

2nd Thematic Exchange Session 2018

Theme: "The youth, victims of political manipulations: Which strategies to overcome the challenges?"

The Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel (WGWYPS-WAS)

Set up on April 29, 2009, in Dakar (Senegal), the WGWYPS-WAS is a regional platform for the exchange, coordination and harmonization of the actions of civil society organizations, United Nations agencies and other actors for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and subsequent on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel.

The WGWYPS-WAS focuses on the sharing of experience, analysis and participatory evaluation of the sub-region's initiatives and efforts for women's participation in peace processes.

The coordination of the WGWYPS-WAS is assured by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the United Nations Entity for Gender.

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Participants:

WGWYPS-WAS members based in Dakar, Senegal on video-conference with WGWYPS-WAS country representatives in: **Benin, Burkina, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinee, Guinee Bissau, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Tchad**

Date: 3rd May 2018

A. PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Batchassi L. Regis, *President of the National Youth Council*

Definitions

By definition, manipulation refers to the use of diverted ways to get an individual or a group to do what one wants. In the political context, this is the action taken by political actors to mobilize young people for political ends on the basis of methods in contradiction with to citizens' and democratic values and principles.

Within the process of manipulation, two types of actors can be noted, namely a manipulator (the political parties) and the manipulated (the youth) and along the way, methods are used which are diverted from the law.

Manipulators essentially aim power, while the manipulated are mainly victims who aspire to an ideal and to the change of their living conditions.

The diverted ways are intoxication, indoctrination, conscience buying, servitude, influence peddling, injustice, corruption etc...

This could be demonstrated through various examples throughout the world and particularly in African countries.

The Youth, a potential for Africa

Considered as the active age group of a population, the youth constitute a potential for development and a vulnerable target exposed to all forms of ills that could create a sprain within States.

In this regard, reflections and strategies are needed to guide the transformation of youth into the capture of demographic dividend.

It is possible to reinforce its resilience to the various challenges it is exposed to such as unemployment, poverty, lack of civism and especially manipulations of political nature, extremism, etc ...

The political manipulation of young people is a profound question that raises the debate on their participation and political commitment as well as

the links between this participation and democratic principles.

In 2011, the Arab Spring was essentially the work of young people leading to the fall of the regimes in power, as it has recently been the case in The Gambia, Kenya, Guinee and Togo. This shows the paradigm shifts which can happen when the youth exert their strength.

Causes and Manifestations of youth political manipulations

Several causes can be noted, including the vulnerability of young people driven by unemployment and precariousness; ignorance of civic values, texts and principles of political governance; the weak political commitment of young people as well as the lack of training, their acceptance of promises and their impatience in reaching their goals through their quest for an ideal.

The phenomenon of manipulation is reflected in calls for civil disobedience, popular revolt and failure to respect the rule of law. Young people are often mobilized in the currents of demonstrations and violence from which they unfortunately are the principal victims.

During clashes between protesters and law enforcement forces, material damage, loss of lives and wounded people are often noted.

The paradox is oftentimes the absence of organizers and movement leaders during these events.

The youth's political participation is relatively low despite their strong presence in political events where they are mostly observers or activists in the field, rarely neither staff members of political parties nor active stakeholders in political decisions making. Their lack of experience therefore justifies their near absence in decision-making bodies.

Their ignorance of the rules governing the state makes them subject to disobedience and disrespect of public goods. The role of young people in politics remains limited to the use and exercise of



the right to vote. The ambition to conquer the militants, the non-respect of the rules of the democratic game and the rule of law, the absence or the refusal of dialogue, the lack or insufficiency of the skills added to the absence of adequate programs geared towards political training are elements that exacerbate the situation.

Consequences of political manipulations

These manipulations have various ramifications of which the (relative) regression of democracy and economic lag, as well as the loss of lives caused by the constant resort to revolt. The stagnation of the youth, through laziness and ease, their incivility along with insecurity, conflicts and the various threats to peace, as well as their low political commitment contribute to their weak involvement in decision-making bodies. In light of these many consequences, the phenomenon of manipulation represents a major challenge both for young people and political actors.

Strategies to overcome these challenges

The use of peaceful methods, the promotion of dialogue, the frequent organization of elections must govern political life.

The resilience of young people to political manipulation must be reinforced by strategies developed by all actors such as government, CSOs, political parties and young people themselves. It is about working for the training of activists by political parties on citizenship and political commitment; promoting socio-occupational integration and youth employment policies; conducting sensitization and training on citizenship ; fostering youth participation in governance through their involvement in decision-making processes; facilitating the ownership and implementation of UNSC Resolution 2250 on youth participation in peace and security.

The youth needs to assert itself more responsibly in politics while considering that the answer to the manipulation could be the lessons learnt from, that manipulation.

It is also important to cultivate the spirit of awakening, alertness and discernment to be aware the thoughts generated around oneself and detect those that negatively influence them in order to contribute to the strengthening of democracy, good governance and the growth of our communities.

Mrs Nafissatou WADE, Senegalese political actor

The mastery of the political arena, a strong way to meet the challenges of youth manipulation

According to Mrs Nafissatou Wade, Senegalese political actor, in order to overcome the challenges of the youth's political manipulation, it is essential that they master it means to do politics and eradicate all forms of "political politics", by not only focusing on generational alternation to just replace the elders but talk about alternation as a vision to change practices. In addition, their command of the role they must play in politics is strategic for the achievement of sustainable development.

For that, they should work to have a better education gauged by strong general knowledge and autonomy. This to be able to have a personal vision and a responsible attitude to believe in themselves and take their destiny in hand. They should avoid considering politics as a means of social climbing and work to get other young people to cope with any attempts of being manipulated.

Finally, it is important that they get inspired by successful models (eg, the caucus women's cloth of the oath who swore and signed on a white loin-cloth to no longer be the object of political manipulation, to have exemplary behavior and Ethics in Politics) because, as stated by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Youth is hope, not danger,(2015)."



B. COUNTRY INTERVENTIONS

Benin

Concerned with the training of the youth who do not necessarily understand the ideology of political parties. The Youth's political manipulation takes on an international dimension. The idleness of young people and their lack of work lead them to illegal immigration and being sold in countries such as Libya; hence a greater sense of responsibility. In addition, youth are absent as participatory members and rely on followers to mobilize their peers in elections. Added to that is a bad conception of the policy designed to make money.

Burkina

The manipulation comes from the frustrations of individuals who do not necessarily fully trust the youth. The promotion of young people is not favored as well as the policy of legacy by the elders. The appointment of young girls should also be taken into account, especially in the strategic positions of political parties and even within committees. Moreover, political manipulation may be due to the multiplicity of existing political parties. Although the youth lose the relay, they do not miss the hand. Manipulations can block the career of manipulated young people, hence the importance of finding advocacy mechanisms.

Cote d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire advocated for increased responsibility of young people and their citizenship awareness, which also requires the definition of moral values. It is also very important to promote the representativeness of young people in decision-making bodies, encourage youth entrepreneurship, lead a deeper fight against corruption and work towards greater self-confidence. Finally, proceed to the revision of the education system to ensure its improvement.

The Gambia

Gambia was concerned with the initiatives taken by Togo's National Youth Council to contribute to maintaining peace in their country.

Guinee

The problem related to youth manipulation can be attributed to the weakness of the education system, the weak encouragement of youth initiatives, the diversion of funds destined for youth initiatives, the overestimation of foreign diplomas to the detriment of national ones, the lack of prioritization of youth training and the fact that young people are poorly knowledgeable of their cultures and customs.

Guinea Bissau

Following the civil war and the rise in the cost of living, the manipulation of young people carried a strong dimension with community and religious leaders prone to this practice. Raising awareness of young people to the phenomenon is very important. Guinea Bissau is still sensitive to the translation of presentations in Portuguese.

Mali

The organization of peaceful, free and transparent elections is very important in african States and requires the elaboration as well as the ratification of a charter of good character by the candidates. The change of mentality and behavior is a priority to get around this problem. Mali invites reflection on the concept that the future belongs to the youth while questioning the time set for that future to be reached.



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Documents and useful links.

The video shootage of this session can be watched on the group's Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/pages/Groupe-femmes-paix-et-securite-1325

Nigeria

The problematic of the manipulation of young people raises the question of basic education received by the youth through their family; hence the need to question the role of family and the community.

Senegal

The question is profound and requires the participation of young women and men in development processes.

Togo

To advance the process of youth participation in political life, Togo adhered to the various proposals concerning education, training for citizenship, citizen control. The fight against all forms of violence against women must be supported as the consequences of gender-based violence contribute to inferiority complexes for women and even more so for girls who should be encouraged to in the management of public life, particularly in politics. Moreover it is important to develop the culture of daring in young girls. It would therefore be necessary to proceed to an analysis of the relationship between the youth and the elderly in African cultures and social networks. Admittedly, associations are often a place where the paternalism that is developed does not always encourage the emergence of political ambitions.

Chad

Youth is seen as a workforce for political actors who ultimately are not included in the decision-making process. Moreover, the weak absorption capacity of the youth by the private sector leads to their frequent involvement in actions where they often do not have enough room to work for an effective and positive contribution.

Recommendations

1. Create Employment and financing Policies for Youth;
2. Integrate citizenship education into school Curricula;
3. Conduct awareness raising campaigns through debates and cultural activities and place them at the heart of development programs;
4. Find strong and relevant advocacy mechanisms;

5. Elaborate and then ratify a charter of good character to the candidates during the Elections;
6. Proceed to the revision of the education system;
7. Develop the culture of daring in young girls;
8. Develop the mentoring system by connecting elders and the youth;
9. Leverage education, citizenship training, citizen control and other important values and , integrate citizenship education in curricula;
10. Fight against all forms of violence against women and girls in order to enable them to develop their self-esteem which would further encourage them to apply for positions in decision-making.

Next Sessions

Dates

Topic 3: An inclusive approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding: UN Directive and best practices	20th June
Topic 4: Representation of women and gender in the media:	30th August
Topic 5: "Capturing Demographic Dividend: a major determinant of peace and security through women and youth in West and Central Africa"	18 October
Topic 6: Mechanisms of coordination of National Action Plans for UNSCR 1325: Case of Mali	5th December