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CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

**ECOWAS and Conflict Prevention in West Africa:
Confronting the Triple Threats**

By

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1.1. Introduction

West Africa's relative stability following a period of violent and protracted conflicts in the 1990s is under increasing attack from a range of existing and emerging threats. The emergence or in some cases re-emergence of certain trends, namely armed sub-state groups, small arms flows and the narcotics trade could erode the stability that the region currently enjoys. Despite progress in consolidating democracy over the past two decades, a series of recent military coups has raised questions about the state of the democratic structures that are currently in place. More generally, much of the region is still waiting for a 'democratic dividend': despite the return to civilian rule and holding of periodic elections, the social and economic well being of the vast majority of people in the sub-region remain dire. The near simultaneous assassinations of President Joao Bernardo Vieira of Guinea Bissau and the country's Chief of Staff, General Tagme Na Waie in 2008 was a glaring reminder of West Africa's troubled past. Although a military takeover in Guinea (Conakry) was foreseen if and when the oft expected death of its long-term leader happened, the occurrence of a coup d'état in December 2008, against the inept and incompetent regime following the death of President Lansana Conté, was nonetheless an unsettling development.

There is no doubt that the re-emergence of coup d'états is a manifestation of the weaknesses of the democratic systems that have been established; highlighting the need to ensure that democracy transcends the holding of periodic elections. At the heart of the problem is the growing abuse of power by civilian authorities. For instance, the issue of term limits has proved to be contentious as several civilians Heads of State have attempted to change their national constitutions to prolong their stay in power often in defiance of public opinion. Recent attempts by Niger's President, Mamadou Tandja to change the country's constitution to allow him a third term is a glaring manifestation of this troubling pattern.¹

Meanwhile, the emergence of al-Qaeda affiliated groups, primarily in the Sahel constitutes a new form of transnational threat with wider global consequences. **The activities of groups such as al-Qaeda in the Maghreb pose serious security threats to countries**

in the Sahel and beyond. Organized crime is also running rampant in the region. **Outsiders find it hard to distinguish between criminal groups that are engaged in smuggling contraband items including hard drugs, groups with terrorist links and those with a political agenda.** Establishing the differences between these groups is one of the hardest challenges confronting national, regional and international actors in their efforts to combat the multiple threats to stability in West Africa.

These developments, coming against the backdrop of the current global economic and financial crisis has placed tremendous pressure on national governments as they struggle to cope with the dire effects of the crises and responding to these threats. The challenges are compounded by the shifting priorities of donor countries, some of whom have been forced to scale back their assistance due to the impact of the financial meltdown on their national budgets.

It is against this backdrop that this paper addresses three critical transnational challenges, referred to as the "triple threats" confronting West Africa: *governance, drug trafficking and small arms and light weapons (SALW)*. **The combined effect of these threats could undermine the security and stability of the entire sub-region.** The paper argues that understanding the broad dynamics and impacts of poor governance, the proliferation of SALW and drug trafficking is critical to maintaining regional stability as a whole.

While the failure of governance in some countries constitutes a threat to national and sub-regional stability, the proliferation of illicit SALW continues to increase the propensity for societal insecurity. However it is the growing use of the sub-region as a transit point by Latin American drug cartels that poses the most serious threat to national and regional security.

Meanwhile, the effectiveness and neutrality of national security services, specifically the police, military and gendarmeries remains a substantial challenge, especially in countries where they are highly politicized. Their neutrality as defenders of the constitutional order, for example during contested elections cannot be guaranteed. While these issues are played out at the national level, they are for the most part transnational as evidenced by the lack of effective law enforcement in Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire among others and therefore require a sub-regional response.

Consequently, the paper focuses on policy responses by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in confronting the triple threats and concludes by offering specific recommendations on how these responses can be enhanced. **Since 1990, ECOWAS has continued to gain in stature and to shift from an ECOWAS of states to an ECOWAS of people; basically placing at the centre of its activities and policy initiatives the well-being and welfare of West African citizens.** More importantly, ECOWAS is also engaging with earlier thorny issues that were placed on the backburner due to political sensitivities like unconstitutional changes of government, security sector reform and broader governance issues.

1.2 Governance

1.2.1 The ECOWAS Response

In West Africa, the issue of governance has been one of the most critical and challenging aspects of its post-independence political history. The lack of transparent governance processes has resulted in political violence ending in military coups d'état as well as violent and destructive intra-state conflicts. The outbreak of conflicts over the 'democratic deficit' in the post Cold War period resulted in the first military intervention by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), when it deployed its Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to Liberia in 1990.

Since then, ECOWAS has mounted several peace operations often in partnership with the United Nations.² But the controversies surrounding the interventions, the need to understand the root causes that precipitated the collapse of several ECOWAS member states forced ECOWAS to: (a) take stock of the nature of political instability and insecurity in West Africa, and (b) respond to the rising societal demands for democratization – recognizing that individual security, good governance and accountability is linked to the security and stability of the whole sub-region.

As a result, what was previously characterized as the paradoxical but tangential developments of the community intervention scheme not only impacted the development of a structured security framework, but also started a 're-democratization' process, spearheaded at first by ECOWAS as a critical component of peace-

building in the sub-region. Eventually, the momentum was taken-over and driven forward by domestic actors. These multiple processes were eventually incorporated into the *Declaration of ECOWAS Political Principles* signed in Abuja in July 1991,³ which reflects a consolidation of the political ideals that had been germinating in the sub-region for some time. This document sought to acknowledge the renewed preoccupation with and reassertion of the fundamental rights and freedom of the individual. The values and norms contained in the Declaration of Principles committed ECOWAS member states to: "Respect [the] fundamental human rights of [ECOWAS citizens] as embodied in universally recognize [sic] international instruments on human rights and in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights."⁴

Significantly, the Declaration sought to: "Promote and encourage the full enjoyment by all [West African] peoples of their fundamental human rights, especially their political, economic, social, cultural and other rights inherent in the dignity of the human person and essential to his free and progressive development."⁵ Finally, ECOWAS' leaders solemnly promised to ensure: "the liberty of the individual and his inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic processes the framing of society in which he lives..." committing to "...encourage and promote in each of our countries, *political pluralism* and those representative institutions and guarantees for personal safety and freedom under the law that are our common heritage."⁶ (Our emphasis)

Since then, these constitutive principles have been incorporated into ECOWAS' revised Treaty of 1993, which further emphasizes the 'promotion and consolidation of a democratic system of governance in each Member State as envisaged, by the Declaration of Political Principles'.⁷ This subsequently contributed to ECOWAS' adoption of a *Supplementary Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy* at the 25th Summit of Heads of State and Government in Dakar in December 2001.⁸ This document established the guiding principles that would help foster participatory democracy, good governance, and the rule of law, respect for human rights and a balanced and equitable distribution of resources. **The protocol emphasized the need for separation of powers. Most importantly, it stated that access to power must be through free, fair and transparent elections, with zero tolerance for power obtained through unconstitutional**

means, strict adherence to democratic principles and decentralization of power at all levels.⁹

While this document was enthusiastically signed by heads of state, its ratification and domestication into national law became contentious. For almost eight years, the Supplementary Protocol could not come into force because the required number of member states had not ratified it. However, enough member states have now ratified this document and it has come into force. This reflects one of ECOWAS' abiding challenges, namely the speed with which member states ratify documents that will enable them to become enforceable.

But there have been other issues concerning the efficacy of this protocol. **The protocol does not have a graduated response mechanism to deal with the manner in which political incumbency is abused and how that contributes to violence in societies.** As a declaratory document of intent, the supplementary protocol has all the objective criteria for supporting member states to organize free, fair and transparent elections. But close to a decade after its promulgation, the record of implementation, oversight, compliance and possible sanctions against member states that fall foul of these principles is, at best, weak.¹⁰ This is reflected in the faulty elections in Nigeria, Guinea, Togo and the less than satisfactory ones in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

In spite of these weaknesses, however, a combination of the principles inherent in these documents – also recently encapsulated in the new *ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework* (ECPF) – can contribute to deepening the democratic process in the sub-region as exemplified by the elections in Benin, Sierra Leone, Niger and more recently, Ghana. As stated above, because of **ECOWAS' realization that governance challenges in several of its member states had contributed to the outbreak of conflicts led it to specifically place governance related issues spanning the activities of political parties and the security sectors at the centre of the ECPF.** This was a recognition on the part of both ECOWAS' political leaders and civil societies that a stable and functional region would need to improve on its governance practices. Consequently, ECOWAS' approach to dealing with broader conflict prevention issues is governance led. The ECPF classifies conflict prevention into two categories: (i) *Operational prevention*, including early

warning, mediation, conciliation, preventive disarmament and preventive deployment using interactive means, such as good offices and the ECOWAS Standby Force, and (ii) *Structural prevention*, often elaborated under peace-building initiatives and comprising political, institutional (governance) and developmental reforms, capacity enhancement and advocacy on the culture of peace. **The ECPF comprises fourteen components that span the chain of initiatives designed to strengthen human security and incorporate conflict prevention activities as well as aspects of peace-building.**¹¹

In tracking the evolution of these mechanisms, two issues stand out, namely: (a) the need for improved coordination between ECOWAS' institutions and agencies on conflict prevention; and (b) improved collaboration between multi-sectors and actors.¹² Internally within the ECOWAS Commission, coordination and consolidation among its institutions have been disjointed; while there are existing gaps in collaboration and information-sharing with external agencies as no systematised method that prioritizes teamwork exists.

While this framework has been adopted, the authors foresee several possible challenges to its successful implementation. First, there is the general and perennial problem of generating the political will among ECOWAS' leaders to initiate the domestic policies and decisions that should complement the principles and mechanisms contained in the ECPF. Secondly, while the issues raised in the ECPF affect the lived experiences of West African citizens, there is a historical chasm between the rhetoric of promulgating such community documents and the reality of getting community citizens onboard such processes through raising public awareness of the existence and rationale for the ECPF. More often than not, such documents basically gather dust with member states and are dusted off during crisis periods. Thirdly, there is the need to improve both intra- and inter-agency coherence and collaboration among the different parts of the ECOWAS Commission – for example the political and economic aspects of the Commission working in tandem to realize set goals – to ensure the effective implementation of the ECPF, but more importantly, to take the lead in liaising with member states. Fourthly, it is essential for adequate investment in financial and human resources – particularly in the political affairs, peace and security (PAPS) directorate – to ensure the smooth implementation of the ECPF. Finally, there is a necessity for a political awareness that, after the

publicity and fanfare of the inauguration of the framework, prevention is a long-term, slow process and not a high profile single event.¹³ **If adhered to, these norms would go a long way in preventing the outbreak of violent conflict, since they would contribute to creating an environment that would ensure a more peaceful way of settling political disputes.**

1.2.2 Governance under Pressure

While there are reasons to question how effectively ECOWAS' stated principles translate from theory to action, ECOWAS has undeniably been very active in promoting regional security. Since the adoption of the Protocol, ECOWAS has overturned military coups in Sierra Leone (1998), Guinea-Bissau (2003), and Togo (2005), and negotiated the departure of Charles Taylor from Liberia. Operationally, ECOWAS has deployed two peace operations: the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (2003) and the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (2003). ECOWAS collaborated with the United Nations, France and the United States in the two deployments, with troops from both missions subsequently re-hatted to the follow-on UN-led missions.

Despite the attention given to ECOWAS' collaboration with the UN and others for its deployments in these countries, ECOWAS' key role in resolving the political crisis in Togo (2005) and Guinea (2007) was the most striking display of its ability to invoke its new instruments to deal with intra-state conflicts before they erupt. **Unlike Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, where ECOWAS intervened to deal with the aftermath of violence, its engagement in Togo and Guinea was credited for averting the eruption of further violence in both countries.**

In Togo, the death of President Gnassingbe Eyadema in 2005, threatened to plunge that country into chaos. After his father's death, Faure Gnassingbe's assumption of power was rejected by members of the opposition and ECOWAS as unconstitutional and unacceptable. However, having changed the constitution and with the country's military on his side, Faure initially appeared determined to succeed his father. This prompted ECOWAS to intervene by calling for an immediate end to the unconstitutional 'father-to-son' transition and a restoration of the old constitution or Togo would risk sanctions and even military intervention - with Nigeria's National Assembly endorsing

the latter.¹⁴ Invoking the Togolese constitution and its zero-tolerance policy against unconstitutional change of government (and that of the African Union), ECOWAS succeeded in brokering a deal that saw Faure step aside, and the deputy speaker of the National Assembly assume the presidency.

Presidential elections, subsequently won by Faure Gnassingbe, were held in sixty days – in line with the constitution but in the face of complaints by the opposition about the short notice, as the sixty days included time spent negotiating with Faure to relinquish power. ECOWAS' success in resolving the crisis can be attributed to three main factors: first, it invoked the Togolese constitution as an entry point to justify its pressure on Faure to relinquish power; second, it invoked its zero-tolerance policy against unconstitutional change of government to justify its intervention and; thirdly, its close collaboration with the AU added legitimacy to its actions.

On a separate note, in late January 2007, Guinea was gripped by strike action as calls from the nation's trade union and civic movements for improved working and broader socio-economic conditions metamorphosed into demands for the country's late president, Lansana Conté, to resign. The government reacted with half-measures, appointing a long-time ally of the president as prime minister. The government's move further inflamed the civic opposition leading tens of thousands of protesters to take to the streets. The president responded by declaring a "state of siege" and unleashed the country's military on the protesters resulting in a high death toll with thousands injured across the country. ECOWAS, the UN and bilateral partners unanimously condemned the government's heavy-handedness and warned the military of the repercussions of their actions. ECOWAS dispatched a high-level mediation team, led by former Nigerian president General Ibrahim Babangida and ECOWAS Commission president Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, to mediate between the parties. The ECOWAS mediation culminated in the appointment of a new prime minister, which was enough of a concession to appease the opposition. But the new prime minister's reign was short-lived as his popularity waned when he was unable to meet expectations, thus making it easy for President Conté to fire him. But this development raises broader operational issues with ECOWAS' ability to mediate, but also to elicit compli-

ance from recalcitrant states and its leaders with earlier agreed upon measures. **Certainly, for improved effectiveness, ECOWAS will need to design better functioning follow-up mechanisms for any future mediation processes both in Guinea – where junta leader Captain Musa Camara seeks to run for the Presidency in 2010 and Niger where President Tandja’s referendum victory is creating tensions.**

Unlike previous attempts at mediation, the 2007 efforts were believed to have succeeded largely because the Guinean authorities realized that their options were dwindling as even some parliamentarians voted against an extension of the “state of siege.” Although ECOWAS’ mediation averted Guinea’s descent into chaos, President Lansana Conté remained in power until his death on 23 December, 2008. Conté’s sudden death and the subsequent military coup d’état constituted an affront to ECOWAS’ zero-tolerance policy for unconstitutional change of government.

However, the situation in Guinea after years of a failing and inept ‘civilian’ government, posed three critical dilemmas for ECOWAS. The first was whether it should strictly enforce its zero-tolerance policy. The second is how flexible it should be, given the fragile situation in that country and its immediate neighbours in the Mano River basin. Third and perhaps most importantly, Guinea’s population welcomed the junta, thereby making it difficult for outsiders to be too rigid with the junta. **Finding the tenuous balance between respecting the ‘wishes’ of the Guinean public and implementing ECOWAS’ norms exposed the underlying tensions between national and supranational institutions.**

Faced with these dilemmas, ECOWAS was forced to walk a fine line as it suspended Guinea from its councils, but promised to assist the junta in organizing elections; the latter was meant to respect the wishes of the population. Perhaps to reinforce its desire for compliance with existing norms, it objected to the junta’s earlier pronouncement of holding elections in two years. But ECOWAS’ position was not harmonious as the actions of some member states most notably Senegal ran counter to its official stance. Nonetheless, the military junta remained suspended and is coming under increasing pressure from ECOWAS and others to conduct elections, which it has pledged hold in early 2010.

However, ECOWAS’ failure to convince President Conté to step aside, even after it was evident that he was incapable of running the country due to deteriorating health, demonstrated its limitations in dealing with recalcitrant civilian heads of state. It is therefore not surprising that the initial ECOWAS interventions in both Togo (2005) and Guinea (2007) were reactive, rather than proactive. That ECOWAS wielded a big ‘stick’ in its engagement in Togo and Guinea (2009), compared to its approach with the late President Conté, highlight its limitations in dealing with entrenched civilian dictatorships. But, the fact that it has succeeded in reversing several unconstitutional changes of governments based on its norms, underscores its growing legitimacy in the region and globally.

1.3.1 Security Sector Reform: a Governance Challenge in West Africa

Meanwhile the role and ability of national security services to remain neutral of internal political processes is proving to be a contentious issue as more and more ECOWAS member states embrace political pluralism. This section contextualizes the processes that have resulted in the recent trend towards security sector reform and governance (SSR/G) and examines the extent to which the ‘demands’ for either better ‘management’, ‘reform’, ‘transformation’ or ‘governance’ is driven by domestic imperatives for change or are occurring as a result of external conditionalities. Demands from donors to reform the security sector as part of general public sector reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, was resisted by several ECOWAS member states from 1982 to 1992. However, during this period, several West African public sectors underwent a series of extensive reforms that culminated in the establishment, in some instances, of National Institutional Renewal Programmes (NIRP), funded by different donors but usually placed under the direct control of the Presidencies. As a rule, the security institutions were excluded from these reforms, which also benefited from substantial external funding. Only in the last few years has the idea gained ground that, perhaps even more than the rest of the public sector, the security institutions in general, and the police and military in particular, also require extensive reform.¹⁵ The transition to democratic forms of governance, the increasing emphasis given to issues of security, and fiscal problems are together driving the perception of the imperative for security sector reform. ECOWAS’ strategic advantage in driving a hard bargain with its member states to adopt SSR measures is because of the long history of unconstitutional involvement of

the security sectors in undermining political governance in the sub-region.

The critical approach to discussing SSR in West Africa is to recognize that ECOWAS member states consists of both stable but fragile and post-conflict states. Thus, SSR processes in the sub-region should be largely perceived as both preventative and a post-conflict reconstruction process. In this vein, two facts stand out. First, all conflicts in the sub-region – Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and Cote d'Ivoire – have all occurred partly because of the poor management of the security sector. Even in relatively stable states such as Niger, Nigeria and Togo, the role of the security sector, particularly the armed forces, in generating instances of instability are frequent. However, there are cases that generate cause for optimism. In Benin, Senegal and Ghana, improved governance of the security sector that were introduced as part of larger public sector reform processes, albeit later than what had taken place in the civil service have contributed to ensuring stability. The complementary drives for improvement in security sector management and governance, particularly for Benin and Ghana were driven primarily by domestic and donor agendas because of the role of the security sectors in hampering development in both countries. Senegal's experience was mainly driven by a gradual learning processes in the post-independence period.

While differences remain across West African states, it is important to recognize the broad specifics of SSR processes in both post-conflict and stable states. For most West African states, with the exception of Senegal, the defining characteristic of these processes is the antagonistic civil-military relationship. Senegal is unique among West African states in the sense that it has never experienced a military take-over. **The resultant effect of the poor civil-military relations is that the trust that should ensure an overlap of collaborative relations is largely absent, thereby hampering the development of effective SSR processes.** However, there are other problems, but for the purposes of this paper there are two issues that should be flagged: (a) first, is the nature of archaic legal foundations governing the management and control of the security sector across the sub-region; (b) second, and more critically, is the level of efficiency of parliamentary oversight.

In all West African states, the bulk of legislative frameworks that govern security sector institutions have not been revised since they were inherited at the time of independence. In Nigeria's case for example, laws governing the police have not seen any significant change since 1959, while in Ghana such laws were last revised in 1970. The end result is that such rules and regulations hardly respond to contemporary policing philosophy or challenges, and certainly do not capture the dynamics of the democratic transition processes in place. Such disparities between the laws governing the performance of the police and the democratic ethos of the states are invariably bound to clash.

One would have thought that recognition of such a chasm in the theory and praxis of SSR would result in changes in legislation. But herein lies one of the challenging institutional oversight flaws in both stable and post-conflict states – namely the levels of competence, knowledge and efficiency of parliamentary oversight bodies.¹⁶ **Part of the challenge of effective parliamentary oversight of this sector is the nebulous term 'national security interest'. What constitutes the national security interest in most of these states has not been specified in any document.** Consequently, any government can either stop or interfere in any parliamentary debate under the vacuous argument that the discussions can be 'injurious to the national interest'.

But there are several other difficulties faced by this particular parliamentary select committee that are of a rather more technical and specialised nature. These are the limitations in parliamentarians' ability to contribute to the debates on the floor of the house and their limited understanding of the nuances, for example, of the military expenditure especially as it relates to acquisitions. There are other challenges related more to structural issues that affects parliaments across the sub-region. These include the lack of parliamentary support staff, which undermines parliamentarians' effectiveness to contribute to debates. This has serious impacts on the capacity of parliamentary committees to effectively scrutinize the budget estimates presented to them by the executive.¹⁷ Furthermore, there are the practical and operational issues involved in these challenges, namely that parliamentary committees have limited resources at their disposal and lack basic minimum facilities including but not limited to: lack of office accommodation for Members; Lack of material

support, such as computers, internet accessibility, adequate research staff and the use and assistance of experts; No reference libraries; Incapacity of committee members to thoroughly examine issues referred to the committee; and Inadequate expertise in oversight and monitoring of security funding.

However, over and above these critical operational challenges are 'behavioral factors,' that arise because there is very little evidence of parliamentary involvement in security matters due to the prevailing culture of secrecy. **There is no doubt that the bulk of ECOWAS member states are transitional democracies (with the exception of Senegal) with serious consequences on the conception and approach to security.** These challenges are partly manifested in the specific difficulties and problems related to their efforts at controlling the security sector. Difficulties touching on oversight responsibilities, with respect to both statutory and non-statutory security organs in member states, have also been carried over to the community parliament.

What then are the prospects for alleviating these difficulties? First, is the need to accept that in most transitional democracies, issues of transparency, accountability and scrutiny of the security sector are usually perceived as witch-hunting; a deliberate ploy by new political power brokers to exercise undue influence but whose knowledge of the security sector itself is at best patchy and shallow. Such perceptions are especially prevalent in states where such new political elites are reemerging from dictatorial one-party rule (Mali, Côte d'Ivoire), from repressive military regimes (Nigeria, Togo), or quasi-dictatorial constitutional regimes (Ghana) among others. There is therefore a strong imperative to bring on board different actors to balance suspicion among the diverse security organs as well as the new political elites.

Taking into consideration the fact that there is some level of apprehension about oversight, is there a possibility that it can also be taken too far? In order to address such concerns, ECOWAS has proposed a four-level model: First, that there should be complete oversight over policy and objectives. Second, that tactics and operational issues must be examined only in controlled circumstances. Third that the identity of key personnel are kept out of the public glare. Finally, that civil society organizations

should play a critical role by providing extra oversight mechanisms.¹⁸ While these proposals on the surface are sensible, one needs to juxtapose them (a) with ECOWAS' ability to elicit member states compliance with these proposals, and (b) because of the democratic governance setbacks in Niger and Guinea, one can speculate that not all member state are enamored by these proposals.

1.4 Drugs

1.4.1 Scale of the Problem and Regional response

One of the most serious single challenges facing West African States is the influx of narcotics from Latin America and its impact on both public and private sector institutions, and the population at large. These flows have become so massive that the West Coast is now popularly referred to as the 'coke coast'; with the effects of this trade compounding the challenges of state fragility in the sub-region.¹⁹ The scale of the problem is such that the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) states:

The crisis of drug trafficking in West Africa is gaining attention...Alarm bells are ringing about the volume of cocaine transiting the region (roughly 50 tons a year). West Africa ... has become a hub for cocaine trafficking...worth almost \$2 billion a year. This is more than a drugs problem. It is a serious security threat.²⁰

Because of the sheer volume of shipments, the sub-region has been carved out by Narco-barons into two hubs, Guinea-Bissau servicing a northern hub and Ghana servicing the southern hub.²¹ However, the impact extends far beyond the two hubs: almost all the maritime states in West Africa are experiencing an increase in actual seizures. Cape Verde²², Ghana²³, Sierra Leone²⁴, Guinea-Bissau²⁵, Liberia²⁶, Guinea²⁷, Nigeria²⁸ and Senegal²⁹ have emerged as major ports of entry for cocaine.³⁰

The effect of drugs on West Africa's weak economies has been diverse. With the increase in drug flows to the region, several public sector institutions have been compromised. Among them are customs authorities, police forces, the judiciary and the banking sectors, likewise in some instances the considerable distortion of local economies sometimes through the appreciation of local currencies. In the case of the Gambia, the local currency, the dalasi experienced an

inexplicable appreciation of almost 25% against the US dollar in a single day in September 2007. Furthermore, between mid-July to November 2007, the dalasi further appreciated 30% against the US dollar. Several possible explanations are available. One is either that the currency appreciations are due to legitimate investments, and a second possibility is that this can be explained by large sums of laundered money. Similar developments have been seen in Guinea-Bissau where foreign direct investments have experienced significant increases.³¹

The regional response in terms of ECOWAS' engagement and efforts to the drugs menace has a long history. Almost a decade ago, during the 21st Summit of Heads of State and Government in Abuja, 30 – 31 October 1998, it issued a declaration entitled 'Community Flame Ceremony – the fight against drugs'. While the issue remained dormant until the recent upsurge in seizures, ECOWAS has nonetheless adopted several other initiatives such as the:

- Resolution relating to Prevention and Control of Drug Abuse in West Africa³²;
- Recommendation C/98 on the establishment of a Regional Fund for Financing of Drug Control Activities in West Africa;
- Decision on the establishment of a regional fund for financing drug control activities³³;
- Decision on establishing the inter-governmental action group against money laundering in West Africa.³⁴

Although all these institutional frameworks exist, '... operationally, not much has taken place'.³⁵ The exception is the Intergovernmental Anti-Money Laundry Group in Africa (GIABA) established by ECOWAS that has sought to sensitize member states to the debilitating effects of money laundering, through its training programmes and improve the capacity of member states to understand the interrelated threats of drugs and money laundering.

Despite limited progress, the ECOWAS Commission has continued to show concern with the upsurge in drug trafficking, and in June 2007, at its 32nd Ordinary Session, the Authority of Heads of State and Government expressed alarm about the growing trends. As a result, the ECOWAS

Commission was mandated to take urgent action. GIABA was subsequently authorized to determine the scale of the problem as a means of using the recommendations to prepare for ECOWAS's strategy.³⁶

Consequently, two initiatives were undertaken. First, a meeting of civil society organizations took place in Abuja, Nigeria on 16 October 2008,³⁷ and later that month an ECOWAS collaborative regional ministerial conference on drug trafficking and control occurred in Praia, Cape Verde. The conference, entitled '*Drug trafficking as a security threat in West Africa*', was convened with the assistance of United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The aims of the meeting were to adopt:

- A political declaration outlining the commitment of ECOWAS's leaders to tackle the drugs menace in all its manifestations, especially as it relates to prioritizing drug control and ensuring that adequate resources are provided to implement the draft plan of action; and
- The ECOWAS Regional Response Action Plan³⁸ which provides a synopsis of the major challenges that militate against effective drug control in West Africa and identifies strategies to overcome them. The Plan offers specific, measurable and realistic objectives with timeframe and budget, and also assigns responsibilities within which to expect tangible results.

This meeting was attended by several ECOWAS ministers overseeing drug control efforts (justice/interior and security, law enforcement agencies and the military). International partners included ICPO-Interpol, World Customs Organization (WCO), the European Union (EU),³⁹ the US government and Latin American and Asian countries. Other important multilateral and bilateral partners in attendance were the Chair of the UN Security Council.

One of the draft documents that came out of the meeting pledged 'to accord drug control the priority it deserves and the highest level of government ... as well as at the ECOWAS Commission'.⁴⁰ In the operative sections of the political declaration, the ECOWAS Commission was directed to:

- Establish a strong coordination mechanism to forge close links with member states' governments and civil institutions and organizations involved in drug control in order to achieve better coordination in the control of drug trafficking and abuse in the sub-region, and for that purpose;
- Establish an ECOWAS Drug Control and Crime Prevention Division responsible for the overall coordination of regional initiatives undertaken in the area of drug abuse and crime prevention, treatment and rehabilitation as well as the collection and analysis of data on crime and drug phenomenon in the sub-region;
- Urgently establish the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Centre (ECPCJS)⁴¹ to serve as a focal point for mutual legal assistance both amongst ECOWAS members and non-members; and
- Mandate the Department of Peace and Security under the Office of the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security with the task of facilitating the formation of the Network of Drug Law Enforcement Agencies/ Units within the framework of the West African Joint Operations for the coordination of efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime in the ECOWAS sub-region.

Finally, the ECOWAS Commission was tasked to initiate the negotiation process for the preparation of an ECOWAS Convention against illicit drug trafficking and abuse to be finalized in 2009.⁴² After agreeing to these exhaustive and comprehensive strategies, the ECOWAS Commission President, Mohammed Ibn Chambas, pledged to 'devise a validated monitoring and evaluation framework to enable us to track performance and deliver our strategies.'⁴³ **Despite ECOWAS' endeavours, it is critical to recognize that unlike other transnational problems, the challenges posed by narcotics trafficking poses an even higher risk of undermining peace-consolidation efforts in post-conflict countries, while threatening stable ones.** For now, it is too early to determine the positive

impact or otherwise of all these suggestions. Certainly, the recent developments in both Ghana (with the capture of 70 kilos of cocaine from Latin America), and the discovery of chemicals and possible clandestine laboratory activity in Guinea⁴⁴ shows that while the rhetoric is good, there are still challenges in combating this trade.

Although there is no hard evidence to link the assassination of arch enemies, President Vieira and Gen. Na Waie in March 2009, there is strong suspicion that the conflict between the two was aggravated by differences over the appropriate response to the onslaught by Latin American drug barons.⁴⁵ While the killings may have resulted from the long-standing enmity between the two, later reports pointed to the possibility of a more sinister role by drug cartels. It was reported that the bomb that killed Gen. Na Waie was manufactured in Thailand, raising further questions about the possible involvement of Asian networks in drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau and the sub-region as a whole. In a direct reference to the possible role of drug traffickers in the killings, the Gambian Foreign Minister, Dr. Oumar Touray, part of an ECOWAS delegation that visited Bissau after the slayings, warned that "what we have on our hands is a time bomb akin to the conflagration in Mexico. ECOWAS has to do something about this situation, else we will all be consumed in the impending inferno."⁴⁶ Needless to say that, such high profile killings could have serious destabilizing consequences that could in the words of the foreign minister consume the entire sub-region.

In neighboring Guinea-Conakry, the newly established military junta has arrested several high ranking former government officials including the son of late President Conté, a serving officer in the country's armed forces at the time of his arrest. The public confession by several senior government officials, including the late president's son, an army captain, indicates the extent to which the drug cartels had penetrated public officials in the previous government. Despite questions about the methods used to elicit the confessions, and the methods may have been wrong, what is evident is that the activities of the cartels would be difficult to curb given the networks they had developed with well placed government officials.

Elsewhere in the sub-region, there are indications that some political parties, both ruling and opposition, are receiving financial benefits from the drug largess. For instance, the role of drug money in national politics surfaced strongly

during the 2008 elections in Ghana, as the various parties accused each other of receiving financial support from drug cartels.⁴⁷ **The infusion of drug money into national politics would significantly alter the terrain, giving an edge to parties that are willing to engage with the cartels.** In the end, when such parties are elected to office, they become hostages of the drug barons with significant impact on the ability and willingness of law enforcement agencies to deal with the scourge, due to either political pressure or cooptation. This would significantly erode public and international confidence thereby increasing the risk of relapse in post-conflict countries or the collapse of once stable states.⁴⁸

1.4.2 Non-ECOWAS-Led Initiatives

Meanwhile, due to the growing magnitude of drug flows through the sub-region, several international multilateral and bilateral operations have been initiated to help West Africa's weak states and ECOWAS fend off this new onslaught. Some of these are:

- Operation Westbridge, Ghana. This is a joint UK Government and Government of Ghana collaboration which has trained and positioned officers and equipment at Accra's Airport. Due to the arrests and imprisonments in Ghana, the whole scheme has already paid for itself due to the low prison charges in Ghana as compared to UK prisons;
- Interpol, Project COCAF – (Cocaine Africa) to monitor large-scale cocaine trafficking routes in previously unaffected regions such as West Africa. Up to the end of 2007 Project COCAF had registered 497 significant seizures of cocaine transported on commercial air flights from West Africa to Europe. Through its COCAF database, Interpol deals exclusively with flights emanating from West Africa to Europe;
- The Maritime Analysis and Operations Center-Narcotics (MAOC-N), an international agency headquartered in Lisbon, Portugal and dedicated to stopping drug trafficking across the Atlantic and formed by seven European nations; and

- UNODC in collaboration with ECOWAS, UNOWA and INTERPOL recently launched the West Coast Initiative (WACI) to confront the threats posed by organized crime. The scheme would initially focus on capacity building efforts for law enforcement agencies in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau.

While these initiatives are laudable, and in some instances have yielded positive results, better coordination as is envisaged in the WACI initiative would contribute to optimizing their outcomes. It is only through such coordinated and complementary efforts that national, regional and international efforts would make a significant impact on the activities of the cartels. This is critical because, without proper coordination, the drug barons would merely shift their operations to those countries that are considered the weak links in the system either because of weak national institutions or limited international support.

1.5 Small Arms and Light Weapons

1.5.1 From Moratorium to a Convention: a sub-region's response to the threat of SALW

West Africa has been plagued by the proliferation of licit and illicit small arms and light weapons for many years. The magnitude of the challenge led the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to describe it as 'weapons of mass destruction in slow motion'.⁴⁹ The President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, similarly described SALW as 'West Africa's weapon of mass destruction'. In this section, we assess the extent to which ECOWAS has 'securitized' this particular issue through an initial 'voluntary' instrument first in 1998 and extended in 2001 until the signing of a legally and politically-binding *ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Related Materials* in June 2006.⁵⁰ However, as of April 2009, this Convention has not come into force because not enough ECOWAS member states had ratified it.

The *ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons* adopted in May 1998 and the Convention represent a normative and practical framework designed to ensure the effective implementation of various national and sub-regional

initiatives. These include, among other things, transfers, conditions of exemption for transfers, control measures for the manufacture of SALW, transparency and exchange of information including the establishment of national and ECOWAS databases and registers. An innovative aspect of this normative framework is dialoguing with artisanal manufacturers and civilians who possess such weapons, as well as visitors' certificates, managing and securing stockpiles, collection and destruction, marking, tracing, brokering, harmonization of legislative provisions, strengthening of border controls, and public education and awareness programmes.⁵¹

While there was strong political rhetoric for this 'voluntary' regime, it quickly became obvious that levels of state compliance upon accession to and the entry into force of the moratorium was at best mixed. Contradictory interpretations were given by states' parties in terms of what its provisions meant. Certainly one of the most critical benchmarks of the efficacy of the whole voluntary process was the creation of National Commissions, which ought to have been established in all member states. Several states like Ghana, Senegal, Mali and Nigeria have been compliant, while Liberia and Niger have not fulfilled all their obligations. While most member states have now established national commissions, their efficacy remains a big question. Basically, such questions have been raised in relation to other critical areas where state compliance was expected. In spite of these problems, however, Adedeji Ebo argues that, '...the moratorium has emerged as a useful template, upon which a West African SALW control regime could eventually be predicated'.⁵² Thus, the adoption of the convention marks the culmination of a process that started with the non-binding moratorium in 1998.⁵³

The ECOWAS Convention on SALW seeks to achieve a broad set of objectives among which are: to prevent and combat excessive and destabilizing accumulation of SALW; control SALW within ECOWAS; consolidate the gains of the Declaration of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons and its code of conduct; promote trust between the member states of ECOWAS through concerted and transparent action on the control of SALW within the sub-region; build the institutional and operational capacities of the ECOWAS Commission and member states in an effort to curb the proliferation of SALW and

their ammunition and other related materials; and finally to promote exchange of information and cooperation among the member states.⁵⁴

While implementation of the SALW protocols have been fraught with challenges especially as it relates to state and non-state compliance, it nevertheless offers two critical pointers: (a) regional institutions do matter; ECOWAS is beginning to influence state policy in the SALW area and demanding compliance, with the result that there is increasing state acquiescence; and (b) ECOWAS' successes with SALW may eventually be translated to other issue-areas and deepen the organization's efficacy in eliciting further state compliance in other sectors. There is, however, significant resistance (in Ghana, Mali and Nigeria,) at the local level to implementing the Convention because the manufacture of these guns plays several roles: familial, cultural, and economic roles which make them difficult to ban.

It is clear from the above discussions that the proliferation and availability of SALW has a close correlation to conflicts in the West African sub-region. **Although there are contestations about the actual numbers of guns in circulation, ranging between 5 – 8 million in the sub-region, there is no doubt that the rise in violence in West African societies – from communal to the national level is related to the easy availability of SALW.**⁵⁵ In the sub-region, SALW are contributing to a culture of violence and an increase in firearms-related crime. While the correlations between SALW and conflict in general are well documented, recent indicators show that the rampant access to and use of SALW is creating public health issues and increasing the cost of doing business in the sub-region. Although some work has been done on the implications of easy availability on conflict, there is certainly the need to understand the wider ramifications in the face of the rising tide of drug trafficking.

While there is no doubt that local production and importation of SALW into West Africa has well developed smuggling networks that have confounded state agents since independence, the effectiveness of such smuggling networks raises further questions as to whether the third part of our triple threats, namely drugs and drugs lords will not begin to exploit such established networks to deepen their trade.⁵⁶ There are indications that along the Togo and Ghana border, well-established smuggling routes (also used for other products) are now being used to smuggle drugs.

However, considerably more work needs to be done to understand the complexities and complementarities that are beginning to emerge among different smuggling networks.

1.6 Explaining the Resilience of SALW & Drugs to Control Measures

A useful starting point for understanding the survivability and resilience of the SALW and drugs trade across West Africa despite consistent national and sub-regional efforts, and recent international engagement, is by examining the networks of social capital that underpin these activities. We have chosen to use social capital an explanatory paradigm among a host of other possible reasons as offering the best prism through which to understand developments relating to weapons and drug trafficking. **While different definitions of social capital exist, in this paper, the term primarily means social relations based on trust and the development of norms and values that support and are supported by such social relations.** Thus, we define social capital as the number, diversity and strength of the social relations maintained by those involved in the complex processes of narcotics and SALW trafficking. In its more general sense as applied by Robert Putnam, it means the pervasiveness of particular norms of reciprocity, the assurance of principles and rules of practice. In the end, Putnam maintains, social capital denotes characteristics of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust.⁵⁷ These facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit, which are created over a long time. In a practical sense, therefore, traffickers with better-performing networks traffic more drugs than is presently known, as the information provided so far is only indicative of the general trends in the sub-region. These networks, we argue, should be understood as a substitute for formal market-supporting institutions.

Through such social capital, a sense of community closeness among traffickers is fostered which provides a protective mechanism within the communities in which they operate. The apparent ability of SALW and drugs traffickers to operate, expand their operations while concurrently outwitting the law can be explained by a strong sense of social capital that represents the norms of mutual engagement that ensures reciprocity, although not necessarily institutionalized forms of reciprocal expectations. **This sense of social capital and reciprocity, we argue, is a major reason why SALW and**

drugs trafficking has survived and is protected by the communities within which they are located. Basically, the reality of the public discourse on drugs and SALW trafficking in all ECOWAS member states is that, while one group see this as a threat, another sees it as an important part of their means of livelihood and achieving societal status.

Conceptually, the point is how to resolve such competing and clashing perceptual agendas.

A second major argument is that because a degree of social capital exists in all the communities where such SALW and drugs trafficking occur, entering the 'closed' world of traffickers is not only difficult but can be dangerous to outsiders. In this particular business, there tends to be some amount of mutual trust that in turn promotes cooperation between local communities and societal economic actors in the process of shared knowledge, growth and economic spin-offs. Thus, the levels of cooperation among different stakeholders that have been experienced throughout West Africa, is also aided by the frequency of social capital, which are 'features of social organization such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation.'⁵⁸

How and why have SALW and drugs traffickers in the ECOWAS sub-region managed to survive the onslaught of successive governmental agencies that have consistently seen them as a threat to both state and societal security? Available evidence suggests that social capital plays an important role in the process of supply, sale and profits accruing from the sale of SALW and drugs. Stocks of social capital in the form of associational activity, social networks, trust and behavioral norms can be linked to improved output and better performance in terms of growth, investment and productivity at the individual and group enterprise levels. **The role of social capital in the processes of SALW and narcotics trafficking in West Africa is quite complex, hence, a thorough understanding of this dynamic is critical for national governments, ECOWAS and international partners seeking to deal with the twin vices.** The logical first step would be to understand the dynamics that underpins SALW and drug trafficking in West Africa. Studies of unemployment trends, especially among the youths, social associations both in the sub-region and the diasporas would go a long way in shedding light on how and why these networks have proved so resilient.

1.7 Conclusion and Recommendations

The framework for peace and security established by ECOWAS is probably the most important contributory factor to establishing peace, stability and security in the sub-region. **While some of the responses to the 'triple threats' have not yielded the desired results, they nonetheless provide a useful basis for calibration to ensure optimal outcomes.** The transformation of ECOWAS from a 'secretariat' to a 'commission' should contribute to cementing its role as the lead institution developing the norms, values and principles that govern state action in the sub-region. As we have discussed above, ECOWAS, despite its difficulties in eliciting compliance with some recalcitrant states on the 'triple threats' has continued to strengthen and deepen democratic transitions within several member states. At the same time, ECOWAS' ability to transition from a Moratorium to a binding Convention on small arms and light weapons is important step. Progress in this area should be replicated in efforts to stem the tide of drug trafficking and improving governance including through security sector reform.

What does the above tell us about ECOWAS's institution building, norm development and the processes for eliciting compliance as a strategy to prevent conflicts? ECOWAS has undoubtedly begun a process of institutionalizing security, democracy and other forms of cooperative behavior in expectation of returns among its member states. It is hoped these initiatives would minimize the chances of countries sliding into violence. This is reflected in its deepening institutionalization processes which have seen the emergence of an integration process towards the institutionalization of a West African regime. **While these developments are encouraging, they are, however, characterised by two basic tensions, namely: (a) a voluntary normative compliance versus non-voluntary institutional enforcement; and (b) the authority of supranational integration structures versus state sovereignty.** These challenges are not only limited to ECOWAS but also to the African Union as it attempts to implement the norms inherent in its Constitutive Act. Furthermore, because ECOWAS is still institutionally weak, its capacities to sanction and punish are feeble or even non-existent. In spite of these teething difficulties, there are signs of encouragement especially when these institutions act collectively against smaller and weaker member states.

It is hoped that the development of strong binding norms would help to serve as a check on the actions and activities of the bigger and stronger members that may be inclined to ignore pressure from smaller members, thereby reducing the risk of the outbreak of conflicts in the sub-region.

Based on the above, the paper makes the following recommendations on the tripe threats:

Governance

I. While democratic governance issues have improved in West Africa, there are still difficulties with the fairness and transparency of elections in several states. ECOWAS through the ECPF should establish standard principles for electoral processes in the sub-region;

II. Closely related to the above, ECOWAS should establish rules to ensure transparency about the selection and function of diverse electoral management bodies to ensure trust in their independence;

III. ECOWAS should establish guidelines for transparent and accountable funding of political parties;

IV. ECOWAS should design and develop a graduated response mechanism to tackle the manner in which political incumbency is abused and contributes to violence in societies;

V. ECOWAS should extend its zero-tolerance for unconstitutional change of government to those governments that tamper with their constitutions to prolong their stay in power;

VI. ECOWAS should adopt strong principles to ensure that members of a military junta are not eligible in elections for a transition to civilian rule; and

VII. ECOWAS should develop strong oversight and compliance to ensure full compliance with its good governance principles.

Security Sector Reform

I. While the delivery of security sector reform and governance support is on the increase, ECOWAS needs to commission studies to establish exactly it is that is being delivered;

II. ECOWAS should commission studies on who provides the delivery of such services and how the service delivery can be improved;

III. ECOWAS should lead the process of developing synergies among different key SSR stakeholders to develop the 'critical mix' of knowledgeable actors;

IV. ECOWAS should identify and develop knowledge-sharing experiences among 'developed' SSR actors in ECOWAS states with those states emerging from conflict or one party dictatorships;

V. ECOWAS should ensure that targeted and sustained capacity-building schemes are established in transitional states given that knowledge about security issues might be paltry;

VI. ECOWAS should spearhead the training for parliamentary select committees on the processes and mechanisms of the legislative process.

Drugs

I. ECOWAS should articulate its concerns relating to the drugs menace as a strategic concern with long-term implications not only for the sub-region but also for Europe, the United States and Latin America. It should not be viewed as a humanitarian issue;

II. ECOWAS should commission a comprehensive study to establish the scale and impact of the problem in the sub-region. The study would focus on identifying the weak links in the law enforcement capacities in the sub-region, Latin America and Europe;

III. ECOWAS should establish a dedicated office to deal with the challenges posed by drug traffickers and other transnational criminal networks. This department should be interdepartmental thereby cutting across the key departments dealing with issues of peace, security and humanitarian affairs;

IV. ECOWAS should strengthen the West African Police Chiefs Committee to include other branches of law enforcement, customs and immigration, and the judiciary;

V. ECOWAS should urgently spearhead the establishment of a tripartite law enforcement network involving Latin American, West African and European agencies;

Small Arms and Light Weapons

I. ECOWAS should launch a region-wide information campaign to get total member states ratification of the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons;

II. ECOWAS should provide targeted training and support for the National Commissions on Small Arms;

III. ECOWAS should support region-wide information and education campaigns on the negative impacts of SALW availability;

IV. ECOWAS should ensure that efforts to deal with SALW are closely linked with emerging transnational threats, most notably drug trafficking;

V. ECOWAS should adopt a policy of "naming and shaming" of countries that are not compliant with the SALW Convention.

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Endnotes

- ¹Wrong, Michela. 2006. 'The big men have tightened their grip,' *Newstatermen*, 10 July; See also 'Tandja and the big man syndrome,' at <http://www.myjoyonline.com> accessed 10 August 2009. Particularly poignant in this sense is U.S. President, Barak Obama's statement to the Ghanaian legislature, that "... History is on the side of these brave Africans, not with those who use coups or change constitutions to stay in power. Africa does not need strongmen, it needs strong institutions." See President Barack Obama in Ghana. Remarks by President Obama to the Ghanaian Parliament, 11 July 2009.
- ²See A. Sarjoh Bah and Bruce Jones, "Peace Operations Partnerships: Lessons and Issues from Coordination to Hybrid Arrangements" in *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations*, Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008, pp.21-29.
- ³See ECOWAS: Briefs Declaration of ECOWAS Political Principles Lagos: Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS. Abuja, 6 July 1991.
- ⁴Article 4. NEPAD Document Section A (ii), 79. For two websites with interesting information on the NEPAD, see <http://www.mapstrategy.com/home.asp> and <http://www.g8.gc.ca/july-21-01-e.asp>
- ⁵Article 5. See NEPAD Document, Section II, sub-section 80.
- ⁶*Ibid.*, Article 6; West Africa, 19 - 23 July 1993, p. 1247.
- ⁷Article 4 (j).
- ⁸ECOWAS: Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, Executive Secretariat, Dakar, December 2001. This document relates very closely to the values and norms expressed in the NEPAD initiative document.
- ⁹*Ibid.*, Article 38.
- ¹⁰ECOWAS: Status of Implementation of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Management, Peace-keeping and Security. Executive Secretariat, Abuja, June 2001. p.5.
- ¹¹*Ibid.*, para. 42.
- ¹²Ekiyor, Thelma. 2008. ECOWAS conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF): a new approach to an old challenge, WACSI Op-ed, p.7.
- ¹³There will be more substantive discussions of these identified issues in the paper.
- ¹⁴Nigeria National Assembly Endorses Military Action Against Togo, *Letogolis.com*, Lagos, 10 February, 2005. This article can be found at: <http://www.letogolis.com/article.html?nid=1520>. Last accessed 12/17/07.
- ¹⁵See Sherman, Jake. 2009. Strengthening Security Sector Governance in West Africa. (New York: Centre for International Cooperation) March, at http://www.cic.nyu.edu/Lead%20Page%20PDF/SSR_WAfrica.pdf. This is a four-part comparative analysis of security sector governance processes in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau focusing more on the role that parliamentary oversight mechanisms play in ensuring efficient security sectors.
- ¹⁶Some of these challenges are discussed in detail in Sherman, op cit.
- ¹⁷For some of the debates concerning the MoD and Ministry of Interior budgetary estimates, see, 'Government's Financial Policy, 2003', *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, Fourth Series, Vol. 28, No. 22, 27 February, Col. 1295 ff, also See *Parliamentary Debates, (Official Report)*, Fourth Series, Vol 14, No. 38, Consideration of Annual Estimates, Ministry of Defence, Head 380, col. 2200, 19 March 1997. In response to the Minister's statement, the Chairman of the Defence & Interior Committee of Parliament, in moving a motion to accept the Minister's estimates argued that, 'with respect to running costs of vehicles, ships and aircraft, the Committee is of the view that, the amount voted for them was insufficient.', *ibid.*, col. 2204.
- ¹⁸*Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector in the Commonwealth*, op cit, p. 24.
- ¹⁹Kirschke, Joseph. 2008. 'The Coke Coast: Cocaine and Failed States in Africa', 7 October, <http://www.worldpress.org/Africa/3257.cfm>.
- ²⁰UNODC. 2008. drug trafficking as a security threat in West Africa October, p. 1.
- ²¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.
- ²²This country has had its fair share of attacks, in March 2007, 500 kilos of cocaine was seized from a container.
- ²³BBC News. 2008. 'Drug money 'tainting Ghana poll', at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7695981.stm> accessed 30 October 2008. Ghana, as one of two hubs, is more of a stockpiling place for further distribution to other West African countries.
- ²⁴In July 2008, a Caracas registered aircraft flying a false Red Cross flag landed at Lungi Airport, Freetown with 700 kilograms of cocaine. However, a trial run of a Venezuelan consignment of 2.5 tons of cocaine failed as those loading the drugs onto a plane for a flight to Sierra Leone were arrested.
- ²⁵In July 2008 500 kilos of cocaine got 'missing' at Bissau airport as soldiers and policemen quarreled about who should take control of the drugs.
- ²⁶King, Semanticus, Jr. 2008. 'Ghanaians and drug trafficking: a Liberians view', *Newliberian.com*. In this case, 2.4 tons of cocaine worth USD 500 was seized off Liberia's shores after a French frigate forced the Blue Atlantic vessel to dock in Monrovia.
- ²⁷BBC News. 2008. 'Guinea drug agents are 'corrupt'', at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/Africa/7683696.stm> accessed 22 October 2008.
- ²⁸Nigeria: 238 women in UK Prison over drug trafficking; *Vanguard* (Lagos) 22 November 2008.
- ²⁹BBC News 2007. 'New Senegal record cocaine haul' at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6260708.stm> accessed 30 September 2008; see also 'Deserted cocaine boat in Senegal', at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6254496> accessed .
- ³⁰BBC News. 2007. 'Africa - new front in drugs war', at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6274590.stm> accessed 12 September 2008.
- ³¹See Fall, A. et al. 2008 'Guinea Bissau Report', September.
- ³²ECOWAS: A/RES.2/8/97.
- ³³See ECOWAS Decision A/DEC.8/10/98.
- ³⁴ECOWAS Decision/ADEC.9/12/99.
- ³⁵See ECOWAS, 2008. 'ECOWAS Ministerial Conference on Drug Trafficking as a security threat in West Africa', October, p. 2 .
- ³⁶*Ibid.*
- ³⁷There was an agreement between the ECOWAS Commission and international partners about the functional utility of involving CSOs in the process in terms of their capacity to strengthen the regional preventive, response and law enforcement strategies for drug trafficking in West Africa. As a result, the meeting enables CSOs to review the Draft Regional Response Action Plan, generating ideas on how to facilitate CSO participation in the plan, and to increase CSO understanding of drug trafficking challenges affecting the region.
- ³⁸See ECOWAS Commission, 2008 'Regional response Action Plan to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking and related organised crime in West Africa, 2008 - 2011', October This Response Action Plan has five thematic areas, namely: (a) Mobilisation of ECOWAS Political Leadership and need for allocation of adequate budgetary resources, (b) effective law enforcement and national/regional cooperation, (c) appropriate and adequate legal framework for effective criminal justice, (d) facing and dealing with the emerging threats of increased drug abuse and associated health problems, and (e) valid and reliable data to assess the magnitude of the drug trafficking and abuse problems affecting the region on a sustainable basis.
- ³⁹Aning, Kwesi. 2009. 'Organized Crime in West Africa: options for EU engagement', Background Paper for International IDEA, Stockholm, Sweden, April.
- ⁴⁰See ECOWAS Commission, 2008. 'Political declaration on Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse Prevention in West Africa', October, Abuja, p. 6.
- ⁴¹This Centre's establishment was recognised as far back as 1999. In Article 46 of the 1999 Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Secu-

riety the threat of drug to the sub-region was recognized but characteristic of ECOWAS and its leaders, nothing was done.

⁴²ibid, pp. 9 - 10.

⁴³See ECOWAS Commission communiqué, 'Ministers Adopt Declaration, Regional Action Plan against drugs and organised crime in West Africa', Praia, 29 October 2008, p.2 .

⁴⁴Press Release, 2009. Evidence of clandestine laboratory activity in West Africa. UNODC, Dakar, Senegal, 31 July.

⁴⁵In July 2008 500 kilos of cocaine got 'missing' at Bissau airport as soldiers and policemen quarreled about who should take control of the drugs. BBC NEWS: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/ft/-/2/hi/Africa/751613.stm> The United Nations warned that smugglers were operating there with almost total impunity, aided by rampant corruption. It is estimated that the volume of cocaine moved through Guinea-Bissau in 2007 was worth more than its entire national income.

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⁴⁸BBC News (2007) 'Africa – new front in drugs war', at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6274590.stm> accessed 12 September 2008.

⁴⁹ Krause 2007: 1.

⁵⁰ ECOWAS 2006. ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

⁵¹ ECOWAS Convention 2006: Article 23.

⁵² Ebo, op cit, p.16.

⁵³ See especially Articles 3, 50 and 51

⁵⁴ ECOWAS Convention 2006: Article 1.

⁵⁵ Musah, Abdel Fatau. 2002. 'Small arms: a time-bomb under West Africa's democratization process' *Brown Journal of World Affairs*. Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring; Bah, Alhaji, M.S., "Micro-disarmament in West Africa: The ECOWAS Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons," *African Security Review*, Vol.13, No.3, 2004.

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⁵⁷ Putnam, Robert (1993b), 'The Prosperous community – social capital and public affairs', *The American Prospect*, No. 13.

⁵⁸ Putnam, ibid.

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