gabriel d'Arboussier, and its leader, Félix Houphouët-Boigny. (Dadié, 1983 and de Benoist, 1982)²⁷.

27. These passages on Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire have been taken from the paper presented by Moussa Paye at the Gorée Workshop in February 2005, within the framework of the preparations for The Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa.

The first truly African press was therefore militant in nature. It was the contrary to the press which emerged with the transition to democracy. It was less linked to political parties and claims to be more professional.

Out of the democratic transition which was taking hold in West Africa during the 1990s came the plurality of information. Deep-seated changes took place in the media landscape with the emergence of private newspapers, which suddenly broke the public monopoly, soon followed by private radio and later television.

However, the media cannot be considered simply a result of the democratisation process. The media was also a stakeholder in the fight for democracy, accelerating, if not triggering, the process. In several countries, the private media did not wait for the advent of more democratic regimes to defy taboos. In fact, it was the first to strike a ringing blow at the dictatorships in power.

However, the media did not always play a positive role. The incumbent power made use of some, generally public media companies, to hinder the democratisation process.

Greater role

The generic term, media, actually refers to a very diverse reality. The media is obviously divided into different types – newspapers, radio stations and television channels, each with very different impacts.

TV is still largely dominated by the public sector. Private TV channels are still emerging rather hesitantly and focusing more on entertainment, culture and sport. In some countries, the real ownership of TV channels is in question. There are serious suspicions regarding the existence of fictitious companies.

Due to illiteracy and, to a certain extent, their cost, newspapers are still reserved for the rich. But their influence is no less real as they reach the national elite and the outside world, in countries that are still largely dependent on external inputs in the economic and, therefore, political sphere. Indeed, a real politico-intellecto-media microcosm has been created, with an impact far greater than the number of entities involved.

From the 1990s onwards, the growing number of radio stations offered the media new prospects. Communicating with the people in their own language and thereby also giving them a voice, radio changed the nature of the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. The use of national languages played a particularly fundamental role in people's perception and appropriation of concepts, and therefore of realities. Radio "democratised" public discourse.

The foreign press also played a significant role. It was dominated by international radio stations belonging to the former colonial powers of France and Great Britain and by newspapers published in their capitals, targeting an African audience. Nonetheless, the development of the local press had considerable impact on their influence. Readership/listenership dropped off substantially as did the number of copies sold.

It can be said that the role of the media has become fundamental in democracy and good governance in Africa. The media has increasingly reduced room for deception. All those in government are obliged to take this fact into account. They do so by strengthening the measures adopted to keep acts of dishonesty secret or, more rarely, by abstaining from certain manoeuvres or, more often, by pretending to have taken the publicity created by such manoeuvring into account.

The media's contribution has been felt in almost all sectors, but to remain within the scope of the Forum's theme, its contribution to Human Rights, the management of public resources, the behaviour of public personalities, the electoral process, etc. can be given as particular examples.

Human Rights violations are monitored and brought before national and, above all, international opinion, and the pressure built in this way ends up by convincing the most radical.

The outcome of several State trials has been strongly influenced in several countries by their wide media coverage, with the authorities being eventually forced to concede to the pressures and ensure that the verdicts delivered appeased public opinion.

The management of public resources is another field that is closely monitored by the press. Public personalities are even more in the public eye thanks to the sometimes-excessive attention the media pays to their doings.

Elections, a key point in the region's political development, have naturally gained a great deal from the development of the media. The increasing involvement of the media has played a substantial role in the emergence of citizenship and journalists have been some of the most vigilant election observers. Most observers of Senegalese politics believe that it was the press that enabled the peaceful change in power in February 2000, by hindering even the slightest attempts at rigging. Although no scientific study has been carried out to support the belief, there is probably a correlation between the good results of the Socialist Party in power at the time in the River region and the absence of any private radio station in the area.

An uncertain future

Is the media's future in Africa already behind it? This deliberately provocative question is increasingly haunting the best minds. The media shows both the damage that can be done when it goes adrift and the limitations of its impact on society.

Indeed, the media did go adrift in Côte d'Ivoire where Reporters Without Borders relentlessly denounced "the climate of hatred and tension fuelled by a partisan press". The international symposium on "Côte d'Ivoire: consolidation d'une paix fragile" (Côte d'Ivoire: Consolidation of a fragile peace), organised by Africa Canada Partnership in Ottawa, Canada, on 23 and 24 February 2004, noted that "before the crisis, the media played a negative role, as it contributed considerably to the exacerbation of latent tensions and conflicts by spreading false rumours, in total disregard of their professional ethics. Political activists turned journalists overnight, transforming newspapers into a sound box for parties to which they had

sworn allegiance. One section of the press took sides with rebel forces and the other with government forces. Given the situation, forums were organised to make the media 'disarm its pens and microphones'.

In Nigeria, an article published in November 2002 in the newspaper *This Day* about the Miss World pageant being held there prompted riots that caused the death of more than 200 people and injured over 500 others in Kaduna.

Admittedly, you cannot ask the media for more than it can deliver. It is not a journalist's duty to change the order – or rather, the disorder of things. It is more than enough if they limit themselves to informing the public fairly and truthfully, while respecting their professional ethics.

However, this is less and less the case. The media's proliferation – newspapers and radios in particular – is the first sign that something is seriously wrong with this sector. For neither are there sufficient resources to ensure the economic viability of all these bodies, nor enough trained journalists to run them. In the absence of a study and based on empirical observations, it may be implied that most journalists working in the region do not even have a high school diploma, let alone a degree in journalism.

Indeed, journalism has tended to become a path to salvation for all those who fail to get a degree or qualifications, and who can enter the profession as volunteers or, more discreetly, trainees. However, the salary the media does not pay must come from somewhere.

To call a spade a spade, there is increasing corruption among journalists; from the "trainee" level where the "trainees" systematically ask for transportation expenses otherwise threatening reprisals, to proprietors who will provide their services to those who offer them the most money. Journalists are certainly not the most corrupt. As the Guatemalan Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Rigoberta Menchú, wrote: "Power is the main source of corruption – whether economic, political or military... Public office is synonymous with pillaging – such posts are like a blank check, a guarantee that you will fill your coffers. It is a rule tacitly accepted by all those who call themselves politicians." While this is a definition that may only apply to the "big shots" who are fraudulently amassing millions of dollars, power can often simply mean a small tip, a bit of oil to grease half-a-dozen palms to get a certificate, a birth certificate or a passport. This does not exonerate the press, which could play a significant role in the fight against corruption provided that it was not itself so extensively involved."

28. 2005 World Press Trends,
Newspaper Circulation and
Advertising Up Worldwide,
Paris, May 2005.

The increasing growth in the number of private media bodies is accelerating its downfall. Indeed, the African press is growing at an extraordinary pace. The number of daily newspapers rose by 10.4% in 2004 as opposed to 1.3% in Europe, 4.1% in Asia, 1.1% in South America and 1.4% in Australia and Oceania, while there was even a 0.1% fall in North America.²⁸ The undue rise in their numbers is largely responsible for the state of bankruptcy almost all of them face, both private and public, according to the standards endorsed by the OHADA (Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires – Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa).

In fact, it is only in exceptional cases that access to the profession is regulated. Generally, the only condition for entering the profession is to actually practice it, for those deriving the most part of their income from the profession are considered journalists.

A legacy of the French legislation, this dogma has been at the root of two contrary rationales. Between 1990 and 1998, the proportion of graduates from an approved professional school rose from 8.7 to 43.8% in news agencies in France, 10 to 31.8% in national daily newspapers and 40 to 57.1% in national radios.²⁹

29. Dominique Marchetti,
"Contribution à une
sociologie des évolutions du
champ journalistique dans
les années 80 et 90", Paris
EHESS thesis, 1998, p. 198.

In Africa, this doctrine led to an increasing reduction of trained journalists in editorial offices. The lack of trained journalists worsened due to their higher mobility and the early retirement of experienced journalists. Furthermore, in cases where trained and experienced journalists have not changed professions, they no longer produce anything for their paper or channel, and drift towards administrative tasks leaving the young untrained 'aspirers' to their own devices. So the latter get no training, neither in school, nor on the job.

However, only professional journalists' organisations seem to be concerned with the state of the media. Neither the authorities nor the opposition, or even civil society, have tried to reverse the trend. Those in power are happy with the growing disrepute of the media. The more it is discredited, the better it would be for their questionable activities. Indeed, the incumbent powers are betting on the press being reduced to vagrancy, even encouraging this process by promoting the rise in the number of papers and channels, leaving the sector to its own devices with its calamitous newspaper distribution channels, unregulated advertising market and being sparing with their help, thereby failing to address the structural issues that in any case they have no desire to resolve.

However, this has not prevented this sector with its uncertain profits from being increasingly overrun by entrepreneurs. One wonders what attracts them to this sector, if not profits.

As for the opposition, whose battle has been increasingly reduced to statements in the media, it has no intention whatsoever of alienating these highly valuable allies especially since it has barely any access to the public media, fossilised in their ostracism of the opposition ever since independence.

Civil society, which should hopefully have been less opportunistic, adopted the same policy. It too does not wish to alienate the media. It too does and says nothing that could annoy the media.

Press, democracy and conflict

The Forum should debate such issues, but it might just be a futile exercise. There are two diametrically opposed concepts here. The first propounded by the supporters of “development journalism”, a notion of journalism that flourished along with that of the single-party regime, justified by the need to build a Nation-State. African journalists had a duty to bear the fragility of institutions in mind and work towards strengthening the Nation-State, as portrayed by the Father of the Nation. This led to a press reduced to reporting and magnifying the father of the nation’s actions.

The press developed by liberating itself from this dependence – not on the State, but in reality, on whoever was in power. This is the second conception advocated by simple journalism activists. They claim to be professional journalists, governed by the same rules and ethics that prevail elsewhere in the world. They believe that there are no grounds to invent a different kind of journalism for the developing world. For those advocating this more professional notion, there are no grounds for discussing the issue of the media’s role in democracy. By being true to its essence, journalism naturally rendered service to democracy, the economy, as well as culture. Providing information fairly and truthfully is sufficient. Without settling the debate, I have no choice but to acknowledge that credible, independent, responsible information would largely suffice to help the cause of democracy and preserve peace.

Questions

The Forum can effectively provide answers – or some direction – to the following questions:

- 1) What type of institutional framework could guarantee the viability of the media?
- 2) How can we ensure the cooperation of all actors concerned (authorities, opposition, civil society, media professionals) to enable the institutional framework to prosper?
- 3) What kind of status would guarantee journalists good training without hindering access to bad elements by the profession?
- 4) How can we guarantee the media's financial viability without infringing upon its freedom?
- 5) How can journalists be better protected?

5. “ECOWAS and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in the Building of Peace and Democracy”

General Cheick Oumar Diarra, ECOWAS’ Deputy Executive Secretary of Political Affairs, Defence and Security³⁰

General Cheick Oumar Diarra oversees ECOWAS politics as regards peace, security and electoral regulation. During his intervention, General Diarra presents the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and ECOWAS’ activities on peace and security issues in West Africa.

30. This document is an adapted transcript of the speech given by General Diarra at the Forum and later validated. The subtitles have been inserted in the text by the editors.

Introduction

I would like to pay tribute to the Sahel and West Africa Club and the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa for having organised this Forum bringing together great socio-political actors which are the political parties, the media and civil society. ECOWAS is very happy to be associated with this debate. This is also an opportunity to thank the Government of Benin and the people of Benin for hosting this Forum in Cotonou. The SWAC is an important partner, if not the key partner, for ECOWAS and the theme of this Forum falls within the framework of ECOWAS programmes. Thus ECOWAS’ participation at this Forum is important as we expect a lot from your deliberations.

I was asked to present the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. You understand that it is not easy to speak of democracy and good governance to representatives of political parties, the media and civil society, and above all intervening after an eminent professor such as Mr. Bathily and political scientists such as Mr. Diallo and others. This is why I will be relatively modest in order to focus my presentation on the Supplementary Protocol, having heard that the framework which has prevailed in the development of this Protocol has already been touched upon by Professor Bathily. As regards ECOWAS’ Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, I hasten to define it, place it within

ECOWAS' strategic framework to promote sustainable peace in the region, and it is in this spirit that it is essential to examine it by its various sections.

Historical background

The Economic Community of West African States, as you know, is an economically integrated community. It aims to promote cooperation and integration with a view to creating an economic union, to improve its populations' livelihoods, to promote growth, and contribute to the development of the African continent. When, in 1975, this organisation's founding fathers met, they naturally had unity and development in mind. This is why the Treaty of 1975 does not mention political issues, issues of security and peace. The founding fathers thought that the only communal desire to create an economic community would be enough to erase the ghosts of all the disagreements between countries. But very quickly, in 1978, three years later, they had to do otherwise because inter-State conflicts had begun to develop between some States. This is why, during the same year, they adopted the non-aggression Protocol and a little later, in 1995, the Mutual Assistance as regards defence.

If you examine the details of these two protocols, you will note that they address inter-State conflicts:

- ▶ Non-aggression: this means that in case of disagreements between States, they will commit to resolving differences in a peaceful manner and by dialogue;
- ▶ Mutual Assistance as regards defence: this is to say that if a State is aggressed, the other States will come to its rescue.

These tools held fast more or less until 1989 when the war in Liberia exploded - a new type of conflict where there is no aggressor. It was in effect Liberians fighting one another: we were no longer in a schema of opposing armed forces. This time the victims were women, children and the aged; the State's existence itself was threatened. A new sort of conflict provoking flows of refugees, displaced populations, the destruction of State infrastructure, etc., and finally a conflict of a sub-regional dimension where the victims were also nationals from neighbouring countries. Faced with this new type of conflict, and failure of the legal framework, ECOWAS had to come up with an ad hoc solution through the Mediation Committee in order to deal with the Liberian conflict, and deploy a monitoring group, commonly known as ECOMOG, to monitor the cease fire.

Later, it was Sierra Leone's turn, then Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia again and then again in Guinea-Bissau. This demonstrates to you that conflicts have become, by the force of things, an inevitable part of West African life.

Conflict Prevention

Without wanting to enter into the typology of conflicts (Professor Bathily has already spoken of this), it must be recognised that conflicts have their own deep-seated causes. That is why already in 1993 (drawing on lessons learned from its relatively good experiences in Liberia and Sierra Leone), as set out in the 1975 Treaty, ECOWAS decided to include the political and integration dimension and introduce the supranationality principle. This involves regional instruments being vital henceforth at the same time to the States and to national instruments. In reference to Article 58 of its Treaty, ECOWAS decided to set up a joint security system taking into account the global aspect of conflicts. In 1999, while applying the measures set out in this Treaty, ECOWAS adopted the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security. This was unprecedented move forward: a protocol that took on of all the aspects of conflict, beginning by prevention, conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance, strengthening peace and regional security. Anticipating difficulties in the ratification of this Protocol, Heads of State decided to have it enter into force immediately after its signing; whereas ECOWAS' measures sets out that instruments must be ratified by at least 9 States for them to enter into force.

We thus worked immediately to set up the Protocol which gives civil society a key role whereas conflicts would not only be handled at the national level. Civil society therefore plays a crucial role in the Early Warning System (one of the Protocol's instruments) through the different networks that it is capable of mobilising. But the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security is mainly concerned with the immediate causes of conflict. Indeed, a strategy promoting sustainable peace is based on a certain number of pillars such as: conflict prevention, resolution and strengthening peace.

Essentially there are two dimensions to prevention: immediate prevention which concerns the immediate causes of conflict. It is based on precautionary diplomacy and early warning. Precautionary diplomacy can be defined as all of the actions undertaken in order to prevent disagreements between

States to degenerate into conflict. However, when, despite efforts conflict unfortunately breaks out, it tries in essence to contain it. But experience shows that immediate prevention has its limits because it does not sufficiently take into account the structural causes of conflict which require structural prevention. If the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security allows intervention in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and has achieved some results, it is nevertheless not because it has tackled the deep-seated causes of conflict.

Thus in 2001, anticipating and drawing on lessons learned from past experiences, Heads of State decided to adopt the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. It is "supplementary" because it is an integral part of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security and this is in fact a mechanism to assist conflict prevention. Whether this has to do with democracy or good governance, these two concepts are dealt with in terms of prevention and promotion of sustainable peace.

Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance

Now I will try to present the Supplementary Protocol itself. You understand that it is not easy to present a document containing fifty articles in such a short period of time. Nevertheless, I will try to touch on various aspects of this Protocol and, notably, the aspects concerning political parties, the media and civil society. The Protocol's first chapter addresses constitutional convergence principles (or criteria) which are in reality known universal norms such as: separation of power – independence of Parliament and Justice – State secularity, freedom of the press and association, the role of the army in a democratic society, role of women and youth and the role of social dialogue.

Why constitutional convergence criteria? For some, it comes from old colonial powers, because our Constitutions often reflect aspects from this historic connection. Furthermore, some of our Constitutions date back to the period of independence and do not take into account the universal norms accepted today. Thus, in the same way that economic convergence criteria exist, ECOWAS believes it is essential to establish constitutional convergence criteria. The objective would be to have these known universal norms reflected and incorporated into each of the member States' constitutions therefore harmonising our Constitutions to reflect common values.

The Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance fundamentally addresses the issue of elections. Indeed, as you are all aware, elections constitute a democratic barometer. It is through elections that the population can express their views and where changes of political power can take place. We see that elections are ever-more poorly organised and they are becoming a threat to democracy. We can call to mind the case of Togo, Guinea-Bissau and elsewhere in the world. That is why, Heads of State, with the adoption of the Protocol in 2001, decided to implement immediately some of the measures, notably those concerning elections. In effect these measures set out that ECOWAS must provide assistance to Member States organising elections; this could take the form of information missions, raising awareness campaigns, monitoring missions. Thus, two to three months before elections, the mission would go into the field to meet all the actors (political parties, civil society, the candidates) who are contributing, directly or indirectly, in the peaceful and smooth running of the electoral process. On the basis of the information mission, a report is made to the Mediation and Security Council (equivalent to ECOWAS' "Security Council" which includes 9 member States), which enables ECOWAS to decide whether to send a monitoring team or take other measures to guarantee free, transparent and fair elections.

As regards monitoring elections, ECOWAS has a lot of experience: Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Ghana, Niger, etc. What is important to note here is that the observers are mainly civil society and State actors. They are independent with their own opinions. Their mission is to observe and monitor the regularity of the elections. ECOWAS is working to develop its election monitoring capacity, notably by creating the Electoral Assistance Unit whose aim is to group national structures responsible for elections in order to promote the exchange of experiences. As you know, the structure in charge of holding elections varies from country to country. How elections are held needs to be harmonised. This structure must be sufficiently independent and autonomous in order for everyone to have confidence in the system.

One of the major problems of elections today is accepting the results. ECOWAS has a Code of Conduct which must be concluded and signed between parties before the elections. In terms of this code, candidates agree to accept the verdict, to avoid auto-proclamation (example of Togo, Guinea-Bissau, etc.): auto-proclamation being the way to best ensure a crisis during elections in a climate of confusion among militants.

ECOWAS also works in such a way that the approach to elections, some fundamental reforms which affect the electoral code cannot be authorised. In this way, it is important to note that ECOWAS tolerates no usurp of power by anti-constitutional means (as was the case in Togo). The voting box according to ECOWAS is the only way to gain power.

Taking into account the length of the Protocol, I invite you to glance through it.

What role can political parties, the media and civil society play?

Firstly, an informative role. In effect, you have the task of knowing what this document contains. You must appropriate the measures and then disseminate them within your respective States. ECOWAS would also like that you contribute to enhancing this Protocol as it is man-made therefore perfectible. ECOWAS finally would like that political parties, the media and civil society play a key role in conflict prevention, as experience has shown that this is by far preferred to resolution.

The United Nations understands that maintaining peace operations are costly for results which are never guaranteed. Just for your information, the intervention mission in Liberia cost around 1 million dollars per day.

ECOWAS would like to launch an appeal to invite you to join us in this great momentum which aims to promote sustainable peace in our region. In effect, without peace, without stability, without security, there will not be development and without integration our countries are all doomed to disappear.

Our safety exists and remains only in the creation in this great entity called the Economic Community for West African States. We are counting on you all (political parties, media, civil society organisations) to play a fundamental role which will make ECOWAS an important, if not the most important link in the chain of African unity, a dream for all Africans.

6. The Text of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance

Protocol a/sp1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security

PREAMBULE

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),

MINDFUL of the ECOWAS Treaty signed in Cotonou on 24th July 1993, notably its Article 58;

MINDFUL of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security signed in Lomé on 10th December 1999;

CONSIDERING all the issues enumerated or reaffirmed in the preamble to the Protocol of 10th December 1999 referred to above;

MINDFUL of the principles set out in the OAU Solemn Declaration on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa adopted in Abuja on 8 and 9 May 2000 and the Decision AHG. DEC 142 (XXV) on the framework for OAU'S reaction to unconstitutional change of government, adopted by Algiers in July 1999;

CONSIDERING the Harare Declaration adopted by the Commonwealth on 20 December 1991 and the Bamako Declaration adopted by the member countries of the Francophonie on 3 November 2000;

CONSIDERING also the Cotonou Declaration adopted on 6 December 2000 at the end of the 4th international conference on new or restored democracies;

RECALLING that women's rights have been recognized and guaranteed in all international human rights instruments, notably the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and

the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women;

MINDFUL of the ratification of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and other international human rights instruments by the majority of the Member States and their solemn commitment to eliminate all forms of discrimination and harmful practices against women;

CONCERNED about the increasing wave of international terrorism;

CONCERNED also about the increasing incidence of conflicts caused by religious intolerance, political marginalisation and non-transparent elections;

HAVING OBSERVED that to become really effective, the Protocol of 10 December 1999 needs to be complemented through the incorporation of provisions concerning issues such as prevention of internal crises, democracy and good governance, the rule of law, and human rights;

HAVING DECIDED to enhance the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

DEFINITIONS:

The terms and expressions used in the present Supplementary Protocol have the same meanings as those used in the Protocol of 10th December 1999.

The list of definitions is completed as follows:

- "Treaty" means the Revised Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signed in Cotonou on 24th July 1993;
- "Protocol" means the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, signed in Lomé on 10th December 1999;
- "Supplementary Protocol" means the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security;
- "Community" means the Economic Community of West African States of the Community as defined in paragraph 2 of Article 2 of the Treaty;

- “Member State” or “Member States” means a Member State or Member States of the Community as defined in paragraph 2 of Article 2 of the Treaty;
- “Community citizen or citizens” means any national(s) of Member States who satisfy the conditions stipulated in the Protocol defining Community citizenship;
- “Court of Justice” means the Court of Justice of the Community established under Article 15 of the Treaty;
- “Authority” means the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States established by Article 7 of the Treaty;
- “Mediation and Security Council” means the Mediation and Security Council as defined by Article 8 of the Protocol;
- “Defence and Security Commission” means the Defence and Security Commission as defined in Article 18 of the Protocol;
- “Executive Secretary” means the ECOWAS Executive Secretary appointed in accordance with Article 18 of the Treaty;
- “Executive Secretariat” means the Executive Secretariat established under Article 17 of the Treaty;
- “Deputy Executive Secretary” means the Deputy Executive Secretary in charge of Political Affairs, Defence and Security as referred to in Article 16 of the Protocol;
- “ECOMOG” means the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group, which constitutes the Community’s intervention force as defined in Article 21 of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism etc;
- “Armed Forces” includes the army, Airforce, Navy, and Gendarmerie; “Security Forces” the Police, Gendarmerie, National Guards and other Forces assigned with Security.

CHAPTER I — PRINCIPLES

The provisions of this chapter complement and clarify the principles set out in Article 2 of the Protocol of 10th December 1999.

SECTION I – Constitutional Convergence Principles

ARTICLE 1

The following shall be declared as constitutional principles shared by all Member States:

- a) - Separation of powers – the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary.
 - Empowerment and strengthening of parliaments and guarantee of parliamentary immunity.
 - Independence of the Judiciary: Judges shall be independent in the discharge of their duties.
 - The freedom of the members of the Bar shall be guaranteed; without prejudice to their penal or disciplinary responsibility in the event of contempt of court or breaches of the common law.
- b) Every accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections.
- c) Zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means.
- d) Popular participation in decision-making, strict adherence to democratic principles and decentralization of power at all levels of governance.
- e) The armed forces must be apolitical and must be under the command of a legally constituted political authority; no serving member of the armed forces may seek to run for elective political.
- f) Secularism and neutrality of the State in all matters relating to religion; freedom for each individual to practise, within the limits of existing laws, the religion of his/her choice everywhere on the national territory. The secularism shall extend to all parts of the State, but shall not deprive the State of the right to regulate, with due respect to human rights, the different religions practiced on the national territory or to intervene when law and order break down as a result of any religious activity.
- g) The State and all its institutions belong to all the citizens; therefore none of their decisions and actions shall involve any form of discrimination, be it on an ethnic, racial, religion or regional basis.
- h) The rights set out in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other international instruments shall be guaranteed in each of the ECOWAS Member States; each individual or organization shall be free to have recourse to the common or civil law courts, a court of special jurisdiction, or any other national institution established within the framework of an international instrument on Human Rights, to ensure the protection of his/her rights. In the absence of a court of special jurisdiction, the present Supplementary Protocol shall be regarded as giving the necessary powers to common or civil law judicial bodies.
- i) Political parties shall be formed and shall have the right to carry out their activities freely, within the limits of the law. Their formation and activities shall not be based on ethnic, religious, regional or racial considerations.

They shall participate freely and without hindrance or discrimination in any electoral process. The freedom of the opposition shall be guaranteed.

Each Member State may adopt a system for financing political parties, in accordance with criteria set under the law.

- j) The freedom of association and the right to meet and organize peaceful demonstrations shall also be guaranteed.
- k) The freedom of the press shall be guaranteed.
- l) All former Heads of State shall enjoy a special status including freedom of movement. They shall enjoy special benefits compatible to their status as former Heads of State.

SECTION II – Elections

ARTICLE 2

1. No substantial modification shall be made to the electoral laws in the last six (6) months before the elections, except with the consent of a majority of Political actors.
2. All the elections shall be organized on the dates or at periods fixed by the Constitution or the electoral laws.
3. Member States shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that women have equal rights with men to vote and be voted for in elections, to participate in the formulation of government policies and the implementation thereof and to hold public offices and perform public functions at all levels of governance.

ARTICLE 3

The bodies responsible for organizing the elections shall be independent or neutral and shall have the confidence of all the political actors. Where necessary, appropriate national consultations shall be organized to determine the nature and the structure of the bodies.

ARTICLE 4

1. Each ECOWAS Member State shall ensure the establishment of a reliable registry of births and deaths. A central registry shall be established in each Member State.
2. Member States shall cooperate in this area with a view to exchanging experiences and where necessary providing technical assistance to each other in the production of reliable voters' lists.

ARTICLE 5

The voters' lists shall be prepared in a transparent and reliable manner, with the collaboration of the political parties and voters who may have access to them whenever the need arises.

ARTICLE 6

The preparation and conduct of elections and the announcement of results shall be done in a transparent manner.

ARTICLE 7

Adequate arrangements shall be made to hear and dispose of all petitions relating to the conduct of elections and announcement of results.

ARTICLE 8

Member States shall use the services of civil society organizations involved in electoral matters to educate and enlighten the public on the need for peaceful elections devoid of all acts of violence.

ARTICLE 9

The party and/or candidate who loses the elections shall concede defeat to the political party and/or candidate finally declared the winner, following the guidelines and within the deadline stipulated by the law.

ARTICLE 10

All holders of power at all levels shall refrain from acts of intimidation or harassment against defeated candidates or their supporters.

SECTION III – Election Monitoring and Ecowas Assistance

ARTICLE 11

The provisions of Article 42 of the Protocol of 10th December 1999 hereby complemented by the provisions under this section.

ARTICLE 12

1. At the request of any Member State, ECOWAS may provide assistance in the conduct of any election.
2. Such assistance may take any form.

3. Also, ECOWAS may dispatch a monitoring team to the country concerned for the purpose of monitoring the elections.
4. The decision in this respect shall be taken by the Executive Secretary.

ARTICLE 13

1. As elections in a Member State approach, the Executive Secretary shall dispatch a fact-finding Mission to the Member State conducting an election.
2. This mission may be followed by an exploratory Mission aimed at:
 - Collecting all texts governing the elections concerned;
 - Gathering all information on the conditions under which the elections shall be conducted;
 - Collecting all pertinent information relating to the contesting candidates or political parties;
 - Meeting all candidates, political party leaders, government authorities and other competent bodies;
 - Assessing the status of preparations for the elections;
 - Gathering any other useful information that may provide a clear picture of the situation.

ARTICLE 14

1. The Executive Secretary shall appoint the leader and the members of the Observer/Supervisory Mission, who shall be independent persons and Nationals of Member States other than the Member State conducting the Elections.
2. The Members of the Mission shall include women.
3. Staff of the Executive Secretariat shall be designated to assist the Mission.

ARTICLE 15

1. The Observer/Supervisory Mission, with the documents collected by the exploratory Mission and the report prepared by the Mission, shall arrive in the Member State concerned at least forty-eight hours prior to the conduct of the elections.
2. The Observer/Supervisory Mission may be preceded by ECOWAS Staff, who shall prepare the meetings to be held between the Mission and the national authorities.
3. The Mission shall be expected to hold consultations with the relevant authorities of the host government for an exchange of views and in order to determine the mode of deployment in the host Member State.

4. It may establish cooperation links with NGO or any other observer team while maintaining its autonomy.
5. The members of the Mission shall show restraint and refrain from making any individual statement. Any statement shall be made collectively and on behalf of the Mission by the team leader or a spokesperson appointed for this purpose.

ARTICLE 16

1. The Mission shall remain in the country throughout the election period and until the election results are announced.
2. The Mission shall also submit a report to the Executive Secretary.
3. The Report shall comprise:
 - The Mission's own observations;
 - Statements by witnesses;
 - Its assessment of the conduct of the elections from the point of view of the national laws governing the elections and the universal principles in electoral matters;
 - Its recommendations for the improvement of the conduct of future elections and monitoring Missions.

ARTICLE 17

1. The Observer/Supervisory Mission's report shall be signed by all Members of the Mission and submitted to the Executive Secretary by the Mission's leader within fifteen (15) days with effect from the date of accomplishment of the Mission.
2. Before leaving the host country, the Mission shall convene a consultative meeting for the preparation of the report.
3. Any member of the Mission, who is unable to attend the meeting, shall submit a report in writing to the Mission's leader before leaving the country.
4. ECOWAS Staff shall assist the Mission in the preparation of the report.

ARTICLE 18

The report shall be forwarded by the Executive Secretary, together with his own observations, if necessary, to the Mediation and Security Council for recommendations to be made to the country concerned and/or to all Member States, and for measures to be taken, where necessary.

SECTION IV – The Role of the Armed Forces, the Police and The Security Forces in a Democracy

ARTICLE 19

1. The armed forces and police shall be non-partisan and shall remain loyal to the nation. The role of the armed forces shall be to defend the independence and the territorial integrity of the State and its democratic institutions.
2. The police and other security agencies shall be responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the protection of persons and their properties.
3. The armed forces, the police and other security agencies shall participate in ECOMOG missions as provided for in Article 28 of the Protocol.
4. They may also, on the decision of the constitutionally constituted authorities, participate in peacekeeping missions under the auspices of the African Union or the United Nations.
5. Members of the armed forces may be drafted to participate in national development projects.

ARTICLE 20

1. The armed forces, the police and other security agencies shall be under the authority of legally constituted civilian authorities.
2. The civilian authorities shall respect the apolitical nature of the armed forces and police. All political or trade union activities and propaganda shall be forbidden in the barracks and within the armed forces.

ARTICLE 21

The armed and security forces personnel as citizens, shall be entitled to all the rights set out in the constitution, except as may be stated otherwise in their special regulations.

ARTICLE 22

1. The use of arms to disperse non-violent meetings or demonstrations shall be forbidden. Whenever a demonstration becomes violent, only the use of minimal and/or proportionate force shall be authorized.
2. All cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment shall be forbidden.
3. The security forces, while carrying out investigations, shall not disturb or arrest family members or relations of the person presumed guilty or suspected of having committed an offence.

ARTICLE 23

1. The armed forces, the police and other security agencies shall during their training receive instructions on the Constitution of their country, ECOWAS principles and regulations, human rights, humanitarian law and democratic principles. In this regard, seminars and meetings bringing together members of the armed forces, Police and other Security agencies and other sectors of society shall be organized from time to time.
2. Joint training sessions shall also be arranged for members of the armed forces from different ECOWAS countries, the police, other security forces, university dons and members of the civil society.

ARTICLE 24

1. The Member States undertake to strengthen their national agencies responsible for preventing and combating terrorism.
2. In accordance with Articles 3(d) and 16(1) of the Protocol, the Department of Political Affairs, Defence and Security of the Executive Secretariat shall initiate joint activities for the national agencies of Member States in charge of preventing and combating terrorism.

SECTION V – Poverty Alleviation and Promotion of Social Dialogue

ARTICLE 25

Member States agree that poverty alleviation and promotion of social dialogue are important factors for peace.

ARTICLE 26

Member States undertake to provide the basic human needs of their populations.

ARTICLE 27

Member States undertake to fight poverty effectively in their respective countries and within the Community, especially by:

- Creating an environment conducive to private investment and the development of a dynamic and competitive private sector;
- Providing the instruments necessary for the enhancement of job creation and for the development of the social sector as a matter of priority;
 - Ensuring equitable distribution of resources and income in order to consolidate national unity and solidarity;

- Enhancing the integration of economic, financial and banking activities through harmonization of commercial and financial laws and establishment of Community multi-national corporations.

ARTICLE 28

1. Employers associations and trade unions shall be organized and/or strengthened in each Member State and at the regional level of ECOWAS.
2. Member States shall promote social dialogue. In this regard, employers associations and workers unions shall meet regularly among themselves and with political and administrative authorities with a view to preventing social conflict.
3. There shall be associations of farmers, artisans and artists in each Member State and at the sub-regional level of ECOWAS.
4. State and at the sub-regional level of ECOWAS.

SECTION VI – Education, Culture and Religion

ARTICLE 29

Education, culture and religion are essential factors for peace, stability and development in each Member State.

ARTICLE 30

1. There shall be regular exchanges of students and academics between Member States.
2. Community institutions shall be established to provide training for students from the sub-region.
3. In accordance with Article 36 of the Protocol, the Executive Secretariat shall, from now on, provide budgetary allocations for immediate funding of the programmes as contained in this Article.

Each Member State shall in the shortest possible time also make a contribution for the take-off and implementation of the programmes contained in this Article.

A percentage of the Community levy shall be allocated for the establishment of a fund for the implementation of the activities outlined in this Article.

4. A policy to promote women's education at all levels and in all fields of training shall be adopted and implemented in each Member State and at the level of ECOWAS.
5. Member States shall guarantee women equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular, shall ensure the same conditions for career and vocational guidance, access to the same curricula, access to opportunities

to benefit from scholarships and other study grants. They shall also ensure the elimination of stereotyped concepts of roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education.

ARTICLE 31

1. The culture of every group of people in each Member State shall be respected and developed.
2. The Executive Secretary shall take the necessary measures to organize, within the sub-region, periodic inter-state cultural events: festivals of arts and culture, symposia, various cultural events on literature, music, arts, and sports.
3. Member States undertake to take measures to eliminate or prevent religious conflicts and to promote religious tolerance and harmony. To this end, permanent structures for consultations among the different religions on the one hand and between the different religions and the State on the other hand, shall be established at national levels.
4. The Executive Secretary shall take the necessary measures to promote, through periodic meetings, consultations among the religious organizations of Member States.

SECTION VII – Rule of Law, Human Rights and Good Governance

ARTICLE 32

Member States agree that good governance and press freedom are essential for preserving social Justice, preventing conflict, guaranteeing political stability and peace and for strengthening democracy.

ARTICLE 33

1. Member States recognize that the rule of law involves not only the promulgation of good laws that are in conformity with the provisions on human rights, but also a good judicial system, a good system of administration, and good management of the State apparatus.
2. They are also convinced that a system that guarantees smooth running of the State and its administrative and judicial services, contributes to the Consolidation of the rule of law.

ARTICLE 34

1. Member States and the Executive Secretariat shall endeavour to adopt at national and regional levels, practical modalities for the enforcement of the rule of law, human rights, justice and good governance.

2. Member States shall ensure accountability, professionalism, transparency, and expertise in the public and private sectors.

ARTICLE 35

1. Member States shall establish independent national institutions to promote and protect human rights.
2. The Executive Secretariat shall take measures to strengthen their capacities. The institutions shall be organized into a regional network. Within the framework of this network, each national institution shall systematically submit to the Executive Secretariat, any report on human rights violations observed on its territory. Such reports and reactions of governments shall be widely disseminated through the most appropriate means.

ARTICLE 36

Member States shall institutionalize a national mediation system.

ARTICLE 37

1. Each Member State shall work towards ensuring pluralism of the information sector and the development of the media.
2. Each Member State may give financial assistance to privately-owned media. The distribution and allocation of such assistance shall be done by an Independent national body or by a body freely instituted by the journalists themselves.

ARTICLE 38

1. Member States undertake to fight corruption and manage their national resources in a transparent manner, ensuring that they are equitably distributed.
2. In this regard, Member States and the Executive Secretariat undertake to establish appropriate mechanisms to address issues of corruption within the Member States and at the Community level.

ARTICLE 39

Protocol A/P1/7/91 adopted in Abuja on 6 July 1991 relating to the Community Court of Justice, shall be reviewed so as to give the Court the power to hear, inter-alia, cases relating to violations of human rights, after all attempts to resolve the matter at the national level have failed.

SECTION VIII – Women, Children and the Youth

ARTICLE 40

Member States agree that the development and promotion of the welfare of women are essential factors for development, progress and peace in the society. Consequently, they undertake to eliminate all forms of discrimination and harmful and degrading practices against women.

ARTICLE 41

1. Member States shall guarantee children's rights and give them access to basic education.
2. Special laws shall be enacted in each Member State and at the level of the Community against child trafficking and child prostitution.
3. The Community shall adopt laws and regulations on Child Labour in line with the provisions of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

ARTICLE 42

1. Member States shall agree on rules to be adopted on the training and development of the youth.
2. Uniform laws shall be adopted within the Community to prevent and handle cases of juvenile delinquency.

ARTICLE 43

The Executive Secretariat shall put in place all necessary structures within its establishment to ensure the effective implementation of common policies and programmes relating to the education and the promotion of the welfare of women and youth.

CHAPTER II – MODALITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND SANCTIONS

ARTICLE 44

1. This Article complements the provisions of Chapter V of the Protocol of 10th December 1999.
2. In order to give full force to the provision of Article 28 of this Supplementary Protocol and in accordance with Article 57 of the Treaty, a legal convention incorporating, if need be, Convention A/P1/7/91 relating to mutual assistance in criminal matters, and the Convention A/P1/8/94 on Extradition

shall be Elaborated and adopted not later than twelve months after the entry into force of this Supplementary Protocol.

ARTICLE 45

1. In the event that democracy is abruptly brought to an end by any means or where there is massive violation of Human Rights in a Member State, ECOWAS may impose sanctions on the State concerned.
2. The sanctions which shall be decided by the Authority, may take the following forms, in increasing order of severity:
 - Refusal to support the candidates presented by the Member State concerned for elective posts in international organizations;
 - Refusal to organize ECOWAS meetings in the Member State concerned;
 - Suspension of the Member State concerned from all ECOWAS decisionmaking bodies. During the period of the suspension the Member State shall be obliged to pay its dues for the period.
3. During the period of suspension, ECOWAS shall continue to monitor, encourage and support the efforts being made by the suspended Member State to return to normalcy and constitutional order.
4. On the recommendation of the Mediation and Security Council, a decision may be taken at the appropriate time to proceed as stipulated in Article 45 of the Protocol of 10th December 1999.

CHAPTER III – GENERAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 46

This Supplementary Protocol shall form an integral part of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, signed in Lomé on 10th December 1999.

ARTICLE 47 : AMENDEMENTS

1. Any Member State may submit proposals for the amendment or revision of this Supplementary Protocol.

2. Any such proposals shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary who shall notify other Member States not later than thirty days after the receipt of such proposals. Amendments or revisions shall not be considered by the Authority, unless Member States shall have been given at least one month's Notice thereof.
3. Amendments or revisions shall be adopted by the Authority.

ARTICLE 48: WITHDRAWAL

1. Any Member State wishing to withdraw from this Supplementary Protocol shall give a one-year written notice to the Executive Secretary who shall inform Member States thereof. At the end of this period of one year, if such notice is not withdrawn, such a State shall cease to be a party to this Supplementary Protocol.
2. During the period of one year referred to in the preceding paragraph, such a Member State shall nevertheless continue to observe the provisions of this Supplementary Protocol and discharge its obligations thereunder.

ARTICLE 49: ENTRY INTO FORCE

This Supplementary Protocol shall enter into force upon ratification by at least nine (9) signatory States in accordance with the constitutional procedures of each Member State.

ARTICLE 50: DEPOSITORY AUTHORITY

This Supplementary Protocol and all instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Executive Secretariat which shall transmit certified true copies to all Member States and notify them of the dates of deposit of instruments of ratification by the Member States and shall register it with the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU), as well as the United Nations (UN) and any other organization as may be decided by the Council.

In faith whereof, we, the Heads of State and Government of the Member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have signed this supplementary protocol, in single original in the english, french and portuguese languages, all texts being equally authentic.

Done at Dakar on this 21st day of December 2001.

.....
H. E. Mathieu KEREKOU

President of the Republic of BENIN

.....
H. E. Blaise COMPAORE

President of FASO
Chairman of the Council of Ministers

.....
H. E. Jose Maria Pereira NEVES

Prime Minister and Head of
Government of the Republic
of CAPE VERDE

.....
H. E. Abou Drahamane SANGARE

Minister of Foreign Affairs, for and
on behalf of the President of the
Republic of COTE D'IVOIRE

.....
H. E. Yahya A. J. J. JAMMEH

President of the Republic of The GAMBIA

.....
H. E. John Agyekum KUFUOR

President of the Republic of GHANA

.....
H. E. Lamine SIDIME

Prime Minister of the Republic of GUINEA

.....
H. E. Koumba Yala Kobde NHANCA

President of the Republic of GUINEA BISSAU

.....
H. E. Monie R. CAPTAN

Minister of Foreign Affairs, for
And on behalf of the President of
The Republic of LIBERIA

.....
H. E. Alpha Oumar KONARE

President of the Republic of MALI

.....
H. E. MINDAOUDOU Aïchatou (Mrs.)

Minister of Foreign Affairs, for and on
Behalf of the President of the Republic
of NIGER

.....
H. E. Olusegun OBASANJO

President and Commander-in-chief of
Armed Forces of the Federal Republic
of NIGERIA

.....
H. E. Abdoulaye WADE

President of the Republic of SENEGAL

.....
H.E. Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan KABBAH

President of the Republic of SIERRA LEONE

.....
H.E. Gnassingbe EYADEMA

President of the TOGOLESE Republic

III. The work undertaken at the Forum

Acknowledgements	89
Forum's Presentation Note	90
1. Opening Statements	93
2. Reports by the Working Groups ³¹	113
3. Conclusion of the Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society Final synthesis of the work undertaken	137

31. The reports of the three working groups present the debates and conclusions of each workshop. These reports only take into account the work undertaken within the workshop and do not take into account participants' reactions at the plenary restitution session. The all-inclusive synthesis of the work carried out within the workshops is set out at the end of this chapter, the conclusions of the Forum.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements by the participants

Participants at The Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa, held in Cotonou from 28 June to 1 July 2005, sincerely thank President Mathieu Kérékou, the Beninois authorities and the people of Benin for their warm welcome and all their support.

The participants congratulate and also thank the organisers of the Forum, the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa and the Sahel and West Africa Club for the quality of the Forum's organisation. Congratulations are also in order for the translators, the Forum's Secretariat and all of the Palais des Congrès personnel for the diligence and availability without whom this Forum would not have been able to achieve these results.

Finally, participants would very much like that the Strategic Watch Club for Peace and the Sahel and West Africa Club widely disseminate the work carried out during the Forum, and urge them to strengthen their partnership in order to assure the Forum's continuity of which the periodicity will be determined after broad consultations.

Participants, in Cotonou, 1st July 2005.

The Forum's organisers pay special thanks:

To the Champions,

To the Partners in the organisation process: Strategic Watch Club, ECOWAS, the Sahel and West Africa Club's national correspondents and the network of resource people established in Gorée in November 2004,

To the Club's Members having contributed financially,

To the Chairpersons and Rapporteurs of the working groups,

To the President of ECOWAS' Parliament, in particular for having accepted to send the Final Declaration to the President of West African Parliaments,

To the participants for their fruitful and complementary contributions on which the Forum's success is based,

To all of the logistical support staff in Cotonou,

To the entire SWAC team.

Presentation Note of the Forum

Context

West Africa is a region experiencing a rapid and profound evolution. While the dynamics of change underway lead to political and social tensions, whether violent or latent, they also induce a certain openness and reconfiguration of the West African public space. The large number of socio-political actors in the public arena (political parties, civil society actors, media, non-governmental organisations, common economic interest groups, women and youth associations, unions, etc.), progress made in the field of political and administrative decentralisation in several countries, and the emergence of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as a driving force of regional political integration is a perfect illustration of this evolution.

Since the 1990s, the active presence of these different actors is apparent at the local, national and supra-national levels. The role of political parties, the media and civil society has continued to evolve since the “national conferences”. These different actors have had very few opportunities to meet and exchange views at the regional level.

In a new context, marked by the recurrent crises of governance and numerous conflicts, a meeting that decompartmentalises actors, despite their diversities and differences, becomes indispensable for facing current and future challenges together and with joint determination.

Offering support to actors who lead the region’s socio-political and institutional re-composition process is a priority in order to promote the agenda of democracy and peace in West Africa. It is within this framework that the Forum of political parties, media and civil society – a joint initiative of the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa and the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) – is being organised.

The Forum will bring together two hundred fifty participants from the fifteen ECOWAS Member States, as well as Cameroon, Mauritania and Chad. It will gather together representatives of political parties, the media and civil society from each country, continental (African Union) and regional (ECOWAS) institutions, multinational networks and movements, as well as development partners.

Objectives

The Forum is aimed at meeting four specific objectives:

- I. Organise a dialogue and contribute to the decompartmentalisation of key actors in democracy – i.e. political parties, the media and civil society;
- II. Help identify strategic issues, risks and major challenges facing West Africa in the building of peace and democracy in the region;
- III. Encourage an informed and constructive dialogue between various types of socio-political actors on their respective roles and responsibilities in building peace and democracy in West Africa, with a view to strengthening joint actions ;
- IV. Contribute to mobilising a wide range of actors around initiatives and actions that can lead to innovative decisions for the peacekeeping and the establishment of democracy in West Africa.

The Forum will approach the stakes of peace and democracy in a context of major economic, socio-political, cultural and institutional changes, of an opening towards other regions of the continent and to the rest of the world. It will examine the roles and responsibilities of three categories of actors. It will cross-examine perspectives and viewpoints in order to build a common vision of the current situation and lead to a consensus on the content and implementation of the actions needed to be implemented in order for the region to exit situations of conflict, strengthen democracy and take up the challenge of development while respecting differences. The Forum will be opened by a meeting that will examine the state of democracy in West Africa.

ECOWAS will be closely associated with the Forum. The appropriation of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance by the citizens and the ways in which socio-political actors can advocate for its ratification and implementation in ECOWAS Member States will be at the heart of the discussions. The Forum will also provide the opportunity to stimulate dialogue between social and institutional actors on the role and place of ECOWAS in policy regulation in the region.

Key Questions

Some of the key questions at the heart of the Forum will be:

- 1 – What lessons can be drawn from the past and present crises in the region, whose origin and/or stakes are of a political nature?
- 2 – How can actors – together and with joint determination – prevent the prolongation and repetition of such crises?
- 3 – How, within the framework of democratic and peaceful expression, can we give concrete shape and sustainability to the logic and practice of dialogue and exchange so as to limit consequential differences and contradictions?
- 4 – What are the roles and responsibilities of each actor in the lasting concretisation of such a perspective?
- 5 – How to face the challenge of sustainable development in the region, while respecting differences?
- 6 – To what extent and how can the Forum contribute to it by becoming periodic and being linked to ECOWAS mechanisms aimed at building and strengthening peace and democracy in the region?

Expected Results

The expected results from this event are as follows:

- ▶ Contribution to a better understanding of the risks and challenges that weigh on the establishment of democracy and the building of peace in the region;
- ▶ Contribution to dialogue among West African socio-political and institutional actors on their roles, capacities and responsibilities in the promotion of peace and democracy;
- ▶ Perpetuation of the Forum as a permanent framework for dialogue, functioning on the basis of sessions, whose periodicity will be defined;
- ▶ Strengthening the democratic process and stability in West Africa for sustainable and equitable development;
- ▶ Implementation of a consensual advocacy strategy promoting the ratification and application of the Supplementary Protocol for Democracy and Good Governance within the ECOWAS zone.

Organisation

A Steering Committee (composed of the SWAC and members of the Orientation Committee of the Strategic Watch Club) has been set up and will oversee the Forum's organisation.

1. Opening Statements

Introduction by Mr. Normand Lauzon, Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat

*Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Dear colleagues and friends,*

I would like to welcome you and thank you sincerely for participating in the work to be undertaken at this Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society co-organised by the Sahel and West Africa Club and the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa.

We are very pleased that you could join us in Benin for this meeting. I would like to sincerely thank our host country, its President, His Excellency Mr. Mathieu Kérékou, the Government of Benin as well as the City of Cotonou for welcoming us. It is not by chance that we have chosen to hold this meeting in Benin. This country has been a pioneer in the democratic evolution which took place in the early 1990s. Benin launched the cycle of the National Conferences in Africa, and is also, it should be emphasised, one of the rare West African countries to have allowed the private press to emerge with the creation of the Gazette du Golfe in 1987. It is also the country where civil society has always been and remains dynamic.

I would also like to thank sincerely the Club's partners, particularly, Luxembourg, Switzerland, France and Canada via the International Research and Development Center, as well as the UNDP and ECOWAS for their financial support to the organisation of this meeting.

Moreover, I would like to thank all of the prominent personalities who have accepted to champion this meeting, His Excellency Mr. Mamadou Tandja, President of the Republic of Niger and holding the office of Chairman of ECOWAS, and His Excellency Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of the African Union who has transmitted messages to us that are included in the documentation provided to you. Their support has given even more magnitude to this event at both the regional and continental levels.

I am pleased to see so many of you and have the pleasure of confirming that the Forum's first challenge has been met, to be able to bring together representatives of political parties, the media and civil society from 18 West African countries. Of course, as you can understand, we have not been able to invite all of the representatives of political parties, the media and civil society from each of the 18 countries. We had to go through a selection process in partnership with the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa (see Means and Criteria for Selection). We are aware that many other representatives would have wanted to take part at this Forum. We hope that when you return to your respective countries, you can share with them the strategic thinking resulting from the work undertaken. This Forum is not just another event but rather a release mechanism for a process of consultation, action and concertation promoting the building and strengthening of peace and democracy in West Africa.

We are more than 200 people gathered together here today to launch a dialogue at the regional level. I am pleased to count among us General Cheick Oumar Diarra, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), responsible for Political Affairs, Defence and Security, who during the morning will present the broad lines of ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. I am pleased to welcome the President of ECOWAS' Parliament, Professor Ali Nouhoum Diallo, who has kindly accepted to chair the plenary session this afternoon.

I would like to emphasise that this meeting is yours; this Forum is yours. Those responsible for organising this meeting would like you to engage in constructive dialogue based on your experiences; to have open and direct exchanges, anchored in reality and understanding the situation in order to move the strengthening and building of peace and democracy in the region forward.

Three questions:

1. Why has the Sahel and West Africa Club been involved in organising this Forum?
2. What should be the principal objectives for our exchanges?
3. What could be the follow-up to this Forum?

1. Why has the Sahel and West Africa Club been involved in organising this Forum?

Concerning the first question, I would like to remind you of what the Club is, give you our perspective of the region and indicate how this Forum is in line with Club's mandate.

In the mid-1970s, in the context of severe drought, several Member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an organisation to which the Club is attached, in partnership with Sahelian countries, created the Friends of the Sahel Club. The aim was to establish a forum for the international community to discuss and encourage strong support for the region. In 2001, our governing board decided to expand the Club's geographic coverage to encompass the 15 ECOWAS member countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo), plus Mauritania, Chad and Cameroon. The Club then became the Sahel and West Africa Club in 2001.

Taking into account the evolutions of the region for the last 30 years and responding to the demands expressed by our partners in the region, the Club has undertaken new issues. Accordingly, today our work focuses on four areas:

- Medium- and Long-Term Development Perspectives
- Agricultural Transformation and Sustainable Development
- Local Development and the Process of Regional Integration
- Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security

Within that framework of our work, our main objectives are to:

- Promote a balanced perception of West Africa taking into account the constraints while emphasising the dynamics of change;
- Support initiatives and efforts by Africans promoting peace;
- Play an advocacy role in support of African endeavours on the international scene.

The Club works in network with West African partners representing governments and all civil society actors in their diversity. It works in close collaboration with development partners of West Africa as well as international organisations; at the continental level: with the African

Union, the NEPAD Initiative and the AfDB; at the regional level: with ECOWAS, UNOWA, the WAEMU, the CILSS as well as ROPPA and of course, the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa.

The SWAC's perception of the region

West Africa has experienced significant change, and should not be perceived as a stagnant region but rather as a region in constant evolution.

A retrospective look at the region enables us to conclude that over the last two decades there have been significant social, cultural, institutional and political changes. To cite just a few: new modes of governance; a shift from a single-party to a multi-party system; expansion of the employment-generating informal sector; macro-economic and structural adjustments; economic liberalisation; changes in the configuration and role of the media; emergence of civil society's role within its professional or community-based representative organisations; evolution of women's rights in society and their changing role in public affairs; higher priority for local development and the regional integration process. Today, the importance of these challenges is exacerbated by the very high percentage of youth under 20 years of age (over 55% of the population). What other region of the world has undergone such transformations?

These tremendous upheavals have created political and social tensions but also an opening up and reconfiguration of the West African public space. While insisting on the dynamics of change and West Africa's capacities to change and adapt, the purpose here is not to say that "everything is going well". These changes have been impeded by problems of governance; human security; national and international strategies and policies; new pandemics.

For us, the vital question is: "Where and how will the approximately 430 million West Africans live in 2020?" This means that there will be an increase of over 10 million inhabitants than there are now. This demographic growth will be embodied by the predominance of youth seeking employment; increased urbanisation; pressure on land and food security; socio-economic infrastructure needs for an expanding population; heightened migratory movements, etc. These are some of the many issues that will be the source of tensions even conflicts to which societies and governments within the region will need to respond. These

are some of the problems to which solutions will only be found within a framework linking the local, national and regional levels. This is why the Sahel and West Africa Club has been involved in organising this Forum in partnership with the Strategic Watch Club.

2. What are the principal objectives for our exchanges during this Forum?

In West Africa, as elsewhere, people want peace and democracy. Each society must rely on its assets and resources in order to build peace; and women are playing a leading role in this process in West Africa.

In order to build and strengthen peace and democracy in a country or region, it is essential to have a good understanding of the societies and their evolutions, progress and challenges rather than adopting a superficial approach too often leading to pessimistic conclusions. This Forum will help raise areas of strategic thinking and action on these issues.

All over the world, maintaining peace in society requires vigilance and persistent determination because nothing is ever a given. Dynamics of change raise hopes for the future yet at the same time raise tensions. Africa is no exception.

Today there is an institution available, ECOWAS, that is very much in demand with regard to conflict management and maintaining peace and it is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. During the course of this Forum, we will have the opportunity to learn more about ECOWAS' activities and the instruments that it will be providing which will be available to you. General Diarra will introduce the Supplementary Protocol, already ratified by 9 countries.

In your region, the social relationships forged by history are thus strengthened by the new proximity of populations in the region structured by a rapidly growing network of towns. As a result, the interactions between urban and rural areas have been modified. Territorial development should be re-thought taking into account these evolutions which have an impact on stability in the region. It is therefore important to decompartmentalise the actors and have them connected through a network approach at the regional level. This is what this Forum seeks to promote.

Finally, we shall not forget - even if it is not today's topic - that Africa, like the other continents, needs to position itself within the new global context. With this, greater regional cohesion will give Africa more weight.

3. Why have you come together, you, representatives of political parties, the media, and civil society?

Everyone should be able to contribute to the building and strengthening of peace and democracy. As representatives of political parties, the media and civil society, you make up an essential pillar within this construction. How can democracy be envisaged without multi-party politics, without freedom of the press and without the active participation of civil society?

You have a lot of real life experience and ideas in common to share as regards the region's future. Nevertheless, you do not always agree on how to proceed. This Forum aims at stimulating dialogue and synergies at the regional level among actors while recognising their diversities and differences in approaches.

We are here not to discuss a given conflict within the region but to share your vision and your plans for the building and strengthening of peace and democracy within the region. These efforts can only be part of a consultation and negotiation process; where there are no losers no winners, but a joint willingness to compromise in order to benefit the majority. To promote unity while respecting diversity and building consensus while accepting alternatives; this is imperative!

4. What could be the follow-up to this Forum?

I would like to ask you to think about the follow-up to this Forum.

As you have well understood, we would not like the Forum to be an event without follow-up on the issue of peace and democracy.

If you have accepted to participate at this Forum, then you too must believe that it is possible to go further together to build and strengthen peace and democracy in the region. It is in this spirit that we ask you, each of you at your level, to be committed beyond this Forum and increasingly involved at the regional level.

It is now up to all of us to identify new courses of action anchored in West African society's experiences for a better common future.

We will be listening to you as regards the follow-up to this meeting.

Thank you.

Statement by Mr. John Igué, President of the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa

*Your Excellency, Honourable Minister of State,
representing the President of the Republic,
Your Excellency, Honourable President of the ECOWAS Parliament,
Your Excellencies, Presidents of National Assemblies,
Your Excellencies, Honourable institution leaders,
Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies, Honourable Deputies,
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Representatives of International
Organisations,
Madam President of the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD,
Dear colleague members of the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa,
Dear participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On behalf of the organisers of this Forum, I wish to, first, express my sincerest gratitude to the President of Benin, His Excellency General Mathieu Kérékou, and to his government for having kindly facilitated and hosted this Forum. On behalf of my colleagues, Strategic Watch Club members, I also wish to thank His Excellency the President in particular for having delegated the Minister of State to open this ceremony.

On behalf of my colleagues, members of the Strategic Watch Club, I equally wish to extend my warmest thanks to you all for your participation.

Despite the economic performances of some countries, despite peace efforts by ECOWAS and international institutions, in collaboration with the various countries, West Africa still faces poverty, serious political crises, food crises, AIDS, and persistent malaria. These crises undermine national efforts towards the development and welfare of their populations.

If we are gathered here today it is, above all, in order to find ways and means to address socio-political crises, including those that erupted as a result of the democratic process which began in 1990. When elections are organised and high-ranking officials leave office there is a disturbing ambience where people fear the escalation of violence.

Thus, since 1990 many countries face open or latent conflicts. About ten countries have gone through at least a period of conflict or severe tension. According to 2003 data, two thirds of the West Africa population, that is 65%, live in countries severely affected by conflict. The root causes of those conflicts are, among others, poor democratic governance, youth unemployment, changing of social, ethnical, and religious standards, and cross-border disputes.

The idea of setting up the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa emerged from the consequences of one of those crises striking one of the pillars of West Africa, that, in this very same city of Cotonou in December 2002. It took shape in April 2003, still in Cotonou, and fine-tuned in Bamako in November that same year.

Despite numerous initiatives promoting peace in West Africa, we thought the creation of our Organisation was needed in order to bring together the different protagonists of the conflicts in the region and thus provide a new approach within the different mediation initiatives tried elsewhere.

The Strategic Watch for Peace in West Africa is a flexible institution, which brings together African high-ranking personalities from all walks of life: intellectuals, former political and religious leaders, journalists, etc. It is open to personalities present here at this Forum in order to strengthen its prerogatives.

The Strategic Watch Club aims to broaden and strengthen complementarily a civil multifunctional and conflict prevention approach that is spreading across West Africa. The Strategic Watch Club's action is in line with ECOWAS' and the African Union's perspective as regards synergy and support.

In collaboration with ECOWAS and the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD, the Strategic Watch Club works towards:

- The prevention of crises in an informed and documented manner and alerting situations and areas at risk;
- Citizen-minded actions through information and activities aiming to preserve democracy, strengthening peace dynamics at the national and regional levels;
- Contribution to the promotion and the respect of principles and values of good governance for the benefit of the population and development.

The Strategic Watch Club solidifies its various actions through four main tools:

- The organisation of fora, bringing together various actors of society, to create dialogue frameworks among socio-political leaders in Africa;
- Information missions in risky areas. Several missions were carried out in Côte d'Ivoire, Casamance, Senegal, and Guinea Bissau. Other missions will be undertaken in Guinea Conakry, Togo, and to all areas in situations of conflict or under threat of conflict;
- Annual reports on the state of peace and democracy in the region;
- Launching of citizen-minded information, sensitisation, and mobilisation initiatives to involve a greater number of citizens in efforts to find solutions for sustainable peace in West Africa.

This Forum, which was initiated by members of the Strategic Watch Club, responds to one of these objectives. Despite the numerous qualitative demographic, economic, and socio-changes the region has undergone, there are still difficulties as seen through the following challenges:

- Ongoing crises and conflicts and the risk that they may spread through the region;
- Youth unemployment affecting about 50 % of the population;
- Extreme poverty affecting about 50 to 60 % of the population;
- Excessive compartmentalisation of the various local, national, and regional entities.

You are invited here today as high ranking actors in the future of our region to provide elements of solutions to these challenges. We would like that this Forum take the form of an annual event, like the Davos Forum on economic issues, organised in other African capitals taking up what has been initiated in Cotonou in order to continually raise awareness, promoting zones at risk in the region.

One of the major weaknesses of political leaders in Africa vis-à-vis their destiny, their country and the region is basically the quest for their personal security. The quest for personal security coupled with the need to stand out, which is at the basis of the confiscation of power for personal, tribal, and autocratic means. It leads many political actors to nepotism and mismanagement. Everyone should be made aware of the risk those escalations could cause, namely in the area of democratic governance.

However, Africa has always been a continent of solidarity, sharing and tolerance. These socio-cultural heritages should be strengthened around the above-mentioned challenges. The historical and cultural links require it, just as our future does in unison with world nations. We should not hide behind the effects of colonisation which led to the balkanization of Africa.

We all know that our borders are artificial; even if they are defined by natural barriers. African populations never speak of these dividing lines as territorial separators but rather areas for contacts and meetings in order to capitalise on common and shared resources. All the same, our different ethnic and socio-cultural groups are the expression of the mixture of blood and various cultures at the same time.

We need to be aware of this so as to strengthen our historical foundations through our deep family ties no matter which country history has placed us in today. The Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa in partnership with the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD, have made it a task to remind us of this need, because peace and good governance constitute the principal pillars of development.

May your debates during these four days enable West Africa to overcome ethnic, religious, ideological and border barriers and propose alternatives of friendship, solidarity, and sustainable peace, a sign of stability of the States and the different regional institutions.

I thank you.

**Speech by Mr. Pierre Osho,
Minister of National Defence representing
His Excellency Mr. Mathieu Kérékou,
President of the Republic of Benin**

*Your Excellency, President of the African Union Commission,
Your Excellency, President of the ECOWAS Parliament,
Mr. Deputy Executive Secretary of ECOWAS,
Mr. President of the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa,
Mr. Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD,
Members of Government,
Honourable Deputies of the National Assembly,
Honourable Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Representatives of International organisations,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The people of Benin are always attentive and receptive to the actions and initiatives aimed at promoting the renewal, prosperity and brilliance of our great and beautiful continent, Africa. All the people of Benin, its institutions and leaders, feel honoured and pleased by this opening ceremony of the Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in Cotonou, this day, Tuesday 28 June 2005.

On behalf of the President of the Republic and his Government, it is for me, a great pleasure to warmly welcome you all, our illustrious guests, coming from Africa and elsewhere to take part in this Forum, here in our country, in the fraternal and hospitable African land of Benin.

It is also my pleasure to express our warm and sincere thanks to the organisers of this important sub-regional meeting for choosing Benin as the host of this prestigious Assembly, the work of which shall be devoted to the major issue of the vitality of our democratic experience and the future of our young nations.

Your presence in Cotonou is comforting and demonstrates the interest in my country which is proud to be the initiator of the Conférence des Forces Vives de la Nation (Conference of the Nation's Vital Forces) in February 1990, an innovative process of consensual democratic change and the peaceful transition towards a multi-party democracy and economic liberalisation.

I appreciate therefore the choice of Benin and see it as an honour to all Benin people, their President, General Mathieu Kérékou, and all its democratic institutions.

*Honourable Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The 1990s, for many African States on the greater part of the Continent, have been a period of a second awakening, of a new great collective hope. Investing in politics, various people have decided to set up the means for a peaceful and consensual procedure motivated by new types of institutions, regulated by new norms.

Distinguished Participants,

Fifteen years after the undertaking of our different democratic experiences, it is undeniable, that in all, some significant obstacles have been overcome and some considerable progress has been made as regards democracy, its establishment, its taking root and its strengthening. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, regular holding of elections, power devolution are elements that have henceforth become an integral part of the political landscape of our countries. With a variably intense dynamic and at such a rate which takes into account the historic and socio-cultural specificities of our respective nations, the democratisation process is moving ahead. Notwithstanding some rumblings and some trembling, it is moving ahead.

In all, despite the unfortunate ups and downs encountered here and there by this great and exalted undertaking of African political rejuvenation, democracy has been and is being demonstrated irreversibly rising to the Africa of the 3rd Millennium.

However deep and strong it is, this self-confidence will not deter us from looking directly and critically not only at this already-travelled road but also at the concrete realities and current practices in order to identify obstacles of all types likely to compromise and delay the great qualitative changes that must put Africa on the road to modernity and prosperity.

A retrospective and introspective look at the general evolution and the state of our democracies demonstrates that despite the progress achieved, there is still a great fragility in all the areas.

This Forum will focus its work on three essential segments of our democratic systems and examine where the stumbling blocks lie as regards political parties, the media and civil society.

Without any doubt, the democratisation of the State and society that makes individuals responsible and aware actors of their destiny appears as a straightforward approach. If enjoying freedom is not closely aligned to respecting the rule of law, it can only go adrift. Too much freedom kills freedom.

As regards the political parties, the sharp increase and unrestrained organisational initiatives encouraged a highly charged and fragmented political landscape to emerge. Therefore numerous groups were created being called “political parties” without having the means to exist and function properly. This situation constitutes a major risk factor in as much as these groups that populate the political landscape of our West African States are constantly in a confrontational mindset as regards the sharing of material advantages that come from the State.

The democratic process thus lacks the ideological debates which should underscore political parties’ educational training. The responsibility of political training is as great in this sector considering the magnitude of illiteracy.

The absence of ideological debate, that is, examining ideas from the African political landscape, is harmful to the democratic process. Therefore it is rare today to see succession at the head of our States, of different philosophical policies, societal programmes inspired by different visions or orientations, in the framework of an authentic political alternate.

Under these conditions, a new strategic thinking is imposed on the nature, the place and the functioning of political parties within our democratic processes.

Civil society is infected with the same virus as political parties in so much that as we all observe, it is highly charged and irresistibly attracted to political calls.

Until now, our democratic processes seem sufficiently propelled by their civil society which, in many of our States, does not effectively assume its role as referee of the political game. Often obsessed by the political arena, civil society allows itself to be recruited by the political class, letting go of

their primary citizenship duty to participate actively in the constructive growth of a nation and her ethical and moral values must be cultivated and promoted.

As regards the media, it is not much better off. Probably their increase is a sign of the vitality of democracy. However, a quick look at the regional press enables us to see that this sector is sick with deviancy and repetitive diversions. Intense therapy is needed in order for the media to play its major political role which is the basis of democracy. It is often said, and with reason, that all political systems have the press it deserves. In order for democracy to be irreversible it needs freedom of the press but also and above all technically competent and morally integrated journalists, motivated by a high degree of patriotism and with a sharp sense of their responsibility, aware of the privileged role of informers and guides of the public conscience.

Dignified and proud of the noble profession, media professionals should be the promoters of excellence, perceived and respected as the purveyors of reality, objective witnesses and impartial arbiters of political debates, modern criers of the constitutional legality and the democratic order.

Alas, today, in most of our countries, the media offers a sad spectacle of an opportunistic and corrosive institution that has veered dangerously away from the code of ethics as well as from the profession's own ethical code. Therefore, reference points being lost and confidence shaken every day, opinion is confused and speculates on chaotic empiricism, racketeering and corruption that erode and pervert the press world. If the press sells its soul and reference points so easily, it is not only as a result of the amateurism of its players, but especially for their acquiescence to the power of money.

The radio stations whose principal goal is to facilitate access to information by the less privileged class, only offer programmes generally dominated by the brutal and tiresome distraction, relegating their job of educating and informing the masses to second place.

As regards television programmes, they are usually subsidiaries of other international channels whose programmes are culturally removed if not totally cut off from the concerns of our populations.

*Honourable Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Confronted with this less than gleaming reality, you will agree with me that our democratic experiences must be periodically invested with new corrective strategic thinking, an essential condition so that they may mature and develop harmoniously.

This strategic thinking, which your Forum is undertaking today in Benin, will be based on the significant themes of our joint willingness to promote the rejuvenation of our democratic processes.

Within this framework, allow me to bring to your clairvoyant individual and collective attention the problematic of strengthening the State whose function and purpose should be pertinently underscored as regards our colonial past as well as the current challenges of globalisation.

Only the States are in a position to guarantee the necessary conditions for the well-functioning of the democratic process, ensure stability, unity and peace. From this perspective a strong State will also need strong interlocutors; it is appropriate thus to support the development of strong policies to emerge benefiting a critical mass and the means to develop on a solid basis going beyond ethnicity or regionalisms. Today, the emergence of such policy developments is a priority in order to restore and preserve peace in our sub-region.

This Forum's initiative, which we commend again, therefore comes at the perfect time to launch a debate on all of these issues with a view to strengthening regional construction and to also enable us to face together all the challenges and the difficulties head-on.

*Distinguished participants,
Honourable Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I shall not end my speech, without commending the efforts of the development partners who have supported us along this route to strengthening democracy and development and the struggle to escape underdevelopment, to embrace progress and modernity.

I hope that in the course of these exchanges, all the vital sectors of democratic governance will be taken into account in your strategic thinking and critical analysis in order for a consensual platform, rigorous and

coherent, to emerge regarding the broad lines of action to be undertaken and open new perspectives for democracy and peace in West Africa.

It is with these words of hope, that on behalf of the President of the Republic, I declare, on this 28th day of June 2005, the Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa, open.

*Ahead with the African democratic rejuvenation,
Long live the Republic of Benin,
Long live International Cooperation,*

I thank you all.

Intervention by Professor Ali Nouhoum Diallo, President of ECOWAS Parliament

*Representatives of the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD,
Representatives of the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa Peace,
Ladies and Gentlemen participating in this Forum,*

I am, indeed, very happy to be here with you this morning, and I would like to thank you for including the ECOWAS Parliament in this meeting that brings us together today, here in Cotonou, Benin.

I appreciate your initiative all the more because this expanded Forum, which incorporates various political and social components of the region's countries, proposes to analyse critical phenomena such as conflicts, political governance, etc. – all issues that have been troubling West Africa for the last fifteen years or more.

This leads me to believe that intellectuals, political actors, economic operators and civil society representatives have come to understand that the political and economic turmoil and armed conflicts that affect this part of our continent cannot be considered as solely the concern of the region's authorities but rather a concern of all our people – unarmed ordinary citizens who are nonetheless the primary victims in all wars.

It is now or never – at a time when the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia are just about coming to an end and when two opposing camps are still facing-off in a Côte d'Ivoire divided in two – that we have to be able to sit together and ask ourselves how all this could have happened, how people who had lived together peacefully took up arms against each other and committed the worst possible atrocities in the world. To what extent are Africa's political class and civil society responsible for the development of the situation we are facing?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is up to you to find answers to these questions through a clear and accurate diagnosis of the difficult conditions prevailing in the region's countries.

For our part, we have observed paradoxical situations here and there which force us to stop and raise questions:

Disputed elections: The outcome of elections in Africa is always disputed, but sometimes the results are not very transparent due to the rules of the game and therefore fail to guarantee equal chances to all. Tragic events following election victories are an all too frequent phenomenon in Africa with the victor perhaps somewhat at a loss either because of a tally that is not subject to review or because of serious political turmoil which, whatever people may say, nonetheless remains a sign of political failure, as such situations mean that the ballot failed to adjudicate between the protagonists. Another troubling question is: what are elections in Africa really worth?

Political exclusion clauses: It has to be said that there are written or unwritten clauses on political exclusion in Africa which often do not allow all citizens, irrespective of their geographic, religious or ethnic origins, to stand for elections, be counted as voters or as eligible to vote. As soon as references to residence, nationality, religion, ethnic or geographical origins are included in electoral laws or merely crystallized in the sub-conscious of the majority of citizens, they become factors leading to the political blockage and exclusion of a category of citizens who are no longer able to get their rights acknowledged.

Constitutional revision: Most of the continent's countries emerged from the series of national conferences with more or less consensual constitutions often containing provisions limiting the President's number of terms in office. These fundamental laws are now being redrafted, sometimes in order to improve them, but very often to do away with provisions that had been called for and acquired during national conferences as is the case with the limitation of terms in office.

Problems regarding democratic changes in government: When provisions of law or political practices reduce the opposition's chances of acceding to power all sorts of conflicts, including armed conflicts, can ensue. The opposition may then see war as the only means at its disposal in order to accede to power. To my mind, democratic and peaceful changes in government should be a barometer for determining the reliability of any democratic system.

Economic governance: For the entire period that our States' economies were dominated by the former colonial powers and then by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's rules, with our leaders ensuring compliance with these rules, everything was allowed, without

any consideration for other political, economic and social balances. In such a context, to be in the opposition meant excluding oneself and excluding one's party's leaders from the country's economic life. Indeed, it sometimes even meant excluding one's region from the benefits of economic and social development. This gave the African political elite a great deal to think about, as they were concerned not just about the future of the entire continent, but also that of their native land.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The question is not one of re-inventing democracy and good governance, but of finding mechanisms that work and that can solve the problems we are facing.

Africa has come a long way by condemning the seizure of power by any means other than those of the ballot box. Several protocols have been adopted including one on Democracy and Good Governance. We will have the opportunity to speak of this at greater length during the Forum but we cannot ignore the fact that even today the continent faces a number of armed conflicts and political practices that are reminiscent of the Middle Ages.

Luckily, the quality of the actors at this Forum prohibits censorship - even more - self-censorship. Gathered here today are renowned intellectuals, leading political actors, skilled economic operators, experienced representatives from the world of NGOs, and the floor is all yours so that you can enlighten us and lead us off the beaten track with bold proposals and solutions that will guarantee West Africa a better tomorrow.

My sincere thanks to the SWAC and the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West African, which have enabled these women and men to come together through this initiative – people who have invested their entire lives, materially and financially, physically and intellectually, morally and spiritually, in order to ensure that their Motherland, Africa, the cradle of mankind, comes out of its obscurantism and moves towards the light, and forgives without forgetting all those who have dominated it, oppressed it, exploited it and engaged in veritable crimes against humanity, such as the slave trade – clearly comparable to a genocide.

I wish you success in all your work!

Thank you for your kind attention.

2. Reports by the Working Groups

Synthesis of the discussions of the first working group on Political Parties

Chairperson: Dr. Rose Oko, National Democratic Party, Nigeria

Rapporteur: Ms. Donata Gnisci, Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat

This report presents the broad lines and proposals emerging from one of the two working groups on political parties. It is not exhaustive but highlights the main points raised by participants in view of the discussions in plenary with civil society representatives and the media.

This working group brought together approximately forty representatives of West African political parties for a one-day working session. It held lively and open discussions with the active participation of all its members. The debate revolved around the key elements, issues and questions outlined in the working paper on political parties and those that emerged during the plenary on the first day.

The questions that guided the work examined the roles and responsibilities of political parties as regards: democracy, good governance and sustainable development; conflict prevention and peace-building; regional integration and cooperation. Furthermore the working group addressed the question at the centre of the Forum's debates: How can political parties work together with civil society and the media with a view to strengthening democracy and building peace?

Participants did not only exchange their points of view on these topics but also shared their experiences in their respective countries.

The following elements emerged through the discussions:

1. There was consensus on the alien nature of the type of democracy currently applied in Africa. Thus, the need was highlighted to find ways and means to put democracy in the African context in order to innovate and "tropicalise" the rules of the game. To shape an African (or West African) model of democracy, a large debate among all actors in society is needed

which helps identify common values and basic principles. The question of identifying those principles and values that are specific to West Africa, at the national and regional levels, deserves further discussion and analysis.

2. Political parties have several roles to play as regards political governance. They compete for the conquest of power on the basis of the political visions they support, the projects of society they propose and the programmes they have conceived. When they come into power, political parties should implement these programmes without excluding those who have not voted for them, let alone their political opponents, from the political and economic life. Political parties in power and those in the opposition should therefore work together towards an inclusive democracy and greater participation. Strengthening the role of political parties and raising citizen's awareness to politics is essential. However, it was argued that State institutions have an even greater role to play to achieve this objective, especially assuring that civic education is accessible to all.
3. As concerns inclusive participation and democracy, the group raised the issue of the role of women and youth in politics. Their roles are often neglected, although women and youth increasingly participate in political life. For example, they are mobilised during electoral campaigns as political militants and often make a significant contribution to the success of their parties. However, after the elections, it is rare that they have a post within the government. Ensuring that 30% of the positions in government are reserved for women could be one way to address this problem. Inter-generational dialogue, greater transparency and internal democracy in parties' functioning, were also indicated as critical.
4. Greater transparency, internal democracy and the strong commitment of party leaders to fight nepotism and corruption are necessary conditions to facilitate the succession process not only within political parties but also in the whole political system. Indeed, political succession and alternance in power were identified as two main factors that can contribute to stability, security and conflict prevention related to governance issues. In particular, these factors illustrate the importance of distinguishing the political from the administrative functions in the public sector. Can Heads of State and high-level officials be affiliated with a political party while exercising their institutional roles and functions? Which public actors can or cannot be partisan?

5. Alternance of power and strengthening of peace are only possible where trust exists between the various parties on the political scene. Parties themselves should ensure that political competition takes place in a peaceful environment. Participants identified two levels of intervention. Within each political party education as regards the need for tolerance and peace and training as regards the entire political process should be provided to all members. In the political arena, a genuine dialogue between political parties should be promoted and strengthened. A firm commitment should also be made to renounce violence geared towards achieving political goals. Several participants insisted on the need to establish legal frameworks and common rules to facilitate this dialogue. Building on the experience of several West African countries, some have suggested developing Charters of Political Parties, Charters of the Opposition and Codes of Good Conduct. These instruments have been applied, with a certain degree of success, to regulate political dialogue and competition particularly before and after the elections. It could be envisaged to set out regional principles to guide the process of developing such national instruments. During these debates, participants raised another issue as regards establishing national unity governments. Under what circumstances are they most necessary? How do they strengthen democracy in situations of peace or when emerging from conflict?
6. Pluralism and respect for diversity are intrinsic to democracy. They represent positive evolutions from the one-party system whose legacies all political parties should work to eliminate: personalisation of politics; political, social and economic exclusion; absence of contradictory dialogue between incumbents and opposition; manipulation of the State media, etc. However, excessive fragmentation and proliferation of political parties are destabilising factors that can lead to conflict. It is important to understand on what basis (e.g. ethnicity, religion, economic interests, etc.) and for what purpose numerous parties are created under certain conditions. On a general level, the question remains as to whether the number of political parties should be limited by law. If so, what criteria should be applied to limit the proliferation of parties? How can parties in society coexist with official parties represented in Parliament? How can we assure that fundamental freedoms are not hindered when limiting the number of political parties?

7. In addressing all of these issues, the group highlighted the importance for civil society and the media to play their respective roles. These roles are distinct but complementary to the roles of political parties in the common goal of building a society that is peaceful and democratic. In particular, civil society organisations and the media play an essential role in bridging the gap between political leaders and the population at the grass-roots level as widespread poverty and illiteracy make the real identification of needs and communication difficult between them. Dialogue between these three categories of actors (political parties, the media and civil society) should definitely be fostered not only regionally, but also nationally. Concrete proposals were made to implement this recommendation as outlined below.
8. There was consensus on the analysis of the current situation and development perspectives of the West Africa region. West African countries are undergoing dramatic demographic, social, economic, political and institutional changes. This puts pressure on the dual socio-political system based on continuity and transformation across the whole region. Regional cooperation could be useful to address transition in a peaceful way for actors facing common problems. Political parties are one such actor in this transformation process that needs to work more strongly on a regional level. The proposal was made to promote, with ECOWAS' support, exchange of experiences and information among political parties throughout the region. Through the ECOWAS Parliament, political parties now have the possibility to work closely together. This collaboration might be strengthened even more, should the ECOWAS Parliament evolve from a consultative to a legislative body. Another suggestion related to the need to build political parties' networks at the national and regional levels with a view to shaping a shared political vision for West Africa.

Finally, participants agreed on the need to make this Forum a periodic event, possibly with the support of ECOWAS. To this end, these proposals for follow-up were identified for discussion in plenary. They are addressed to the organisers, the various partners who made this Forum possible, but first and foremost to the Forum's participants.

- ▀ Cite in the Final Declaration the participants' will to hold this type of regional Forum on a regular basis;

- ▶ Explore the possibility for the next Forums to involve actors beyond West Africa, particularly from Central Africa;
- ▶ Assure that the conclusions of the Forum are made available to West African governments and that these States are more strongly involved in the future Forums;
- ▶ Develop dissemination and awareness strategies to assure that the Forum's conclusions are made available to those actors from political parties, the media and civil society in West Africa who could not attend the Forum. This may include:
 - The constitution of a core group of participants and the organisers to undertake missions to West African countries in order to disseminate the Forum's conclusions;
 - The dissemination of the Forum's conclusions through national media of the respective participating countries.
- ▶ Assess the feasibility and interest to organise in each of the different countries, a Forum of Political parties, the Media and Civil Society linked to the regional event.

Synthesis of the discussions of the second working group on Political Parties

Chairpersons: Messrs. Boubakar Moussa Ba, consultant, Mauritania et Mahamadou Issoufou, Parti nigérien pour la démocratie et le socialisme, Niger

Rapporteur: Mr. Cheick Mohamadou Bassirou Sarr, Ande Jëf – Parti africain pour la démocratie et le socialisme, Senegal

The second working group focusing on political parties retained the following conclusions for which a condensed version is set out in this report:

1. If it is true that the democratisation process in Africa can be dated to the 1990s, particularly in West Africa, a phenomenon related in part to the great transformations occurring in the world, in Europe particularly with the fall of the Berlin wall, the split of the Soviet System, the Baule Speech, one can also confirm that Africans, through the struggles they have faced for decades, have constructed an irreversible foundation for Africa by moving towards democracy, for national liberation, national independence and democratic alternation.
2. The struggle for political democracy happens in each country, together with the struggle for economic democracy. On the eve of the structural adjustments plans imposed by the IMF and the World Bank, the failure of which is still obvious today, there is room for new plans, like poverty reduction, driving the urban and rural masses into an ever-growing pauperization. This in a way means that the struggle for political democracy will be articulated with the struggle for economic democracy, if it is to be complete and sustainable.
3. The West African people in many of the countries are confronted, like never before, with conflicts often related to electoral contests but they aspire for peace and democracy. In such a context, The Forum of Political Parties, Media and Civil Society constitutes a fair and pertinent response to the various questions raised and related to the building of democracy and peace. While examining experiences here and there, it seems fair to affirm that only democracy can save Africa and it must adapt the universal values of democracy to the stark realities of our countries.

4. We must reaffirm very strongly that our fundamental objective is to build democracy, peace, economic and social development on our continent, in our sub-region, in our countries. For this to happen, with the understanding that conflicts are inevitable, we must work towards strengthening our capacities for conflict prevention, management and resolution.
5. The means by which we have to attain these objectives are first and foremost the political parties, the supposedly best organised social forces, the most aware and prepared for conquering political power. These essential instruments must, in their creation as in their daily actions, provide society based projects and programmes far from identity concerns (ethnic, religious, regional, sex and others, etc.); references which every constitution should prohibit. The political parties must also practice internal democracy, favouring alternation of power in their country. And without recommending limiting political parties, the proliferation of which greatly hinders democracy, we have to favour natural selection, while seeking other legislative mechanisms, like the financing of parties or the ballot box (through very strong means). With this, the Charter of the Political Parties of Benin should constitute a source of inspiration.
6. The place of youth and women deserves special consideration as it constitutes the livelihood of the parties as well as that of the society. It seems essential to give a greater place to supervising the youth, to their political and civic education while integrating this training in school curriculum; a way to involve aware and technically competent new citizens. In the same way, new problems posed by this juvenile population, especially in terms of employment, health, training and education, must be at the centre of the new issues posed and resolved by the political elite.
7. Discrimination against women hinders their emancipation. Considering our societies' evolutions, it is essential to encourage the promotion of women to elected or nominated decision-making positions, for fairness even positive discrimination and a voluntary policy of revalorising women.
8. The take-over of power remains a concern in all political training. We must straightforwardly affirm our choice for democracy and peace to prevail through electoral means. With this understanding and taking into account the experience in our sub-region, we strongly recommend:
 - The establishment of independent bodies to organise elections;
 - The consensual management of voters' cards by the different political parties;

- The secularisation of the electoral process, candidates and electors throughout the national territory;
 - Free access to public media;
 - The installation of truly independent (constitutional or special) courts;
 - The choice to have electoral observers who follow the electoral process from beginning to end;
 - The prohibition of conscience-buying.
9. The exercise of power, once it has been taken, must adhere to democratic and republican norms, respecting the laws and constitutions, transparency, tolerance, separation of powers, etc. in keeping with good democratic and economic governance and providing security to all actors.
 10. The role of the armies, to avoid referring to their irruption in the political arena, is a hot topic. Could we, as is done in some countries, promote professional armies and keep them outside of the electoral process? A majority of this working group extricates itself in order to support the idea that armies must be republicans and not justified on the basis of ethnicity or religion.
 11. As regards the specific cases of Togo, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, the working group has recommended informing parties more systematically in order to raise their awareness.
 12. The political parties, with a view to the interest this Forum represents to them, recommend: the annual meeting of this Forum to review and assess to date of all the decisions and recommendations suggested, with all the other actors coming from civil society and the media. They strongly recommend examining the experience in Niger with the establishment of the National Council on Political Dialogue.
 13. They recommend the follow-up and re-organisation at the national level of the Forum. The parties propose that the Forum congratulate the organisers and acknowledge and thank the Government of Benin.
 14. As concerns African integration, the political parties recommend to their governments – for those who have not done so already - to ratify ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

Synthesis of the discussions of the first working group on Civil Society

Chairperson: Mr. Abdoul Gadiry Diallo, Organisation guinéenne de défense des Droits de l'homme, Guinea

Rapporteur: Mrs. Bintou Sanakoua, Collectif des femmes du Mali, Mali

Introduction

After the nomination of Mr. Abdoul Gadiry Diallo as Chairman, the Forum's focal point in Guinea, all 46 members of the group introduced themselves. Thereafter, Professor John Igué, President of the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa briefed the group on the theme: "Civil Society in Building Peace and Democracy in West Africa." The text clarifies the concept of civil society and addresses the three key issues dominating African and international politics over the last 15 years:

- Participative democracy;
- Liberalism and its political advantages;
- The future of the Welfare State with its current crises and the need to introduce a new system of governance.

The text focuses on three main issues:

- Framework and functioning of the civil society;
- The role of civil society in the democratic process;
- Challenges facing civil society, recurrent crises and lasting peace.

Methodology

This group did debated openly and at length on all issues raised in and beyond the text. After fruitful discussions, the working group made the following remarks:

- The poor institutional framework of CSOs rendering them vulnerable to demands from States and interest-minded political forces;
- The lack of financial autonomy which reduces Civil Society Organisations free space;
- The tendency of civil society leaders to seize the decision-making power of a group; the lack of respect for democratic principles, and the lack of transparent management;

- The poor communication among CSOs with common objectives both at national and regional levels;
- The creation by State authorities of associations for the purpose of securing funding earmarked for CSOs;
- The lack of harmonisation leading to the dispersal of efforts within the CSOs with common objectives, particularly in the area of conflict prevention and settlement;
- The dynamism and strong commitment of women and the youth in the prevention and settlement of conflicts in West Africa, prompting political forces in conflict to enter into dialogue.

In response to those remarks, the working group deemed it necessary to:

- Clarify the concept of CSO and outline the conditions for introducing a code of conduct for civil society actors;
- Build the institutional and organisational capacities of CSOs;
- Have respect for democracy and good governance so that they become the CSOs guiding principles in order for them to be more credible as counterbalancing forces;
- Create conditions for close collaboration between FOSCAO (Forum of Civil Society Organisations in West Africa), the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa, and the Sahel and West Africa Club in efforts to restore peace and security in the region;
- Index and develop the endogenous mechanisms for the prevention and the settlement of conflicts through the involvement of traditional rulers, wise men, religious leaders, and traditional communicators;
- Emphasise the fact that if peace means more than the absence of war, CSOs operating in the areas of conflict prevention and settlement should coordinate their actions and help restore a climate of peace and security;
- Lobby to educate children at primary schools on the culture of peace and democracy;
- Introduce voluntarist policies on public literacy campaigns.

A proposal has been made to set up a follow up framework for the Forum in each of the countries to ensure the periodical organisation of this regional Forum and specify its frequency.

Synthesis of the discussions of the second working group on Civil Society

Chairperson: Mrs. Penda Mbow, Mouvement citoyen, Senegal

Rapporteur: Mr. Bakary Fofana, Centre du commerce international pour le développement, Guinea

About 45 people participated in this working group which examined three main themes listed in the introductory document “Civil society in Building Peace and Democracy in West Africa”: 1) the typology and operation of civil society; 2) its role in the current democratic process; 3) how civil society copes with the challenges of recurrent crises and sustainable peace.

The typology and operation of civil society

Before tackling these issues, a proposal was made to harmonise the different notions of civil society. Rather than providing a precise definition, discussions helped identify its various components.

Civil society is comprised of traditional or modern organisations, non-political, non-partisan, non-State-controlled, non-governmental, profit-making or not, which strive to achieve social and economic development for a democratic and peaceful society.

Discussions also focussed on the importance of private sector organisations in this area and insisted on taking into account traditional organisations as genuine members of civil society.

As far as representativeness is concerned, civil society is recognised in the results of its work with respect to the population’s priorities.

The typology and operation of civil society

Before tackling these issues, a proposal was made to harmonise the different notions of civil society. Rather than providing a precise definition, discussions helped identify its various components.

Civil society is comprised of traditional or modern organisations, non-political, non-partisan, non-State-controlled, non-governmental, profit-making or not, which strive to achieve social and economic development for a democratic and peaceful society.

Discussions also focussed on the importance of private sector organisations in this area and insisted on taking into account traditional organisations as genuine members of civil society.

As far as representativeness is concerned, civil society is recognised in the results of its work with respect to the population's priorities.

In terms of its operation, civil society should:

- be part of both a development and a challenging dynamic;
- be transparent in its operation;
- create synergies between its different components to be more effective;
- strengthen and develop its capacity to analyse issues in order to assess policies better;
- take a participative approach with the actors it works with;
- draw up an ethics code;
- reject sectarianism and extremism in its operation.

The role of civil society in the current democratic process

One of the first observations made is the failure of the political and economic system to solve problems and meet the population's priorities. The principles underpinning democracy are not properly approached. The focus is more on access to power than on building a real democratic culture dynamic. The fragility of the State weakens both society as a whole and its ability to develop a genuine driving social project. This favours the introduction of non-endogenous development. Areas of strategic thinking and the development of endogenous alternatives are confused and clouded over by the profusion of concepts and their frenzied consumption.

One of the consequences of this situation is social fragmentation, the loss of identity and the quest to reconstruct society in an environment marked by the weight of the world. Debates identified the issues of the family crisis which should be the basis of defining a new cultural, political and economic identity; hence the importance of reviewing our political history, traditions and references, as the major issue is the relationship between the African local and the global situations. This represents a challenge for civil society.

Another consequence for civil society takes us back to the issue of the management of human and financial resources, defining and sharing a vision based on values specific to the population.

Several issues were raised, including the political exploitation of the media, the need to define, or rather redefine, democracy, etc.

As far as civil society's role is concerned, three fundamental factors were identified: commitment, organisation and participation.

On the basis of this and other analyses, the working group defined the following roles in the ongoing democratic process. Civil society should:

- act as an interface between the State, politicians and the population;
- act as a pressure group;
- promote values and citizens' awareness;
- fight corruption;
- promote the truth;
- educate young people and inculcate historic awareness;
- promote respect for difference and tolerance;
- act when the State fails;
- play a mediating role;
- undertake certain advocacy actions;
- promote human safety;
- ensure the restoration of values in politics;
- improve citizens' social status;
- support women in accessing responsible positions;
- promote dialogue;
- translate African constitutions into national languages;
- train and inform;
- africanise western concepts;
- engage in the observation of the electoral process;
- contribute to establishing truly effective citizenship;
- promote ethics and morality in politics;
- awaken Africans' altruistic awareness of development issues;
- fight exploitation through the political class of youth, women and other civil society organisations;
- promote social and economic well-being.

Recommendations

- The development of cooperation between the media and civil society;
- Capacity-building and the definition of the responsibilities of media professionals;
- The multiplication of national dialogue opportunities;

- Training of political leaders on the rights and duties of citizens and on the electoral code;
- The definition of a credible youth and women promotional programme by political parties;
- Grass-roots politics should not exclude civil society, which implies the existence of independent candidatures.

How civil society copes with the challenges of recurrent crises and sustainable peace

The debates identified several causes of crisis in West Africa. These include the distribution of wealth, exploitation of tribalism, impunity, national egotism, non-compliance with the rules of law, outside influence, etc.

In terms of conflict prevention, it is important to:

- Promote civil education of the population;
- Act as a defender of national constitutions;
- Militate for education to become depoliticised;
- Focus on educating the young;
- Set up a network of organisations working to promote peace in the region;
- Introduce conflict prevention aspects in ECOWAS countries' education systems;
- Develop a culture of religious and interethnic tolerance.

In terms of crises resolution, it is important to:

- Integrate traditional dynamics in the resolution process;
- Set up intervention mechanisms by civil society;
- Involve civil society networks working to promote peace.

In terms of peace building, it is important to:

- Revise the education and training system;
- Promote dialogue and increase dialogue opportunities;
- Avoid religious extremism;
- Promote economic and cultural rights;
- Build a credible legal institution;
- Strengthen regional integration;
- Build civil society's capacities;
- Promote the common history of populations;
- Promote endogenous values.

General recommendations

At ECOWAS level

- Drawing up of a social plan for West Africa by the political authorities;
- Creation of an independent structure for the supervision of elections in West Africa;
- The return of Mauritania into ECOWAS;
- Institutionalisation of this Forum;
- Better coordination between existing dialogue areas of civil society: West African Social Forum, ECOWAS Forum on Civil Society and Civil Society Forum, political parties, the media;
- Creation of an advocacy platform within ECOWAS;
- Promotion of the idea of West African integration at the grass-roots level;
- Rapid introduction of a policy managing young people's emigration from West Africa to other continents;
- On the same basis as the Common Agricultural Policy, ECOWAS should draw up sector-based policies in the economic, social and cultural fields.

Dialogue areas

- Support the strengthening of the West African Social Forum;
- Create an interactive website for West African civil society;
- Introduce a mechanism to implement and monitor recommendations produced by this Forum at the regional and national levels.

Financing of civil society

After very fruitful discussions, the participants recognised the right of access to regional public financing for development actions that benefit the population.

Synthesis of the discussions of the working group on the Media

Chairperson: Mrs. Diana Senghor, Institut Panos Afrique de l'Ouest, Senegal

Rapporteur: Mrs. Suzanne Kala-Lobé, Journalist, Cameroon

With about forty journalists practising mainly within the public media (particularly radio and television), along with the participation of private press journalists (all media sectors together), albeit with a negligible number of women, the working group examined "The Roles and Responsibilities of the Media in Governance and Peace", while adhering to the following idea: "Fifteen years after the launching of the liberalisation of political systems in Africa, what are the stakes and challenges facing the media".

The discussion was introduced by the main questions raised in the introductory paper, namely: "What would be the institutional framework likely to guarantee the viability of the press? How to assure concertation between other actors and relationships between them be maintained? What would be the journalists' status? How must the public media change in order to serve the general public?"

These questions were seriously analysed focusing attention on the state of the press, the multiplicity as regards the number of newspapers, the precariousness of journalists, the incidences pertaining to this precariousness in as much as the quality and credibility of the information. Finally, among the list of the press' drawbacks, the working group concentrated on the weakness and fragility of the press which has emerged under difficult conditions namely during the democratisation process in West Africa. The region was already shaken by profound changes occurring within many States and all the difficulties naturally reflected back onto this sector which is now being established.

The working group examined the following question: "What could be the role and responsibilities of the media in the building of democracy and peace?" The discussions aimed to refocus such a problematic, based on reality and the moment in time that the question was raised, so as to question the quality of the media's role within the democratic process. To better understand the seriousness and the incidences, an analysis was

carried out on: the means of producing information, how it is addressed, its contents, the problems disseminating information, the language(s) in which it is produced, the way in which to articulate local information into regional information, regulatory capacity, economic and cultural conditions, the viability of the press. Finally, the working group structured what seems to be essential to undertake within the ECOWAS zone in order to strengthen, according to the terms devoted to “the media’s capacities”, these instruments which are crucial for democracy.

The report was read twice: first, during discussions, with its key points, and then at the level of recommendations coupled with the relevant explanation.

The Discussions

Several issues were discussed:

- ▲ The role of the State which in turn deemed responsible for the atomisation of the Press and asked to assume its role as facilitator and arbitrator;
- ▲ The conditions of a profession so trampled on, miserable and poor, exposed to great temptations, sometimes giving in to corruption, thus de facto corrupting the quality even the addressing of information;
- ▲ The relationships between the media and the public; the actual status of information and its formats; the exclusion, indeed the further marginalisation of certain social groups ;
- ▲ The ambiguous relationships between political parties, civil society and the media (at times partners, adversaries and competitors);
- ▲ The role of journalists during wartime and the difficulty to produce the “right and true” information, whatever the situation: war or peace.

As regards the media’s role, the hindrances, constraints and limits pertaining to the profession were underlined: the weakness of the press, often the lack of collective conventions, internal regulations and workers’ social protection, the lack of training for youth in the field. While observing that the legal frameworks (communication laws) in the ECOWAS zone are far from being harmonised, and the inactive dissemination of information which is also not focused on key problems affecting the general public, the working group emphasised new conditions which could improve considerably the quality of the media’s role in the building of peace and strengthening of democracy.

Proposals and Recommendations

These proposals focused on the need for a strong, free and independent press, autonomous, capable of producing fair and true information, encouraging balance between the excluded, marginalised and other actors. A press which does not hesitate to disturb society by daring to raise the veil and address subjects which are usually left unsaid; a press always ready to play its citizenship role in the building of a peaceful regional space, by properly defining its own role and position.

There are non negotiable conditions, which are:

- 1) Training for journalists,
- 2) Establishing conditions for practising this profession,
- 3) Setting up the legal and economic frameworks,
- 4) Strengthening, by all means possible, regional cooperation, and particularly the decompartmentalisation reflex.

The increasing power of the media (written and audio-visual) underscores the importance of the support needed within the ECOWAS zone, the plurality, diversity and diversification of the Press. This means the need to clarify an institutional and legal framework through the harmonisation of communication laws (freedom of the press, access to public information, pluralism in the roles and support, etc.).

In order to strengthen the capacities of the press, regional information centres must be set up, adapting the information's content and rhythm to the real needs of the African press.

New professional training mechanisms must be established adapted to the current needs of duration and means: for instance, the hosting of seasoned journalists in the media; the supervision of young recruits by professionals; the establishment of media schools; reforming of training centres, etc.

Participants also proposed the following:

- ▶ Using regional communication languages and training journalists in these languages;
- ▶ Setting-up regional press agencies to feed the media in each country with information pertaining to Africa and strengthening PANA;
- ▶ Using new information and communication technologies (NICT) to promote regional information;
- ▶ Encouraging conflicts to be covered or other events by journalists of countries other than those in conflict;

- ▶ Re-drafting, at the regional level, a protocol strengthening African press capacities and protecting journalists carrying out their work;
- ▶ Requiring the media to guarantee the plurality of information, while giving equal and fair space to various social actors: civil society and political parties, without being subservient partners to them;
- ▶ Creating a place for meeting and exchanges between experienced journalists and young recruits in order to improve the quality of information and accountability;
- ▶ Strengthening capacities of self-regulating bodies and increasing legitimacy of regulating bodies by guaranteeing representation while respecting political, sociological pluralism, etc.;
- ▶ Making the press viable while imposing specific criteria on all private entrepreneurs: capital, premises, salaried workers' working conditions, number of staff, increasing public aid without other conditions than representation, the seriousness and regularity of the media;
- ▶ Widening the regulations of community radio stations so that they can handle general information;
- ▶ Signing collective conventions guaranteeing the rights of media professionals.

The relationships between the media, civil society and political parties

These three groups have the common power to exercise a persuasive influence on public opinion. They are often in competition, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) creating their own radio, or when political parties set up their own press. The media is victim to political parties' desires who seek to manipulate them. In turn, some media organisations abuse their power by sometimes selling their services. These factors inevitably affect democratic transparency negatively. Difficult to avoid, the media can be contained if each plays its role with responsibility. These relationships are therefore based on competition and partnership. Competition may be healthy and the partnership fruitful. Everything depends on the forces put into play!

Conclusion

The richness of a debate, the time spent to ensure mutual understanding can never be reflected in any report, no matter how exhaustive it may be. This report sets out how each participant believes in the importance of the media's role in building democracy, how all are convinced that only professionalism can strengthen their capacity, but above all, that everything depends on us: our determination to effect change and play the game with all we can, with a keen sense of responsibility even though it is not always easy in times of war to exercise the required discretion. All the participants are aware that the regional stake and major challenge in the building of democracy and peace in order to go beyond borders to overcome barriers that have cost so much in human lives.

3. Conclusion of The Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa

Final Synthesis of the discussions

In their discussions and recommendations, the three groups of actors taking part in the Forum (political parties, civil society organisations and the media) each affirmed their role in the ongoing democratic process in West Africa. Each group tried to describe the situation and characteristics shared by the various countries in the region, over and above differences between current political contexts.

They analysed their contribution to democratic civil life and their capacity to promote, maintain or re-establish civil peace. They presented their situation with respect to power (civilian and military) and to the State. They explained their position with respect to fellow citizens and populations. They identified their foot-hold in society. They identified possible divergences or conflicts between each others' practices and objectives. They showed the will to strengthen synergies and bridges between each other in a spirit of partnership and complementarity. The Forum thus enabled each group to express what it expects from power and other groups, which rights should be guaranteed and which duties each should accept.

The three groups of actors formally referred to the democratic model of western societies but each questioned the foot-hold of this model in the tradition and value of African cultures. This issue in fact triggered the debate on the effects of globalisation on democratisation and economic development in Africa: the dialogue between "African local" and "world global" is of permanent concern to the region's socio-political actors.

From these discussions, challenges emerged which are shared by the three groups of actors in their various forms of organisation, management and participation in the different aspects of public life.

These challenges relate to:

- i. The need for regulation adapted and standardised at local, national and regional levels;
- ii. The strengthening of organisational, institutional and human capacities;

- iii. The transfer of knowledge, experience, responsibility and power within institutions, in particular between generations;
- iv. The development of reliable and transparent financing systems that help fight poor practices and corruption;
- v. Improved dialogue and cooperation with other public actors;
- vi. Their contribution to the pacific management of social and/or political conflict and the prevention of violent conflict in general.

Over and above these transversal challenges, specific situations for each category of actors were identified.

Civil society

Generally speaking, even though delegates at the Forum had different views of civil society organisations, their role in the democratic process was recognised and re-affirmed. Their legitimacy lies in their performance and the effects of their commitment.

Various questions have been asked, without complacency, by civil society organisations themselves on their representativeness and their countless areas of intervention (“amorphous entity”). The criticism of the way they function was presented: fragility of financing and risks of appropriation, fragmentation, dispersion, opacity and exploitation of all sorts.

The focus was on the specific capacity of these organisations to contribute to the democratisation of society at several levels, in particular:

- ▶ With respect to political power, civil society organisations act as forces of opposition, indispensable to democratic life when they alert, criticise and speak up for social groups that leaders and political parties may forget.
- ▶ Through their proximity to grass-roots communities, civil society organisations are anchored in a dynamic social reality. They are privileged actors in civic education, indispensable to democratic life. Through this, they are capable of making effective contributions to peace and reconciliation processes, namely by appealing to all traditional authorities and working across national frontiers. Civil society organisations can therefore help reduce the democratic deficit which educated and westernised political elites cannot do.

Moreover, CSOs often have social solidarity functions that the State cannot (or can no longer) perform. The State sometimes delegates anti-poverty actions to civil society organisations. In other cases, these organisations are

required to perform State functions (protection, security) or provide basic services (health, education), especially in conflict situations or in the wake of crises, or in favour of vulnerable groups (displaced populations, migrants, ethnic minorities, children, etc.). Owing to this, the issue of access by these organisations to public funding is raised.

The contribution of CSOs to democratic life is considered to be essential. However, dialogue with parties and powers is ambivalent, as illustrated by the unsettled debate on the presentation of independent candidatures from civil society in political elections.

The Forum recommends full recognition of civil society actors in civil dialogue and the drawing up of social projects that the political parties could include in their agendas.

In particular, two types of organisation have been recognised for their social innovation role:

- i. Associations promoting women's rights, rights with respect to their person, civic rights, participation in political life;
- ii. New youth movements in their aspirations for peace, a responsible life, education and social change.

The Forum recommends effectively taking into account the voice and initiatives of youth and women's movements, their will to transform society and establish civil peace.

Political parties

Discussions on the role of political parties in democratic life and civil peace resulted in several approaches.

- ▶ **A philosophical approach** on the relevance of the western democratic model for Africa. Messages on traditional values and on the use of traditional authorities in restoring peace were voiced at the Forum. Various issues should be presented in parallel: How to reconcile democratic modernity and anchorage in the cultural base of West African societies? What is the current role of traditional authorities in national and local political systems? How can the political representation system, based on changing parties and social groups, be adapted? How can the political class be renewed? What is the role of the intelligentsia? How can illiterate populations access politics?

▶ **A political approach** based on two major messages:

- i. Democratic life depends on respect for the Constitution and the State of Law;
- ii. Refusal to take power by force is the basis of democracy.

It is accepted that the objective of all political parties is to “win power”. The party system is thus organised. The Forum stated the importance of a real ideological debate between political parties but it also recalled the risks for democracy in accepting that parties may have an ethnic, regional or religious base.

Owing to this, in democracy, access to power through elections is a crucial moment. The organisation of legitimate elections requires an updated civil status, the development of electoral registers, the definition of constituencies, the implementation of the ballot and vote counting. This democratic engineering requires a free and impartial institution to monitor the democratic process.

On the basis of legitimate elections, peaceful democratic life depends on alternating power and the regular renewal of leaders. The need for status and rights for opposition parties as well as for high-level authorities having left power (i.e. former Heads of State) is recognised and strongly recommended by the Forum.

The increase in the number of parties as polling days approach was mentioned as a pitfall in the system. The reasons underpinning the creation of certain parties and their representativeness may be called into question. However, limiting their number by law is a solution that is not unanimously agreed. Favouring a natural selection between parties by other measures depending on contexts seems more suitable.

- ▶ **A social approach** on relations between parties and other socio-political and institutional actors. Democratic representation by the party system is preferred to any other system of authority. However, critical analyses have been made as to the relations parties have with other actors invited to the Forum. For example, parties’ capacity to exploit civil society organisations or manipulate populations has been criticised.

The role of the army in society raised questions on its inclusion in democratic life. The Forum opened the debate on the right to vote for military personnel. It was unanimously agreed that democratic life involves

power to civilians through elections. However, it was suggested that this debate (specifically covering more or less fair eligibility criteria) should be integrated in broader discussions on the role of the military in the political and decision-making processes in West African countries.

- ▶ **A geopolitical approach** on the dimensions and regional actors of democracy and peace. The need for a real regional debate with a view to forging relevant political visions for West Africa has been mentioned. Stronger cooperation between West African parties – starting with the pooling together of experiences nationally in the establishment of democracy, dialogue with other actors, etc. – has also been suggested.

The Forum raised the issue of regional integration as a democratisation and peace factor by discussing the overflow of nationalism and the role of ECOWAS.

In particular, the issues of ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, ratified to date by nine countries (therefore about to enter into force) were re-affirmed. The implementation of the Protocol extended to all West African countries is urgently recommended by the Forum.

These areas of discussion should be pursued.

The Media

Fifteen years after the opening of the democratic process in West Africa, the Forum's participants affirmed that strong, free and viable media can play a decisive role in building peace and democracy in the region, despite remaining obstacles and shortcomings, mainly concerning restrictions on the ability to work freely as a journalist. They also highlighted the risks of breaches in ethical rules, in particular during crisis situations.

They observed that information is not the sole responsibility of journalists and the media; all other actors in society are now capable of circulating information.

Pluralism of information is specific to all democracies. That is why, considering the importance of the media in the strengthening of democracy and building of peace, participants at the Forum made a certain number of recommendations to support the plurality and diversity of the media and strengthen the role, status and protection of journalists. These recommendations are included in the Forum's Final Declaration.

Observing the lack of training for journalists, participants recommended the creation of a regional training centre adapted to the realities of the West African context (rapid social change, access of the region to global trade and the issues of globalisation, regional integration process, conflict dynamics, emergence of new actors, etc.). These new training mechanisms should mainly target young, inexperienced professional journalists. Moreover, they insisted on the need to make journalists aware of, or to remind them of, the ethical rules that govern the profession.

It was observed that most journalists in the region are generalists whereas there is a stronger need for journalists specialising in politics, economics, social issues, scientific revelations, etc.

Despite a significant increase in the number of publications, information is not always accessible to the general public, especially to the more isolated and deprived populations. Several suggestions were made to remedy this problem, including:

- ▶ The use of regional communication languages and training of journalists in these languages;
- ▶ The creation of a regional press agency and/or the support of existing ones;
- ▶ A more extensive use of new information technology to promote regional information;
- ▶ The opening of new radio waves, especially community radio, and private TV stations to broadcast high quality information accessible to a broader, illiterate audience;
- ▶ The drafting, on the regional level, of a protocol on building the capacities of the African press and on protecting journalists in their jobs.

Despite the diverse approaches of the three groups of actors, the same atmosphere of dialogue enabled the Forum to overcome controversy, open up debate and demonstrate solidarity of West African societies in their will to achieve peace and democracy.

The recommendations made by the Forum reflect these convergences.

Closing speech

His Excellency Mr. Valentin A. Houdé, Minister in charge of relations with Institutions, Civil society and Benin citizens outside the country

*Honourable Ladies and Gentlemen,
Presidents of the Republic's Institutions,
Mr. Mahamat Choua Lol, former Head of State of the Republic of Chad,
Members of the Government,
Members of Parliament,
Former Prime Ministers,
Former Ministers,
Members of the diplomatic and consular corps,
Representatives of international organisations,
President of the ECOWAS Parliament,
President of the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On this day, Friday 1st July 2005, I have the honour, on behalf of the Head of State, Head of the Government, General Mathieu Kérékou, of closing The Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa, opened in this same place at the Palais des Congrès on Tuesday 28th June 2005 and which involved the participation of eminent actors from 18 countries from West and Central Africa.

After the brilliant description of the state of play by the Minister of State in charge of National Defence, representing the President of the Republic, at the opening ceremony of the Forum, what aspects of the Cotonou conference should we bear in mind?

Distinguished Delegates,

During this Forum, you have recommended the following:

- ▶ Taking into account African socio-cultural contexts with the universal values of democracy for their anchorage and appropriation;
- ▶ Respect for the democratically adopted Constitution;
- ▶ Measures (electoral codes, permanent dialogue frameworks, acknowledged roles of opposition parties and former Heads of State) to ensure the trust

and security of actors in political life in order to stabilise and anchor democracy;

- ▶ The general introduction of autonomous structures for the transparent and regular organisation of elections;
- ▶ The promotion of freedom of the press by training of journalists, their protection against liberticide practices while respecting the law and ethical rules and through the pluralism of the media;
- ▶ Recognition of civil society within the framework of the consultation and discussion process inherent in democratic life;
- ▶ Greater emphasis on civic and political education of young people by involving formal and non-formal systems of education.

The relevance of the conclusions of your work has demonstrated your commitment to strengthening peace and democracy in our region and throughout Africa without which sustainable development is impossible.

On behalf of the Government of Benin and its Head, General Mathieu Kérékou, I would like to thank you for the immense work you have achieved in such a short period of time.

My thanks also go to the organisers of this original Forum: the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD and the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa.

*Distinguished delegates,
Honourable guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Despite your very busy agenda, I hope you all had a pleasant time in Cotonou and that you will look back fondly to your stay in Benin.

With these words conveying African warmth, and convinced that this Forum will be a significant date in the history of our continent, on behalf of the President of the Republic, on this day Friday 1st July 2005, I declare the close of The Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa and wish you a good journey home to your respective families.

Long live democracy,
Long live international cooperation,
Long live Africa,
Long live Benin,

Thank you.



IV. List of participants

Means and criteria for selecting participants

Considering the number, the various geographic origins and the diversity of participants, the Forum's Steering Committee (consisting of representatives from the Sahel and West Africa Club and the Strategic Watch Club) sought groups the most representative of the region in their selection of invitees, knowing for example that there are more than 900 political parties in West Africa.

The selection by the Steering Committee was carried out between November 2004 and April 2005. The Sahel and West Africa Club identified the representatives from political parties and the Strategic Watch Club identified the representatives from the media and civil society. These proposals were then discussed and validated during a preparatory meeting in April 2005.

Several sources of information were cross-referenced in order to clarify the choices and assure balance in the selection process: drawing on resource people in the countries and the SWAC's local correspondents; consultations with partners at various levels; Internet searches on specialised sites, etc.

The selection was based on precise criteria established beforehand. Each country has been taken into account:

Political parties: two delegates representing the first two political parties in power and the first two parties in opposition (four people);

Civil Society: four representatives from female leaders, youth, unions or employers organisations and NGOs, and or opinion leaders;

Media: two representatives from public media and one independent media or close to the opposition.

Participants from Political parties, the Media and Civil Society

■ BENIN

Political parties.....

M. Alain ADIHO

Ministre de l'Enseignement Technique
Président
Union pour le Bénin du Futur (UBF)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Raphaël C. AHLONSOU

Secrétaire Général Adjoint
Alliances Forces du Progrès (AFP)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Moïse BOSSOU

Représentant Me Adrien Houngbédji,
Président du Parti du Nouveau
Démocratique (PRD)
Porto Novo, Bénin

M. Séfou FAGBOHOUN

Président
Mouvement Africain pour le Développement
et le Progrès (MADEP)
Porto Novo, Bénin

Me Abraham ZINZINDOHOUE

Député, Avocat
Partie de la Renaissance du Bénin (RB)
Cotonou, Bénin

Media

M. Akuété ASSÉVI

Directeur de Publication
La Nation
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Ismaël SOUMANOU

PDG
Groupe La Gazette du Golfe
Cotonou, Bénin

Civil Society

M. Adrien AHANHANZO GLELE

Transparency International
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Jacques Djima BONOU

Secrétaire général
Fédération des Unions de Producteurs du
Bénin (FUPRO)
Bohicon, Bénin

M. Daniel EDAAH

Directeur Exécutif Africa Peace
Centre Africa Peace
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Ousmane OROU TOKO

SOS Civisme
Cotonou, Bénin

Other participants.....

M. Lambert ADOTE

Journaliste indépendant
Cotonou, Bénin

Mme Edith AHOUANJINOU

Rép. VILTA-PEACE Internationale (Société
civile)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. A. Gaspard AKUNDE

Président
Mission des Jeunes pour la Prévention et la
Gestion des Conflits (MJPGC)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Babatoundé François CHALLA

Président, ONG " Le Réveil "
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Modeste William DEHOTIN

Académie Alioune Blondin Bèye pour la Paix
(ABBAP)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Jean DETONGNON

Rassemblement pour le Démocratie et la
Panafricanisme (RDP)
Cotonou, Bénin

Mme Jeanette Maowtin EGBEWOLE

Femme et Vie
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Erick GANDAHO

Initiative Panafricaine pour le Développement
International (IPADI)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Anatole GOUTANDY

Journal L'Avenir, Cerda (ONG)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Ghislain HOVINS

Salon des Communes du Bénin
Bénin

M. Armand KELOMEY

VILTA-PEACE Internationale
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Benjamin LISSAVI

Journaliste
L'Oeil du Peuple
Cotonou, Bénin

Mme Marie-Éléonore N'KOUE

Conseiller Technique
Ministère chargé des relations
avec les Institutions
La Société civile et les Béninois
de l'Extérieur
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Ramanou RAFATH

Africa Needs
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Francis DA SILVA

Vice-Président IPD
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Cocou Honoré SODEGLA

VILTA-PEACE International

M. Martin TOMAVO

Alliance Etoile
Cotonou, Bénin

■ **BURKINA FASO**

Political parties.....

M. Dieudonné BONANET

Secrétaire adjoint aux relations
extérieures
Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Ali LANKOANDE

Président national
Parti pour la Démocratie et le Progrès/Parti
Socialiste (PDP/PS)
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Etienne OUEDRAGO

Secrétaire national aux relations
extérieures
ADF/RDA
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Salifou OUEDRAOGO

Député à l'Assemblée nationale
Union nationale pour la Démocratie et le
Développement (UNDD)
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Media.....

Mme Mafarma SANOGO

Journaliste APAC Burkina
Ministère de l'Information
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Civil Society.....

M. Patrick BASSOLE

Secrétaire à l'information
Jeunesse unie pour une Nouvelle Afrique
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme Clarisse MERINDOL

Juriste spécialiste en droits de l'Homme
Ministère de la Promotion des Droits de
l'Homme
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Abbé Joseph Mukassa SOME

Secrétaire exécutif national de l'Organisation
Catholique pour le Développement et la
Solidarité (OCADES)
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme Cécile SOW

Secrétaire générale du Conseil
d'administration
Coalition Burkinabé pour les Droits
de la Femme (CBDF)
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

■ **CAMEROON**

Political parties.....

M. Adamou NDAM NJOYA

Président national
Union démocratique du Cameroun (UDC)
Yaoundé, Cameroun

Media.....

M. David NDACHI TAGNE

Journaliste Correspondant RFI/AFP
Cameroun Tribune/CRAC
Yaoundé, Cameroun

Mme Suzanne KALA-LOBE

Journaliste
Nouvelle Expression
Douala, Cameroun

Civil Society

M. Martin ABEGA

Secrétaire exécutif
Groupement Inter-Patronal du Cameroun
Douala, Cameroun

M. Pie KATIHABWA

Chargé de l'Information et
de la Communication
BASC/Caritas Cameroun
Yaoundé, Cameroun

M. Séverin KWAYEP NGUEDJIO

Coordinateur de Campagne Solidarité
alimentaire
SAILD/ACDIC
Yaoundé, Cameroun

M. Bille SIKE

Responsable d'Antenne
Association de Lutte contre les Violences
faites aux Femmes
Maroua, Cameroun

■ **CAPE VERDE**

Media

M. Alfredo CARVALHO SANTOS

Directeur Journal Horizonte
Entreprise de Production et Divulgation
d'Information, Inforpress-SA
Praia, Cap Vert

Civil Society

M. Jorge Carlos FONSECA

Directeur de Droit et Citoyenneté
Président de la Fondation Droit et Justice
Ancien Ministre des Affaires étrangères
Praia, Cap Vert

■ **CHAD**

Political parties

M. Nouradine Delwa Kassiré COUMAKOYE

Président national, Ancien Premier ministre
Rassemblement national pour la Démocratie
et le Progrès (VIVA/RNDP)
N'Djaména, Tchad

M. Mahamat Choua LOL

Président, Rassemblement pour la
Démocratie et le Progrès (RDP)
Ancien Président de la République
N'Djaména, Tchad

M. Ngarléjy YORONGAR

Coordonnateur exécutif fédéral, Parti
Fédération et Action pour la République
(PFAR)
N'Djaména, Tchad

Civil Society

M. Adjia François DJONDANG

Secrétaire général adjoint
Union des Syndicats du Tchad
N'Djaména, Tchad

M. Seknewna Lema GANGBAINA

Formateur
Institut Africain pour le Développement
Economique et Social
(INADES-FORMATION)
N'Djaména, Tchad

Mlle Kirobo Kadja MBOGO

Chargée de la promotion féminine
Centre d'Appui au Développement de la
Jeunesse Tchadienne (CADEJET)
N'Djaména, Tchad

Mme Geneviève TOUDJINGAR NAKIRI

Présidente
Cellule de Liaison et d'Information des
Associations féminines
N'Djaména, Tchad

■ **CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Political parties

M. Bernard EHUI

Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI/RDA)
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Mme Henriette DIABATÉ DAGRI

Ministre d'Etat chargé de la Justice
Secrétaire générale
Rassemblement des Républicains (RDR)
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

M. Pascal Affi N'GUESSAN

Président
Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Dr. Fatoumata TRAORE

Secrétaire nationale chargée
de l'identification
Forces Nouvelles de Côte d'Ivoire
Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire

Media

M. Imboua DEGNY MAIXENT

Radio Télévision Ivoirienne (RTI)
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

M. Augustin KOUYO

Quotidien Notre Voie
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Civil Society

M. André BOGUI

Président
ONG Paix Assistance et Solidarité
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

M. Nanan DODO N'DEPO DIDACE

Secrétaire général
Conseil Supérieur des Rois
et Chefs Traditionnels de Côte d'Ivoire
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Mme Thérèse N'DRI-YOMAN

Professeur agrégée de médecine
ACONDA – VIH/SIDA
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

M. Diakalia OUATTARA

Secrétaire général adjoint
Forum national sur la Dette et la Pauvreté
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

■ **THE GAMBIA**

Political parties.....

Mr. Adama CHAM

Deputy Secretary General
Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation &
Construction
APRC Political Bureau
Banjul, The Gambia

Mr. Sidia S. JATTA

Member of National Assembly
Banjul, The Gambia

Media

Mr. Sering FYE

Manager Programmes
Gambia Radio and Television Services
Banjul, The Gambia

Civil Society

Mr. Kalleh FABAKARY

Secretary General
Youth Ambassadors of Peace
Serrekunda, The Gambia

Mr. Jaiteh LUNTANG

Village Head (Alkolo)
Civil Society
Bakau Banjul, The Gambia

Mr. Yaya Masire SANYANG

Country Director Action Aid, The Gambia
Serrekunda, The Gambia

■ **GHANA**

Political parties.....

Dr. Edmund N. DELLE

Chairman
Convention People's Party (CPP)
Accra, Ghana

Mr. Richard Oblitei SOLOMON

New Patriotic Party (NPP)
Accra, Ghana

Dr. Edward N. MAHAMA

Leader
People's National Convention (PNC)
Accra, Ghana

Mr. Bede A. ZIEDENG

General Secretary
National Democratic Congress (NDC)
Accra, Ghana

Media

Mr. Kofi BUCKNOR

Director of Television
Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
Accra, Ghana

Mr. A.B.A FUSEINI

Graphic Communications Group Ltd
Graphic Road
Accra, Ghana

Civil Society

Mr. Justice BLAY

Community Development Officer
Women in Law and Development in Africa
Takoradi, Ghana

Mr. David DORKENOO

Adviser to the President of OTUWA
Organisation of Trade Unions of West Africa
c/o Ghana TUC
Accra, Ghana

Mr. Constant GNACADJA

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
(WANEP)
Accra, Ghana

Ms. Janet KWAMI

Board member
Ghana National Youth Council / School of
Communication Studies
Accra, Ghana

■ GUINEA

Political parties.....

M. Ousmane BAH

Président
Union pour le Progrès et le Renouveau (UPR)
Conakry, Guinée

Dr. Sékou KONATE

Secrétaire général
Parti de l'Unité et du Progrès (PUP)
Conakry, Guinée

M. Lanciné OUSMANE CISSE

Secrétaire politique
Parti Démocratique de Guinée (PDG/RDA)
Conakry, Guinée

Dr. Ibrahima Sory SOW

Secrétaire aux relations extérieures du BPN
Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée (RPG)
Conakry, Guinée

Media

M. Talhatou Tafsir DIALLO

Chef de Service RKS 94.9
Radio Télévision Guinéenne (RTG)
Conakry, Guinée

M. Hassane KABA

Directeur de Publication
Journal l'Indépendant
Commune du Kaloum
Conakry, Guinée

Civil Society

M. Bakary FOFANA

Directeur Centre du Commerce international
pour le Développement (CECIDE)
Conakry, Guinée

M. Thierno Maadjou SOW

Président
Organisation guinéenne de défense des
Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen (OGDH)
Conakry, Guinée

M. Mohamed TOURE

Président
Parlement des Jeunes de l'Union du Fleuve
Mano pour la Paix
Maison des Jeunes du Kaloum
Conakry, Guinée

■ GUINEA BISSAU

Political parties.....

M. Antonio Inacio Gomes CORREIA

Membre du Bureau politique du PAIGC
Parti Africain pour l'Indépendance de la
Guinée et du Cap Vert
Bissau, Guinée-Bissau

M. Basilio VAILU

Membre du Conseil national du PUSD
Parti Uni Social Démocratique (PUSD)
Bissau, Guinée-Bissau

Media

M. Mamudo DJAU

Chef du Cabinet du Ministre de la Présidence
Bissau, Guinée-Bissau

Civil Society

M. Sabana EMBALO

Président du Mouvement de la Société civile
Union Nationale des Travailleurs de Guinée
Bissau
Bissau, Guinée-Bissau

■ LIBERIA

Political parties.....

Mr. Victor BADIO

Assistant Secretary General
Unity Party
Monrovia, Liberia

Mr. Sei Wonkemie GAHN

National Vice Chairman
Liberia Action Party (LAP)
Monrovia, Liberia

Mr. Richard S. PANTON

Secretary General
Liberian People's Party (LPP)
Monrovia, Liberia

Mr. Thomas Romeo QUIOH

Vice-Chairman
United People's Party (UPP)
Monrovia, Liberia

Media

Mr. Sherman C. SEEQUOH

Analyst Newspaper
Associate Editor

Civil Society

Ms. Lindora HOWARD

Program Assistant
Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET)
Liberia

Mr. Rev. Christopher W. TOE

Secretary General
Inter Religious Council of Liberia
Liberia

Mr. Zawolo Z. ZUAGELE

Parliamentarian
Capitol Hill
Monrovia, Liberia

■ MALI

Political parties

Mme Diop Binta DIALLO

Congrès National pour l'Initiative et la
Démocratie (CNID)
Bamako, Mali

M. Djiguiba KEITA

PARENA
Bamako, Mali

M. Dioncounda TRAORÉ

Président
ADEMA / Parti Africain pour la
Solidarité et la Justice
PASJ
Bamako, Mali

Dr. Bokary TRETA

Secrétaire général
Rassemblement pour le Mali (RPM)
Bamako, Mali

Media

M. Manga DEMBELÉ

Directeur TV (ORTM)
Bamako, Mali

M. Mamadou Lamine DOUMBIA

Directeur délégué de la Rédaction
Quotidien L'Indépendant
Bamako, Mali

Civil Society

Mme Mariam Diallo CISSOKHO

Kayes, Mali

M. Boly FARILY

Association des Organisations
Professionnelles des Producteurs (AOPP)
Mali

Mme Bintou SANAKOUA

Collectif des Femmes du Mali (COFEM)
Bamako, Mali

M. Safouné TOGO

Etudiant
Association des Elèves et Etudiants du Mali
(AEEM)
Bamako, Mali

■ MAURITANIA

Political parties

M. Ahmed Ould DADDAH

Président
Rassemblement des Forces Démocratiques
(RFD)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

M. Boidiel Ould HOUMEID

Secrétaire exécutif chargé des Affaires
sociales
Parti Républicain Démocratique et social
(PRDS)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

M. Ahmed Ould SIDI-BABA

Président
Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et l'Unité
(RDU)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

M. Mohamed Ould MAOULOUD

Président
Union des Forces de Progrès (UFP)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

Media

Mme Hindou Mint Mohamed ANINA

Rédactrice en chef Le Calame
Mauritanie

Civil Society

Mme Fatma Mint KHOUBAH

Présidente
Réseau mauritanien pour la promotion des
Droits de la Femme (RMPDF)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

M. Mohamed Abdel Selam**Ould MOHAMDI**

Faculté des Sciences et Techniques
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

M. Abdoulaye SY

Membre du Bureau exécutif
Association mauritanienne des Droits de
l'Homme (AMDH)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

Mme Lalla Aïcha Gongo Jigui SY

Militante syndicale affiliée à la CGTM
Confédération Générale des Travailleurs de
Mauritanie (CGTM)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

■ NIGER

Political parties.....

M. Albadé ABOUBA

Ministre d'Etat conseiller en Sécurité à la
Présidence
MNSD-NASSARA
Niamey, Niger

M. Amadou CHEIFFOU

Président
Parti Rassemblement Social Démocrate
– Gaskiya (RSD)
Niamey, Niger

M. Mahamadou ISSOUFOU

Président
Parti Nigérien pour la Démocratie et le
Socialisme (PNDS)
Niamey, Niger

M. Amadou LAOUAL

Vice-Président du Bureau politique national
Convention Démocratique et Sociale
(CDS-RAHAMA)
Niamey, Niger

Media.....

Mme Fadimou MOUMOUNI

Journaliste
DRTN Télé-Sahel
Niamey, Niger

M. Aissami Tata Moussa TCHANGARI

Secrétaire général
Alternative Espaces Citoyens
Niamey, Niger

Civil Society.....

M. Djibo BAGNA

Secrétaire général CNPFP/N (membre ROPPA)
Niamey, Niger

Mme Nafissa FASSOUMA BOUBACAR

Secrétaire général
Réseau des Femmes Entrepreneurs et Artisans
Niamey, Niger

M. Souleymane Inna MOUSSA

Jeune Défenseur des Droits de l'Homme
(JDDH)
Association Nigérienne pour la Défense des
Droits de l'Homme (ANDDH)
Niamey, Niger

■ NIGERIA

Political parties.....

Mr. Paul Yao AHIAVE

Pan African Strategic and Policy Research
Group, PANAFSTRAG
Lagos, Nigeria

Dr. Goddy IDAMINABO

National Secretary
United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP)
Abuja, Nigeria

Mrs. Rose OKOJI OKO

Chairperson Board of Trustees
National Democratic Party
Abuja, Nigeria

Senator Uti Joshua YOHANNA

National Secretary
Alliance for Democracy (AD)
Abuja, Nigeria

Media.....

Mr. Debo ADESINA

The Guardian
Lagos, Nigeria

Mr. Yakubu Ibn MOHAMMED

Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)
Abuja, Nigeria

Civil Society.....

Dr. Olaseinde Makanjuola ARIGBEDE

Union of Small and Medium Scale Farmers of
Nigeria (USMEFAN)
Ibadan (Oyo State) Nigeria

Mr. Eshiet ESHIET

West African Human Rights Forum
Lagos, Nigeria

Mrs. Zainab MAINA

President/Founder, Women for Peace
Initiative
Abuja, Nigeria

Mr. Adeoba OJEKUNLE

Africa Leadership Forum
Ota (Ogun State), Nigeria

Mr. Paul Ikem ONYEKA

Communication & Research Assistant
Social Equity and Development Organization
of Nigeria
All Africa Students Union
Lagos, Nigeria

■ **SENEGAL**

Political parties.....

M. Mamadou LY

Secrétaire national chargé de l'Administration
et de la Permanence
Alliance des Forces du Progrès (AFP)
Dakar, Sénégal

M. Cheick Bassirou SARR

Ande Jëf – Parti africain pour la Démocratie et
le Socialisme (AJ/PADS)
Dakar, Sénégal

M. Cheikh SECK

Parti socialiste
Secrétaire général
Mouvement National des Jeunes
Socialistes
Dakar, Sénégal

M. Aliou SOW

Ministre de la Jeunesse
Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS)
Dakar, Sénégal

Media.....

M. Badara DIOUF

Quotidien national Le Soleil
Dakar, Sénégal

Civil Society.....

M. Mamadou CISSOKHO

CNCR
Dakar, Sénégal

M. Babacar DIOP dit Buuba

Président
CONGAD,
Dakar, Sénégal

Mme Penda MBOW

Présidente
Mouvement Citoyen
Dakar, Sénégal

M. Mody NDIAYE

Commissaire national
Mouvement des Eclaireurs et Eclaireuses du
Sénégal (EEDS)
Diourbel, Sénégal

■ **SIERRA LEONE**

Political parties.....

Dr. Zainab KAMARA

Honourable Member
Sierra Leone Parliament
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Mr. Alie Salieu SANKOH

All Peoples Congress Party (APC)
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Media.....

Mr. Sayoh KAMARA

Editor
Awareness Newspaper
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Civil Society.....

Mr. Al Sankoh Conteh ISHMEAL

President
National Youth Coalition (NYC)
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Mrs. Iyasha JOSIAH

National Coordinator,
Civil Society Movement
Sierra Leone Association of NGOs (SLANGO)
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Mr. Murray E.S. LAMIN

National Secretary General
National Association of Farmers of Sierra
Leone (NAFSL)
Freetown, Sierra Leone

■ TOGO

Political parties.....

Me Yawovi AGBOYIBO

Président
Comité d'Action pour le Renouveau (CAR)
Lomé, Togo

M. Roger T. DANIOUÉ

Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais (RPT)
Lomé, Togo

M. Jean-Pierre FABRE

Secrétaire général
Union des Forces de Changement (UFC)
Lomé, Togo

M. Maurice Dahuku PERE

Président
Pacte Socialiste pour le Renouveau (PSR)
Lomé, Togo

M. Badjow TCHAM

Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais (RPT)
Lomé, Togo

Media.....

M. Lucien Mensah DJOSSOU

Le Combat du Peuple
Lomé, Togo

M. Abdallah TEFRIDJ

Lomé, Togo

Civil Society.....

Mme Kafui ADJAMAGBO-JOHNSON

WILDAF-West Africa
Lomé, Togo

M. André Kangni AFANOU

West African Youth Network
Lomé, Togo

M. Kokou AMEGADZE

Chargé de l'Information et de la
Communication
Les Amis de la Terre
Lomé, Togo

Père Gustave SANVEE

Organisation de la Charité pour un
Développement Intégral (OCDI)
Lomé, Togo

SPECIAL GUESTS

ECOWAS.....

Dr. Remi AJIBEWA

Dpt. Des Affaires Politiques
CEDEAO/ECOWAS
Abuja, Nigeria

Prof. Ali Nouhoum DIALLO

Président du Parlement de la CEDEAO
Abuja, Nigeria

Général Cheick Oumar DIARRA

Secrétaire exécutif adjoint
CEDEAO/ECOWAS
Abuja, Nigeria

Dr. Adrienne Yandé DIOP

Directrice de la Communication
CEDEAO/ECOWAS
Abuja, Nigeria

Hon. Assan SEÏBOU

Premier Secrétaire Parlementaire
CEDEAO/ECOWAS
Cotonou, Bénin

OTHER INVITEES

M. Boubakar Moussa BA

Consultant
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

Prof. Abdoulaye BATHILY

(keynote speaker/ Conférencier principal)
Député à l'Assemblée nationale
Dakar, Sénégal

M. Guy Michel BOLUVI

Journaliste, Sud Communication
Niamey, Niger

Mme Seynabou MALE

Coordinatrice
Comité de Solidarité des Femmes pour la Paix
en Casamance
USOFORAL
Ziguinchor, Sénégal

Mme Diana SENGHOR

Directrice
Institut Panos Afrique de l'Ouest
Dakar, Sénégal

RESOURCE PERSONS

M. Abdoul Gadiry DIALLO

Trésorier

Organisation Guinéenne de défense des
Droits de l'Homme (OGDH)
Conakry, Guinée

M. Sanatcho HAYANGOU-DANGUIGUE

Directeur de Cabinet Ministre de
l'Enseignement supérieur, de la
Recherche Scientifique et de la Formation
Professionnelle
N'djaména, Tchad

Mrs. Fatou KINTEH

National Expert-Social Protection
FASE Project, UNDP
Banjul, The Gambia

Dr. Mariam Djibrilla MAIGA

Présidente
Fédération des Réseaux des Femmes
Africaines pour la Paix
Bamako, Mali

Mme Thérèse Keita MAI MANGA

Socio-économiste, Conseillère technique
Cabinet du Président de la République
Présidente de l'Organisation des Femmes
pour le Développement (OFEDSAA)
Niamey, Niger

Dr. Oumar NDONGO

Director Delco House
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Mme Salimata PORQUET

OFEP/Plate-forme de la Société Civile en Côte
d'Ivoire
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Mme Juliette Khady SOW

Institut d'Etudes Politiques et Stratégiques
(IEPS)
Dakar, Sénégal

OBSERVERS

M. Jacques ADANDE

Diplomate
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Kodzo Gabriel ALAGAN

Coordonnateur adjoint de la Diaspora
togolaise au Bénin (DIASTIDE)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Gabriel ALLOGNON

Parti du Renouveau Démocratique (PRD)
Porto Novo, Bénin

M. Jérôme CARLOS

Directeur Radio CAPP FM
Cotonou, Bénin

SEM. Christian DAZIANO

Ambassadeur de France au Bénin
Cotonou, Bénin

Mme Micheline DOFFAGNE

Attachée de la Coopération internationale
Chef du Service Afrique de l'Ouest
Bruxelles, Belgique

M. Roger GBÉGNONVI

Transparency International Bénin
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Symphorien GBONSOU

Aide et Action Bénin
Cotonou, Bénin

Mme Edith GOUIN

Agent de développement Afrique de l'Ouest
et du Centre (Direction générale de l'Afrique)
Agence canadienne de développement
international (ACDI)
Cotonou, Bénin

S.E.M. Pierre HELG

Ambassadeur de Suisse au Bénin
(en résidence à Abuja, Nigeria)

M. Jean HOUALAKOUE

Journaliste, Rédacteur en Chef
Office de Radiodiffusion et Télévision du
Bénin (ORTB)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Hamidou Baba KANE

Deputé de l'Assemblée nationale
Vice-président, Rassemblement des Forces
Démocratiques (RFD)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

Mme Reiko KAWAMURA

Conseillère, Délégation permanente du Japon
auprès de l'OCDE
Paris, France

Mme Barbara KONZET

Coopération autrichienne
pour le Développement
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. François KATENDI

Journaliste
Marchés Tropicaux/Magazine Afriques
Paris, France

M. Edgard KPATINDÉ

Vice-Président
Institut de Prospective Africaine (IPA)
Créteil, France

M. Assogba Kossou B. LOTH

Président du Parti Rassemblement des
Citoyens pour la Vérité (RCV)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. René Valéry MONGBE

Député à l'Assemblée nationale du Bénin
Cotonou, Bénin

Mlle Virginie MORILLON

Volontaire internationale
LARES
Cotonou, Bénin

Pasteur Jean NADJO

CIDUSPAD-OSC
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Fernand NOUWLIGBETO

Journaliste
Agence de presse Proximités
Cotonou, Bénin

S.E.M. A. van OJIK

Ambassadeur des Pays-Bas au Bénin
Cotonou, Bénin

Dr. Peter PIECK

Chargé de Programmes, GTZ
Allemagne

M. Epiphane QUENUM

Député, Porte-parole
Parti de la Renaissance du Bénin (RB)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Mohamed Yahya Ould SIDI HAIBA

Conseiller chargé des Relations extérieures
Parti Républicain Démocratique et Social
(PRDS)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

Mlle Muriel SIGNOURET

Journaliste
L'Intelligent/Jeune Afrique
Paris, France

M. Moustapha SOUMARÉ

Représentant Résident au Bénin
Programme des Nations unies pour le
Développement (PNUD)
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Abdoulaye THIAM

Grand Reporter, Le Soleil
Dakar, Sénégal

Mme Maréma Touré THIAM

Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS)
Dakar, Sénégal

Prof. Daniel TAWÉNA

Secrétaire Général
Front d'Action pour le Renouveau
Démocratique (FARD/ALAFIA)
Cotonou, Bénin

Prof. Léonard WANTCHEKON

Associate Professor of Politics
New York University, USA

ORGANISERS

Sahel and West Africa Club /OECD

M. Massaër DIALLO

Responsable de l'Unité Gouvernance,
Dynamique des conflits, Paix et sécurité

Mme Soura DIOP

Assistante de programme

Mr. John ESHUN

National Correspondent of the SWAC
Accra, Ghana

Mme Donata GNISCI

Analyste des conflits, Politologue

M. Franck IGUE

Chargé de Communication

M. Normand LAUZON

Directeur

Mme Gabrielle LUTHY

Assistante administrative

Mrs. Sylvia NZEKWU

National Correspondent of the SWAC
Lagos, Nigeria

M. Benoît OUEDRAOGO

Correspondant national du CSAO
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme Gwénola POSSEME-RAGEAU

Conseillère en Planification stratégique et
Relations extérieures

Mme Thérèse PUJOLLE

Présidente

Mme Sunhilt SCHUMACHER

Directrice adjointe

Mme Jamila YAHY

Assistante administrative

Strategic Watch Club for Peace
in West Africa

Mr. Prosper Nii Nortey ADDO

Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training
Centre
Accra, Ghana

Pasteur Kodjo Gerson BESSA

Eglise presbytérienne évangélique du Togo
Lomé, Togo

Mme Kadiata Malick DIALLO

Nouakchott, Mauritanie

M. Jean-Pierre ELONG MBASSI

Secrétaire général PDM
Cotonou, Bénin

M. John IGUE

Président
Club de Veille pour la Paix en Afrique de
l'Ouest
Cotonou, Bénin

M. Khalid IKHIRI

Président
Association Nigérienne des Droits
Humains
Niamey, Niger

Dr. Sedat JOBE

Ancien Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la
Gambie
Banjul, The Gambia

M. Tidjane Bah KOÏTA

Sénateur de Kaedi
Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le
Développement (UNDD)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

M. Mohamed Ould MAOULOUD

Président
Union des Forces de Progrès (UFP)
Nouakchott, Mauritanie

Mme Nathalie MEDETOGNON

Assistante administrative

M. Chérif Elvalide SEYE

Directeur COMDEV
Dakar, Sénégal

M. Babacar TOURE

Président
Groupe Sud Communication
Dakar, Sénégal

Fifteen years after the momentum of dialogue and citizenry mobilisation generated by the National Conferences, the Sahel and West Africa Club, co-jointly with the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa and ECOWAS, organised a Forum, at the regional level and in the same place, bringing together representatives of 72 political parties, 72 civil society organisations and 36 media representatives from eighteen West African countries.

While achieving a dialogue between the nearly 300 participants in their complementary diversity at the Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society held in Cotonou in July 2005, the organisers only responded to the request by actors on the ground: to join forces in order to confront some of the challenges facing West Africa as regards the prevention and resolution of crises and conflicts; the strengthening, of civil peace and the promotion of democracy; free circulation of goods and people in order to ensure a better future and better security for all.

This innovative Forum constitutes a very important step - and recognised as such - in the decompartmentalisation of actors and the beginning of a fruitful dialogue and an intense strategic thinking on the role and responsibilities of everybody in the building of peace and democracy.



Sahel and West Africa Club

Le Seine Saint-Germain

4, boulevard des Isles, 92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux, France

Postal address: 2, rue André Pascal- 75016 Paris, France

Tel.: + 33 1 45 24 89 87 - Fax.: +33 1 45 24 90 31

Email: sahel.contact@oecd.org

Website: www.oecd.org/sah