



Sierra Leone and Liberia are two Westafrican countries that have just come out of years of civil conflict and are reconstructing their society. This booklet will show how youth are involved in the peacebuilding processes in these countries by giving an impression of the Mano River Union Peace Caravan. This unique event in the MRU basin (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea) was organised in November 2004 by the MRU youth parliament to promote peace among the local people, especially youth. Besides information on the youth parliament you can read the young parliamentarians' impressions and ideas and see what the Peace Caravan looked like.



## The Mano River Union Youth Parliament

Working for peace in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea

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# Introduction

With this booklet we want to show the positive actions of young people in a post conflict region by giving an impression of the Mano River Union Peace Caravan. This unique event in the MRU basin (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea) was organised in November 2004 by the MRU youth parliament to promote peace among the local people, especially youth. Both Sierra Leone and Liberia have just come out of years of civil strife in which civilians have been the major victim of brutal abuses and total chaos and where youth played a prominent role in the war as child combatants. However, young people from the same region have come together to work for peace in their countries. This has resulted in the establishment of the Mano River Union Youth Parliament.

This booklet will give a face to the young people that are constituting the youth parliament. Besides information on the MRU youth parliament you can read the young parliamentarians' impressions and ideas and see what the Peace Caravan looked like.

The booklet is especially made for African youth living in the Diaspora, notably the Netherlands, to show them what their peers are doing back home and to create a link between them and their fellow youth in the home countries.

Have fun!

# MRU youth parliament



# Information on the Mano River Union Youth Parliament

## **What is the MRU youth parliament?**

The Mano River Union Youth Parliament (MRUYP) is a sub-regional network of young peacebuilders, students, journalists, development practitioners and human rights activists within the Mano River Union Basin (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea) that advocates for peace, human rights and the development of young men, women and their communities. The MRUYP is an initiative of the West African Youth Network (WAYN) in collaboration with the Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA) and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders Sierra Leone (UNOY Sierra Leone).

## **How did it start and why?**

The parliament was launched during a training seminar on Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution which was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone in August 2003 and was attended by more than forty young people from Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The initiative of the youth parliament was a direct reaction to the marginalized position of youth; they are hardly involved in the peacebuilding process in their countries and are not considered as positive actors nor are they included in decision making institutions. In the conflict-torn region of

the Mano River Union efforts have been made to support the peace-building initiatives of women and civil society, but no comparable efforts were made to invest and promote the role of youth leaders, who not only represent an enormous potential for change in post-conflict situations, but often also are the key actors in the community development and social transformation among their peers.

The aim of the parliament is to bring together MRU youth leaders working for peacebuilding and non-violent conflict resolution in view of empowering their capacities; sharing of field experiences; networking to overcome their isolation; to improve the effectiveness of their projects and to achieve more advocacy power. The youth parliament will act as a catalyst for youth empowerment in the region.

## **What do they do?**

The members of the parliament meet yearly in the country of the president of the parliament to discuss their annual actionplan. Each country-delegation is responsible for undertaking activities and projects in their homecountry relating to the focus-areas of the parliament. The first year (2003-2004) of the parliament was used to spread the information on the youth parliament, to become known by authorities and other organisations and to select good members. The first year was closed with a common project of all members of parliament: a peace-caravan through the Mano River Basin. You can find more information on this project on page 15. The first session of the parliament was held in Conakry from the 21-25<sup>th</sup> November 2004. During this session the statutes of the parliament were drafted to help govern the activities of the parliament.

The coming year the parliament will continue to set up project in the following areas:

#### *MRU Youth Building Peace*

Young People play a central role in the prevention of violence and conflict, as well as in the actions to bring peace in war torn societies. In a region, ridden by conflict, the strategic target of this group is to mainstream the role of young people as peacebuilders.

#### *Youth Advocacy*

This working group has a key strategic orientation to serve as a link between young field workers and decision makers. As several members of the Parliament are field workers we consider it important to open communication channels and possibilities for lobbying and bringing youth concerns forward at a top level. This group undertakes campaigns and movements; looks for access to the media, identifies strategic opportunities to influence youth participation at the local and regional level.

#### *MRU Revitalization Working Group*

This Group will work on the survival of the region through regional and economic reintegration as the Mano River Union is seen to be critical to the survival of the three countries. The Group therefore seeks to engage in concrete activities aimed at revitalizing the Mano River Union Secretariat and promoting the spirit and protocols of the Union.

#### *MRU Human Rights*

The objective of this group is to promote human rights and the rule of law in the sub-region. Consequently, they will

focus on researching, information exchanges, monitoring and dissemination with emphasis on the rights of women, children and youth.

#### *Youth Fighting HIV/AIDS*

This group will concentrate on looking for effective actions by young people to prevent the spread of HIV/aids and at the same time taking action to fight discrimination and stigmatising associated with the disease.



# Information sur le Parlement des Jeunes pour la paix de L'union du Fleuve Mano

## Introduction

En vue d'accompagner et de participer à la réalisation des objectifs de l'organisation de l'Union du Fleuve Mano, plusieurs Organisations de la Société Civile se sont démocratiquement créées et se sont consolidées en se regroupant au sein d'un vaste Mouvement efficace travaillant dans tous les domaines. Ces organisations ont joué un rôle de premier ordre dans le règlement des conflits. Parmi elles, le Réseau des Femmes du Fleuve Mano pour la Paix qui s'est montré particulièrement actif dans la mobilisation des énergies, en sensibilisant les populations, en interpellant les dirigeants et les responsables des factions belligérantes et en proposant sa médiation.

A l'image des femmes, les jeunes des pays de l'Union du Fleuve Mano ont mis en place un Parlement pour leur servir de tribune d'expression, de cadre de réflexion et d'action en faveur d'une culture de la Paix, de l'intégration et du développement.

## Historique

Sur invitation du Réseau des Jeunes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (WAYN) et de l'UNOY de la Sierra Leone, un séminaire de formation sur la Résolution des Conflits, la Prévention des IST/VIH/SIDA et le Mode de Gestion des Projets avait regroupé plus d'une trentaine de jeunes leaders du mouvement associatif de la Guinée, de la Sierra Leone et du Libéria du 27 juillet au 3 Août 2003 en Freetown, capitale de la république de Sierra Leone.

A l'issue d'une semaine de formation, les jeunes ont décidé, le samedi 3 août, de la mise en place de leur Parlement en vue de leur participation à la réalisation des objectifs de l'Union et de ceux du Millénaire fixés par les Nations Unies.

## Mission

Le Parlement des jeunes de l'Union du fleuve Mano pour la Paix se veut être une tribune d'expression, et un cadre privilégié de

réflexion, de concertation et d'action en vue du renforcement des capacités des jeunes dans les processus de Paix, d'intégration et de développement.

A ce titre, le Parlement peut servir d'instrument de mise en œuvre des programmes et projets relatifs à la construction de la Paix, à l'intégration sous régionale, à la Démocratie, à la Bonne Gouvernance à la lutte contre la Pauvreté, la Corruption, les IST/VIH SIDA etc.

#### Activités

- Réaliser les actions de sensibilisation, de formation et d'information dans le cadre de la prévention et de résolution des conflits, de la pauvreté, de la corruption, de la Démocratie, de la Bonne Gouvernance, des Droits Humains, de la lutte contre les IST/VIH/SIDA etc.
- Organiser des caravanes et des voyages d'étude au sein du Bassin du Fleuve Mano.
- Encourager et organiser les rencontres périodiques entre les jeunes à travers le sport, l'art et la culture.
- Promouvoir l'hygiène et la protection de l'environnement.
- Initier et animer des séances d'apprentissage des langues officielles pour faciliter la communication entre les jeunes.
- Interpeller les populations, les autorités et la communauté internationale sur les questions de paix, de sécurité, des Droits humains, de la Bonne

Gouvernance etc.

- Apporter une assistance aux personnes victimes des conflits et des calamités.
- Encourager, organiser et participer aux rencontres nationales et internationales relatives à la paix, à l'intégration et au développement.
- Entreprendre toutes démarches pour la mobilisation des ressources nécessaires à la réalisation des objectifs du Parlement.
- S'affilier à toutes organisations nationales, sous régionales et continentales poursuivant les mêmes objectifs.





# Peace caravan



# Introduction MRU Peace Caravan

The MRU peace caravan was the first joint project of the MRU youth parliament and took place in November 2004, just before the first session of the parliament. The aim of the peace caravan was to promote peace, unity and reconciliation in the Mano River Union and to contribute to the United Nations Decade for a Culture of Peace. The peace caravan intended to increase the involvement of youth and local people in peacebuilding in the region and to put pressure on the governments to work on

sustainable peace in the region. An important element of this mission was unity in diversity, a significant step toward building a culture of peace. Three different cultures, two different languages, different social and religious backgrounds together on a multiple journey for a single cause: Peace.

## Where and when?

So that's why from 10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> November 2004 a yellow bus carried 40 young people from Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia through the Mano River Union to spread the message of peace to especially the young people in the subregion. The caravan started in Conakry and then found its way through bordervillage Pamlap to Sierra Leone, via Freetown up to Bo-Waterside at the Sierra Leonean/Liberian border. From there they returned to Guinea to visit Coyah, Kindia and Madina-Oula. Due to security problems in Monrovia they unfortunately had to cancel the Liberian part of the caravan; but they did cross the Mano River separating Liberia and Sierra Leone while singing their three national anthems.



### What did they do?

On the way the young participants, all member of the youth parliament, spread flyers with peace messages and information about the youth parliament and talked to curious people gathering around the bus. In the border villages they took more time to gather the youth with the help of three artists who attracted the people with their drums. The young parliamentarians went into dialogue with their local peers about the importance of the contribution of young people to peace, the causes of conflict, the daily problems confronting them and what they, the youth, can do to solidify the peace in their countries. The workshops were closed with singing peace songs and dancing on the rhythm of the drums.

During the peace caravan the participants also met with the Guinean minister of youth and sports who later provided accommodation and food during the parliamentary session, and they visited the Mano River Union secretariat and the MRU peace forum in Freetown.

### Intensive experience

The 7 days of the caravan were an intensive experience for the participants. Due to the challenges of very bad roads, fragile security and poor communication means they had to change the original route and improvise to deal with the unexpected

changes. They had to adjust to a real nomad life: sleeping in the open air; eating what was to be found on the way, washing in rivers and dealing with the challenges of three different cultures packed together in one bus...But through intensive discussions about the meaning of peace and the importance of dialogue; through informal language courses, networking and a lot of singing the group became united. And at the end of the caravan the young deputies were ready to take up the activities and challenges for the coming year, stated in the action plan of the youth parliament which has been drawn up during the parliamentary session.





# The caravan day by day

## Day 1: Wednesday 10 November Departure day

We planned to depart from the ministry of youth and sports in Conakry with the Guinean delegation and a small delegation from Sierra Leone that was supposed to have arrived one day in advance. In the morning they had still not arrived, so the Guinean delegation proceeded with the departure ceremony at the ministry. The minister of youth, sports and culture, mr. Elhadj Fode Soumah, expressed his support for such initiatives, wished us a good journey, and handed over the Guinean flag which was going to be attached on the bus. When the evening approached we decided to start moving in the direction of Freetown in the hope we would meet the Sierra Leoneans, who had still not arrived, on the way. This was completely the opposite direction from what had been planned. We proceeded until the first town

outside Conakry: Coyah and there we parked at a strategic total petrol station; the bus with our banner and flag in the spotlight so in case the others would pass they would spot us...we slept outside on our mats.

## Day 2: Thursday 11 November

Morning hours in our petrol station: still no sign from our brothers so we decided to take the road to the border, Pamlap. How happy we were to arrive there and to see a group wearing white T-shirts with 'Ambassadors of peace'; that had to be them! They had had an accident on the way and part of the group was still behind. We had to wait for them, so we decided to stay in Pamlap and use our time to do our first workshop. We gathered the villagepeople by walking and dancing through the village, with the artists with the drums in front and all the participants in T-shirts, handing out the flyers, and singing 'No more war - we want peace!' in which the children soon joined. We took the whole mass to the school where Toure, the president, and some others spoke to the crowd. They talked about the aim of the peace caravan, the importance of peace and the role of youth in conflicts. After that they went into dialogue with the people present, mostly young people, by asking them questions about the problems that they are confronted with and their ideas about peace and conflict. After the discussions in the hot sun we enjoyed the possibility of a bath in the nearby river. We then decided that it was better to move on instead of losing time; again hoping to meet the others on the way, in Port

with a big group now. We went straight to the national stadium, as the ministry of youth and sports in Sierra Leone had promised us to provide lodging in the national stadium hostel. We visited the Mano River Union Secretariat where we were received by the secretary general, mr. Tidiane. From there a small group met with some journalists and from there we all proceeded to a workshop on journalism and peacebuilding organised by the MRU peace forum. In the evening we did a short session outside the stadium, but due to a football match we had little audience. We slept in beds!

#### Day 4: Saturday 13 November

But not for long, because we had to leave early in the morning. We had a long journey ahead; we wanted to reach the border with Liberia in the evening to meet the Liberian delegation. The atmosphere in the bus was good; people were discussing the meaning of peace or singing songs and telling jokes. In Bo, a town of motorbikes, we asked some young boys to escort us on their motorbikes. They put on our T-shirts and we sang while our flyers were received by eager hands. We stopped to talk a little to the curious people in small groups, but had to continue due to the time pressure.

From Kenema the road became very bad, it started to rain and the driving became difficult. It was a scary journey and it was already approaching 9 pm when we arrived in Zimmi, the last village before the border. We had to stay there for the night and we were thankful that the local authorities offered us rooms in a

house and water to wash. The evening we did a session around a bonfire in the middle of the village where it was full of young people. As soon as they heard the drums they all came nearer and formed a big circle around us. We sang peace songs with them, danced together and went into dialogue with some keen young people who were very interested.

#### Day 5: Sunday 14 November (End of Ramadan)

Again we had to get up before sunrise to complete the journey to Bo-Waterside, on the other side of the border. There at last we met our missing delegation: the Liberians, who had been waiting for us since the previous day. When we crossed the bridge over the Mano river, the three delegations felt their unity and we held hands while singing the three national anthems. We then moved with our music through the village, dancing and soon joined by a big crowd (it was the end of the Ramadan). In the hall the people and many children were already waiting. The Liberian delegation had prepared the village well for our arrival. A small delegation first had to speak to the elders and some other people went to make an emission for the local radio station. The others meanwhile had started singing and talking to the people present. The many children joined us in singing: "we want peace, no more war!" and listened to us when explaining about the role of young people and the importance of peace. After the talking and singing we proceeded to a big grass field in the middle of the village where we planted 3 trees to symbolize the new peace that we have to water to make it grow.



## About the Peace Caravan

Mohamed Nyakoi from Sierra Leone

*"My experience during the caravan was unprecedented and so exciting, when young people from the three countries came together in a bus to discuss and share their unique expertise on youths empowerment and development after decade long civil wars. Apparently, we were able to allay their fears that had developed over the years, when we held fires at strategic towns along the borders in trying to ensure that the broken relationship was mended and the atmosphere of co-existence could return once again in the basin. Nevertheless, we need to do more so that our effort will not go in vain."*





### Day 6: Monday 15 November

It was another long day in the bus; we only reached Pamlap around 6pm and were just in time to cross the border and continue till Coyah. On the way the driver took us to his family where all 40 of us took a bath to wash off two days dirt. In Coyah we had hoped that the prefect would provide accommodation, but he was already sleeping when we arrived. So there we are again, left in the street. But luckily the driver saved us again by taking us to a family house where we could spread our mats; the girls inside, the boys outside. Tired as we are we slept.

### Day 7: Tuesday 16 November

A phonecall to Conakry learned us that the minister of youth and sports was supposed to arrive in Coyah that morning. We decided to wait for him at the prefects mansion. We had a short ceremony when the minister had arrived and the prefect offered us drinking water. Next to the house was a big school and the prefect helped us to arrange that we could give a workshop for some of the classes. With a big crowd of teenagers around us we did our workshop, talked to the pupils, danced, sang and started our introduction with drums and singing. Toure and Isidore used their educative talents to give a lively talk to the pupils. They asked them why youth are involved in war to which the pupils responded with reasons as poverty and hunger. Subsequently they asked who would be willing to join a rebelgroup if they would offer them 200 dollars...only two raised their hands. They were called in the middle of the circle to explain their answer.

One of them explained that if you are poor, you have no work you are not free and others can impose their will on you. The two brave pupils were given a t-shirt for their explanation. After the singing and dancing a lot of pupils came to talk to us in small groups. We left sensibilisation materials about HIV/aids, tobacco and education with the head of the school.

Our next destination was Madina-Oula, a border village between Guinea and Sierra Leone. This village was not planned, but the time didn't allow us to reach the originally planned villages like Nzerekore and Yenga. We had to cross a river by boat before reaching the village. It was already late when arriving in Madina Oula. The bus was quickly surrounded by excited children who were overloading us with questions and we were looking forward to a nice session around a bonfire. Meanwhile though our president Toure was talking to the authorities and that took a long time. The commander of the village was not at all pleased with this surprise visit. He was not impressed with the documents from the ministry of youth and sports and said that we should have asked for permission in the military camp, some kilometres ahead. This village had been attacked during the war and because of the land border the security measures were very strict. So strict that even a bus of young peacebuilders was apparently seen as a potential disguised rebelgroup! We were not allowed to even pass the night in the village and were sent back in the dark, accompanied by a soldier. We slept with in the same family house in Coyah!

# SWEET PEACE CARAVAN

What a sweet Peace Caravan  
Oh, what a joyful Peace Caravan  
What a funny Peace Caravan

Singing songs of Identities  
Song of different tribes, languages  
Learning different things  
Sharing jokes of youthfulness

All in teens and twenties  
Born in war, live in war survive by God  
Amidst political, religious, racial  
And cultural diversities  
Holding together as one tree

A caravan of wonders and challenges

A caravan of obstacles and barriers  
The unforgettable experience of Madina  
oula, pampala, and the  
happy stop in Bo-WaterSide and comadaya  
Oh what a joyous night at Nongo Taady  
The exchange of ideas  
Learning of language

Oh, what a sweet Caravan  
Not forgetting the daily news  
The networking, breakthroughs  
integration etc.  
What a Sweet Caravan

WHEN SHALL WE SEE AGAIN?

Written by  
Massa Dopoh (Liberia)  
Member MRU YOUTH PARLEMENT

CARAVANE DE LA PAIX DANS LE MANO RIVER UNION

Cessburg - Moroua - Freetown - Cessburg: 10-17 Novembre 2004

WAYN , PLAN NETHERLANDS , NINNY, ALERT, AFRONETH

## About the Peace Caravan

Hadja Mariama Camara de Guinée

"Pour moi la caravane de la paix fut une belle expérience surtout innovatrice car elle nous a permis nous jeunes d'être en contact direct avec ce qui se passe sur le terrain; de voir et de comparer les réalités, les problèmes des jeunes dans nos différents zones d'actions. Je pense que c'est une chose à refaire car il ne suffit pas de savoir dans une salle bien climatisé parler, c'est mieux d'aller sur le terrain à travers des activités comme la cavarane pour vivre la réalité et entendre les témoignages des personnes qui ont vécu dans les conflits. Dormir dans une station, sous les moustiques, avec tout les dangers que cela recours et bien moi je conclus en disant que: si c'était à refaire et bien je le feral.\*"





## One of the songs of the Peace Caravan

### No more violence

**Chorus x 2** We say no more violence in our nation  
Among our selves in the Mano River Union  
All what we need is peace every day every where

**Vers 1** This is the time for peace to reign in Africa  
Let us come together to work for peace we can  
One family and one united people with peace we  
Unite to build a better nation, so we say no more  
violence we need peace every where

**All x 2** Lalalalala  
We want peace  
Chorus x 2 till fade

*CARAVANE DE LA PAIX*



**PEACE CARAVAN  
NO MORE VIOLENCE**

# Members



**Mohamed Toure** | President | Nationality: Guinean  
| Age: 31 | Occupation: philosophy teacher | Email:  
motoure1@hotmail.com |

**Motivation** J'ai voulu être membre du parlement pour mieux défendre les préoccupations et les aspirations des jeunes au niveau de notre sous région . A travers mon association de base, je me suis engagé dans la construction de la paix autour de moi, car sans la paix il n'y a pas de développement . Il est important d'engager la jeunesse dans la construction de la paix, car la jeunesse constitue l'avenir et la devenir de toute société humaine . Sans la jeunesse, toute action de construction de la paix est sans garantie futur.

**Quel est ton rêve de paix ?** Un monde sans guerre , sans violence, sans exclusion . Autant que cela peut dépendre de toi, fais la paix avec tout le monde.



**Salamatou Kamara** | Vice-president | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Age: 22 | Occupation: secretary | Organisation: PeaceLinks education organisation | Email/contact: salabkay@yahoo.com, mruyouthparliament@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I got engaged in peacebuilding after a decade long civil war. I realised that it is necessary for young people, especially women, to be involved in peacebuilding since they are the ones been used.

**What is your dream of peace?** A world free from army and ammunitions and have needs of youths being addressed.



**Arthur Becker** | 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy speaker | Nationality: Liberian | Age: 25 | Occupation: student (economics) | Organisation: Mano River Students Union | Email: unoylib@hotmail.com |

**Motivation** I became active in peacebuilding because of the perpetual violence that engulfed my region and the devastating effect the conflict had on young people.

**What is your dream of peace?** That the world will continuously be peaceful. Be patient minded in Life, for he who laughs last, laughs the best.



**Faya Toure** | Nationalité: Guinéen | Age: 26 | Occupation: informatique | Organisation d'origine: Fair-play | Email/contact: tourefaya@yahoo.fr |

## Motivation

- C'est pour l'intérêt des jeunes c'est à dire défendre leur intérêt
- Inviter les jeunes à éviter les conflits.
- Eradiquer l' esprit de rébellion

**Quel est ton rêve de paix?** C'est laisser régner la paix.



**Francis Dopoh II** | Nationality: Liberian | Age: 25 |  
Occupation: student | Organisation: Youth Organized for  
the Promotion of Intellectual Activities (YOPIA) and MRU  
Student Union (MARSU) | Email: dbeta2004@yahoo.com /  
Ameusu2003@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I was motivated by the undaunted desire to build peace and prevent conflict in the MRU basin so as to fully attain the maximization sustainable development in Liberia, the MRU basin, West-Africa, the world over. Having lived the entire years of my existence in conflict I saw it as a wasteful effort to have peace in life if those of us who are the vulnerable target sit back and look. Upon this feeling, I joined the first antiwar demonstrations that took place on Jan 15th 1995 in Monrovia, Liberia.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream is to enjoy peace all the rest of my live both in Africa and the world over, and my children and infinite generation live in a global village earthly paradise.



**Charles M. Johnnick** | Nationality: Liberian | Age: 27 |  
Occupation: student | Organisation: Voice Against Violence |  
Email: voiceagainstvviolence@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** My reason of becoming member of the MRU youth parliament is to work with young people as youth to bring about solution to abolishing in the sub-region, particularly region of the MRU.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream for peace is that one day the planet earth shall be free of violence, war will be history, and we will sit as young people to discuss peace, not war. Peacebuilding organisations should be taken very serious when it comes to transforming the young traumatized generations of the world.



**Alya Soumah** | Nationalite : Guineene | Age : 28 |  
Occupation : maintenance en informatique | Organisation  
d'origine : Parlement de la MRU |  
Email : soumah\_alya@yahoo.fr |

**Motivation** Sans la paix pas de développement. J'en veux que dans l'espace Mano c'est une seule nation, un peuple qui ont de même problèmes qu'elle soit donc dans cette conditions sans la paix au Liberia pas de paix en Guinée et au Sierra Leone. C'est pour cela nous sommes tous condamnés de vivre ensemble pour construire la paix durable dans notre sous région Ouest Africain.

**Quel est ton rêve de paix ?** Cela est un rêve commun. C'est l'idéal que les Africains eux-mêmes mettent en place des stratégies pour permettre à l'Afrique de retrouver une certaine stabilité et un certain redressement du point vue politique, économique et social.



**Zacharia Jah** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Age: 25 |  
Occupation: social worker | Organisation: Peace links/ WAYN  
Sierra Leone | Email: zacjah@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I see it fit that as a youth activist in Sierra Leone over the past years we have been struggling to maintain peace in the MRU. Now it's the right time for me to play an active role after having undergone the 2003 training conference in Freetown. I was motivated in 1990 by a club called Global Family in USA and a branch in Freetown that was preaching peace messages using peace songs community theatre and outreach to schools etc.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream of peace is let peace prevail in the world and MRU and let us all create a culture of peace.



**Massa Tina Dopoh** | Nationality: Liberian | Age: 19 | Occupation: university student | Organisation: Kids And Tomorrow (KAT, executive director) | Email: tinadopoh@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I got engaged in peacebuilding for three good reasons:

1. I want to be a good peacebuilder, this is why I'm studying political science and sociology.
2. To encourage other youths to be a good peacebuilder by saying no to war.
3. To tell other youths that we are precious in the eyes of god and that god wants us to be peacebuilders and not warlords.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream of peace is to see youth united, living in harmony with each other. Respecting the rules and regulations of our country leaders. To see youth together discussing peace and making peace decision.

**Advice** Youth please take education very serious so that your right to do good things cannot be abused more by warlords and disgruntled leaders.



**Herbert Bangura** | Nationality: Mano River Union Citizen | Age: 19 | Occupation: student/volunteer | Organisation: IEARN (International Education And Resource Network) SL/ WAYN SL | Email: bcool597@yahoo.com, bcoolmusic@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** To positively contribute towards the sustenance of lasting peace and unity in the sub-region. Speak against issues, which threaten the welfare of youth in the region. Seeing the need for lasting peace considering the fruits of the senseless wars within the sub-region the only way one can achieve peace is when we are involved in re-creational activities and are an expert in the wider and music media, help train other youth.



**Isidore Gonona Nanamou** | Nationalité: Guinéen | Age: 29 | Occupation: journaliste | Organisation d'origine: Parlement de la MRU | Email: isgone2000@yahoo.fr |

**Motivation** Parce que les objectifs du parlement cadrent avec mes intentions de voir régner la paix dans le monde en général et dans la région de la Mano en particulier. Surtout par ce que je suis jeune. Depuis toujours je suis engagé en faveur de la paix parce que pour moi la paix n'a pas de prix. De la volonté général, la paix c'est l'absence de tout ce qui peut porter préjudice en la liberté de l'homme en société. Alors des lorsque je suis acteur social, j'aspire à la paix.

**Quel est ton rêve de paix?** Mon rêve de paix est de voir en Afrique une absence totale de bruit de fusil, d'arme etc. Que la population mange à fin. Qu'il y est plus d'emploi pour la jeunesse que est enrôler dans la guerre, pas manque de moyen de subsistance.



**Donald Kalokoh** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Age: 30 | Occupation: social worker | Organisation: Ministry of youth and sports | Email: donaldkalokoh@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** My country has just ended a decade long civil war. I became engaged in peacebuilding by serving as a volunteer of UNOY Sierra Leone.

**What is your dream of peace?** Let peace prevail on earth



**Harriet Geedeh** | Nationality: Liberian | Age: 22 | Occupation: student | Organisation: Voice against violence | Email: ilgeedeh@yahoo.com /voiceagainstviolence@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I got engaged in peace building when I saw that war brought a setback to everyone's life. When I found out that majority of the youth were the cause of the suffering and set back I felt that coming together as youths to share peace message and peace education will transform youth into useful materials. I believe that we youth can make the difference. And we will change the notion of our elders.

**What is your dream of peace?** To see peace reign forever. When everyone can enjoy peace and freedom. When everyone can be happy and live a decent life. Forever, we can make this world a better one. Love is all that matters after all. We as youth can make the change. Educate our fellows that were used as killing machine. To stop the war and take a positive step. So that our generation to come will live a decent life.



**Mohamed Nyakoi** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Age: 29 | Occupation: student | Organisation: UNOY (United network of young peacebuilders) Sierra Leone | Email: mednyaks73@hotmail.com |

**Motivation** I got engaged in peacebuilding at the time when the people of Sierra Leone were in dire need of peace. Although it was not an easy task, but with the skills I have acquired in conferences, workshops, seminars, and outreaches I was able to motivate the former RUF rebels and the CDF fighters in the Eastern Region to surrender the weapons (disarmament) through radio discussions, drama and outreach programmes which led to a speedy disarmament in the East.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream of peace is not something to be left to others in distant place. It is something we create minute to minute in our efforts to cultivate love, passion and forgiveness for others. Forging trust in our respective communities, countries through our own action and example.



**Aurelia Tamba** | Nationality: Liberian | Age: 20 | Occupation: university student | Organisation: WAYN (West African Youth Network)- Liberia | Email: aureliababy@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I became a member to promote peace in the region through peace advocacy and sensitization program in the MRU. To adapt to a culture of peace among the MRU region. To educate especially women about their importance in peacebuilding.

**What is your dream of peace?** I want peace to reign in the whole world is done by the young ones and we are the youths, we need to work very hard toward this dream.



**Korzo Forkpa** | Nationality: Liberian | Age: 23 | Occupation: accountant/student | Organisation: WAYN (Liberian chapter) | Email: cozy4sue@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I became a member of the MRU youth parliament to personally contribute to peacebuilding in not only the MRU but Africa as a whole. I attended a workshop in Monrovia, Liberia on peacebuilding and I was greatly touched by the exposure. Since then I vow to engage myself wholeheartedly in peacebuilding.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream is to see everlasting peace, I mean that the peace of God that surpasses all understanding reign throughout the universe.



**Darvey Moore** | Nationality: Liberian | Age:32 | Occupation: physician assistant (p.a.) | Organisation: Liberians united for peace (L.U.P.) of Movement Against Poverty (M.A.P.) | Email: darveymoore@yahoo.com

**Motivation** I got engaged in peacebuilding through the inspiration of the MRU youth parliament and LUP (Liberians united for progress) for the promotion of peace. I came in contact with fellow MRU members who encouraged me to form a part of peacebuilding as a youth in that youths are at risk of being used in arms conflict as killing machines. I therefore thought it very expedient to get solely and wholly involved.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream of peace is that the entire world have total peace and stability by non violence and sensitisation of other youth in the Diaspora. And I am of the strongest conviction that by 2020, there will be world peace by god's divine intervention and inspiration.



**Joseph Suko Myers** | Nationality: Liberian | Age:36 | Occupation: business manager; peace and poverty advocate | Organisation: YAP (Youth against poverty), a branch in MAP (Movement against poverty) | Email: joyejomy@yahoo.com

**Motivation** I became member of the MRU because I feel that there are many social problems that young people are facing, specifically poverty, ignorance, and diseases etc. You see, peacebuilding is one of the most important things now in the MRU basin, because without peace there can be no normality of every aspect of life. Africa had been in darkness for long time, I feel that the time has come with the help of our donors to bring true lights of peace and reconciliation – moreover democracy.

**What is your dream of peace?** Well, my dream of peace is to make sure that youths are well funded and encouraged to advocate for peace and peacebuilding in the MRU firstly, and secondly to be train to know how to manage conflicts and violence.



**Kadiatou Bangoura** | Nationalite : Guineene | Age : 20 | Occupation: etudiante | Organisation d'origine : étudiants de MRU | Email : kadiatoubangoura2003@yahoo.fr |

**Motivation** C'est parce que je suis jeune, je suis l'avenir de demain, et le but du parlement est de reconstruire l'avenir. Je suis toujours dans des activités de jeunesse, et que la guerre est en train de ronger notre génération.

**Quel est ton rêve de paix ?** La solidarité, la justice, lutter contre les drogues, la bonne gouvernance...

**Conseil** Arrêter la guerre, synonyme de destruction, arrêter les conflits pour sauver l'humanité.

Pourquoi des millions pour payer les armes, les millions d'enfants meurent de faim ce sont des innocents.



**Williametta F. Cooper** | Nationality: Liberian | Age: 21 | Occupation: student | Organisation: WAYN/Liberian chapter | Email: wilmet4luv@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I decided to become a member of the MRU youth parliament in order to help my fellow youth in rebuilding our country and the world at large. That was one of the reasons secondly I am a youth and have decided to lay down my life for peace sake. To add my voice to the others to cry and work for peace, until we can get it.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream of peace is to make sure that youth are well founded and also encourage them to advocate for peace and peace building in the MRU. Firstly and secondly to be trained to know how to manage conflicts and violence.



**Mohamed Sillah Sesay** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Age: 22 | Occupation: national coordinator | Organisation: Children and youth for peace network | Email: mohammedsillah2002@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** In order to build the foundation for a peaceful world where violence and war will cease to be acceptable I thought it necessary to let the education of young people in Sierra Leone inculcate the values of peace and unity and then change the negative perspective that the society holds against the young people of Sierra Leone that of any time they come together there will be violence among themselves.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream of peace is to let the education of our young people inculcate the values of peace and unity so that the generation yet unborn will live and grow in a peaceful world where violence and war will cease to be acceptable.



**Koroma Iru Gbassay** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Age: 25 years | Occupation: volunteer | Organisation: Dove cut youth organisation/Unoy (United Network of Young Peacebuilders) | Email: irugbash@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I engaged myself in peacebuilding for the countries in Africa to be in peace by being a role model. As youths have been used in our countries throughout the past centuries I want them to withdraw from violence and to focus on development. I had already been playing a great role by building peace between communities and youth groups in resolving conflicts between them.

**What is your dream of peace?** Peace will make us to live in a developing world. My dream for peace is honesty, security, commitment and transparency, make the peace to stand firm in the whole world. May peace prevail on earth; politicians should not use youths as tools for war. Youth should serve as role models in terms of showing positive ideas in development.



**Hadja Mariama Camara** | Nationalité: Guinéenne | Age: 22 | Occupation: étudiante | Organisation d'origine: Parlement de la MRU | Email: mariamasuzanne@yahoo.fr |

**Motivation** Pour une meilleure intégration dans mon milieu. Parce que rien ne peut se faire sans la paix, elle est primordiale et précieuse; elle est à préserver.  
**Quel est ton rêve de paix?** L'unité dans la solidarité.



**Marie Admire Kanu** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Age: 28 | Occupation: facilitator | Organisation: Lutheran World Federation/ WS | Email: fromglorytoglory2002@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I think as a member of the MRU it is a right for me to become a member and to see that peace reigns in all the MRU countries. I think without peace yourself is not peace, and because I like peace that's why I engaged myself in peacebuilding.

**What is your dream of peace?** To see peace reign all over the world



**Yeanoh Conteh** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Age: 22 | Occupation: Student | Organisation: WAYN | Email: ykonteh@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** I see it fit to become a member of the MRU YP because I want to promote peace in the region concerns.

**What is your dream of peace?** To maintain sustainable peace in the Mano River Union



**Linda Becker** | Nationality: Liberian | Occupation: student | Organisation: WAYN Liberia | Email: beckerlinda83@yahoo.com



**Olu Femi Macauley** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Age: 25 | Occupation: community development worker/logistic officer | Organisation: Peacelinks education organisation | Email: peacelinks2@yahoo.com |

**Motivation** Because I want to be actively involved in decision making processes in the MRU youth parliament and also to campaign for development peace and solidarity.

**What is your dream of peace?** My dream is to see Africa free from wars, HIV/ aids pandemic etc. by that we can live in a peaceful atmosphere with love, unity and harmony.



**Jeffrey Kangbai** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Email: Jeffrey@kangbai.com |



**Sulaiman Kargbo** | Nationality: Sierra Leone | Organisation: UNOY Sierra Leone | Email : uncysieraleone@yahoo.com |



**Victoria Awer** | Nationality: Liberian | Organisation: Voice against violence | Email: voiceagainstvviolence@yahoo.com |



**Alhadji Conteh** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Organisation: Unoy Sierra Leone / Ministry of youth and sports | Email: unoysieraleone@yahoo.com |

## Facilitators



**Richelieu Allison** | Nationality: Liberian | Organisation: West African Youth Network (regional director) | Email: wayn\_regional@yahoo.com |

In 2001 Richelieu Allison, together with other young West African initiated the West African Youth Network to help champion youth participation and Empowerment in the sub-region. He has been involved intensively in the search of peace in the Conflict stricken Mano River Union and was awarded the Peace Promoter of the Year 2001 Award by the Liberian Press for his unique role in involving youth in the conflict resolution process. He considers the MRU Youth Parliament and Peace caravan, a concept he personally initiated in 2003, as his greatest achievement.



**Bockarie Enssah** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Organisation: Civil society movement SL / Commonwealth Youth Caucus / World Peace Prayer Society | Email: enzo\_de\_great@yahoo.com |



**Husham Sessay** | Nationality: Sierra Leonean | Organisation: Unoy Sierra Leone | Email: unoysieraleone@yahoo.com |



This booklet has been prepared as part of the follow up program (executed by Afrometh Foundation) of the Mano River Union Peace Caravan, a project of the MRU youth parliament.

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### West African Youth Network

The MRU youth parliament is an initiative of the West African Youth Network, headed by Richelieu Marcel Allison and based in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The West African Youth Network (WAYN) is a regional youth empowerment organization established by four young people from West Africa in March 2001. WAYN seeks to serve as an advocacy mechanism and Public Policy Voice for the cause of young people in West Africa. WAYN serves as an umbrella structure for youth organizations in West Africa.

[www.waynyouth.org](http://www.waynyouth.org)