

**WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING NETWORK (WIPNET)  
WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING (WANEP)**

**REPORT**

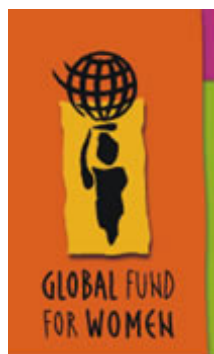
**Fourth (4<sup>TH</sup>) Annual Women in Peacebuilding Regional Conference**



***Theme: Revisiting United Nations Security Council Resolution  
1325 on Women, Peace and Security: Opportunities and  
Challenges for the Future***

***Hotel du Lac, Cotonou, Benin  
1-3 November 2005***

***Supported by:***



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*Ecoma Alaga*  
*Regional Coordinator, WIPNET*  
*WANEP*

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Background*

West Africa's recent history is replete with sad episodes chronicling the legacies of failing states characterized by self-entrenched leaders, new so-called freedom fighters, warlords, and private armies. A snapshot of the region reveals that most countries have experienced internal crises with cross-border implications e.g. the Casamance conflict in Senegal which affects Gambia and Guinea Bissau; the crisis in Togo which affects Benin, Ghana and to some extent Nigeria; and the war in Liberia which mutated across the Mano River basin countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry and Cote d'Ivoire affecting neighbouring Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mali.

The nature of these conflicts and the fact that they originate from the 'bush', close to rural communities, exposes and draws local civilian populations, particularly women and children, into the violence conundrum. As recent conflicts target more and more civilians, women and girls are not only affected in different ways than men, but are also often targets of violence because they are female. In addition to mutilation, displacements, deaths, loss of property, HIV/AIDS, trafficking, etc., women and girls are targets of specific engendered forms of violations such as rape, domestic violence and forced pregnancies. Inadequate judicial infrastructure means that often the perpetrators of these crimes are not punished.

Juxtaposing this negative impact of violent conflicts on women is the positive roles women play. Women serve as a strong force in community harmonization, mobilization, and rehabilitation during violent conflicts; and yet when it comes to negotiating peace and facilitating the reconstruction of societies after war, they are grossly underrepresented and/or excluded. Recent peace negotiations in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia are examples of women's marginalization during peace processes. This exclusion has resulted in women's agitating for inclusion as witnessed during the Liberian peace talks in Accra in 2003, where Liberian women led a campaign to ensure women's participation in the peace process and the subsequent transitional process.

Though women have repeatedly proved that their inclusion is critical to holistic and sustainable peace, the traditional male-dominated structures of peace and security still make their involvement difficult. Thus, the emergence of international and regional Instruments such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the African Union's (AU) Protocol on Women's Rights mandating women's active participation and involvement in peace and security at all levels and sectors – both formal and informal - are seen as important tools for engendering peacebuilding.

However as is often the case, instruments related to women's empowerment and involvement in decision-making processes often face challenges of accountability and implementation by policy makers. The onus lies with women's groups and civil society actors to ensure that these instruments remain relevant and are applied in the appropriate context resulting in tangible inclusion of women in local, national and regional processes.

This is particularly critical in the case of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. At the time the Resolution was adopted, it was seen as a watershed in the evolution of international women's rights in the area of peace and security. The Resolution calls for: increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in conflict prevention, management and resolution; attention to the specific protection needs of women in conflict, including refugees; increased support for women peacebuilders; no impunity for war crimes against women, including gender-based violence; gender perspective in UN peacekeeping operations and post-conflict processes; and gender perspective in UN Reporting and Security Council Missions. It urges parties in armed conflict to respect international law on the rights and protection of women and girls, take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, pay attention to the needs of women in conflict, peace and security, adopt measures to support local women's peace initiatives and involve women in all stages of peace processes. It includes a number of requests for action to the United Nations in general, the Security Council and its member states in particular, as well as to parties in armed conflict. In a nutshell the Resolution constitutes three core inter-linking drives for building and sustaining peace, the "Three Ps" – prevention, protection and participation.

As a UN Security Council Resolution, 1325 is binding on all member states as stated in the UN Charter; however implementation on the ground is weak due to lack of political will and lack of awareness of the Resolution among women who are the primary beneficiaries. Civil society actors and in particular women's groups across West Africa such as MARWOPNET, WIPNET and NEWMAP, have been working to bridge this implementation gap. WIPNET in particular, has been using 1325 as an advocacy tool to broaden women's involvement in peacebuilding through an ideology called Women's Peace Activism. Through this activism, WIPNET has been mobilizing women's groups to challenge patriarchal systems, which fortify their exclusion, and to promote social justice. Though this activism has resulted in the involvement of more and more women in peacebuilding across the sub region, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 remains largely unknown. Furthermore the collaboration between civil society and policy makers which is key to successfully realizing the goals of the resolution is weak. Since 2004, WIPNET has been working with policymakers at both regional and national levels to ensure that gender and in particular women's issues are mainstreamed into peace and security in West Africa.

The fifth anniversary of Resolution 1325 presents WIPNET, policymakers, other women's groups and civil society actors another unique opportunity to revisit the Resolution, examine its relevance to peace and security in West Africa and strategize on how to advance its implementation. Thus, WIPNET dedicated its Fourth Annual Women in Peacebuilding regional conference to the review of the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 in West Africa. The theme for the conference was ***'Revisiting United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: Opportunities and Challenges for the Future'***.

This is a report of deliberations of this conference. It is structured along the conference agenda, which key objectives were to:

- Assess the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 in West Africa

- Create awareness on the opportunities UNSC Resolution 1325 provides for the advancement of women's rights in peace and security processes
- Examine the relevance of UNSC Resolution 1325 to gender mainstreaming at the regional and national levels
- Identify best practices of implementing UNSC Resolution 1325 at local, national and regional levels.
- Develop strategies on how to popularize and localize Resolution 1325 in West Africa

The conference consisted of paper presentations and group work concluding in the development of a plan of action for advancing the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 in West Africa. Paper presentations addressed:

- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Then and Now
- Current Gaps and Forward Looking Strategies in the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325
- ECOWAS' Experience of Mainstreaming Gender into Peace and Security

Key issues the conference deliberated on included:

- Strategies to raise awareness on UNSC Resolution 1325
- Strategies for dealing with issues of implementation and accountability
- Strategies for increasing women's participation in peace and security in West Africa

The conference took place at Hotel du Lac in Cotonou, Benin from 1- 3 November, 2005. During the Opening Ceremonies, participants were welcomed by M. Joseph Djogbenou, the Chair of WANEP-Benin; Emmanuel Bombande, Executive Director of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding; Constant Gnacadja, National Network Coordinator of WANEP-Benin; Ecoma Alaga, Regional Coordinator of WIPNET; Thelma Ekiyor of the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town and Founder of WIPNET; Mme. Mikiko Sasaki of UNDP-Benin; and Florence Ihemme of ECOWAS. The Conference was officially opened by a representative from Benin's Ministry of Families and Social Assistance.

## **DAY 1: SESSION ONE: PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

### **Paper 1: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Then and Now**

**Presenter: Jennifer Pedersen**

**Chair: Bassey Anita Okedi**

The paper gave an historical exposé of the adoption and significance of Security Council Resolution 1325. Below are key highlights of the paper. Resolution 1325 which was unanimously adopted on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2000, was achieved as a result of the efforts of women's organizations worldwide. It recognizes the impact of conflict on women and girls and calls on all parties in conflict to protect and uphold the human rights of women and children in conflict and post-conflict situations. It builds on previous treaties, declarations and statements including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Actions, the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action, and CEDAW.

Several provisions of the Resolution aim to increase the participation of women in decision-making in peace and security. It requires the Secretary General and the United Nations to fulfill specific tasks and mainstream gender in UN field operations. It mandates the inclusion of women in all levels of peace processes and calls for support for local women's peace initiatives. All parties to conflict must respect international law of armed conflict which gives special protections to civilians. It outlines the need to protect women and girls from gender-based violence and calls for an end to impunity in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and other crimes directed at women and girls during conflict. The needs of female refugees must also be considered. In sum, the Resolution clearly requires states to ensure the protection of women and girls during and after conflict, and holds the UN, national governments and all parties to conflict responsible for implementing the Resolution.

The paper also noted that several studies and reports on the Resolution have been published since its adoption, including the two Reports of the Secretary General of 2002 and 2004 and an independent study by Elizabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, published in 2002. While these reports noted the significance of the Resolution, they all lamented the lack of implementation of its provisions and the continuing obstacles in building women's peace and security.

Some of the challenges to the implementation of the Resolution include the failure to meet quotas on time, the lack of gender equality in representation at the highest levels of the UN, and the continuing occurrence of sexual abuse by peacekeepers. The continuing prevalence of gender-based violence and the lack of attention paid to the needs of female ex-combatants is an additional problem. Nonetheless, successes include the translation of Resolution 1325 into more than 70 languages, the creation of the "Friends of 1325" coalition and the use of 1325 as an advocacy tool by women's civil society organizations.

The presenter also noted that the WIPNET Conference provided an opportunity to build on 1325, to move forward and create strategies for the future. The Resolution is an important advocacy tool for women peacebuilders and human rights activists, and

it now rests with them to hold governments accountable and demand the implementation of the resolution.

**Paper II: Current Gaps and Forward-Looking Strategies in the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325**

**Presenter: Thelma Ekiyor**

**Chair: Dr. Lydia Umar**

This presentation noted that the appeal of Resolution 1325 lies in the fact that it overtly calls for the participation of women in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. However, the resolution is only as good as the paper it is written on. The implementation of the Resolution remains a key concern for all five years on. The presenter noted that it is critical that women's groups ask strong questions on the significance of the Resolution for their lives.

There are several gaps in the document. First, the document is written in the language and tone of international law, which is difficult to understand outside of policy circles. Thus there is a need to simplify the Resolution for the average user. Further, terms such as 'Demobilization' and 'Rehabilitation' are not common terms outside of violent conflict. Also, the prioritization of the Resolution within the UN system leaves much to be desired. The UN places priority on Resolutions that are country-specific; thematic resolutions such as 1325, which are applicable worldwide but more difficult to implement, are given less priority.

There are also several gaps in the UN system which impede the implementation of the Resolution. There are forty departments responsible for its implementation. Aside from UNIFEM and DAW, no agency is pushing for the full implementation of the Resolution at the UN. Only 2 out of the 50 Special Representatives of the Secretary General are women. Further, a feminist analysis shows that the UN is incapable of mainstreaming gender because of its normative bias. Finally, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations experiences problems in implementing the Resolution. This is because despite the presence of Gender Advisors, UN missions are male-dominated and unfriendly to women. For example, in Liberia, UNMIL was importing sex workers to service its peacekeepers.

Additional gaps in the implementation of the Resolution exist at the national level. Officials who sign the document often do not know it exists. Gender Ministries are responsible for non-security issues. For example, they look at the education of the girl child, but there can be no education without security. Further, there is an absence of accountability in the implementation of the Resolution, as there are no monitoring and implementation measures in place. It was suggested that women's groups should look at how women's peace and security issues are considered through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

The identification of gaps is necessary to create forward-looking strategies for the implementation of the Resolution. The nexus between civil society and policy makers must be strengthened. Although civil society has taken the lead in the implementation of 1325, women's peace and security is still a marginalized issue. Until women's peace and security is part of human security, the desired change will not be attained. Thus, though the Resolution is a platform for action, its existence does not mean that woman's peace and security is addressed.



The presenter also cautioned that it is important to choose the issues within the Resolution that are most relevant to our experience. For example, for women living in conflict situations, women's activism for zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence must be increased, particularly as the resolution is emphatic about this. This does not mean that the Resolution is not significant for women living in relatively peaceful situations. Security issues are different in all countries – they are not limited to armed conflict. Civil society must provide leadership on these issues. Capacity building is an important tool to elevating women to having a voice on these issues. Measures must be put in place to regularly monitor the implementation of the Resolution.

**Paper III: ECOWAS' experience of Mainstreaming Gender into Peace and Security**

**Presenter: Ms. Florence Ihemme**

**Chair: Mme. Aminata Diouf**

ECOWAS was created as an economic institution with fifteen member states. In 1993, ECOWAS revised its treaty to incorporate political issues including defense and security, which are outlined in the Protocol on Peace and Security of 1999 and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001. ECOWAS has a gender policy and works closely with civil society groups such as WACSOF and WANEP to achieve its set goals.

The 1999 Protocol sets out parameters for ECOWAS' intervention in the sub-region. Interventions prior to 1999 were controversial. A key issue is that the Protocol is guided by the principle of super-nationality. Once something has been adopted at the ECOWAS Secretariat, it is binding on all member states. At ECOWAS, the Council of Elders, the Standby Force, and the Defense and Security Commission have specific roles within peace and security.

The 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance was created to address the causes of conflict in the West African sub-region. This Protocol deals with such causes of conflict as forceful accession to power, civil-military relations, poverty and elections.

The Gender Policy at ECOWAS is only a year old. These legal frameworks provide opportunities for mainstreaming gender into ECOWAS' peace and security architecture and thus contribute to the advancement of Resolution 1325. Already, discussions have been held between the Gender Division and the Office of Political Affairs, Defense and Security of ECOWAS on the need to engage a consultant to assist the Secretariat mainstream gender into all its peace and security issues.

ECOWAS documents under review also provide for collaboration with civil society organizations. ECOWAS works with CSOs such as WANEP, which has a Liaison Officer within the Executive Secretariat in Abuja; and the West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) which was created a year ago. Finally, the four Zonal Bureaus are charged with the gathering, analysis and sharing of information on conflict prevention. All of these examples show the opportunities for civil society in engaging the different units and offices of ECOWAS to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into community peace and security programmes.

Regarding the creation of awareness on the Resolution, the presenter advised that CSOs should take the lead in bringing this to the attention of their governments through the use of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. For implementation, accountability is one of the gaps to be addressed. Regarding women's participation, there must be advocacy at the national level in regards to women's participation in national forces before participation in international missions can be addressed.

Ms. Ihemme suggested that, in regards to the Plan of Action, we should be guided by specific criteria and measurable goals such as indicators. The conference should be guided by SMART principles, which ensure that activities and outcomes are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. The ECOWAS Protocol is due for review next year and this presents an opportunity for us.

*Comments from the Floor:*

Participants commented that Resolution 1325 is difficult to promote as it is often unknown at the government level. Other feedbacks included:

- There must be increased participation of women in peace and security organizations.
- Participants criticized the lack of women's representation at ECOWAS, including at Zonal Bureaus, and hoped to see this change in the future.
- A monitoring and evaluation system which will be a great asset to the implementation of the resolution.
- Resolution 1325 must be both simplified and translated to be more accessible to women in all communities.
- Affirmative action policies would go a long way in encouraging women to apply to positions in peace and security organizations.
- The implementation of Resolution 1325 can be seen at several levels. Countries with respect for human rights are better at implementing 1325 than countries with human rights abuses.
- The African Union has an affirmative action policy of 50% and has a Gender Directorate. This is a model for others to emulate.
- Accountability is an important issue. For example, in the case of Liberia's comprehensive peace agreement, if there had been mechanisms for accountability, much more could have been achieved for women.
- Women must be prepared to put their name to their work and take ownership of important tools such as Resolution 1325.

## SESSION TWO: WIPNET'S EXAMPLES OF ENGENDERING PEACE AND SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA

### *Togolese Women's Peace Vigil*<sup>1</sup>

March 8<sup>th</sup> of every year is International Women's Day. WIPNET dedicates this day to this celebration with its Peace Check Point activity. However, the celebrations took a different twist this year, as WIPNET declared a peace vigil to express solidarity with women in Togo following the outbreak of violence and hostilities after the death of Gnassingbe Eyadema on February 5, 2005. The peace vigil which was observed by women of Togo under the auspices of WIPNET-Togo was followed by press conference, breaking the culture of silence which existed in the country. They appealed for calm and called on all political actors to respect human dignity and life.

### *Ivorian Women's Nonviolence Campaign*<sup>2</sup>

Since 2002, Cote d'Ivoire has been divided into two – the rebel-held north, and the government-led South. During the 2004 WIPNET conference in Nigeria, there was an outbreak of violent conflict in Cote d'Ivoire which led to the deaths of French soldiers and a counter-attack by the Licorne (French) forces. The Northern part of the country was deprived of electricity and water for ten days, leading to illness and destruction. As a result, WIPNET Regional and WIPNET-Cote d'Ivoire embarked on a non-violence campaign. This took place in two phases - the first phase targeted the population in the south, and the second the north. In the south, WIPNET issued a peace declaration calling on all political actors to respect international and national laws, as well as human rights and especially the rights of women in conflict. WIPNET also urged the UN forces to apply their mandate with impartiality and neutrality and to respect the rights of civilians especially women and children.

Noting the poor involvement of women in peace processes in the country, WIPNET also called on women to rise to the challenge and play their role in building and sustaining peace and security.

### *The Rural Women's Peace Initiative*

WIPNET's bottom-up approach of working and dealing with issues of peace and conflict in the sub-region reveals that there exists a gap between women's involvement in peacebuilding at the urban and rural levels, with the need being more immense at the rural/grassroots level where illiteracy and ignorance are prevalent. For WIPNET, addressing the needs at the grassroots level, where the highest numbers of women are found, is tantamount to ensuring the active involvement of women in a process that would enable them direct change. Thus in 2004, WIPNET launched its *rural women's peace initiative* with the overarching goal of building the capacity of rural/grassroots women's groups, associations and guilds to play active roles in preserving peace in rural West African communities that are usually the theatres of violent conflicts/wars.

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<sup>1</sup> Presented by Claudine Ahiany-Kpondzo, Togo

<sup>2</sup> Presented by Marguerite Yolibi Kone, Cote d'Ivoire

Since its launch in November 2004, the initiative has been implemented in 4 countries: Liberia, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. This initiative was supported by the Global Fund for Women and the Women's Peacemakers Program of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (WPP-IFOR). Highlights of these were shared with participants at the conference.

### *Cote d'Ivoire*<sup>3</sup>

Women are often seen as passive victims, but since the outbreak of conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, issues of rape and HIV/AIDS "woke women up."<sup>4</sup> The pilot community for the WIPNET's rural women's peace initiative in Cote d'Ivoire was Divo, also known as the "ECOWAS town". During the training, women spoke of their roles in building peace in their communities. A rural women's peace committee was set up after the training to engage traditional peacebuilding authorities and institutions.

### *Senegal*<sup>5</sup>

In Senegal's Casamance region, there has been loss of property and human life. Women have been active in building peace in this region. The resolution of the Casamance conflict has to do with the traditional character of women who occupy a very important place in society. When men want to go to war, it is women who give them the power to go out and fight. Yesterday, the women were helping the warriors. Today, WIPNET is trying to get women involved in peace action by organizing traditional ceremonies for them. They have organized trainings in border zones with Guinea Bissau and the Gambia where women had been helping the rebels. In one region, thirty women representing twenty-five villages benefited from the training. In the second region, women represented five parts of their village. WIPNET has also translated United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 into Diola.

The results of the RWPI activities in the Casamance region were:

- Confidence building among women in their ability to engage in conflict resolution and peacebuilding
- Raised awareness of need for solidarity among women
- Raised awareness on zero-tolerance for violence against women

### *Sierra Leone*<sup>6</sup>

The RWPI, which took place in July 2005 in Bo province, Sierra Leone, revealed that the needs of women in post-conflict Sierra Leone remain largely unaddressed. There is still a high level of illiteracy, particularly amongst women, which continues to minimize their level of participation in public decision making. Examples given included the peace declaration and the Demobilization, Disarmament and Reconstruction efforts, which do not provide for the specific needs of women who had fought as combatants; and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which did not plan for women's voices to be heard, making it difficult for women to testify. It was noted that there existed a culture of silence among women pre-war Sierra Leone

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<sup>3</sup> Presented by Marguerite Yolibi Kone, Cote d'Ivoire

<sup>4</sup> Marguerite Yolibi Kone

<sup>5</sup> Presented by Rosalie Sagna, Senegal

<sup>6</sup> Presented by Gladys Brima, Sierra Leone

which is still prevalent today. The RWPI thus provided the space for women to come together and strategize on how to engage in building peace and in other public decision making processes. Whilst only twenty women were expected, more than thirty attended the training, saying “we want to be part of this process – forget about the food, the transportation – this is about our lives!”

Dealing with trauma healing is essential to building peace. Thus during the training, there was a session on ‘shedding the weight’, a WIPNET forum, where women are given the opportunity to share experiences that have affected their lives. These women have also created a Rural Women’s Peace Advocacy Platform, to identify and intervene in community conflicts.

### ***Promoting Women’s Political Participation: The WIPNET – Liberia Experience<sup>7</sup>***

In 2005 many had their eyes on Liberia because of the elections. Given the role women had played during the peace process, with their nonviolence campaign and advocacy, many were concerned at what WIPNET’s role would be during the electoral process.

It was difficult for WIPNET to maintain its impartial and non-partisan role especially considering the personal political interests of some of its members. Thus, WIPNET organized a one-day consultation where members discussed political issues and invited the Civil Affairs Division of UNMIL to run the meeting. It was decided that WIPNET members who had political ambition should take temporary leave of absence from WIPNET’s activities.

On another note, WIPNET partnered with UNMIL and the UNDP to carry out civic education in several communities. WIPNET discovered serious voter apathy in several areas, especially among women. As a result of this, UNIFEM and UNDP requested WIPNET to assist with voter education. WIPNET members took care of babies, sold fish, and did laundering, as women went to register. At the end of four days, 7,455 women were registered. The report of this activity is available on the UNIFEM website. WIPNET also conducted a training of trainers for young women, from between the ages of 18 to 25, as a way of further promoting women’s political participation.

The biggest challenge faced by WIPNET was maintaining neutrality, especially during the run-off of the presidential elections which was seen as a “women versus men,” affair. Another challenge was the difficulty of convincing community members, particularly women, to vote during the run-off elections, given the voter apathy that had set-in.

The success of WIPNET’s involvement in the voter and civic education significantly increased the level of women’s political participation in Liberia – by the day of the elections, fifty more women than men had registered to vote. Women have now taken a stake in the political process in Liberia, and WIPNET believe that this is the first step to ensuring that women’s issues are at the centre stage of political parties’ agenda. The presenter concluded by noting that WIPNET’s role was timely and

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<sup>7</sup> Presented by Leymah Gbowee, Liberia

helpful. She was positive that “there is no way that political history of Liberia can be written without noting the role of WIPNET in the entire process.” She further stated that in December 2005, once the electoral process was over, WIPNET will call a meeting to reconcile the women of Liberia.

*Comments from the Floor:*

Participants noted that:

- As Cote d’Ivoire will soon be entering into an election period, the Liberian example will be particularly helpful to WIPNET – CI.
- In the Liberian elections, problems of voter apathy and slow voting procedures due to high levels of illiteracy were observed. Early voter education should be carried out if funding is available for it.
- WIPNET must maintain its neutrality and impartiality in all elections, as was the case in Liberia. Despite political pressures to become involved, WIPNET members must remember to stay true to the underlying principle of the network and stay out of mainstream politics for as long as they are actively involved in the activities of the network.
- Many participants recounted their frustrations with the lack of available funding for important projects. In response the presenter stated that though WIPNET is strategically placed within WANEP, the network should continue to make its own decisions, develop their own program, and fundraise for it accordingly and its members must operate in the same vein.

**DAY II, SESSION THREE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 IN WEST AFRICA**

Participants were split into three groups (2 Anglophone and 1 Francophone) during this session and asked to come up with specific recommendations and strategies for advancing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in West Africa. At the end of the session participants developed a plan of action for advancing the implementation of the resolution in the sub region.

*RESULTS OF GROUP WORK*

**Francophone Group<sup>8</sup>**

*Strategies to Raise Awareness on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in West Africa*

Strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Campaign aimed at various actors for the implementation of the resolution</li> <li>2. Establish partnerships between WIPNET and various Ministries (Gender, Family, etc.)</li> <li>3. Elaborate on a plan of action and follow-up with principal actors</li> <li>4. Promote action on IEC/CCC (Information, Education and Communication / Communication for a Change in Behavior) in the area of peace and security</li> <li>5. Mobilize women around peace and security issues</li> <li>6. Integrate UN SCR 1325 on curriculum for women’s training in the area of peace and security</li> <li>7. Integrate UN SCR 1325 in other courses in peacebuilding</li> <li>8. Mainstream UN SCR 1325 in institutional mechanisms</li> <li>9. Send letters, emails and petitions to different actors concerned</li> <li>10. Partner with the media and other theatre groups</li> </ol>

**Anglophone Group One<sup>9</sup>**

*Strategies for Increasing Women’s Participation in Peace and Security*

The group began by examining activities that can increase knowledge of UNSC 1325:

Level	Activities
Grassroots	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Simplify and contextualize the entire resolution</li> <li>2. Translate document into various local languages</li> <li>3. Raise awareness on the document through sensitizing women’s groups to integrate the UN SCR 1325 into their existing activities</li> <li>4. Encouraging every WIPNET group to incorporate 1325 in all their activities</li> <li>5. Media sensitization</li> </ol>
Civil Society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dissemination of the simplified version of 1325 to CSOs</li> <li>2. Consultation with all stakeholders at the local, national</li> </ol>

<sup>8</sup> Presented by Emma Soroko (Cote d’Ivoire) and facilitated by Aminata Diouf Ndiaye (Senegal)

<sup>9</sup> Presented by Mariam Kadiri (Ghana) and facilitated by Bassey Anita Okedi (Nigeria)



	<p>and regional levels</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Identification of focal persons among the different institutions that will be the link with civil society</li> <li>4. Training on the Resolution</li> </ol>
Policy-Makers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engagement with Gender Ministries, Parliamentarians, ECOWAS parliament and sub-committees on gender and other sub-regional bodies and agencies responsible for peace and security</li> </ol>

### **Strategies for increasing women's participation**

1. Encourage women/girls to take up careers related to peace and security (police, immigration, etc.)
2. Career counseling in schools on peace and security
3. Instituting incentive packages for girls who take up careers related to peace and security
4. Reviewing discriminatory laws/policies hindering women's participation in peace and security (e.g. when women have to take jobs in other countries with foreign service, partners have to be screened)
5. Challenging social, traditional and cultural norms that inhibit women's participation in peace and security
6. Affirmative action – Incremental implementation of affirmative action over a period of time
7. Advocating for implementation of existing laws that promote or safeguard the interests of women in peace and security
8. Train and empower more women in peace and security – these are broad terms that must be identified.
9. Build strategic partnerships with gender sensitive men including religious leaders and traditional leaders

### **Anglophone Group Two<sup>10</sup>**

#### ***Strategies for Dealing with Issues of Implementation and Accountability***

### **Strategies for dealing with issues of implementation and accountability**

Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Translate and interpret document into local languages – essence of law should not be missed – ensure key points are interpreted</li> <li>2. Create awareness of document – develop flyers, posters, leaflets; media, television, dramas, talk shows, jingles in English, French and local languages; publications such as articles in newspapers, on internet, etc; training of trainers – identify people in communities who can read and train others on the laws; create awareness through distribution of UNSCR 1325 to policy makers – inform</li> </ol>
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<sup>10</sup> Presented by Isoboye (Soby) Nonju (Nigeria) and Olive Thomas (Liberia); facilitated by Dr. Lydia Umar (Nigeria)

	<p>policy makers of the documents and other stakeholders; monitor progress made in implementation at the country levels</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. WIPNET to integrate 1325 into all its operations</li> <li>4. Advocacy/ lobbying</li> </ol>
Accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build strategic partnerships with policy makers and stakeholders – partners are accountable to one another</li> <li>2. Initiate regular consultations with policy makers/ stakeholders to review progress made</li> </ol>

*Comments from the Floor:*

Participants discussed the presentations and made the following comments:

- Women’s economic capacity affects their ability to work on peace and security issues. Economic empowerment is absolutely essential to a broader understanding of human security. However, because the document at hand discusses peace and security issues only, women’s economic security does not figure in the above results.
- WIPNET should develop a document on this issue to present to the different Gender Ministries.
- The insertion of an accountability clause in the resolution was discussed. However, it was agreed that it was unlikely the document could be modified and as such, women should be active in pushing for an additional monitoring and evaluation plan on the implementation of the resolution.
- Civil society should not wait for a review process, but should be active in pointing out the gaps in the resolution so that the implementation of the resolution begins immediately.
- Women should: push for strong affirmative action policies to increase the numbers of women in peacekeeping missions; set up a mechanism for monitoring; and create alliances with other stakeholders.
- The resolution should be contextualized for each country. In Liberia, for example, demobilization and disarmament is important, while it is not important to Nigeria.

## DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN OF ACTION FOR ADVANCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UN SCR 1325 IN WEST AFRICA

Participants were asked to identify four of the most important strategies for their country, and prioritize these strategies. What strategies should WIPNET work on in the region?

Based on the presentations and discussions, Ecoma Alaga, Regional Coordinator for WIPNET, developed four categories that WIPNET could work on:

1. **Interpretation.** There is a need to interpret Resolution 1325 through a **West African lens**. As such, WIPNET must work with Human Rights groups that are actively monitoring rights violations in the region. WIPNET develop strategic partnerships to translate and interpret the document.
2. **Popularization and Localization** of the document
3. **Capacity Building.** Many of WIPNET's members belong to different NGOs that are focused on other human security activities. UN SCR 1325 should be integrated into these programs/activities and capacity needs to be built in this regard.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** Issues of accountability and implementation can be properly assessed if there is a monitoring and evaluation matrix. WIPNET will develop this and share with other women's groups. WIPNET could also create a coalition "1325 Task Force" that would send alternative reports to ECOWAS, AU, United Nations and other relevant institutions every year, on governments compliance with 1325 in West Africa.

It was noted that WIPNET will lead the process of developing a plan of action, but care should be taken not to sideline other women's groups. It is important to build partnerships with women's groups that can push the WIPNET agenda. It is everyone's responsibility to fight for implementation of 1325. At the West African level, WIPNET can take this responsibility and move the resolution forward. The activities to be undertaken in each of the four strategies listed above must be both region and country specific. For instance at the first level of interpretation, each country needs to identify the provisions of the resolution that are relevant to its context. In the same vein the activities that would be undertaken at the level of strategy 2 – popularizing and disseminating – would vary from country to country. On the issues of report, it was pointed out that every two years there is a report on Resolution 1325 released by the Secretary General at the UN. Participants deliberated on how can WIPNET best contribute to this review.

One participant<sup>11</sup> noted that a coalition of CSOs in Sierra Leone, spearheaded by UNAMSIL, is working on Resolution 1325. This team was visiting different regions to popularize 1325. She informed delegates that WIPNET, the Gender Ministry of Sierra Leone, and Human Rights groups are part of this coalition and that other countries could learn from the Sierra Leonean experience.

Another participant<sup>12</sup> gave examples of similar coalitions that exist to advance Resolution 1325 and stated that these were open to other groups. For example, there is

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<sup>11</sup> Gladys Brima, Sierra Leone

<sup>12</sup> Fatoumata Maiga, Mali

already the Friends of 1325 forum; and more recently the “1000 women for the Nobel Peace Prize” campaign forum.

### ***PLAN OF ACTION***

To facilitate this process, participants were again split into groups. Below is a plan of action developed from the feedbacks from the group presentations.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Measurable Output</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Collaborative Partners other than WIPNET</b>
<b>Interpretation/ Conceptualizing the Document</b>	Identify Human Rights/ Legal institutions to interpret 1325	TOR; minutes of meetings; 1325 Review team formed	May 2006	Human Rights/ Legal Partners; Gender Ministries, other women’s groups
	National Consultation with CSOs and policy makers	Consultation report	March 2006	CSOs, policy makers
<b>Popularizing and Dissemination</b>	Translate 1325 into 6 additional West African languages	6 translated versions of 1325	October 2006	WIPNET national networks
	Organize 1325 awareness raising campaigns on key dates (March 8; May 24 <sup>th</sup> ; October 31 <sup>st</sup> ; World Refugee Day; (June 6 <sup>th</sup> ); etc	Campaign materials, posters, flyers, internet postings, etc	October 2006	WIPNET, other women’s groups, gender ministries, etc
<b>Monitoring compliance and accountability</b>	Develop regional monitoring tool	Monitoring Matrix	February 2006	WIPNET; ECOWAS Gender Unit; WANEP M&E Coordinator
	Adapt regional monitoring matrix to national context	National Monitoring matrixes	June 2005	WIPNET POs, Gender Ministries; WANEP M&E Coordinator
<b>Documentation</b>	Annual	Regional and	October 2006	WIPNET;

<b>and Dissemination</b>	Reports on the implementation of 1325 in West Africa	national reports; other relevant supporting documents		Gender Ministries: ECOWAS Gender Unit; Other women's groups
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## **WIPNET'S POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAINSTREAMING WOMEN'S ISSUES IN PEACE AND SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA**

**Ecoma Alaga (WIPNET Regional Coordinator)** presented WIPNET's Policy Recommendations for mainstreaming women's issues in peace and security in West Africa. These are categorized into four (4) broad strategic areas:

1. Working with ECOWAS
2. Engendering Peacekeeping
3. Promoting the Participation of Women in Peace Processes
4. Engendering National Institutions and Policies

### Working with ECOWAS

- ECOWAS should collaborate with women's groups across the sub-region working in the area of peacebuilding to strengthen its efforts to mainstream gender, and in particular women's issues, in its peace and security architecture
- ECOWAS should infuse gender issues into the development of its early warning mechanism
- Women should play key roles in the ECOWAS structure e.g. ECOWAS Council of Elders
- ECOWAS parliamentarians should promote national laws and policies which argue for the involvement of women in peace and security at both regional and national levels
- Relationships should be forged between ECOWAS zonal bureau heads (Banjul, Cotonou, Monrovia, Burkina) and women's groups on the ground

### Engendering Peacekeeping

- 30% of peacekeeping contingents should be women
- All peacekeeping teams should undergo gender sensitivity training prior to deployment
- Raising awareness of peacekeeping, its scope and benefits to women has not been a priority prior to/ during deployment
- Increase the number of female police personnel as part of civilian police in Peace Support Operations
- Strict punishment and reprimands should be in place for male or female peacekeepers found guilty of any form of sexual assault or violence on fellow peacekeepers or members of local community
- Peace Support Operations should collaborate with women's groups in target locations to improve methods of communicating with women in the community

### Engendering Peace Processes

- Governments and parties in conflict should ensure that there is equal representation of men and women in the delegation represented at the peace table
- Women at the peace table should not be relegated to observers or support personnel but should serve as key representatives of delegations
- As part of preparations for peace negotiations, all sides should conduct thorough gender analysis of the impact of conflict on men and women and the necessary solutions and remedies required to respond.

- Build the capacity of women in mediation, negotiation, advocacy and lobbying to enable them to participate effectively in the peace process
- Women should be given active and high profile roles in post-conflict or transition processes following peace agreements

#### Engendering National Frameworks and Mechanisms

- Gender ministries, women's bureaus etc. should be strengthened, well informed and strategically positioned to act as an avenue for ensuring that gender issues relating to peace and security are centre stage of national policies
- International and regional instruments, resolutions, etc related to women, peace and security, such as UN SC Resolution 1325 and Articles 10 & 11 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Women and Peoples Rights on the rights of women, should be integrated into national agendas on peace and security
- There should be coherence & collaboration between ECOWAS gender & development centre and national gender ministries

#### *Comments from the Floor:*

Participants made the following comments:

- Florence Ihemme of ECOWAS noted that the Gender Policy Recommendations were comprehensive. She explained that a CIDA-funded project on institutional capacity building resulted in a workshop in Abuja to elaborate on indicators in the Early Warning system. These include gender-sensitive indicators. The process is still in its early stages and has yet to be presented to member states. Ms. Ihemme observed that it is very important that ECOWAS as a sub-regional organization be gender-sensitive in all its programs. She pointed out that 2 women are now part of the ECOWAS Council of Elders. She noted that though the ECOWAS Protocol does specify that gender should be taken into consideration, at the national level there is need to increase efforts to ensure that women's agenda remain central to national policy discourse.
- Participants suggested that issues of reconciliation be included in these policy recommendations. They noted that issues of trauma healing and reconciliation are becoming more and more significant in the sub region, particularly in post-conflict societies like Liberia, Sierra Leone, etc.

## SESSION FOUR: PRESENTATION OF REPORTS

### *WIPNET Regional Annual Report*<sup>13</sup>

The WIPNET year begins in December and ends in November. The last activity each year is the Annual Regional Conference. Key highlights of WIPNET Regional's activities include:

- Cote d'Ivoire women's nonviolent campaign.
- Sub-regional (Senegambia and MRU) consultation with Gender/Women's Ministries and women's groups
- Capacity building training workshops on Negotiation, Mediation, Policy Influencing and gender mainstreaming for Gender/Women's Ministries in the Senegambia and MRU
- Togolese Women's Peace Vigil
- Launch and Implementation of Rural Women's Peace Initiative in Sierra Leone, Senegal, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire
- Participation in 49<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and Beijing +10 World Conference on Women
- Continued airing of Voices of Women Radio Program
- Expansion of women in peacebuilding networks to 2 new geo-political zones in Nigeria
- Peace Check Point activity
- Translation of UN SCR 1325 into 4 additional languages
- Mentorship program through the hosting of 2 interns
- Participation in other key international meetings

\*Details of WIPNET 2005 activity reports can be found in the WANEP 2005 annual report.

A number of WIPNET members were also honored this year. Ms. Thelma Ekiyor was honored at the international conference on conflict prevention (GPPAC), and by WIPNET- Nigeria; Mme. Helene Dandilou, a WIPNET Adviser from Cote d'Ivoire, was one of the 1000 Women nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Several new initiatives are being developed for the coming year. To begin, WIPNET will work more closely with policy makers and develop a Women in Parliament Peace Force. Another activity will be the Peace Girls Network, which will groom young girls for future peace action. A program on War-affected Women's Peace Outreach will be developed to work with women in refugee and IDP camps.

Gratitude was expressed to the POs, Regional Advisors, and the WANEP Regional team. Special thanks were expressed to WIPNET's Strategic Partners, Oxfam America, Oxfam GB, Urgent Action Fund, African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), IFOR-WPP, Global Fund for Women, American Jewish World Service, Mama Cash, Novib and individuals like David Crockett who supported WIPNET's work in 2005.

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<sup>13</sup> Presented by Ecoma Alaga, WIPNET Regional Coordinator



## *Country Reports*

### *Liberia<sup>14</sup>*

For many 2005 was seen as the year in which the destiny of Liberia would be determined. Key activities of WIPNET included:

- Its involvement in the DDR process
- The Rural Women's Peace Initiative, which was organized in local languages
- Expansion of the women in peacebuilding network to the remote/interior regions of Liberia, resulting in a membership of 5,000
- Capacity building trainings for women in peacebuilding
- Civic and voter education in partnership with UNDP and UNIFEM
- Young Women Civic/Voters education training project
- Consultation with media experts on VOW
- Airing of Voices of Women Radio Program
- Targeted advocacy on rape, drunk driving, electoral reform, 30% quotas for women's political participation, and violence-free elections.
- WIPNET also joined the campaign to raise awareness on the Rape Bill.  
\*Liberia is the first country in West Africa to have a strong bill on rape and sexual harassment.
- Celebration of International Women's Day.

WIPNET-Liberia raised \$112,544 USD for its program activities for the year 2005 and self-sponsored 14 participants for this conference. The Program Officer for WIPNET-Liberia, Ms. Leymah Gbowee, used the opportunity to announce her resignation as PO for WIPNET-Liberia, due to the need for her to join her family in Ghana. She however indicated her availability to work with the Team in Accra.

### *Senegal<sup>15</sup>*

WIPNET-Senegal activities in 2005 centered on:

- Awareness creation on women, peace and security
- Capacity building
- Airing of the "Voices of Women" radio programme
- Translation of Resolution 1325 in Diola
- Rural Women's Peace Initiative
- Control Arms campaign
- Translation of the WIPNET community women in peacebuilding manual into Diola
- Peace Check Point activity

\*WIPNET-Senegal has also entered into strategic partnership with the Ministry for Women's Affairs.

The report also noted that WIPNET Senegal was launched in September 2002 following the training of twenty women in Dakar. In the Southern region of Senegal women are active in several areas, including the resolution of the crisis in the

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<sup>14</sup> Presented by Leymah Gbowee, Liberia

<sup>15</sup> Presented by Marie Rosalie Sagna, Senegal

Casamance. This region experienced a conflict that lasted more than twenty years and now, slowly, a sustainable peace is being created. This is a good opportunity for women to build relationships and be active in solving the problems in their communities.

### *Sierra Leone<sup>16</sup>*

This report which was titled «Picking up the Broken Pieces» highlighted the immense need of women in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The WIPNET PO stated that Sierra Leone is at a crossroads, as they are moving from relief to development and from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in the midst of acute poverty. It is one of the least developed countries in the world. Most donors have scaled down or withdrawn from the country. The UN is planning to leave in December 2005, and an election is also due next year. Sierra Leoneans are unsure of their security without UN troops. Civil society organizations and institutions continue to increase their efforts to sustain the peace and are putting measures in place to ensure a smooth takeover after UNAMSIL's withdrawal in December 2005. She reported that WIPNET Sierra Leone has focused its work on two broad areas. The first was to create awareness on the role of women in community rebuilding, and the second was to broaden WIPNET's membership base. A major activity of WIPNET Sierra Leone for 2005 was the rural women's peace initiative.

WIPNET-SL strengthened its partnerships with related organizations and institutions; working closely with the UNAMSIL Human Rights and Gender unit to popularize 1325; and on the Secretary General's bulletin on sexual exploitation and abuse of peacekeeping missions.

### *Comments from the Floor:*

Participants made the following comments:

- WIPNET members in Mali would like to see more WIPNET activities in their country
- Members from Togo requested that WIPNET be launched in Togo
- The Regional Coordinator of WIPNET assured delegates that WIPNET had not forgotten Mali and Guinea Bissau. She encouraged women in Togo to mobilize themselves. WIPNET members are encouraged to tell WIPNET Regional their needs before a program can be designed for them, as the needs of women vary from one country to the other.
- WIPNET members should take advantage of the presence of Regional Advisors and contact them with any questions they may have.
- WIPNET should seek to become better accredited for its activities and become more visible. Countries should document their work; otherwise, the successes of WIPNET will remain unknown.
- Countries were encouraged to raise funds locally for their activities and depend less on the regional secretariat, as this shows a high level of commitment. To facilitate this WIPNET regional proposes to organize capacity building trainings for its POs in proposal writing and fundraising.

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<sup>16</sup> Presented by Gladys Brima, Sierra Leone

### *Cote d'Ivoire*<sup>17</sup>

Key activities of WIPNET-Cote d'Ivoire in 2005 included:

- Capacity training in peacebuilding for 40 women supported by the Government of Canada
- Non-violent advocacy campaign in collaboration with WIPNET regional
- Strategic partnership building with the Ministry of Families, Women and Children; the Ministry of National Reconciliation; the UN including OCHA; and the Ambassador of Canada.

\*The Canadian Embassy supported WIPNET-CI by furnishing its office

Key challenges faced were lack of funding; organizational management challenges at the level of WANEP-CI which in turn affected operations; instability and hostilities in the country resulting in the withdrawal of embassies and foreign institutions from the country.

### *Ghana*<sup>18</sup>

Over the course of the year, WIPNET-Ghana focused on the expansion of the network in the northern region. Ten (10) new WIPNET groups were formed and three organizations joined WIPNET-Ghana. Other key activities included capacity building, and awareness creation on the role of women in peacebuilding. WIPNET-Ghana also observed the peace check point activity on International Women's Day and co-organized a symposium on "Women Inspiring Hope and Possibility."

### *Benin*<sup>19</sup>

WIPNET Benin engaged in a number of activities over the course of the year. These included trainings and campaigns on the women's rights in the area of peace and security. WIPNET-Benin translated the Security Council Resolution 1325 into Fongbe.

### *Guinea Bissau*<sup>20</sup>

Guinea Bissau is a small country with at least 23 political parties which participated in the June Presidential elections. Guinea Bissau also has many natural resources but is a poor country, as many people live on less than \$1 a day. People live in insecurity and fear of the unknown. WIPNET-Guinea Bissau's activities revolve around capacity building, peace and non-violent campaigns, and civic education.

### *Nigeria*<sup>21</sup>

2005 was both rewarding and challenging for WIPNET-Nigeria. Over the course of the year, WIPNET received a three year grant from NOVIB to strengthen the capacity

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<sup>17</sup> Presented by Marguerite Yoli Bi Kone, Cote d'Ivoire

<sup>18</sup> Presented by Mariam Kadiri, Ghana

<sup>19</sup> Presented by Solange Nouatin Attakla, Benin

<sup>20</sup> Presented by Dionisia Gomes, Guinea Bissau

<sup>21</sup> Presented by Bukola Akosile, Nigeria

of women's groups in Nigeria to participate in peace advocacy and conflict prevention. This resulted in the expansion of the network to three additional geopolitical zones. Other activities included capacity building, consultation on the Voices of Women radio program, advocacy campaigns, organization of a national women in peacebuilding conference, and partnership building with Action Aid and the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs.

*Comments from the Floor:*

The following observations were made by participants:

- Several cross-cutting issues came up in the presentations. First, WANEP is not a grant-making organization, thus both the regional secretariat and the national networks are expected to fundraise for their respective activities. Over dependence on the regional office for funding will lead to redundancy.
- Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal were commended by the WIPNET Regional Coordinator for taking initiatives to sustain their networks, as well as develop programs that are specific to their contexts.
- The concept of Human Security should be internalized in program planning, as WIPNET believe that peace is not just the absence of war.

***Overview of GPPAC and Presentation of Civil Society Agenda<sup>22</sup>***

WANEP is the regional initiator for the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) in West Africa. The partnership has developed a regional action agenda for the prevention of armed conflict which cuts across several thematic areas, including gender equality and women's empowerment, elections, good governance, small arms, etc. The action agenda specifies recommendations for working for policymakers. The next phase of process is the formation of national civil society platforms at the national level that would serve as a watchdog of policymakers. WIPNET members were encouraged to continue to participate fully in this process, particularly at the country level in order to advance the women's agenda. Reference was also made to the role of WIPNET in the regional process of GPPAC. The Liberian women are on the front page of the final outcome document, and most of the stories compiled through the project are on women building peace.

*Comments from the Floor:*

- The GPPAC document discusses women's roles in conflict prevention. Women can use this document alongside 1325 to promote the global conflict prevention agenda in their countries. Women's groups are encouraged to attend the consultative sessions on this document in their countries.
- WIPNET POs should work with the WANEP national network coordinators to ensure that women are part of this process.

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<sup>22</sup> Presented by Victoria Kunbour, WANEP Regional

### ***Report on WIPNET's Participation in CSW 49 and Beijing +10<sup>23</sup>***

The 49<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was held from February 28 – March 11, 2005. The Commission on the Status of Women has been mandated by the UN General Assembly to integrate into its programs a periodic review of the critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and to develop the Platform's significant role in gender mainstreaming at the United Nations. The mandate of the 2005 session of the CSW was to review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes documents of Beijing +5. Thus the conference aimed to identify the current challenges and successful strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.

WIPNET was represented by Ms. Thelma Ekiyor, Ms. Leymah Gbowee, Mrs. Ruby Dagadu and Dr. Lydia Umar. Their key activities included presentations on WIPNET and its activities and support to partners. A key lesson from this conference is the need for WIPNET to develop a documentation plan that will showcase its work in such a manner that it becomes a reference for learning.

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<sup>23</sup> Presented by Leymah Gbowee, Liberia

## FINAL NOTE

The WIPNET Regional Conference is an annual event that brings together representatives of women's groups and other stakeholders from across the sub region to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices of their work in the year. It also allows for deliberation on topical issues on women, peace and security and provides the platform for members to develop strategies that would place women at the centre of peace and security in West Africa. The 2005 WIPNET Regional conference was no exception to this. It provided the space for members to celebrate their achievements, as well as to re-examine strategies that have not been as effective as expected.

It revealed that the present challenge for the network is no longer how to get women to work together, but how to make impact in policy formulation and implementation on women's involvement in peace and security in the sub region. In this regard collaboration with policy makers, Gender Ministries and other bodies like the ECOWAS Gender Division is crucial. It also revealed that critical need to build on the work of its networks in Liberia, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire; and the need to strengthen the capacity of the ECOWAS Gender Unit. The conference clearly showed that the task for WIPNET is no longer getting known, but to use its network and popularity to ensure that women are not only tokenly integrated in peace and security, but that they are involved because they have the competencies to get involved.

The conference ended with a closing dinner at which **Liberia** was chosen as the next country to host the Fifth Annual WIPNET Conference in 2006.

## APPENDIX I

### WIPNET 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL WIPNET CONFERENCE 1-3 NOVEMBER 2005 PARTICIPANTS' LIST

NAME	ORGANISATION	ADRESSE	PAYS / COUNTRY
<b>Aminata DIOUF NDIAYE</b>	Ministere de la Femme, de la Famille et du Developpement Social	<a href="mailto:aminatadioufndiaye@yahoo.fr">aminatadioufndiaye@yahoo.fr</a> 8497062/5736262	Senegal
<b>Marie Rosalie SAGNA</b>	WIPNET/WANEP Senegal	BP 87 Ziguinchor Senegal <a href="mailto:marierosalies@yahoo.fr">marierosalies@yahoo.fr</a> <a href="mailto:wipnetsenegal@yahoo.fr">wipnetsenegal@yahoo.fr</a> (00221)552-21-47 991-58-00	Senegal
<b>Solange NOUATIN ATTAKLA</b>	WANEP/WIPNET-Benin	08 1 BP : 7033 Aeroport Cotonou (229) 96 04 23 <a href="mailto:sol_attakla@yahoo.fr">sol_attakla@yahoo.fr</a> <a href="mailto:wipnetbenin@yahoo.fr">wipnetbenin@yahoo.fr</a>	Benin
<b>Reine ALAPINI GANSOU</b>	Wildaf – Benin Comite Consultatif WIPNET	04 BP 0608, Gbeganey Cotonou Tel: +229 21301986 Fax +239 21315499 <a href="mailto:alapinir@intnet.bj">alapinir@intnet.bj</a> <a href="mailto:alapinireine@yahoo.fr">alapinireine@yahoo.fr</a>	Benin
<b>Catherine AGOSSOUVO</b>	Ministere de la Famille de la Protection sociale, Benin	Tel: 213167-07/08 90 04 13 75 <a href="mailto:agossath@yahoo.fr">agossath@yahoo.fr</a>	Benin
<b>Marguerite YOLIBI KONE</b>	WANEP – Cote d'Ivoire	09 BP 3320 Abidjan 09 <a href="mailto:klintio2001@yahoo.fr">klintio2001@yahoo.fr</a> (225)056 77 677	Cote d'Ivoire
<b>Mme Kaba Yaya FOFANA</b>	Ministere, Cote d'Ivoire	Ministère de la Famille et de la Promotion de la Femme Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire	Cote d'Ivoire
<b>Yvonne OKOBET</b>	WIPNET-CI	2ème Adjoint au Maire de la Mairie de Divo BP 1273 Divo +225 32762700 / +225 06049511 <a href="mailto:yvonok@yahoo.fr">yvonok@yahoo.fr</a>	Cote d'Ivoire
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