

“Global Consultative Roundtables on the Responsibility to Protect: West African Perspectives”;

Final Report: Civil Society Perspectives

30-31 July, 2008
Accra, Ghana

Discussion Draft



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Introduction

Beginning in September 2007, the World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy’s Responsibility to Protect-Engaging Civil Society (**R2PCS**) project embarked on a new initiative: to build a global civil society network for the Responsibility to Protect with representation from both Northern and Southern NGOs. The initiative is supported by Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group, Oxfam International and Refugees International.

The **R2PCS** Project has organized a series of consultative roundtables with NGOs worldwide, to 1) increase understanding of R2P and how it applies to conflicts in the region, 2) explore how to strengthen regional and international mechanisms to support R2P, and 3) forge partnerships with NGOs who are interested in joining in a core group in building an NGO network. Since February 2008, we have co-organized regional meetings in Thailand, Canada, Argentina, Uganda, South Africa, France and Ghana. The West African Roundtable took place in partnership with the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), with the support of the Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA) and Fredrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

This report seeks to complement the [Policy Paper](#) distributed by the West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI) by providing specific recommendations from participants on activities and strategies for civil society on the Responsibility to Protect. A brief overview of presentations is outlined below, followed by a comprehensive review of civil society discussions.

Part 1: The Responsibility to Protect in West Africa: Speakers and summaries of presentations

Opening Session

The conference began with welcome remarks from the organizers, followed by a keynote address by **Mrs. Sintiki Ugbe**, Director of Gender, Youth, Sport, CSO, Employment, Drug Control at ECOWAS. Mrs. Ugbe gave an overview of ECOWAS’ background, and mentioned that West African heads of states and governments adopted a Conflict Prevention Framework (or ECPF) in January 2008 to ensure peace, security, stability and development in the sub-region. This framework outlines that ECOWAS has the power to act to protect human security in three distinct ways, namely, the Responsibility to Prevent, to React and to Rebuild, echoing the 2005 ICISS report. The framework also stipulates the role of civil society in safeguarding [peace, security and] the protection of civilians, and she assured that ECOWAS would work closely with civil society, for instance through the Directorate of Gender Youth and Civil Society, to hold states accountable to their commitments.

Mrs. Margaret Kutsoati, Director of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment, who delivered a goodwill message on behalf of the Government of Ghana, ensured that the Responsibility to Protect is a topic that the Government takes very seriously. She noted that of the three pillars of the R2P, Ghana must place emphasis on the Responsibility to Prevent. She explained that preventing conflict in Ghana will involve working collectively to improve good governance, safeguard human rights and respect for the rule of law.

Session One: Introduction to the norm

The first session offered an overview of the R2P norm and how to understand its applicability to West Africa. After **Mrs. Sapna Chhatpar** Project Manager at WFM-IGP provided an introduction to the norm, **Mrs. Nicole Deller**, Director of Programs at the Global Centre for R2P highlighted the many challenges remaining in implementing R2P, most specifically on getting the message right, holding governments accountable to what they agreed to in 2005, and clarifying how R2P will be applied and in which situations. **Dr. Kwesi Aning**, Head of the Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution Department at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre recalled the lack of political will and capacity within the African Union, especially when it comes to applying coercive measures. This will be a challenge to the proper implementation of normative commitments of Member-States in the Constitutive Act of the AU and the “Ezulwini Consensus”, seen as Africa’s endorsement of the R2P principles. Dr. Aning also commented on R2P’s applicability in Kenya post-election and in the ICC prosecutor’s demand for arrest warrant of Sudan’s president.

Session Two: Responsibility to Protect in West Africa

The second session gave an overview of the prospects for implementing R2P in West Africa at the sub-regional and national levels. **Ms. Thelma Ekiyor**, Executive Director of WACSI, gave an analysis of ECOWAS’ mandate for conflict prevention, drawn from regional and international bodies such as the AU, NEPAD and the UN, highlighting the global nature of prevention. The Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), on which Ms. Ekiyor focused most of her presentation, calls specifically for civil society to serve as partners in ensuring effective implementation and monitoring of the ECPF at the regional, national and community level. **Major-General Carl Coleman** of the African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR) presented the aims and challenges in building a Regional Standby Force to respond quickly to evolving conflicts and bringing peace and stability to every African sub-region. As Africa is still far away from mounting a successful peace support operation with its own resources, effective collaboration with the UN and the donor community in the planning, development of concepts and procedures is crucial. **Mr. P.K Opoku-Mensah**, Executive Secretary of the National Peace Council, presented the national infrastructure for peacebuilding established by the government of Ghana, known as the “National Architecture for Peace”. It brings civil society groups, community organizations, professional bodies and faith-based organizations together with government agencies, into a national framework for anticipating and responding to situations of potentially violent conflict.

Session Three: Civil Society Initiatives on R2P-Related Issues in West Africa

The third session presented civil society initiatives in West Africa related to the full-spectrum of prevention, reaction and rebuilding. **Ms. Leymah Gbowee** Executive Director of WIPSEN-AFRICA, spoke of the need to clarify R2P with a gendered approach for a more meaningful inclusion of women in building peace. **Mr. Murtala Touray**, Zonal Coordinator at the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) spoke of WANEP’s role as an implementing partner of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) and its link to the Responsibility to Prevent. **Mr. Voke Ighorodje** Program Officer at the Center for Democracy and Development questioned how corruption could lead to widespread and systematic crimes against humanity and therefore be relevant to R2P.

Dr. I. S Zabadi from the West African Network on Security and Democratic Governance (WANSED) spoke about the role of WANSED as a regional think-tank in exchanging information, promoting research and advocacy in the area of democratic governance and security sector reform. **Oumar Ngongo** from the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOFF) provided an overview of joint ECOWAS and civil society initiatives on humanitarian assistance and identified the lapses in humanitarian assistance to communities

affected by war-torn countries. **Professor Ken Attafuah**, Executive Director of the Justice and Human Rights Institute presented the context of the institutional legal frameworks for protecting human rights in West Africa and the challenges facing national justice systems and National Human Rights Institutions.

Part II: Civil Society Initiatives and Strategies on R2P

Following presentations from the first day of the roundtable, participants gathered in small groups to discuss civil society challenges in advocating R2P in the sub region (West Africa) and region (Africa), strategies to overcome these challenges, and activities that civil society groups could engage in at the national, sub-regional, and regional levels.

1. Challenges

The challenges identified in promoting and advocating R2P in the sub-region and the region:

- Lack of knowledge about the concept in capitals, regional/sub-regional institutions and in civil society groups, leading to a misapplication or misunderstanding of the norm;
- Groups and governments need to claim ownership of the norm, to contest the idea that the concept is a Western concept;
- No existing networks coordinating advocacy of R2P in West Africa: civil society groups lack efficiency, cooperation and information-sharing on R2P-related activities;
- No efforts or mechanisms in place to ensure that states and the sub-regional community can be made accountable for the implementation of their commitments to the Responsibility to Protect principles;
- Need to develop the credibility of NGOs, notably concerning the view that they are western-funded and driven;
- Resources constraints (funding and technical capacities) remain strong obstacles to the advancement of R2P by NGOs in Africa;

2. Activities and Advocacy strategies

The types of activities can be pushed at the national, sub-regional and regional levels on R2P included the following:

Strategies to support R2P

- Raise awareness at the community, national, sub-regional level by reaching out to local/regional/sub-regional representatives, women, youth and faith groups;
- Conduct advocacy by lobbying and briefing national and ECOWAS parliamentarians and parliamentary committees around specific resolutions or initiatives;
- Since ECOWAS has urged for a relationship with civil society, notably through the Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), groups should create a relationship with ECOWAS to access and lobby key representatives;
- Domesticating the R2P norm, by emphasizing the cultural values of African collective responsibility inherent to the norm;
- There should be a systematic link when conducting advocacy between early warning activities and early response to emphasize the importance of prevention in the norm;

- Base advocacy on existing traditional norms, regional conventions and protocols to highlight that the norm is not a new concept (i.e the African Union Constitutive Act's Art 4, the Resolution on R2P at the African Commission Human and People's rights);
- Push for the inclusion of R2P-related courses in educational institutions;
- There is a need for roundtables and platforms for exchange on R2P between different regions on the continent;
- Building media capacity to push forward R2P issues, and reach out to media outlets to sensitize the general public to join movements/initiatives calling on their government to be accountable to their R2P engagements;
- Conduct advocacy through various mediums including the internet, offering forums for discussion and information sharing such as Google-groups.

Activities to implement strategies

Participants in small groups presented their findings, and all identified the need to develop a network for organizing to advance the development and implementation of R2P in the region. The following were some ideas for activities that a network on R2P could take on:

- A network on R2P should have a broad membership and include a gender perspective;
- Create a functional R2P secretariat to coordinate and harmonize the activities of members of the network in order to operationalize the R2P doctrine in West Africa
- Develop a simple advocacy message to reach wider audience beyond NGOs, institutions and government structures;
- Translate core documents on R2P in relevant regional languages;
- Conduct regular consultations on R2P to educate, inform and analyze how R2P applies to conflicts in the region;
- Organize workshops, seminars, public lectures, training programs and publications on R2P in the region;
- Assist with the development of resources from local funders;
- Monitor the references on R2P at the international, sub-regional and national levels (normative advances, meetings, media, events...), including the reporting on advances in implementing R2P.

Building a Global Coalition

Discussion on Global Coalition Draft Concept Paper:

Participants agreed on the need to develop strategies and collaborate further in promoting R2P, which led to a discussion on a proposal for building an international civil society network on R2P.

William R. Pace, Executive Director of the Institute for Global Policy, presented a draft concept paper for establishing a global civil society coalition on R2P. WFM-Institute for Global Policy, in cooperation with Human Rights Watch, Oxfam International, Refugees International and International Crisis Group, has identified the need to consult civil society worldwide, in view of increasing awareness on R2P and establishing a global coalition of civil society groups in support of the R2P. Mr. Pace gave an outline and asked for input on a draft work plan for building a global coalition including the following elements;

- Purpose and function of a global coalition
- Coalition structure and governance
- Priorities for a global coalition and priorities in the region

Mr. Pace explained that the goals of a Coalition could be the following:

1. To promote understanding of the Responsibility to Protect among civil society, governments, policy-makers and the public.
2. To hold governments accountable on their commitment to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.
3. To guard against the misapplication of the norm so it is not misused or abused by governments, regional organizations or international organizations.
4. To ensure that responsibility to protect is restricted to genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, as articulated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.
5. To facilitate strategic cooperation for advocacy within the NGO community, and also between NGOs and parliamentarians, governments, regional organizations and the United Nations.

Participants were invited to comment and give recommendations to the concept paper. Some participants expressed concerns about the criteria for membership. It was mentioned that it would be crucial to show a broad based support, including women, faith and youth groups. Some participants supported inclusion of NGO groups affiliated with governments, since these have access to decision-makers. Other mentioned the potential relevance of think-tanks and education institutions in the coalition to assist with research, publication and awareness-raising. Overall, it was mentioned that it will be crucial to find organizations which have the credibility and capacity to move R2P forward.

In terms of governance, participants stressed that there should be a West-African Secretariat for the coalition. There was a concern that African organizations were overrepresented in a Steering Committee because of the higher number of conflicts in the region. However a discussion explaining that it stemmed from how many groups were already working on R2P compared to other regions of the world, especially in West Africa, alleviated these concerns.

Next Steps

- Participants were asked to stay involved in discussions, to share their comments or concerns on the draft concept paper, and to introduce or reinforce R2P into their existing mandates before eventually joining a coalition of NGOs.
- In response to recommendations expressed by NGOs at the roundtables, WACSI announced that it would serve as a West-African Secretariat on R2P and would provide more detail on its action plan.
- WACSI also distributed a policy paper on R2P in West Africa based on the roundtable presentations and discussions.
- Finally, WFM-IGP is drafting an interim report synthesizing the seven consultative roundtables held on R2P thus far –outcomes of which will be sent to all participants.

We welcome you to send us your input and comments to this summary of civil society recommendations on R2P. WFM-IGP will remain in contact with all roundtable participants concerning upcoming developments on the creation of an R2P coalition.

List of participants

NAME	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
1. DR. NANA PRATT	Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET)	Sierra Leone
2. MAJ. GEN. J. K. ATTIPOE	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)	Ghana
3. DR. KWESI ANING	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)	Ghana
4. SAMUEL ATUOBI	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)	Ghana
5. NANCY ANNAN	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)	Ghana
6. LEVINIA ADDAE-MENSAH	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)	Ghana
7. LEYMAH GBOWEE	Women Peace and Security Network –Africa (WIPSEN-AFRICA)	Ghana
8. VON KEMEDI	Bayelsa State Government	Nigeria
9. DR. I.S. ZABADI	West African Network on Security and Democratic Governance (WANSED)	Nigeria
10. JULIE SANDA	West African Network on Security and Democratic Governance (WANSED)	Nigeria
11. VOKE IGHORODJE	Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)	Nigeria
12. THEODORA W. ANTI	Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA)	Ghana
13. WILLIAM PACE	World Federalist Movement (WFM)	USA
14. SAPNA CHHATPAR	World Federalist Movement (WFM)	USA
15. MARION ARNAUD	World Federalist Movement (WFM)	USA
16. MURTALA TOURAY	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)	Gambia
17. FRANK B. DANKWA	Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD)	Ghana
18. DR. OSHITA O. OSHITA	Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR)	Nigeria
19. GEN. A. QUAINOO	Centre for Conflict Resolution (CENCOR)	Ghana
20. GBODUI AFI DOVI	National Coalition Of Civil Society Organisations (CNCS)	Togo
21. OSMAN DAMBA TAHIDU	Pan African Organisation for Sustainable Development (POSDEV)	Ghana
22. NANA AFADZINU	Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA)	Nigeria
23. P. K. OPOKU-MENSAH	National Peace Council	Ghana
24. NDEYE ROSALIE LO	Femme Afrique Solidarite (FAS)	Senegal
25. MALCOLM JOSEPH	Centre for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMSP)	Liberia
26. PROF. OUMAR NDONGO	West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOFF)	Nigeria
27. FAUSTINA ESSANDOH	Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS)	Ghana
28. MAJ. GEN. CARL COLEMAN	African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR)	Ghana
29. NICOLE DELLER	Global Centre For R2P	USA

30. NAFI CHINERY	African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)	Ghana
31. HAWA MUHAMMAD	African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)	USA
32. PROF KEN ATTAFUAH	Justice and Human Rights Institute (JHRI)	Ghana
33. MAMA KOITE DOUMBIA	The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)	Mali
34. THELMA EKİYOR	West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)	Ghana
35. GEORGE OSEI-BIMPEH	West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)	Ghana
36. LADY WILLIE-HARRY	West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)	Ghana
37. CHARLES KOJO VANDYCK	West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)	Ghana
38. DESMOND AGYEMANG-BAAH	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration	Ghana
39. MAGARET KUTSOATI	Ministry of Manpower Youth and Employment	Ghana
40. BARBACAR NDIAYE	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	USA
41. SEBASTIAN SPERLING	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)	Nigeria
42. DR. SINTIKI UGBE	Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS)	Nigeria
43. JOHN VILAKAZI	South African High Commission	South Africa
44. WILLIAM WILLIAMS	Australian High Commission	Australia
45. MARGARET ODOTEI	Canadian High Commission	Ghana
46. MARIA LAVELLE	Canadian High Commission	Canada