



Club de Veille pour la Paix en Afrique de l'Ouest  
Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa

## PREPARATORY WORKSHOP OF THE FORUM OF POLITICAL PARTIES, MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN WEST AFRICA

Gorée (Senegal), 3 – 5 November 2004

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## CONTEXT

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In view of the forthcoming Forum on political parties, media and civil society, the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) Secretariat, in partnership with the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa and the Institut d'Études politiques et stratégiques (IEPS) of the University of Les Mutants in Gorée, organised a workshop in Gorée (Senegal) on 3-5 November 2004. Its objective was to **bring together African competencies to discuss the themes chosen for the Forum and to prepare its organisation.**

These three days were intended to:

- Discuss and validate the themes chosen for the Forum, i.e. the context of democracy and peace; political party life; the media in the democratic process and conflict situations; the role of civil society in democracy.
- Define a preparation strategy: choice of participants, identification of resource people in the field.
- Identify a communications and resource mobilisation strategy.
- Discuss the possibility of making the Forum a regular event favouring synergy between ECOWAS, the Strategic Watch Club, civil society and other institutional partners.

The workshop also acted as a framework for the foundation of a partnership between the SWAC and the Strategic Watch Club with political and strategic research institutions and various initiatives and organisations working in the fields of peace, democracy and security in the region.

The workshop was attended by around forty representatives from the fifteen countries of West Africa<sup>1</sup> and members of the SWAC Secretariat. The profile of participants may be summarised as follows: 25% of participants (11) work for Research Centres (Centre Kofi Annan, Ghana; African Security Dialogue and Research, Ghana; Centre de Recherches pour le Développement International – CRDI, Senegal; Instituto Nacional de Estudios e Pesquisa – INEP, Guinea Bissau; Institut d'Etudes Politiques et Stratégiques of the University of Les Mutants, Gorée, Senegal); 50% from civil society (non-governmental organisations and members of the Strategic Watch Club). Three representatives from West Africa's media sector attended. Representatives of the Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS, the Executive Deputy-Secretary in charge of Political affairs and the President of the ECOWAS Parliament were present.

Below is the summary of contributions made by speakers, debates and conclusions of the workshop. This summary record is organised by chronological order of the workshop sessions. The final list of participants, the final acknowledgements and the summary record of the women's meeting held in parallel with the workshop are presented in the Annex.

Finally, the organisers would like to thank the chairpersons of the sessions, speakers and all participants for their original and committed opinions which fuelled rich and intensive debates during these three days.

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<sup>1</sup> Benin; Burkina Faso; Cape Verde; Côte d'Ivoire; Ghana; Gambia; Guinea Conakry; Guinea Bissau; Mali; Mauritania; Niger; Nigeria; Sierra Leone; Senegal and Togo.

## OPENING SESSION

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Professor Djibril Samb, Acting Director of the University of Les Mutants, opened the session as host of the meeting. After having welcomed participants, he underlined the importance of this workshop, held in a highly symbolic and memorial place for the African continent. He praised the participants' efforts in discussing key issues for the future of the region, i.e. relations between democracy and peace in West Africa and the role of various actors in the democratisation and conflict resolution processes.

He gave the floor to Mr. John Igué, who introduced the Strategic Watch Club, of which he is the President. The Strategic Watch Club was set up in 2003 by a group of renowned West African personalities (university lecturers, religious circles, NGOs, media, women's groups, etc.) who were convinced that civil society should play a role in contributing to peace, security and stability in the region. To decompartmentalise and synergise the range of initiatives promoting peace already operating in West Africa is a priority. For this purpose, the Strategic Watch Club promises to mobilise actors, collect and circulate information and analysis to enlighten, alert and prevent conflict.

John Igué then made an appraisal of the region characterised by the mixed results of reforms inspired by donors. He indicated the many challenges that West Africa faces: socio-political crises, economic growth threatened by poor sales of natural resources (mining in particular) and its sacrificed youth. On the other hand, he paid tribute to women's fight for equity and justice and progress obtained in these fields.

Mrs. Sunhilt Schumacher, Deputy Director of the SWAC, presented the Club. Set up in 1976 on the initiative of OECD<sup>2</sup> Member countries in liaison with the authorities of Sahel countries, the SWAC now covers the fifteen ECOWAS countries plus Mauritania and Chad. Its field of intervention is centred around four areas: agricultural transformation and sustainable development; local development and the process of regional integration; governance, conflict dynamics, peace and security; and long-term development perspectives. The SWAC works as a network with a vast range of West African actors and their development partners. It also maintains relations with West African intergovernmental organisations (the CILSS, the WAEMU, etc.). A cooperation framework was recently set up with ECOWAS, its principal partner for the entire region. The Club seeks to stimulate informed and informal debate between all these actors on strategic issues for West Africa, based on the identification and promotion of dynamics of change and the drivers of change<sup>3</sup>.

Finally, Mr. Massaër Diallo, Head of the SWAC's Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security Unit, recalled the agenda, the objectives and expected results of the workshop. Before starting work, he invited participants to an informal introduction session so that everyone could present the political situation, state of conflict and peace in their own country. This helped recall the context and focus the debates on current issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.oecd.org/sah](http://www.oecd.org/sah).

### **Presentation**

The session was chaired by John Igué. Mr. Massaër Diallo, who introduced the topic, based his presentation on four themes: West Africa, a region in constant evolution; the democratisation process in a confirmation phase; ECOWAS, a political integration zone; prospects for the implementation of ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance<sup>4</sup>.

West Africa is a region in constant evolution and change facing many challenges. The region offers natural wealth, and undeniable culture, but also high social poverty, accentuated by acute differences between urban and rural areas. A demographic explosion has produced a generation of young people in search of education and jobs. These young people, over the long term, represent a new contingent of voters. The contradiction between challenges and transformation opportunities is a fundamental structural factor in the determination of conflicts, the occurrence of socio-political crises and national identity that rage in the region.

During the 1990s, West Africa experienced major political change, i.e. the democratisation of the political system which is however not irreversible. There are many parties, several dozen per country of which only three or four win over 80% of votes in elections. At the same time, there is a media explosion and a progressive assertion of civil society on the public scene. This situation illustrates the need to support a dynamic political class, civil society and the nascent media.

On the regional level, ECOWAS is an area of integration and viable cooperation. It is developed on a coherent cultural, social and economic base. It is also characterised by continuity in the political dynamism of its Member countries. Set up as a mainly economic integration area, ECOWAS has been forced to play a political role before its time. The protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (1999) ratified the Community's presence in a field in which it had not previously intervened: regional peace and security. In 2001, the adoption of the Supplementary Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy (which completes the Mechanism) gave it a political role. This protocol confirms the principle of **constitutional convergence** (Art. 1) in favour of: democracy and the state of law; the separation of powers and civil control of military forces; the fight against poverty and social dialogue. For the time being, the protocol has only been ratified by three Member countries, which restricts its implementation. Civil society plays a key role in lobbying governments that have not yet ratified. The involvement of the ECOWAS parliament composed of national elected representatives is also needed to stimulate debate on protocol's ratification in Member countries.

ECOWAS represents a tremendous opportunity to deal with the crisis of the nation-state because the integration project it promotes will, in the long-term, allow a good balance of governance between local, national and regional levels.

### **Discussions**

Limited by time and the desire of all participants to give their opinion on an apparently key issue, the debate highlighted the following concerns: federalism, integration, democracy, the nation-state, culture. In fact several angles tackle the same issue of regional integration.

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<sup>4</sup> ECOWAS, Supplementary Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on democracy and good governance, additional to the protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.

Although most participants have faith in integration, certain reservations were voiced with respect to its capacity to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development in West Africa.

Firstly, regional integration should not be taken as a panacea. Integration is an opportunity that can go over and above the limits of the nation-state whose construction, after over forty years, has only led to deadlock. But the State is nevertheless necessary as integration requires strong State institutions. What is the viability of furthering integration at the ECOWAS level, if the entities responsible for setting it up are not themselves viable? Could federalism be an alternative to constructing the State? It could not, it was believed, using as an illustration the counter-example of Nigeria: although a federation, it still has to deal with the same problems as any other country.

Secondly, the States' political commitment is essential to making integration a reality. Intergovernmental organisations are unable to push through the integration agenda alone without the direct and consistent support of their Member States. During its history, West Africa has experienced periods of real integration. It is important to understand which factors hindered this dynamic from developing in a linear way. With this in mind, the need for adequate political leadership, as well as the role of the media in the disintegration of the region is recalled. Historians are asked for their opinions as it is necessary to establish a base that can be provided by African culture, its values such as solidarity, in order to transcend the limits of the nation-state.

Thirdly, although ECOWAS is the most relevant institutional framework to promote regional integration, it needs to "exist better", to have the means to have the treaties it succeeds in having signed respected. It is up to civil society to take hold of protocols concerning the population, popularise them and make them a subject of discussion so that citizens may appropriate them and ensure that they are respected through popular opinion.

Fourthly, considering the continental role of the African Union regarding regional cooperation and peacekeeping, subsidiarity and cooperation between the African Union and ECOWAS should be strengthened. Cooperation between supranational institutions is strategic to optimise management and use of financial and technical resources made available by the international community to deal with conflicts and promote of peace.

Finally, discussions turned to democracy which should be a peace-promoting factor in the region and not a catalyst of tension. Promoting political governance based on the coordination and cooperation between powers at different levels (local, national, regional and continental) to guarantee interests of populations is, for Africa, also a means of implementing its own concept of democracy.

### ***Proposals in view of the Forum***

- Appraisal of the ongoing democratisation process in the region.
- Envisaging devoting one of the Forum's sessions to a Supplementary Protocol for Democracy and Peace in West Africa and the stakes of its implementation in Member Countries.

### **Presentation**

The second session, chaired by Mr. Babaly Sall, was introduced by Mr. Boubacar Bâ, independent consultant.

The role of political parties in African society should be examined in light of the stakes and challenges raised by the twenty-first century, i.e. the restoration of sustainable civil peace, the construction of new forms and modes of governance, the management of spaces and resources in a context of demographic and socio-economic change, the continent's role in the international system and in globalisation.

As forms of social organisation, political parties were introduced in the continent by colonialism. They represent just one instrument to take and exercise power, to define the economic orientations of a country. From their creation until the end of the Cold War, through periods of *coups d'Etat*, they tended to be turned towards the outside (colonial powers first, the two superpowers later) rather than towards their populations. In contrast, China and India have chosen endogenous solutions.

Modern and traditional elites have the monopoly on running parties thus setting out their composition and operating methods. Relations with the army and involvement in power management are also key factors in the evolution of parties. They are not the major framework for the organisation and structuring of societies, in the name of specific ideals or social projects.

The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the end of the Cold War. One of the objectives of the subsequent democratisation process was to reinforce multiparty systems and competition for power between organised groups. It thus confirms the role of parties in the political system, yet questions are still unresolved concerning the role played in the strengthening of democracy, the management of conflicts and the restoration of peace, their contribution to the emergence of a political leadership capable of upholding a vision of the future and rising up to the many global political and economic challenges. Finally, their anchorage in African society and their organisation on several levels (cells, federations, sections, etc.), then between local, national, regional and global levels, are also a question for debate for the West African intelligentsia.

The mixed assessment and contradictions in partisan experience in Africa should be tempered by the youthfulness of post-colonial political institutions. In the long term, hope lies in the young generations that will play a fundamental role in the construction and reinforcement of institutions (including political parties) by lessons learned from endogenous governance methods while being inspired from experiences elsewhere.

### **Discussions**

There is a consensus about the importance of this theme and the need for continuous in-depth discussions on the nature, role and functions of political parties in view of the Forum.

The discussions revolved around two major questions:

- 1. What are the political parties' roles and responsibilities in view of the African historical and current socio-political context?**

On this first issue, the following concerns were raised:

- What is the content of parties' programmes? What social projects do they express?
- What relations are managed between government and the army and how? How do external actors influence political parties, especially those in power?
- What are the relations with rank and file members? How do parties reflect the different components of society? How do they operate, how are they financed and how do they recruit members?

Several participants have underlined the lack of internal democracy and the lack of ideals and social projects. They thus questioned the relevance of political parties to promote the democracy agenda in West Africa.

National parties are crumbling but this does not reflect social fragmentation and the diversification of bodies representing the population, as they are expressed in other ways. This crumbling does not prevent the ruling class, which leads parties and the State, from being homogenous. Political parties can therefore be a means of securing its reproduction.

## **2. What is the relationship between political parties and other socio-political actors on the national and regional scene?**

The following questions would further strategic thinking on this topic:

- What direction is taken by political parties?
- Should the political future of West Africa be exclusively left in the hands of parties?
- What is the current state of cohabitation between political parties and actors in civil society, and what are its prospects?
- What are their respective roles in political life?

These questions are asked with respect to the emergence of a dynamic and organised civil society and multiple information and communication resources. They raise the issue of training leaders and party members and the management of pluralism in society. The wide range of political actors that collaborate in defending citizenship, in providing public services, etc. is both an opportunity and an improvement, the importance of which is recognised by political parties.

Since independence, most West African parties have lost their bilateral, continental and international dimension. The recent creation of the ECOWAS Parliament enables political parties to retrieve this supranational dimension as a dialogue tool and cooperation framework between populations. Interactions between the development of political parties and the development of regional institutions deserve to be taken into consideration.

One last factor discussed relates to the relationship between political parties and conflicts. What are the causality relations between political parties and conflict? What is the parties' contribution to resolving conflict and promoting peace and security? In exit from conflict situations, what are the stakes involving the transformation of armed groups into political parties (e.g. the case of Liberia)?

### ***Proposals in view of the Forum***

- Targeting the role and position of political parties in the democratisation process in West Africa.
- Including the question of relations between political parties, the media and organised actors in civil society in the Forum's agenda.

### **SESSION III: THE MEDIA IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN WEST AFRICA**

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The session, chaired by Mrs. Adrienne Yandé Diop, ECOWAS Director of Communications, was introduced by Mr. Moussa Paye, journalist.

#### **Presentation**

Mr. Paye noted that the West African press is essentially militant. The first newspapers in English-speaking Africa were founded by Governor Sir Charles McCarthy who, in 1822 created the *Sierra Leone Gazette* (Sierra Leone) and the *Gold Coast Gazette* (Ghana). This opened the way to private initiatives. In Ghana, as of 1857, Charles and Edmund Bannerman founded the *Accra Herald* which voiced nationalist opinion. Kwame N’Krumah himself created the *Accra Evening News* on 3 September 1948, which became the main instrument of his propaganda. In Nigeria, future president Nnamdi Azikwe was the editor in chief of the *African Morning Post*. In French-speaking Africa, Houphouët-Boigny’s “Rassemblement démocratique africain” party launched *Le Réveil* in Côte d’Ivoire. *Le Réveil* angered the colonial power which then asked to remove immunity of its parliamentary coordinators, Houphouët-Boigny himself and Gabriel d’Arboussier.

During the colonial period, although the press spearheaded the nationalist struggle, the post-independence press cannot, contrary to media historiography, claim to have played a major role in the establishment of democracy. The contemporary press is more the daughter than the mother of the democratic process of the early 1990s. On the other hand, journalists have contributed to democratisation through their unions which were often opposed to political and union monolithic tendencies.

The current state of the press varies greatly from one country to another. A proliferation of newspapers can be witnessed everywhere, which goes against all economic logic. In some countries, the media is actively involved in power struggles; in others, for example in countries that follow British tradition, the concern for independence is stronger. In conflict situations, like in Sierra Leone or Liberia, it has cost the press dearly and they were unable to remain uninvolved.

In all, the general situation is not good. Private media has failed to obtain financial autonomy needed to maintain their editorial independence against the State and economically and financially powerful groups.

#### **Discussions**

Historically, the press’ contribution to the construction and consolidation of a post-colonial State in West Africa has helped identify a series of problems relating to the funding of the media, the economic and financial viability of press companies, their autonomy with respect to other powers, and their social functions in situations of peace and conflict (circulation of information, influence on public opinion, etc.). Participants confirmed the importance of these problems and suggested complementary issues to be debated. For example, the media’s intellectual and financial independence may lead to a debate on public information service. In several West African countries, media reform is urgent, although political decision-makers do not perceive it as such. Yet means of access to the profession, training opportunities for journalists and the strengthening of organisational capacity and management of communication companies are real concerns for professionals. At the same time, it is important that the debate on the status and role of media should not be confined to professionals in the sector only as if it was their exclusive property.

Over and above the themes raised by the presentation, participants indicated further issues to take into account to prepare the “media” dossier in view of the Forum.

- The role of electronic media (radio and TV), multimedia and other forms of interpersonal communications.
- The real impact of the different types of media in influencing public opinion.
- The impact of direct broadcasting of international radio and TV channels by satellite.
- The resignation of public authorities with respect to the need to reform the sector, in particular on the question of access to the profession, training of journalists, economic and financial viability of press companies.
- The public service status, often exploited by governing powers.
- The need not to restrict the debate on the status and role of the media to professionals of the sector, as if the sector were their sole property.
- Awareness of the cultural dimension in the processing of information.
- Professional ethics and the responsibility of the journalist in peacekeeping.

#### **SESSION IV: THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE DEMOCRACY OF WEST AFRICA**

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##### ***Presentation***

The session, chaired by Mr. Massaër Diallo, was introduced by Mrs. Thérèse Keita, sociologist. After giving an insight into the recent development of African civil society, she covered its major characteristics.

The term “civil society” is as vast as it is ambiguous. It includes a wide variety of social actors with diverging functions and interests. Depending on the split between French-speaking, French-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries, civil society has played a very different role in the democratisation process during the 1990s in West Africa. Proposing a single typology of actors or drawing up a list of its strengths and weaknesses in political life does not open up the debate. The specificity of each context should be taken into account in order to understand the real contribution of civil society to the strengthening of democracy and the promotion of peace.

The emergence of civil society, in particular of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Africa, is linked to the democratisation process. It is based on some of the most important sectors in national life: fight against poverty, development projects, provision of basic services (health, education), environment protection, promotion of the culture of peace and human rights, etc.

Today, civil society plays an essential role in mobilising social forces that contributes to the anchoring of democracy and the improvement of the population’s living conditions. Its importance lies in its field knowledge and the effectiveness of its actors in the field. However, the lack of autonomy of actors in civil society with respect to donors, including international NGOs, in all decision-making and strategic orientation choices must be underscored. To this is added a dispersion of actions in the field, linked to limited resources and capabilities available to this type of actor.

##### ***Discussions***

If no universal concept can be found, at least an operational concept needs to be implemented in order to help the organisation of the Forum progress and to target the most relevant actors in each country. This concept should take into account the internal complexity and diversity of civil society, its sometimes contradictory means of action and ambiguity.

For example, should religious and traditional leaders, who, in some countries, represent the administration, be included?

A corollary issue relates to the prioritisation of different segments of civil society. In this way, NGOs dominate in international debates such that they are sometimes considered to be the only actors involved. Participants have observed that this is far from true in West Africa where different forms of authority and social organisation have always existed outside modes recommended by development partners.

Moreover, it is essential to make a difference between the role of civil society in the promotion of socio-economic development and the role it plays in politics, where it acts as an opposition and a political breeding ground. The counter-power and political breeding ground are at the centre of the Forum's discussions.

Although its counter-power status is undisputable, the political role of civil society has progressively asserted itself through its involvement in the fight for human rights and democracy. It then came forward by the emergence of independent candidatures during political elections. These are candidatures by leaders who forge their experience through social actions and who wish to contribute to the management of the State's power. It is a sign of citizen dynamism that should not be crushed but supported.

This situation reveals a complementary/rival relationship between civil society and political parties on the public scene. Rivalry is partly explained by the way the emergence of civil society is generally perceived in developing countries. It is particularly linked to the democratisation of the political system as well as to the collapse of the State and deconstruction of traditional societies under the pressure of globalisation.

According to the participants, only a partnership between civil society actors, the media and political parties can support a veritable democratic society. The way this partnership is built on the regional level will be discussed at the Forum. For this purpose, ECOWAS' work involving the adoption of legislation allowing civil society to complete the action of public authorities according to precise representation and good governance norms must be followed closely.

Deepening dialogue and collaboration between political parties and civil society to promote general interest however requires each actor to maintain its sphere of influence and specific operating modes. Consequences caused by excessively close complicity between the political world and civil society should not be underestimated. The sharp increase of NGOs created by political parties in power or as instruments of political opposition is a recurrent phenomenon in West Africa that has been observed by participants.

Questions of transparency, independence and accountability of civil society institutions, their economic viability and financial autonomy are key. Training of professionals and the strengthening of management and organisational capacities are also priority.

### ***Proposals in view of the Forum***

The Forum dedicates part of its work to **cross-cutting questions** that emerged both in discussions on the role of civil society in democracy and peace and in political parties and the media. These questions relate to:

- Funding and economic and financial viability.
- Intellectual independence and autonomy.
- Transparency and democracy of internal operating methods.
- Strengthening human and organisational capacities.

## GROUP WORK AND CONCLUSIONS

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Following the plenary sessions, work continued in two working groups. The first looked at defining the objectives and major themes of the Forum, then identifying expected results. The second tackled participant selection criteria, priority actions for organisation, mobilisation of skills and resources, orientations of the communications strategy before, during and after the Forum. After the work sessions, the plenary session met again to discuss and adopt the conclusions. The main points are presented below. A Presentation Note on the Forum follows.

1. ***The Gorée workshop approves and supports the organisation of the Forum.*** For the first time, these three categories of socio-political actors meet to agree on the analysis of the general political situation of West Africa and on the contribution of each actor in peacekeeping, security and democracy in the region.
2. ***An organisation committee, composed of the SWAC Secretariat and the steering committee of the Strategic Watch Club is in charge of the organisation of the Forum.*** This core group may ask resource people and institutions present in the workshop to back up work with actions. In particular, women formed a group to help circulate information concerning the Forum in the field and to support identification of the participants (see Annex).
3. ***The themes discussed in the workshop are chosen for the Forum.*** The organising committee is responsible for finalising technical dossiers, taking into account contributions available and discussions of the preparatory workshop.
4. ***The Forum should federate all initiatives and discussions on these themes.*** It should not simply juxtapose activities already in process or preparation. For this, a “partnership approach” will be preferred.
5. ***The search for funding should, parallel to funding expected by SWAC Member countries, envisage alternative sources, in particular endogenous sources, so that the region demonstrates the importance it gives to the Forum.***

## FORUM PRESENTATION SHEET

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*With a view to creating a permanent dialogue framework between actors in the region for the formation of West African public opinion in favour of democracy and peace*

### **Context**

West Africa is a region undergoing profound and rapid change. While the dynamics of change underway generate violent or latent political and social tension, they also induce an opening and reconfiguration of the West African public space. The large number of socio-political actors in the public arena (political parties, civil society actors, non-governmental organisations, economic interest groups, women's and young people's associations, the media, unions, etc.), progress made in political and administrative decentralisation in several countries and the emergence of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as a driving force behind regional political integration perfectly illustrate this.

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

In a new context, characterised by recurring governance crises and numerous conflicts, a meeting that decompartmentalises actors in their diversity and their 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) Secretariat – 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**

This Forum targets four specific objectives:

- I. Organise dialogue and contribute to the decompartmentalisation of key actors – political parties, the media and civil society – in democracy;
- II. Help identify strategic issues risks and major challenges facing West Africa in the construction of peace and democracy in the region;
- III. Encourage an informed and constructive exchanges between different types of socio-political actors on respective roles and responsibilities in peace-building 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 could lead to innovative decisions for peacekeeping and establishing democracy in West Africa.

The Forum will discuss peace and democracy issues amidst a context of major economic, socio-political, cultural and institutional change, of opening to other regions of the continent and to the rest of the world. It will examine the roles and responsibilities of the three categories of actors. It will cross-examine perspectives and viewpoints to establish a shared vision of the current situation and reach a consensus on the content and implementation of actions needed to relieve the region of conflicting situations, strengthen democracy and take up the challenge of development while respecting differences.

**ECOWAS** will be closely associated with the Forum. Citizens' appropriation of the **Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance**, the means for socio-political actors to militate for its ratification and implementation in ECOWAS member countries, will be at the centre of discussions. The Forum will also provide the opportunity to energise dialogue between social and institutional actors on the role and position of ECOWAS in the policy regulation of the region.

### **Key questions**

1. What lessons can be drawn from past and current crises in the region, whose origin and/or stakes are of a political nature?
2. How can actors, 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 establishment of such a perspective?
5. How to face the challenge of sustainable development in the region whilst respecting differences?
6. To what extent and how can the Forum contribute to this by being held periodically and linked to ECOWAS mechanisms aimed at building and strengthening peace and democracy in the region?

### **Expected results**

The expected results of this event are as follows:

- Contribution to better understanding of risks and challenges weighing on the establishment of democracy and construction of peace in the region;
- Contribution to a dialogue among West African socio-political and institutional actors on their roles, capacities and responsibilities in the promotion of peace and democracy;
- Durability of the Forum as a framework for permanent dialogue operating in sessions whose frequency 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 implementation of the Supplementary Protocol for Democracy and Good Governance within ECOWAS.

### **Organisation**

An organising committee, consisting of the SWAC Secretariat and members of the Orientation Committee of the Strategic Watch Club, has been set up. It is responsible for the scientific orientations, mobilisation of funds and communication. It will also associate African personalities and ECOWAS representatives among its participants. For logistical support, it will be associated with a network of managers from West African institutions, NGOs and West African media who participated in the Gorée preparatory workshop (3 to 5 November 2004), and ECOWAS representatives and its Parliament.

A sponsorship committee, made up of eminent African personalities who have played a key role in the promotion of democracy and peace on the continent, will also be created.

## General information

- **Countries hosting the Forum:** selection in process.
- **Countries involved:** the 15 ECOWAS countries plus Cameroon, Mauritania and Chad.
- **Strategic partner for the activity:** ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States).
- **Number of participants:** 250.
- **Type of participants:** political party representatives (4 per country), the media (4 per country) and civil society (4 per country). Personalities from the region and the continent playing a major role in the development of peace, democracy and influence of the region.
- **Estimated budget:** €350,000.

## **ANNEX 1: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Considering the importance of peace and democracy as factors promoting development and social justice for African people in general and the people of Senegal in particular;

Considering the increasingly growing conscience developing in the West African sub-region regarding the need to promote social dialogue of all political, economic, cultural and social development actors;

Considering the vital role played by the University of Les Mutants as the centre of promotion for dialogue between civilisations;

Considering the growing involvement of the Institut des Etudes Politiques et Stratégiques in the implementation and organisation of this dialogue of civilisations, namely in democratic governance, security, peace and development;

Considering the quality of the welcome given to each delegation taking part in this Workshop;

Considering the logistical and material organisation conditions of this event and the fascinating setting of the island of Gorée hosting it;

Considering the special attention given by all the personnel of the Institut des Etudes Politiques et Stratégiques of the University of Les Mutants to participants staying in Gorée;

We, **the participants** at the preparatory Workshop for the West African political party, media and civil society Forum, held on 3 to 5 November in Gorée in the premises of the University of Les Mutants,

Express our very sincere thanks and deep gratitude:

- To the people of Senegal, to national and local political and administrative authorities, in particular the Mayor of Gorée, and the Authorities and all the Personnel of the IEPS, for their hospitality and the quality of measures taken to ensure the safety of participants and facilitate fruitful discussion;
- To the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa and the Sahel and West Africa Club for taking the successful initiative to convene this Workshop that is ***a strategic step towards the creation of a place of discussion and strategic thinking for the effective mobilisation of social actors in peace and development in West Africa;***

We congratulate and thank the interpreters/translators for providing high quality technical support and contributing to the high standard of discussions throughout the Workshop: the success of the deliberations depends on them;

We note with satisfaction the importance that the Sahel and West African Club and the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa give to the involvement of women in the deliberations on security, peace and development in the West African sub-region and encourage them to continue in this direction;

We reiterate our belief in dialogue and mediation as means to solve conflicts in West Africa;

We reiterate our gratitude to all the Institutions and individuals who have worked to facilitate the organisation and success of the ***Preparatory workshop for the West Africa political party, media and civil society Forum***, by making the delegations' stay in Gorée and Dakar as pleasant as possible.

Gorée, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2004

**Participants**

## **ANNEX 2: SUMMARY RECORD OF THE WOMEN'S MEETING**

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Within the framework of the preparatory workshop, women participating in said workshop (see list below) met in the premises of the Hôtel Croix du Sud de Dakar (Senegal). In her introduction, Mrs. Schumacher, Deputy Director of the SWAC Secretariat, presented the concerns and expectations relating to the important role played by women in Africa, in particular in solving conflict and striving for peace. She stated that she was impressed by the intellectual quality and commitment of participants in this workshop. It illustrated that it is possible to establish a small network of women on the basis of this nucleus for future actions and initiatives.

The participants briefly introduced themselves, expressed their opinion and indicated their vision and perceptions on the failures experienced by other circles. By mutual agreement, the participants decided to:

- Focus their action on the organisation of the Forum;
- Set up a group with the dual responsibility of circulating the Forum's project and contributing to its success by identifying committed women capable of enhancing the level and results of the meeting.

These resource persons and organisations will be sought/identified in cooperation with the Forum's organising committee in the countries present at the preparatory workshop and those unable to attend. For this purpose, it was unanimously agreed that:

- All women present should be associated, in some way, with the organising committee of the Forum in order to give a certain legitimacy with respect to the relay role they need to play in their respective country and region.
- This legitimacy will find its expression through a "mandate" (or terms of reference) which defines their role and tasks in such a way as to facilitate contacts with the authorities, organisations of civil society and all other speakers and partners.

This meeting therefore ended on a note of satisfaction and confidence. Mrs. Maï Manga Thérèse Keita thanked all the women for their clairvoyance.

Dakar, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2004  
Mrs. Maï Manga Thérèse Keita

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Maï Manga Thérèse Keita, Niger  
Seynabou Maal, Senegal (excused)  
Dr Mariam D. Maiga, Mali  
Clarice Merindol, Burkina Faso  
Salimata Porquet, Côte d'Ivoire  
Sunhilt Schumacher, SWAC Secretariat  
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