



PRESS RELEASE

UNOWAS and ECOWAS reinforce cooperation to empower women peacebuilders in the region

Accra, 17 May 2019- The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in partnership with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC), the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC), organized a Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop at the KAIPTC in Accra on 13-17 May 2019.

The Deputy Commandant of the KAIPTC, Brigadier General Irvine Nii-Ayitey Aryeetey, opened the closing ceremony, Distinguished guests included: Mrs. Freda Prempeh, Ghana Honorable Deputy Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection; Mr. Pingrenoma Zagre, Ambassador of Burkina Faso to Ghana; Mr. Ron Strikker, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Ghana. Representatives of the diplomatic missions of Mali and Canada also attended.

The workshop forms part of a strong commitment of ECOWAS and UNOWAS to further empower women peacebuilders in West Africa and the Sahel.

Over 30 participants representing eleven countries in the region were trained in conflict analysis, mediation and gender dimensions of conflict, mainly drawn from the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework and UNOWAS' Conflict Analysis Handbook.

During the training, participants were equipped with the skills needed to train women stakeholders in conflict analysis and prevention in their own countries and communities.

To maximize the impact of such efforts, ECOWAS and UNOWAS agreed to strengthen linkages between regional, national and local peace initiatives by capitalizing on existing institutional structures, including ECOWAS early warning and special representatives' offices and the regional Working Group on women, youth, peace and security.

"Today there is a positive momentum in West Africa in terms of the awareness of promoting women leadership and participation in peacemaking. Without women's inclusion, peace is not sustainable. We need to redouble our efforts to support capacity-building and skills training for women. UNOWAS is committed to working with ECOWAS to achieve this important objective," said the UN Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, at the closing ceremony.

On her part, the ECOWAS representative Mrs. Onyinye Onwuka, Head of the Political Affairs and International Cooperation Division, emphasized that "the regional Training of Trainers Workshop coincides with the 10th anniversary of the ground-breaking ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) of which Women, Peace and Security is one of the fifteen components." She further noted that "it is crucial to encourage an integrated approach among international, regional and national actors to accentuate women's capacities for conflict analysis and prevention."

ECOWAS and UNOWAS remain determined to cement their partnership to empower women peacebuilders in the region with the support of other partners.

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