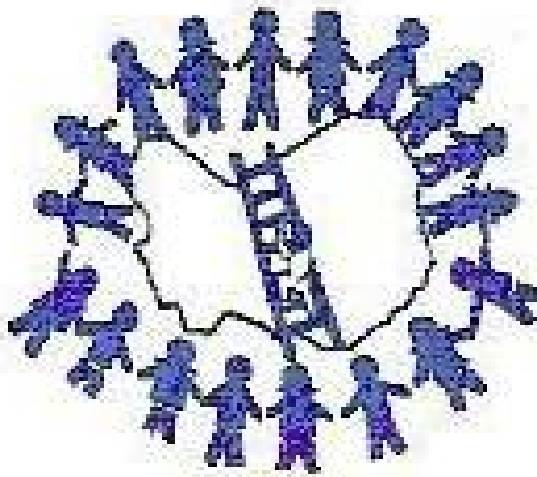


# WEST AFRICAN YOUTH NETWORK

"Ennobling the minds of young people for the  
creation of wholesome functioning societies in West  
Africa"



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2004

"IF YOU THINK SMALL THINGS CANNOT MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE, YOU SOULD TRY SLEEPING IN A ROOM FILL  
WITH MOSQUITOS"-Unknown

## **INTRODUCTION**

The **West African Youth Network (WAYN)** wishes to extend felicitations to all its members, associates, staff, youth groups, stakeholders and donors.

The year 2004 was a busy and important one for WAYN, as we were able to implement a number of projects and programs aimed at breaking down traditional paradigms that tends to affect the involvement of youth in regional issues. In 2004, WAYN extended its donor base, an action that proved to be very effective for the organization's institutional building capacity and work plan.

It is acknowledged that 2004 was not a bad year for West Africa. The elections in Ghana brought a new hope for democracy in the region. The manner in which the elections were held and the results accepted can best be described as a beacon of hope for West Africa. Elsewhere the level of violence that crept up in Nigeria and the continuous civil conflict in Ivory Coast shattered the hope of peace loving people in the region.

However, the disarmament process in Liberia and the last minute attempt to broker peace in the long standing casamance crisis in Senegal demonstrated to us the need for continuous dialogue as a means of reshaping the destiny of our region. The role of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** in helping to resolve conflicts in the region also proved crucial to conflict transformation in West Africa.

In the coming year, we will continue to lobby for greater transparency and accountability in local and regional decision-making processes, and ensure that young people are raised with a mindset towards regional peace, justice and equity. The issue of youth in decision-making and peace building processes is now central to the Programme Agenda of WAYN.

WAYN believes that it is only through direct participation that the voices of young people can be heard. We believe that young people need to be actively involved in all aspects of their societies, so that they can actively contribute toward development processes. It is time that youth are acknowledged as pivotal and integral components in all dimensions of governance. It is time that young people serve as Pressure Mechanisms for Transparency, Good Governance and Accountability in West Africa. WAYN is committed to achieving these noble objectives.

**Organizational Background:**

The **West African Youth Network** 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;

## **ROGRAMME ACTIVITIES 2004**

In consonance with its Mission Statement, the following programmes were undertaken during the year:

### **Youth Transforming Conflict Seminar**

In April 2004, **WAYN** collaborated with the United Network of Young Peace builders (The Netherlands), United Network of Young Peace builders of Sierra Leone and the Network University of The Netherlands to organize and host a Youth Transforming Conflict young people from around Africa. The event which was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone from 18-29 April brought together more than forty youth leaders from West, Central, East Africa and the Great Lakes region. It was preceded by a two week on line training programme. The Project directly targets young people actively involved in peace building activities in West Africa and youth from other conflict torn regions.

#### **The Objectives of the seminar:**

1. To create a **complementary regional face-to-face and online learning environment on conflict transformation and peace building** for improving the knowledge, skills and capacities of local youth leaders.
2. To facilitate an **exchange of experience and practice among youth leaders working in conflict-affected regions**, and strengthen their capacity to network and develop joint projects at local, national and regional levels (self-help networks).

3. To **empower young people** by increasing their knowledge and understanding of conflict dynamics and its root causes, conflict transformation as a tool for intervention, and by exploring the role young people can play in conflict situations and post-conflict development.
4. To **develop young leaders' competence** to use, adapt and develop skills, methods and tools in conflict transformation relevant to the needs of their local contexts and multiplying them.
5. To **increase young peoples' capacity** to deal with the inter- and intra-personal, community and organizational, cultural, social and political dimensions of conflict (including reconciliation and healing).
6. To **involve young peace builders in designing, planning and implementing strategies for peace** in the context of the Global Campaign "Peace It Together" for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence.
7. To **increase youth participation and access to learning**, by benefiting from on-line tools as an effective instrument for social transformation.

### **Mano River Union Peace Caravan**

The involvement of young people in peace building activities remains a vital component of the agenda of WAYN. Being cognizant of this, an unprecedented and rewarding Peace Caravan was organized by WAYN in

November. The Caravan brought together young people from Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone and was sponsored by Plan Netherlands, Alert (The Netherlands), Xminy Solidarity Funds (The Netherlands) and Afroneth (The Netherlands). The below Media Release summed up the activities and spirit of the Caravan:

*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 sub region. This peace caravan was an initiative of the Mano River Union Youth Parliament, supported by the West African Youth Network (WAYN). It preceded the first session of the MRU youth parliament that took place in Conakry, 21-25<sup>th</sup> November 2004.*

*The caravan started in Conakry and then found its way through border village 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. 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 deputies 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 visited the Mano River Union secretariat in Freetown and the MRU peace forum. 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.*

*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.*

### **FIRST SESSION, MANO RIVER UNION YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

The First Session of the MRU Youth Parliament was organized in Conakry, Guinea FROM 21-25 November. The Session, which was a follow up to the

MRU Youth Training Workshop on Peace building held in Freetown in 2003, was sponsored by the **Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA)**. It brought together forty youth leaders from Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. The Opening and Closing Session of the Parliament was held in the National Parliamentary Building in Guinea.

The first session provided the forum for the Parliament to deliberate on key issues affected young people in the region. At the end of the Parliament, the participants adopted a New Statues and a Collective Plan of Action. It must be noted that the Government of Guinea, through the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture assisted greatly with the implementation of the Parliament's activities. *This represents a genuine example of effective collaboration between government and civil society*

#### **4. MANO RIVER UNION DIALOGUE DAY**

The MRU Dialogue Day was held on 23 November and form part of the activities of the MRU Youth Parliament. It was designed to bring together policy makers and young people to discuss the future of the MRU. The Programme was addressed by the Acting Secretary general of the Mano River Union. MR. H. M. B. Tejan, Mohammed Toure, Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Anthony Koroma, Director of Youth, Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr. Oumar Ndong, Director, MRU Peace and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Guinea.

Some of the key issues arising from the discussion include the Free Movement of People, the protocols of the MRU and Youth Participation; and HIV/AIDS. A Mechanism to ensure an effective follow up of the Recommendations arising from the Dialogue Day has been put into place.

### **International Peace and Justice Garden**

On April 23, a request was made by **WAYN** to the Special Prosecutor of the Special Court of Sierra Leone, Dr. David Crane for the establishment of a Peace and Justice Garden at the Special Court. This request was made on behalf of the participants at the Youth Transforming Conflict Seminar held in Freetown, Sierra Leone from 18-28 April 2004.

The request was duly approved and a Project Proposal was submitted to the Court by **WAYN** and the **United Network of Young Peace builders-Sierra Leone**. As a result, a special garden was constructed before the entrance of the imposing court complex in Freetown. The garden is presently awaiting dedication.

### **Campaigning and Advocacy-YENGA**

In line with its Advocacy Strategy, **WAYN** launched a campaign aimed at highlighting awareness on the issues of Yenga, a border town between Guinea and Sierra Leone. During the year, the issue of occupation became a major issue and a fact finding mission from **WAYN** visited the town to gather first hand information in August. A sustained Media Campaign was

conducted to highlight the fragile issue. Fortunately, the Governments of Guinean and Sierra Leone issued a Communiqué allaying the fears of all.

### **PARTNERSHIP**

During the year, WAYN continue to foster ties with relevant stakeholders, partners, donor, youth groups and Governments in order to ensure the achievement of its inherent objectives. Towards this end, a number of contacts were made and maintained. Notably amongst these include:

#### **a. Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sierra Leone**

The Center is an integral part of the University of Sierra Leone. It is located at Fourah Bay College, Freetown and serves as a think tank and learning center for Peace Building and Conflict Resolution. The Center remains a vital partner in the area of Leadership training and Peace education. In early August, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Center for the establishment of an annual West African Youth Leadership Training Programme at the University of Sierra Leone.

The leadership Programme seeks to prepare West African youth leaders for future challenges. A Comprehensive Project Document has been completed and funding is presently being sought for this important initiative. As part of the Programme, the Center has already developed a Training Module.

<b>TRAINING MODULES</b>
<b>WEST AFRICAN FUTURE LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME</b>
<b>DEVELOPED BY THE CENTER FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES</b>

<b>ECOWAS: History, Challenges and Development</b>
<b>A History of African Leadership: The genesis of crisis</b>
<b>Leadership: Types and Techniques</b>
<b>Governance and Citizenship Education</b>
<b>Conflict Resolution: Concepts, Skills and Techniques</b>
<b>Election Observation and Monitoring</b>
<b>Introduction to Human Rights and HR Monitoring</b>
<b>Mediation: Skills, Techniques and qualities of a Mediator</b>
<b>Introduction of Peace Education</b>
<b>Democracy and Good Governance; Concept</b>
<b>Project Management and HIV/AIDS</b>

**b. Afroneth**

Afroneth believes the development of Africa depends to a large extent on Africans themselves and on a new partnership between African living in Africa and abroad. Its vision is to bring together Africans in the International Diaspora and Africans on the continent and to inspire a new synergy between them for the benefit of Africa.

In November 2004, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between WAYN and Afroneth, a Dutch based organization. Owing largely to the partnership between the two groups, WAYN was able to attract funding from about four Dutch organizations for the MRU Peace caravan in

November. WAYN further recognizes this partnership as been essential in linking up the activities of West African Youth with that of the compatriots in the Diaspora. A Delegation from Afroneth is expected to visit WAYN in the coming year to hold discussions aimed at exploring areas for future collaborations

**c. MRU Peace Forum**

The MRU Peace Forum is based in Freetown, Sierra Leone and is a civil society based movement for the MRU. The Forum has provided tremendous technical support to the work of WAYN. IN November, this partnership paid off greatly when the Peace Forum provided support to the convening of the MRU Youth Parliament and Peace Caravan. The Forum participated in the MRU Dialogue Day. WAYN also participated in the MRU Forum Management Meeting on October 4 in Freetown, Sierra Leone

**d. Youth for Peace in Africa Foundation**

The Youth for Peace in Africa is an independent organization created by African Young Peace builders to mobilize and facilitate the energy of African youth organizations into positive action. The overall objective of the YPA is to enable young Africans and their organizations to contribute to the emergence and sustenance of a culture of peace at all level of their engagement for a long lasting peace in Africa. WAYN is a founding member of the YPA

## **F. United Network of Young Peace builders-Sierra Leone**

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. UNOY-SL continued to serve as an action partner of WAYN in the area of youth empowerment in Sierra Leone.

## **G. South African Youth Movement**

The SADC Youth Movement is a South African based organization working with and among young people from academic institutions and the wider community within the SADC Region in empowering them to develop a vision for transformation of society and creating a better world. The Movement is presently coordinating the NEPAD Youth Summit 2005. WAYN is presently collaborating with SADC in ensuring the participation of West African youths in this event.

## **h African Child Policy Forum**

The African Child Policy forum is knowledge based policy and advocacy centre committed to the promotion and realization of child rights and welfare in Africa, The forum is a non-profit independent institution founded in 2003. It is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and recently set up a Youth Support Unit.

## **International Conference and Seminars**

In recognition of its role as a vital partner in the area of youth development, **WAYN** was invited to participate in a number of international programs and forums during the year. Some of these included:

## **African Development Forum V**

In October, WAYN was invited to participate in the Fourth African Development Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by the Economic Commission of Africa. The Forum was held from 11-15 October. The overall objective of the forum is to facilitate a process of consensus building among the key stakeholders of African development—the African governments, civil society, researchers and academics, intergovernmental organizations and donors.

The forum seeks to formulate sharply defined, time-bound actionable programs that can be implemented within the capacity of African countries. It also aims to enhance the donor community's familiarity with African development aspirations and priorities, which will enable donor programs to be more responsive to locally determined needs.

### **PRE ADF YOUTH SYMPOSIUM**

As part of activities leading to the ADF-V, a pre youth symposium was held on October 10. WAYN was selected to serve as one of the discussants and presented a paper on Youth and Governance.

The pre-ADF youth symposium was intended to provide a platform for dialogue between various youth groups, experts and individuals on issues of programme planning to enable young people to make contributions to current policy debates. Most importantly, it sought to bring to the forefront of the ADF IV discussions, the importance of rigorously addressing issues affecting the youth. The objectives of the pre-ADF symposium on 'Youth and Governance' included



- Share knowledge and information, and take stock of the various challenges afflicting Africa's youth.
- Define policy actions and key recommendations addressing the challenges facing Africa's youth.
- Establish priorities and identify modalities to impact African leaders, youths, development partners and international organizations in carrying forward the pressing significance of youth development on the governance agenda.
- Consider further the modalities for collaboration in order to create synergies among youth groups.

### **Pan African Youth Symposium**

From December 6-7, WAYN participated in the Pan African Youth Symposium, which was organized by the African Child Policy Forum and held at the Hilton Hotel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The objective of the symposium was to provide a discussion forum, where representatives of youth organizations and network could elaborate on their shared vision on possible ways of strengthening youth organizations and networks.

## **The Second Steering Meeting for the West and Central Africa Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children**

WAYN was also invited to participate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Meeting for West and Central Africa Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children. This meeting was held in Dakar, Senegal. Regrettably due to the late information, WAYN could not participate in this very important meeting.

### **PROGRAMME MEETINGS AND CONSULTATIONS**

In line with its Objectives, the Regional Secretariat held a number of consultations and meetings during the year with a number of relevant personalities and institutions:

<b><u>NAME</u></b>	<b><u>POSITION</u></b>
<b>1. Hon Joe Blell</b>	<b>Deputy Minister of Defence, Republic of Sierra Leone</b>
<b>2. Hon. Dr. Dennis Bright</b>	<b>Minister of Youth, Republic of Sierra Leone</b>
<b>3. Hon Ellan Diallo</b>	<b>Minister of Youth, Republic of Guinea</b>
<b>4. Dr. Abdiallo Diallo</b>	<b>Secretary General, Man River Union Secretariat</b>
<b>5. Dr. Oumar Ndongo</b>	<b>Director, MRU Peace Forum</b>
<b>6. Ms Antonia Ngabala</b>	<b>Programme Officer, UNDP Peace Building Initiative in Africa</b>
<b>7. Mr. Abdul Tejan Cole</b>	<b>Chairman, Board of Director, Open Society Initiative of West Africa</b>

<b>8. Dr. Abdul Fatau Musah</b>	<b>Programme Coordinator, Open Society Initiative of West Africa</b>
<b>9. The President</b>	<b>Ethiopia Youth Association</b>
<b>10 Mr. Muzkwakhe Alfred Sigudhla</b>	<b>Coordinator, NEPAD Youth Summit, President South African Movement</b>
<b>11. The Regional Director</b>	<b>East African Women Development Initiative</b>
<b>12. Mr. Kimmie Weeks</b>	<b>Founder and Coordinator, Youth Action International, USA</b>
<b>13. Mr Jean Ives Bonzi</b>	<b>Coordinator, Youth Foundation for Peace in Africa</b>
<b>14. Mr. Eddie Brogman</b>	<b>President Miracle Corner, New York USA</b>
<b>15. Mr. Jean Ives Bonzi</b>	<b>Coordinator, Youth for Peace in Africa</b>

## **FUNDING PARTNERS**

In 2004, WAYN sought to improve its donor base as a means of ensuring the broader implementation of its inherent objectives. Towards this end a number of new funding partnerships were established. During the year, funds were obtained from the following donors:

## **Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA)**

OSIWA is dedicated to supporting the creation of open societies in West Africa marked by functioning democracy, good governance, the rule of law, basic freedoms, and widespread civic participation. OSIWA believes that it best serves by sustaining catalytic and innovative initiatives that add value to the efforts of West Africa's civil society. It is based in Dakar, Senegal. OSIWA has proven to be a major partner for the Programme Activities of WAYN and provided support for the MRU Youth Parliament

## **XMINUSY Solidarity Fund**

Xminus Solidarity Fund is an independent funding organization in the Netherlands. It provide support for social movements and small scale initiative all over the world and strive for a world based on more just economical, political and social relations. Xminusy provided support for the MRU Peace Caravan.

## **ALERT, The Netherlands**

Alert is an independent fund that strives for a more equal distribution of power, knowledge and capital, as well as for a healthier environment. Alert grant subsidies to a small-scale and once-only projects organized by and for young people with progressive ideas world wide. Alert provided support to the MRU Peace caravan

## **Plan Netherlands**

Plan Netherlands provided support for the MRU Peace Caravan.

## **UN Mission in Sierra Leone**

The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, through its DDR Section, provided funding to WAYN for a Youth Workshop on Peace Building for youth groups in Freetown, Sierra Leone

## **COUNTRY PROGRAMME**

WAYN extended its activities to Senegal and Gambia with the appointment of Comrades Mohammed Mbengie and Abdu Jobe as Country Representatives respectively in April 2004. Realizing the important role of the **Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA)** as a formidable developmental partner, Mr. Mbengue was selected to also serve as our Liaison Officer to OSIWA. In line with his assignment, he held discussion with officials of OSIWA also signed a Project Agreement with OSIWA on behalf of WAYN. Mohammed holds a Master Degree in English and American Studies from the Cheik Anta Diop University in Senegal while Abdul is a prominent youth activist and founder of the Youth Crime Watch of the Gambia.

During the year, some new focal points were also selected to help chart a new course of action. Mr. Sammy Jacob Abbey (Ghana), Mr. Arthur Becker (Liberia), Ms. Gisele Mida (Ivory Coast) and Mr. Spero Hector (Benin) join the bandwagon of WAYN. Sammy also served as Liaison to ECOWAS. Gisele is studying for her Master in English, while Arthur is a graduate of the AME University in Liberia. Sammy is the Head of the African Youth Development Alliance and Spero is a youth journalist.

## **TOGO**

In Togo, a Plan of Action was formulated by Country Team for the holding of a Sub-Regional Youth and Parliamentary Forum on the New African Partnership for Development. Consultations and preparation are presently underway for the holding of the Forum. The Focal Point, Mr. Andre Aafanou also did extensive work on the Youth Empowerment Programme, a project designed to ensure the participation of young people to decision making bodies in West Africa.

## **NIGERIA**

In Nigeria, the country office also conducted a two day leadership training programme for more than forty youth leaders. The programme was sponsored by the Regional Secretariat and a prominent Nigeria philanthropist. Mr. Adeda Ojeniyi, Focal Point, also served as Programme Coordinator of the Regional Secretariat.

## **Sierra Leone, Youth Seminar on Peace Building**

In collaboration with the DDR Section of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), WAYN's Regional Office hosted a three day training workshop for more than forty youth leaders from Freetown, Sierra Leone from 9-11 December. The training workshop was facilitated by the **Center for Peace and Conflict Studies** of the University of Sierra Leone and brought together youth groups from in and around Freetown. It was held under the theme: **“Youth's Action for Peace Building and Conflict resolution”**. At the end of the workshop a fifteen man Western Youth Peace Council was formulated to follow up activities of the workshop

## **GUINEA**

In Guinea, the Country Team headed by Ms. Mariama Hadja Camara, also worked assiduously in ensuring the success of the Mano River Union Youth Parliament, which was held from 21-22 November in Guinea

## **GHANA**

From Ghana, the Country team reported about its participation in a number of local and international youth seminars on youth empowerment.

## **FOCAL POINT OF THE YEAR**

In line with tradition, Mr. **Sammy Jacobs Abbey** of Ghana was selected as our Focal Point of the year. Since he joined the Network, this young

Ghanaian has proven his leadership qualities and commitments over the last few months.

## **WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT**

In keeping with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between WAYN and Afroneth, an initiative which seeks the development of a web site for WAYN has commenced. The website is being design in The Netherlands and will serve as a permanent source of information about WAYN and its Programme Activities.

## **Regional Secretariat**

The Regional Secretariat continues to be run by a six man team:

1. Regional Director-Richelieu Marcel Allison
2. Programme Coordinator-Adeola Ojeniyi (on leave)
3. Project Officer/Finance-Abraham Kanneh
4. Project Assistant-Ms. Yeanoh Conteh
5. Programme Assistant-Mr. Zachariah Jah
6. Mr. Mohammed Silah Sesa-Programme Assistant



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

WAYN wishes to acknowledge, with thanks and appreciations, the contribution of the following personalities and institutions, who contributed immensely to the implementation of its Programme Agenda in 2004:

1. Dr. Dennis Bright  
Minister of Youth  
Republic of Sierra Leone
2. Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA)
3. Afroneth
4. Plan Netherlands
5. Dr. A. Diallo  
Secretary General, MRU
6. The President and Members, Guinean National Parliament
7. ALERT
8. Mr. Hassan Jalloh  
Director, Afroneth
9. Dr. Oumar Ndongo  
Director, MRU Peace Forum

10. Mr. H. M. B Tejan  
MRU Secretariat
11. The Speaker and Members, MRU Youth Parliament
12. Mrs. Antonia Ngabala  
Programme Coordinator  
UNDP Peace Building Office
13. African Child Policy Forum
14. Economic Commission for Africa
15. Ms. Rosemarie Van West  
Intern, Afroneth
16. Mrs. Menamuta Pratt,  
Center for Peace and Conflict Studies  
University of Sierra Leone
17. Mr. Lamin Abubakar,  
DDR Section, UNAMSIL
18. Ms Bernatte Lukonde,  
UNAMSIL
19. Xminus, The Netherlands
20. Independent Observer, Sierra Leone

## PLAN OF ACTION 2005

PROGRAMME	OBJECTIVE	ACIVITIES	POTENTIAL PARTNER
WEST AFRICAN YOUTH PEACE INITIATIVE	1. To promote peace in the sub-region	1.Undertake a Peace Caravan from Ivory Coast through major cities in West Africa; 2. Training for young peace builders	ALERT, PLAN NETHERLAND, XMI Y, UNDP AFRONETH
WEST AFRICAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME	TO PROVIDE TRAINING FOR WEST AFRICA FUTURE LEADERS	1. UNDERTAKE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ANNUAL TRAINING PROGRAMME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SIERRA LEONE	OSIWA, CENTER FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES, ECOWAS, AFRICA'S FUTURE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME YPA
WEST AFRICAN YOUTH PARLIMENTARY FORUM ON NEPAD	1. To help change the mindsets that prevent the participation of young people in decision making	Conduct a Forum in Togo for youth representatives and MPs.	CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARY CENTER, OSIWA, PLAN NETHERLAND, WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY, YOUTH FOR PEACE IN AFRICA
YOUTH DEMOCRACY INITIAITVE	To make youth visible in democratic and governance	1. Conduct Trainer for youth election	National Endowment For democracy, Westminster Foundation for Democracy

	<b>processes</b>	<b>observers; send observers to the Liberian Election 2. Organize Governance and Democracy Clubs</b>	
<b>2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION, MRU YOUTH PARLIAMENT</b>			<b>OSIWA, MRU PEACE FORUM, MRU SECRETARIAT, UNDP YPA</b>
<b>FUND RAISING EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE</b>			<b>YOUTH ACTION INTERNATIONAL (USA)</b>
<b>ECOAWS YOUTH DESK</b>	<b>To make youth visible in the activities of ECOWAS</b>		<b>ECOWAS, YPA</b>
<b>HIV/AID INITIATIVE</b>	<b>To help fight stigma and discrimination</b>		<b>YPA</b>
<b>SUB REGIONAL MECHANISM ON CHILD SOLDIERS</b>	<b>To formulate a regional mechanism for child protection</b>	<b>Sub regional workshop</b>	<b>UNICEF, SAVE THE CHILDREN SWEDISH, Child Protection Office, ECOWAS, YPA</b>

## **ANNEX**

[Pre-ADF Symposium](#) > Youth and Governance

### **Presentation: Pre-ADF Symposium on Youth and Governance**

**By**

**Richelieu Marcel Allison**

**Regional Director, West African Youth Network (WAYN)**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Sunday, 10 October 2004**

**Madam Chair**

**All Protocol Observe**

I bring you greetings from the West African Youth Network (WAYN), a sub regional youth empowerment group that has membership in twelve West African Countries. I also bring you felicitations from the African Network of Young Peace builders, a continental youth movement of more than 200 active members based here in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

I must first of all extend my gratitude to the organizers of this important symposium for selected me from amongst many other qualified youth leaders from to make this presentation here today.

**Madam Chair:**

We have gathered here in this historic hall to basically brainstorm on the important role youth can play in governance, democracy, and education in Africa. It is our ardent hope that this Initiative will indeed provide an open forum for dialogue amongst youth representatives, experts and individuals to enable young people get off the fence and play their rightful roles in transforming governance systems that will afford them the opportunity to participate in decision making.

**Madam Chair:**

It is an undeniable fact that young people constitute more than fifty five percent of the population of Africa. Despite this fact, young people across the region continue to be denied the rights to participate in decisions that affect their well being. They have been marginalized in all spheres of Africa's political and social setting and today find themselves relegated to lesser roles. Regrettably, while this has been going on, young people have been the subject of unprecedented recruitment as soldiers, combatants and fighters by both Governments and irregular fighting forces alike. Let face reality, if young people are brave enough to fight and defend their countries, they must also be seen as mature enough to adequately participate in decisions that affect their future.

**Madam Chair:**

A critical examination of most of the constitutions and statutory laws in Africa today will reveal that there are National Laws that give youth the chance to participate in decision making. The Liberian Constitution, for example, gives young people as young as twenty five (25) the chance to be elected to their National Parliament. If indeed there are existing laws that recognize our right to participate then why are we being marginalized?

The question now is how can we change and transform the mindset that have prevented youth from playing a more proactive role in governance and democracy in Africa. This is an immense target group, which lacks resources, access to knowledge, skill, training and decision-making. Tragically, the youth are still marginalized, both in terms of formal participation in politics and in influencing public policy in vital areas such as on leadership, education, governance and human rights.

I shall attempt to answer this question with the following contributions:

**a. Youth Empowerment and Responsibility**

In my view the first step toward ensuring youth involvement in governance should commence with the youth themselves. Until we realized that we are formidable partners in the process of governance and social transformation, we shall continue to lag behind and be marginalized. In this vein, youth must be empowered through training to play their rightful roles. It will interest you to note that my organization, WAYN is presently working with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, based in the United Kingdom, to undertake a Pilot Project-"Engendering Democracy and Governance in West Africa through the empowerment and participation of Youth" in Togo, Ghana, Liberia and Ivory Coast. This Project seeks the mobilization of young people to participate in local and regional Politics and democratic process. Our long term objective is the election of more young people to their National Parliaments and Local Councils.

Realizing the importance of training in this direction, we have also commenced discussion with the Open Society Initiative of West Africa for the establishment of a **West African Youth Leadership Training Institute** at the University of Sierra Leone next year. This Programme seeks to equip youth with the necessary tools and skills for future challenges.

**b. Sensitization Programmes and General Advocacy**

Most governments and political institutions in Africa perceived young people from the perspective of the "Youth Wing Mentality". That is they only want to utilize the votes of young people to ascend to political parties but not to work along with young people for social transformation. In this light, the need to embark upon an Advocacy Campaign to change this

mindset cannot be overemphasized. Participation of Youth in Governance and Politics is certainly a right and not a privilege. We as young people must begin to speak out about the need for us to be represented. We must make our voices heard. "*Our Lives began to end the moment we keep quiet on little things that matter*" is one of the famous quotations of the late Martin Luther King.

There is also a need for mechanisms to be put into place at the levels of the AU, ECA, NEPAD and other institutions to ensure youth participation in all activities and programmes.

Madam Chair:

Before I close, allow me to also articulate my view on the HIV/AIDS epidemic which forms an integral part of the agenda of this symposium. The issue of HIV/AIDS represents one of the most pressing challenges confronting young people in Africa today. We believe that if the fight is to be won, the active involvement of young people must be stressed. Our concern should be how we change the perception of young people regarding the disease. We must now focus on fighting the stigma and discrimination associated with it. To do this we must break the silence and make people to be aware that HIV/AIDS is not a death sentence as in the past. There is still hope for people who are diagnosed to live a longer life. If this is done people will not be afraid to know their status. We must also urge our governments to formulate strategies aimed at subsidizing the drugs and scaling up treatment for those affected. Having access to anti retro viral drugs is a right.

We also need to step up our prevention campaigns. Young people are indeed the best agents and the first line of defense in this global fight.



Madam Chair:

We have a very arduous but compelling task ahead of us. We must work to adopt a Declaration at the end of this symposium that could serve as an Advocacy Tool for Youth's Participation. Let history recall that the participants at this Forum were amongst the architects of a Regional Youth Participation Policy in Africa.

If obstacles beset our path to peace and participation; 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 scrutinize of our purpose, which will provide rigid determinations of the dynamic strength of our will to succeed

Thank you, Madam Chair

