



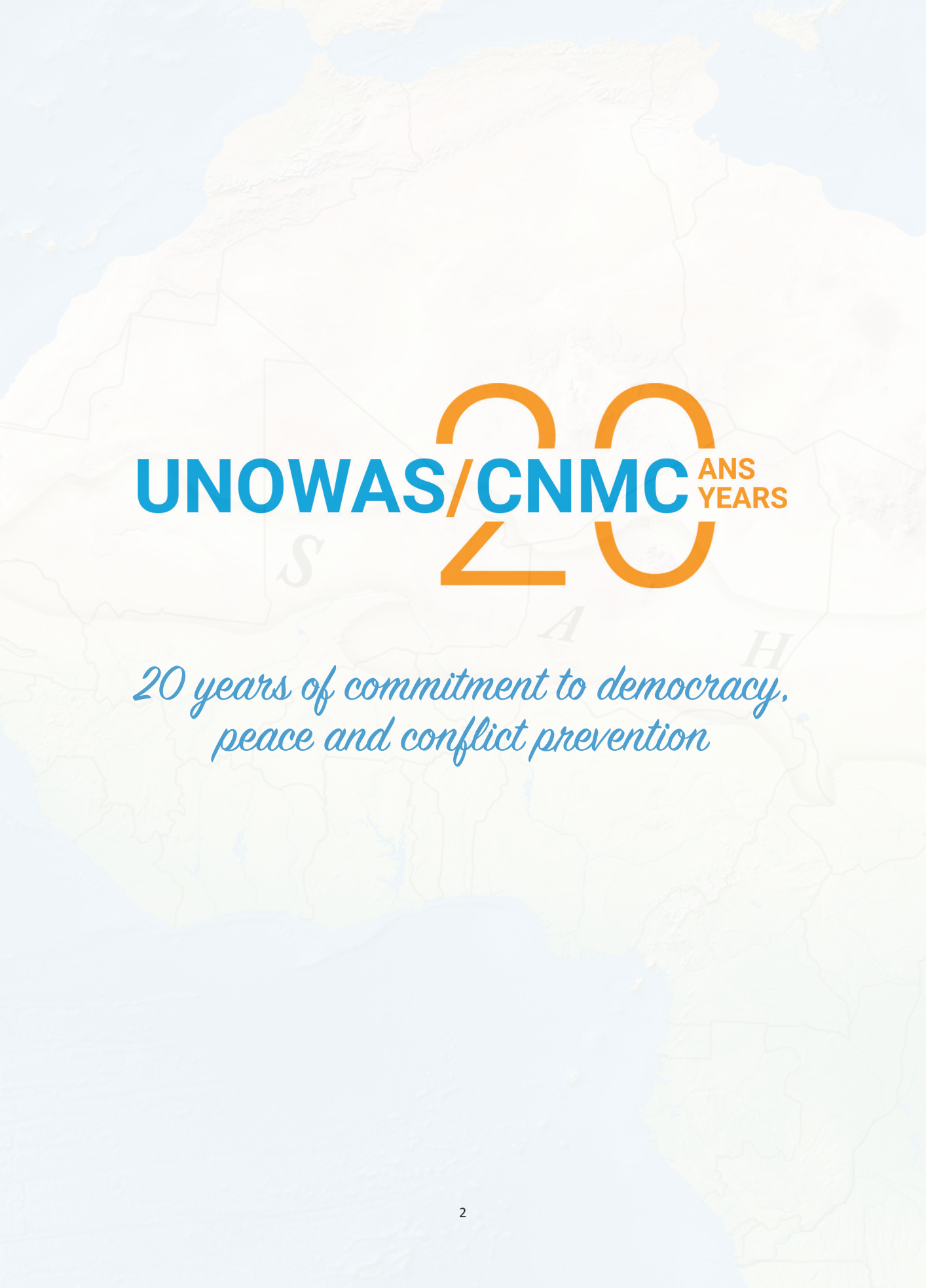
# UNOWAS Magazine

*Together for Peace*

Quarterly Magazine of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel



## Regional Conference on climate change, peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel



# UNOWAS/CNMC **20** ANS YEARS

*20 years of commitment to democracy,  
peace and conflict prevention*



# In this issue



**EDITORIAL : UNOWAS and the CNMC, 20 years of commitment to democracy, peace and conflict prevention**



**UNOWAS news in brief**



**UNOWAS addresses the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel**



**When water becomes a luxury for rural populations; a new gold rush in Agadez**



**Interview - Louise Aubin, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Niger**



**UNOWAS and ECOWAS call for a return to constitutional order in Guinea and Burkina Faso**



**UNOWAS and UNOCA strengthen their collaboration**



**The annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security launches a Call to Action for better participation in decision-making bodies**



**Mahamat Saleh ANNADIF**

Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)

## UNOWAS and the CNMC, 20 years of commitment to democracy, peace and conflict prevention

The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), and the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC) are 20 years old!

Twenty years ago, thanks to the commitment of former UN Secretary-General, the late Kofi Annan, and with the support of the UN Security Council, the Regional Special Political Mission covering West Africa was born.

Known by the acronym UNOWA: United Nations Office for West Africa, it was inaugurated in September 2002 in Dakar, Senegal, where it continues to enjoy the support of the host government.

Two decades later, UNOWA, now UNOWAS, following the merger with the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel (OSES), continues with determination and commitment the mission entrusted to it by the UN Security Council: help prevent conflicts and support the consolidation

of democracy and peace in West Africa and the Sahel.



**Through the implementation of its mandate, UNOWAS has become a major actor and a committed partner alongside countries in their efforts to consolidate democracy, peace and development.**

Over the past two decades, UNOWA/UNOWAS has built a privileged relationship with the sixteen countries and partners of the sub-region. Through the implementation of its mandate,

UNOWAS has become a major actor and a committed partner alongside countries in their efforts to consolidate democracy, peace and development. It is also a privileged witness to the changes and upheavals that West Africa has experienced and continues to experience.

On the occasion of this 20th anniversary, I think of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, the late Kofi Annan, as well as my illustrious predecessors, namely: Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, the late General Lamine Cisse, Said Djinnit and Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

This anniversary also coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC), created in November 2002, to follow up on the implementation of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling of 10 October 2002 on the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria.



Chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Africa and the Sahel, the CNMC works tirelessly since its establishment for the consolidation of peace and the strengthening of fraternal ties between Cameroon and Nigeria.



**the CNMC works tirelessly since its establishment for the consolidation of peace and the strengthening of fraternal ties between Cameroon and Nigeria.**

To date, the CNMC has succeeded in demarcating close to 2050 km of an estimated 2100 km border. I hope that the 34th session of the CNMC to be held in Abuja

next August, will be an opportunity for the two neighboring and brotherly countries to reach a compromise on the last points of disagreement, which would give a historical posture to this anniversary.

In the face of these multiple and pernicious challenges, I remain even more determined to continue the work through UNOWAS, in coordination with countries and partners, to contribute to peace consolidation and prosperity in West Africa and the Sahel.

This year, we intend to celebrate this 20th anniversary with our national, regional and international partners and in the presence of my predecessors whose names are now inseparable from the major and diverse contributions of this office to peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel.

#### Also in this issue

[UNOWAS addresses the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel](#)

[When water becomes a luxury for rural populations; a new gold rush in Agadez](#)

[Interview Louise Aubin, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Niger](#)

[UNOWAS and ECOWAS call for a return to constitutional order in Guinea and Burkina Faso](#)

[UNOWAS and UNOCA strengthen their collaboration](#)

[The annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security launches a Call to Action for better participation in decision-making bodies](#)

## UNOWAS, fostering peace and preventing conflicts in West Africa and the Sahel

We work in with our regional partners towards peace and security

We support countries in the promotion and protection of human rights

We contribute to the effective participation of women and youth in peacemaking and conflict prevention efforts

We support the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel

We facilitate the implementation of the International Court of Justice ruling on the boundary dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria

We support countries in their efforts to address multiple challenges related to peace

The United Nations office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), a regional special political Mission of the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).

### Special representative ANNADIF's Visit to Sierra Leone



The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mahamat Saleh Annadif carried out, from 31 March to 1 April 2022, a mission to Sierra Leone. He met with the President of the Republic Julius Maada Bio, the former President and leader of the main opposition party All People's Congress (APC), Ernest Bai Koroma, members of the diplomatic corps and the United Nations country team. The objective of the mission was to pursue discussions with the authorities and the main opposition party and to foster an inclusive dialogue in the run-up to the June 2023 general elections.

### Updating the Manual of Good Practices for Resolving Conflicts between farmers and herders in West Africa



UNOWAS and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) organized on 10 and 11 March 2022, in Saly, a seminar for the finalization of the manual of good practices for the resolution of conflicts between farmers and herders in West Africa. For two days, participants in this technical meeting reviewed the manual which was recommended in April 2018 by the ECOWAS Ministerial Meeting. With the contribution of experts from the ECOWAS Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, the ECOWAS Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, CILSS, UNOWAS and the Dakar-based UN specialized agencies, the document has been finalized and is currently being submitted to the approval of UNOWAS and ECOWAS leadership.

### UNOWAS and ECOWAS agree on joint activities for 2022



UNOWAS and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held a meeting on 7 and 8 March 2022 in Dakar in which they assessed the status of implementation of the 2021 Joint Work Plan, identify priority areas and define joint activities for 2022. They agreed, inter alia, to develop a mapping of security sector reform initiatives in the sub-region, and to hold an annual high-level political forum on organized crime. As part of their partnership, UNOWAS and ECOWAS have developed a mechanism allowing them to meet regularly to discuss their collaboration on issues relating to peace and security, and good governance in the ECOWAS area.

### United Nations strengthens coordination to better assist Mano River Union states



The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO) and the United Nations Resident Coordinators of the Member States of the Mano River Union (MRU), held on 10 March 2022, at UNOWAS Headquarters, a meeting on common challenges to peace, security and sustainable development in the Mano River sub-region. Participants shared information, analysis and views on various topics including drug trafficking, organized crime, illegal exploitation of resources, increasing ethnicization of politics, instrumentalization of the justice system and the use of hate speech in the media. They pledged to strengthen their coordination in order to better assist MRU States in addressing significant threats to regional peace and security.



# 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT UNOWAS

-  UNOWAS, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, was established in 2002 as a regional special political mission that reports to the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and Peacebuilding (DPPA).
-  UNOWAS is chaired by Mr. Mahamat Saleh ANNADIF, Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for West Africa and the Sahel and Head of UNOWAS, and by Ms. Giovannie BIHA, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General.
-  UNOWAS is mandated by the Security Council to act for the resolution of crises and conflicts through an active role in preventive diplomacy, good offices, and political mediation in the countries of West Africa and the Sahel.
-  UNOWAS covers 16 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo-Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone. Togo and (Chad).
-  UNOWAS works in close collaboration with other United Nations entities and regional and international partners such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Mano River Union, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Gulf of Guinea Commission, the Group of Five for the Sahel and the African Union, to promote an integrated approach to the prevention of conflicts and regional challenges.
-  UNOWAS supports the countries of the sub-region in their efforts to consolidate good governance, respect for legality and human rights, and the integration of gender in conflict prevention and management initiatives.
-  UNOWAS supports sub-regional institutions and States to build their capacities to face cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security in the sub-region. It also contributes to the analysis and assessment of the impact of climate change on security and stability in the sub-region.
-  UNOWAS participates in the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) to support the countries of the Sahel region in their fight against security threats, development challenges and management of the effects of climate change, and the promotion of sustainable development.
-  Mr. Mahamat Saleh ANNADIF is also the President of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CMCN), created to facilitate the implementation of the judgment rendered in 2002 by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria.
-  The mandate of the (CMCN) includes support for land border demarcation and maritime border delimitation; facilitating the withdrawal from the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the transfer of authority to the Republic of Cameroon; responding to the needs of the populations affected by the demarcation.

# UNOWAS addresses the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel



Panelists at the Regional Conference on Climate Change, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel

*In response to the UN Security Council's request to address the impact of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel, UNOWAS has launched a series of initiatives, including the regional conference on climate change, peace and security held in Dakar on April 6 and 7.*

Climate change has become a global concern that requires urgent mobilization and responses as harmful consequences are inexorably increasing and threatening the peace and security of millions of people. West Africa and the Sahel are especially vulnerable in this regard given the speed of climate change in this region and the limited capacity of governments to mitigate it.

Increasingly concerned about this issue, in January 2020 the

Security Council requested UNOWAS to “take into consideration the adverse consequences of climate change, energy insecurity, environmental change and natural disasters, among other factors, including by assisting the governments of the region and the United Nations system in undertaking assessments of risk management strategies related to these factors.”

Indeed, in recent years West Africa and the Sahel have experi-

enced unprecedented climate shocks. Heat waves, droughts, dust storms and floods have become more frequent and rainfall more erratic affecting a region where 60 to 70 percent of the population depends on rain-fed agriculture and livestock for survival. According to the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), agricultural yields in the Sahel could decrease by as much as 50 percent by 2050, causing a large migration to coastal areas.





Participants at the Regional Conference on Climate Change, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel



## Climate change has become a global concern that requires urgent mobilization and responses

Recurring tensions and conflicts between farmers, herders, fishermen, forest workers, miners and other groups over access to scarce natural resources is a worrisome trend in this context. Climate change has exacerbated an already complex situation of poverty, instability, population displacement, and weak resource governance, and has made people's lives even more difficult in places already affected by insecurity and extreme climate change, especially where

terrorist groups harbor and manipulate local rivalries over natural resources, stirring inter-communal dissent.

### **Regional approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding**

Populations across West Africa and the Sahel have adapted to adverse climatic conditions by strengthening traditional practices and resilience, or by migrating or relocating. At the national level, ECOWAS members have committed to the Paris Agreement through their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Many of them are also working on finalizing National Climate Change Adaptation Plans (NAPs). Multiple regional climate action initiatives also exist, including the Great Green Wall, a pan-African initiative launched in 2007 to restore an 8,000 km stretch of degraded landscape that spans the Sahel.

To address the impact of climate change on peace and security, as per its mandate, UNOWAS has engaged in a major collaborative effort with the UN system, ECOWAS, government agencies, and civil society organizations. Significant initiatives have been undertaken in this regard such as the creation of an ECOWAS-UNOWAS Working Group on Climate Change and Security; the establishment of a UN Regional Working Group on Climate Change, Security, Environment and Development (UN-CCESD), in collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM); the deployment of climate security risk assessments in collaboration with the UN system, ECOWAS, government agencies and the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security- in five pilot



Participants at the Regional Conference on Climate Change, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel

countries in the region: Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. In 2022-2023, UNOWAS and ECOWAS plan to conduct additional risk assessments in the remaining ECOWAS member states.

These efforts are indispensable and reflect the importance of integrated approaches across government sectors and thematic expertise, and among actors at local, national, regional and international levels to tackle the adverse implications of climate change on the sub-region.

#### A Call to Action

In the same spirit, UNOWAS, together with Ireland, the Republic of Ghana and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in collaboration with ECOWAS Member States and the United Nations system, organized a Regional Conference on Climate Change, Peace and Security

in West Africa and the Sahel on 6-7 April 2022 in Dakar.



**These efforts are indispensable and reflect the importance of integrated approaches to tackle the adverse implications of climate change on the sub-region.**

The objective of the Regional Conference, the first of its kind organized by UNOWAS, was to concretely define the adverse consequences of climate change, energy insecurity, environmental change and natural disasters on human security in

West Africa and the Sahel; to take stock of current efforts at the local, national and regional levels to address climate security risks; and to identify options for strengthening current responses to climate security risks from a conflict prevention and peace-building perspective.

About one hundred participants, including researchers, experts, civil society and government representatives from countries in the sub-region, the United Nations system, as well as regional and international partners, attended the conference.

Through different sessions, participants addressed a series of issues and themes related to the impact of climate change on peace and security at the local, national, and regional levels. They stressed the need to take urgent and concrete measures to promote inclusive, evidence-based analysis and policy-





Panelists at the Regional Conference on Climate Change, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel

making, to strengthen integrated partnerships and collaboration and to scale up climate finance for sustaining peace.



**They stressed the need to take urgent and concrete measures to promote inclusive, evidence-based analysis and policymaking, to strengthen integrated partnerships and collaboration and to scale up climate finance for sustaining peace.**

The partners present at this conference, Mr. Amadou Lamine GUISSÉ, Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Senegal; Mr. Kenneth THOMPSON, Special Envoy for Ireland for Francophone Africa and the

Sahel; Ambassador Kwabena Osei DANQUAH, Special Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of Ghana; General Francis A. BEHANZIN, ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; Ms. Inger ANDERSEN, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), who delivered a video message; and Mr. Mahamat Saleh ANNADIF, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, all stressed the importance of acting together to better support the efforts of the countries of the sub-region in the face of a challenge that knows no geographical boundaries.

The Regional Conference on Climate Change, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel concluded its work with a Call to Action addressed to the governments of the sub-region, regional and international organizations, the United Nations system, and various partners.

UNOWAS with its partners, and the participants unanimously

expressed their support for the Call to Action, and committed to continue their efforts to help the countries of West Africa and the Sahel to address the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security.

#### **Also in this issue**

[EDITORIAL : UNOWAS and the CNMC, 20 years of commitment to democracy, peace and conflict prevention](#)

[When water becomes a luxury for rural populations; a new gold rush in Agadez](#)

[Interview Louise Aubin, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Niger](#)

[UNOWAS and ECOWAS call for a return to constitutional order in Guinea and Burkina Faso](#)

[UNOWAS and UNOCA strengthen their collaboration](#)

[The annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security launches a Call to Action for better participation in decision-making bodies](#)

# Call to Action



## Regional Conference on climate change, peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel,

We, the representatives of countries in West Africa and the Sahel and participants in the Regional Conference on Climate Change, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel, organized jointly by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Ireland, the Republic of Ghana and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in collaboration with ECOWAS' Member States and the United Nations System, in Dakar, Senegal, from 6 to 7 of April 2022;

Having examined the adverse implications of climate change on the maintenance of peace and security in the region, including the impact of rising temperatures, the increasing frequency and intensity of droughts and floods, desertification, biodiversity loss, and sea level rise on populations who rely mainly on rain-fed agriculture and livestock for subsistence;

And considering the risks associated with growing competition over diminishing water and land, including conflicts between farmers and herders, in a context of volatile insecurity,

marked by migration and forced displacement, recruitment into armed groups, demographic pressure, lack of economic opportunities, and limited resource governance.

### **Inclusive, evidence-based analysis and policymaking**

**1. CALL** on the United Nations system, including UNOWAS in coordination with UN Country Teams, the Climate Security Mechanism (CSM) and ECOWAS to continue working with regional and national partners supporting governments in the region to conduct climate security risk assessments and to implement risk management strategies addressing the adverse effects of climate change, energy poverty, environmental degradation and natural hazards on peace and security, to build capacity, to document good practices, and to promote integrated approaches that foster synergies between climate action and sustaining peace, such as agro-silvo pastoral systems.

**2. CALL** governments of the region to take effective measures to embed human mobility, conflict prevention, resolution,

peacebuilding and disaster risk reduction and management into National Determined Contributions, National Climate Change Adaptation Plans and other relevant policies, plans and frameworks to strengthen resilience, ensuring the inclusion and meaningful participation of women, adolescents, youth, migrants, civil society organizations, local policy-makers, vulnerable groups whose voices and participation are essential for effective national policy development, with due consideration to local contexts.

**3. CALL** on regional and sub-regional organizations, Governments of West Africa and the Sahel, the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector to ensure that analysis and policymaking targeting climate-related security risks build on evidence, including on community knowledge and cultures, perceptions, practices, and involve communities themselves at all levels.

### **Integrated partnerships and collaboration**

**4. CALL** regional and sub-regional organizations, Governments of West Afri-



ca and the Sahel, the United Nations system, multi-lateral development banks and climate finance institutions, civil society and the private sector to help strengthen collaboration and broaden partnerships at all levels; harmonize policies, financial mechanisms, instruments, strategies and action plans; and effectively combine political and technical expertise with a view to reducing vulnerabilities and inequalities and enhancing the resilience of States and communities, especially those most affected by climate-related security risks.

**5. CALL** that regional and sub-regional organizations, Governments of West Africa and the Sahel, the United Nations system, multi-lateral development banks and climate finance institutions, civil society and the private sector ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, youth, migrants, and vulnerable groups in all efforts to address climate-related security risks and leverage their capacity to act as agents of positive change and sources of innovative solutions using approaches that enhance resilience and social cohesion.

**6. CALL** on the United Nations system, including the UN Security Council, to promote integrated approaches to address climate-related security risks

in West Africa and the Sahel, including by strengthening the Regional United Nations Working Group on Climate Change, Security, Environment and Development in West Africa (UN-CCSED), the UN Regional Network on Migration, the Resilience and Energy Working Group of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and by supporting the activities of the Climate Security Mechanism (CSM) in the sub-region.

#### **Climate finance for sustaining peace**

**7. CALL** development partners to scale up climate finance in line with commitments made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 2015 Paris Agreement to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation, as reiterated at the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) in Glasgow.

**8. CALL** on multilateral development banks, development agencies and climate finance institutions to improve access to climate finance to communities at the frontlines of climate change, including those living in conflict-affected or fragile contexts, to strengthen the design, implementation and monitoring of risk management mechanisms, and to ensure they are both conflict- and gender sensitive..

**9. CALL** on Governments of West Africa and the Sahel to ensure a fair and balanced distribution of climate finance especially to scale-up Nature-Based Solutions, including women- and youth-led initiatives and programs, taking into account human mobility considerations, and to harness the co-benefits of climate action and peace-building, including through strategies that prioritize women's economic empowerment, income-generating activities for youth; and the socio-economic integration of migrants and groups experiencing vulnerability and marginalization.

#### **Monitoring of the implementation of the Call to Action**

**10. CALL** on the Secretariat of the UN Working Group on Climate Change, Security, Environment and Development in West Africa and the Sahel (UN-CCSED) to lead the monitoring and implementation of this Call to Action in collaboration with the United Nations system, including the Climate Security Mechanism (CSM), and together with ECOWAS and other partners, including during COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022

**Done in Dakar on 7 April 2022**



Women fetching water. Photo: IOM

## When water becomes a luxury for rural populations; a new gold rush in Agadez

“Fifteen kilometers was the travel distance to a neighboring village to fetch water. During the dry season, we would have to travel 30 kilometers. Women and children spent most of their day in search of water. This was our daily struggle to get drinking water,” says Adoum Alhousseini, Chief of the pastoral village of Tagaza, in the commune of Tchirozérine, 120 kilometers north of the city of Agadez in Niger.

Located in the heart of the Sahara, the region of Agadez in

northern Niger is the largest in the country, covering more than 667,000 square kilometers. According to a recent World Bank report, temperatures in the Sahel are rising 1.5 times faster than in the rest of the world, in Niger, temperatures are predicted to rise by three to six degrees by 2100.

Rural populations are the most affected by climate change and land degradation. In Agadez, an already arid area, water has become a luxury for many com-

munities in its rural parts. A new study by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Niger identifies Agadez as where water resources are drying up the fastest as a result of climate change. In the isolated village of Tagaza, access to basic public services, including drinking water, is minimal.

“Our groundwater is very deep, situated under a layer of rock, which makes this water almost impossible to access,” says Alhousseini.

In Tagaza, two boreholes were used to supply safe water to the village and neighboring communities, including their livestock. However, the water points ceased to function over time due to repeated breakdowns. They were forced to look for water in neighboring villages.

“We didn’t have enough money to drill a new borehole, so we had to travel dozens of kilometers on donkeys to fetch water, sometimes only to discover dried-up wells,” adds Alhousseini.

In addition to the long distance, the communities were drawing water that was not clean and drinkable.

“It took us on average three hours to reach a well, and this once every couple of days. The water was dirty, and my children would get sick so often that they missed many days at school,”

said Tata Ibrahim, a woman from the community.

Competition over water has almost led to conflicts between communities and livestock owners in Tagaza. The IOM study also shows that in the Agadez region, the lack of access to drinking water is a major source of conflict.

### **Avoid conflicts**

“As the Chief of the village, I often had to intervene to avoid an escalation into conflict. There were always small clashes between the villagers, especially with the herders who fed their cattle. During the dry season (March through May), the livestock died because of the lack of water, and the production of cow or camel milk decreased considerably. These are huge losses for our communities,” adds Alhousseini.

To make it through the dry season, communities prioritized the use of water for the purpose of drinking, neglecting other uses of water.

“People in the village even lacked personal hygiene. We didn’t have enough water to give our children to drink, so how could we use it to shower?” says Moumouna.

In January 2022, upon request from communities via the Mayor of Tchirozerine, IOM, through its community stabilization programme in Agadez, rehabilitated the boreholes of Tagaza. Today, 29 villages of the commune of Tchirozérine fetch water from these boreholes, representing over 8,000 people in total.

When asked how communities feel about the renovation of the boreholes, Alhousseini replies, “It’s like a disabled person who



The boreholes' tank. Photo: IOM





Hadijita going to fetch water. Photo: IOM

#### Also in this issue

*EDITORIAL : UNOWAS and the CNMC, 20 years of commitment to democracy, peace and conflict prevention*

*UNOWAS addresses the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel*

*Interview Louise Aubin  
United Nations Resident and  
Humanitarian Coordinator in  
Niger*

*UNOWAS and ECOWAS call for a  
return to constitutional order in  
Guinea and Burkina Faso*

*UNOWAS and UNOCA strengthen  
their collaboration*

*The annual Women's Forum for  
Peace and Security launches  
a Call to Action for better  
participation in decision-making  
bodies*

recovers his legs and learns to walk again". The rehabilitation of the boreholes has also boosted Tagaza's economy and contributed to women's empowerment. "Before, we spent all day fetching water, but now we have time to work. We can generate income, by processing milk into cheese, sewing or even market gardening, an activity we could never imagine doing before," says Ghissa Hadjijata, a woman from the community.

"Tagaza has become a real cross-road as we supply water to surrounding villages. It is now a place where hundreds of people and animals pass through every day, thus offering a great trading opportunity for inhabitants," says Alhousseini. "Our lives have changed completely," he concludes.

These testimonies illustrate the growing concern about the impact of climate change on land

degradation in rural communities. IOM's Community Stabilization Programmes, funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the UN Peacebuilding Fund, and the French Development Agency, have rehabilitated or constructed five boreholes in different locations of the Agadez region between July 2021 and January 2022. These boreholes have enabled more than 14,000 people to access drinking water.

*Article prepared by the IOM Niger office.*



The United Nations World Water Development Report 2022

# GROUNDWATER

## Making the invisible visible



Unlocking the immense potential of groundwater today  
and protecting the resource for tomorrow

[en.unesco.org/wwap](https://en.unesco.org/wwap)



The World Water Assessment Programme of UNESCO  
is financed by the Government of Italy





**Mrs. Louise Aubin**

United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Niger

« Niger has made progress on almost all fronts, despite the magnitude of the security challenge and the management of the covid-19 pandemic. »

*Since January 2021, Ms. Louise Aubin is the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Niger. A demanding role in a country that is facing several challenges. Interview.*

**After having held several positions within the United Nations, you have assumed the position of Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Niger since January 2021. What can you tell us about this country?**

Over the past few years, Niger has made progress on almost all fronts, despite the magnitude of the security challenge and the management of the covid-19 pandemic.

The deepening of democratization through the organization of elections deemed transparent by local and international observers has allowed the first

handover between two elected presidents. And while some of the opposition is still contesting the results, having appealed to the ECOWAS Court of Justice, I am hopeful that the political dialogue is moving forward, particularly with the appointment of the opposition leader at the end of February, a first since the introduction of this status in Niger's constitution.

In the area of governance, significant progress has been made and the High Authority for the Fight against Corruption and Related Offenses (HALICIA) has been strengthened. Several reports from this institution and the Court of Auditors have iden-

tified irregularities and malfunctions. During the year 2021, no less than 185 complaints were registered by the HALCIA and some 11 billion francs were recovered. This is a substantial windfall for a country with limited income. It remains for the Justice system to take exemplary sanctions to ensure that all of Niger's resources are used to meet the needs of the population.

On the agricultural front, local production has grown significantly with the help of national programs, the main one being the Initiative des Nigériens Nourrissent les Nigériens (known as I3N), as well





**In recent years, UN programs and funds have been able to make a valuable contribution to improving access to education, access to health care, and to promoting human rights.**

as partner projects to recover arable land. In Niger, 80% of the population depends on agriculture, but the low level of processing means that this sector accounts for only 40% of gross domestic product. It should be noted that climate change is a serious threat and without the use of mechanized irrigation, producers are exposed to the loss of their crops. This year's situation is extremely serious: on February 15, the Government and the United Nations jointly launched the Support Plan and the Humanitarian Response Plan to assist more than 3.5 million people, 2.5 of whom are suffering from severe food insecurity. Low rainfall in 2021 combined with insecurity in agricultural production areas explains this picture. The medium-term solution lies in the exploitation of the rich renewable water tables spread throughout Niger, including the northern zone, which is wrongly considered to have low agricultural potential.

Cross-border dynamics are double-edged swords. Most at-

tacks occur in these areas, so borders are vital to Niger as a landlocked country. That is why the UN country team and all of Niger's partners are supporting these vast areas through the Peacebuilding Fund, stabilization projects, and through humanitarian assistance to address the needs of displaced persons and communities residing in insecure areas.

In this regard, Niger is strengthening its position as a regional center for security in the Sahel. An ambitious national defense strategy plans to increase the number of defense and security forces from 30,000 in 2021 to 50,000 by 2025. Training and partnership will play a central role in this strategy. For example, the G5 Sahel is stationing some of its battalions on Niger's western and eastern borders, and a consultation process with the National Assembly will allow a decision to be made on the transfer of some troops from France and the European Takuba Force to Niger.

**But beyond the elements you have mentioned, the United Nations system has been present alongside the people of Niger for 62 years. What assessment can you make of the role of the UN in Niger?**

Niger has not yet expressed its full potential. In 1960, the programs that were envisioned, both by the then authorities and by their partners, were aimed at meeting the identified needs of a population of just over 3.4 million. In 2022, a national census will undoubtedly confirm that the 24 million has been passed. While the

effort made by partners has increased, the fact remains that the population has multiplied by 7 in the meantime, requiring us to rethink the levers of inclusive and urgent development in Niger.

Development is therefore a particularly complex matter for which the primary responsibility lies with the states, which define in their development plans the priorities on which the partners align themselves. These priorities are generally humanitarian, development and security priorities as we have just discussed in relation to progress in 2021.

In recent years, UN programs and funds have been able to make a valuable contribution to improving access to education, access to health care, and to promoting human rights. If I were to be more specific, I would cite a few victories, including supporting the Independent National Electoral Commission in issuing identity documents to more than 5 million Nigeriens to enable them to exercise their right to vote in the last elections; supporting health authorities in the total eradication of Guinea worm and in vaccinating 81% of children under five against polio; fighting child marriage and gender-based violence; and empowering thousands of youth and women to lead a decent life; accompanying Niger's implementation of a legal framework for the protection and solutions for internally displaced persons and refugees on its territory.

To better address the complexity of development in Niger, the UN Secretary-General



Mrs. Aubin during a mission in Maradi with young girls supervised by the Spotlight Initiative Niger.

identified Niger as one of seven priority countries for the implementation of a «new way of working». A High Tripartite Committee was established with the government to advance humanitarian-development collaboration while working on security issues that are the greatest impediment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Consensus has been built around broad collective outcomes, including poverty reduction, access to basic social services, and enhanced security for the people of Niger. The Covid-19 pandemic has slowed our work, however the development of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the process of developing the new UN cooperation framework in Niger provide a unique opportunity to revive and institutionalize this approach and achieve more transformational results in the daily lives of all Nigeriens.

**The political and security context in the Sahel seems to be an ongoing challenge. How do you rate the partnership with Niger's authorities in addressing the various challenges?**

Niger is an important player in the fight against violent extremist groups. In the context of strengthening security, several major actions have been implemented by the government, including increasing the defense and security budget to 14% of the national budget, adopting a law defining the framework for the legal and institutional repression of terrorism and related activities, creating a National

Center for Strategic and Security Studies (CNESS), and strengthening sub-regional and international cooperation through the G5 Sahel and EUCAP Sahel.

Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and the United States have a military presence in Niger. In June 2019, Niger and the United Arab Emirates ratified an agreement regarding the installation of a military base in the Agadez region, 800 km from the Algerian borders. In 2018, a major U.S. airbase site was inaugurated, which will be operational in 2024.

Niger is a member of the G5 Sahel joint force, which also includes Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Chad. The G5 Sahel conducts military operations

along the borders of G5 Sahel member states with operations in the Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger border region.

Niger is also a member of the joint multinational force fighting insecurity on the country's southwestern borders caused by groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP. The Lake Chad Basin Commission allows Niger, along with Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, to focus on stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development in this troubled region. In 2019, donors to a Stabilization Fund have pledged approximately US\$60 million in support of the implementation of the regional strategy for the stabilization, recovery and resilience of Boko Haram-affected areas.

And it should be recalled that since June 2017, France, Germany, the European Union, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the UNDP have launched the Sahel Alliance to improve the effectiveness of development aid and help meet the challenges facing the G5 Sahel member countries. The Alliance now includes 25 countries and international organizations and 11 observer members, and in fact, it participates in a coordinated action of the main development partners in the region.

### **What are the UN's priorities for this year?**

The United Nations' priorities echo those recently defined by the Niger authorities. To begin with, we share a common analysis of the root causes contributing to the inequalities experienced by the people of Niger,

namely: education, health, employment, access to land, child marriage, youth participation in public life, climate change, population displacement, and the Covid-19 pandemic. It should be recalled that in 2020, the World Bank estimated the level of extreme poverty at 42.9% of the country's population and according to the Human Development Index report published in 2020 by the UNDP, Niger was ranked 189th out of 189 countries.



**To better address the complexity of development in Niger, the UN Secretary-General identified Niger as one of seven priority countries for the implementation of a “new way of working”. A High Tripartite Committee was established with the government to advance humanitarian-development collaboration while working on security issues that are the greatest impediment to achieving the SDGs.**

These data guide the UN's interventions, which target as a priority population groups with multiple inequalities in order to leave no one behind, and which aim to i) consolidate political, econo-

mic, administrative, judicial and peace governance; diversify and structurally transform the economy for more inclusive and resilient growth and reduce gender inequalities; ii) building human capital capacity; and iii) supporting rural development and climate action in targeted areas through improved livelihoods, poverty reduction and strengthening of food and nutrition security, the establishment of national and community-based disaster risk prevention and management mechanisms and the strengthening of their resilience.

Together with all stakeholders, I am very hopeful that the United Nations will support accelerated development in Niger in the coming years.

#### **Also in this issue**

*[EDITORIAL : UNOWAS and the CNMC, 20 years of commitment to democracy, peace and conflict prevention](#)*

*[UNOWAS addresses the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel](#)*

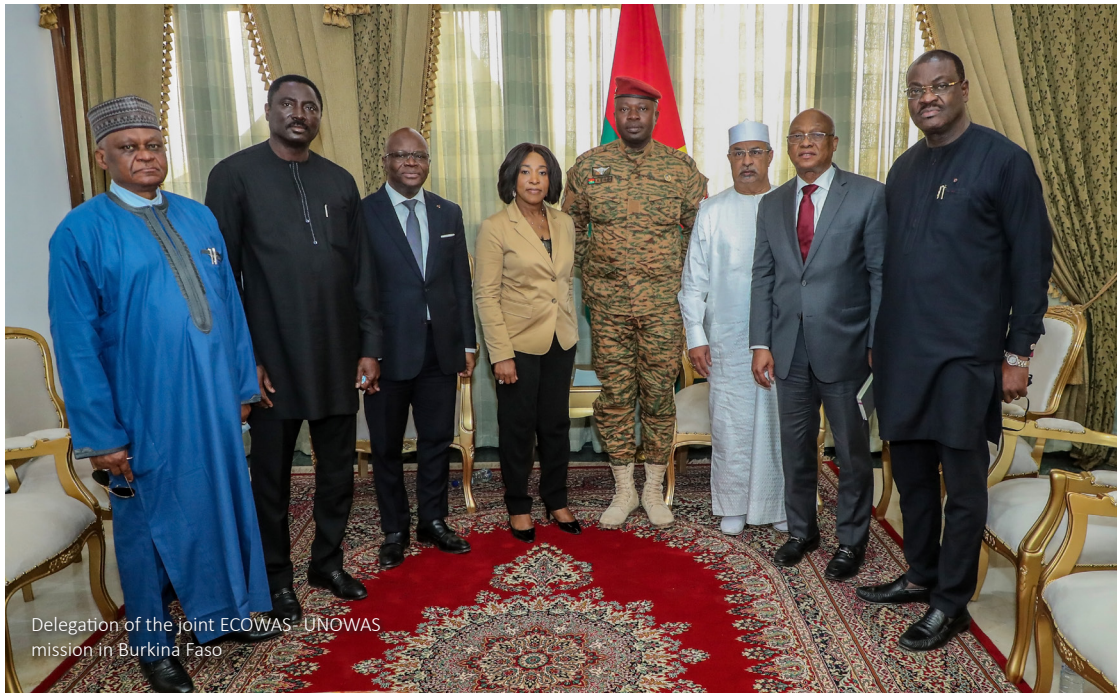
*[When water becomes a luxury for rural populations; a new gold rush in Agadez](#)*

*[UNOWAS and ECOWAS call for a return to constitutional order in Guinea and Burkina Faso](#)*

*[UNOWAS and UNOCA strengthen their collaboration](#)*

*[The annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security launches a Call to Action for better participation in decision-making bodies](#)*





## UNOWAS and ECOWAS call for a return to constitutional order in Guinea and Burkina Faso

*Following the successive coups d'état, UNOWAS and its regional partner, ECOWAS, have been urging for a rapid return to constitutional order, and the need to engage in a global reflection on the state of democratic governance in the sub-region.*

In recent months, West Africa and Sahel sub-region has been the scene of coups d'état, a means of accession to power that many observers and experts thought was over. However, the capture of power by the military in Guinea, Burkina Faso and Mali, not to mention the failed attempt in Guinea-Bissau, undoubtedly underscore the need to strengthen democratic governance. But faced with multiple challenges, the countries of the sub-region need stronger support from the international community to consolidate peace

and build democratic institutions that meet the aspirations of the people.

While condemning changes of power by force, UNOWAS has expressed its support for the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for a rapid return to constitutional order through the organization of free, transparent and inclusive elections. At the Extraordinary Session of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government on the political situation in Burkina

Faso, Mali and Guinea, held in Accra, Ghana, last 3 February, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mahamat Saleh ANNADIF, reiterated the UN's support to ECOWAS in its efforts to strengthen democratic governance: «We are encouraged by the commitment of the current Chairman of ECOWAS who stressed the need to review the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, and under-

lined the need for a comprehensive reflection on the state of democratic governance in the sub-region,» he said.

### Coordinated Responses

Beyond these three situations, the issue of respect for the constitutional legality of democratically installed institutions and the realization of the legitimate aspirations of the people for peace, stability, and development is haunting. «It is important to reinforce the coordination of efforts of ECOWAS, the African Union, and the United Nations to ensure a rapid transition,» he added.

Joint missions were conducted with ECOWAS in Guinea and Burkina Faso to meet with the new authorities to assess the situation in the respective countries. UNOWAS and ECOWAS requested their interlocutors to provide a reasonable timetable for a rapid return to constitutional order as recommended by the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government.

Indeed, despite the new measures taken by the transitional authorities, particularly the establishment of transitional governments, they have still not formulated an official timetable accepted by ECOWAS that would allow for a peaceful return to constitutional order.

Recalling the precariousness of transition periods, UNOWAS and ECOWAS, during their missions, warned the new military authorities against a possible deterioration of social cohesion, and recommended the establishment of frameworks for dialogue with

the various socio-political actors.

For his part, addressing the UN Security Council via video conference on the 9th February, the Special Representative ANNADIF reported on the situation in Guinea and Burkina Faso, and stressed the importance of a coordinated response among the various partners to help these countries deal with this crisis: «In the search for solutions, we must do everything possible to prevent the populations, who are already suffering from the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation, from being unduly affected by the ongoing political crisis,» he said.



## UNOWAS and ECOWAS requested their interlocutors to provide a reasonable timetable for a rapid return to constitutional order

Pursuing his good offices initiatives in support of ECOWAS, the Special Representative ANNADIF traveled to Accra on April 11th to assess sub-regional developments with President Akufo-Addo in his capacity as the current Chair of the regional institution. On April 12, in Ouagadougou, he met with the President of the transition, Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, to whom he recalled the decisions of the last summit of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government, in

particular those relating to the full and unconditional release of former President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, and the adoption of a consensual timetable that would allow for a return to constitutional order in Burkina Faso.

While reaffirming UNOWAS' commitment to work with ECOWAS, the Special Representative welcomes the satisfactory political developments in some countries, and urges all socio-political actors in the sub-region to promote dialogue and consultation, and to work together to decisively address the structural challenges that hamper the consolidation of democratic institutions, peace and development.

### Also in this issue

[EDITORIAL : UNOWAS and the CNMC, 20 years of commitment to democracy, peace and conflict prevention](#)

[UNOWAS addresses the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel](#)

[When water becomes a luxury for rural populations; a new gold rush in Agadez](#)

[Interview Louise Aubin  
United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Niger](#)

[UNOWAS and UNOCA strengthen their collaboration](#)

[The annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security launches a Call to Action for better participation in decision-making bodies](#)

# UNOWAS and UNOCA strengthen their collaboration

*As part of the collaboration between UNOCA and UNOWAS, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Mahamat Saleh ANNADIF took part in the 10th meeting of UN entities present in Central Africa on 1 and 2 February 2022 in Brazzaville.*



SRSGs ANNADIF and FALL at the 10th meeting of UN entities present in Central Africa

The geographical proximity of Central Africa to West Africa, and the nature of the challenges they have in common, require continued close collaboration between UNOCA and UNOWAS to assist the countries of the two subregions in their efforts to consolidate peace and security. It is in this sense that UNOWAS and UNOCA are working together for the implementation of the United Nations mandate on the issues of conflict prevention, human rights, peace and security in the two subregions of West and Central Africa.

Echoing his colleague, Mr. François Lounceny FALL, SRSG and Head of the United Nations Office for Central Africa, organizer of this meeting, Mr. ANNADIF said that «this meeting also offers an opportunity to coordinate our efforts to better support our two sub-regions, Central Africa and West Africa. This approach is essential, including questions about strengthening interregional cooperation.»

This meeting, which was a forum for exchange on peace and security in Central Africa,

also brought together Special Representatives Bintou KEITA and Mankeur NDIAYE, respectively Special Representatives in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. It also saw the participation of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes and the Resident Coordinators of the United Nations system in Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Gabon and Rwanda, as well as the Directors of the Regional Human Rights Offices, and UNESCO.





For his part, Mr. FALL spoke of the importance of pooling efforts in the face of common challenges. According to him, it is a question of «going further in identifying concrete measures conducive to strengthening the resilience of States (...) in the face of security threats, including those that, like climate change and violent extremism, continue to cause many victims, lead to massive displacement of populations and, ultimately, affect the stability of States.»

The 10th meeting addressed the issue of governance and the prevention of electoral crises. Mr. ANNADIF analyzed the challenges facing the West African region and the underlying political, social and institutional root causes. He also highlighted lessons to be learned from experiences in West Africa that could be useful in Central Africa.

Multidimensional threats to security, particularly in the Lake Chad Basin, as well as in eastern DRC, including cross-border threats to peace and security such as maritime security, conflicts between farmers and herders and challenges related to climate security, were all crucial topics that were discussed during these two days of meeting.

In this regard, the Head of MONUSCO, Mrs. KEITA stressed that «democratic consolidation is undoubtedly one of the keys to the sustainable stabilization

of Central Africa, because it must make it possible to move away from the logic of the «winner who takes everything» to that of the balance of power, the accountability of leaders and the balanced and transparent sharing of investments and revenues, which makes it possible to rebuild the state and in turn leads to the consolidation of regional stability.»



**conflict prevention  
is an essential  
investment for each  
of the countries  
in the region and  
that we must all  
encourage and  
invest in**

At the end of the meeting, participants developed a regional framework for conflict prevention. Ms. KEITA said that «conflict prevention is an essential investment for each of the countries in the region and that we must all encourage and invest in.» This regional conflict prevention framework will serve as a roadmap for coherent and integrated prevention commitments by the UN in Central Africa.

#### **Also in this issue**

[EDITORIAL : UNOWAS and the CNMC, 20 years of commitment to democracy, peace and conflict prevention](#)

[UNOWAS addresses the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel](#)

[When water becomes a luxury for rural populations; a new gold rush in Agadez](#)

[Interview Louise Aubin  
United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Niger](#)

[UNOWAS and ECOWAS call for a return to constitutional order in Guinea and Burkina Faso](#)

[The annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security launches a Call to Action for better participation in decision-making bodies](#)

# The annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security launches a Call to Action for better participation in decision-making bodies

Nouakchott, the capital of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, hosted the first edition of the Annual Forum of Women for Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel on March 14 and 15, 2022. The participants launched the Nouakchott Call to Action for an effective and civic participation of women in decision making.



Panel at the annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel. Nouakchott, Mauritania.

In West Africa and the Sahel, women represent more than 50% of the total population and constitute an important electoral mass as well as a pool of skills capable of not only participating but also leading decision-making bodies. However, they are underrepresented in many areas of activity, and struggle to attain leadership positions in the public and political spheres.

“The effective participation of women in decision-making bodies is vital to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. With this statement, Ms. Giovane Biha, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for West Africa and the Sahel, opened the first edition of the annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel under the

theme “Women and participation in decision-making bodies: building strategic action for sustainable results and impact”.

## Underepresented

According to the World Economic Forum's 2020 Gender Gap Report, political empowerment is the area in which women are grossly underrepresented. Although the women's



Participants at the annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel. Nouakchott, Mauritania.



## La participation effective des femmes aux instances de prise de décision est vitale pour atteindre les objectifs de développement durable

political empowerment index is low globally, taken as a whole or individually, countries in the West Africa and Sahel sub-region rank in the lowest echelons of this index. Apart from Senegal, which stands out at the global level by occupying 32nd place out of 153 countries, the other countries are ranked as follows : Benin 134th, Burkina Faso

127th, Cabo Verde 89th, Côte d'Ivoire 131st, Gambia 137th, Ghana 107th, Guinea 108th, Liberia 63rd, Mali 84th, Mauritania 72nd, Nigeria 146th, Sierra Leone 121st, Togo 116th. Only one woman has become Head of State (Liberia), one Vice President (Gambia), two have become Prime Minister (Senegal and more recently Togo in 2020), and a limited number of women have been elected Head of Parliament-as in Gambia, Liberia, and Togo-.

Taking this context into account, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have initiated, in 2021, the annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security, with the objective of mobilizing women's associations and networks in West Africa and the Sahel to strengthen their partnerships in

advocacy for a better involvement of women in decision-making spheres. This forum also aims to foster exchanges between key stakeholders and identify critical areas for intervention in policy and practice at the local, national and regional levels.

In the presence of Mr. Sadfy Sidi Mohamed, Secretary General of the Ministry of Social Action, Childhood and Family of Mauritania, representing Mrs. Aha Mint Haroune Ould Cheikh Sidiy, this first edition of the Women's Forum saw the participation of about one hundred women and men from seventeen countries of West Africa and the Sahel, as well as representatives of the United Nations system and the Mauritanian government.

### Regional consultation

This regional consultation will help " define the best strate-





Participants in a workshop at the annual Women's Forum for Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel. Nouakchott, Mauritania.

#### Also in this issue

[EDITORIAL : UNOWAS and the CNMC, 20 years of commitment to democracy, peace and conflict prevention](#)

[UNOWAS addresses the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel](#)

[When water becomes a luxury for rural populations: a new gold rush in Agadez](#)

[Interview Louise Aubin, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Niger](#)

[UNOWAS and ECOWAS call for a return to constitutional order in Guinea and Burkina Faso](#)

[UNOWAS and UNOCA strengthen their collaboration](#)

gies so that men and women, in equal measure, contribute to the eradication of the obstacles that delay the development and stability of the sub-region,” added Ms. Biha in her opening address.

For two days, participants took stock of the role played by women in decision-making bodies, in the defense and security forces, in conflict prevention and management, in negotiation, mediation and peace processes, in the prevention and fight against violent extremism and terrorism, as well as in the private and judicial sectors.

Aware of the stakes and determined to spotlight the need to involve women in the various decision-making bodies, the participants launched at the end of the forum, the Nouakchott Call to Action for the effective participation of women in decision-making. This Call to Action contains a

series of recommendations, addressed to the authorities of the countries, regional organizations and partners of the sub-region.

UNOWAS, in coordination with its partners, notably ECOWAS, will support the implementation of the recommendations of the Nouakchott Call to Action, and will remain committed to promoting the participation of women and youth in decision-making bodies.





# UNOWAS Magazine


*Together for Peace*

Quarterly Magazine of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel

UNOWAS Magazine informs you about UNOWAS / CNMC activities and efforts in consolidating peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel.

For more information about the Magazine and UNOWAS, visit our website: [www.unowas.unmissions.org](http://www.unowas.unmissions.org) or write to: [unowascpio@un.org](mailto:unowascpio@un.org)





**UNOWAS/CNMC** 20 **ANS**  
**YEARS**





*20 years of commitment to democracy,  
peace and conflict prevention*

*E*

*L*