

## **Background:**

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

## **30-31 July: Global Consultative Roundtables on the Responsibility to Protect: West African Perspectives; Accra, Ghana.**

The West African Roundtable took place in partnership with the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI).

## **Day 1**

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. **Mr**

**s. Margaret Kutsoati**

, 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.

The first session offered an overview of the R2P norm and how to understand its applicability to West Africa. After **Mrs. Sapna Chhatpar** from WFM-IGP provided an introduction to the norm,

**Mrs. Nicole Deller**

of 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**

of 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 zulwini Consensus, seen as Africa's endorsement of the R2P principles. Dr. Aning also commented on R2Ps applicability in Kenya post-election and in the ICC prosecutors demand for arrest warrant of Sudans president.

The second session gave an overview of the prospects for implementing R2P in West Africa at the sub-regional and national levels. **Thelma Ekiyor** 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. **Ma**

**Mr-General Carl Coleman**

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**

presented the national infrastructure for peacebuilding established by the government of Ghana, known as the ational 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.

The third session presented civil society initiatives in West Africa related to the full-spectrum of prevention, reaction and rebuilding. **Leymah Gbowee** 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** from 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**

from CDD questioned how corruption could lead to widespread and systematic crimes against humanity and therefore be relevant to R2P.

**Dr. I. S Zabadi**

from 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.

## Day 2: How to Advance Civil Society Work on R2P

Day 2 began with a continuation of discussions on civil society initiatives in the sub-region related to R2P. **Omar Ngongo** of WACSO 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**

from 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.

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More details on these presentations will be made available shortly.

### Small Groups:

Following these presentations, participants gathered in small groups to identify 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. Recommendations for civil society included the following:

## **Strategies to Overcome Challenges**

Creation of a functional R2P secretariat;

Awareness-raising (including popularizing the norm at the community level);

Linking R2P to existing traditional norms, regional conventions and protocols to highlight that the norm is not a new concept;

Lobbying and briefing appropriate national and ECOWAS parliaments;

Systematic linkage between early warning and early response;

Advocacy for the creation of a reporting mechanism on the implementation of R2P;

Building media capacity to push forward R2P issues.

## **Activities to push R2P Activities**

Lobbying and briefing parliaments;

Workshops and seminars;

Public lectures;

Trainer of trainers;

Publications (Briefing papers) including fact sheets;

Courses on R2P in Educational Institutions;

Monitoring discussions on R2P both at the national and subregional levels;

(A more detailed account of all recommendations will be provided shortly in a full report.)

## **Discussion on Global Coalition Draft Concept Paper**

Participants agreed on the need to develop strategies and collaborate on advocacy on R2P, which led to a discussion on a proposal for building an international civil society network on R2P. A concept paper for a global coalition was presented by Mr. William Pace and participants were invited to comment and give recommendations to the concept paper. Groups agreed that they would go back to their organizations and governing bodies to introduce the idea and obtain

feedback.

**Next Steps:**

WFM-IGP will send a final report detailing the discussions and outcomes of both days in the next few weeks. Participants are invited to make changes/edits to this report.

WACSI will be providing a policy report on the Responsibility to Protect and implementation in West Africa.

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.

**Reports and Agenda:**

Conference Agenda is available at: [Conference Agenda](#)

To see details of the conference, see the [full policy paper from the West African Civil Society Institute \(WACSI\)](#) and [WFM-IGP's Civil Society Report](#).