



WAYNFOCUS

West Africa Youth Network Newsletter

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This is our eight issue of the WAYN Focus, the West Africa Youth Network and Focal Points newsletter. We encourage our partners and focal points to send in their articles and reports for publishing.

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We also ask that those who receive the Newsletter should copy them for distribution to their members. That way we can reach as many networks as possible more effectively. Our objective is to reach a really wide audience and therefore we appeal again to those readers, as well as concerned youth, to e-mail their contacts to wayn_ghana@yahoo.com or samabbey@africamail.com. The newsletter is also posted on our website

We would of course appreciate cash support to enable us to mail more hard copies to readers. Needless to say we would welcome written contributions and also look forward to receiving any interesting archival material for the Network that is being set up as part of the transformational process

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E-mail address for the regional & Liaison office.

You can now send your comments, reactions and enquiries to the address below:

wayn_ghana@yahoo.com

News from the Regional Directoracte

FOLLOW UP TO FREETOWN REGIONAL FORUM NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENTARY FORUM HELD IN NIGER

A National Youth Parliamentary Forum, bringing together Youth and Members of the National Parliament of Niger, was held in **Niamey, Niger** from 14-17 November 2005. The Forum which was organized by WAYN-Niger was the first follow up at the National level of the **Regional Youth Parliamentary Forum** that was organized in April 2005 by WAYN in collaboration with The **Parliamentary Centre** and the **Canadian International Development Agency**.

The Forum in Niger brought together 40 youth leaders and 10 MPs. During the Forum, papers were presented on various topics related to NEPAD, APRM process, human Rights, Good Governance, youth employment and participation. The Forum was organized with support from UNDP Country Office in Niamey and the World Bank.

The Regional Secretariat of WAYN was represented by the coordinator for the **Youth Parliamentary Action Group and Country Focal Point, WAYN-Togo**; Mr. André Kangni AFANOU (Togo) who gives an overview of the activities of the Action Group and also presented a paper on "**The APRM Process, Challenges and Perspectives**". The coordinator of the forum and Focal Point, WAYN-Niger, Ms Amina Iro Mousthapha also presented a paper on the "**Millennium Development Goal**".

A member of the Nigerian Parliament, Hon. Abdou Abdourdarame, who is also a member of the Youth parliamentary Action Group, also contributed to the successful of the event. At the end of the forum, participants, who were representing the various regions of Niger, adopted a Plan of Action to further up their activities.

The editorial staff of this newsletter would like to commend Ms. Mousthapha for her farsightedness in organizing this great and Hon. Abdoudarame, member of Niger's Parliament and the Youth Parliamentary Action Group. Meanwhile, Andre has described the forum in Niger as the first attempt by his Action Group to put into place the proposals emanating from the Freetown Forum. He disclosed that **WAYN** is currently holding extensive consultations with the **Parliamentary Centre** and the **Canadian International Development Agency** to organize the forum in Liberia, Senegal, Togo, Ghana, Nigeria and Benin

WAYN MEETS WEST AFRICAN SPECIALISTS AT AMNESTY NETHERLANDS

The Director of WAYN, Mr. Richelieu Allison recently held a working dinner with West African Specialists of Amnesty Netherlands. The meeting provided the forum for the WAYN boss to brief the specialists about the activities of WAYN especially as it relates to its Human Rights Programme. The West African team was led by the Director of Africa, Mr. Peter Helsloot.

Meanwhile Mr. Allison also visited the offices of **Amnesty International** and held discussion with Ellen Vermeulen of the **Special Programme on Africa** and Loes Muldes of the **Youth and Student Department**. Both discussions entered around the programmes of WAYN and areas of collaborations.

SUB REGIONAL ACTIONS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN GET UNDERWAY SOON IN THE MRU

IN keeping with its Strategic Programme Plan of Action 2006-2008, the West African Youth Network is expected to shortly conduct a Community Social Mobilization Campaign to highlight Violence against Women and Children in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone

The campaign grew from the felt need to mobilize key actors at the community level to help in fighting against violence against women and children. The project seeks to enhance the position of community leaders and traditional rulers to become advocate for women and children and to work together to fight violence

against women. The primary goal is to deepen the understanding on the situation relating to violence against women and children and develop concrete action for right promotion at the community level. The main thrust is to involve different actors at the community level to analyze their opportunities and capacities for protecting women and children and to also enable them to take stock of their own level of responsibilities for the violation, abuse and inability to fulfill some of their obligations.

WAYN is presently collaborating with the **MRU Youth Parliament** and the **Youth and Student Division of Amnesty Netherlands**. It is expected that the documentary and photos that will be collected at the end of the seminar will be distributed to policy makers as well as used to raise awareness amongst students and young people in the Netherlands

WAYN PROGRAMME ASSISTANT COMPLETES STUDIES IN ENGLISH AND MANAGEMENT IN GHANA

Ms. Mariama Camera, Focal Point **WAYN-Guinea** and Programme Assistant at the Regional Secretariat in Freetown, has completed an intensive one year studies in management and English at the Ghana Management School in Accra. Ms. Camera, who was sponsored by WAYN, as part of its staff enrichment programme, is expected to take up assignment in Freetown in April this year as Programme Officer. We wish to congratulate her for a job well done

WAYN HOLDS STRATEGIC PROGRAMME MEETING WITH AFRONETH

A strategic programme meeting intended to put into place mechanisms aimed at improving the present collaboration between WAYN and Afroneth was held recently in the Netherlands. The meeting was designed to basically assess the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two organizations in October 2004 and to further examine new strategies aimed at ensuring the implementation of the MOU.

The meeting further reviewed the Strategic Programme Plan of Action for WAYN 2006-2008 as well as its resource mobilization strategic and its human resource capacity. The need to ensure the participation of West African youth in the Diaspora in the activities of WAYN was stressed and the two organizations agreed to put into place mechanism for the holding of a West African Diaspora Conference in West Africa. Modalities of this summit are presently being worked out. Afroneth is a Dutch based organization that seeks to promote the interest of African migrant in the Diaspora

ALLISON MEETS WITH DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL

The Dutch Government has been commended for its support to Peace Building Initiatives in the Mano River Union. The commendation was made recently at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands by the Director of WAYM, Richelieu Allison when he pay a courtesy call on the Head of the West Africa Department at the Ministry, Dr. Paul J. M. Litjens.

Mr. Allison praised the Dutch Government in particular for its role in resolving the Liberian and Sierra Leone Conflict and appealed for more support for the Peace Building and reintegration programmes in the two countries. He then briefed the Dutch envoy about the activities of WAYN and its collaboration with a number of Dutch NGOs.

For his part, Dr. Litjens commended WAYN for its wonderful initiatives in the West Africa region and pledged the continuous support of his government to the socio-economic development of West Africa. Mr. Allison was accompanied to the Dutch Foreign Ministry by Ms. Caroline Vanloon of **West Africa Witness**.

In related developments, Mr. Allison also met and held separate discussion with Ms. Els Henderick of **Xminy Foundation**, Ms. Meira Asher of **Bodylap**, Hassan Jalloh of **Afroneth**, Ms. Kim Hartog of **Plan Netherlands**, Dr Judith Grootschulten of **Oikos**, Ms Marijke Mooij of **Hivos**, Ms. Fanny Meeus of **CORDAID** and Maria Kooijman of the **United Network of Young Peace Builders** during his working visit to the Netherlands.

WAYN Opinion

SUMMARY REPORT

MEETING BETWEEN THE WEST AFRICAN YOUTH NETWORK

AND THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES, 13 AUGUST 2005, ABUJA NIGERIA

INTRODUCTION

A delegation from the West African Youth Network was in Abuja, Nigeria from 10-14 August 2005. The delegation was invited to participate in a meeting organized by the Center for Democracy and Development, a Nigerian based think thank for democracy and development. The meeting was intended to provide the forum for the youth from West

Africa to share their experiences with their Nigerian counterparts, drawn mainly from the Niger Delta region. The selection of the network to participate in this meeting, which was tagged "**Niger Delta Youth meet the rest of West Africa**," was in recognition of its emerging role as a catalyst for youth participation and peace building in West Africa.

Six members of the Network drawn up from Burkina Faso, Togo, Nigeria, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone were selected to participate in this meeting. During the two day forum, members of the Network presented papers and also lead interactive discussions on various topics. The meeting further provided the opportunity for members of the Network to share some of its activities, including the **Mano River Union Youth Peace Initiative**, the **Leadership Training Programme** and the **West African Youth Parliamentary Forum**, to the Nigeria participants.

Being mindful of their work as a regional group, the delegation took off time to pay a courtesy call on the Secretariat of ECOWAS based in Abuja on 12 August 2005. This meeting was considered as a follow up to a previous meeting held in Cotonou, Benin in June 2005 between the Coordinator of the **West African Youth Parliamentary Action Group** Andre Afanou and Gal DIARRA, the Deputy General Secretary in charge of political, peace and security affairs, and the communication Manager, Mme Adrienne DIOP. This brief summary report seeks to highlight the meeting between officials of ECOWAS and the West African Youth Network.

BRIEFING SESSION

The delegation, which was headed by the Regional Director of the Network, Richelieu Allison, arrived at the Headquarter of ECOWAS, Yakubu Gowen Crescent, Asokoro District at about 4:00 p.m. on 12 August and was immediately ushered into the office of Mr. Frank G. Afanyaikossou, Programme Monitoring Officer. Mr. Afanyaikossou thoroughly briefed the delegation about the work of ECOWAS with emphasis on the various protocols. He narrated the function of the Political Department and the Programme Monitoring Office. He was impressed with the visit and took his guests on a tour of the Monitoring Office. He then presented a number of documents, protocols and reports to the delegation

After about an hour the delegation was escorting into one of the conference rooms at the Secretariat for a meeting with the Political Department of **ECOWAS**. Welcoming the delegation, the Director of Political Affairs, Abou Yacouba, commended the youth of West Africa for their vision to come together and promote development and peace in the sub-region. He lamented the numerous conflicts in the region but stressed that the Economic Community of West African States has already put into place the necessary

mechanisms to address problems arising from conflicts. He recounted the role of ECOWAS in addressing the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as the pivotal role play in averting chaos and violence in Togo. Mr. Yacoubou, who appeared visibly impressed with the composition of the delegation, also spoke about the various protocols of ECOWAS and urged the Network to work along with his office in mobilize youth across the region to participate in the implementation of the various protocols.

In his remarks, the Regional Director of the West African Youth Network, Richelieu Allison, expressed their delight in meeting with the Political Department of ECOWAS and described the meeting as one of the biggest achievements of the Network in 2005. He lamented the fact that young people have over the years been excluded from participating in national and regional decision making institutions and spoke of his organization campaign to change the mindset that has over the years prevented young people from participating in issues that affect the wellbeing. He stressed the importance of forming a partnership between ECOWAS and the Network and spoke of his organization's readiness to help in the mobilization of youth across the region to propagate the various protocols of ECOWAS.

For his part the Togolese Focal Point of WAYN, who is also serving as Coordinator of the **West African Youth Parliamentary Action Group**, Andre Afanou, gives an overview of some of the activities of the Network.

1. West African Youth Parliamentary Action Group

Andre informed the executives of ECOWAS about the work of the Action Group, which was established in April 2005 at the end of a three day **Youth Parliamentary Forum** organized by the Network in Freetown, with support from the **Parliamentary Centre of Canada**. He narrated that the primary objective of the Group is to continue to forge partnership between youth people and MPs at local and regional levels for the purpose of creating wholesome functioning societies and promoting the implementation process of the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD), with empathies on the African Peer Review Mechanism, and the Millennium Development Goals. He spoke of plan to duplicate the forum at National Levels with the holding of National Programme in the Gambia, Togo, Ghana, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. He further disclosed that modalities for the holding of a Follow up meeting in Burkina Faso are been put into place and that the Speaker of the Parliament in Burkina Faso is working along with Hon. Assitou Sideble to ensure the realization of this initiative.

He then informed the officials of intention of the Group to seek affiliation with ECOWAS as a means of achieving its inherent objectives.

Addressing himself to the work of the Action Group, Political Affair Director Abou Yacouba commended the Network and the **Parliamentary Centre of Canada** for such a bold and innovative initiative and pledged the support of his department in the follow up process of the Action Group. He said that it was a brilliant idea to form partnership between youth and MPs and call for the involvement of the ECOWAS Parliament in this direction. He stated that he was looking forward to the convening of a West African Youth Parliamentary Forum at the headquarters of ECOWAS. He disclosed that he will advise the Secretary General of ECOWAS about the need to grant an affiliation status to the Parliamentary Action Group.

2. West African Youth Leadership Training Programme

The executives were also briefed about the proposed West African Leadership Training Programme. The Programme is designed to provide leadership training to youth from around the region so as to prepare them to confront challenges. An appeal was made by the Network for the Secretariat of ECOWAS to provide internship for the graduates of the programme. Andre disclosed that support is being mobilize from the **Open Society Initiative of West Africa**, a donor institution that has been a major collaborating partner of WATN

Director Yacoubou welcomed this development and advises the delegation to submit to forward to him details about the leadership training programme for action. He noted that such twining way go a long way in creating new leaders for West Africa

3. ECOWAS Protocols and the Involvement of Youth

The executives were informed about the willingness of the Network to embark upon an intensive mobilization campaign, utilizing the skills of young people, to promote the various protocols of ECOWAS. The Network considers the fact that many people are not aware of the protocols relating to Conflict Mechanism and the free movement of people and believes that the involvement of young people at various levels will go a long way in propagating and sensitizing people about the programmes of ECOWAS. It was then recommended that ECOWAS formed a partnership with WAYN in this direction.

Again, Director Yacoubou welcomed this development and called for the formulation of a regional youth plan of action for ECOWAS. He concluded by advising the Network to remain steadfast in the implementation of its objectives. He noted the many challenges ahead but with the active participation of young people these challenges could be overcome.

4. Good Governance and Human Rights

The delegation also expressed the concerns of youth in the sub-region about the violations of human rights by governments as well as the issue of transparency and governance in the sub-region. The authorities of ECOWAS were commended for its intervention in the Togolese crisis under the framework of the protocol on Security. The Network intends to mobilize youth across the region to serve as pressure agents for human rights, transparency and accountability in the region.

5. AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FORUM-FIVE/ECOWAS YOUTH FORUM

Two other issues that were raised during the meeting were the *Fifth African Development Forum* and the holding of the *ECOWAS Youth Forum*. Regional Director Allison disclosed that his organization was working to ensure the full participation of young people from the region in the scheduled African Development Forum slated for October in Ethiopia. He further spoke of plan to also organize the first ever ECOWAS Youth Forum in the Gambia in 2006 to map out strategies for the integration of youth issues into the agenda of ECOWAS.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

The meeting between the *West African Youth Network* and high level executives of the *Economic Community of West African States* represents an enormous attempt on the part of WAYN to forge ahead in the implementation of its numerous programmes. These programmes are designed basically to put youth issues at the top of national and regional agendas. The meeting provided a unique forum for WAYN to engage ECOWAS on issues of importance. This was the first major meeting between ECOWAS and WAYN at the headquarters of ECOWAS. It indeed provided the perfect avenue for the frank exchange of ideas. It must be mentioned the willingness on the part of ECOWAS to open its door to young people. This was a clear manifestation of the fact that the Regional Body is willing to work with young people, who constitutes about fifty five percent of the population of West Africa.

In its quest to ensure the realization of its mission and vision, WAYN shall continue to remain engage with the Secretariat of ECOWAS so as to ensure that young people are put at the top of its agenda. WAYN shall continue to work with the *ECOWAS Parliament* in its drive to strengthen the new form partnership between youths and Members of Parliament. WAYN shall remain engage with ECOWAS to promote leadership programmes for young people so as to safeguard the future of the sub-region. WAYN is further convinced that young people, from the multi track approach, would serve as Pressure agents for social change in the region. In light of this responsibility, WAYN pledges

to continue to serve as a true catalyst for the realization of the various protocols of that August body.

PARTICIPANTS AT THE MEETING

1. Abou Yacoubou
Director, Political Affairs, ECOWAS
2. Dr. Aderemi Ajibewa
Principal Political Officer
Political Affairs
3. Mr. Frank G. Afanyiakossou
Programme Officer, Monitoring
4. Mr. Takwa Zebulon Suifon
WANEP Liaison Officer to ECOWAS
5. Ms. Nicole Barry
Focal Point, WAYN-Burkina Faso
6. Mr. Adeola Ojeniyi
Focal Point, WAYN-Nigeria
7. Mr. Andre Afanou
Coordinator, Youth Parliamentary Action
Group
Focal Point, WAYN-Togo
8. Richelieu M. Allison
Regional Director

WAYN FREETOWN DISTRIBUTES NEW YEAR GIFTS

The ushering of a new year has always been characterized as a period of reflection aimed at finding a way forward for the future.

Members of WAYN Sierra Leone decided to use the day to distribute a small consignment of clothes collected during the recent visit of Director Allison to the Netherlands to three needy families in Freetown. Presenting the items to the families recently, Ms. Josephine Sesay said that the clothes are gifts from some friendly people in Holland who believing in the concept of sharing. She said that more donation are expected to be made to other families as most of the clothes collected are been transported to Freetown. Meanwhile WAYN wishes to commend Ms. Caroline Vanloon, Rozemarilyn Van West and Mieke, who coordinating the collection process in Holland. WAYN wishes to further thank all the families and friends who contributed to this worthy cause.

"If all man gives a thread, the poor will have enough"

YOUTH ALLIANCE LAUNCHES DIAMOND EXHIBITION FOR YOUTH IN SIERRA LEONE

A Diamond Photo Exhibition intended to bring to fore the process of the diamond trade has been launched in Freetown, Sierra Leone by the Youth Alliance for Social Action (YASA). The Launching Ceremony was held recently in Freetown at the Milton Margai College. The Launching Ceremony was performed by Mr. Dan Harmann, Coordinator of the Taking It Global Programme in Sierra Leone.

The Exhibition is an initiative of the West African Witness and the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa. It seeks to give an insight on the diamond trade. The Youth Alliance for Social Action is a joint initiative of WAYN and Peace Link.

WAYN GAMBIA SEEKS TO OBSERVE PENDING ELECTION

In keeping with the Programme Strategy of **WAYN** to mainstreaming young people in electorate processes, WAYN-Gambia has commenced putting into place the necessary mechanism to ensure that a West African Election Observation Team participates in the pending Presidential elections in the Gambia. The Focal Point, Abdul Jobe is presently consulted with the regional Secretariat in this direction.

Meanwhile, the first ECOWAS Youth Development Forum is slated to be held in Banjul in June this year.

WEST AFRICAN YOUTH TO GIVE MINISTRY OF YOUTH IN FREETOWN A FACE LIFT

As part of the activities marking the forth coming West African Youth leadership Programme in Sierra Leone, the Regional Secretariat has decided to undertake a civil project. The Project encompasses a clean up campaign in the yard of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Freetown and the painting of the exterior walls of the Ministry. The exercise will be conducted by participants from more than 14 Countries who will be in Freetown to attend the Youth Leaderships Institute.

WAYN SEEKS NEW AVENUE

Forges partnership with African Future Leadership Forum, UN, CHRF & PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES, ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

The Director of WAYN, Richelieu Allison recently met with the Head of the **African Future Leadership Programme** in Dakar Senegal., Mrs Olubanke King-Akelere. The discussion centred on the leadership Programme assisting to the youth empowerment programme of WAYN.

WAYN is also completing modalities for an NGO Status with the United Nations Department of Social Affairs.

WAYN is also exerting efforts to ensure its participation in the **Peace and Conflict studies Programme** of the **Rotary Foundation** and Human Rights Education Programme of the **Canadian Human Rights Foundation**

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

West African Youth Leadership Training Institute- Freetown, Sierra Leone

MRU Youth Parliament-Monrovia, Liberia

ECOWAS Youth Development Forum-Banjul, Gambia

FOCAL POINT NEWS



The Gambia

Abdul Jobe is presently working behind the scene to ensure the success of the ECOWAS Youth parliament in June

* wayn_gambia@yahoo.co.uk



WAYN Togo

Andre was recently in Niger to help conduct the National Youth parliamentary Forum. Wayn_togo@yahoo.fr



WAYN GHANA

Sammy was recently in Austria to participate in an international seminar. wayn_ghana@yahoo.com



WAYN Guinea

Ms Mariama Camera has completed her course of studies in Ghana. Congratulations!



WAYN Sierra Leone

WAYN SIERRA LEONE recently some clothes to disadvantaged kids. The Chapter is presently helping with the coordination of the Leadership Training Seminar as well as collaborating with Peace Link and West Africa Witness to organize a Diamond Exhibition for young people., wayn_sierraleone@yahoo.com



WAYN Nigeria

WAYN Nigeria coordinator Mr. Adeola Ojeniyi is expected to participate in the Africa Future Leadership Training Programme Intern Programme in November. waynnigeria@yahoo.co.uk



WAYN Senegal

Ms Bintou Diallo has been selected as our New Focal Point in Senegal. She replaces Mohammed Mbengu and has been selected

for the **Burundian Project**. WAYN congratulates Mohammed for his recent appointment.* wayn_senegal@yahoo.fr



WAYN NIGER

Amina is the Focal Point of the Month. She was able to organize the National Youth parliamentary Forum in Niger in November and is expected to shortly travel to Libya for the African Youth Summit BRAVO iro_mustapha@yahoo.fr



WAYN Burkina Faso

Ms Nicole Barry, our Focal Point, was recently in Abuja for the Reunion Meeting and also forms part of our Delegation to ECOWAS. She continues to formulate a plan of action for a follow up seminar in Ouagadougou.



WAYN Benin

WAYN Benin coordinator, Mr. Spero Hector is currently among the 14 members of the Africa Network of Young Peace-builders carrying out research for the strengthening of the ANYP* wayn_benin@yahoo.fr

WAYN Cameroon

Mr. FOMBO FRANKLIN FON has been selected to help coordinate our website *WAYNCAMEROON@yahoo.com

WAYN LIBERIA

Arthur is gearing up for the MRU Youth Parliament in Liberia
Wayn_lib2001@yahoo.com