

ANNUAL REPORT

2003

WEST AFRICAN YOUTH NETWORK

(WAYN)

"EACH TIME A MAN STANDS UP FOR AN IDEAL, OR ACTS TO IMPROVE THE LOTS OF OTHERS, OR STRIKES OUT AGAINST INJUSTICE, HE SENDS A TINY RIPPLE OF HOPE, AND CROSSING EACH OTHER FROM A MILLION DIFFERENT CENTERS OF ENERGY AND DARING, THOSE RIPPLES BUILD A CURRENT WHICH CAN SWEEP DOWN THE MIGHTIEST WALLS OF REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE"- Robert Kennedy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The intricacies of the year 2003 awaken new challenges to mankind everywhere. Wars, rumours of wars, terrorism, natural disasters, and instability continue to hunt mankind everywhere. The region of West Africa, in particular, witnessed many dramatic events, which helped to exacerbate the suffering of millions, and decimated the lives of many of the region's precious jewels. West Africa, as a region entered the year badly bruised and still trying to recover from years of bad leadership, external and internal manipulation, closed societies, unstable political climates, devastated communities and collapsed systems.

Captivating headlines: "**War Continues in Liberia**"; "**Falling out of with the Ivorian Mercenaries**"; "**Ivorian Conflict hits Cattle trade**"; "**Coup in Guinea Bissau**"; "**Labour Unrest in Nigeria**"; "**Mauritania Coup Failed**"; "**Ceasefire Broken**"; "**HIV/AIDS Takes Toll**"; "**Corruption Threatens Stability**"; "**Government Charged With Human Rights Violations**" "reflected the media coverage of events in West Africa in the year 2003.

During the year under review, elections were held in Togo, Nigeria and Guinea but unfortunately the results of these elections demonstrated the refusal of West African Countries to subscribe to the basic tenets of free and fair elections. The year also witnessed the continuation of conflicts in Liberia and Ivory Coast, a coup detat in Guinea Bissau as well as the massive proliferation of small arms thereby seriously threatening the peace and security of the sub-region.

The fatalities recorded by the conflicts in West Africa brought nothing but tragedy in 2002. Not only did it stifle economic development, democracy, political stability or any other form of improvement, they complicated, and to a large extend, frustrated every plans for the advancement of the region.

This sad state of affairs posed enormous but surmountable responsibilities on the shoulders of the region's youngest citizens. It further increased the challenges faced by organizations working in the fields of conflict resolution, human rights, peace-building, governance and HIV/AIDS Activities.

One of such organizations is the **West African Youth Network (WAYN)**. 2003 was certainly a busy year for us at WAYN. In addition to running our

own programmes we were involved in other programs such as continuing our collaborations and partnership with partner organizations, and regional and international outreach.

The main strategic target for WAYN in 2003 was to promote human rights and good governance, mainstream the participation of young people in peace building, HIV/AIDS Campaigns as well as breakdown traditional paradigms that hamper the holistic involvement of young people in local, national and regional decision making bodies.

In December, WAYN took time out to reflect on the work it has been doing. This enabled the organization to think carefully about the strategies that have worked for it so far and how it can continue to develop the work it do with great youth leaders across the region.

This Report seeks to give a synopsis view of the various programme activities of WAYN during the year 2003. It further examines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the network with the aim of infusing a new level of dynamism into its Action Plan and propelling the organization to a new height. Finally, the Report also encompasses a Proposed Plan of Action and Programme Activities for 2004.

Organizational Background:

The **West African Youth Network (WAYN)** was established in March 2001 by four young people from West Africa who felt the urgent need to mobilize young people to get off the fence and participate in practical activities affecting their future. The creation of the organization was in direct response to the increase in the level of conflicts around the region, coupled with the alarming increase in the number of human rights abuses and violations.

IT'S PROGRAMMES:

WAYN's five main areas of work are:

1. Empowering young people to serve as agents for social transformation and democratic empowerment.
2. Providing an umbrella structure to facilitate coordination amongst youth organizations in West Africa.
3. Advocating and Protecting Human Rights, with particular focus on the rights of women and youth.
4. Promoting Peace-building and Conflict Resolution in the region.
5. Fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS.

STRATEGY:

WAYN's programme strategy, designed and guided by an empowerment framework, is based on promoting peace, democracy, and human rights with focus on youth's rights, opportunities and capacities. WAYN implements its empowerment agenda through seven core strategies that build on the network's comparative advantages:

- Strengthen the capacities and leadership of young people and youth's organizations for conflict resolution, peace and social transformation;
- Create a regional pool of young democrats, human rights defenders and peace builders;
- forge new synergies and partnership amongst youth organizations, governments, the media, Civil Society
- Build an operational knowledge base to influence youth empowerment
- Undertake pilot and demonstrative projects to harness the energies of young people to fight HIV/AIDS.
- Engender governance, democracy and human rights.
- General Advocacy and campaigning

As a vehicle for informed and effective advocacy, WAYN works to raise the priorities of young people in the perceptions of decision makers and opinion leaders around the region. By building alliances, the network work to expand the effectiveness and reach of individuals and groups dedicated to peace-building, human rights, good governance, democracy and youth empowerment.

The network shares experiences and best practices through its training programs, forums, and advocacy and outreach programs. WAYN is promoting an integral program of action in the following areas:

-Research and Monitoring: The Network is building a regional monitoring and dissemination system to and to keep track of particular themes;

-Networking and Capacity Building: The Network promotes and coordinates training and capacity building for youth organization, as part of efforts to empower young people;

-Campaigning and Advocacy: The Network promotes and coordinates campaigning for the empowerment of young people and undertakes advocacy on its thematic issues:

A. Annual Board Meeting

The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of WAYN was held in Monrovia, on 29 February 2003 with only three members from Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone participating:

- 1. Ojeniyi Adeola Abolanle-Nigeria**
- 2. Menamuta B. Jalloh-Sierra Leone**
- 3. Richelieu M. Allison-Liberia (Secretary)**

It is worth mentioning that the Meeting was convened after several delays, due primirily to the lack of funds to ensure the physical present of Board Members. The meeting, however, convened with the participation of the other two members on line.

During the meeting, the Regional Director extensively briefed the Board of the activities of WAYN in 2002 and further presented a Programme Plan of

Action for 2003. The Board reviewed the Report for 2002 and the 2003 Programme Plan of Action and commended the Secretariat for its commitment to implementing the Mandate of the Network despite the lack of resources to effectively tackle the numerous Programme activities.

After a day of deliberation, the Board mandated the Regional Secretariat to embark upon the following activities in 2003:

1. Foster Sustained Partnerships with governments, regional bodies, The Media, Women groups, Civil Society Groups and the donor community
2. Launch a major advocacy campaign aimed at encouraging the participation of young people in politics and local, national and regional decision making institutions
3. Formulate an Institutional Development Programme to strengthen the Institutional Capacity of the Network
4. Develop and undertake innovative projects in the areas of governance and democracy, peace building, HIV/AIDS and conflict resolution, in line with the Mission Statement of WAYN
5. Extend the membership base through the accreditation of more youth groups and the extension of programme activities to French speaking countries

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Armed with mandate of the Board, along with an astute organizational ability and a thorough sense of commitment, the Regional Secretariat sought out to carve and implement innovative pilot and demonstration projects in 2003. The following are some of the principal initiatives undertaken during the year under review: `

1. MRU Youth Training Seminar on Peace-building, Conflict Resolution and Children's Rights

With Support from the Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA), WAYN organized a Special Training seminar for more than thirty five young people from Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The objectives of the seminar were to provide training in non-violent conflict resolution,

leadership and Management, human rights and promote peace in the troubled MRU Region and established the MRU Youth Parliament as a catalyst for youth empowerment in the region.

The seminar was convened in Freetown, Sierra Leone from 27 July-3 August 2003. It included a Special Youth Peace Caravan by young people to Liberia and Guinea and a Peace Meeting with President Tejan Kabbah by youth representatives at the Presidential Lodge in Freetown on August 15, 2003.

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The seminar was a resounding success with the installation of the Officials of the newly established MRU Youth Parliament on 3 August and the realization of its objectives. The officials of the Parliament include:

A. Hon. Mohammed Toure-Guinea

B. Hon. Ms. Salamatu Kamara-Sierra Leone

C. Hon Ms. Wede Seekey-Liberia

Since the seminar, participants have been involved in further defining the role of the Parliament and have succeeded in drafting new statutes, informing the governments of their respective countries and authorities of the Mano River Union Secretariat in Freetown.

The first session of the Parliament is scheduled to convene in Conakry, Guinea in July 2004. The Network is presently working along with the Parliament to ensure the success of this endeavour. The final Report of the Seminar is posted on the website of the United Network of Young Peace builders, an important partner and affiliate of WAYN (www.unoy.org).

2. Youth and HIV/AIDS

Realizing the danger posed by HIV/AIDS epidemic, the Regional Secretariat sought to incorporate HIV/AIDS as an integral part of its Programme Agenda 2003. In line with this, the Secretariat organized a three-day workshop for twenty youth organizations in Liberia from 17-20 April 2003. The seminar devoted much of its time to discussing stigmatization, discrimination and the danger of the disease.

The Country Teams executed seminar workshops in Freetown, Sierra Leone and Lagos, Nigeria in May. These workshops recommended the

strengthening of WAYN's HIV/AIDS Initiative as a means of mobilizing young people across the region.

Despite the availability of a newer combination of drugs, HIV/AIDS remains a fatal disease amongst young people due mainly to ignorance. WAYN recognizes the serious threat of the disease to the future of the region and will continue to design and implement projects aimed at fighting the scourge of the disease.

3. Peace-building Initiative

Peace building remains a vital component of the Programme Activities of WAYN. The Network's Peace building Programme aims to help find lasting solution to the multifaceted conflict in the sub-region. Building up from experiences gained from its involvement in the MRU's Conflict in 2001, the network sought to help bridge the gap of mistrusts and suspicions amongst neighbours in the region.

In June 2003, four members of the Sierra Leonean Chapter of the Network embarked upon a Peace Mission to Liberia. While in Monrovia, they met with high officials of the Liberian government, including the Ministers of Youth and State. A scheduled visit to rebel controlled areas and a meeting with the then Liberian leader was aborted at the last minute due to the intensification of the conflict in Monrovia. The visit of the delegation was mainly to promote peace.

On 15 August 2003, a high-powered WAYN's delegation met with President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone. The meeting, which was part of the MRU Youth Seminar, provided an opportunity for the youth to brief the Sierra Leonean leaders of their peace ventures and appealed to him to utilize his good offices to mend the ties between Liberia and Guinea. President Kabbah, for his part briefed his youthful guest about the events in the Mano River Union and promised to work for peace.

A delegation from the Network also visited border towns between Sierra Leone and Guinea in August to identify with the problems of the local people and to help foster cross-border dialogue.

On August 1, 2003, the Network had an informal meeting with a senior Official of the Liberian rebel group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), Mr. Edward Farley in Freetown. The meeting was

intended to express the grievances of the network as they relate to the recruitment of child soldiers.

4. Partnership/Advocacy

Over the last twelve months WAYN has established and maintained closer contacts, communications and channels of exchange of information, ideas and concerns with Regional bodies, Governments, The Media, Civil Society and women Groups. Amongst the key partnerships developed and sustained in 2003 include:

a. **African Youth Parliament.** The African Youth Parliament (AYP) is based in Nairobi, Kenya. It seeks to promote youth empowerment and social integration in Africa. In March, AYP hosted an Assembly of African Youth in Nairobi, Kenya. Based upon a Memorandum of Understanding signed in Cotonou, Benin in November 2002 between WAYN and the AYP, the Network was selected as an Action Partner of the Foundation in March.

b. **Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSC).** CSC campaigns to prevent the use of child soldiers and to promote their demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration. It was formed in May 1998 by six leading non-governmental organizations. Its Secretariat is based in London, England. In January 2003, a line of communication was open between CSC and WAYN. CSC contributed information materials on Child Soldiers for use by the participants at the MRU Youth Seminar on 24 January. WAYN formally completed the application for CSC's membership on 19 February. In March, CSC requested WAYN to acts as its Focal Point in West Africa. Notes were also exchanged between the two organizations about the possibility of convening a Regional Seminar on Child Soldiers in June, as part of activities marking the Day of the African Child. However, this project did not materialize.

c. **Child Protection Unit, ECOWAS.** WAYN maintains a very cordial and rewarding relationship with the Child Protection Office of the Economic Community of West African States. This Unit continues to provide technical assistance to WAYN in the area of Child protection. Discussions aimed at convening a Regional Seminar on War Affected Children as a follow up to the Accra Conference on War Affected Children 2000 were held between WAYN's Regional Director and the Head of the Unit, Mr. Ibrahima Diouf.

d. African Network of Young Peace builder(ANYP) The ANYP was established in Franschhoek, South Africa in July 2001 by young people from 34 African countries with a special focus to analyze the role of young African in peace building. WAYN joined the Network in 2002 and remains an active member during the year, contributing positively to various Peace and conflict resolution Interventions.

f. United Network of Young Peace builders (UNOY). UNOY Foundation is based in the Netherlands and is involve in youth programmes around the globe. It oversees the activities of the ANYP. During the year UNOY Foundation provided UNOY provided immense technical support to the work of WAYN Two small grants in July and December to help cope with the transfer of WAYN activities from Liberia to Sierra Leone.

Activities of WAYN are hosted on the website of UNOY. In November, WAYN commenced work with UNOY Foundation on the formulation of the necessary strategies for the hosting of an On Line Youth Transforming Conflict Course and a Face-to-Face Meeting in Freetown for young people from West Africa in 2004. This project will be held in collaboration with the Network University, UNOY-Sierra Leone, the Dutch National Youth Council, All African Student Union and the Student Forum 2000. WAYN is making a significant contribution to the proposed project activities.

g. United Nations of Youth-Sierra Leone (UNOY-Sierra Leone). During the year, WAYN developed a very positive partnership with the United Nations of Youth-Sierra Leone. This partnership paid off well when UNOY-Sierra Leone provided immense technical assistance to the convening of the MRU Youth Seminar in Freetown. UNOY-Sierra Leone also provided moral and emergency assistance to the Network during its initial transfer to Freetown. UNOY-Sierra Leone was established in 1989 as an affiliate of UNOY Foundation and has been involved in innovative programs in the areas of peace-building and conflict resolution.

h. Open Society Initiative of West Africa.(OSIWA) OSIWA is based in Dakar, Senegal. It is dedicated to supporting the creation of open societies in West Africa marked by functioning democracy, good governance; the rule of law, wide spread civil participation and basic freedoms. During the year it proved to be a major funding partner of WAYN, providing the financial support for the MRU Youth Training Seminar. WAYN hope to develop a

more sustained partnership with OSIWA especially in the areas of youth empowerment, peace-building, HIV/AIDS democracy, human rights and good governance.

i. Peace Building Department, University of Sierra Leone. During the year, the Peace building Department of the University of Sierra Leone provided technical support to the Peace Building Initiative of the Network. WAYN hopes to seek future collaborations with this Department for the short-term training of young people from across the region.

J. NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD)

In July 2003, WAYN was invited to participate in the Civil Society Meeting of NEPAD, which convened in Maputo, Mozambique in July. However, due to poor communication problems, resulting from the problems in Monrovia, Liberia at the time, it was not possible to participate in this important meeting.

k. Action for Conflict Transformation-West Africa (ACTWA). Based in Freetown, Sierra Leone, ACTWA focuses on Conflict Management and Transformation in West Africa. A Memorandum of understanding seeking to promote the involvement of young people in conflict transformation activities was signed between the two institutions in November.

L. World Health Organization-Freetown Office. The WHO Country Office in Sierra Leone, through its Representative, Dr. Joaquim Saweka presented one Basic Health Kit to WAYN on 31 July for use at the MRU Youth Seminar.

Beside those mentioned above, WAYN also forged closer ties with other Local regional and international institutions, civil society groups and donor agencies.

5. Human Rights and Gender Initiatives

WAYN recognizes the importance of human rights and democratic values as essential elements in the building of a vibrant region. Accordingly, during the year a new unit, a Human Rights and Gender Unit was set up, under the leadership of Ms. Hadja Camera of Guinea.

This action was in direct response to one of the resolutions adopted at the first West African Youth Summit held in Monrovia from 16-20 November 2001. At the end of the summit, the participants, being cognizant of the increase in the number of human rights violations and gender based violence across the sub-region, mandated the Regional Secretariat to create a Human Rights and Gender Desk, specifically to engage in human rights education, promotion, gender mainstreaming and democratic development.

In September 2003, a two day Enrichment and Strategy Meeting was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone by the Regional Secretariat to basically define and formulate a Human Rights' Plan of Action for the Network. At the end of the exercise, which was primarily characterized by brainstorming and frank exchange of ideas, the participants agreed to adopt the following activities to form an integral part of the Human Rights Programmes 2004-2005 of the West African Youth Network:

1. Human Right Education

- a. Strengthen the capacity of youth organizations to undertake human rights education efforts (e.g., training, awareness campaigns, information dissemination and advocacy) aimed at building a regional culture of peace
- b. Provide a unique opportunity for youth to deepen their understanding of human rights and of the essential role of human rights education in effecting social change.

2. The Promotion and Protection of women and children's rights

- a. Violence against women
- b. Traditional practices affecting women
- c. Child Soldiers and Child Protection Initiatives
- d. Child Labour

3. Human Rights Advocacy and Awareness Campaign

- a. Undertakes advocacy and coordinate human rights campaigns amongst young people aimed at raising human rights awareness at regional and local level;
- b. Adopt a Research, Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism to monitor human rights abuses and violation at national and regional levels;

c. Launch an Annual Youth Human Rights Report to help report and measure the human rights records of West African Countries and progress made on human rights issues by these countries.

6. Child Protection Programme

Practical discussions were held with the Child Protection Unit of ECOWAS on the need to organize a Regional Consultation as a follow up to the Accra Declaration on Child Soldiers. This consultation is aimed at following up the progress made from the Accra Meeting which was held in 2000. The ground round for this important initiative is still being work out.

A Mano River Union Sub Regional Mechanism on Child Soldiers was formulated in August as part of the MRU Youth Seminar. This Mechanism has targeted the full DDR of child soldiers in Liberia and has commenced work in this direction, in collaboration with the Country Team of Liberia, the UN Mission in Liberia and other relevant institutions.

In February, The Network joined the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldier; a UK based International Network working to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers, to secure their demobilization and to ensure their reintegration into society.

In August, the Network took up issue with the Liberian rebel group, LURD on the continuous recruitment and use of children as child soldiers. In a meeting in Freetown, WAYN expressed dismayed over the continuous use of children as soldiers in the Liberian crisis. The representative of LURD categorically denied the new recruitment of children and presented a Press Release dated 30 May 2003 from its Voinjama Headquarters requesting all its commanders to undertake the disarmament of all children within their ranks and files to support his statement.

6. Democratic and Governance Initiative

During the year under review, elections were held in Togo, Nigeria and Guinea but unfortunately the results of these elections demonstrated the refusal of West African Countries to subscribe to the basic tenets of free and fair elections. The continuous lack of transparency and good governance has contributed largely to the increased in the number of civilian conflicts around the region.

WAYN has continued to stress the importance of inculcating the concept of good governance and transparency at all levels of society, commencing from national governments. In a region saddened with regional conflicts, WAYN has further stressed the need for the adoption of the basic tenets of democracy in the region to help create an open society and avoid the violent change of governments that have too often characterized the political climate of West Africa.

Toward these ends, the organization developed a number of proposals during the year and has commenced seeking the support of the donor community in this direction. One of its basis projects seeks to empower young people as agents for the consolidation of democracy, good governance and transparency in the region.

A long term objective of WAYN's Democratic Initiative is to build a regional pool of young democrats and to further seek and encourage the election of more young people and women to national and regional decision making institutions. WAYN shall therefore continue to seek support for its Governance and Democratic Initiatives as it is of the firm conviction that Democracy and good governance are sine qua non to the survival of West Africa.

AFRICA'S FUTURE PLAQUE 2002

The Africa's Future Plaque is an annual award initiated by the Network in 2002 to recognize the selfless efforts of those individuals and institutions that through their actions have contributed to the advancement of peace, good governance, human rights and youth empowerment in the region. The Plaque has also serve as an advocacy tool. It is governed by a Special Regional Board of Trustees who is charged with the responsibility of approving and endorsing all nominees for the Award.

In early 2003, the Board received more than eight nominees for 2002 from across the region. After two months of deliberation and discussion, President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, who was nominated by members of the Sierra Leonean Chapter for his role in the search for peace in the Mano River Union Basin, was unanimously approved as winner of the Award for 2002. President Kabbah was presented the Award in August 2003 at an elaborate ceremony in Freetown.

In November 2003, more than ten institutions and personalities were nominated for the 2003 AWARD and the Board has commenced passing on the various nominations.

Designing of New Logo

A new logo was designed and subsequently approved in July 2003 for use by the Network. Designed by Patrick Mason of Liberia, it officially came into use on 10 August 2003.

NEW Country Team and Representatives

In 2003, the Regional Secretariat, in keeping with the mandate of the Board, set up to decentralize the overall activities of the network, with particular focus on extending its programme activities to francophone countries.

Accordingly, the following new Country Representatives were selected:

- 1. Andre Aafanou-Togo**
- 2. Makingfing Konate-Mali**

They have both accepted their new assignments and have joined the bandwagon of emerging leaders determined to break down traditional paradigms and forge ahead for a new West Africa.

REGIONAL SECRETARIAT

The Regional Secretariat continues to implement the mandate of the Board in accordance with the Mission Statement of WAYN. A Regional Director, who is ably, assisted by two Programme Officers, who worked on a part time basis, heads the Secretariat.

Owing largely to the conflict in the Liberian capital, the offices of the Regional Secretariat were transferred from Monrovia to Freetown, Sierra Leone in July. As a result of this, the Secretariat lacks basic office equipments at the moment to fully meet its demanding challenges. Even before this transfer, the Office was faced with some rental problems early on in the year due to the lack of needed resources for the new fiscal year.

At the moment, the Secretariat is housed at the National Stadium Complex in the heart of Freetown. As a result of the transfer, the Country Office in

Freetown had to be upgraded through the procurement of the necessary legal registration documents from the relevant institutions in Freetown. The Secretariat was also constrained to employ the services of Mr. Ansu Konneh as Financial Consultant to help formulate and maintain the financial system of the institution. Mr. Kanneh, a Sierra Leonean National and a graduate of the Fourah Bay College, has achieved a lot in a short period of time.

During the period under review, Ms. Hadja Camera of Guinea also worked part time at the Secretariat for about three month as Gender Focal Point trying to set up the Gender Desk of WAYN. She also helped to coordinate the activities of the MRU Youth Parliament and serve as French Translator, helping the Secretariat in this important assignment.

The United Network of Youth Foundation and the United Nations of Youth-Sierra Leone provided immense financial and emergency assistance to WAYN during the year to help cope with the difficulties resulting from the transfer to Freetown.

Present Staff and Associates:

Position	Name	Nationality
Regional Director	Richelieu Allison	Liberian
Programme Coordinator	Ojeniyi Adeola Abolanle	Nigerian
Sr Programme Officer	Vacant	
Assistant Programme Officer	Hadja Camara	Guinean
Assistant Programme Officer	Ansu Konneh	Sierra Leonean

Country Representatives:

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>Representative</u>
1.Ghana	Victor Erin
2. Liberia	Finley Karngar

3. Mali	Makifing Konate
4. Nigeria	Ojeniyi Adeola Abolanle
5. Sierra Leone	Ms. Sokinny Allen
6. Togo	Andre Aafanou
7. Guinea	Ms. Hadja Camera
8. Ivory Coast	
9. Benin	Vacant

ANNUAL EVALUATION MEETING

The annual **Programme Evaluation Meeting (PEM)** was convened in Freetown on 11 December. This meeting was basically intended to help the secretariat identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Network during the year under review as well as the lessons learned and challenges, with the aim of adopting recommendations to help guide the activities of the organization in 2004.

The following observations were highlighted:

- The lack of an organizational website. In such an advance information age, the importance of a website cannot be overemphasised. It greatly enhances the work of an organization and help to disseminate information on a regular basis. It was therefore stressed that a website be developed and maintained as soon as possible. The unique role of UNOY FOUNDATION in hosting relevant information pertaining to the network was however commended.
- The lack of adequate participation of young people across the region in regional and public decision making processes have greatly affected the contribution of young people to social transformations and democratic changes. It is recommended that WAYN adopt an Aggressive Advocacy Project to encourage the participation of more young people and women in politics and decision-making bodies.

- The project should actively encourage the mass participation of young people and women in democratic campaigns, elections and other activities that will promote the candidacies of women and young people.
- The need to augment the programme Team of the network. Over the last few months, the activities of WAYN has grown tremendously, in line with the many challenges that continue to confront the youths of West Africa and there is an urgent need for the infusing of new staff members into the overall programme activities of the institution. Attention should be paid to the recruitment of professional staff members, on voluntary and part-time basis to help implement the numerous activities of the network.
 - The current programme of cooperation and partnership with relevant institutions has contributed immensely to the attainment of the network's objectives. The need to establish and nurture constructive and creative partnerships in a manner that would not only leverage and help accelerate the process of regional change and youth empowerment but would also significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of utilization of the donor resources cannot be overemphasized as well.
 - That Mr. Andre Aafanou, Country Representative of Togo, be selected as Human Rights Focal Point to oversee the Human Rights Unit of the Network. This young Togolese journalist holds a Master Degree in Law and could help to strengthen this very important component of WAYN in the coming months.
 - That the Freetown country Office be strengthened along side the Monrovia office to effectively coordinate the activities of the network and that necessary equipment, computers, etc is procured. An Institutional Development Proposal is developed in this direction.

OBITUARY

In August, the Network was hit with the sad news of the death of one of its Programme Assistants Mr. Edward Urias Swaray, Jr. A Liberian, Swaray played an important role in coordinating the logistical arrangements of the MRU Youth Seminar from Monrovia to Freetown and served the institution from its early days. Armed men reportedly killed him during the fracas in Monrovia. May his soul and the souls of all departed youth rest in eternal peace

Appreciation and Special Acknowledgement:

WAYN wishes to acknowledge the contribution and support of the following individuals and institutions that made significant contributions toward the attainment of its objectives during the year. This Report would be uncompleted if we failed to recognize their work and efforts. We look forward to further enhancing our partnerships and collaborations in 2004.

- 1. Open Society Initiative of West Africa**
- 2. Ministry of Youth and Sport, Sierra Leone**
- 3. Ms. Maria Kooijman**
Executive Secretary, United Network of Youth
- 4. United Network of Youth, the Netherlands**
- 5. Ms Christiana Clarke**
Former Programme Officer-Africa
Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers
- 6. Mr Ibrahima Diouf**
Special Advisor, Child Protection
ECOWAS
- 7. Positive Africa-Ivory Coast**
- 8. Peace Studies Department**
University of Sierra Leone
- 9. United Nations of Youth-Sierra Leone**
- 10. Mrs. Mary Dunn-Gadeh**
Yeato Educational Center-Liberia

- 11. Ms. Dorothy Ndungu**
Nairobi Peace Initiative-Nairobi, Kenya
- 12. African Network of Young Peace builders**
- 12. Mr. Chidiki Ndukwu**
Nigerian Student Union of the Nation Nations
- 13. The Inquirer Newspaper-Liberia**
- 14. Africa Peace-Cotonou, Benin**
- 15. African Youth Parliament, Nairobi, Kenya**
- 16. African Network of Young Peace builders**

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Victor Erin
Ghana Country Representative

"If obstacles beset our path to peace and progress; if hurdles obstruct our ways; and if anxious questions abrade the air of our confidence, let these be neither immovable barriers nor unsolvable riddles, but let them be viewed, rather, as stringent tests of our faith; exacting measures of our courage; searching scrutinise of our purpose, which will provide rigid determinations of the dynamic strength of our will to succeed."-William Richard Tolbert, Jr. former President of Liberia and Chairman of the OAU