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Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre

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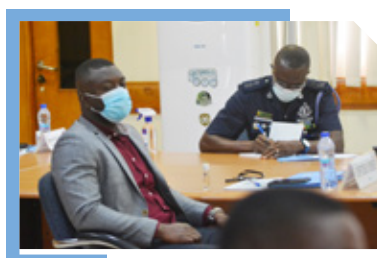
Second KAPS Forum assembles stakeholders to address Democratic Backsliding in West Africa

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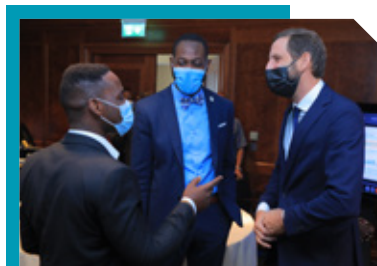
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Second KAPS Forum assembles stakeholders to address Democratic Backsliding in West Africa



The second edition of the Kofi Annan Peace and Security Forum (KAPS Forum), which was held at KAIPTC on 8th and 9th December 2021, focused on the theme: *'Democracy and Governance in the Context of Complex Crises in West Africa'*.

The theme was chosen to mark the 20th Anniversary of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance adopted in December, 2001. The Forum took cognisance of the progress made in West Africa in terms of democratic transition and peaceful transfer of political power in the region.

Nonetheless, it called attention to the gradual “backsliding of democracy” in the region, as evidenced by the re-emergence of military coup d'états, manipulation of Constitutions to extend term-limits by civilian presidents, electoral violence and irregularities, as well as exclusion of identifiable groups such as youth and women from political engagement.

Further, the Forum recognised that all these challenges were occurring against the backdrop of violent extremism, terrorism, organised crime, climate change, health pandemic, human rights violations, misuse of digital technology, and other threats to the stability of the region, and to the social and economic prosperity of the people.

The Forum identified the root causes to this West African crisis including the failure of certain elected leaders to prioritise the well-being of their electorates, the contradicting positions by ECOWAS on having zero-tolerance for military take-overs but also tolerating unlawful civilian state capture, and the waning participation by civil society and the wider populace in demanding, promoting and safeguarding democracy and good governance. The solutions proposed were summarised in a 15-point Communiqué as reproduced on page 19.



Empowering women for conflict prevention, resolution; Government of Denmark, KAIPTC roll out new course.



Women across Africa play key roles in taming or preventing conflicts; however, their efforts go unnoticed. This had engaged the attention of the KAIPTC and the Government of Denmark to reverse the trend through a course that empowers women with skills and knowledge to live out their roles in preventing conflict in the Sahel. Its maiden edition dubbed 'Women in Conflict Prevention Course 2021' focused on the Sahel Region—a hotbed for extremism that threatens peace and security in the sub-region.

The course was introduced 2021 in pursuit of the strategic objectives in KAIPTC's Strategic Plan, with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. The two-week course is aimed at providing knowledge and expertise on women's role in conflict prevention and peace process in the region. It offered insight into the factors that trigger conflicts.



A Centre of Excellence

The Deputy Commandant of KAIPTC, Air Commodore George Kweku Arko-Dadzie, who spoke at the opening ceremony of the course, said the Centre has “established itself as a Centre of Excellence in research and training

in the Conflict and Peace Operations fields” over the years. He added, “this course specifically is contributing significantly to the objectives of the ECOWAS Women in

Conflict Prevention Framework and is structured as a collaborative problem-based learning programme that will encompass lectures, case studies, small group works, brainstorming and exercises”.

Topics covered included the Nature of Conflict, Theories of Conflict, Conflict Analysis and Conflict Mapping, Contemporary Security Challenges and Conflict Prevention in Africa. The participants were also taken through African Peace and Security Architecture, Early Warning and Response, Women in Conflict Prevention and Human Rights in Conflict Prevention among others.

They were also exposed to some of the principles and theories including the dynamics and fundamental elements necessary for a successful mission accomplishment, which is part of peace efforts in conflict resolution.

With the course content in mind, Air Commodore Arko-Dadzie said

it was the expectation of the Centre that the course would significantly enhance the capacity of participants to contribute ultimately towards the building of a peaceful and stable Africa where the security of all people would be guaranteed. He commended the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark for its unflinching support in partnering with KAIPTC to run the course he described as “important.”

The capacity-building event brought together 20 participants mainly from personnel working with communities in conflict-affected areas, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other organizations involved in conflict prevention in the Sahel Region.

Through the course, KAIPTC and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs have increased awareness of participants on their roles in preventing conflict, and further established a network of women in the Sahel Region who

would collaborate to support conflict prevention efforts.

Again, through the course, participants now have improved knowledge and skills in conflict resolution, which they are expected to use to improve and sustain conflict prevention processes in the Sahel Region.

The course comes at a time the researchers from KAIPTC warned that there was a shift in the world of violent extremists as women were not just victims. Women who would ordinarily coil with fear in the past are performing several roles to fuel terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism. With the roll-out of the course, KAIPTC and the Denmark Foreign Affairs Ministry are contributing to remedial efforts to stem the rising cases of extremism in a sub-region, which is already struggling with poverty and underdevelopment.



Testimonials

A Research Officer in charge of Electoral Assistance at the ECOWAS Commission, Manyam Tukur, was full of praises for the course.

“I find the course very engaging, the modules are comprehensive and have a lot of information which will help guide me along my path as a Gender Advisor and Election focal point. The range and experience of the facilitators are exceptional, and it was quite mind-blowing hearing stories of first-hand experience of conflict encounters and how some issue were dealt with. This course is important to my work as UPS election focal point, as it has broadened my mind on the challenges in gender and how to keep pushing in concerning them.”

So did the Sierra Leone National Network Coordinator for West Africa Network for peace Building, Isata Mahoi:

“I appreciated the fact that the facilitators are all grounded on their modules. The approaches they used are all in place. There was full participation at all levels, communication was effective. This course has capacitated me in such a way that, my current job is well placed at the helm of affairs and conflict prevention. Therefore, I will make the best out of this course to create more impact in my country and the continent as a whole.”

UNSCR1325 and women in conflicts

Women play key roles in maintaining peace and security in their homes, communities and their countries. The United Nations knew it, political leaders knew it, military and even armed rebels knew it, but their contributions were hardly acknowledged in international frameworks until 2000—the birth of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR1325).

The UNSCR1325 adopted in October 2000 recognised the experiences of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, and also acknowledged the contributions and absence of women in the conflict resolution, prevention and peacebuilding process. The Resolution called on all stakeholders and actors, to ensure the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts. It further called for the empowerment of women, to ensure their inclusion in the prevention of conflict, and the peacebuilding process.

With West Africa and the Sahel seen as a hotbed for violent conflicts and terrorism for which women and children remain the most vulnerable, there is a general consensus that more needed to be done to empower women.

While women withstood the worst of conflicts worldwide, the Council on Foreign Relations figures highlights that between 1990 and 2019, women worldwide constituted just 2% of mediators, 8% of negotiators and 5% of witnesses and signatories in all major peace processes.

According to the UN, women are mostly absent from peace processes, which results in peace agreements and ceasefires that rarely address the perspectives, needs and concerns of women and other vulnerable groups. Additionally, the lack of planning for the needs in post-conflict recovery could endanger the long-term sustainability of any peace agreement. Hence, women's participation in preventing conflict is essential for achieving a lasting positive peace process.

Senior Leaders in AMISOM benefit from KAIPTC's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Peace Support Operations in Africa Course

From 2-9 October 2021, KAIPTC undertook a mobile training to deliver the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Peace Support Operations in Africa Course (MELPAC) for the Africa Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

The training was organized in response to a request by AU on behalf of AMISOM to train senior mission leaders and heads of units in monitoring and evaluation (M&E), with the intention to institutionalize relevant processes in the mission in the future.

In all, 25 persons received skills and knowledge on how to apply the principles of results-based M&E in mandating, preparing, deploying and drawing down of AMISOM; how to develop effective MEL systems and crafting appropriate indicators for mission-related programmes and projects, among others.

KAIPTC designed the MELPAC course in 2020 with support from Germany in response to requests from ECOWAS and the AU to meet M&E requirements for PSOs.



Ghana needs careful response to small arms challenges — Prof Aning

Prof Kwesi Aning, the Director of Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research of KAIPTC has raised concerns over some explosives from Ghana's mines illegally streaming into conflict zones in West Africa.

"Some of the explosive devices found in Mali, Guinea and elsewhere have some markings that can be traced home [Ghana]. We have a small arms problem to deal with," he said, as he rallied a holistic approach to dealing with the circulation of documented and undocumented weapons in the turbulent West Africa sub-region.

With Ghana among the destination for arms from conflict zones in the Sahel, Prof Aning observed that there was the need for the country to be equally worried about small arms produced in the country.

"We need to respond to the small arms challenges carefully. First relate to understanding and having a better grasp of where the guns are manufactured in Ghana illegally. The second, relates to the import of these guns into this country. The third relates to the leakages in the stockpile we have, and also, particularly from the mining companies".

"What that means is that as a country, we need to ask ourselves some really difficult questions. If criminals get access to all types of guns including military-grade guns, then it means Ghana has created a fertile ground both for the acquisition of the necessary tools for violent attacks and also for resupply and supply networks," he explained.

The security expert was speaking at the opening ceremony of a workshop on 'Vulnerabilities and Resilience in Peace Infrastructures in West Africa' at Cape Coast in the Central Region.

The event brought together key players involved in peacebuilding in

Ghana to discuss how to build resilient structures that can promote peace and security in the sub-region.

Worrying figures

Statistics from Ghana's National Small Arms Commission indicates that there are more than 1.2 million unregistered firearms and light weapons in circulation in Ghana. This is apart from the millions of sophisticated weapons imported into the country by criminal gangs through unapproved channels.

Prof Aning believes it would take intelligence on the ringleaders who make the guns available, where they are located, how they get the guns among others to deal with the problem which continuous to create instability in the sub-region.

When he took his turn, the Commandant of the KAIPTC, Maj Gen Francis Ofori, said there was no doubt that creating the necessary national structures was an important first step towards effective conflict prevention.

Proactive measures

Making a case for proactive rather than reactionary approach to peace and security, he said:

"We often wait too long for violent conflicts to erupt before attempting to respond. This has proven to be costly and detrimental in both human and material terms. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us all to play our part in this process if we are to achieve the objective of building national institutions, resources, and skills to resolve conflicts and sustain peace within our societies".

West Africa has been embroiled in turbulence including violent



extremist groups, unconstitutional changes in government, serious governance deficits and contentious electoral contestations, inter-ethnic tensions between nomadic farmers and pastoralists, maritime insecurity, as well as rapid population growth which have had economic, social and political strains on West African countries. Added to the tall list is the COVID-19 pandemic which has turned the world on its head.

The background

In an attempt to respond to these challenges, ECOWAS introduced a number of initiatives. Key among these is the adoption of the 1999 Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, and its 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

To further support the Mechanism, the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was promulgated by the Mediation and Security Council (MSC) in January 2008, with a plan of action to drive the 14 components of the Framework which was launched in January 2019. Subsequent to the adoption of the ECPF, several regional consultations were held in order to garner support for the creation of national infrastructures for peace (I4P).

For example, in September 2013, a meeting was jointly organised by the





ECOWAS Commission, the African Union Commission (AUC) and other partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the support of the government of Ghana. These partners sought to explore the feasibility and modalities for establishing and strengthening national infrastructures for peace in West Africa. The meeting culminated in the Accra Declaration of 10 September 2013 on ‘Strengthening National, Regional and Continental Co-ordination Towards Building National Peace Infrastructure for Conflict Prevention’. ECOWAS member states were called upon to develop nationally-owned and nationally-led infrastructure for peace (I4P) within the next three years.

Eight years down the lane, attempts at the establishment of national infrastructure for peace by member states have produced uneven results. While countries such as Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone have developed structures for the implementation of the I4Ps, other countries such as the Gambia and Senegal are yet to take definitive steps towards the establishment of nationally-owned infrastructure for peace.

Four-country study

Major General Ofori said those developments informed the KAIPTC's partnership with the Government of Denmark (development partner) for which it undertook a four-country study in Sierra Leone, the Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal between March and April this year. This was to ascertain the level of implementation of structures and mechanisms for

conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and to identify gaps and opportunities that can be leveraged upon in building resilience at the country level.

He revealed that a similar study would be undertaken in Ghana to complement the efforts of the National Peace Council.

He commended the Regional Peace Councils and the various Regional Security Councils for their contribution towards peace and security in the regions.

“These efforts have to be strengthened in order to sustain the peace we all enjoy in the country,” he added.

He also commended the Danish Embassy for being a strong partner of the KAIPTC.

Working together

The Danish Ambassador to Ghana, His Excellency Tom Norring, who applauded the partnership with KAIPTC noted that working in silos would not help in tackling the worsening insecurity in West Africa. He, therefore, recommended the development of strong cooperation between the different countries on the coast of West Africa and in the region.

“Securing peace is highly dependent on national frameworks. Mali and Guinea have been victims of military coups partly fueled by unaddressed needs in their respective populations”.

On the importance of peace architecture, he said its efficacy had been demonstrated in Ghana where *“the [National] Peace Council is able to engage early to diffuse tense situations which could have degenerated into election violence. It is a critical element in the Ghanaian national peace infrastructure.”*

Ambassador Norring reciprocated the kind words from the Commandant of KAIPTC stating that *“the KAIPTC proves time and again why it is an institution that is playing a central role in the peace and stability of the region.”*

Over the years, Ghana's National Peace Council has received plaudits for its work which had often doused flames of tension threatening to consume the country's peace and security. It is credited with working in the background since the 2008 elections to allow cool heads to prevail during the country's post-election agitations.

That achievement was not lost on the Chairman of the Central Regional Peace Council when he addressed participants at the workshop.

“Infrastructure for peace should not mean a rigid structure but a process that leads to sustainable peace. A peace infrastructure should be a platform that is responsive to day-to-day issues that arise in the ebb and flow of conflict while it sustains a clear vision of the longer-term change needed to sustain development”. ■

Government of Denmark commits to conflict prevention, peace and security in West Africa



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At a time when the security concerns in the West African region remains a significant concern to all actors, the Government of Denmark, under the Danish development and humanitarian strategy “The World 2030”, is working with several institutions to promote the peace, stability and development in the region and beyond.

One of several important initiatives being funded by the Government of Denmark is the ‘Promoting peace and security in West Africa’ project (2021 – 2022), which is implemented by KAIPTC. The project has three thematic areas; Women, peace and security, Conflict prevention and Responsibility to Protect.

Under the conflict prevention theme, KAIPTC recently held a regional policy workshop in Sierra Leone to look at best approaches to build resilient infrastructures for peace to prevent conflict in West Africa. It hosted participants from Ghana, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, ECOWAS and CSOs in Sierra Leone.

Speaking at the workshop, the Danish Ambassador to Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea & Togo, H.E. Tom Norring, noted that “*current developments in the ECOWAS region has only accentuated the need for greater focus on conflict prevention and peaceful solutions*”. He cited increases in terrorist activities, radicalization, organized crime and violent conflicts between different

populations, particularly in the Sahel, adding that the gradual spread to the West African Coastal states, highlights the truth that conflict and violence is no respecter of borders.

He further added that, given the spreading insecurities in the region, it was encouraging and promising to witness the participation of five (5) countries in the workshop, in support of the goal to implement conflict prevention structures on a national level, adding that “*securing peace is highly dependent on national frameworks*”.

The Ambassador affirmed his Government’s commitment to a better and balanced world, announcing that in September 2021, the ‘Danish



Government of Denmark commits to conflict prevention, peace and security in West Africa



Strategy for Development Co-operation, titled 'The world we share' was launched. The strategy has two overarching ambitions which guides Denmark's engagement with the world. The first, he said 'is to lead the fight to combat climate change and restore balance to the planet. The other is the ambition to give hope to people in need'. In doing so – giving hope to people in need - the commitment to supporting conflict prevention, peace and stabilization efforts is a key priority. Without it, he said, other efforts will be of little value.

The Commandant of KAIPTC, Maj Gen Ofori, officially opened the workshop. In his remarks, he noted that, while ECOWAS had demonstrated leadership by creating the regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, member states ought to leverage these mechanisms to establish an institutionalized approach to conflict transformation and building resilience. He added that the workshop, as well the findings of the country reports generated from the four-country study conducted between March and April 2021, will contribute to inform policy on the implementation of national infrastructure for peace in the region.

Dr. Onyinye Onwuka, Head of Mediation and Coordination of Regional Political Affairs, ECOWAS Commission, in her goodwill message, noted that focus of the workshop was not only timely but apt, given the growing challenges socio-political and security environment in the region which placed on urgent demand for collective reflection on practical strategies to strengthen internal mechanisms for conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution.

Some participants shared the benefits and value they received from the workshop. Mohamed Sheik Kargbo, a Sierra Leonean and the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Internal Affairs noted that *"the policy workshop*

is very relevant to my work as one coming from the security sector, giving the challenges to sustaining peace in my country after the civil war. The facilitators were superb. The outcomes of the workshop will definitely inform future policies and strategies in my ministry".

Ms. Salama Njie, who is the National Network Coordinator for the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in The Gambia, also said; *"indeed an excellent and well-coordinated workshop. It is also very pertinent and timely as my organization, WANEP is amongst those leading the Infrastructure for Peace (I4P) process in The Gambia. The lessons learned and networking will indeed help in shaping our own I4P. Both the facilitators and the identified themes were apt."*

Under the ongoing 'Promoting peace and security in West Africa' project, other workshops and engagements have been held in The Gambia and series of workshops and capacity building sessions will be held in the coming months for stakeholders in Ghana and across the sub-region. ■



Broader stakeholder engagement required for effective implementation of HDP Nexus, MHPSS – Maj Gen Francis Ofori



The Commandant of KAIPTC, Maj Gen Francis Ofori has called for broader stakeholder engagements on the two new approaches to peacekeeping operations – the Humanitarian Development Peace (HDP) Nexus and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Peace Support Operations (MHPSS).

The engagements, he said, must focus on enhancing the implementation of the HDP Nexus and MHPSS concepts in peacekeeping missions to respond to the changing nature of conflicts. Maj Gen Ofori made the call when he addressed participants at a hybrid workshop on “Emerging dynamics in peace operations in Africa” in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Organised by the KAIPTC in collaboration with the German Development Agency (GIZ), and the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), the workshop discussed emerging issues in peace operations as well as proposed measures to strengthen Africa’s security architecture.

The HDP Nexus, introduced in the context of the 2016 World

Humanitarian Summit, is a new way of working that provides a pathway to bridge the gaps between the humanitarian, development and peace sectors.

The MHPSS, on the other hand, seeks to address fundamental individual and collective well-being factors essential to the overall initiation, development, maintenance and sustenance of a peace culture. While acknowledging the seeming changes in peacekeeping operations over the period, Maj Gen Ofori noted that the HDP Nexus and the MHPSS had been developed to ensure effective peacekeeping missions.

Making reference to the maiden edition of KAIPTC’s KAPS Forum in September 2019, he said the event highlighted the glaring lack of linkages between various actors working in fragile countries where there were large-scale peace missions.

“This clearly amplifies the existing concern that several actors in the humanitarian, development and peace sectors work in distinct and silo approach that fails to provide a holistic and durable solution in countries facing complex crises.”

Maj Gen Ofori further indicated that KAIPTC as part of its training processes

attached a lot of importance to the HDP Nexus and the MHPSS to peacekeeping and had incorporated them into its training portfolio.

“The KAIPTC believes that beyond incorporating these two new approaches into its trainings, there is the need for a broader stakeholder conversation which focuses on enhancing the implementation of the HDP and MHPSS concepts with the context of peacekeeping,” he said.

The Special Representative of the United Nation Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the UN Office to the African Union, H.E Hanna Tetteh, expressed concern that over the years, response to conflicts, including peace operations and peace-building, had been largely focused on crisis management; reacting to events rather than addressing the root causes.

“These responses were focused on security and the provision of aid, often not in tandem with each other. They were costly and not sustainable in the long-term, as well as ad hoc and incoherent in efforts towards institution-building and development,” she said.

H.E. Tetteh also emphasized the need to take stock and review the way in

Broader stakeholder engagement required for effective implementation of HDP Nexus, MHPSS – Maj Gen Francis Ofori

which peace operations are constructed, mandated and operating, as well as the interactions and coordination between the peace and security, development and humanitarian pillars.

The Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to Ethiopia, Mr. Heiko Nitzschke, expressed worry that mental health and psychological needs of personnel deployed for peacekeeping operations had not been given the needed attention, and stressed the need to recognize the particular needs of mission personnel before, during and after deployment

“That is why Germany supports various projects focusing on mental health and psychological support with the aim of ensuring individual and collective wellbeing,” he said.

Ghana’s Deputy Ambassador to Ethiopia, H.E. Kwasi Asante, urged the African Union to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with reputable academic research institutions, such as KAIPTC for the effective implementation of new approaches to enhance peacekeeping operations.

“In post-conflict environments, development, humanitarian and peace activities are often undertaken by different actors who need to take account of each other’s actions – and possibly collaborate – to ensure efficient and effective delivery since each of these activities have impact on each other,” he said.



The Chief of the Policy Development Unit, Peace Support Operations Division of the African Union, Mr Zinurine Alghali called for the continuous enhancement of the strategic partnership between the AU and the UN to ensure a comprehensive approach to its joint work and efforts.

“It is only through such enhanced cooperation that the AU and UN can ensure all our efforts are also aligned and integrated with the work of humanitarian and development agencies and partners for more sustainable solutions,” he said.



USAID, KAIPTC successfully hold final session on ‘Specialized Course on Preventing Violent Extremism’ in Tamale, Ghana

Ghana’s five regions of the north are close to the Sahel, a sub-region that is struggling to cope with the lethal effects of violent extremism.

To spare the country that agony, the KAIPTC organized a ‘Specialized Course on Preventing Violent Extremism’ for Peace Council members in the Northern, Savannah, Upper East and Upper West regions in Ghana.

The final session was held in Tamale to climax the month-long capacity development programme. The last session was targeted at the core technical staff of the Regional Peace Councils in the four (4) regions.

The training was under the ‘Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Training for Regional Peace Councils in Northern Ghana’ project, which is implemented by KAIPTC for the National Peace Council, and funded by the Littorals Regional Initiative (LRI) of the USAID. The goal of the project is to build the capacity of regional peace council members and technical staff to enable them to plan, develop and implement action plans that build resilience to violent extremism in their districts and local communities in the northern part of Ghana.

In a welcome address, the Deputy Commandant of KAIPTC, Air Cdre George Arko-Dadzie, noted with concern the gradual spread of violent extremism within the region, with the ultimate intention of the perpetrators to reach coastal regions. He said: “In all this, the most vulnerable groups

are the border towns and local communities. As such, there is the need for partners to remain committed in this fight against terrorism and violent extremism, by building the resilience of local towns and communities to prevent recruitment and radicalization of these groups”.

He urged participants to actively engage during the training because “it is through such engagements that collectively, we can offer recommendations to address the menace of violent extremism in our country and in the region as a whole”.

The Deputy Country Representative of the USAID/ Office of Transitional Initiatives Littorals Regional Initiative, Ms. Dalia Haj-Omar, wished all participants an insightful learning experience.

The LRI is a USAID/Office of Transitional Initiatives-funded program which seeks to shore up stability and prevent violent extremism in the Littoral countries, including Ghana, Togo and Benin. It is a quick-response mechanism supporting local counterparts across five West African coastal countries to withstand the increasing pressures of violent extremist organizations by addressing instability factors including conflict, weak social cohesion, and governance deficits. The programme provides grants to local partners to implement home-grown, innovative strategies aimed at building local capacities and resilience to prevent

the spread of violent extremism.

The project was timely because of existing vulnerabilities in the northern regions of Ghana that augur for violent extremist tendencies.

Candidly, the northern part of Ghana is relatively underdeveloped compared to the south. The causes of this under-development are mainly socio-economic in nature – the demand for labour and better economic prospects constantly leads to migration to the south. Secondly, inadequate and uneven provision of infrastructure and investment in social services have contributed to the north-south disparities. Compounding this problem is a teeming unemployed youth, high poverty levels and high illiteracy rate. Topped with weak states institutions/law enforcement agencies and conflict, this context provides a fertile field for violent extremist activities to sprout among vulnerable/ groups.

The project, was therefore aimed at preventing violent extremism by equipping participants to; identify vulnerabilities and risks factors of women and youth radicalization and involvement in violent extremist groups at local levels; evaluate the effectiveness of existing actions at the local and national levels to address the risks identified, and formulate complimentary local and national action plans for development and implementation by the Regional Peace Councils. ■



Children in conflict areas: WPSI, Save The Children International to hold symposium to discuss their welfare, safety

They are powerless in conflicts. They have been drafted to fight, they are killed, used as human shields, forced into marriages and yet they are voiceless. They are the future but remain vulnerable in spite of loads of international frameworks to protect them— They are children.

Their plight and vulnerability were the key issue on the table at the KAIPTC when policymakers and experts from civil society, academia among others gather to discuss issues bothering the welfare of children in conflict zones.

Frameworks for child protection

Although several frameworks, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), the United Nations Convention on

the Rights of the Child (1989) and its protocols among others were adopted to promote and protect the rights of children in armed conflicts, they are far from protecting children.

The existence of these frameworks seems to have a limited effect on guaranteeing the safety and well-being of children, especially considering that the number of children living in conflict zones continues to increase.

Heart-breaking figures

Figures from Save the Children asserts that Africa has approximately 170 million children living in conflict zones on the continent—the highest in the world. A 2018 report published by the same organization estimated that 1.2 billion children are exposed to extreme risk of conflict, poverty and discrimination against girls.

Increasingly, from Nigeria through Syria to Iraq among others, parties to conflict continue to disregard the international rules and codes of conduct that exist to protect children in conflicts situations.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Protection of the Child, in the July 2020 Report to the Security Council, urged the Member States to strengthen accountability measures to end impunity and integrate a gender perspective in the protection of children in situations of conflicts.

But there is still a sad reality. Gender issues matter in the ways boys and girls experience conflict. As a result of armed conflict, uprooted population groups, particularly women, boys and girls, live for years in camps, dependent on humanitarian aid and with limited access to vital resources.



According to experts, gender inequality has been noted as a root cause of many barriers to sustainable development and critically impacts children's ability to survive, learn, and live a life free from violence.

That is not all. Discrimination against women and children and the lack of recognition of their particular needs

exposed them to varied violence and abuse and thereby make them more vulnerable.

Experts say a nuanced understanding of the experience of conflict and other situations of violence for younger children, adolescents, and those with varying types and degrees of disability will benefit from this framework to

enable practitioners to recognize these differences and respond appropriately.

Why the symposium

It is against this background that the Women, Peace and Security Institute (WPSI) of the Kofi Annan

Children in conflict areas: WPSI, Save The Children International to hold symposium to discuss their welfare, safety



International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in partnership with the Save the Children International (SIC) organized a three-day regional symposium to create a platform to discuss issues concerning children.

It was the theme 'Accelerating the implementation of Children and Armed Conflict Agenda: A Call to Action.'

The participants were drawn from regional child protection experts, policymakers, experts from academia and Civil Societies Organizations among others to deliberate on the outcomes of recent research conducted in Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria on the involvement of children in armed conflicts and the engagement of youth in peacebuilding.

It will among other aims present an opportunity for the stakeholders to discuss the different research findings and recommendations that emerged from the four country's case study and provide a platform for policy-makers to identify ways in which key recommendations from

the research can be translated into policies and response mechanisms to address the plights of children in armed conflicts.

When the sun sets on the event the organizers harvested policy recommendations and actions plan to accelerate the implementation of the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda proposed, and a report on key recommendations based on the outcomes of the symposium for advancing the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda produced and disseminated. They also nurtured a collaboration among relevant actors across the Sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate the implementation of the CAAC agenda strengthen.

Participants

The regional symposium brought together thirty (30) participants from national human rights institutions; continental institutions including the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), the African Union Peace and Security Department (AUPSD), the African Union Women, Gender & Development Directorate (AUWGDD),

the office of the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace & Security; Training Centres of Excellence (TCEs); and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) among others. Key stakeholders engaged during the field visit in Nigeria, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo will also participate in the symposium.

Connected to saving children from drowning in the ocean of conflict is building the capacity of the youth as peace ambassadors, but largely ignored.

Although the AU'S African Youth Charter, as well as Resolutions 2250, 2419 and 2535 of the UN Security Council, underpin the need to build the capacity of the youth as peacebuilders as well protect them during conflicts, it remains a paper talk.

It has been observed that African youth continue to be excluded in peacebuilding processes. This contributes to impeding the achievement of sustainable peace and security on the African continent. ■

Pilot course on Gender Mainstreaming in African Union (AU) Peace Support Operations (PSO) ends at KAIPTC

A five-day training programme to pilot a Course on Gender Mainstreaming in African Union (AU) Peace Support Operations (PSO) has ended at KAIPTC in Accra. With the issues of gender increasingly taking center stage as women gain footing in peacekeeping operations around the world, the course is meant to test the relevance and appropriateness of the modules in addressing gender issues in PSOs.

It was also to examine the logical flow of the harmonized curriculum, evaluate the adequacy of time allocations for the various modules, lessons and teaching points as well as assess the appropriateness of training methodologies, exercises and training aids as recommended in the harmonized curriculum.

Organised by the African Union Commission with the support of the KAIPTC and the British Peace Support Team – Africa (BPST-A), it attracted civilians, military and police personnel who are preparing for deployment or have been deployed in AU mandated and/or authorized PSOs.

With the KAIPTC having a reputation for world-class education aimed at breaking the barriers of gender disparities, the Deputy Commandant of the KAIPTC, Air Commodore George Kweku Arko-Dadzie, expressed appreciation to the AU for opting for the centre; *“As a Training Centre of Excellence (TCE), we are happy that the AUC selected KAIPTC to conduct the pilot course in order to determine if the harmonized curriculum adequately responds to issues of gender in PSO.”*

The AU has committed itself to implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda into its peace and security structures and processes. That the Deputy Commandant said

was *“apparent in the integration of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 into the AU’s gender related frameworks, the appointment of a Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security and pronouncements by the organization in this regard and in its policies and practices.”*

In a bid to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda, the AU developed the “Gender Training Manual for AU Peace Support Operations” in 2013. The purpose of the manual was to ensure that African Standby Force (ASF) would be able to identify and mainstream gender into all aspects of their operations.

Between 2013 and 2017 the AUC developed two different training packages on gender to provide African Standby Force (ASF) personnel with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to respond effectively to gender issues in Peace Support Operations (PSOs). The first package was developed with the support of the UNDP and UN Women in 2013 while the second package was developed with support from the Institute for Security Studies through the Training for Peace (TfP) Programme in 2017.

With the support of the United Nations Office of the African Union (UNOAU), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), KAIPTC and the British Peace Support Team – Africa (BPST-A), the African Union Capability Development Unit began a process of reviewing and harmonizing both documents into one training package that comprehensively addresses issues of mainstreaming gender in AUPSOs.

Ever since the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in October 2000 to address the issues of women, peace and security, the clock of progress has been ticking albeit not as fast as experts would

have wished. But there has been progress.

The African Union (AU) through the establishment of normative instruments, such as the Maputo Protocol (2003) enjoins member states to address the concerns of women especially in conflict situations and also engage women in peace processes.

Furthermore, the establishment of the AU Directorate of Women, Gender and Development in 2000, the appointment of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security in 2014 and the creation of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise) in 2017, point to progressive efforts at achieving gender inclusiveness on the continent.

But that is not all.

The adoption of the African Union Strategy on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) 2018-2028 is based on an inclusive and multi-sectoral approach and builds on the lessons learned from the implementation of the AU Gender Policy (2009). To further advance the WPS agenda, the AU, developed the “Gender Training Manual for AU Peace Support Operations” in 2013. The purpose of the manual was to ensure that African Standby Force (ASF) would be able to identify and mainstream gender into all aspects of PSO.

In 2020 the AUC, with the support of its partners, began a process of reviewing and harmonizing both documents into one training package that comprehensively addresses issues of gender and the WPS agenda in AU Peace Support Operations (PSOs). ■

Countries urged to consciously involve more Women in Peace and Security architecture



The Women, Peace and Security Institute (WPSI) of the KAIPTC wants countries in the sub-region to “consciously” involve women in their respective peace and security architecture.

While acknowledging the efforts of some African countries, the Institute said there was still more to be done to uplift the participation of women in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325).

The Institute observed with concern that the hindrances affecting the involvement of women in security issues were structural and not the lack of willingness on the part of women to occupy frontline positions.

The Head of the WPSI, Mrs. Joana Osei-Tutu, made the call at the opening of the Women in Peace and Security Leadership and Mentoring Course at Abidjan in Cote D'Ivoire on Monday, November 15, 2021. The training was organised by the WPSI with funding support from the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs of Denmark under the project: *“Promoting Peace and Security in Africa: Danish Support to KAIPTC 2021-2022”*

It aimed at enhancing the leadership and mentoring capacity of operational level leaders working in the area of peace and security within the ECOWAS region as well as promoting the implementation of the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Africa.

Mrs. Osei-Tutu urged countries to review their structural policies and offer women the opportunity to contribute directly to the promotion and maintenance of peace in the region.

“I think countries have begun working and they are doing well, but I think there needs to be a continuous effort by countries in terms of consciously having more females involved. There needs to be more policy change by member states by having a conscious effort with women,” she said.





She continued: *“the hindrances are structural more than the willingness of the women. So they have to look at the structures in place and make a conscious effort to remove these structures.”*

Mrs. Osei-Tutu said the course formed part of a broader project that is part of the daily support that the WPSI renders to promote female leadership and influence in peace and security within the sub-region. The WPSI is a knowledge Centre for the expansion of technical capacity, training, policy, research, and analysis on women, peace and security in order to better inform the broader security agenda in Africa.

In a speech read on his behalf, the Commandant of the KAIPTC, Major General Francis Ofori, underscored the need to move beyond the rhetoric and tokenism of female participation in peace processes and to create opportunities that ensure the meaningful participation of women.

“It is our hope that through this training, participants will be able to enhance their skills, leverage their power,

networks and alliances, and influence decision making in the peace and security environment,” he said in a speech read by Dr. Fiifi Edu-Afful, a Senior Research Fellow and Deputy Programme Head-Peace Support Operations at the KAIPTC.

For his part, Dr. Fiifi Edu-Afful said though women play a critical role when it comes to issues of peace and security on the continent, they are usually sidelined in the peacebuilding process. He said the KAIPTC would continuously roll out initiatives aimed at building the capacities of women and influence decision making at the regional level.

The KAIPTC, in keeping with its commitment to promote the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa, in 2019, established the KAIPTC Women’s Support Scheme to increase training opportunities for women and provide targeted capacity building programmes for women. Under the support scheme, the KAIPTC developed a training manual on leadership and mentoring for female leaders in the peace and security architecture. ■



KAPS Forum and Communiqué

COMMUNIQUE ADOPTION FOR SECOND EDITION OF THE KOFI ANNAN PEACE AND SECURITY FORUM ON THE THEME: 'DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF COMPLEX CRISES IN WEST AFRICA', HELD IN ACCRA, GHANA ON 8TH AND 9TH DECEMBER 2021

1. Preamble

Under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Ghana, the Commander-in-Chief of the Ghana Armed Forces, and the Chairman of the Authority of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Heads of State and Government, His Excellency (H.E.) Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo; and under the Chairmanship of the ECOWAS Special Envoy to Guinea, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas; the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) and Kofi Annan Foundation held the second edition of the Kofi Annan Peace and Security Forum (hereafter, KAPS Forum). The Forum, themed: 'Democracy and Governance in the Context of Complex Crises in West Africa', was held on 8th and 9th of December 2021, in collaboration with the Federal Government of Germany, the Kingdom of Norway, and the Kingdom of Sweden.

The KAPS Forum was also honoured to host H.E. John Agyekum Kufuor, Former President of the Republic of Ghana; H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former President of the Republic of Liberia; H.E. Ernest Bai Koroma, Former President of the Republic of Sierra Leone; H.E. Kabiné Komara, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea; and H.E. Lansana Kouyaté, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea and Former Executive Secretary of ECOWAS.

The roll call of distinguished delegates made up of representatives from governmental and inter-governmental organizations, United Nations (UN) special envoys, the diplomatic community, development partners, election management bodies, security professionals, policy and research think tanks, academia, peacekeeping training institutions, corporate leaders, and other civil society groups; participated both in

person and virtually.

2. Development of the Communiqué

The final communiqué is based on deliberations and conclusions at the KAPS Forum relating to the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (hereafter, the Protocol) adopted in 2001. The following sub-themes were discussed either at plenary or in small-group sessions; namely—: Background, Expectations and Significance of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; Democratic Backsliding in West Africa; Good Governance and Democratic Consolidation in War-to-Peace and Democratic Transitions; Entrenching Constitutionalism; Ensuring Free and Fair Elections; Challenges and Prospects of Balancing Democracy with Countering Violent Extremism; Challenges, Prospects and Lessons with respect to Deepening Democracy in an Age of Pandemic; Youth and Women Participation in Democracy; Electoral Integrity in the Digital Age; and Role and Ethics of Election Monitoring and Observation.

3. The Communiqué

Delegates made the following observations and recommendations during the KAPS Forum:

3.1 Context

I. The year 2021 marks the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the Protocol, which seeks to entrench democratic institutions and practices in West Africa.

II. The West African region has seen a decline in the incidence of military coup d'états and civil wars, and a rise in instances of peaceful elections and peaceful transfers of

power, in the last 20 years.

III. However, in the recent past, the avowed goals of the Protocol are being put to test by multiple sources of threats to security in the region.

IV. Unconstitutional or illegitimate extensions of term-limits and the interventions of the military in politics are re-emerging at a time when many believed that coup d'états had become things of the past in West Africa.

V. These developments are being complicated by the crises resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the challenges posed by violent extremism and radicalization in West Africa and the Sahel.

VI. A review of the Protocol has been proposed as part of processes aimed at mobilizing effective responses to these challenges. It was against this backdrop that the theme for the second meeting of the KAPS Forum was adopted.

3.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations were offered for consideration:

I. National stakeholders should promote broad-based political participation and inclusivity in order to bolster the resilience of the state to anti-constitutional and anti-democratic practices;

II. ECOWAS Member States should explore alternative options to the politics of winner-takes-all as a means to forging greater participation and inclusion;

III. ECOWAS Member States should invest in forms of education that promote the cultivation of civic, democratic and peace cultures;

IV. Consideration should be given to the implementation of policies by States to transition from the culture of elections towards the consolidation of democratic cultures;

V. ECOWAS Member States should consider the adoption of constitutional provisions that stipulate the maximum age limit at which a person can legally contest for the office of president;

VI. Consideration should be given to the adoption of specific legal provisions that prevent the concentration of power in the hands of the Executive, as a means to promoting the rule of law and political accountability in West African States;

VII. ECOWAS Member States should redefine the idea of the public interest to reflect the priorities and needs of all segments of society;

VIII. ECOWAS Member States should take steps to strengthen the independence and technical capacities of election management bodies in order to deliver credible electoral outcomes that reflect the will of the citizens;

IX. ECOWAS Member States should consider adopting measures to ensure effective regulation of the use and abuse of digital technologies in electoral processes as well

as online discourses in order to prevent misinformation and hate speech;

X. Civil society groups should reinvigorate their participation, engagement, and neutrality in the political arena in order to counter tendencies and practices that give rise to democratic reversals;

XI. ECOWAS Member States should adopt policies and programmes aimed at removing patriarchal structures which diminish women's experiences in political spaces, while promoting women's leadership and political participation across the scales and sites of society;

XII. ECOWAS should adopt specific provisions in the proposed revised Protocol that emphasize zero-tolerance for constitutional manipulation, with a mandatory two-term presidential term-limit for all Member States;

XIII. ECOWAS should engage more proactively with Member States in ways that promote constitutionalism, the rule of law, and accountability, in order to obviate or minimize the need for crisis response or the imposition of sanctions;

XIV. ECOWAS should collaborate effectively with institutions of thought leadership in the creation of regional norms and their delusions particularly to local contexts in order to enhance the prospects for transformational changes; and

XV. The youth should

be recognized as critical stakeholders in democracy, development, and in the peace and security of their states.

WHEREUPON, We the under listed, Commandant of KAIPTC, Chairman of the Kofi Annan Foundation, and Chairman of the KAPS Forum append our signatures to this Communiqué on the date below:

Adopted in Accra on 9th December, 2021; issued in Accra on 26th January, 2022.

Signed

MAJOR GENERAL FRANCIS OFORI
Commandant, Kofi Annan
International Peacekeeping Training
Centre (KAIPTC)

Signed

MR. ELHADJ AS SY
Chairman of the Board, Kofi Annan
Foundation

Signed

H.E. DR. MOHAMED IBN CHAMBAS
Chairman of the Kofi Annan Peace
and Security Forum and ECOWAS
Special Envoy to Guinea

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About the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre

The Ghana Ministry of Defence (MoD) established the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in 1998 and commissioned it in 2004. The purpose was to build upon and share Ghana's five decades of internationally acclaimed experience and competence in peace operations with other states in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region and the rest of Africa. This was in recognition of the need for training military, police and civilian men and women to meet the changing demands of multidimensional peace operations. The Centre is one of the three (3) Peacekeeping Training Centres of Excellence mandated by the ECOWAS to offer training in peacekeeping and peace support operations (PSO) in Africa.

The Centre delivers training courses in three thematic areas; Peace Support Operations, Conflict Management and Peace and Security Studies and also runs Masters and PhD programmes in same. The KAIPTC has a world-class research department that undertakes research in the thematic areas in Peace and Security. Located in Accra, Ghana, the KAIPTC is an internationally-recognized institution and has till date trained and tutored over 14,000 participants and students since its inception.

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