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United Nations Development Programme

# STRATEGIES FOR PARLIAMENTS TO SUPPORT CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY: COUNTRY EXPERIENCES FROM WEST AFRICA

Cover Photo Credit: A court official distributes application forms to residents beginning the process of getting identification documents ahead of elections in Côte d'Ivoire. Credit UN Photo / Ky Chung



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For more information on this joint initiative, please visit the following link on AGORA:  
<http://www.agora-parl.org/westafrica>



Ivorian Refugees in Liberia after fleeing after lingering political tension from disputed presidential elections in their home country erupted into violence in February 2011. Grand Gedeh County, Liberia. Credit: UN Photo/UNHCR / Glenna Gordon

West Africa has experienced significant violent conflict in the last three decades, resulting in insecure populations, unstable states, and compromised development efforts. Reflecting the broader trends throughout Africa, most conflicts in West Africa today occur within states and only on occasion does intrastate violence spill across borders,<sup>1</sup> drawing in neighbouring countries and internationalizing local conflicts. Many of the violent conflicts in West Africa, such as civil wars and insurgencies, military coups, and election-related violence, are political. Since 2000 alone, there have been seven<sup>2</sup> unconstitutional changes of government in West Africa.

Election-related violence is also widespread in West Africa. This includes killings and assassinations, intimidation/threats of violence, and the beating of opponents, as well as the destruction of private and/or public property. Electoral violence has occurred in presidential polls across the sub-region, including in Togo (April 2005), Guinea-Bissau (June 2009), and Côte d'Ivoire (October 2010). Similarly, parliamentary polls turned violent in Liberia (October 2005), Nigeria (April 2007), Sierra Leone (August 2007), and Ghana (December 2008).



# INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades alone, civil wars and insurgencies have involved eight countries in West Africa:

- **Liberia:** civil war, 1989-1996, 1999-2003
- **Sierra Leone:** civil war, 1991-2002
- **Guinea-Bissau:** civil war, 1998-1999
- **Côte d'Ivoire:** civil war, 2002-2007
- **Mali and Niger, Tuareg rebellions:** insurgency, early 1990s, and since 2006
- **Senegal, Casamance region:** insurgency, early 1990s
- **Nigeria, Niger Delta:** insurgency, 1998-2009



Women participate in the “16 days of Activism” campaign to strengthen the rights of women and stop gender-based violence. Credit: UN Photo / Christopher Herwig

Crises do not have only immediate, proximate causes. Many crises have roots in long-term, structural conditions that allow conflicts to flare in the first place. These factors may include: poverty, poor governance, institutional exclusion and discrimination, gender inequality, low levels of democratic culture and education, burgeoning unskilled youth populations, unreformed security forces, cleavages along emotive lines of ethnicity and religion, absence of or poorly functioning rule of law institutions, a proliferation of illicit arms and porous borders, inequitable access to natural resources, and widespread corruption.<sup>3</sup>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) experience in supporting democratic governance globally has borne out the importance of political parties and parliaments as key actors in democratic transitions. UNDP is seeing initiatives that build linkages between parliamentarians and civil society as being increasingly linked to broader peace-building objectives through specific efforts to target conflict-affected communities.<sup>4</sup> Legitimately elected parliaments provide a forum for the concerns of diverse societal actors (including women and marginalized groups) to be aired and incorporated into processes of dialogue, reconstruction, and conflict resolution. UNDP is therefore specifically working with parliaments to directly strengthen the capacity of women MPs and to strengthen committees and other parliamentary processes that can promote gender equality issues.

This Report is designed to provide parliamentarians, staff, and parliamentary partners with concrete measures and best practices on Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR) for use in their daily work. The Report focuses primarily on practical ways how parliaments can prevent and recover from violent conflict, particularly through their legislative, oversight, and representative functions. The report also highlights potential partners that can help advance parliamentary efforts on CPR. Country-specific and regional examples highlight the successes of West African parliaments<sup>5</sup> in preventing and recovering from violent crisis. Lessons from the region are offered to further inform parliaments on ways they can empower themselves to become more effective actors in this area.

Parliaments are well positioned to manage social crisis, prevent violent conflict, and bring about lasting peace. CPR is often considered the domain of the executive, but parliaments can also play a





significant role in this area through their everyday work of representing constituents, making laws, and overseeing government policy and programs. As representatives of the people, parliaments are uniquely legitimate democratic institutions with a central role to play in all governance processes.

To fulfil their core functions in addressing CPR issues, parliamentarians can:

- Employ the plenary as a forum for peaceful debate and resolution of conflict-sensitive issues
- Use standing committees, particularly in addressing technical aspects of a particular crisis
- *Ad hoc* or special commissions or cross-party caucuses can be established with a specific mandate to address an emerging or existing conflict
- Engage directly with their constituents and mediate emerging crisis or recovery efforts
- Task parliamentary staff in carrying out CPR initiatives

Parliaments can also enlist a broad range of external partners in their CPR efforts:

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) can help amplify advocacy campaigns, provide much needed research and technical assistance, and help bring parliamentarians closer to citizens
- Local traditional and customary bodies can be valuable partners in identifying citizens' needs regarding conflict issues and in helping parliaments to communicate a response



In November 2012, Sierra Leone voted in the third presidential and parliamentary elections since the end of the civil war in 2002. Credit: UN Photo / UNIPSIL





## INTRODUCTION

- The media can call attention to matters of public concern as well as investigate and expose sources of conflict

With important roles within and outside of parliament, political parties are natural partners for parliaments for reducing conflict. Parliamentary collaboration with the executive can be a particularly effective strategy in addressing crisis situations, and regional platforms, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) can also assist parliamentary efforts in CPR.



Election materials distributed in Monrovia, Liberia. Credit: UN Photo / Eric Kanalstein





Lawmakers meet during a session of Parliament in Accra, Ghana, June 16, 2006. Credit: Jonathan Ernst, World Bank

## A. Parliaments' Legislative Functions

Democratic societies can establish effective political institutions to regulate conflict in order to avoid the outbreak and escalation of violence. Parliaments are at the forefront of such institutions. Parliamentarians contribute to CPR through their everyday work of making laws, overseeing government policy and programmes, and representing constituents as outlined below:

- **Legislation** is one tool that parliamentarians can use to prevent and mitigate crisis. As representatives of the citizenry at large, parliamentarians are well placed to express their constituents' interests and needs in the law-making process.
- Generally, parliamentarians review legislation from the executive and make amendments accordingly. Rather than wait for the executive, parliamentarians can also be proactive and initiate their own **Private Members Bills**. By taking such action, parliamentarians can set the agenda, rather than merely respond to the priorities of the executive. With an 'ear to the ground',



# I. PARLIAMENTARY LAW-MAKING FOR CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

parliamentarians can identify emerging crises long before other government actors; translating that information into law is a critical conflict prevention tool.

- Parliaments do not only have to enact new laws as a way to prevent crisis. Parliamentarians can also **defend existing legislation**, the removal of which could beget instability and violence.
- The process in which laws are made can also lead to a peaceful resolution of differences. **Committee deliberations**, which usually involve a smaller number of parliamentarians and staff, can be very conducive to working through the technical details of legislation. Closed-door sessions can remove participants from the ‘political noise’ often associated with high-profile crisis-related issues. On the other hand, moving legislation to the plenary allows for a broader debate on these often-sensitive issues and an opportunity to build consensus around committee recommendations. **Plenary debate** can be an important forum to exchange ideas, express minority voices, and articulate a broad range of views.
- **Hearings** are another step in the law-making process that parliamentarians can use in addressing CPR issues. Expert testimony from security sector officials, victims of violence, representatives of civil society, and recognized experts can contribute significantly to the development of legislation. For example, in its efforts to domesticate the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), the National Commission on SALW in **Cote d’Ivoire** hosted a debate on a draft bill with key stakeholders. Parliamentarians, politicians, security and defence force officials, and civil society representatives discussed the bill and Ivorian specificities regarding the local manufacture, repair, and possession of SALW.<sup>6</sup> Parliamentarians may also choose to organize **structured dialogues** (e.g., town hall meetings) in crisis-affected constituencies to further solicit input from citizens directly impacted by conflict.
- To further assist in the law-making process, parliamentarians can turn to their own staff, particularly relevant **committee staff**, as well as the **parliamentary research department**. Staff can be critical in drafting or accessing commissioned reports, official documents, and relevant statistics and data, which are essential in preparing draft legislation.

## Developing crisis response legislation: Sierra Leone’s Domestic Violence Act

Sierra Leone’s Domestic Violence Act, passed in June 2007, marked an important milestone in the struggle to end impunity on sexual and gender-based violence. The process of developing this legislation demonstrates an open, inclusive approach to law-making. After the establishment of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights (PCHR) in 2003, the Committee consulted with women’s organizations and agreed to the inclusion of international women’s rights principles and standards into Sierra Leone’s national law. The PCHR subsequently conducted a nationwide consultation on gender issues that involved committee members and its civil society partners.

The draft bill was heard in a pre-legislative parliamentary committee, which raised awareness of the law and further strengthened it before it moved to the plenary. This process highlights the importance of seeking input from citizens and civil society groups, building broad support for draft legislation, and working collaboratively with other parliamentarians and committees.



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Through their law-making authority, parliamentarians can legislate on a wide range of conflict issues. Applying a **conflict-sensitive lens to drafting legislation** can help ensure that laws do not cause or exacerbate crisis conditions. CPR legislation in West Africa can address the following issues found throughout the region:

- Elections and political parties - electoral systems; party and candidate registration; campaign financing; reserved seats for women and minorities; boundary delineation
- Small arms and light weapons - the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons; production, proliferation and carrying of weapons; sanctions on illegally possessing weapons
- Poverty reduction - equitable distribution of resources; equal access to education and employment opportunities;
- Sexual and gender-based violence - domestication of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820; domestic violence; female genital mutilation; trafficking; sexual harassment
- Local and community-based sources of conflict - land tenure and rural land disputes; chieftain hostilities; migration and displaced populations



Members of the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) carry placards with messages of peace and non-violence during the 2011 elections in Liberia. Monrovia, Liberia Credit: UN Photo/Emmanuel Tobey



# I. PARLIAMENTARY LAW-MAKING FOR CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

In post-conflict contexts, parliaments can establish or support national bodies to advance transitional justice and reconciliation. Truth-seeking or fact-finding commissions, war crime tribunals, or committees on inheritance rights and national identity laws are cases in point. Parliaments also can play an important role in post-conflict settings in regulating security sector reform by reviewing laws on prisons and correctional facilities, police reform, and courts and customary law, among others. In reconstruction efforts, parliaments can contribute to **peace-building** by validating, legitimating, and approving peace agreements.

## Legislating Peace Agreements in West Africa

In several West African countries that have experienced civil wars in recent years, parliaments or transitional legislatures enacted laws to incorporate provisions of peace agreements necessary for the resolution of conflict. Examples include:

- The 1999 Lomé Agreement for **Sierra Leone**
- The 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the second phase of the **Liberian** civil war
- The 2000 Niger Delta Development Commission Act in **Niger**
- The 2009 Amnesty Law for militant groups in southern **Nigeria**



Liberians celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in Accra on 18 August 2003, which ended their country's 14-year civil war. Credit: UN Photo / Staton Winter

Integrating international treaties and regulations into domestic law is another important function of parliaments. The African Union has numerous **conventions, protocols and charters** that relate to crisis prevention, including:

- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems In Africa
- Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa
- Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

**ECOWAS** has also established many regional treaties, protocols, and resolutions that can serve as models for member states. Though members are bound to these protocols and resolutions, parliaments can build or expand on certain provisions according to their specific circumstances. Parliaments could



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consider the following ECOWAS documents for this purpose: the Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation, and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa; the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security; the Protocol on Non-Aggression; and the ECOWAS Initial Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons.

The **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** is a regional group of 15 West African countries. Founded on 28 May 1975, with the signing of the Treaty of Lagos, its mission is to promote economic integration across the region. Considered one of the pillars of the African Economic Community, the organization was founded in order to achieve “collective self-sufficiency” for its member states by creating a single large trading bloc through an economic and trading union. It also serves as a peacekeeping force in the region. The organization operates officially in three co-equal languages: French, English, and Portuguese. The ECOWAS consists of two institutions to implement policies: the ECOWAS Commission and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development, formerly known as the Fund for Cooperation until it was renamed in 2001.

## B. Enacting budgets supportive of crisis prevention and recovery

Parliaments have an important role to play in reviewing, amending, and approving national budgets, including on CPR issues. Parliaments can formally and informally shape the executive’s proposed funding allocations on defence, security, and other conflict-related matters. Committee review, hearing testimony, and plenary debate help ensure that sufficient and appropriate budget allocation is made for CPR issues.

Parliaments can also participate in the budget process by reviewing and monitoring government spending. In this way, parliaments can enhance transparency and accountability, particularly on CPR issues, which tend to be sensitive and often addressed behind closed doors. Parliamentary audits of the budget can ensure that the budget is executed as planned and can highlight misuse of allocated funds. Although law-making provides an important entry point for parliaments to shape crisis prevention and recovery efforts, legislation alone cannot prevent crisis or recover from conflict. For this, oversight of the implementation of law is necessary.

Gender-sensitive budgeting<sup>7</sup> is a particularly powerful tool available to parliamentarians to promote gender-sensitive legislation. Gender-sensitive budgeting advances gender equality and the fulfilment of women’s rights. Gender-sensitive budgeting not only takes women into consideration on CPR matters, but also actually promotes their role by ensuring that resources are allocated to their CPR efforts.

## C. Developing laws to address gender and violence

**Gender** is an important factor to consider in any CPR-related legislation. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to violence and this only increases during violent conflict. It is important to ensure that all parliamentary legislation, whether related to prevention, peace-building or recovery, take **gender mainstreaming**<sup>8</sup> into account, as recognized in the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. It is critical not only that women participate in drafting legislation, but also that issues affecting women, girls, boys, and men all be factored into new pieces of legislation.



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In observance of International Women's Day, participants march from the centre of Monrovia to the Temple of Justice, home of the Liberian Supreme Court, where they staged a peaceful sit-in protest against gender-based violence (08 March 2007, Monrovia, Liberia). Credit: Eric Kanalstein, UN Photo

One of the biggest obstacles in the implementation of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) legislation is that the issue is still largely seen as a 'women's issue'. To address this, parliamentarians in West Africa might consider the success of the **Rwandan parliament** on this issue. In adopting a wide-ranging bill to combat GBV, Rwandan parliamentarians framed the law in terms of 'gender' rather than of 'women'. The bill used inclusive language, which protected boys as well as girls, and appealed to male parliamentarians in their roles as husbands, sons, and fathers. As a result, the bill was co-sponsored by an equal number of men and women.

Parliaments in West Africa have been particularly active in promoting legislation to fight **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**. The list below provides a sample of such laws:

- **Benin:** Law on Sexual Harassment (2006), Repression of the Practice of Female Genital Mutilation (2003), Family Code Provisions on Early and Forced Marriage (2002)
- **Burkina Faso:** Penal Code provides for penalties against: any injury of the female genitals, forced marriage, practicing bigamy, and paying a marriage dowry (1996)
- **Cape Verde:** National Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence (2007-2009)



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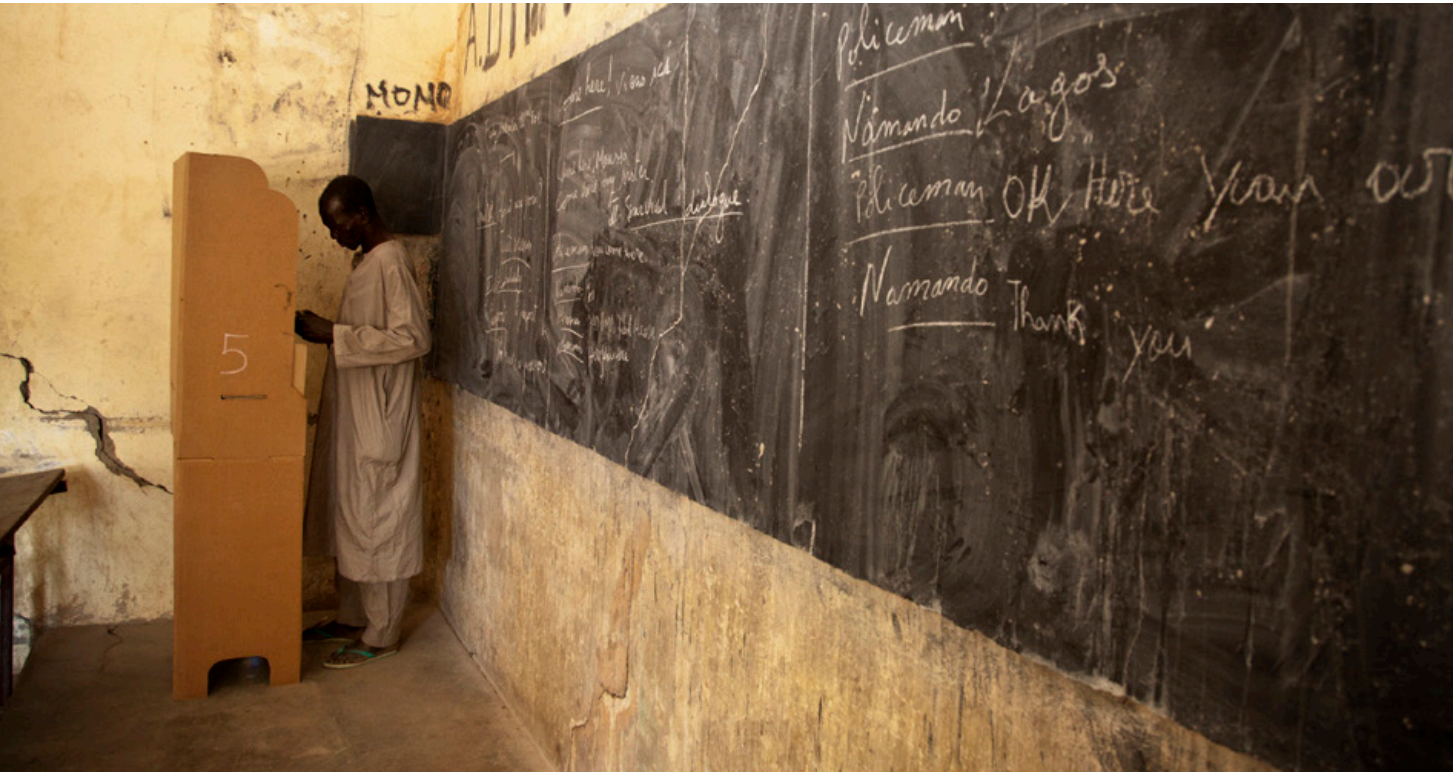
- **Ghana:** Human Trafficking Act (2005), Domestic Violence Act (2007), National Domestic Violence Policy and National Plan of Action (2009-2019), establishment of Domestic Violence Management Board and Domestic Violence Support Unit
- **Guinea Bissau:** Criminal Code includes punitive measures for perpetrators who commit crimes “against physical integrity” and against “sexual freedom” (1993)
- **Liberia:** Rape Amendment Act (2006), Anti-Trafficking Act (2005), National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action (2006-2011)
- **Mali:** Ordinance establishing a National Programme to Fight the Practice of Female Genital Mutilation (2002)
- **Nigeria:** Dehumanising and Harmful Traditional Practices Law (2003), Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law Enforcement and Administration Law (2003), Maltreatment of Widows Prohibition Laws (2004, 2005)
- **The Gambia:** National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women and Girls includes a section on Protection from Violence (2010)



Liberian citizens participate in a workshop jointly organized by the Liberia National Police and UN Police (UNPOL) on rape reporting procedures and other issues, titled “Women’s Security in the Community”, at the BWI Technical High School in Kakata, Liberia. Credit: UN Photo / Staton Winter



## II. USING PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT



A polling station in Mali's Gao region during the parliamentary elections held 24 November 2013.  
Credit: UN Photo / Marco Dormino

### A. Parliaments' Oversight Functions

Oversight of the executive's CPR efforts is a second core function of West African parliaments. A wide variety of tools and mechanisms is available to parliamentarians to conduct oversight. The key oversight activities include:

- **Fact-finding missions** - Parliamentarians can organize fact-finding missions to investigate the nature of the crisis. Site or field visits enable parliamentarians to learn first-hand about the crisis and to help inform their response. Fact-finding missions are usually informal, often *ad hoc*, and commonly focused on a particular recent incident or crisis. For minorities and marginalized populations, such visits provide an opportunity for their voices to be heard when no other venues are available to them.
- **Commissions of inquiry** - For a broader, more rigorous, and formal investigation of a crisis, parliaments can establish commissions of inquiry. Such commissions tend to employ a variety of oversight tools, including public hearings and the interpellation of ministers, and often call on parliamentarians who have certain expertise or other associations to a particular crisis. Commission reports often include recommendations for action and next steps for parliamentary engagement in addressing the particular crisis.
- **Public hearings** - Public hearings are a common mechanism for parliaments to gather information, question experts, and raise awareness about a particular crisis. For example, hearings allow parliamentarians to call on government and security sector officials to testify on the record, solicit





expert testimony from human rights organizations or women's groups, and consult community leaders on the implementation of law or government service delivery. Holding a hearing near the site of an incident allows parliamentarians to call public attention to a specific CPR issue and highlight parliament's response. Hearings can address immediate conflict-related issues, such as election-related violence, or can be called on more general topics, such as regulation of the extractive industry.

- **Interpellation**<sup>9</sup> - If parliamentary rules so allow, the right to interpellate ministers offers parliaments extensive oversight powers. Requiring ministers to testify on security- or crisis-related issues and having the authority to call for their removal helps ensure that senior government officials are held to account. Interpellation is most commonly used to evaluate the performance of senior government officials in their handling of a crisis or conflict.
- **Joint oversight initiatives** - Parliamentarians can join other government and non-government actors in various oversight efforts. Joint fact-finding missions can include parliamentarians, government representatives, and civil society leaders in the investigation of a given crisis. Collaboration can also be more formal and structured.
- **Information-gathering and dissemination** - There is often little public policy information available about CPR issues. Parliaments can address this by commissioning research on immediate or structural causes of conflict, disseminating official government documents, briefs and reports, and calling attention to relevant studies, statistics, and other data sources. Parliaments can also publicize committee reports, draft bills, and plenary debate transcripts on CPR issues.



Ivorian refugees in Butuo, Liberia. They are among thousands to have fled the post-electoral crisis across the border in their native Côte d'Ivoire.  
Credit: UN Photo / E. Tobey

### B. Parliamentary Actors in CPR Oversight

- **Parliamentarians**, in their individual capacities, are well suited to participate in oversight activities. A parliamentarian whose constituency is conflict-prone may use his/her personal, familial, tribal, or community ties to monitor and follow up on government initiatives or the implementation of conflict-sensitive legislation.
- **Parliamentary committees** can exercise enormous oversight powers. Standing committees on security and defence, peace and development, human rights, or public accounts can leverage their mandates to oversee CPR issues. In **Togo**, for example, the Defence and Security and Human Rights Committees collaborated to visit prisons and report on their findings. *Ad hoc* committees



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can also effectively conduct oversight of specific issues and usually include members of the government and opposition. Their recommendations, therefore, often enjoy cross-party support.

- **Caucuses** are yet another platform that parliamentarians can use to carry out their oversight mandate. Removed from overt political pressure and influence, multiparty caucuses can be particularly effective oversight mechanisms. Women's caucuses in West Africa have been especially effective in their advocacy efforts to raise awareness around sexual and gender-based violence and in the domestication of international gender conventions.

### Women's Parliamentary Caucuses in West Africa

Women's parliamentary caucuses in West Africa have been effective in supporting CPR oversight. In **Togo**, **Sierra Leone**, and **Guinea**, for example, caucuses and networks advocate for, and monitor the implementation of, gender-sensitive legislation. The **Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Sierra Leone** led an independent investigation into an incident of political violence (the alleged rape of women in Kono district) and submitted its findings to the vice president. The Caucus also took part in the annual 'Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence' and set aside a day for consultation with other parliamentarians on GBV. **The Women's Caucus in Ghana** recently supported various awareness-raising activities on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) with the goal of using GRB as a future oversight tool.

- **Parliamentary staff** are an often overlooked but critical component of conducting oversight for CPR. Committee staff can develop CPR expertise and serve as parliaments' institutional memory. Parliamentary research staff are particularly well positioned to support oversight activities: they can be commissioned to draft reports, gather official documents, collect comparative materials, and reach out to relevant CSOs. Specialized staff can also review budgets, analyse spending trends, and assist relevant committees to monitor government expenditures on the security sector and CPR issues.

### C. CPR Oversight in West Africa

Parliamentarians can exercise oversight of a wide range of CPR issues in West Africa. Many of these issues—such as violence related to elections, gender, and land disputes—have already been highlighted in this paper. In addition to these pressing issues, parliaments in West Africa can provide oversight of the following common CPR issues:<sup>10</sup>

- **Regulating small arms and light weapons (SALW)** - There is wide international recognition of the inadequacy of policies, laws, and oversight mechanisms for regulating the flow and possession of SALW, particularly concerning how to curb the risks of illegal transfers. Though all governments in West Africa have policies and legal frameworks on SALW control, many of these frameworks are outdated and thus increasingly ill-matched for today's threats.
- **Overseeing security sector spending** - Security sector spending is highly unregulated in many countries in West Africa. In **Ghana**, **Nigeria**, and **Sierra Leone**, arms and defence procurement contracts are not subject to the law on public contracting, which limits oversight only to internal checks and creates room for collusion. There has also been a tendency in parts of West Africa to divert budgetary allocations for civilian sectors to arms and defence equipment procurement in order to wage war.





The Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (ADDR) begins demobilization processing on a site at Anyama, outside Abidjan. Ex-combatants line up to turn in their weapons, receive demobilization cards and begin reintegration. Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire Credit: UN Photo / Basile Zoma

- **Regulating privatized security** - The proliferation of non-state security actors—e.g., mercenaries, private military companies, and private security companies—has escaped adequate oversight measures in many West African countries. Many private military and security companies recruit former military personnel and ex-policemen, who serve in conflict settings without effective regulation, monitoring, or oversight and end up challenging the government's monopoly on the use of force.
- **Regulating detention centres** - Prison inmates are completely under the control of security personnel. This arrangement makes prisoners particularly vulnerable to human rights abuse. In West Africa, cases of torture and mistreatment in prisons and detention centres are common. Oversight is critical to uncover cases of mistreatment and prevent further abuse.
- **Role of women in the security sector** - Parliamentarians can play a pivotal role in promoting and protecting the role of women in the security sector. They can do so by ensuring increased female recruitment, retention, and advancement; eliminating sexual harassment, discrimination, and other human rights violations; and monitoring gender-mainstreaming in security sector institutions.



## II. USING PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

### Mobilizing Resources for Local CPR Initiatives

Armed violence in **Ghana** tends to be largely a result of chieftaincy and land disputes. Though parliament's constitutional mandate on CPR is limited, parliamentarians have still found ways to address the threat of armed violence. Given the high incidence of armed robberies in his constituency, one enterprising parliamentarian identified community security as a priority. He personally mobilized resources to establish a police station in his district as well as sponsor new police posts. He also levied funds to start police patrols and community watchdog groups and to undertake basic infrastructure projects to improve community safety, such as clearing bushy areas and providing additional streetlights.



Women police officers working in the Salem Police Station in Monrovia, Liberia Credit: UN Photo / Marcus Bleasdale/VII





Residents of Samatiguila, a town in the Ivorian region of Dengué, participate in the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)'s information campaign for a peaceful electoral environment, dubbed "UNOCI Days". Samatiguila, Côte d'Ivoire Credit: UN Photo / UN Photo/Basile Zoma

Parliamentarians have a critical role to play in carrying out **constituency outreach and promoting dialogue for peace**. Not only can parliaments mediate internal disputes, they can also use their 'good offices' to mediate external CPR issues. In these roles, parliaments provide minorities and marginalized groups – themselves often embroiled in crisis – a voice in the peaceful resolution of conflict.

Parliament is a natural place for **mediation**, where competing points of view can be articulated and where dialogue can build consensus. In many respects, mediation is at the heart of parliaments' work: building agreement through compromise. By promoting inclusive and open debate (in plenary or committee) on CPR issues, parliaments are inherently venues for dialogue. By serving as a forum for discussion, parliaments can keep opposing groups engaged in a non-violent process to resolve disputes.

Parliaments facilitate **dialogue, debate, and constructive engagement** among parliamentary parties. By providing space to air grievances, particularly for disadvantaged and minority parties, parliaments can become important pressure-release valves in conflict settings. Though parties in West Africa (and elsewhere) have often inflamed or aggravated crisis, parties have the power, if channelled effectively, to contain conflict as well.



### III. PARLIAMENTARIANS AS MEDIATORS

#### Parliaments as Institutions of Mediation

**Niger's** National Consultative Council demonstrates the role that transitional representative bodies can play in facilitating dialogue among competing parties. With representation of all Nigerien political parties, the Council has become a venue where the voices, interests, and concerns of all socio-economic and political actors are expressed, discussed, and debated, particularly within the framework of national reconciliation and peace-building.

Parliament in **South Africa** during the period of *apartheid* passed laws aimed at repressing and excluding a majority of South Africans from having a voice in political life. The current parliament, established in 1994, marks a dramatic change in approach: one based on integration, national unity and cohesion, and social justice and equity. From an institution that exacerbated social tension and conflict, the new parliament transformed itself to become the symbol of a united, democratic South Africa. This transformation is all the more remarkable, given the fact that it was the result of negotiations between the very parties that were once at war with one another.

Parliaments can play a direct role in mediating conflict in the broader political sphere. Using its 'good offices', parliaments can leverage their institutional credibility and legitimacy to address CPR issues:

- As elected or appointed representatives, parliamentarians can engage their constituents directly in crisis prevention and recovery efforts. They can do so through a variety of **outreach activities**, such as establishing constituent offices, traveling to vulnerable constituencies, sponsoring inter-community dialogue, or organizing town hall meetings on CPR.
- Legitimately elected or appointed parliaments are a reflection of a population's diversity and can ensure **fair representation of vulnerable groups**. Parliamentarians can also give voice to, and serve as a mouthpiece of, these groups in national dialogues on security-related issues. In this way, the aspirations of marginalized groups, including women and minorities, can be expressed and concerns can be addressed. Parliamentarians can also engage communities in their constituencies to prevent an escalation of local crisis.



Women in Côte d'Ivoire celebrate International Women's Day. Credit: UN Photo / Ky Chung





- **Leveraging their authority and personal networks**, parliamentarians are well positioned to use resources to help address constituents' CPR needs. Parliamentarians may also be positioned to establish or use community-development funds to address local grievances—such as land disputes—that can become violent. Having a say in the distribution of development funds can also ensure that minorities and other marginalized groups are not discriminated against, thus eliminating a common source of conflict.

#### Parliamentary Mediation in Guinea Bissau

In **Guinea Bissau**, parliament's mediation efforts in the aftermath of President Vieira's assassination in 2009 helped the country avoid a constitutional crisis. The constitution and the electoral law provided different timeframes for holding emergency presidential elections. A prolonged constitutional crisis in a violence-prone country like Guinea Bissau could well have led to a military intervention or a more serious political crisis. It took negotiations between the interim speaker of parliament, the prime minister, and the two main parties represented in parliament to agree to a 120-day period for the holding of the election.



A woman signs a document certifying her vote in Côte d'Ivoire's legislative elections, at a polling station in Bondoukou. Credit: UN Photo / Hien Macline



## IV. ENGAGING PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERS ON CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY



Representatives of civil society in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Credit: UN Photo / Eskinder Debebe

Law-making, oversight, and representation offer parliaments many ways to engage in CPR. To amplify and magnify those CPR efforts, parliaments can collaborate with a variety of partners, including: CSOs and the media, political parties, the executive, and national parliaments in the region.

### A. Civil Society Organizations

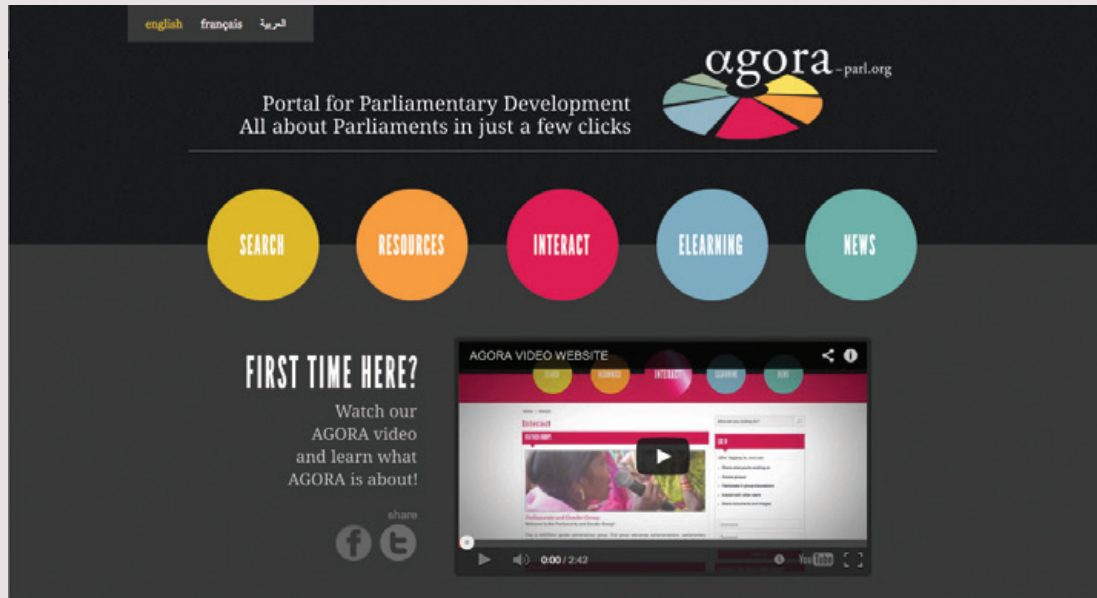
- Broadly defined, CSOs in this context include citizen groups, community-based organizations, traditional bodies and religious groups, unions, associations, research institutions, and the media, among others.
- CSOs can be valuable partners for parliaments on CPR issues. As advocates, CSOs can aggregate and articulate policy options and their relevant merits. CSOs are also excellent sources of information for providing parliaments expertise on particular CPR issues and as forums for exchanging and sharing lessons, standards, and good practice (see box below on AGORA).



## IV. ENGAGING PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERS ON CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY



### AGORA: Sharing Parliamentary Experiences on CPR in West Africa



AGORA ([www.agora-parl.org](http://www.agora-parl.org)), a web portal for knowledge sharing on parliamentary development, brings together parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, donors, practitioners, academics, civil society, and the media. The portal seeks to consolidate knowledge, expertise, and lessons learned as well as to facilitate active collaboration among the worldwide parliamentary development community of practice. AGORA's Trusted Area, a private platform for members of the global community of practice, offers e-discussions, a blog, a newsfeed, and much more.

AGORA also features a 'Parliaments and Crisis Prevention in West Africa' group, where members can blog, post queries, share their experiences on CPR issues, and connect with other West African parliamentarians and parliamentary staff.

- CSOs can also mobilize critical human and material resources to complement parliaments' CPR efforts. CSOs can strengthen and intensify parliaments' oversight role as watchdog organizations, whistle-blowers, and gatekeepers, ensuring accountability and transparency in crisis-related issues.
- With strong cultural and historic links to their communities, traditional and customary bodies are particularly well placed to articulate the interests of marginalized or conflict-affected groups. Given their role in mediating local disputes, traditional and customary bodies are similarly excellent entry points for parliamentarians trying to engage on particular local conflicts.



## IV. ENGAGING PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERS ON CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

### B. Engage with CSOs

- Parliaments and CSOs can establish partnerships on CPR initiatives. In such cases, they can collaborate on CPR efforts, including, for example, joint fact-finding missions, co-sponsoring oversight hearings, or working together on draft legislation.
  - In Sierra Leone, collaborative work on CPR issues between parliament and CSOs has been very fruitful: CSOs have even financed and facilitated numerous parliamentary field visits, providing parliamentarians with exposure to segments of the population they would not otherwise have a chance to meet.
- Parliaments and CSOs can also join forces on mediation efforts.
  - In Guinea Bissau, The Goodwill Commission composed of parliamentarians, CSO representatives, and religious leaders, tried to broker peace between the government and the rebels. The Goodwill Commission facilitated a dialogue between the president and the armed forces chief of staff and acted as a liaison with ECOWAS and diplomatic representatives of selected European countries. These efforts contributed to resolving the power struggle and to paving the way for the 1999 and 2000 legislative and presidential elections.
- Parliaments and CSOs can also work together to organize public dialogue and awareness on CPR.
  - In Guinea Bissau, parliamentarians are involved in the National Reconciliation Dialogue, a process that brings together various stakeholders from government, opposition parties, and civil society in a constructive and inclusive dialogue on national unity, stability, and peace.
  - In Nigeria, and with encouragement from parliament, CSOs played a key role in the public awareness and advocacy campaign to stop President Obasanjo's ambitions for a third term in 2006. In particular, the National Civil Society Coalition Against Third Term Agenda (NACATT) was pivotal in sensitizing the general public about the plan. They did this through a series of publications, public seminars, and debates.
- Parliaments can also benefit directly from CSO expertise and experience in CPR. Research institutes and think tanks, for example, can help develop the capacities of parliamentarians and staff on CPR issues. Through commissioned research, committee briefings, and other platforms for information-sharing, CSOs can strengthen parliaments' knowledge and skills for crisis prevention and recovery.



## IV. ENGAGING PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERS ON CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY



### Parliaments' Collaboration with WANEP

The West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is a regional network of community-based organizations devoted to peace and conflict prevention. WANEP has worked successfully with national and regional parliaments to further CPR efforts. At the national level, WANEP engaged in a peace-building process with the **Ghanaian** parliament to help resolve the inter-communal conflict in Bawku (area of the Upper East Region). Parliamentarians' personal and financial support for the Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee facilitated dialogue between opposition leaders of the community who, as a result, committed themselves to promoting peaceful co-existence, placing emphasis on 'commonalities' that unite the people instead of the insignificant differences dividing them.



At the regional level, under the auspices of the Rapid Response Initiative, WANEP and members of the ECOWAS Parliament (**Côte D'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone**) successfully supported stakeholders in **Guinea** in the process of a peaceful transition to end the political stalemate. Regional engagement moved to country-level consultations and campaigns for peace and democracy in Guinea. The collaboration between WANEP and the ECOWAS Parliament produced a set of recommendations that influenced the Ouagadougou Joint Declaration establishing the road map for peace and a return to constitutional order in Guinea.

### C. Working with the Media

The media can also be a valuable partner in supporting parliaments' CPR efforts. It can:

- Report on parliamentary efforts to prevent conflict
- Inform the public regarding existing or emerging crisis
- Launch independent investigations on security-related issues

Among other functions, the media can publish:

- Minutes of non-confidential parliamentary committee meetings on security issues
- Press releases on important parliamentary debates, decisions, motions, and laws concerning CPR
- Information on how individual parliamentarians or political factions in parliament vote on CPR issues (such as the budget)
- Security-related legislation (including freedom of information laws) and bills before parliament
- Documents of strategic importance, such as regional and national security policies



## IV. ENGAGING PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERS ON CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

### D. Promoting Peace through Political Parties

Political parties can play a crucial role as agents of stability in West Africa. Functioning within and outside of parliament, parties are well positioned to engage in and collaborate with parliaments on crisis prevention and recovery efforts. Often representing opposing sides of a conflict, parties can engage in dialogue, mediation, and dispute resolution. Parties in parliament can work through committee debate, plenary discussion, or multiparty caucuses. Outside of parliament, parties can serve many of the same functions as civil society, further amplifying parliaments' efforts on CPR.

In West Africa, where election-related violence is prevalent, parties can play a constructive role in **preventing and mitigating violence** at the polls. Working with parliamentarians, election management bodies, and other stakeholders, parties can advocate for electoral reform, including, for example, consensual rules and processes for candidate/party eligibility. Parties can also promote the electoral exercise as a long-term, constructive process, not a 'zero-sum game' in which the winner takes all.

#### Ghana's 2008 Presidential Election: Parties Calling for Peace

Ghana's two major political parties—the incumbent New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the former ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) party—played a key role in ensuring a peaceful transfer of power following the 2008 presidential election. The outgoing NPP wanted to contest the results of the run-off election and even filed a motion with the Accra Fast Track High Court to stop the Electoral Commission from announcing the final tally.

Though the leadership of the two main parties engaged in occasional alarmism and brinkmanship, the parties eventually restrained themselves in favour of a peaceful transfer of power. Outgoing president John Kufuor released a press statement encouraging the parties to accept the results declared by the Commission and indicated his willingness to meet the constitutional requirement of handing over power by the specified date. Further, when the Commission announced the victory of the NDC candidate for president, the NPP acknowledged the result and publicly conceded defeat the same day.

To build confidence in the electoral process, parties can recruit, train, and deploy party agents to polling sites. Where provisions for party agents do not already exist, parties can work with and through their parliamentarians to establish the appropriate legal framework. Inter-party dialogue is another way in which parties can collaborate with parliaments on election-related crisis prevention. In **Niger**, for example, the National Council for Political Dialogue (CNPd) offers an institutional mechanism for all party dialogue, including on CPR issues, such as election-related violence.

In post-conflict settings, parties and parliaments can work together on **constitutional framework issues**, including multiparty dialogue and cross-partisan collaboration on electoral and constitutional reform. Engaging subnational and local party units can also help ensure that the interests and needs of all citizens, especially excluded or vulnerable groups, are heard and addressed peacefully.





In most countries in **West Africa** (and, more broadly, around the world), there is a significant imbalance of power between the executive and parliament; when it comes to security and conflict, in particular, the executive enjoys a dominant role in its control of the country's security forces, the national budget, and access to classified information. For meaningful engagement in CPR, parliaments must establish constructive relationships with their respective executive branches. For this reason, governing parties in parliament should engage the opposition and provide them the opportunity to participate in CPR efforts.

### E. National Parliamentary Collaboration in West Africa

Parliaments in West Africa have a great deal to gain from working together on CPR. As experience has already demonstrated, regional collaboration can help parliaments address common threats, including, for example, the proliferation of small arms, human trafficking, or drug smuggling. Many domestic crises also have the potential to spill over and affect neighbouring countries, especially in regards to refugee migration and displaced persons. Establishing a foundation of trust and cooperation in times of peace can help manage crises if they ever arise.

**National parliaments** can cooperate on a variety of activities. Joint fact-finding missions, reciprocal field visits, and regional and international conferences and workshops offer national parliaments many opportunities to share experiences, develop CPR capacities, and identify and enact South-South solutions to common threats. Donor-supported regional workshops and seminars are another platform to bolster parliamentary cooperation. Through virtual platforms—e.g., AGORA's 'Parliaments and Crisis Prevention in West Africa' group<sup>11</sup>—parliaments can come together to share lessons learned, provide each other expertise, and collectively develop good practice on how to engage on CPR.

These exchanges can be formalized by establishing parliamentary networks on CPR, which further encourage peer learning. Such networks are already in place, for example, for parliamentary defence and security committees to improve their expertise in conducting oversight. This network also provides an open space for discussion between parliamentarians and defence and security forces. It also provides opportunities for political dialogue on regional security policy and threats.

Regional exchanges and cooperation among national parliaments also facilitates the integration of regional and international conventions and treaties into national law. A number of activities have recently taken place to assist parliaments to transpose SALW conventions into national law. These platforms also allow for structured dialogues on the harmonization of laws, including on those linked to reducing armed violence domestically and regionally.



## IV. ENGAGING PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERS ON CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

### Parliaments' Collaboration with WAANSA

The West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) was created to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapon in the West African region. WAANSA has worked successfully with national and regional parliaments to further CPR efforts. WAANSA has been a strategic partner of the ECOWAS Parliament's Peace and Security Commission and contributed to the drafting of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW, the ratification of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms (WAANSA delegates visited ECOWAS member states and carried out lobbying and campaigning activities), and the promotion of an Arms Trade Treaty.

At the national level, WAANSA has focused on ensuring the effective implementation of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW. WAANSA has recently begun to support national parliaments to establish parliamentary networks on SALW. To date, WAANSA has successfully achieved this in **Burkina Faso** and **Sierra Leone**.



The pyre of light weapons ready to be set alight. Côte d'Ivoire. Credit: UN Photo / Basile Zoma





Sierra Leoneans take to the polls in Freetown to vote in the third presidential and parliamentary elections since the end of civil war in 2002. Credit: UN Photo / UNIPSIL

ECOWAS and its affiliated institutions and programmes comprise the most robust regional partners on CPR for national parliaments in West Africa. The Mechanism for Conflict, Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security and the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) serve as a “reference for the ECOWAS system and Member States in their efforts to strengthen human security in the region.”<sup>12</sup>

The ECOWAS Parliament can play a critical role in contributing to CPR in West Africa. ECOWAS can employ quiet diplomacy, fact-finding missions, and investigatory measures (especially through the Standing Committee on Political Affairs, Peace and Security) to bring together conflicting parties, build confidence, and make independent recommendations aimed at resolving the root causes of conflict. The Parliament has played an effective role in CPR by:

- Establishing joint committees to monitor intelligence/security issues
- Harmonizing security laws in the subregion, such as drug trafficking and banning small arms and light weapons
- Launching the ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians Association (ECOFEP) to further promote gender equality and combat gender-based violence



## V. REGIONAL CRISIS PREVENTION MECHANISMS

- Promoting good governance
- Establishing a framework to monitor porous borders
- Sharing information on immigration
- Building capacity on intelligence-gathering
- Providing direct support to national parliaments to monitor and prevent crisis before they occur or escalate

Though there is no formal support mechanism in place for the Parliament on mediation, the ECOWAS Parliament has found ways—primarily through **parliamentary diplomacy**—to play such a role on crisis issues. The parliament also serves as a venue for dialogue and interaction with national parliaments on CPR issues. The presentation of country reports, which takes place at each ordinary session of parliament, provides an opportunity for the plenary to assess and debate political developments and security incidents in individual countries.

The Parliament's mandate also entitles it to consider and make recommendations on any matter concerning the Community, including issues related to human rights and fundamental freedoms, peace, and security, among other matters.

A host of civil society networks associated with ECOWAS also offer national parliaments important partnerships on CPR. Perhaps the best known of these networks is the **ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN)**. The ECOWARN mechanism uses pre-defined indicators to analyse risks and rapidly detect security trends. ECOWARN also develops and shares incident and situation reports, daily highlights, country profiles, policy briefs, and monthly and quarterly reports to help inform stakeholders on emerging crisis.

Recognizing the important contribution that citizen organizations can make to regional crisis prevention mechanisms, ECOWAS has adopted a relatively open and inclusive approach to civil society. In 2003, the **West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF)** was established as a structured platform to bring together civil society, ECOWAS, and member states. Through WACSOF, CSOs can provide strategic input into ECOWAS's decision-making processes. Civil society groups have also been working with ECOWAS to implement the multiple regional protocols and instruments, including the ECPF.





Experience from across West Africa provides important lessons for parliaments' contributions to peace and stability. Based on the country-specific examples provided throughout this paper, broader lessons can be drawn to inform good practice on parliamentary engagement in crisis prevention and recovery. Further, the lessons presented below offer parliaments guidance on strengthening their role in this critical area.

### A. Preparing for Parliament to Engage with CPR issues

- **Conduct a Multiparty Self-Assessment on CPR** - As a first step to engaging in CPR issues, parliaments should assess their own capacities to contribute to crisis prevention and recovery. Not only can a self-assessment exercise help parliaments identify the specific functions and areas that most need attention, but an assessment can also ensure ownership of, and political will for, reform. Engaging all major parties in the self-assessment is critical to ensuring legitimacy and credibility to the process and to providing parties an opportunity to work together constructively toward a single common purpose. A self-assessment should evaluate parliaments' primary functions, staff capacity, parliamentary structures, and partnerships with regard to CPR. Please see Annex 1 for further information.
- **Build Political Support for CPR** - By engaging a broad section of parliamentary actors, parliamentarians can effectively build political support for CPR. Key steps in the process may include: consulting with relevant committee chairs; securing multiparty sponsorship; building coalitions with high-profile parliamentarians; building gender-balanced coalitions to ensure that the perspectives of women are included; securing support from the leadership to introduce conflict-related initiatives into parliaments' agenda; and seeking support and financial backing from the speaker and his/her deputies to advance conflict-related initiatives.

### B. Developing Parliamentary Capacity for CPR Engagement

- **Integrate a CPR Lens into Strategic Planning for Capacity Development** - Strategic plans for parliamentary development are a critical tool for guiding successful internal capacity-building. A strategic plan for parliamentary development that incorporates a CPR lens should articulate parliament's mandate, authority, and desire to address crisis matters. The plan should propose areas of capacity development for parliamentarians and staff and detail proposed changes to parliamentary structures and procedures to enable more effective engagement on CPR issues. The plan should outline areas and types of required technical, material, or financial assistance. Consulting broadly with minority groups, opposition parties, women parliamentarians, and other vulnerable factions can promote ownership and transparency in the planning process. Soliciting input from parliament's leadership, the governing and opposition parties can set the tone for a multiparty, non-partisan approach to capacity development.
- **Design a 'Whole-of-Parliament' Approach to Capacity Development** - By developing a whole-of-parliament approach to capacity development, parliaments can ensure a holistic strengthening of CPR-related competencies. Strengthening parliamentarian and staff capacities to effectively conduct the day-to-day operations of parliament is a first step to improving the institution of parliament. Investing in basic capacity development on such topics as parliamentary rules of procedure, public hearings, and the national budget can help establish a base upon which further CPR expertise can be built. Introducing gender-mainstreaming, including capacity development for gender-responsive budgeting, can further strengthen parliaments' overall contribution to CPR.



## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Build Knowledge, Skills, and Expertise on CPR** - Crisis prevention and recovery require a sophisticated level of expertise that many parliamentarians and staff may not have. Building CPR expertise in parliaments' research departments and legal drafting units (often the same entity) can help ensure that a conflict-sensitive lens is applied to all legislation and that parliamentarians have access to reliable and updated information on CPR issues. Specialized training—such as on gender-sensitive budgeting—can be provided to research staff and, if resources are available, entire units can be established for these specialized areas.
- **Strengthen Parliamentary Structures and Procedures for CPR** - In taking a whole-of-parliament approach, parliaments can establish new, or strengthen existing, structures to bolster their CPR competencies. Parliaments can establish specialized committees on peace, conflict prevention, or mediation, for example, to enable them to marshal the resources, time, and focus for CPR issues. Parliaments' rules of procedure can be designed to create an environment of cooperation and conciliation for parliamentarians handling sensitive CPR issues. Voting rules can be designed to offer incentives for compromise and reward negotiation on conflict-sensitive issues. Rules can also help ensure that parliamentary debates remain non-inflammatory and can help avoid exacerbating tensions within the chamber. Rules that call for inclusivity and transparency can also mitigate tensions between opposing factions, such as government and opposition parties, and ethnic majority and minority groups.

### C. Supporting Parliamentary Outreach for CPR Engagement

- **Engage Parliamentary Partners** - Civil society is a rich source of information on CPR to draw from. CSOs can be invited to brief committees, testify in hearings, and submit research on conflict-related matters. Given the common threats throughout West Africa, other parliaments in the subregion are also an excellent source of information and expertise. Drawing on model legislation, fact-finding missions, and mediation efforts, parliamentarians and staff can draw on the experiences of their colleagues from the sub-region.
- **Engage Regional CPR Platforms** - Parliaments can engage and learn from regional CPR mechanisms, most notably the ECOWAS Parliament. West Africa has active networks in crisis prevention and recovery, all of which can benefit national parliaments' CPR efforts. Forging closer relationships with these national and regional actors not only serves to develop capacity, but also increases access to information, development of good practice, and awareness of cross-border security threats. Collaborating with international partners is another effective strategy for parliaments to further engage in crisis prevention and recovery (see details in Section E in the Resources and Further Reading Section below).

# ANNEX I: SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL ON THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN ADDRESSING CRISIS/CONFLICT



While engagement in crisis prevention and recovery will differ from country to country, the following checklist summarizes some of the key entry points available to parliaments. The checklist provides parliamentarians an easy guide to assess existing CPR efforts and to determine what else can be done to expand their role in CPR.

## Parliament and Crisis: Past Experience

### *Law-Making*

	Response
Title of bills initiated to address conflict	
Title of bills amended to address conflict	
Title of bills passed to address conflict	
Please describe the purpose and nature of the legislation indicated above:	





## ANNEX I: SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL ON THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN ADDRESSING CRISIS/CONFLICT

### *Oversight*

	Response
Number and topic of plenary debates held to address conflict/crisis	
Number and topic of committee debates held to consider resolutions and bills on conflict/crisis	
Number and topic of consultations held to address conflict/crisis	
Number and topic of hearings held to address conflict/crisis	
Number and topic of oversight investigations to address conflict/crisis	
Types of parliamentary committees established to address conflict/crisis <sup>13</sup>	
Types of oversight bodies established to address conflict/crisis <sup>14</sup>	
Number and type of oral and written questions posed on conflict/crisis	

# ANNEX I: SELF-ASSESSMENT ON TOOL THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN ADDRESSING CRISIS/CONFLICT



Please describe the results of the hearings/investigations indicated above:

Please describe the success/challenges met by the oversight bodies/committees indicated above:

## *Representativeness*

	Response
How does parliament conduct constituency outreach to conflict-/crisis-affected groups? <sup>15</sup>	
How does parliament define conflict-affected groups? <sup>16</sup>	
Types of conflict-related national strategies <sup>17</sup> parliament has participated in	
Number and topic of plenary debates held to address conflict	
Number of trips per session that MPs visit constituencies	
Number and topic of committee debates held to address conflict	



# ANNEX I: SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL ON THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN ADDRESSING CRISIS/CONFLICT

	Response
Number and type of interventions from experts, CSOs and citizens to a committee	
Please describe the successes/challenges to outreach activities indicated above:	
Please describe parliament's relationship to the executive in developing conflict-related national strategies	



# ANNEX I: SELF-ASSESSMENT ON TOOL THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN ADDRESSING CRISIS/CONFLICT



## *The Institution of Parliament*

### **What types of parliamentary structures address conflict?**

- ☐ Standing committees. Please specify:
- ☐ *Ad hoc* committees. Please specify:
- ☐ Research unit. Please specify:
- ☐ Budget unit. Please specify:
- ☐ Media/communications office. Please specify:
- ☐ Other. Please specify:

### **How do parliament's internal rules of procedure alleviate/exacerbate the potential for conflict?**

- ☐ Voting rules. Please specify:
- ☐ Committee meetings/hearing. Please specify:
- ☐ Role of the opposition. Please specify:
- ☐ Role of party caucuses. Please specify:
- ☐ Other. Please specify:

### **To what extent and how has parliament engaged civil society in conflict issues?**

- ☐ Research/publications. Please specify:
- ☐ Expert testimony. Please specify:
- ☐ Hearings. Please specify:
- ☐ Investigations. Please specify:
- ☐ Media. Please specify:
- ☐ Other. Please specify:

### **To what extent and how have political party caucuses played a role in conflict issues?**

- ☐ Promoting cross-party dialogue. Please specify:
- ☐ Sponsoring cross-party legislation. Please specify:
- ☐ Conducting cross-party hearings. Please specify:
- ☐ Other. Please specify:

### **How has parliament engaged other parliaments (regional or international) on conflict issues?**



## ANNEX I: SELF-ASSESSMENT ON TOOL THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN ADDRESSING CRISIS/CONFLICT

☐ Parliamentary forums. Please specify topic:

☐ Conferences. Please specify topic:

☐ Study tours. Please specify topic:

☐ Other. Please specify topic:

### **Parliament and Conflict: A Look Ahead**

*(To be completed by MPs and staff)*

**Please briefly describe the issues that may provoke conflict or armed violence that you want to address:**

**Please briefly describe the root causes of the issues that may provoke conflict or armed violence:**

**Please briefly describe why you believe parliament can successfully address the conflict or armed violence:**

## ANNEX I: SELF-ASSESSMENT ON TOOL THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN ADDRESSING CRISIS/CONFLICT



**Please briefly describe whether you believe parliament (individual members, committees, caucuses) has the will to address the conflict or armed violence:**

**Please briefly describe what you believe parliament can do to address the conflict or armed violence:**

*Legislation:*

*Oversight:*

*Representation:*

*Other:*





## ANNEX I: SELF-ASSESSMENT ON TOOL THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN ADDRESSING CRISIS/CONFLICT

**Please briefly describe the role, if any, that party caucuses can play in addressing the conflict or armed violence:**

**Please briefly describe the challenges to parliament in playing the aforementioned role:**

**Please briefly describe the role that you anticipate the executive will play in affecting parliament's capacity to address issues that may provoke conflict or armed violence:**



**Please briefly outline how the UNDP/partners can support parliament's efforts to address the conflict or armed violence:**

*Capacity development (members, staff, committees):*

*Structures/procedures:*

*Parliamentary caucuses:*

*Civil society:*

*Regional/international parliaments:*

*Other:*



## RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

### A. Case Study Reports and Relevant Documents

- "Parliaments As Peace-Building Institutions: Responding to the Challenges of Gender-Based Violence in West Africa." UNDP, 2010
- "Political Violence in West Africa: A Critical Analysis of the Role of Parliamentarians and Political Parties." UNDP, 2010
- "Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery Mechanisms in West Africa: Regional and National Parliaments Employing Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management Techniques." UNDP 2010
- "Political Parties and Parliamentary Groups in Post-Crisis and State Building Environments in West Africa: Recommendations for a Way Forward." UNDP Parliamentary Working Group, 2010
- "Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery: Guidelines for the International Community." UNDP, 2006
- "Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: ECOWAS Parliament-DCAF Guide for West African Parliamentarians." The Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2010
- "Towards Strengthening the Role of Parliaments in Crisis Prevention and Recovery in West Africa." UNDP Regional Seminar Report, 2010
- "UNDP Regional Parliamentary Working Group Report: Barcelona Workshop." UNDP, 2010

### B. Regional Treaties, Protocols and Conventions

- Treaty of ECOWAS, 1993
- ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), 2008
- ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, 2006
- ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, 1999
- ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, 2001
- ECOWAS Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation, and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa, 1998
- ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression, 1978
- ECOWAS Resolution Relating to the Enhancement of the Community Parliament, 2002
- ECOWAS Initial Plan of Action against Trafficking In Persons, 2001
- Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development
- Decision A/Dec.11/12/2000 Adopting A Control Strategy On HIV/Aids In West Africa the Authority Of The Heads Of State And Government, 2000
- Decision Dec.12/12/2000 Adopting The Sub-Regional Action Plan For Integrated Management Of Water Resources, 2000





## C. Regional Crisis Prevention Mechanisms

- Pursuant to Chapter IV of the 1999 protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security, a sub-regional peace and security observation system known as the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) has been established
- ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme (ECOSAP)
- Election Monitoring Declarations
- ECOWAS Standby Force
- ECOWAS Gender Development Centre

## D. Africa-wide Protocols, Treaties and Conventions

- Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament
- Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems In Africa
- Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa
- Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism
- Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union

## E. UN Agencies and Other Development Partners

Numerous international organizations active in West Africa provide targeted, tailored assistance to parliaments on CPR. Parliamentarians should consider reaching out to these organizations as they draft their capacity development strategic plans.

- **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):** Supports the capacity development of national parliaments to prevent conflict and armed violence by raising awareness of the role parliaments can play in CPR, promoting regional parliamentary networks on CPR, and coordinating global (AGORA), subregional and national assistance programmes.
- **The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC):** Supports effective parliamentary oversight of the security sector, greater involvement of parliamentarians in small arms control, and the ratification and integration of regional and international conventions regarding small arms and light weapons into national law.



## RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- **The Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF):** Builds the capacity of West African parliaments in oversight of the security sector and in post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building.
- **Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES):** Empowers parliaments to play a role in the formulation and implementation of security policy and in the democratic control of the security sector.
- **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU):** Promotes crisis prevention and recovery through protecting human security and building strong and representative parliaments and a conducive national environment for the rule of law.



## Endnotes

1. The Mauritania–Senegal Border War between 1989–1991
2. These occurred in September 2003 and April 2012 in Guinea-Bissau, in February 2005 in Togo, in December 2008 in Guinea, in December 2009 and February 2010 in Niger, and in March 2012 in Mali.
3. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Conflict Prevention Framework
4. UNDP Report: *Governance for Peace, Strengthening the Social Contract*
5. The West Africa sub-region includes the 15 ECOWAS countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.
6. <http://www.fes.de/afrika/content/web/veranstaltungen.html?set=652>
7. Gender-Sensitive Budgeting (GSB) is budgeting that integrates a gender perspective and tracks how budgets respond to gender equality commitments and targets. Assessing budgets through a gender lens requires thinking about finances in a new way. Because project implementation is largely determined by the source of funding, budgets can either promote gender equality or exacerbate inequalities.
8. Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but rather a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities: policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and the planning, implementation, and monitoring of programmes and projects.
9. **Interpellation** is the formal right of a parliament to submit formal questions to the government.
10. Drawn from the ECOWAS Parliament-DCAF Guide for West African Parliamentarians
11. <http://www.agora-parl.org/strengthenparliamentinwestafrica>
12. <http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/10-4.pdf>
13. For example, committees on: public accounts, standing security/defence, ad hoc oversight, transitional justice, etc.
14. For example: anti-corruption commissions, truth-seeking or fact-finding commissions, war crime tribunals, commissions on reparations, etc.
15. For example: constituency offices, constituency visits, mail, phone, other mechanisms
16. For example: women, children, minorities, etc.
17. For example: Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), national security strategies, etc.





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