Elections and Stability in West Africa

Introduction

Africa has made significant gains on the path to democracy and, in theory, recent elections in West Africa have made power accessible to all. By May 2011, all fifteen presidents in the countries belonging to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the president of Mauritania, had gained office through elections. However, an assessment of recent elections in the subregion and their implications for crisis prevention and stability still reveals mixed results overall.

In some countries, the ballot box has not only become the preferred tool for selecting leaders, elections are also recognized as the only acceptable way to access power. In the likes of Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Niger, and Nigeria, elections have produced encouraging outcomes. Some electoral processes have helped societies acclimatize to democracy as a reality and eased political tensions. And progress has been recorded at all three election stages across West Africa. At the pre-election stage, the introduction of biometric voting cards helped secure the vote in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, for example, and will help to do so in upcoming elections in the Gambia, Ghana, and Sierra Leone. During the election stage, progress was made in ensuring a peaceful polling process and in the observation of elections, particularly in Guinea, Niger, and Nigeria. In the postelection phase, an acceptable level of legality in several countries further contributed to strengthening the electoral process as a whole.

Regrettably, the impact of electoral violence is also visible in West Africa. Democracy and stability have suffered from a culture of rigging, and elections remain challenged by a generation of leaders who refuse to see themselves out of office. Material and institutional limitations continue to affect electoral processes in the region. These include the difficulties candidates face in formalizing their candidacy, problems with voter registration, and the challenges facing election-management bodies. For free, fair, and peaceful elections in the subregion to shift from the exception to the rule, their democratic value needs to be restored and reinforced.

On May 18–20, 2011, the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) held a regional conference in Praia, Cape Verde, on elections and stability in West Africa, in collaboration with the government of Cape Verde and other regional and international partners. The meeting's objective was to analyze the impact of recent electoral processes on stability and democracy in West Africa and their implications for crisis prevention and peacebuilding.

This report summarizes the key points that emerged from the Praia conference. Highlighting the challenges facing West African countries in organizing

free, fair, and peaceful elections, the conference discussed the existing regional and national frameworks that support democracy and electoral processes in the subregion. Best practices and lessons learned from recent electoral processes in Cape Verde, Ghana, and Niger were shared, with a view to informing the organization of upcoming elections in neighboring countries. The role and modalities of electoral assistance were also discussed, supported by concrete cases of UNDP's electoral initiatives in Niger and Guinea. The conference further underlined the importance of collaborative initiatives in strengthening democratic processes and preventing conflict. Finally, key standards, processes, and actors that can help to build democracy and stability were discussed: human rights and gender-equality norms, electoral litigation, and the role of security forces and the media during electoral processes all present opportunities to reduce election-related violence and improve election outcomes in West Africa.

Regional and National Frameworks Supporting Democracy and Electoral Processes in West Africa

ECOWAS member states have adopted a broad range of instruments that serve as frameworks for democracy and good governance in the subregion. Among these, the 1999 Lomé *Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security* and its supplementary 2001 *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*[1] provide an inclusive conception of the notion of peace, which encompasses political stability.

The supplementary protocol prescribes "constitutional convergence principles," which cover the separation of powers; free, fair, and transparent elections; the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms; freedom to form political parties; special treatment for former heads of state; and "zero tolerance" for unconstitutional changes of government.[2] In Guinea-Bissau, the principle of zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means was reaffirmed following the September 2003 military coup that overthrew then President Kumba Yala and led to the immediate organization of elections. The principle also found meaning in 2005 in Togo, when ECOWAS condemned the "constitutional coup" that followed President Gnassingbe Eyadema's death and supported the political transition by pushing for the organization of elections. The zero-tolerance principle further led to the condemnation of the December 2008 military coup in Guinea, and the one in Niger in February 2010, which followed President Mamadou Tandja's attempt to illegally stay in power after modifying the constitution.

The supplementary protocol also provides the framework for ECOWAS' electoral assistance. This encompasses financial and technical support, observation and monitoring of elections, institution building, and support to national efforts to reestablish democracy and constitutional order whenever necessary.[3] It further details the role of military observers in ensuring security during electoral processes as well as ECOWAS' involvement in the resolution of pre- and postelection-related conflicts.[4] In 2007, ECOWAS officials intervened in Sierra Leone to facilitate the acceptance of the presidential election results, which saw a transfer of power with the election of President Ernest Bai Koroma over former Vice President Solomon Berewa. A year later in Ghana, ECOWAS conducted shuttle diplomacy to ensure the results of the presidential election were accepted despite a narrow margin. In 2008, the supplementary protocol was reinforced by the adoption of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), which aims to enhance subregional human-security efforts by preventing violent conflict and engaging in peacebuilding initiatives in postconflict situations.[5]

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1   Two-thirds of ECOWAS member states are parties to the Lomé protocol, see ECOWAS, *Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security*, December 10, 1999. See also ECOWAS, *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security*, December 21, 2001, A/SP1/12/01.

2   ECOWAS, *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*, Article 1.

3   ECOWAS, *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*, Section III, Articles 11–18.

4   ECOWAS, *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*, Section IV, Articles 19, 20, and 22, and Section VII, Article 36. See also ECOWAS, *Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention*, Article 10, and ECOWAS, *The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework*, Paragraphs 48-49, Regulation MSC/REG.1/01/08, January 16, 2008, available at www.ecowas.int/publications/en/framework/ECPF_final.pdf .

5   ECOWAS, *The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework*.

Nonetheless, the supplementary protocol also presents challenges. These include a weak sanctions regime that focuses on suspending member states' participation in the community's decision-making bodies. ECOWAS has initiated a review of the sanctions regime and participants at the Praia conference called for the revised regime to be based on democratic principles and leaders' accountability to their citizens. They argued that this should be facilitated by ongoing initiatives to popularize the twelve constitutional convergence principles contained in the protocol and parallel efforts to strengthen citizens' ownership of the protocol.

Other obstacles identified as limiting the effectiveness of the supplementary protocol relate to the absence of term limits in the convergence principles and the absence of a clause prohibiting amendments to electoral laws in the six months leading up to an election. Furthermore, the protocol is weak in combating monarchical tendencies and does not provide solutions to harmonize conflicting election-management bodies, an issue raised by the postelection crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. With regard to election observation by ECOWAS, the participants at the conference raised concerns about observation missions that validate flawed elections, for example in Togo in 2005 and in Nigeria in 2007.

The supplementary protocol is considered an ambitious text that touches on national constitutional norms. It has been adopted by member states, and national jurisdictions can apply its provisions at a local level. However, despite its potential, it is often undervalued by governments, and its implementation varies. Conference participants suggested a number of measures for strengthening the effectiveness of the protocol.

- At the ECOWAS level, the arbiter of the protocol needs to be clarified. Currently, there is no provision on the resolution of disputes relating to the protocol, and stronger judicial guarantees would help individuals to refer matters to the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice directly, without going through the preliminary exhaustion of local remedies.[6]

- At the member-state level, the normative power of the protocol would be strengthened by integrating it into states' constitutional provisions. This was the case in both Togo and Benin, where provisions of the protocol were invoked to resolve disputes linked to the 2010 elections. In Côte d'Ivoire, where United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1603 (2005) and 1765 (2007) organizing elections opposed constitutional provisions, one operative solution could be the incorporation of the protocol's provisions into the functioning of organs and institutions managing elections.

- Finally, the harmonization of regional leaders' positions on issues would improve the effectiveness of the protocol, as would addressing uncertainties about leadership roles between ECOWAS and the AU. In this regard, the existing principle of subsidiarity governing ECOWAS–AU relations should be further clarified.

At the national level, it was argued that electoral violence can be the result of poor constitutional drafting, echoing a concern that some African states are more preoccupied with appearances of democracy than enrooting its practices. In many countries across the continent, elections and power, mostly executive power, constitute a means to access the state's resources and wealth. To correct this weakness, one conference panelist suggested drafting constitutions that are mindful of social contexts and that encourage power sharing, especially executive power. For some conference participants, power sharing therefore appears as an alternative to excessive executive power and the winner-takes-all approach when statebuilding remains fragile. For others, however, power sharing was considered a defeatist position representing the failure of democracy, and one that should not be accepted as the future of democracy in Africa.

In postconflict contexts, political agreements are another legal framework to consider. Aimed at re-establishing immediate or short-term stability while ending crises, political agreements often put forth governments of national unity, followed by the organization of elections. Their complex nature is reflected in the fact that, while sometimes applying to areas already covered by the constitution and thus having a constitutional aspiration,

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6 See ECOWAS, *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*, Article 39.

they are not legal instruments but more acts of political will. Political agreements pose problems when they contradict national constitutions. In Côte d'Ivoire for example, this issue was illustrated by the validation of elections through certification, following the invitation of the UN to participate in the work of the Independent Electoral Commission and the subsequent endorsement of the election results by UN Security Council resolutions.[7]

Lessons Learned from Recent Electoral Processes in West Africa

Africa has positive examples of democratic experiences. Participants agreed that these experiences should be collected and disseminated across the continent, as they constitute important resources for peace and stability. Electoral processes in Cape Verde, Ghana, and more recently in Niger provide key lessons for free, fair, and credible elections in West Africa. Overall, these processes highlight the link between the quality of elections and peace, stability, and the sustainability of democratic institutions. In addition, in each one of these countries, the local context and home-grown initiatives have reinforced the emergence and consolidation of successful electoral processes.

CAPE VERDE: CONSULTATION, CONSENSUS, AND FAVORABLE CONDITIONS

Ten peaceful presidential and legislative elections have been organized in Cape Verde since 1991, with some producing transfers of power. These democratic practices have facilitated the creation of conditions for development: Cape Verde has moved from being among the least developed countries to being a middle-income country, and it is now on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals.[8] A peaceful independence process, the existence of permanent discussion and consultation frameworks, a distinct decision-making process, and a bipartisan parliamentarian system characterized by proportionality help to explain Cape Verde's

stability.

Participants at the conference agreed that consensus on electoral law, the electoral calendar, and on the organ ensuring the supervision of elections is the formula for any successful electoral process. In Cape Verde, such consensus is achieved using platforms for dialogue that involve government and opposition political parties. In addition, investments have strengthened the electoral process, putting in place the financial conditions to ensure that all parties can participate and opposition parties can play their role of monitoring the government effectively. Other elements from Cape Verde's positive election record presented to the conference were: freedom of the press and access to the media for all political parties; the status granted to former leaders that ensures their ability to live a decent life once they leave power; good governance, citizen participation, and credible and independent election bodies as reinforcing components of the rule of law, democracy, and human rights; and a limited police presence, at a short distance from polling stations, to ensure the security of the electoral process.

In spite of its successes, Cape Verde's legislative election in February 2011 did witness some violent incidents—it appears that all of the institutions put in place did not work effectively. The challenges still affecting Cape Verde's electoral processes are linked to current problems with the designation of the electoral commission's members, and the fact that electoral lists are still controlled by the government. In addition, although parity is ensured in government, and the law provides for financial aid to political parties that have women counting for at least 25 percent of their elected representatives at the municipal level, women remain in a minority at the local level and in the judiciary.

GHANA: TECHNOLOGY, CREDIBILITY, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The use of electronic voter registration and other technological tools has reduced ballot rigging in Ghana, highlighting practical ways to support citizens in exercising their democratic rights.

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7 *Pretoria Agreement on the Peace Process in Côte d'Ivoire*, April 6, 2005, available at www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2005/pretoria_agreement.pdf . The Pretoria Agreement was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 1603 (June 3, 2005), UN Doc. S/RES/1603. See also *Ouagadougou Political Agreement*, March 2007, endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 1765 (July 16, 2007), UN Doc. S/RES/1765.

8 UNDP, "Cape Verde on Track to End Poverty and Meet Most MDGs," UNDP Newsroom, September 21, 2010, available at:
   http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/september/cape-verde-on-track-to-end-poverty-and-meet-most-mdgs.en .

Conference participants highlighted other key lessons learned from Ghana's successful electoral processes. Constitutional safeguards should be put in place and adequate resources provided to organize free and fair elections. The government should ensure that the electoral campaign is conducted without fear or intimidation. Politicians have a particular responsibility not to inflame tensions, and the general public should help elections to take place in a peaceful manner. Moreover, the Electoral Commission of Ghana plays a key role in the credibility of electoral processes due to its perceived authority, integrity, and independence, which are facilitated by the permanent tenure of its members. In addition, the Electoral Commission of Ghana is critical in addressing minor conflicts using mediation and conflict-resolution techniques, supporting dialogue among political parties, and supporting voter education across the country.

NIGER: TRANSITIONING TO ELECTIONS AFTER A MILITARY COUP

In Niger, democracy was re-established fourteen months after the February 2010 military coup that put a stop to former President Mamadou Tandja's attempt to modify the constitution and extend his decade-long rule. The transition process demonstrated that if elections are transparent, honest, and credible, they will be accepted by all. In particular, the consensual nature of the electoral legislation in Niger is thought to have contributed to this success. The Nigerien case also showed the benefits of having a voter list that is transparent, open, neutral, and secured and of allowing candidates and political parties equitable access to state resources and balanced coverage by the media. Suspicion was avoided, according to a conference participant, because all the political parties took responsibility for the electoral process and were fully committed to it, and electoral observers were present and visible.

The transition in Niger also underlined the importance of guaranteeing the neutrality of the administration and the authorities. This was achieved by ensuring the ineligibility of members of the ruling junta—the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CSRD) headed by Major Salou Djibo of the Defense and Security Forces (FDS)—to stand for election. At the same time, it was important that political actors remained the main stakeholders in the electoral process and that their responsibility was reaffirmed at every stage. To this end, both ruling and independent political parties were represented within the electoral commission. Furthermore, the Nigerien case highlighted the importance of an electoral commission that is independent, and not simply an administrative body serving the ruling power. Strengthening the quality and credibility of constitutional courts and bodies in charge of electoral disputes also proved important, so that they could monitor the legality of the electoral process and discourage potential fraud and threats to the peace.

Electoral Assistance from International and Regional Actors in West Africa

Electoral support can be provided as financial and technical assistance or through observation, depending on the resources available and the way that elections are organized. The kind of support provided also depends on the nature and level of coordination among the international actors involved in the electoral process, and conference participants recommended a spirit of complementarity to this end.

At the AU level, electoral assistance focuses on the observation of elections. An Electoral Assistance Fund, within the AU's Department of Political Affairs, supports the deployment of observers in countries holding elections. In addition, the AU ensures the promotion of good governance principles as well as credible, free, and fair elections by advancing normative frameworks such as the principles developed by the Panel of the Wise in its report "Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence"[9] and the 2007 *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance*.[10] However, despite their adoption, the slow implementation of these norms remains a major source of concern. For

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9   African Union Panel of the Wise, "Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence: Strengthening the Role of the African Union in Preventing, Managing, and Resolving Conflict," *The African Union Series*, New York: International Peace Institute, July 2010.

10 *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance*, adopted by the eighth ordinary session of the AU Assembly, January 30, 2007.

the Department of Peace and Security, the key priority is to ensure that polling does not cause a rupture in society. With this in mind, and while waiting for the operationalization of the African Standby Force, the five regional standby brigades could help to maintain security during electoral processes.

At the United Nations level, several structures deal with elections. These include UNDP, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). In addition, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and its Electoral Assistance Division ensure that electoral assistance is provided in a coherent and consistent manner. At the conference, the Electoral Assistance Division shared four particular guidelines that form part of the principles it has developed:

- Apart from the technical and material aspects of electoral assistance, political criteria should insist on the qualitative elements of elections, specifically the establishment of democratic institutions and the organization of free and fair elections.

- Conflict prevention should be put at the heart of the electoral process. This includes identifying the parameters that have the potential to cause tension, as well as the means to prevent and resolve such tensions.

- Electoral assistance should lead to sustainable and cost-effective processes. This calls for commitment from both the beneficiaries and the providers of assistance to work toward domestically-funded elections. Currently, 60 percent of UN electoral assistance is provided in Africa, to countries that will not reach the Millennium Development Goals but invest substantially in elections nonetheless.

- Elections should safeguard national sovereignty and take into account the needs and political realities of each country. It is important that national structures are allowed to own the electoral process. This can be reinforced with capacity-building programs before, during, and after elections.[11]

For UNDP, electoral assistance constitutes an entry point for broader democratic governance, and the agency aims to ensure that elections are fully owned by national actors, while helping to advance human rights. Electoral assistance further helps countries to acquire the necessary skills to organize free, fair, and credible elections. In practice, technical assistance is provided to election-management bodies but also, between elections, to civil society and the media.

Using the electoral-cycle approach, which encompasses the prevoting, voting, and postvoting stages of an electoral process, electoral support can supply more substantive assistance by taking legal frameworks, the electoral system, and the election's stakeholders into consideration. The electoral-cycle approach is considered an important way to ensure that electoral support focuses on sustainability. In addition, it allows the application of lessons learned from previous electoral processes. UNDP's tool for providing electoral assistance is organized around its Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS), a three-year initiative that helps countries improve their electoral laws, processes, and institutions, while also enhancing women's participation in electoral processes. In 2010, sixty-six countries received electoral assistance from UNDP, and 20 percent of these operations—which accounted for half of UNDP's assistance—took place in Africa. Guinea and Niger provide two cases of recent interventions by UNDP.

UNDP AND THE 2010 ELECTORAL PROCESS IN GUINEA

In June and November 2010, the presidential elections held in Guinea were the country's first democratic elections since independence in 1958. Against this backdrop, electoral support was provided in the areas of political and social dialogue, as well as security. The country's UN resident coordinator and the Special Representative for the Secretary-General (SRSG) for West Africa drafted a roadmap to guide the conduct of political parties. Funds were mobilized to provide the necessary equipment to security and defense forces charged with ensuring the process was safe and secure, to facilitate the transportation of electoral materials and results, to conduct human rights

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11 For more on electoral assistance principles, see, for example, Fabio Bargiacchi, Mette Bakken, Paul Guerin, and Ricardo Godinho Gomes, "Effectiveness and Sustainability of Electoral Assistance: The Electoral Cycle Approach," ISPI Working Paper, July 2011, available at: www.ispionline.it/ad/electoral/WP_Sustainability_and_Effectiveness_Electoral_Assistance.pdf .

training, and to sensitize the population to relevant UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace, and security, including Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889.[12] Emphasizing local ownership and citizens' engagement, this support aimed to build the capacity of national stakeholders rather than substitute them with external actors, and to consult with political parties and partners throughout. In particular, women, youth, and elders helped publicize a message of peace.

UNDP Country Director Adama Coulibaly reported that the electoral process in Guinea benefited from strong political will and the determination of national authorities to end the transition period, as well as a clear articulation of technical and political aspects of the process and a balance between the two. There was also intelligent collaboration and cooperation between the electoral commission and the ministry in charge of territorial administration, as well as effective coordination among all the partners that formed the International Contact Group for Guinea, including the EU, which funded more than half of the elections. After the vote, a close follow-up process further contributed to its success.

Practical recommendations that emerged from the Guinean case study at the conference included the need to adhere strictly to the electoral calendar, the importance of anticipating and planning for the requisite resources, and the need for a permanent consultation framework that respects the electoral cycle. That said, at the end of the electoral process in Guinea, one important question remained unanswered: how to reconcile sovereignty with the availability of resources.

UNDP AND THE 2010–2011 ELECTORAL PROCESS IN NIGER

In Niger, UNDP Resident Coordinator Khardiata Lo N'Diaye reported that the agency emphasized the need for all of the actors involved to familiarize themselves with the legal framework of electoral assistance to better understand their own roles. In addition, UNDP found that consensus should be built among actors who are at the forefront of national action. For instance, setting up and respecting the electoral timeframe should be a consensual process, as should establishing and managing the voter list.

Partnerships further contributed to the success of this recent electoral process. Partnerships were established to mobilize resources for the organization of elections, and two-thirds of the necessary funding was raised within three months. Additional collaborations contributed to building the capacity of the electoral commission by providing international expertise, acquiring electoral material to limit contestation, providing civic education that made use of traditional and modern means of communication, and supporting security forces in ensuring security during the electoral process. Furthermore, open channels of communication between the government and the electoral commission facilitated coordination.

Overall, the elections provided an opportunity to restart the country's democratic process. And the electoral process highlighted further opportunities for sustainably building the capacity of election-management bodies, strengthening the civil-registration system, supporting democratic governance, and documenting and promoting a success story.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE UN AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR PEACEFUL ELECTIONS

The Praia conference discussed collaboration between ECOWAS, the AU, and the United Nations on election work, which was considered to be exemplary, particularly with regard to preventing conflicts. This collaboration was developed during recent electoral processes in Guinea, Niger, and Côte d'Ivoire. And, with the Arab League and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, interorganizational collaboration was also exercised in Mauritania.

In Guinea, the ECOWAS-AU-UN partnership played a key role in facilitating the International Contact Group, and the ECOWAS-appointed mediator was endorsed by the AU and the UN. In

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12 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of October 2000, the first resolution on women, peace, and security, highlighted the specific protection needs of women and girls in conflict and called for increased women's participation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes. Resolution 1888 of September 2009 urged member states to take effective measures to protect women against sexual violence in armed conflict situations. Building on Resolution 1820 of June 2008, which was the first to recognize conflict-related sexual violence as an international peace and security concern, Resolution 1888 also addressed practical implementation issues and called for the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Resolution 1889 of October 2009 reiterated the need to strengthen the participation of women at all stages of peace processes. See UN Doc. S/RES/1325, S/RES/1820, S/RES/1888, and S/RES/1189, respectively.

Niger, a lighter system was put in place, which involved several visits to the country during the transition period, from as early as the second day of the military coup. In Côte d'Ivoire, the ECOWAS-AU-UN triangular collaboration helped to raise election standards: at the UN level, it helped to voice condemnation of unconstitutional changes of government; at regional and subregional levels, it promoted the certification process endorsed by the UN Security Council.

Thus, based on a principle of subsidiarity that helps clarify leadership issues, the collaboration in West Africa provides an example of a process that other regions could aspire to. Here again, the importance of consensus was emphasized, which can be inconsistent and requires periodic reviews.

Human Rights and Gender Balance in Electoral Processes

Democracy goes hand in hand with human rights. While the United Nations does not promote a unique model or form of democracy, human rights are considered a critical part of all electoral processes as they enounce the principles that are necessary for effective political participation and help to legitimate election outcomes.[13] When human rights are not a part of elections, both the electoral process and their outcomes can become a threat to peace, stability, and development.

Among the principles proclaimed by United Nations human rights instruments, those that affirm the close link and mutually reinforcing nature of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law include: the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs; the right to periodic and genuine elections; the right to vote and to be elected; the freedoms of association, expression, and opinion; and the principles of equality and justice. The 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and the UN Commission on Human Rights' 2002

resolution on "Further Measures to Promote and Consolidate Democracy" formulate the rights and fundamental freedoms that are essential elements of democracy.[14]

At a regional level, a number of instruments proclaim human rights and democracy as shared values, including the 1981 *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, the 2003 Maputo *Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa*, and the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance*.[15] At a subregional level, the ECOWAS *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* also makes mention of human rights. All these instruments are interrelated and what is at stake is their effectiveness. Thus, the ratification of regional instruments such as the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* is to be encouraged further, conference participants concluded.

Beyond the ratification of legal frameworks, a human rights-based approach should be applied to elections themselves, and the latter should be considered as part of a broader development process, according to one speaker at the conference. Elections should aim at fulfilling human rights, and the electoral process should incorporate the principles of universality and inalienability, indivisibility, equality and nondiscrimination, participation, and accountability. Support should be provided to deepen all relevant actors' knowledge of human rights and of their role in protecting these rights; this includes actors from parliaments, national electoral commissions, civil society, the media, the judiciary, and the security forces. State institutions should be made more aware of the interrelationship between human rights and democracy. Specifically, mechanisms to ensure election-related rights (e.g., the right to vote and take part in the public affairs of one's country) should be established and consolidated, and human rights institutions should have a role to play in the electoral process. The protection of women and children should be reinforced, including during election periods. For instance, the regional implementation of UN Security Council

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13 Tom J. Farer, "The Promotion of Democracy: International Law and Norms," in Edward Newman and Roland Rich (eds.), *The UN Role in Promoting Democracy: Between Ideals and Reality* (Tokyo: United Nations University, 2004), p. 32. See also United Nations, "Democracy and the United Nations," available at: www.un.org/en/events/democracyday/pdf/presskit.pdf .

14 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 21, December 10, 1948; *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Article 25, December 16, 1966; UN Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2002/46 (April 23, 2002).

15 *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, Article 13; *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* ("Maputo Protocol"), Article 9, July 11, 2003.

Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security should be promoted, and women's political participation should be encouraged.

While the ECOWAS supplementary protocol has facilitated progress in terms of women's representation in national parliaments in countries like Liberia and the Gambia, the Praia conference recalled that the political participation of West African women remains limited. This is reflected in the makeup of electoral commissions, where women's involvement is mostly marginal. The same applies to political parties, which generally lack internal norms promoting women. Women's participation in democratic structures is further stalled by their limited resources and the challenges they face in meeting the financial requirements attached to the candidate's deposit. When they manage to meet these financial demands, the composition of electoral lists and women's positions on these lists often hinder their election nonetheless. Moreover, at the governmental level, women often occupy "sensitive" ministries, while portfolios dealing with elections and other sovereignty issues are automatically allocated to men. Women also face social and cultural constraints, which include elements of public resistance to female political leadership, particularly in rural areas. Finally, the lack of data on women's political participation remains a problem in the region, and it is therefore important to identify, collect, and disseminate positive accounts of women's involvement in politics.

Participants at the Praia conference agreed that women need democracy. However, democracy equally needs women for its sustainability and legitimacy. An electoral process that does not include women represents an artificial democracy. Thus, in September 2010, a regional action plan was adopted to increase women's participation in political and decision-making processes.[16] This regional initiative should be complemented by national legislation promoting women's participation in electoral processes. National legal frameworks advancing women's political participation should be harmonized with international instruments. More efforts should be made to implement international instruments, and both

civil society organizations and political parties have a role to play in monitoring this implementation. Political parties should be educated in promoting affirmative policies and internal democratic processes that facilitate gender equality. Civic education should be made accessible to the general public, and women have a critical role to play in educating and training future generations of citizens. Two paths should be followed simultaneously, according to conference participants: changing mentalities and attitudes in relation to education and changing institutional structures within political parties and at the national level. Finally, concrete support should be provided to women in terms of both capacity building and resources.

Rationalizing Contestation to Manage Electoral Disputes

A typology of elections presented at the conference identified three distinct roles that elections can play in relation to democracy: first, elections serve as foundations for democracy or mechanisms to transition to democracy; second, elections can help to consolidate a democratization process; and third, elections can become part of a democratic routine. In Africa, the necessary legal and institutional frameworks to ensure free elections have generally been established. However, in practice, the boycott of elections and contestation of results in countries such as Senegal and Benin serve as a reminder that electoral processes in these countries are still in a phase of consolidation.

The contestation of elections is considered to have both conventional and unconventional elements. On the one hand, disputes are considered an inherent part of an election, and electoral litigation is a common feature of most electoral processes. On the other hand, electoral litigation becomes irregular when it is excessive (e.g., with a massive cancellation of elections), when it is endless, and, more importantly, when it is not resolved when brought before the body responsible

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16 UNOWA, "Report of the Regional Forum on the 10th Anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in West Africa," Dakar, Senegal, September 15-17, 2010. Regional forum organized by UNOWA in collaboration with the AU, ECOWAS, the Mano River Union, UNFPA, UN Women, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP, UNHCR, and UNICEF.

for resolving election disputes. To limit electoral litigation—keeping it within reasonable boundaries and ensuring peaceful election outcomes—disputes should be addressed and resolved using existing legal frameworks. In practice, the management of election litigation should prevent another round of elections from happening in the street.

The Praia meeting identified two instances that can fuel electoral disputes at the beginning of the electoral process: when the voter list and its legitimacy cause concern and when candidates' eligibility is called into question. In Senegal and Benin, for example, recent electoral conflicts arose from the absence of any formalized mechanism to contest the voter list. And in Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, tension arose following the elimination of Alassane Ouattara from the electoral race in 2000 and the exclusion of the main opposition leader, Gilchrist Olympio, from presidential elections in 1993 and 2003. After an election, electoral litigation develops mostly around the contestation of the results, in relation to the way the elections were organized or in relation to the elections' adjudicator.

Rationalizing electoral litigation in West Africa therefore calls for permanent consultation platforms, which allow for continuous dialogue on elections. One such example is the Ghana Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) established in 1994 by the electoral commission and political parties as a trust-building mechanism, which ensures that processes leading to election challenges are brought to the fore for discussion and that answers are identified for their resolution.[17] Furthermore, it is important to reach a point where monitoring bodies are appointed on a consensual basis, and are less politicized and less precarious. There is also a need for a better division of labor between electoral commissions and constitutional courts or tribunals that are mandated to decide on electoral disputes. Finally, the conference called for effective management of election-related disputes by ECOWAS, which aims to harmonize its norms and practices with regard to elections; for example, by putting in place a regional system of election certification.

Defining the Role of Security Forces

In ordinary circumstances, elections and their successful litigation are an alternative to violence. However, in some contexts, elections move away from a healthy competition between different programs for society and instead turn into a competition among social and ethnic groups, for whom defeat or loss of power equates to social exclusion. All means are therefore used to stay in power, including violence.

Insecurity during electoral processes is related to the way elections are organized as well as the context in which they take place (e.g., economic conditions, social demands, criminal activities), all of which are often exacerbated in crisis or postconflict situations. Risks associated with the organization of elections relate to the legal framework for organizing elections, the material organization of elections, and the tools for electoral litigation. The electoral framework carries a potential for frustration and therefore a risk of violence when parts of the electorate are or feel excluded, when citizens who should not be registered are included on voter lists, or when provisions violating the principle of "one person, one voice" are adopted. In addition, a biased electoral process can create discontent and lead to rejection of the results.

To mitigate the security risks linked to the electoral process, conference participants suggested solutions in the form of political agreements and consensus on the legal instruments and organs in charge of the electoral process. All other potential motivators of violence should also be identified, analyzed, and assessed, and appropriate security plans should be established. Two types of security plans can be devised: a classic organization of the security forces within the regular chain of command, or the creation of a special force for the elections (such as in Togo in 2007 and Guinea in 2010). For both types of plans, legal requirements and regulations need to ensure the neutrality of the forces providing security and prevent abuses. However, in most African countries, there is no legislation nor widely known framework of action

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17 Electoral Commission of Ghana, "Electoral Reform Undertaken or Taking Place in Ghana's Electoral System," available at www.ec.gov.gh/node/10 .

for security forces at election time.

Nevertheless, when involved in electoral processes, security forces should display the requisite competence and professionalism. For instance, they should be trained in human rights and international humanitarian law and their intervention should conform to such international standards. They should not be overly armed, lest they become a threat to the public. Preferably, the police, not the military, should be the force in charge of the security surrounding elections. Their neutrality should be established, and they should remain under the authority of the institutions managing the electoral process.

In practice, following the 2006 political agreement between government and opposition parties that paved the way for elections in Togo, a special security force, including members of the police and gendarmerie, was established to ensure the security of the 2007 legislative elections. Similarly, in 2010, a special security force for the presidential election (FOSEP) was organized. FOSEP was active throughout the electoral process. Security was ensured during the revision of the voter list and during the electoral campaign through the protection of candidates and political parties' headquarters, and the provision of security for political demonstrations. On and after voting day, FOSEP also facilitated the peaceful conduct of the vote and vote counting and secured transport of the ballots from voting bureaus to the headquarters of local electoral commissions.

The Togolese experience of security provision demonstrated the importance of political consensus from the start of the process and the significance of dialogue between government and development partners. Drawing from this case study, conference participants suggested that where a special force is established, its mandate should cover the entire electoral process. It should be clear to all actors involved that ensuring the security of elections is a matter of national security. Nonetheless, a clear partnership with civil society should also be established. Specifically, the role of the media in informing the public needs to be supported, and targeted training addressing journalists helps to meet this need. Finally, strengthening and standardizing ECOWAS' role in election-related crises in the subregion would further help in defining the role of all security forces at election time.

Violence Prevention and the Media

West African journalists are often challenged by their limited resources, their lack of adequate training, and ultimately their frequent lack of neutrality. The latter applies more to government-owned or government-controlled media during electoral processes. Private media outlets, despite limited resources, remain the media of diversity in West Africa and should be supported to ensure independent coverage of electoral campaigns, conference participants said.

It is the role of media-regulation organs to ensure that public media serve the public interest and represent a diverse range of views, particularly during elections. At the international level, Reporters Without Borders has produced a set of guidelines aimed at equipping journalists with the skills needed to contribute to the prevention of election-related violence.

In Guinea, the role of the media in the context of the electoral process was illustrated by the Maison de la presse, or the Press House. During the 2010 seven-month electoral campaign, the Press House remained a space dedicated to electoral communication for all actors involved in the process. Press conferences and press releases were organized, which involved the independent national electoral commission, civil society organizations, and the election's security force. The Press House helped to generate a flow of information and contributed to increased sharing of information, thereby limiting rumors and manipulation attempts in the media. This was made possible by the establishment of a decent work environment and working conditions for journalists; the provision of a professional, neutral, and impartial space that allowed access to diverse media; and the allocation of sufficient funding by the international community, namely, France and the USA. The refusal of political parties to use the Press House during the electoral campaign was considered a limitation. However, this changed after the presidential election, when political parties and the government also started to make use of the Press House for their communication activities.

Conclusion

The Praia conference highlighted the need for sustained efforts to enhance electoral processes in West Africa, with a view to consolidating democracy and building peace.

While effective legal frameworks that support democracy and electoral processes in the subregion have been adopted, challenges linked to the weak sanctions regime of ECOWAS' supplementary *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*, constitutional designs that do not always take into account the social context, and possible conflicts between political agreements and national constitutions still need to be addressed.

Lessons learned from successful electoral processes in Cape Verde, Ghana, and Niger reaffirm the link between free and fair elections and the establishment and maintenance of peace, stability, and stronger democratic institutions. Consensual and inclusive processes, adequate resources, strong and independent election-management bodies, and the commitment of all political actors are important prerequisites for holding credible and peaceful elections.

With regard to electoral assistance, the need for more political electoral support was emphasized, rather than simply technical and material support. This was illustrated particularly by UNDP's involvement in national electoral processes, in which elections serve as an entry point to build or strengthen democratic governance. In addition, collaborative efforts like the ECOWAS-AU-UN partnership provide a useful framework for conflict prevention and could be replicated to ensure the organization of free, fair, and credible elections across the continent.

The close link and mutually reinforcing nature of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law were underlined at the conference. However, beyond the shared values proclaimed by international, continental, and regional human rights and democratic governance instruments, the implementation of these instruments remains key to their effective contribution to sustainable democracy, stability, and development in West Africa. Considering the obstacles that continue to hinder women's political participation, stronger initiatives should be developed to raise awareness among local populations and advance gender-equality principles within political parties and institutions.

Moreover, to prevent violence by rationalizing electoral litigation, discussion platforms should be established, issues surrounding the appointment and composition of election-management bodies should be addressed, and the division of labor among bodies mandated to resolve election-related disputes should be clarified.

The Praia conference also detailed ways to successfully mitigate security risks related to the organization of elections and the context in which they take place. Specifically, police forces rather than the military should be used during electoral processes, and they should meet important requirements of neutrality, competence, professionalism, equipment, and subordination to the civilian authorities managing the process. Finally, with regard to the media, the conference highlighted the need to respond to challenges of independence, training, and resources that have the potential to impede journalists' fulfillment of their responsibility during elections—enabling the public to become a well-informed electorate.

Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability in West Africa

Adopted by the Regional Conference on Elections and Stability
held in Praia, Cape Verde (20 May 2011)

I.   A Regional Conference on Elections and Stability was convened in Praia, Cape Verde from 18 to 20 May 2011. The conference, hosted by the government of Cape Verde, was organized by the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), in partnership with the UNDP regional office, with the support of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and its Electoral Assistance Division, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), the European Union (EU), and the International Peace Institute (IPI). Participants including high-level representatives of West African states, international and regional organizations, as well as representatives of election management bodies, national security forces, civil society, academic institutions and the media, examined the situation of elections in West Africa, focusing on the impact of electoral processes on democracy and stability and its implications for crisis prevention and peacebuilding.

II. Participants acknowledged that assisting state authorities in West Africa in holding peaceful, free, and fair elections has been at the core of United Nations and ECOWAS efforts aimed at strengthening democratic principles and processes in the sub-region. They underscored that the increasing number of competitive elections across the sub-region has contributed to strengthening democratic prospects. While some countries succeeded in organizing peaceful and credible elections, others' electoral processes have been marked by tensions and violence. They observed that shortcomings in the electoral administration such as partisan electoral management bodies, the lack of adequate mechanisms to manage electoral disputes and ensure inclusive representation, and financial gaps in the organization of elections are important factors of instability.

III. Participants reviewed successes and challenges of elections in the sub-region, including in relation to effective electoral assistance, the promotion and harmonization of regional norms and principles, and the integration of cross-cutting priorities pertaining to human rights, the security sector and the media, into the electoral management framework. They engaged in discussions on best practices and lessons learned from recent elections in West Africa including in Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Cape Verde, Niger, Benin, and Nigeria, and exchanged on the necessity to strengthen collaboration and consensus among all election stakeholders and for a holistic and sustainable approach to electoral processes.

The participants in the Regional Conference stressed the following:

A.   The right to vote and to be elected is a fundamental human and constitutional right;
B.   Setting conditions for credible electoral processes including holding and financing elections is the responsibility of state authorities;
C.   National consensus is a key requirement to the elaboration and adoption of electoral laws, voters lists, electoral management bodies and other related mechanisms;
D.   Elections goes hand in hand with building institutions and civic education to sustain democratic culture;
E.   The alternation in government and time limitations of political mandates are cornerstones of democratic and electoral processes;
F.   The critical role of political parties in electoral processes and their importance in enhancing democratic institutions;
G.   The opposition has an important role to play in national politics both as the main interlocutor and challenger to the ruling party;

H. Election-related violence continues to be one of the major challenges to political stability in the sub-region;

I. Corruption, manipulation and rigging continue to plague a number of electoral processes in West Africa;

J. Free and fair elections as a prerequisite for the peaceful transfer of power are the cornerstone of democracy;

K. Democratically-controlled and impartial security forces are a precondition for the conduct of credible elections;

L. The critical role of civil society including women and the media in the delivery of credible elections in the sub-region;

M. The relevance of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance adopted in December 2001 to provide a concerted regional response to the growing challenge of election-related violence in West Africa;

N. The importance of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance adopted in 2007 as well as OIF Bamako Declaration adopted in 2000;

O. The importance of the Presidential Statement of the United Nations Security Council of 10 July 2009 on "peace consolidation in West Africa" stressing the need of holding transparent and open elections in respect to constitutional order.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants identified key prerequisites for elections to promote stability and agreed on the necessity to work together for the implementation of the following recommendations:

Elections and Crisis Prevention

1. Identify "at-risk" countries and areas by assessing the presence and gravity of political and social problems; making efforts to address underlying grievances before elections and limiting their potential to ignite underlying grievances;

2. Special attention should be given to the role of youth during elections and their grievances, including unemployment, which should be addressed to avoid the use of youth as perpetrators of violence;

3. Promote cooperation and coordination between international partners involved in the resolution of electoral disputes including through appropriate mechanisms such as International Contact Groups;

4. Further encourage the UN-ECOWAS-AU partnership in conflict prevention as an effective tool of crisis management and mitigation;

5. Strengthen cooperation between UNOWA, OHCHR, ECOWAS, and governments to develop, in collaboration with electoral management bodies, a regional civil society and national human rights institutions capacity building program in electoral affairs;

6. Establish early warning mechanisms to monitor potential human rights violations before, during, and after elections and enable a quick response with the participation of civil society, in particular women groups.

Electoral Assistance

7. Request that international electoral assistance is delivered in a manner appropriate to context, based on careful and comprehensive needs assessment and respecting national dynamics and ownership;

8. Ensure that international electoral assistance encourages development sustainability by placing a priority on capacity building of national stakeholders and institutions in conformity to the electoral cycle approach, as stated by the UN General Assembly Resolution 62/150;

9. Encourage electoral assistance providers to ensure that assistance is sustainable and cost-effective, being that all West African states are expected to self-fund elections;

10. Urge the UN and all international electoral assistance providers to adopt a conflict prevention approach in the provision of electoral assistance; placing at the heart of their work the prevention of election-related conflicts and provide advice that can facilitate political stability;

11. Set up mechanisms for regular consultation among national stakeholders;

12. Facilitate the establishment of adequate state mechanisms and regulations to finance political parties and

electoral campaigns in order to promote equitable participation in electoral processes;

13. Prevent the financing of political parties and their campaigns by criminal networks, in particular drug trafficking networks.

Norms and Principles of Electoral Processes

14. Ensure that constitutional, legal and regulatory frameworks that reflect international best practices and norms are implemented, including the respect of equal treatment of candidates and political parties;
15. Perform a periodic evaluation of the implementation of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance;
16. Ratify the African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and relevant regional instruments, and put into place mechanisms to monitor and enforce compliance with its principles;
17. Harmonize, at the regional level, normative and institutional arrangements governing elections with due respect to national political systems.

Electoral Administration

18. Continue to reinforce capacity building of electoral management bodies to support their effectiveness;
19. Develop capacity to promote political rights, and facilitate citizen access to voter registration processes on a continuous basis, as required by national law;
20. Facilitate the establishment of reliable electoral lists based on regular census by civil registry including through the use of appropriate technology;
21. Establish a regional educational centre in electoral administration to strengthen capacity of national election officers, and facilitate the dissemination of election-specific knowledge by research and training centres and networks in West Africa;
22. Continue to assess and reflect upon the staffing and mandates of Electoral Commissions in West Africa in order to improve their performances;
23. Promote transparency and consensus throughout the electoral process: before, during, and after election-day;
24. Put in place appropriate mechanisms for the expeditious, just, and fair resolution of electoral disputes, and in this regard build capacities of the local judiciary in electoral dispute resolution;
25. ECOWAS should consider the possibility to conduct the monitoring of elections in its member states, when appropriate.

Elections and Cross-cutting Issues

A. Human Rights and Gender

26. Call greater attention to the importance of promoting gender equality in all economic, political, and social contexts and empowering women in the conduct of elections;
27. Ensure that electoral processes in West Africa are conducted in compliance with human rights norms and standards;
28. Guarantee freedom and equity of assembly, association and speech in electoral processes;
29. Ensure fair protection to all voters and candidates, in particular female candidates, against violence, intimidation and other forms of human rights violations;
30. Raise awareness of all state institutions involved in the electoral process to fulfill their obligations according to human rights instruments;
31. Build human rights capacity of all actors in the electoral process including through national public awareness, education and institutional development;
32. Establish and/or consolidate regional and national accountability mechanisms to ensure the full enjoyment of article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international and African treaties pertaining to elections;

33. Implement the Regional Plan of Action on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 adopted at the Regional Forum organized by the United Nations, ECOWAS, MRU and the AU in Dakar in 2010;

34. Take appropriate measures to promote women participation in elections and the election of women in public offices and within political parties.

B. Security Forces

35. Ensure the impartiality and neutrality of security forces during elections; ensure that priority is placed on protecting populations and safeguarding public goods as part of security forces commitment to a wider human security framework;

36. Emphasize the leading role of security institutions in maintaining law and order with military forces providing additional support on a need basis;

37. Strengthen national legal frameworks in order to specify the mandate, supervision, accountability, and operational management of security forces in electoral processes including the collaboration with all stakeholders;

38. Establish an ad hoc electoral security force to address fragile institutional context under the supervision of an integrated electoral security coordinating body;

39. Adjust the electoral security force and other security mechanisms to the specific context by: i) performing a comprehensive risk assessment; ii) establishing a chain of command providing for timely information and decision-making;

40. Teach, promote and respect the international norms and standards for public order in electoral periods, including on human rights notions;

41. Reinforce the cooperation between UNOWA and ECOWAS in the elaboration of a regional electoral security program to underpin capacity building program for security forces/services within the framework of a broader security sector reform agenda;

42. Involve closely ECOWAS in the securitization of sensitive electoral processes;

43. Use lessons learned in securing elections as an entry point to security sector reform.

C. The Media

44. State-owned and private media - including new media - must abide by codes of conduct in order to guarantee accurate and fair coverage of the electoral process including to political parties and independent candidates;

45. Provide adequate training to media, ensure that they have an official legal status, resources and equipment;

46. Freedom of expression should be guaranteed while holding the media accountable for biased reporting; reinforce the legislation against discriminations and incitements to hatred;

47. Involve the media and journalists associations and unions in the definition of public policies related to media regulation and development;

48. Develop comprehensive media support strategies well in advance of elections, and monitor their implementation throughout the electoral process;

49. Ensure full independence of media regulatory bodies and guarantee resources to monitor and regulate media properly; develop tools to apply sanctions if necessary;

50. State authorities and civil society should conduct extensive public information campaigns to inform citizens about the electoral process and their civic duties;

51. Facilitate synergies on a regular basis between the media and bodies in charge of election management;

52. Use new information technologies to facilitate the dissemination of election-related information and the reporting of irregularities;

53. ECOWAS should consider the possibility of establishing a regional media regulatory body, with due respect to freedom of expression.

Agenda

Elections and Stability in West Africa

Wednesday, May 18, 2011

Opening Ceremony

09:00-10:00   **Introductory Statements**
Mr. Said Djinnit, *Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for West Africa*
Mr. James Victor Gbeho, *President of the ECOWAS Commission*
Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, *AU Commissioner for Peace and Security*

Opening Statement
H.E. José Maria Neves, *Prime Minister of Cape Verde*

10:00-10:30   Coffee break

10:30-11:30   **Session I: High-Level Panel on "Elections and Stability in West Africa"**

H.E. Salou Djibo, *former Head of State of Niger*
H.E. John Kufuor, *former President of the Republic of of Ghana*
H.E. José Maria Neves, *Prime Minister of Cape Verde*

11:30-13:00   **Session II: Ten Years of ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance: Issues, Stakes, and Challenges**

"Ten Years of ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects"
Dr. Abdel Fatau Musah, *Director for International Relations, ECOWAS*

"Moving Forward: Limitations of the Protocol and Perspectives for Improvement"
Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, *Director, Center for Democracy and Development, Nigeria*

"The Protocol and the Challenge of the 'Constitutional Convergence Principles'"
Prof. Alioune Sall, *Cheikh Anta Diop University*

Chair
Ambassador James Victor Gbeho, *President, ECOWAS Commission*

13:00-14:00   Lunch break

14:00-15:30   **Session III: A Critical Look at the Recent Elections in West Africa and Their Implications for Crisis Prevention and Stability**

"Overview of and Lessons from Recent Electoral Processes in West Africa"
Prof. Dodzi Kokoroko, *Directeur du Centre de Droit Public, Université de Lomé, Togo*

"Elections, Conflict Prevention, and Peacebuilding in West Africa: The Way Forward"
Mr. Thierno Souleye Mbodj, *Expert, Private Sector, Development and Peacebuilding*

"Collaboration Between the United Nations and Regional Organizations for Peaceful Elections in West Africa: The Case for UN-ECOWAS-AU Partnership"
Mr. Said Djinnit, *Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for West Africa*

Chair
Mr. Hugo Sada, *Delegate for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*

15:30-15:45   Coffee break

15:45-18:00   **Session IV: Challenges and Opportunities for Electoral Assistance in West Africa**

The UN perspective
"An Overview of Policy and Strategic Issues"
Mr. Tadjoudine Ali-Diabacte, *Deputy Director, Electoral Assistance Division, United Nations*

"An Overview of the Role of UNDP"
Ms. Gita Welch, *Regional Manager, UNDP Regional Centre, Dakar*, and
Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, *Director, Democratic Governance Group*

"A View from the Field: The 2010-2011 Electoral Process in Niger and Guinea"
Ms. Khardiata Lo N'Diaye, *Resident Coordinator,* and Mr. Adama Coulibaly, *Country Director, Guinea*

The EU perspective
Mr. Jose Coll I Carbo, *Head, EU Delegation, Cape Verde*

The OIF perspective
"Election Observation and Transparency"
Mr. Hugo Sada, *Delegate for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*

Chair
Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, *AU Commissioner for Peace and Security*

18:00-19:00   **Meeting of the Steering Committee and Drafting Group**

Thursday, May 19, 2011

08:30-10:30   **Session V: The Challenge of Norms and Standards in Electoral Processes in West Africa**

"Political Agreements, Electoral Legislation, and Crisis Exit"
Prof. Frédéric Joël Aïvo, *University of Benin*

"Managing Electoral Disputes and Preventing Electoral Violence"
Prof. Ismaila Madior Fall, *Cheikh Anta Diop University*

"Counting Votes and Declaring Winners: Synergies and Ambiguities Between Electoral Commissions and Constitutional/Supreme Courts"
Mr. David Kangah, *Deputy Chairman, Ghana Electoral Commission*

"Challenges and Stakes in the Identification and Registration of Voters"
Benin: Prof. Nassirou Bako-Arifari, *General Supervisor of CPS-LEPI*
Côte d'Ivoire: Mr. Moussa Kane, *Electoral Officer, ONUCI*

Chair
Mr. Tadjoudine Ali-Diabacte, *Deputy Director, Electoral Assistance Division, United Nations*

10:30-10:45   Coffee break

10:45-12:30   **Session VI: Elections and Cross-Cutting Challenges**

Panel 1: Human Rights and Gender Balance in Electoral Processes

"Human Rights and Democracy"
Mahamane Cissé-Gouro, *Regional Representative, OHCHR*

"Human Rights, Elections, and Constitution Drafting in West Africa"
Mr. Nana K. A. Busia, Jr, *Senior Rule of Law & Human Rights Advisor, and Head of Access to Justice programme, UNDP-Sierra Leone*

"Gender Mainstreaming in West African Electoral Processes"
Ms. Michele Koudounou Sona, *Gender Expert*

"The Added Value of Human Rights to Electoral Processes in West Africa"
Mr. Patrice Vahard, *Senior Human Rights Advisor, UNOWA*

Chair
Mr. Josep Coll i Carbo, *Head, EU Delegation, Cape Verde*

12:30-14:00   Lunch break

14:00-16:00   **Panel 2: The Role of the Security Sector in Providing Security During Electoral Processes**

"Prerequisites to Ensure Public Order and Human Security in Sensitive Electoral Processes"
Gen. Siaka Toumany Sangare, *General Inspector of Police, Ministry for Internal Security and Civil Protection, Mali*

"Managing Security on the Election Day"
Col. Yark Damehame, *Commander of the FOSEP (Force de sécurité élection présidentielle), General Director of the Gendarmerie nationale, Togo*

"UN Tools to Support Security During Electoral Processes"
Prof. Kossi Agokla, *Elections and Security Expert, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa*

Chair
Gen. Lamine Cissé, *UN Coordinator for SSR in Guinea*

16:00-16:15   Coffee break

16:15-18:00   **Panel 3: The Media and Violence Prevention During Electoral Processes**

"Challenges, Opportunities, and Best Practices in West Africa"
Mr. Mame Less Camara, *Journalist and Lecturer, CESTI, University Cheick Anta Diop*

"Electoral Communication Before, During, and After the Poll"
Mr. Daniel Fra, *Director, Maison de la presse, Guinea*

"Guidelines for Journalists During Elections"
Mr. Ambroise Pierre, *Africa Division, Reporters Without Borders*

Chair
Boubacar Yacine Diallo, *Communication Advisor and President of Free Radio Union, Guinea*

18:00-19:00   **Meeting of the Steering Committee and Drafting Group**

Friday, May 20, 2011

08:30-10:30   **Session VII: Roundtable – The Cape Verde Experience of Elections**

Mr. Manuel Miranda, *Vice-President, National Electoral Commission*
Ms. Roselma Evora, *Expert, Political Science, Civil Society*
Ms. Arlinda Chantre, *Director General, Electoral Administration*

Chair
Ms. Petra Lantz, *Resident Coordinator, Cape Verde*

10:30-11:00   Coffee break

11:00-12:00   **Adoption of Final Document and Closing Session**

Closing Statement
H.E. Mr. Basílio Mosso Ramos, *President of the Cape Verde Parliament*

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