



Lessons Learned from an Assessment of Peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations in West Africa

By Dr. 'Funmi Olonisakin

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Foreword:

Peace support operations (PSO) have become complex operations consisting of a variety of civilian and military components. West African countries have been actively involved in several peace support operations over the last years: from current AU peace support operations outside of the region to the earlier ECOMOG missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Inadvertently, the experiences from such interventions feed into the overall framework of the evolving African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the current establishment of the African Stand-by Force (ASF). Yet, due to the complex and political nature of these conflicts as well as the natural controversies associated with peacekeeping missions, there have only been ad hoc attempts to conduct systematic evaluations. In turn, no clear methodology or standard procedures are presently available for assessing the impact of peace support operations have emerged.

Against this background, the Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution Department of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre (KAIPTC) and the German Development Cooperation have jointly commissioned this report to contribute to the development a framework of evaluation, with a special focus on the implications for the civilian dimension of peace support operations. The author, Dr Funmi Olonisakin, is Director of the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at the School of Social Science and Public Policy, King's College London and a renowned expert on issues of African security, conflict management and peacekeeping.

The present report is based on a comprehensive literature review to assess the impact of past peacekeeping missions in West Africa and to help identify lessons learnt. It includes recommendations and a set of "generic" Terms of Reference for possible future studies on the impact of regional peace support operations.

Dr Kwesi Aning

Head Research Department KAIPTC

May 2008

David Nii Addy

GTZ Technical Advisor

May 2008

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Introduction

This paper, which is a part of the research collaboration between Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Department (KAITC) and the German Development Cooperation, is an attempt to draw lessons from peacekeeping and peace support operations (PSOs) in the West African sub-region.

The extent and ramifications of recent complex emergencies around the world have thrown up a number of terms. Very few of these have, however, gained wider currency as the terms “Peacekeeping” and “Peace Support Operations”. But the frequency of their usage has meant that these two terms have acquired varied and sometimes, confusing connotations, thus necessitating the need to explain their usage in any given context. Broadly, Peacekeeping is one way of assisting war-torn countries to create conditions for sustainable peace.¹ In the traditional sense, peacekeeping entails the deployment of military personnel with the consent of warring parties, in order to establish a semblance of order to replace the one of anarchy and chaos that characterised the war period. Often, peacekeeping is intended, for example, to accompany or follow an agreed peace or cease fire.

On its part, “Peace Support Operations” is a concept that is often considered as being synonymous with peacekeeping. In reality, however, the concept can be described as the process whereby diplomatic, civil and military activities are employed to re-establish peace in conflict-affected environments, and thus create an environment whereby civilian elements of the mission can operate to ensure the establishment of self-sustaining peace.² At least two things are implicit in this broad definition of Peace Support Operations (PSO): first is that the concept has many ramifications, including peacekeeping, peace creation, peace enforcement, peace-building, delivery of humanitarian assistance. The UN refers to this as multidimensional peacekeeping. Second is that PSO is expected to be prevalent in places where the central government is either non-existent, or is completely weak to actualize its exclusive control over the means of violence.

¹ For more on Peacekeeping, see, Alex Bellamy, Paul Williams and Stuart Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, Cambridge: Polity, 2004

² For more on Peace Support Operations, see, Marten Zwanenbury, *Accountability of Peace Support Operations*, Leiden Martinus Nijhoff Publishers; Funmi Olonisakin, *Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa: Conceptual and Legal Issues in ECOMOG Operations*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000

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In this report, Peacekeeping missions are taken to mean the military policing action undertaken by military personnel and the police, under the authority of a political body – an organisation, group of states or in rare cases, a single nation – to support the implementation of an agreed peace. Peace Support Operations are conceived as all the multidimensional activities undertaken by international actors to address the major civil conflicts that occurred in West Africa during the 1990s and early 2000s. Peacekeeping is separate from enforcement action, which is taken to enforce order and protect civilians.

In the last two decades, West Africa has earned the reputation of a region riddled with civil conflicts and political instability. In December 1989, a civil war broke out in Liberia, and like a cosmic hurricane blowing across the region in a clockwise direction, neighbouring countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire, soon fell victims of bitter and sometimes multi-dimensional civil conflicts. Liberia was to have another round of civil conflict after regional and global actors had helped in ending its first round of civil war. While the causes of all these conflicts have varied, at the roots of virtually all of them was the fundamental problem of governance, especially as this relates to managing the complexities of diversity, the handling of the natural resource endowments of the countries, and the treatment of the youth population who had continually seen themselves as the neglected majority in an unjust social order.

In Liberia, a relatively unknown rebel force, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) under Charles Taylor, took up arms against the government of late President Samuel Doe in December 1989 and with external assistance from several neighbouring African countries inclusive of Cote d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso, was able to make the country ungovernable. In the course of the war, other armed factions, often formed along ethnic lines, emerged to compound the conflict. After seven years of war and at least a dozen peace agreements, Charles Taylor emerged President of Liberia, following elections in 1997. When Liberia was to be engrossed in another round of civil war, the cause was the failure of the Taylor government to embark on genuine reconciliation and peace building

In Sierra Leone, another rebel force, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), under Foday Sankoh, challenged successive central governments in the country from 1991. Although this did not result in the proliferation of armed factions, there also emerged other actors, including civil militias and mercenaries known as Executive Outcomes, who fought on the side of the Government of Sierra Leone.

The conflict in Guinea Bissau had its roots in the crisis that emanated from President João Bernardo 'Nino' Viera's decision to sack his army chief, Brigadier

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Ansumane Mané, in June 1998 amidst allegations and counter allegations of arms trafficking. The “final showdown” eventually came when Viera’s order to arrest Mane was fiercely resisted by troops loyal to the Army Commander, thus resulting in an army mutiny. The army mutineers immediately formed themselves into the *Junta Militar* in protest against the failure of President Viera to institute democratic governance in Guinea-Bissau. As fighting continued between supporters of Mané and the army, Senegal and Guinea sent forces to support President Viera. On its part, the civil war in Cote d’Ivoire emerged as a result of complex difficulties linked to the problems of political succession and the definition of citizenship and citizens’ entitlements in the country.

The conflicts in these four countries were to subsequently attract international peacekeeping and peace-support operations. In all, peacekeeping and peace support operations have had to take place at least five times in West Africa in the last two decades. These were two in Liberia (1990-1998 and 2003 to date), Sierra Leone (from 1997 to 2005), Guinea Bissau (1999) and Cote d’Ivoire (since 2003). An array of actors, sometimes working together, few times working at cross-purposes, but all the time working to ensure that a semblance or stability returns to replace anarchy, have all operated in these four countries. While some of these actors made physical military intervention, others got involved through the sponsorship of policy initiatives to see to the establishment of long-term mechanisms for peace and stability in the sub-region.

Expectedly, the activities of these actors have varied, with some involved in peacekeeping and others connected with post-conflict peace-building and some still having their activities striding between both spectrums. Two actors – the sub-regional organisation, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the United Nations – played the most redoubtable roles, with both despatching peacekeeping missions/ PSOs to some of the sub-region’s civil conflicts. The ECOWAS force, ECOMOG (ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group), operated in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d’Ivoire (with slightly amended labels in some cases), while the United Nations deployed observer and peacekeeping/ peace support missions to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire.

While the activities of the two had the sole objective of re-establishing peace and stability in all the countries, there were differences in their operations, determined largely by the time of their intervention, the resources available for the operation, and the ease with which they could assemble the requisite force needed for intervention and the contents of the mandates to be executed. As will be shown later in this report, while ECOMOG had always been faced with the arduous task of re-establishing political order at the beginning, the United Nations has come in afterwards, often to consolidate the relative peace already

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established by ECOMOG. Overall however, ECOMOG has undertaken largely peacekeeping and enforcement operations in West Africa, to restore order and provide security. The UN on the other hand, has either deployed a small observer mission as seen in Liberia in 1994 and Sierra Leone in 1998, in support of the regional effort; or large multi-dimensional missions to provide security, build and consolidate peace. In all cases, these missions were deployed after ECOMOG had arrived at the mission to create a measure of order and stability.

ECOMOG was deployed in Liberia in August 1990, and between then and 1997, alternated between peacekeeping and enforcement action in the bid to establish order. The deployment of UNOMIL in 1994 marked the first time that a regional and UN mission were deployed simultaneously. In that mission ECOMOG was responsible for providing security for the UN. In 1997, ECOMOG was deployed in Sierra Leone albeit with an unclear regional agenda, to reverse the coup by the army and rebels. The ECOMOG Task Force, through enforcement action in February 1998, ousted the Junta, allowing for President Kabbah's reinstatement in March 1998. Following incidents and rebel incursions into Freetown in 1999, the UN again became involved (stepping up its involvement in 1999 from the small observer mission in 1998).³ It was the second time that UN and ECOMOG would co-deploy in the region. This time, parts of ECOMOG were "rehatted" into UNAMSIL in 2000. In 2003, the "rehatting" practice was repeated when ECOMIL (ECOWAS Mission in Liberia) was deployed to support peace and stabilize Liberia following Taylor's departure, and "rehatted" into UNMIL (UN Mission in Liberia), and again in 2003, when ECOMCI (ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire) was "rehatted" into UNOCI.

The degree of interest generated by the nature of peacekeeping and peace support operations in West Africa has resulted in a number of academic and policy-oriented publications on the subject. Broadly, these can be brought under three headings. First is academic literature that looks at the complexities of external involvement in many of these conflicts.⁴ Second is the number of policy

³ The UN itself became embroiled in complexities on the ground in May 2000 when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) forces kidnapped 500 of its peacekeepers.

⁴ These include, for example, Abiodun Alao, *The Burden of Collective Goodwill: The International Involvement in the Liberian Civil War*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers, 1996; Funmi Olonisakin, "Mercenaries Fill the Vacuum", *World Today*, June 1998; Funmi Olonisakin, "Nigeria and the Peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 1998; Desmond Davies, "Peacekeeping: African Style"; Adekeye Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War: Nigeria, ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa*, Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002; M.A. Vogt (ed), *A Bold Attempt at Regional Peacekeeping: The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG*, Gabumo Publishing Co. 1992; M.A. Vogt and L.S. Aminu (eds), *Peacekeeping as a Security Strategy in Africa*, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1996; Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, Boulder Colorado: Lynne

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briefs and manuals written to assist international actors and NGOs operating in many of the war affected areas in West Africa;⁵ while the third consists of reports and publications by members of the armed forces on the lessons learnt on the operations in which they have participated across West Africa.⁶

Additionally, in 2004, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC) facilitated a review of the ECOMOG operations in West Africa, while the UN has also conducted several lessons learned studies of its operations in West Africa⁷; and a review of ECOMOG Missions is also currently being undertaken by ECOWAS – the outcome of which is to be published as a book in due course. The ECOWAS project aims to provide an “accurate account of the ECOMOG force”, as well as provide “ensure an understanding of the critical incidents that compelled the deployment of the force and the role of the ECOMOG Force in the milestones on the road to peace”

It also calls for the examination of the performance of the ECOMOG Force in the two interventions in Liberia, as well as Sierra Leone and in Guinea Bissau, bringing out important lessons learnt including:

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- Rienner, 2007; and Funmi Olonisakin, *Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa: Legal and Conceptual Issues in ECOMOG*; Kluwer Law Publishers, 2000. Emmanuel Kwesi Aning, *Elliciting Compliance from Warlords: The ECOWAS Experience in Liberia*, *Review of African Political Economy*, September 1999; Thomas Jaye, *Issues of Sovereignty, Strategy and Security in the ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia*, Edwin Mellen Press, 2003
- ⁵ Some of these have included, for example, those written by NGOs like Conciliation Resources based in London (with publications like the ACCORD series) and the various reports by Human Rights Watch.
- ⁶ These are sometimes written as dissertations for military institutions by those who had taken part in some of these operations, for institutions like the Nigerian War Collage; Royal College of Defence Studies, London; South African Military Academy, etc. A number of former ECOMOG Commanders have also been writing on their experiences. For example, General Olatunji Olurin a former ECOMOG Commander in Liberia, has written his memoirs, while the late Brig. General Maxwell Khobe, who led the ECOMOG Operation in Sierra Leone, wrote a paper detailing his experience. See, Mitikishe Maxwell Khobe, “The Evolution and Conduct of ECOMOG Operations in West Africa”, ISS Monograph 44: Boundaries of Peace Support Operations, February 2000.
- ⁷ See, for example, “ECOWAS Peace Operations from 1990 to 2004: Synopsis of Lessons Noted and Key Recommendations”, Background Paper for the ECOWAS “Lessons Learned” Workshop, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra Ghana, 10-11 February 2005; and United Nations, *Lessons Learned from United Nations Peacekeeping Experiences in Sierra Leone*. New York: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, September 2003.

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- (a) Why the force succeeded or otherwise in its objectives
- (b) The successes or otherwise of protecting civilians in the course of the interventions;
- (c) The appropriateness of the command and oversight structures for the force; and
- (d) The collaboration and tension between the force and other external intervention forces

It is also the objective of the study to:

Propose concrete changes to the repositioning of the ECOMOG Force against the background of lessons learned and the evolving African Security architecture;

Provide a perspective that is not only unique but also complements and enriches existing literature; and

Draw up an interconnection of the ECOWAS Standby Force with the African Union Standby Force

A close look at the TOR for the ECOWAS project, however, reveals some gaps in its scope, a tendency that may limit the final outcome of the exercise. First, it excludes Cote d'Ivoire from the list of countries considered. Secondly, it understandably places primary emphasis on the ECOMOG operations and secondary focus on other operations, not least UN peacekeeping missions in West Africa. The assessment of the linkage if the ECOWAS Standby Force with the African Standby Force however promises to be a major strength of the ECOWAS project.

This report offers a more detailed overview of the extra-African dimension to the whole debate on Peacekeeping and Peace Support operations in the continent, particularly the role of the United Nations. The report takes a more comprehensive approach by examining how the peacekeeping missions contributed to the longer term goals of security and development in the sub-region.

Notwithstanding these publications and research products, there remains relatively limited writing by West African practitioners and presentation of systematic documentary of these experiences with analysis of interaction

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between different actors. The expansion of the analysis to include UN regular debate on the role of peacekeeping and peace support operations in ways that link the Security and Development needs of the sub-region as part of a Framework for analysing Peacekeeping Operations is thus urgently required.

The TOR for this present report requires a detailed treatment of the objectives, effectiveness and efficiency of missions, which calls for a focus on key issues like the motivation for deployment, process of deployment, the politics of Deployment, the initial condition of the operational environment, the planning and execution, the operational time frame, the outcome of the mission and its efficiency. A second main requirement of the TOR is the impact and sustainability of missions, which looks at issues like how the missions ended, the impacts on operational environment and the sustainability afterwards. The third part of the TOR discusses a generic TOR for assessing peacekeeping and peace support missions in the future – in ways that link the operations to the longer term security and development agenda in the target country and region.

The rest of this report is divided into four substantive sections. The first looks at the objectives, effectiveness and efficiency of the peacekeeping and the peace-support missions that have taken place in the region, while the second discusses the impacts and sustainability of the outcomes. The third section takes a short peep into a long future of peacekeeping and peace support operations in West Africa, looking at lessons learned and missed, and it provides a guide for compiling a generic Terms of Reference (TOR) for future studies of the effectiveness and impact of peace operations in West Africa. The fifth section concludes the report and offers some policy recommendations.

Section One:

The Objectives, Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Missions

In this section, this report considers all the key issues associated with the politics of peacekeeping and PSOs in West Africa. Eight issues have been identified as influencing the realization of the objectives and determining the degree of effectiveness of these missions. These include: the motivation for intervention, the politics involved in the process of taking the decision for deployment, the controversies associated with the deployment of these missions, the initial operational environment, the contents of the peacekeeping missions, the operational time-frame, the outcome of the missions, the efficiency of the activities undertaken and the approaches adopted.

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(a) *Motivation*

In considering the motivation for intervention in recent West African conflicts, it needs to be noted from the outset that the motives for undertaking any peacekeeping mission is always a controversial issue to gauge and this is indeed a reflection of the degree of political cohesion in the sub-region. In most cases, there are often the “declared” and the “hidden” reasons for intervention. While the declared are those that come through official government pronouncements and ones which governments and authorising bodies are often willing to advertise, the hidden ones are those subtle under-currents which they do not openly declare, but are nevertheless paramount in explaining actions that are taken and the decisiveness with which they are executed. This was certainly a crucial factor in explaining interventions in West African conflicts, as there were both “declared” and “hidden” motives behind some of the peacekeeping and peace support missions in the region. What, however, makes the situation a bit complex in the case of West Africa is that there were often blurred distinctions between the agenda of some key members of the regional organisation, ECOWAS, notably Nigeria, and the agenda of the organisation (i.e.: ECOWAS). The issue of hidden agenda applies more to ECOWAS operations than to UN operations.

The “declared” motivations in all the four countries where there have been peacekeeping and peace support missions have been similar: the desire to put an end to the carnage and destruction which, at the time of intervention had resulted in the death of considerable numbers of civilians and had resulted in the complete collapse of law and order. Attendant to this was the effects of these wars on the neighbouring countries, especially through the massive influx of refugees and other cross-border crimes, notably, small arms proliferation. Going into individual cases, it should be pointed out that before ECOWAS intervened in Liberia, there had been a complete breakdown of law and order and the government of the late Samuel Doe was on the verge of collapse. Indeed, the late President was arrested and subsequently killed just at about the time the regional peacekeeping force was settling down in the country.

In Sierra Leone the situation was similar. Although Sierra Leone could not technically be described as a “Collapsed State” during this period as there was a central government in place. But it could be described as a “wounded” state because the central government was too weak to meet the challenges posed by the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Furthermore, the national army that was supposed to be defending the democratically elected government had staged a coup and had entered into an informal alliance with the rebels. Indeed,

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the catastrophic consequences of this weakness had effects on the civilian population and some of the neighbouring countries. For example, more than a million persons were displaced and at least 300 000 refugees had fled to Guinea.⁸

In Guinea Bissau, the military coup had threatened the central government and not even the assistance from the Senegalese and Guinean governments could meet the challenge posed by the country's military force, which challenged the central government, while in Cote d'Ivoire, the central government was too weak to manage the complexities of security challenges posed by the rebels. Consequently, in all the cases, there were sufficient grounds to justify the "declared" reasons for intervention.

But apart from these "declared" reasons enumerated above, at least three of the interventions were believed to be coloured by hidden motives. These were those in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. In the cases of Liberia's first ECOMOG mission of 1990-97 and Sierra Leone, the accusations of hidden agenda need to be placed in context, as they were not directed against ECOWAS, but more against a key ECOWAS country, Nigeria, which was believed to be using the organisation as a subterfuge to satisfy hidden agendas. Another irony in the accusation was again the fact that it was not the country per se that was accused, but its leader, Ibrahim Babangida who, for a variety of reasons, was believed to have deep personal interest in the developments in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was alleged that Babangida had personal reasons for wanting to protect the leaders of Liberia - Samuel Doe, and later Joseph Momoh of Sierra Leone. Doe was considered to be his sub-regional "god-son", who named an institution at the University of Liberia after him,⁹ while Momoh was his classmate at the Nigerian military academy.

While Nigeria persistently denied this allegation, it is important to point out that it persisted through the initial part of the ECOMOG operation in Liberia and was key in understanding the politics of the peacekeeping mission in that country and later, Nigeria's initial intervention in Sierra Leone.¹⁰ The suspicion of hidden agenda in the case of Guinea Bissau was placed more at the doors of ECOWAS, as the organisation's intervention was interpreted in some circles as a way of getting the beleaguered President Viera out of the hook. In general, however, it is

⁸ See, Comfort Ero, *ECOMOG: A model for Africa?* ISS Monograph Series, February 2000

⁹ This is the Ibrahim Babangida School of International Relations, which remains operational in Liberia.

¹⁰ See Funmi Olanisakin Nigeria, *ECOMOG, and the Sierra Leone Crisis*, in Ibrahim Abdullah, *Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War*, Dakar Codesria: 2004

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believed that the overwhelming majority of leaders at the outbreak of the Liberia war had a desire to prevent this emerging phenomenon of an armed civilian take over of government. The impact of the perception of hidden agendas was to however lead to an underestimation of the earlier missions as interventions characterised by “partiality” among intervening powers.

In this regard, the UN, when it became involved in military operations in Liberia and West Africa in general, was not plagued by allegations of hidden agendas. Rather its problem was a lack of political will to undertake appropriate robust peacekeeping operations in West Africa. The token Observers Missions (initially 66 men in 1994 in Liberia) and in 1998 in Sierra Leone did not inspire confidence in UN operations. The token response can be explained by the need to satisfy the “do-something” lobby, following media exposure, and the reluctance of UN member states to contribute troops to dangerous operational environments.

On the whole, it is difficult to come to any judgement on all the interventions in West Africa. While, indeed, some of them might have provided opportunities to advance hidden or personal agendas, the security crisis created by the conflicts also ruled out indifference as alternatives for the sub-regional organisation charged with managing the affairs of the region.

(b) *The Process of taking decisions to deploy troops*

The processes of taking decisions to deploy peacekeeping missions to these countries were dictated by two considerations: the prevailing security situations in these countries and the political climate within ECOWAS member states.

In Liberia, as the casualties mounted in August 1990, the decision by the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) to deploy the ECOMOG force was criticised on the ground that it was illegal because it was the decision of a smaller body of ECOWAS. The process of taking this decision was also influenced by the fact that ECOWAS members were divided with some providing covert and overt support for either side. This compounded the situation and led to the charge of illegality.¹¹ As would be shown later, this was to further generate controversies about Nigeria’s motive in the country.

The process leading to the decision to deploy in Sierra Leone was also complex. Two things must be pointed out to preface any discussion on ECOMOG operations in Sierra Leone. First, the country had provided an operational base and supply route for the ECOMOG operations in Liberia. Second, before the

¹¹ I have discussed this in greater details in *Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa*, op-cit.

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ECOMOG operation was officially deployed in Sierra Leone, Nigeria had, under a bilateral arrangement between the two countries, dispatched a military team to the country at the request of late President Joseph Momoh. The attendant implication of these is that when eventually a peacekeeping mission was to be despatched, some of the logistical issues that could have made deployment difficult were avoided.

After the military junta overthrew the Kabbah government and formed an alliance with the RUF, Nigeria led a military operation to the country in the bid to reverse the coup, before the necessary ECOWAS mandate endorsing the action was granted. Other ECOWAS states were quick to distance themselves, with Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire preferring a diplomatic solution. ECOWAS initial response was to place an arms embargo on Sierra Leone. When ECOWAS decided at its Abuja Summit in 1997, to reinforce the sea and air blockade of Sierra Leone, instead of using more direct military action, the Nigerian military government led by General Sani Abacha was not pleased.¹² Indeed, in the run-up to the summit, the Abacha administration had expended considerable diplomatic energy to persuade ECOWAS to formally endorse the use of force to drive the Military Junta out of power in Sierra Leone and reinstate ousted President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

No controversy surrounded the decisions relating to Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire. The decisions were taken by ECOWAS as an organisation and the terms of involvement as well as the mandates of the missions were clearly outlined. However, what would seem to have accounted for the clarity in the involvement later in Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire, as against Liberia, was the fact that by the time of these other operations, there was an emerging consensus on the conditions and for troop deployment. A new ECOWAS treaty was in place in 1993. And by 1999, the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security had been adopted.

On the part of the UN, the decision to deploy was complex in Sierra Leone where the UN moved from token observer force in 1998 to a full fledged Pace Support Operation in 1999 and a more robust operation by 2000. This transition from 1998 to 2000 was underpinned by a number of factors: (a) initial need to show that it was doing something in Sierra Leone even if the political will was largely absent; (b) a desire to share in the glory of a potentially successful operation especially given the negative perception of the UN as regional actors were effectively responding to crisis in conflict zones e.g Nato in Kosovo; and(c) the need for

¹² Sani Abacha became the Nigerian leader after an Interim government formed following the nullification of Nigeria's most democratic election was nullified by President Babangida.

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greater relevance and to regain credibility. In May 2000, the kidnap of 500 of its peacekeeping troops led to a sharp scaling up of UN presence and the peace operation in Sierra Leone.

A pattern seems to have emerged, in which regional peacekeepers are first deployed to the target countries – Sierra Leone 1997; Liberia 2003 (ECOMIL), Cote d’Ivoire in 2003 (ECOMICI) – and then "rehabbed" into an expanded, more multi-national, better resourced UN mission. This seems logical if regional organisations can deploy more rapidly and more importantly, can more robustly tackle the murkier operational environment before the arrival of the UN. This is a potentially strong partnership – regional organisations known for robustness, and UN more cautious to undertake UN Chapter VII type operations. This has at times generated criticism in some African quarters that this is an arrangement in which Africans give the blood and the UN takes the glory.

(c) *The Politics of Deployment*

In a climate such as that enumerated above, it was inevitable that controversies would emerge in the decision to deploy. The first intervention in Liberia was controversial, especially as the intervention was deemed illegal by some member states (although by no means illegitimate). It was this that gave a number of Francophone countries, in particular, Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire, the impression that the intervention was a mere subterfuge to protect the government of the late President Doe. As indicated earlier, the leaders of both Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire had, for personal reasons, supported Charles Taylor, the leader of the rebellion in Liberia.¹³

This controversy, which was widely demonstrated at the time of the first ECOWAS intervention in Liberia, later became a major factor in the politics surrounding deployment of troops and appointment of staff officers. Nigerian planners had anticipated some opposition and needed to accord a high degree of legitimacy to the force. In order to appease Francophone countries and not to give the impression of wanting to advance a selfish national agenda in Liberia, Nigeria conceded the leadership of the peacekeeping mission to Ghana, despite providing the bulk of the troops for the peacekeeping mission.¹⁴ Throughout the ECOMOG operation in Liberia, the Nigerian contingent made up on average,

¹³ The personal reasons here have been widely reported in several studies. There are unsubstantiated claims that the adopted daughter of the late Houphoet Boigny, Daissy who had married A. B. Tolbert, killed by Samuel Doe, later remarried Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso.

¹⁴ See Funmi Olonisakin, *Reinventing Peacekeeping*, *op-cit*

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about 70 percent of the entire force. This explains why a Ghanaian General, Arnold Quinoo, was the first ECOMOG Commander in Liberia.

This attempt to placate Francophone West African countries was to create far greater complications for the peacekeeping mission, as General Quinoo, though in theory the Field Commander, did not have total control of his force, the bulk of which came from Nigeria. This lack of effective control, among other factors, was to severely weaken ECOMOG's capacity at the initial stages. Indeed, it was the problems arising from command and control, which led to the arrest and subsequent killing of the late President Samuel Doe while in ECOMOG's base. It would remain one of the tantalising conjectures of West African history whether there would still have been the series of initial mishaps if Nigeria had assumed overall command of the peacekeeping mission from the outset. From that period up until the end of the mission in Liberia, Nigeria maintained the command positions of the Liberian peacekeeping mission.

The situation in Sierra Leone was also controversial. After Nigeria tried and failed to reverse the coup, and attempted unsuccessfully to achieve ECOWAS endorsement for military action, a split became apparent between the Ghanaian President, Jerry Rawlings, and General Abacha. Rawlings, who assumed power by force in 1981, but had since transformed himself into a 'democrat', and appeared to be genuinely constrained by the dictates of democracy. He thus could not undertake the type of enforcement action demanded by the situation in Sierra Leone without parliamentary endorsement. There was also dissatisfaction on the part of some Francophone leaders: Blaise Campaore of Burkina Faso, who was to have taken over the chairmanship of ECOWAS left the summit before it ended for unknown reasons. Guinea and Liberia had also indicated they did not want their territories used as a launch pad for intervention. Guinea, which had been the destination of choice for exiled Sierra Leone presidents, was uneasy about the instability along its own borders and among its military. President Lansana Conte had good reason to fear both an external and domestic backlash if he actively supported military action.

The intervention in Guinea Bissau was also controversial, although admittedly not as profound as those in Liberia and Sierra Leone. After the army mutiny threatened the government of former President Veira, he invited the Senegalese and the Guinean army to support his government. Indeed, it was only after the withdrawal of the foreign troops in the country that ECOMOG Peacekeepers came into the country. The ECOMOG troops in the country, which was planned for 1,450, came from Togo, the Gambia, Niger and Benin Republic.

The Cote d'Ivoire intervention was no less controversial. The government of President Gbagbo was not completely in support of ECOWAS intervention as

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there were fears that such an intervention would turn out to be as controversial as other previous ECOMOG initiatives.

(d) Initial conditions in the target environment

In the case of the first operation in Liberia, the initial conditions in the operational environment required the need to first re-establish a semblance of peace. These conditions were created by decades of mismanagement of economy and of social and political exclusion. They included, for example:

- Atmosphere of deep distrust
- Failed mediation and reconciliation attempts
- State collapse - absence of security, social amenities - thus threatening complete disaster
- Widespread atrocities by all armed groups including rebels and government forces
- Splinter of main opposite group - the INPFL led by Prince Johnson was the first to break away from Taylor's NPFL
- Humanitarian tragedy resulting from atrocities and indiscriminate attacks on civilians and complete chaos
- Inaccessibility of much of the country

Because a crisis of such magnitude had no recent precedence in the region, there was general confusion. The immediate objective was to put an end to the carnage that had descended on the country. Consequently, the atmosphere dictated the need for effective military response with very limited time to consider the prospect of simultaneously addressing security and development needs. Also worth pointing out here is the fact that the three main factions in the country at the time of ECOMOG's intervention had different approaches to the ECOWAS intervention.¹⁵ As noted earlier, Taylor, the NPFL leader, was against the deployment of ECOMOG, which was perceived as an attempt to shore up the government. Doe supported it as he saw it as an escape valve from the onslaught from Taylor and Johnson. On his part, Johnson saw it as an opportunity to relieve pressure on him from Taylor's forces, thus giving him the opportunity to consolidate while waiting for a chance to eliminate both Doe and Taylor.

¹⁵ Apart from Doe and Taylor, another actor at this stage of the conflict was Prince Yomie Johnson. He was a former member of the Liberian Army and a founding member of the Taylor's NPFL. He later broke away from Taylor to form his own independent group known as the Independent National patriotic Front of Liberia, (INPF)

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By the time external intervention became a reality in Sierra Leone, countries in the region had the experience of Liberia to draw lessons from. The initial conditions in the country were also complex, characterised by an almost non-existent economy and poor state capacity to provide essential services and extremely limited opportunities for growth and development. Disgruntled soldiers toppled Kabbah, installed Major Johnny Paul Koroma and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), which in turn became allied with the RUF, assumed power in the country. The outcome was the displacement of the population in the capital, Freetown, and the massive refugee problem that spread beyond the country's borders. Nigeria thus led an ECOWAS force to dislodge the AFRC/RUF alliance and reinstate the deposed President Tejan Kabbah.

In Guinea Bissau, the initial condition was that of confusion among other things. At the outbreak of conflict, Portugal and several other Lusophone countries tried to find an amicable solution to the conflict. It was the failure of this initiative that brought ECOMOG into the picture. The situation was tense and inhabitants of the capital moved to potentially safe areas.

Cote d'Ivoire also had similar conditions. In 2002, there was mutiny in the army by soldiers who were opposed to being demobilised and this soon developed into a full scale war. By the end of 2002, a negotiated ceasefire was short-lived and it gave way to further clashes and battle for the key cocoa industry town of Daloa. Some previously unknown rebel groups also emerged to seize towns in the western part of the country. By mid-October 2002, the government and one of the rebel groups, the Patriotic Movement of Cote d'Ivoire (MPCI) had signed a ceasefire agreement, and French troops were to monitor the agreement. However, attention shifted to the western part of the country with the emergence of two new rebel groups, the Ivorian Popular Movement for the Great West (MPIGO) and the Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP). The MPIGO and the MJP were allied to the MPCI. This was the prevailing situation when ECOWAS sent in a peacekeeping force from five countries: Senegal (providing Force Commander), Ghana, Benin, Togo and Niger in January 2003. As of the time of the arrival of the force, there was a force of about 4,000 French military personnel (the Licorne Force) on the ground in Cote d'Ivoire.

From the fore-going, it can be seen that in the majority of cases, the initial conditions in these environment made security and humanitarian issues the pre-eminent concerns. The initial conditions in almost all cases reflected the absence of active conflict prevention and/or failure of conflict prevention altogether. As such, the opportunity to consider peace building or early development work alongside the deployment had been lost with the failure of prevention or early intervention.

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(e) Contents of Mission Planning and Execution

In all Peacekeeping and Peace Support missions in West Africa, the “contents” have often been determined by the nature of the actors, more than the situation on the ground in these countries. In Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d’Ivoire, ECOWAS operations had been largely limited to peacekeeping and enforcement – with the aim of ending the carnage and establishing a semblance of order. At the time the earlier peacekeeping missions were being planned by ECOWAS, not much concern was given to key issues like provision of humanitarian support, peace-building, good governance, development and the re-establishment of rule of law.

There are at least three reasons for the neglect of emphasis on long-term developmental agenda. First, the initial desire was to end the carnage and bring political stability to these countries. Already, the extent of the carnage had overwhelmed ECOWAS such that it was not willing to go beyond the initial objective of peacekeeping. Besides, it was clear during the first mission in Liberia that ECOMOG planners had little understanding of the complexities of the new war environments, particularly the scale of humanitarian tragedy. Liberia was one of the first conflicts to demonstrate the scale of challenges posed by intra-state conflict in the post-Cold War era. Second, ECOWAS did not have the resources to sustain peace-building and all its diverse ramifications. Already, the cost of peacekeeping was too great for the organisation and it often had to resort to seeking external assistance to meet the demands of peacekeeping. To thus contemplate adding post-conflict reconstruction and other developmental agenda to its activities was far beyond the capacity of the organisation. Third and related to the second point, ECOWAS did not have a strong and credible enough structure to handle peace-building. Even in peacekeeping where it had achieved considerable success, this was an ad-hoc creation that was designed to meet exigencies.

Additionally, there was an omission of civilian input in the planning and execution of ECOMOG operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone initially. The operations were predominantly military planned and led. The absence of civilians in the first ECOMOG mission in Liberia was glaring. The ECOMOG organisational arrangement provided for two civilian posts – a Political Affairs Officer and a Legal Officer. There were no civilians occupying those posts on the ground in Liberia for the first five years of the ECOMOG operation. The absence of civilians on the ground was blamed on a shortage of resources. Similarly, there was no senior political office on the ground in Liberia such as a Special Representative of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, until 1995. As a result,

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ECOMOG Force Commanders were responding to the daily political issues while remaining in charge of the military operations.

However, while ECOWAS did not consider issues of post-war reconstruction, good governance, rule of law, etc, in its peacekeeping activities, a number of other actors, especially international NGOs, United Nations, Development agencies of Western European countries, Japan and the United States have all come in to address the crucial aspects of post- conflict peace-building in these countries. Indeed the relationship is between one of complementarity and subsidiarity in which ECOWAS enforcement operations have been replaced once stability is achieved or complemented by a UN multidimensional peace support operations - which takes these into account as part of that mission. Below are tables of some of the activities undertaken in the Peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations in West Africa.

(i) Peacekeeping, Peace Support Operations and Enforcement Action in West Africa since 1990

<i>Intervening Agency</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Pattern of Intervention</i>	<i>Period</i>
ECOWAS through ECOMOG, ECOMICI, ECOMIL	Liberia, Sierra Leone Guinea Bissau Cote d'Ivoire Liberia	Peacekeeping/Enforcement Peacekeeping/Enforcement Peacekeeping Peacekeeping Peacekeeping	1990 - 1998 1997 1998 2003 2003
United Nations	Liberia Sierra Leone Cote d'Ivoire Liberia	Peacekeeping(Observation) Peacekeeping/PSO Peacekeeping/PSO Peacekeeping/PSO	Sept. 93 Sept '97 July '99 - Dec. 05 Sep. 03 - Ongoing April 04 - Ongoing
British Army	Sierra Leone	Enforcement; support for SSR	June 2000
Mercenaries	Sierra Leone	Specific Assignment	1996

(ii) Peace Building Support

<i>Agencies/Countries</i>	<i>Peace building and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Exercise supported</i>	<i>Countries where activities took place</i>
United Nations and its agencies	DDR Arms Recovery Political Reform Police Reform	Liberia and Sierra Leone

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African Union/OAU	Support for Political stability and assistance in DDR	Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire
Regional (ECOWAS, KAIPTC)	SSR Training of Parliamentarians DDR Election Observation SALW Training Civil Society Programmes	Participants generally come from ECOWAS countries but some of the activities relate specifically to Liberia.
Bilateral Agencies, e.g. Development Agencies of Western European Countries, e.g. GTZ, DfID, DANIDA, USAID Japan etc.	SSR Support for Parliamentarians Support to UNDP for arms recovery and other development projects Physical Reconstruction of Institutions and Structures	Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire
Research, Academic and Policy institutions like DCAF, Kings College London, etc	SSR Training of Parliamentarians	Liberia, Sierra Leone, but most of the activities relate to Liberia.

Source: *Compiled by the author*

Before concluding this section, it may be necessary to address, even if briefly, the relationship between ECOWAS and United Nations peacekeepers particularly in mission execution. Although in some of the places where they have worked together, rivalry and tension underlined their relationship, there was essentially close collaboration between them, with ECOMOG able to undertake more robust operations than the UN.¹⁶ It is indicative of the mutually reinforcing natures of the ECOWAS and UN mandates in some of these operations that many of ECOWAS soldiers were among the first set of peacekeepers in UNAMSIL, while indeed the former Force Commander of ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire later became the force Commander of the United Nations Operation in the same country.

Also worth discussing here is the support that has come to the peacekeeping operations from non-African countries, especially countries in the European Union and the United States. The support has been largely logistical but also financial in nature. In Liberia, ECOMOG had considerable support from EU countries and the United States. In Sierra Leone, the UK, apart from committing troops in 2000, also provided logistical and financial support to ECOMOG. In Cote d'Ivoire, Britain has supported the peace efforts through assistance to Ghana, while the French contributions were conveyed through Niger, Senegal

¹⁶ See Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, op-cit

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and Togo. The United States made its contribution through strategic transportation and in funding 2/3 of the food requirement for the Cote d'Ivoire operation¹⁷ The financial cost for ECOMOG operation in Cote d'Ivoire, (about 15 million Euros) was obtained through a set of financial assistance agreements that included contributions from France, United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain. However, Nigeria remains the largest contributor to peacekeeping operations in West Africa. All in all, Nigeria is said to have spent in excess of 12bn USD on peace operation since the first ECOMOG operation in Liberia in 1990.

(f) *Operational Time Frame*

ECOWAS in all its peacekeeping missions did not specify an exit plan. It was clear that it would not abandon missions, mid-way although mandates were renewed periodically. Typically, Field Commanders presented situation reports to ECOWAS Heads of States and Governments, after which mandates were duly changed or renewed. The situation with Peace Support operations was somewhat dependent on the specific actor. While other actors have appeared more flexible in their time scopes, the United Nations often puts its involvement under constant review, with mandates for extension of operations only provided by the UN Security Council.

Until recently, the staging of elections was a standard benchmark for the drawdown of a UN peacekeeping mission from an operational environment. But the threat that an armed conflict would replace within five to ten years of a settlement has become apparent in several contexts as seen in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Haiti, among others. Analysts have argued that elections alone should not be the sole determinant of the withdrawal of peace support missions. Rather, more should be done to address the root causes of the crises. Thus, Sierra Leone provided the first test case for adjusting the benchmarks for withdrawal of UN peacekeeping missions. Key among the benchmarks set were, the establishment of security and state authority throughout the country. The deployment of a UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone immediately following the withdrawal of the peace mission, UNAMSIL, marked the first time that the UN would continue to facilitate the consolidation of peace, in a bid to address root cause factors and to strengthen institutions of governance.

From all the above, it can be seen that the time-frame for operations has varied. While ECOWAS and the UN involvement have always been determined by their

¹⁷ See, Abdoulaye Fall, "ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire: Partnership for Peace", www.inwent.org/ef-texte/military/fall.htm

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respective organisations, they often have to respond to the situation on the ground in war-torn countries on the basis of the needs on the ground and the the capacity and degree of political will within the organisation to remain in the operational environment. Typically, regional organisations have tended to exhibit greater resolve to deal with conflict in their regions, which ultimately impact on neighbouring countries.

(g) *Outcomes of Missions*

Opinions about the outcome of the missions have varied. For convenience, these are grouped into three: (i) the perception of the local beneficiaries, i.e. the governments and the populations that invited or hosted the missions; (ii) the organisation itself; and (iii) external observers. Perhaps the most controversial and most complex of the missions was the first one in Liberia from 1990-97. The local population was of the opinion that the operation was successful, even if it had reservations about some of the other activities undertaken by the force.¹⁸ In Sierra Leone, the local population was also appreciative of the role of ECOMOG even if, as in the case of Liberia, they had some concerns as to aspects of the activities of the peacekeeping mission.¹⁹ In Cote d'Ivoire, there was also the impression that the ECOMOG (ECOMICI) operation was successful, despite initial planning and logistical difficulties. In Guinea Bissau, however, the opinion has been that the experience was chequered. The bloody overthrow of Guinea-Bissau's head of state, was seen as a sign of failure of the ECOWAS initiative in the country. What made the impact of the failure more profound was that it came just weeks after the killing of the president of Niger. President Vieira was forced out of office after Vieira and Mane had signed a peace accord negotiated by ECOWAS.

In most of the cases, ECOWAS, the authorising body saw each operation as a progression mission, building on previous experiences. In Liberia in 2003 and Sierra Leone, the organisation was unambiguous in its assertion that its operations had been successful despite the difficulties encountered. After the initial challenges in Liberia, the organisation believed it got its act together and was able to establish the secure environment that created the atmosphere for the

¹⁸ Specifically, the local population was unhappy with three aspects of ECOMOG activities. These were the alleged looting and carting away of Liberian goods to their home countries - a situation which led the local population to change the acronym ECOMOG to mean "Every Car or Moveable Object Gone"; the illicit amorous affairs by the soldiers with Liberian women; and the brutality that sometimes accompanied the treatment of Liberian civilians, particularly enforcement operations.

¹⁹ The cause of concern in the case of Sierra Leone also included the indiscriminate use of force during critical stages of the operation and allegations of corruption.

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conduct of a general election. And subsequently, some of the lessons of that initial mission were learnt in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. One example of this is a more coherent political response although the pattern of some member states intervening in the conflict areas continued to Cote d'Ivoire and the second Liberia crisis. In particular, there is less suspicion over Nigeria's role and leadership as more ECOWAS member states have continued to contribute troops to peacekeeping when compared to the initial operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. ECOMOG is now perceived as more neutral.

One major outcome of the ECOWAS peacekeeping experience in West Africa has been the strengthening of a normative framework for conflict prevention and management. In 1993, a new ECOWAS Treaty was adopted, and in 1999, ECOWAS adopted the Protocol for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, followed by a Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001. All of these have helped to institutionalise responses to conflict in the region, including for example, the creation of the Mediation and Security Council and a Defence Commission among other things.

In Guinea Bissau, the extent of "chest-beating" was significantly reduced, as there was recognition in several quarters that the situation could have been better managed. ECOWAS was however more successful in preventing the military from assuming control of the machinery of government in Guinea-Bissau in 2003 following the coup, with early concerted diplomatic intervention. Interestingly, Guinea-Bissau, had initially pledged troops in late 2002 to ECOMICI, but this did not materialise as all pledges were subject to the approval of the Government of CdI. Guinea-Bissau was already heading for a crisis due to long delays in paying the salary of soldiers. It was widely believed that the coup might have been averted had the soldiers been deployed abroad thus keeping them busy while providing much needed remuneration.²⁰ Guinea Bissau would later contribute 45 Officers and 605 Soldiers to ECOMIL.²¹

What was perhaps significant in ECOWAS assessment of its operations has been the politics of naming. Although the 1999 Protocol on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security provides for the institutionalisation of ECOMOG as a toll for peacekeeping, and enforcement action in situations of armed conflict in the region, the operations in Cote d'Ivoire

²⁰ See "ECOWAS Peace Operations from 1990-2004: Synopsis of Lessons Noted and Key Recommendations, KAIPTC, op cit. p.25-26

²¹ Ibid.

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and in Liberia in 2003 were renamed ECOMICI²² and ECOMIL²³ respectively. This renaming was in part psychological – the need to remove negative perceptions previously attached to ECOMOG.

A pattern seems to be emerging in which *After Action Reviews* (AAR) are conducted following a peacekeeping mission. While there seems to be a desire to make this available to the general public, the inability of the organisation to ensure proper dissemination means that many of those that would have wanted to have access to the document don't have access to it. Aside from the KAIPTC Review of ECOMOG Peace Operations referred to in this paper, an ECOMIL AAR was circulated by ECOWAS in November 2004. It remains to be seen whether this pattern will continue with future operations. The one AAR that has been published so far by ECOMOG (albeit with the support of external partners), does not contain elements of accountability.²⁴ As such, it might not result in major changes in the foreseeable future. There is however some evidence of a deliberate effort to learn the lessons from previous missions as will be shown later.

The assessment of ECOWAS peacekeeping initiatives by external observers has been mixed, but there is increasing consensus that the organisation has tried its best amidst formidable odds. Most external observers have identified a number of rough edges in the ECOMOG operations but some also do appreciate that the odds against the organisation were enormous and that it should receive greater encouragement to improve its activities and meet the challenges of sub-regional conflicts. Recent engagement by external bilateral and multilateral actors is in sharp contrast to the 1990s when external actors tended to be more dismissive of ECOMOG achievements and saw its troops only as ill disciplined and corrupt. The US, for example, was very critical of the ECOMOG operations led largely by Nigeria during the regimes of Babangida and Abacha but this changed with the latter operations in Liberia in particular, with positive reports about the performance of ECOMOG, particularly Nigerian troops, who were thought to have performed more professionally than in other missions. This was attributed largely to the training provided by the US to the Nigerian Battalions prior to the operations. Interestingly, Nigeria Generals and Commanding Officers have repeatedly argued that their troops did not lack training in soldiering skills. Rather, they have been plagued by logistical challenges. Indeed, it is difficult to attribute overall operational effectiveness to the training received in a relatively short period of time, without systematic monitoring over a sustained period.

²² ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire

²³ ECOWAS Mission in Liberia

²⁴ ECOWAS, *After Action Review* of the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia, 2004.

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(h) *Efficiency of Missions*

Overall, the factors that have tended to influence the efficiency and effectiveness of the zone had to do with the following:

- a. The depth of understanding of the socio-economic and political context.
- b. Absence of standardised training/ doctrine
- c. Gaps in Command, Control and Communications
- d. Lack of adequate and standardised logistical support
- e. Mandate appropriateness
- f. Partnership and coordination with external partners

The efficiency of the missions has varied, and in almost all cases, there were gaps between ends and means, which reflected differences between the resources – human, material and financial – that were pledged and those that were available for the operations. The review of ECOMOG operations facilitated by KAIPTC in 2005 already outlined many of the issues relating to command, control and communications; logistics; training and doctrine; and role of external partners – all of which determined the level of efficiency of the ECOMOG operations. Below is a capsule summary of some of these issues:

- External involvement in peacemaking enhanced and hindered the peacemaking process and ultimately the peace operations in different ways. The failure to synchronize peacemaking initiatives in both Liberia (post-1997) and Cote d'Ivoire had the effect of compounding the peace process. Yet at other times, external support and partnership was crucial, including, for example, mission planning for ECOMOCI with the assistance of UNDPKO and other bilateral actors; the positive impact on ECOMIL, of the threat of American force in August 2003; and the active collaboration of France's Licorne troops with ECOMICI in Cdi.
- The absence of centralised logistics meant that equipment varied and it was difficult to standardise – a factor which no doubt impacted command and control. The lack of adequate logistical support also led at times to delays in deployment, which ultimately impacted the operation. This was the case for example, with the Office of the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary, which did not become operational until after a month after the deployment of ECOMIL. This is compounded by the fact that the ECOWAS Commission remains significantly weak in terms of its capacity

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for mission planning. And the capacity to accurately analyse and predict the situation on the ground was also weak.

- Command and control was also undermined by the tendency for troop contributing countries to give direct orders to their troops.
- The absence of standardised training across the contingents and in the quality of training received prior to the operation also affected efficiency and effectiveness of the force.
- It has been demonstrated that prior training of military personnel improves efficiency in the mission. For example, prior to ECOMOCI, there was prior training of military personnel in peace support training centres and other military schools. Furthermore, there had been joint exercises. As the review of ECOMOG Operations from 1990 to 2004 indicated, "...ECOMOG does have troops that are capable of operating alongside modern, well equipped, and well trained armed forces..."²⁵
- The absence of civilian staff in ECOMOG operations prior to Cote d'Ivoire was a major gap, which impacted on efficiency. Even after ECOMICI, there remains a lack of adequately skilled civilians in the field of peace and security in general. There is a dire need for training of civilians as well as training of military in civilian aspects of peacekeeping, if the West African region is to improve overall operational efficiency.

The creation of a Policy Analysis and Strategy Unit (PASU) in ECOWAS, has been one of the lessons learned from previous peacekeeping operations and will be a key asset to the organisation in addressing many of the gaps identified in previous missions. Indeed this was one of the recommendations in the ECOMOG review facilitated by KAIPTC in 2005. The creation of a database of West African experts in the field of peace and security by PASU in 2007 is a useful first step to addressing the gaps in knowledge.

As will be shown later in this report, the determination of a regional power, Nigeria, to support the peacekeeping mission in Liberia made a significant difference and improved efficiency and effectiveness at critical times, providing decisive leadership. The fact that the Nigerian regimes concerned considered the missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone a matter of national pride meant that it was able to commit significant resources (including provision of fuel/ POL products throughout) which enhanced operational effectiveness. But such dedicated support also has major downsides as demonstrated by the Liberian experience.

²⁵ See "ECOWAS Peace Operations from 1990 to 2004: Synopsis of Lessons... op. cit., p. 14.

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The reputation of the force suffered as a result of Nigeria's domestic problems and pariah status earned by the Abacha regime in particular. The inadequacies of the Nigerian military establishment were ultimately reflected in ECOMOG since Nigeria constituted on average 70 percent of the ECOMOG force. It should, nonetheless, be noted that the seven year operation in Liberia was overseen by Nigerian military regimes, which were less sensitive to domestic criticism and opposition from civil society. It was difficult for a civilian regime under Obasanjo to ignore public opinion and the growing calls from 1999, for Nigeria to withdraw its troops from Sierra Leone.

Another peacekeeping mission in Liberia during the first round of the country's civil war was led by the United Nations albeit in cooperation with ECOMOG. Here, the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was sent into the country after ECOWAS had established some form of stability in the country. The relationship between ECOMOG and UNOMIL has been widely recognised as the first case where the United Nations and a regional organisation had worked together to address a complex emergency through peacekeeping.²⁶ There were a number of hiccups in the relationship between ECOMOG and UNOMIL, such that at some point they were more of rivals than allies. Key among the complaints by ECOMOG was about remuneration. ECOMOG soldiers complained that they were poorly paid when compared to UNOMIL and yet they performed the more rigorous task of providing security to both UNOMIL Observers and the Liberian population.

Against the background of the experience from the first peacekeeping mission, ECOMOG was able to avoid some of the pitfalls that befell the first mission. The decisiveness with which the force went in and was able to carry out the necessary ECOWAS mandate was manifest of a force with considerable inside knowledge of the situation in the country. The fact too that some of the soldiers sent for the second round of peacekeeping activities in the country already took part in the first operation and thus had a deep knowledge of the terrain, also contributed to the quicker and more effective delivery of assistance to the country, in addition to the back up provided by the US.

The mission to Sierra Leone too was largely Nigerian dominated and once again, this reflected on the efficiency of the mission. The Nigerian leader that provided leadership to the ECOMOG mission in Sierra Leone, Sani Abacha, was also

²⁶ This has been well discussed in John Mackinlay and Abiodun Alao, *Liberia 1994: ECOMOG UNOMIL Response to Complex Emergency*, New York: United Nations Occasional Paper Series No. 1, 1996. See also, 'Funmi Olonisakin, UN Cooperation with Regional Organizations in Peacekeeping, *International Peacekeeping*, Spring 1997; See also, Alao, Mackinlay and Olonisakin, *op-cit*

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determined to see to the success of the operation. It is ironic that the same leader that was responsible for re-establishing democracy in Sierra Leone was an avowed autocrat at home.²⁷ The autocratic nature of his domestic rule also meant that not many countries outside West Africa were willing to come in and partner with Nigeria on the Sierra Leone peacekeeping mission. The degree of support from Nigeria to ECOMOG waned after the sudden death of General Abacha in 1998. Logistical support was non-existent. Nigerian troops, who formed the majority of the ECOMOG force, complained of dire shortage of supplies and logistical support, not least ammunition, in addition to which there were serious command problems within the Nigerian contingent. It was under these circumstances that the RUF forces attacked Freetown in January 1999, overwhelming ECOMOG troops in the capital, killing them by the hundreds.

UN missions have traditionally held greater promise of efficiency when compared with ECOWAS missions. UNAMSIL however had Command, Control and Communication problems during its earlier phase, which were not unconnected with a transition from ECOMOG to UNAMSIL. When UNAMSIL was formed, it was widely expected that a Nigerian General would be made the Commander of the operation, especially against the background of Nigeria's vast peacemaking and peacekeeping experience in Sierra Leone as well as the high number of Nigerian troops in the mission. However, the UN considered it inappropriate to appoint a Nigerian as the Commander, especially given the fact that a Nigerian citizen, Olu Adeniji, had been appointed as the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in Sierra Leone. In the end, an Indian Officer, General Vijay Jetley, was appointed Force Commander, and a Nigerian officer was made his Deputy.

Consequently, the relationship between Jetley and his Nigerian Deputy was not cordial, and this was to have significant impact on UNAMSIL's activities. The lowest point in UNAMSIL's involvement in Sierra Leone came when some 500 UNAMSIL soldiers were kidnapped by the RUF in May 2000. Although they were later released, it was a major embarrassment for the United Nations. What was, equally embarrassing was the claim by General Jetley that his activities were being sabotaged by some of his UN colleagues. In a private letter to the United Nations Secretary General, Jetley alleged that there was a strategic alliance between the rebels and key Nigerian officers of ECOMOG and the United Nations. Specifically General Jetley alleged:

²⁷ This contradiction here has been well-captured in Abiodun Alao's article "Peacekeepers Abroad, Trouble Makers at Home: The Nigeria Army, National Politics and Sub-regional Policies", in Olayiwola Abegunrin and Soji Akomolafe, *Nigeria and the World: Essay in Honour of Olajide Aluko*, New York: Nova Scotia Publishers, 2007.

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“... keeping Nigerian interest was paramount even if it meant scuttling the Peace Process and this also implied that UNAMSIL was expendable. To this end the Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) and the Deputy Force Commander (DFC) cultivated the RUF leadership – especially Foday Sankoh – behind my back.”²⁸

The third conventional force that got involved in Sierra Leone was the British Army.²⁹ The force came into the country initially to support the evacuation of British and other European citizens from Sierra Leone but was later charged with the task of supporting UNAMSIL and the Government of Sierra Leone as they repelled the rebel incursion into the Capital. It is widely accepted that the British Army’s “beyond the horizon” strategy had a huge psychological impact and contributed significantly to deterring the rebels from advancing on Freetown. Interestingly, the UN operation was perceived as inefficient by some officers of the International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT), which consisted largely of the British Army. Their greatest criticism was that despite UNAMSIL’s massive logistical support base, it was inefficient and incapable of rapidly responding to counter the threats posed by the rebels. Because of the specificity of the task and its relatively short duration, it was possible for the British Army to demonstrate a high level of efficiency. However, the British Commanders on the ground were in collusion with UNAMSIL over what approach to take to removing the threat posed by the rebels. There were hot exchanges between both sides on how best to bring an end to the conflict in Sierra Leone.³⁰

In Guinea Bissau, unlike in Liberia and Sierra Leone, there was no single country that was willing to champion the peacekeeping initiative. There is a general impression that Nigeria and other Anglophone countries were not particularly interested in committing troops to the peacekeeping initiative in Guinea Bissau, thus leaving the contribution of troops to Francophone countries. Indeed, the non-contribution of troops by Nigeria, and to an extent Ghana, could be understood against the background of their considerable involvement in Liberia and Sierra Leone. All this made the mission in Guinea Bissau low-key with relatively slender objectives. Portugal led the external effort to provide logistical and other support to the mission.

²⁸ Quoted from Dena Montague, “The Business of War and the Prospect of Peace in Sierra Leone”, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2002), p. 236.

²⁹ I have decided not to discuss the involvement of mercenaries because they were not recruited either for peacekeeping or enforcement.

³⁰ See Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone*, op. cit.

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It should be noted that the factors, which determined efficiency were sometimes different for ECOMOG and the UN. While the UN multi-dimensional operations have tended to balance civil and military aspects of the needs of the local environment, ECOMOG has focused almost exclusively on military dimensions. In all cases, the operational environment required not only the need to address political and civil affairs issues, but also ensuring the input of civilian experts and understanding of civilian issues by the military. While the UN has often had a Special Representative heading peacekeeping missions in order to respond to the multi-dimensional challenges and ensuring the training of the military in these diverse areas e.g. child protection, human rights, gender, civil affairs, etc. , ECOWAS did not have civilian heads of mission in the field initially. As indicated earlier, before ECOMOG, ECOWAS did not have a Special Representative to direct political affairs, nor did it have civilian or indeed specialized training for its troops on key issues affecting the civilian community. Institutions like KAIPTC have a role to play in the training of the military as well as civilians on the civilian dimensions of peacekeeping.

Section Two: Impacts and Sustainability

In this section, attention is focused on the issues surrounding the long-term outcomes of the peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations in West Africa. I have identified three key issues for discussion here. The first is a discussion on how these missions ended and the long term implications of this on the country. The second is on the impact of the operations on the operational environment, especially on issues like security, political stability, establishment of harmonious inter group relations and inter-generational relationships e.g. youth inclusion. The third and final subsection deals with the issue of sustainability, especially as this relates to improved governance, rule of law and the consolidation of democracy and peace.

How Missions Ended

A complete evaluation of peacekeeping and peace support operations in West Africa may still be some time away, as there are still several places where peace support operations are still in progress, as seen in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire and indeed Sierra Leone with UNIOSIL. However, the time may be ripe enough for some forms of preliminary conclusions, especially as post-mortem examinations can be made on about three or four of the peacekeeping and peace support operations. The first peacekeeping exercise in Liberia ended with the conduct of an election organised by ECOWAS and the UN. The manner in which the first

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round of civil war in Liberia ended showed that a peacekeeping mission, no matter how successful, would still need the intervention of the international community to organise a credible election and support longer term peace building efforts.

One issue that was on the agenda as part of the Abuja II Agreement of 1996 was the rebuilding and reform of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). But Taylor reneged on this after elections, claiming that his new government would take on the responsibility of rebuilding the army. This outcome should, however, not be surprising in a situation where the main focus of peacekeeping was on military operations, and reaching a political solution without simultaneous consideration for other peace-building activities such as support for strengthening of institutions including rebuilding of a new security apparatus and overall governance reform. This was a classical peacekeeping mission in which the real focus was on securing a environment in which the conditions of lasting peace could be pursued. The way the Liberian war ended, however, showed some of the contradictions in peacekeeping. While Taylor won the election, it was not known whether the victory at the poll was a manifestation of genuine trust in him or the willingness of the Liberian population to ensure that a defeat for him did not result in another round of civil war. If this was the desire of Liberians, it turned out to be counter-productive, as his victory at the election was again responsible for another round of civil conflict.

The second intervention in Liberia also ended with an election in 2005 of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. In both cases, the elections were preceded by the signing of peace agreements. In 1996, the Abuja II peace agreement, mid-wifed by ECOWAS and the United Nations prepared the grounds for election, while the 2004 election was predicated on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra, Ghana and a two-year transitional period to allow for the implementation of the CPA. The United Nations mission in Liberia which came in 2004 was multi-dimensional with peacekeeping and peace building components.

As in the case of Liberia, there were peace agreements preceding the end of the war in Sierra Leone. In November 2000, a new cease-fire agreement was signed in Abuja, Nigeria. This, however, did not prevent continuation of hostilities, and shortly afterwards, Guinean forces entered Sierra Leone to attack RUF bases from which attacks had been launched against Liberian dissidents in Guinea. A second Abuja Agreement, in May 2001, set the stage for a resumption of DDR on a wide scale and a significant reduction in hostilities. As disarmament progressed, the government began to reassert its authority in formerly rebel-held areas. By early 2002, some 72,000 ex-combatants had been disarmed and demobilized, and in January 2002 President Kabbah declared the civil war

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officially over. The United Nations force, however remained in the country until December 2005.

In short, in the case of Sierra Leone, hostilities ended after sufficient pressures had reduced the capacity of the RUF to remain a credible military force. Unlike Liberia, however, the end of mission was not linked to the conduct of any election. The type of mission that remained to implement the peace agreement has also contributed to sustained peace. UNAMSIL's multi-dimensional role was important in this regard. The biggest achievement of ECOMOG and UNAMSIL in the end was the creation of a secure environment in which long-term peace could be built. Here again, ECOMOG's main focus was on military operations, and a sequential approach was again adopted - to rebuild the Sierra-Leone army after a secure environment was created. In any case, beyond assisting with the army-rebuilding, its capacity was limited.

In contrast to ECOMOG, however, UNAMSIL from 2000 was able to take a multi-dimensional approach, with the mission working with the country team, to address economic recovery, governance reform and reconciliation. All of these were essential to addressing the initial conditions and root cause of the conflict to prevent a recurrence of war. Even so, Sierra Leoneans were concerned at the end of the UNAMSIL mission in 2005, that many of the root causes of the conflict remained unaddressed. But for the first time in the history of UN peacekeeping, the UN deployed an integrated office (UNIOSIL) in Sierra Leone, to work with the Government of Sierra-Leone to facilitate the consolidation of peace.

The end of ECOWAS involvement in Guinea Bissau in 1998 was not as significant. At a meeting of ECOWAS foreign ministers held in Togo that month, Vieira's overthrow was condemned and demands were made for him to be permitted to leave Guinea-Bissau. It was also decided that ECOMOG forces would be withdrawn from the country. The last ECOMOG troops left in early June. The operation in Cote d'Ivoire is still on-going and the evaluation of the peacekeeping/ peace support operations may have to wait until the end of the mission.

Impact of missions on operational environment

In all the cases where the missions have ended or are winding up, their impact on the operational environments, have been profound. In Liberia, the peacekeeping and peace support operations have been quite important in determining a number of post-conflict issues, the most important being the reformation of the new national army. As discussed earlier, after the first round of the civil war, the opportunity of reforming the new national army through the

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activities of the ECOMOG operation was lost, as the former President Taylor preferred to reform the army without external interference. However, after the second round of the country's civil war, the Ellen Sirleaf Johnson government took up the option of building a new national army.

This government relied on external assistance in two ways. The government sought and obtained the assistance of the Nigerian government to second a Nigerian officer with Liberian experience to come in as the new Head of the Liberian national army. Even after this officer was recalled to come and become the Nigerian army chief, another Nigerian officer was sent in as a replacement. The decision to obtain Nigeria's assistance in this way is indicative of the significant contribution of Nigeria to peacemaking in the region, not least through its leadership of the ECOMOG operations. The greatest contribution of ECOMOG during the first war as in the second Liberian war was the ability to conduct robust operations, which imposed a stable environment.

The second dimension of external assistance is the US support for the rebuilding of a new national army. With more than US\$200m pledged by the US, the task of building armed forces was assigned to a private military corporation, Dyne Corps. The impact of this remains to be seen but initial indications are that it has not achieved much.

Similarly, the reformation of the Liberian National Police is also being conducted by UNMIL. The impact of the mission on political stability in Liberia is also remarkable. On the two occasions that there were external interventions in the country, the end of the mission created a form of political stability, even if, as in the case of the first ECOMOG intervention, this was blown by the Taylor administration after the elections. This mistake was not repeated by the Sirleaf Johnson administration. The impact of the UN has also seen attitudinal changes among critical actors particularly in civil society towards issues like human rights, gender relations, youth concerns and the apparent establishment of harmonious relations. It is too soon to judge whether this is a longer term scenario. The activities of the United Nations agencies and those of some international non-governmental organisations brought a proliferation of gender and human rights local NGOs that emerged to advance the interests of women and other vulnerable groups in the country. While the challenge of youth exclusion remains, the efforts of the United Nations in bringing about a credible disarmament and demobilisation programme in the country has been a valuable first step in addressing this problem. It is still too soon to know the longer term impact of the international support in these areas.

In Sierra Leone, the initial assistance offered by ECOMOG, and the subsequent support provided by UNAMSIL and the UK was helpful in the restructuring of

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the new national army. As in the case of Liberia, military officers from Nigeria were invited to come and assist in the restructuring of the national army. The late Maxwell Khobe, who by the end of the war had become a national hero in Sierra Leone,³¹ was made the country's Chief of Army Staff. This was a position that was approved by the Parliament. At about the same time, a British Police Officer was appointed the head of Sierra Leone's Police Service, another position endorsed by Parliament. Perhaps a lesson that can be drawn from this is that "local ownership" does not need to be xenophobic, as there are cases when sensitive appointments have to be strategically made. Again, the processes in these two appointments, which included parliamentary approval, gave them some of the hallmarks of local ownership, albeit, in an unusual way. Again, and as was the case in Liberia, UNAMSIL CIVPOL was also active alongside the UK in the reformation of Sierra Leone's new national police force

Sustainability Afterwards

Since one of the objectives of all peacekeeping or peace support operations is to contribute to good governance and create an environment in which economic development can be sustained, how these operations have tried to sustain long-term peace-building initiatives will be considered albeit briefly in this report. In Liberia, although there was peace after the end of the first round of civil conflict, this was not followed by improved governance. For example, there was no improved rule of law, no serious attempt to reform the armed and security forces and the local capacity to deliver peace-building efforts was not encouraged. Failure to bring about these changes contributed in no small measure to the relapse into armed conflict. Indeed, the ECOMOG operation and the UN observer mission focused narrowly on the establishment of security. While the need to rebuild the army was recognised in the Abuja II agreement as a major step toward sustaining the measure of security established by ECOMOG, which was expected to begin after elections. This approach to peacekeeping accounted in the past for relapse of armed conflict.

The international community has been working toward developing more comprehensive peace plans. This lesson was learnt in Liberia after the second war and also in Sierra Leone. In Liberia, the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) laid the ground work for ensuring sustainable peace and development through second provisions for security sector reform in addition to a host of governance reforms. In Sierra Leone, the withdrawal of UNAMSIL was followed immediately by the establishment of UNIOSIL, which now continues to focus on

³¹ Streets were named after him and other Nigerian main actors, including Abacha, in the capital, Freetown.

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the security and non-military aspects of peace consolidation, including, for example, consolidation of state authority and Governance; reintegrating of former combatants; reconciliation; national recovery; and economic and social development. UNAMSIL already prepared the ground work for this in the transition plan from peacekeeping to peace consolidation.

Possibly against the background of the failure of the Taylor government on these issues, the Sirleaf Johnson government that emerged in the election that ended the second round of intervention immediately took steps along these lines. Immediately after assumption of power, the government worked with a broad range of actors to ensure the sustainability of the activities already established by the United Nations. The government confirmed a Governance Reform Commission (GRC), which was mandated to undertake a broad of governance reforms, and now mandated by Parliament as a permanent Governance Commission. Since the establishment of the commission, it has taken steps on issues relating to land reform, security sector reform, judicial reform, among others.

Of all the areas of reforms aimed at establishing the sustainability of peace in Liberia, the most controversial has been Security Sector Reform. The antecedents of this controversy need to be noted here, even if the implications of it will be discussed under lessons-learnt in the next section. During the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the second war in Liberia, all the warring factions in the conflict insisted that the United States should play a key role in military reform - a task that the United States contracted out to Dyncorp, a private security company, whose role has generated enormous controversy within and outside Liberia.³²

But apart from the Dyncorp involvement, there have also been other efforts to develop oversight capacity of other critical actors, especially Parliamentarians. Two of these are worth recording. The first is the effort by the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College London in partnership with the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) and the Geneva-based Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), to develop a knowledge base for Liberian Parliamentarians on issues relating to the oversight role of Legislators in security sector reform. Interfacing this initiative is the support being provided by the same group alongside KAIPTC to the Governance Commission in Liberia, which is charged with the task of leading the process of developing a security

³² See Adedeji Ebo, *The Challenges and Opportunities of Security sector Reform in Post-Conflict Liberia*, Geneva: Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Occasional Paper 9, December 2005. See also Thomas Jaye's, assessment report of Liberia's security institutions, unpublished paper, Governance Reform Commission, Liberia, 2005.

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policy for Liberia. KAIPTC has periodically seconded a Senior Fellow to the Governance Commission since late 2006. The second initiative, also undertaken as part of this KCL-ASSN-DCAF partnership, is the establishment of an Institute, the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation, at the University of Liberia.³³ One of the aims of this Institute is to facilitate public policy debates around issues of conflict transformation and peace building in the Mano River Union and it is now receiving support from several sources to assist in developing the capacity of this Centre to achieve its objectives.³⁴ All this is in addition to the multi-dimensional initiatives of the UN Mission in Liberia along similar directions. The longer-term impact of the ongoing peace missions in Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire, however, remains to be seen.

Section Three:

Lessons learned, lessons missed and guidelines for generic TOR for future studies

This section addresses three issues that can guide the formulation of future policy and issues relating to Peacekeeping, Peace Support Operations and peace building in West Africa. These include the lessons learned from these missions; the lessons missed and the key elements that should guide future studies of peacekeeping and peace support operations in West Africa. Also, the section discusses specific issues that should be considered by regional peacekeeping training centres, especially how training or research can be organised to meet the challenges of responding to complex emergencies in the West African sub-region and the African continent as a whole.

Lessons Learned

West Africans have long argued that the burden of West African security must be borne primarily by West Africans. While assistance may take some time to come from outside, it will remain the main responsibility of West Africans to ensure the political stability of their region. Consequently, the countries and their

³³ When the Centre was first established, it was called the Institute for Conflict Transformation, but the name was later changed and named after the former UN Secretary General after his visit to the country. Distinction thus needs to be made from the Accra, Ghana-based Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC).

³⁴ Among the latest supporters for the Centre is the Harry Guggenheim Foundation in the United State, which is currently working with King's College London to assist in capacity-building at the Institute. As part of this plan, a number of courses on peace and security, including SSR are being developed.

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regional organisation have to find ways of ensuring regional stability and they should be ready to contribute to any peacekeeping missions that may be required. This seems to have been realised by the sub-regional organisation ECOWAS. While opinions may differ as to the lessons learned from peacekeeping and peace-support operations in West Africa, there seems to be a general agreement that the experiences motivated the region to embark on a comprehensive overhauling of its security mechanism.

Following its experiences of conflict in the region, ECOWAS has now come up with a security architecture which is arguably the most advanced in Africa. This is the ECOWAS Protocol on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, which was adopted in 1999, followed by the supplementary protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001. And in May 2007, ECOWAS unveiled its Conflict Prevention Framework, which is the missing link that now provides a framework for translating the earlier protocols to concrete initiatives on the ground.

In terms of major lessons learned for all the peacekeeping and peace support operations in West Africa, three are significant for the purposes of this study:

- First, collaboration between the UN and ECOWAS in peace operations is inevitable. Each organisation has strengths that can complement the weaknesses of the other. The type of collaboration that must exist between them in peacekeeping and PSOs has been made apparent through the peace operations of the last decade. In the first Liberia operation, the UN played a subordinate role to ECOWAS both politically and militarily, which, in the end, had the effect of undermining the credibility of the UN.³⁵ This lesson has been subsequently learned and reflected in the new type of division of labour that now exists between both organisations. A pattern has emerged as seen in Sierra Leone, second Liberia operations and Cote d'Ivoire, in which ECOWAS deploys ECOMOG, ECOMIL, ECOMICI, with a substantially robust mandate which enables them to undertake enforcement operations if and when required, to create the necessary environment for other peacemaking and peace building activities to occur. In all three cases, ECOWAS troops have subsequently been "re-hatted" into the significantly larger and multi-dimensional UN operations that took over from the regional forces.
- Second and not unrelated to the above point is another lesson that became apparent in the first Liberia operation and also subsequently learnt (albeit

³⁵ See Alao, Mackinlay and Olonisakin, *Peacekeepers, Politicians and Warlords*, op. cit.

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inadequately). This is the strategic development of options for addressing root cause factors right from deployment phase. This thinking informed the peace agreements in Lome, and Accra which predated both UNAMSIL and UNMIL. The practical challenges of dealing with the wide-ranging root cause factors and initial conditions have all been reflected in the qualified success of Sierra Leone and the ongoing challenges encountered by UNMIL.

- The third lesson, which has been learned is that the principle established in UN peacekeeping, which excludes neighbouring states from contributing troops to peacekeeping operations can not be sustained in a region like West Africa. The experience of Guinea and UNAMSIL is a case in point. Guinea was initially excluded from contributing troops during the “rehatting” of ECOMOG into UNAMSIL. The position of the UN in excluding neighbouring states is that it will be difficult for them to maintain a neutral stance. But in West Africa, neighbouring states, which are themselves often affected by the fallouts of the conflicts around them, often have a vested interest in establishing order and stability in those conflicts because their own security is dependent on this in the long run. The decision to exclude Guinea from UNAMSIL was later reversed with Guinea contributing one battalion to UNAMSIL ³⁶

Lessons Missed

Three principal factors stand out in terms of lessons missed or yet to be learned:

- First is the continuing failure of regional and UN operations to apply early action, even when the threat of a slide into armed conflict has been glaring. Responding to conflict early warning in a timely manner might result in increased instances of preventive deployment (to avert a major crisis) rather than full-fledged peacekeeping operations or enforcement action, which are more cost intensive. West Africa has had no experience of preventive deployment. Indeed, this is a rarity globally, with Macedonia being the only case where a preventive deployment mission has been undertaken.
- Second, regional operations have omitted the use of civilian experts, or indeed preparation of military personnel for civilian aspects of peacekeeping such as child protection, HIV/AIDS, other human rights and gender dimensions, etc. through pre-mission training. The first attempt to undertake such prior training of the military was supported by

³⁶ Funmi Oloisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, op. cit.

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Save the Children Sweden in 2000 when it conducted a training of senior officers in select West African countries on child protection issues, so that these officers could in turn train their contingents prior to deployment in a mission area. There are no reports of active follow-ups on this training. Indeed, the UN has had relatively few cases of pre-deployment training for civilian components of peacekeeping and PSOs although most UN missions provide newly deployed contingents/ rotating contingents with requisite training on several civilian dimensions of peacekeeping, not least child protection, in addition to refresher training. KAIPTC will have to play a particularly relevant role in ensuring a systematic focus on such civilian pre-mission training for West African military, police and civilian personnel.

- Third, significantly less attention is still given to the need to embark on peace building from an early stage during peace operations, which much focus placed (perhaps rightly) on stabilization. Although the UN is taking steps to improve this, the net effect however is that development actors and the security community have tended to work in isolation particularly at the start of operations, when it is particularly crucial that they develop a joint strategy.

For ECOWAS in particular, this thinking has not yet become part of the practice. Its new Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) might provide a firm basis for connecting the security and development needs of operational environments from the start. In this regard, it is important to connect the ECPF and the African Union's Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy in order to ensure synergy with continental processes.

Furthermore, this gap in security-development thinking in ECOWAS approaches has meant that the organisation has been unable to develop effective collaboration with UN peace building initiatives in Liberia and Sierra Leone where it previously led the way in peacemaking and peacekeeping. As a result, ECOWAS has continued to play a peripheral role in the work of the UN Peace Building Commission and the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), which took over from UNAMSIL to help facilitate the consolidation of peace. Observers have noted that the absence of a clearly articulated ECOWAS policy or guidelines on peace building has encouraged scenarios such as those in Liberia, where a private security company has led the process of Security Sector Reform with potential adverse consequences. The Policy Analysis and Strategy Unit (PASU) of ECOWAS will be particularly relevant in ensuring that adequate research and analysis are undertaken in support

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ECOWAS articulation of clear guidelines on peace building and the need to link longer term development issues from mission planning stages.

Guidelines for generic TOR for future studies

Conducting a study on the effectiveness and impact of peace operations in West Africa

Guidelines for Terms of Reference

(1) Meanings of effectiveness, impact and coherence for the purpose of the Study

The focus of a comprehensive study of peace operations in West Africa should be on assessing their effectiveness and impact, and on ensuring coherence among critical actors within and outside the mission.

Adopting OECD definitions, a study of *effectiveness*, should examine the objectives of the peace operations and the extent to which they have been achieved or expected to be achieved (OECD, 2002); examination of *impact* should look at the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the operations, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended (OECD, 2002); while an assessment of *coherence* among critical actors should examine the extent to which there is a "systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions" among all external actors and between external and local actors (OECD 2001).

(2). Initial Conditions of the target operational environment

An assessment of initial conditions in an operational environment is an important and useful starting point, which can help guide the authorizing body in determining its objectives, training requirements and later, assist it in gauging the effectiveness and impact of any mission deployed. An assessment of initial conditions might include the following:

- (a) Overall prevailing conditions on the ground before the deployment of the peace mission, including for example, the

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overall governance environment, extent of respect for human rights and the rule of law, the state of gender relations.

- (b) Geographical considerations: strategic/regional environment
- (c) Ethnic composition: inter group relations
- (d) Economy: including natural resource endowment
- (e) critical actors located in or already operating in the target operational environment
- (f) What was the nature of the peace process? Was any conflict prevention effort undertaken? What was the outcome of mediation and peacemaking efforts?

(3) Decision to deploy by authorizing institution; Mandate

The following are some of the key issues to consider when examining the decision to deploy a mission:

- (a.) What informed the decision to deploy?
- (b.) What are the key objectives sought by the authorizing body? Any vision of longer-term security-development needs?
- (c.) Were some of the initial conditions in the target country taken into account in setting these objectives?
- (d) What is the mandate given to the peace mission? How does this fit with the objectives sought by the body?

(4) Mission Planning

In assessing mission planning, the following questions should form a core part of the process:

- (a) What were the objectives set for the mission? How did the mission set its priorities?
- (b) What was the assessment of the capacity to fill these objectives in terms of resources - human (e.g. troop strength, civilian and other expertise), material (logistical and other support) and financial resources
- (c) Did Mission Planning take initial conditions in target environment into account?
- (d) What critical players were envisaged as part of the mission and processes on the ground? (e.g. UN, bilateral actors, etc.)
- (e) How were the troops recruited?
- (f) What training did the contingents receive prior to mission? During mission? Who provided the training? How relevant was this to situation on the ground?

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(5) Mission Execution

The following key issues have been identified as important requirements in the analysis of mission execution:

- (a) How effective was the mission in terms of achieving its immediate operational aims and the related objectives of its political masters?
- (b) What factors determined the degree of its effectiveness? What role did political processes play? How did pace of deployment, pledged and delivered resources, overall logistics, inter-contingent relations, mission leadership, affect the capacity of the mission to deliver on its objectives?
- (c) What was the role of the mission in conflict prevention efforts if any?
- (d) To what extent was the mission required to focus on supporting efforts to address root causes of the conflict? How was this addressed within overall mission focus?

(6) Coherence issues

An assessment of coherence should include the following:

- (a) Coherence within key sectors and among key actors in the mission
- (b) Coherence with local actors
- (c) Coherence with other external actors operating on the ground
- (d) Coherence between mission activities and the agenda set by the political/ authorizing body

(7) Impact of operations/ sustainability issues

In examining impact of peace operations, analysis should ideally move beyond seeking security outcomes particularly where authorizing bodies have taken initial conditions into account and have sought longer term outcomes. It should be noted however that it is difficult to gauge impact in the short term. The following are some of the issues, which can nonetheless be taken into account in assessing impact or potential impact:

- (a) Noticeable political/ security, social and economic trends in the operational environment attributable to the mission
- (b) Results of programmes and initiatives implemented by the mission

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- and changes in the target environment as a result of these initiatives
- (c) Key outcomes initially articulated by mission planners or unintended, which are attributable to the mission.
 - (d) Changes to initial conditions including success in dealing with some of the root cause issues, which can be attributed to the mission
 - (e) The potential to sustain the positive changes and gains realized beyond the lifetime of the mission.

Section Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

While of course a complete history of peacekeeping and peace support missions in West Africa may still be some time away, especially as some of the missions are still on-going, it is perhaps appropriate to offer some preliminary conclusions. While there were clearly difficulties at the beginning of the ECOWAS efforts to plan and execute peace operations in West Africa, all operations undertaken by ECOWAS have achieved a measure of success. In all cases, they succeeded in forcing armed groups to accept ceasefires that in most cases led to the signing of peace agreements. From the foregoing, it can be seen that ECOWAS' main strength has been in the area of peacemaking (mediation) and peacekeeping, which has enabled it to alter some of the initial conditions of chaos and violence by creating environments conducive to the pursuit of negotiations or reconciliation and normal development.

Indeed, ECOWAS has scored a number of continental “firsts” in this respect: the first in Africa to undertake a major peacekeeping initiative; the first to collaborate with the United Nations in meeting the challenges of a complex emergency in the post Cold War world; the first in evolving a workable security management mechanism, among others. However, while ECOWAS has done remarkably well in peacekeeping, the extent of its involvement in regional peace-building, at least until recently, has been comparably weak. Indeed, the effort at peace-building especially after bitter civil conflicts, have witnessed more the involvement of external actors, with the regional organisation, playing a very minimal role.

The regional organisation has potential capacity to be a decisive actor in the area of post-conflict peace building, be it through articulating guidelines or acting as facilitator of critical processes. However, before this can be realised, the organisation has a number of challenges that it has to overcome, including the availability of human resources that can comprehend and analyse issues relating to conflict, security and development in the organisation; the availability of resources to address the complex and multi-dimensional aspects of peacekeeping

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and a strong and credible structure to meet the challenges of regional security. Some of these are already being addressed, but among other things, urgent priority must be given to the issue of internal coherence within ECOWAS between its security and development functions, in addition to ensuring appropriate training for core personnel on key aspects of peace building and the capacity to provide backstopping for key elements of a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation.

This report makes the following five key recommendations:

1. ECOWAS should take concrete steps to implement its conflict prevention framework to enable it clearly align its policies with needs on the ground and in this regard to translate its Protocols (1999 and 2001) into concrete initiatives on the ground. Partner institutions such as KAIPTC should offer necessary assistance in this regard.
2. ECOWAS should provide clear guidelines and a plan for undertaking "preventive deployment" as part of a proactive conflict prevention plan. This could be implemented with ECOWAS standby arrangements.
3. KAIPTC should work more closely with ECOWAS to identify specific training needs within the context of ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) as well as ECOWAS regional context, focusing on the following: a.) implementation of ECPF; b.) civilian aspects of peacekeeping (c) activating roster of West African civilian experts.
4. ECOWAS should take a more proactive approach stance on peace building in all operations in West Africa by a.) articulating clear principles on peace building in Africa in line with the African Union PCRCD; b.) facilitating strategic partnerships with external actors in peace building in West Africa, using its operational guidelines and developing a better linkage and collaboration with the UN Peace Building Commission.
5. ECOWAS and KAIPTC should collaborate to develop increased West African expertise on issues of peace and security in Africa. In addition to the training of personnel destined for peace missions, and the database of West African experts being developed by ECOWAS, it will be more rewarding if both institutions would provide structured experience building opportunities for young West African scholars and practitioners in the field of peace and security.

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