Gender-responsive Peacebuilding Learning and Strategy Workshop for West and Central Africa

Hotel Fleur de Lys Plateau, Sale Madiba
Dakar, Senegal
7-9 June 2016

Workshop Report

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Executive Summary

Over the past decades, almost all West African countries have directly or indirectly been affected by armed conflict, radicalisation, civil unrest and crisis. Women in the region have played a visible and important role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, while simultaneously suffering disparate impacts of violence, displacement, and economic insecurity. The inclusion of a gender perspective in peacebuilding efforts is also important to conflict prevention and recovery.

The Dakar workshop, jointly organized by UN Women and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in June 2016, aimed to share and consolidate knowledge on gender-responsive peacebuilding. It offered an opportunity for South-South learning and exchange, building on the many practices that have been developed in the region by representatives of more than 10 countries who presented specific country case studies. Furthermore, gender-responsive peacebuilding programme design, monitoring and evaluation methods and tools were presented and elaborated on through group work across national boundaries.

During the workshop presentations and discussions, it became evident that almost all countries in the region are directly or indirectly affected by armed conflict, crisis and economic downfalls. Poverty and the lack of equal economic opportunities contribute to insecurity that, in turn, may lead to violence. In order to respond to the common challenges in the region, accountability of national actors and access to justice need to be increased. Countries in the West African region need more specifically dedicated resources and capacities to effectively implement principles of gender-responsive peacebuilding.

The existing challenges and security threats can be addressed only through strong collaboration between all actors across the region. Participants suggested that good practices and lessons learned should be exchanged in a more systematic and regular manner to continuously prepare to prevent and respond to armed violence, conflict and other humanitarian crises. Cross-border issues in particular require a multi-lateral dialogue which identifies strategic and mutually beneficial solutions to common obstacles to sustainable peace and responds to root causes of conflict in West African societies.

1. Introduction and Workshop Objectives

The gender dimensions of armed conflict are widely recognized through the documentation of selective sexual and gender-based violence incidences, the changing and reinforced gender roles in militarized environments and the different needs, perspectives and entry points during and after armed conflict. In order to support the more effective inclusion of a gender perspective into peacebuilding initiatives in the West African region, UN Women and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) organized a Gender-responsive Peacebuilding Learning and Strategy Workshop for West and Central Africa in Dakar, Senegal, from 7 to 9 June 2016.

The principal aim of the workshop was to share and consolidate knowledge on gender-responsive peacebuilding interventions and increase the capacity of governments from the region and civil society partners with the support of UN Women country offices and international actors. The purpose of this knowledge exchange was to support the integration of a gender perspective into peace and conflict analysis and the peacebuilding programming cycle[1] as well as into existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, with a focus on operationalizing the UN Secretary-General's Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding.[2] By bringing together more than 10 country representatives to present specific country case studies, the workshop offered an opportunity for South-South learning and exchange. Furthermore, gender-responsive peacebuilding programme design, monitoring and evaluation methods and tools were presented and elaborated on through group work across national boundaries. Specific theories of change, as well as results and monitoring frameworks on gender and peacebuilding were explored and discussed.

Participants representing national governments, civil society and UN Women offices from 10 different countries in the region (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote D´Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone) were invited to present their country context and a specific peacebuilding initiative to the audience. Through panel discussions following the country case studies, commonalities and differences were identified and prioritised. Based on the selected priorities, participants developed key outcomes, theories of change and fitting indicators. Participants jointly discussed how these monitoring and evaluation tools fit into already existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks at the national level and how they could improve the efficiency of gender-responsive peacebuilding in the region.

1. Defining Gender-responsive Peacebuilding in the Region

The workshop referenced international policies and provisions as well as background information and presentations to introduce the topic. The existing normative and conceptual framework embeds

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[1] For more details on monitoring and evaluation of the peacebuilding programme cycle please see the the peacebuilding fund website: http://www.unpbf.org/application-guidelines/7-monitoring-and-evaluation-me-reflective-peacebuilding/

[2] United Nations. *7 Point Action Plan.* Report of the Secretary-General on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding (A/65/354–S/2010/466). New York: 2010
http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven_point_action_plan.pdf

gender-responsive peacebuilding in a variety of specific guidelines, norms and provisions. These include the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979), the current UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2250 (2015), 2272 (2015)), and the Seven-Point Action Plan (7PAP), following the United Nations Secretary General report in 2010.[3] This plan requests that 15 per cent of the peacebuilding spending by the United Nations be dedicated to gender equality.

As results measured by the gender marker demonstrate, meeting this financial target remains a challenge. Further challenges such as responding to the specific needs of the youth, developing the needed capacities at all levels in the peacebuilding architecture, the absence of women in senior leadership positions, as well as the lack of funding commitments pose significant obstacles on a global scale to respond adequately to gender-related peacebuilding issues.[4]

Over the past decades, almost all West African countries have been affected by armed conflict, radicalisation, civil unrest and crisis. The rising number of incidents of violent extremism has undermined peace and development in the region. As all of the opening speakers[5] highlighted at the beginning of the workshop, women in the region have played a visible and important role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, while simultaneously suffering disparate impacts of violence, displacement, and economic insecurity. . International and regional actors as well as representatives from the Senegalese government[6] highlighted that women have not only been strongly affected by armed conflict but have also been key actors when it comes to peacebuilding efforts in the region.

Emmanuel Bombande, Special Assistant to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), observed that in the context of increased unemployment and social and economic inequalities, young people can be especially vulnerable to radicalisation and violent extremism. Religious principles and values have been exploited for violent purposes across the region and beyond. He stated that the political instabilities that result from violent elections, constitutional reforms, conflicts and corruption contribute to a sense of insecurity and imminent threat that drive people, especially the youth, towards violent and extremist groups.

Addressing cross-border issues such as migration streams, violent extremism and illicit border trades in West Africa requires a stronger regional collaboration. In particular, issues such as small arms and

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[3] United Nations. *Report of the Secretary-General on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding* (A/65/354–S/2010/466). New York: 2010

[4] Presentation by Sarah Douglas, Policy Advisor to UN Women and to the UN Peacebuilding Support Office. Dakar: 7th June 2016

[5] Mr. Axel de Ville, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women; Tammy Smith, Officer in Charge, UN Peacebuilding Fund; Mr. Awudu Ahmed Gumah, Director of the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC); Ms. Mareme Diao, Police Commissioner, Commissariat d'Arrondissement de Dieuppeul, Ministry of Interior; Ms. Oumou Khary Niang, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Women, Family and Children, Government of Senegal.

[6] Ms. Oumou Khary Niang, Technical Advisor in the Ministry of Women, Family and Children on behalf of H.E. Mariama Sarr, Minister of Women, Family and Children, Government of Senegal

light weapons, climate change, religious extremism and economic inequalities need a more strategic regional response. Mr. Bombande requested regional and sub-regional organisations to collaborate even more effectively on conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives to respond to these challenges. In order to create an accountable force of governance, efforts need to build on the existing architecture of peace to create a sustainable culture of peace in the region, he concluded.

During the workshop, actors from governments, civil society and representatives of international and regional organizations had the opportunity to present in detail existing examples of gender-responsive peacebuilding initiatives in their respective countries and to link the national issues to the regional context (see annex). The participants then identified commonalities and differences between the countries in the region to draw a clearer picture of the regional and national issues around gender-responsive peacebuilding.

2. Commonalities and Differences in the Region

After the official opening and introductory presentations, country case studies were presented by each delegation (see annex IV for summary of each country case study presentation). The case studies were guided by specific questions on gender and peacebuilding initiatives in each country that were shared with participants in advance (see annex III). Based on these country-specific presentations, commonalities and differences were identified during an open discussion with all participants.
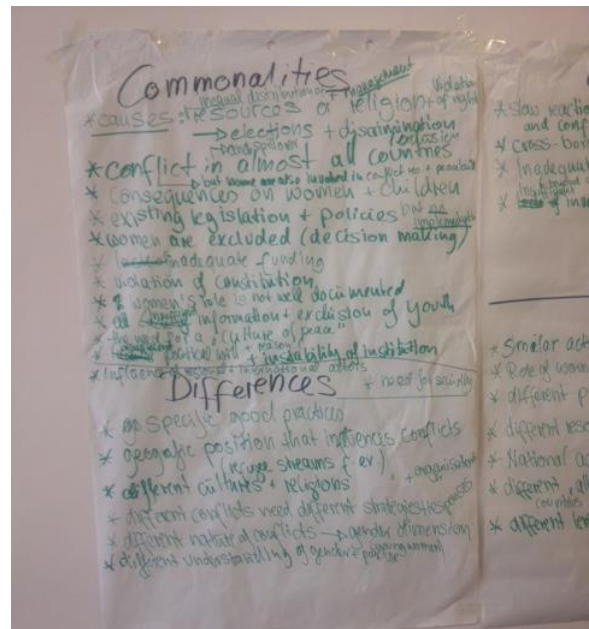
⇨ **All countries in the region are directly or indirectly affected by armed conflict**

During the country case study presentations, it became evident that almost all countries in the region have faced situations of armed conflict and civil unrest over the past decades. Participants identified violent conflict as one of the common denominators in the region that contributes to the existing unstable and unequal human development that eventually causes a relapse into armed conflict and violence in a vicious cycle. Several countries in the region have also been affected by the recent Ebola crisis and by current extremist violence and terrorist attacks, which again contribute to volatility in the region.

As a result of these crises, women and children are particularly affected by and vulnerable to poverty and violence but at the same time largely excluded from decision-making and political processes. Participants observed that despite all obstacles women have been active peacebuilders and advocates for human rights across the region, often acting as a unifying force despite national borders or ethnic-religious divides. Women in Liberia and Sierra Leone are cases in point.

⇨ **Poverty and the lack of equal economic opportunities are factors contributing to insecurity, which in turn may lead to violent behaviours**

Most countries struggle with economic downfalls and limited capacities to respond to social crises and armed violence appropriately. There is widespread youth unemployment and poverty in the region. The resources that exist are often unequally distributed, which contributes to discriminatory access to services and goods, which again results in frustration and violent reactions especially by the marginalised youth. Young women and men are particularly excluded from decision-making positions and political processes and, due to the increasing inequalities and lack of opportunities, even more vulnerable to extremism and violence.

⇨ **Lack of accountability and access to justice despite an existing legal framework**

Even though there is a legislative framework and political commitment in almost all countries to end violence against women and contribute to sustainable and inclusive peace, participants report that the application of the law and access to justice remain inconsistent in the different countries across the region. Institutions often do not seem strong enough to respond to the security threats and social challenges appropriately.

Participants identified corruption and lack of accountability as factors that weaken public institutions and undermine public trust in them. Lack of commitment and and accountability by governmental institutions and public servants to the existing policy framework are the common challenges to comprehensive peacebuilding in this region.

Participants noted the lack of seriousness and timeliness with which State institutions treat security threats such as extremist groups and civil unrest as well as their root causes, including economic inequalities and cultures of violence across the region. The resources of extremist groups and the support they receive from external actors, both within and outside of the continent, seem much larger than the resources the State has at its disposal to respond to them. Participants recommended that national governments track conflict dynamics and insecurities more closely to react quickly and appropriately to incipient crises.

⇨ **Resources and capacities need to increase to effectively implement principles of gender-responsive peacebuilding**

Governments in the region should collaborate to anticipate violent behaviours and processes, including cross-border activities. International and national actors should increasingly invest in conflict prevention rather than in a military response once the violence breaks out.

Differences between the countries in the region:

But not all countries in the region have the same context and dynamics when it comes to gender and peacebuilding issues and face different obstacles and challenges but also opportunities. The different ethnic, religious and social composition in each country also influences how gender and power dynamics unfold in each context. Communities are organised differently, clan and state structures can vary, and the place of women and the role they play in each society can differ. Gender roles build on the different cultural dynamics that are often country- or even community-driven and need to be analysed in the specific context they unfold in when planning peacebuilding interventions from a gender perspective.

The national policy frameworks may differ as well. Not all countries from the region have developed national action plans on the implementation of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and the different levels of international support the countries receive influence their capacity to respond to security challenges.

Peacebuilding strategies and interventions need to take these differences and specific characteristics into account to be effective. Sustainable tailor-made peacebuilding efforts have common components across the region but also country-specific activities and outcomes.

Throughout the opening speeches as well as during the presentations of country case studies it became evident that the identified challenges and security threats can be addressed only through a strong collaboration between all actors across the region. Participants suggested that good practices and lessons learned should be exchanged in a more systematic and regular manner to continuously prepare to prevent and respond to armed violence and conflict as well as to other humanitarian crises. Strategic regional and national priorities and realistic monitoring and evaluation frameworks that interlink the different initiatives, actors and frameworks could help to address these issues.

3. **Key Takeaway Points on Monitoring and Evaluations of Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding**

Overall, this workshop proved to be a decisive platform for exchange and dialogue among actors from the region who all work on gender-responsive peacebuilding and who develop, implement or monitor the related policy frameworks on women, peace and security. In particular, with respect to collaboration and linking of such different frameworks, similar workshops and meetings can contribute to making peacebuilding and conflict prevention more gender-responsive and more efficient.

In order to target, plan and monitor activities that specifically respond to the key challenges and security threats in the region, strategic priorities were identified by participants. The priorities describe a broad conceptual area of work that has been identified through a gender-responsive conflict analysis.[7] Participants subsequently selected specific priorities in each working group and discussed

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[7] Presentation by Tammy Smith, Officer in Charge of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, on „Monitoring and Evaluation Result Chains and Theories of Change". Dakar: 7th June 2016

what conditions influence the development towards the desired change in each context. The selection of cross-border issues was encouraged to stimulate collaboration and exchange between neighbouring countries represented in the room.

Starting from the strategic priorities, each working group was asked to develop an outcome that translates the strategic priority into a context-specific desired result (for example: "The local population has confidence that state security actors provide safety"). Based on these outcomes participants furthermore developed conditions needed to fulfil these outcomes. The working groups formulated specific theories of change that identify the assumptions and conditions needed for the outcome to be met that fit the identified priority and outcome (for example: "If security actors provide safety in a fairly manner, the population will be less vulnerable to and less likely to seek protection from non-state actors"). As a result, participants then were able to identify the needed monitoring and evaluation components based on the priorities most relevant to them in their bilateral working groups.

Subsequently, quantitative and qualitative indicators were formulated to measure the progress towards the achievement of the outcome. Participants also discussed the data needed in order to monitor and evaluate these programmatic efforts. A baseline and target were also defined to support the indicator definition and the selection of the specific means of measurement. With the support of Tammy Smith, Officer in Charge of the Peacebuilding Fund, all group presentations were peer-reviewed and provided with specific feedback from a monitoring and evaluation perspective.
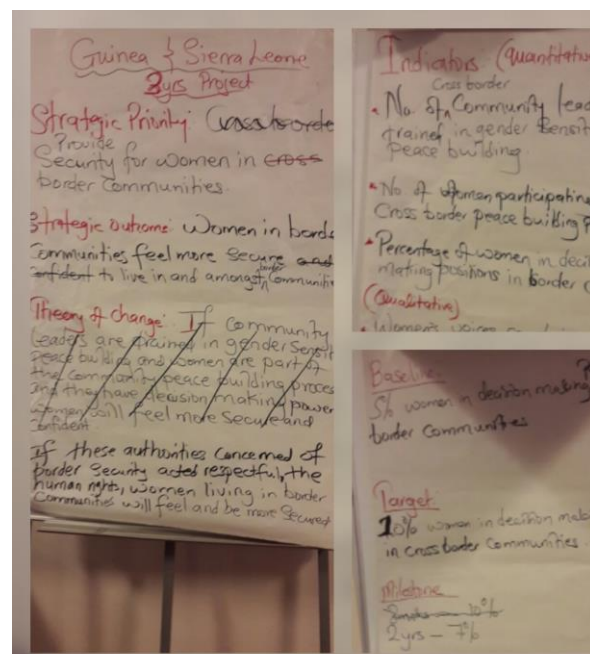
At the level of national programming, gender-responsive conflict analysis can create an effective basis for future programme planning and implementation. Such analysis also feeds into the last stage of the programme cycle.[8] These national monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms shall be connected and interlinked with related programmes and projects to avoid duplications and gaps. The programme cycle presented by the workshop facilitators is a process with different steps and tools the participants explored as concrete examples in their working group.

4. Recommendations and the Way Forward

This workshop on Gender-responsive Peacebuilding for West and Central Africa brought together representatives from governments, civil society and international actors working in over 10 different countries in the region. The participants presented their country contexts with respect to gender and peacebuilding issues and then identified commonalities and differences, as well as strategic priorities. Based on this analysis and strategic priorities, outcomes and indicators were identified that led to a discussion of how national and international monitoring and evaluation frameworks can increase their efficiency in responding to the specific needs and opportunities for gender-responsive peacebuilding in the region.

It became evident that, despite the different geographic locations, cultural, ethnic and religious differences, many socioeconomic problems and power dynamics fuelling violence and armed conflict are common across the region. Many challenges and opportunities therefore need to be addressed in close collaboration and coordination among actors in and outside national state borders. Cross-border issues especially require a multi-lateral dialogue to identify strategic and mutually beneficial solutions to common obstacles that threaten sustainable peace and address root causes of conflict in West African societies, including economic inequalities, corruption, and unequal access to resources and justice.

Furthermore, the accountability of governmental actors and public institutions and the translation of international commitment into action require strong and efficient monitoring and evaluation that builds on existing initiatives, tools and frameworks as well as on conflict analysis from a gender perspective.

Analysis, planning, programming and evaluation need to be harmonised. Ideally existing policies, tools and frameworks, such as the national action plans on resolution 1325, peacebuilding priority plans, United Nations Development Frameworks and specific projects and programmes on gender-responsive peacebuilding should be interlinked and strategically connected. These should comprise the national government, civil society organisations and international actors, including donors. Such collaboration would involve a large variety of actors and interest-driven priorities that would need to be balanced.

ANNEXES:

Annex I: Agenda

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
0900-1030	**Official Opening and introductions** *National government representatives,* *UN Women and PBSO representatives,* *Chair: Nicola Popovic (Consultant)*	**Recap on case studies´ commonalities and differences** *Group work* *Chair: Nicola Popovic (Consultant)*	**Addressing regional dynamics for national planning** *Tammy Smith (PBSO)* *Tatyana Jiteneva (UN Women)*
1030-1100	Break	Break	Break
1100-1230	**Peacebuilding in the Region: Architecture and Approaches** *Dr. Emmanuel Bombande (UNOWAS),* *Sarah Douglas (UN Women),* *Chair: Comfort Lamptey (UN Women)*	**Case studies´ commonalities and differences** *Jebbeh Forster (UN Women),* Scholastique Ntirampeba (UN Women)	**Addressing regional dynamics for national planning** *Tammy Smith (PBSO)* *Tatyana Jiteneva (UN Women)*
1230-1345	Lunch	Lunch **Group Picture**	Lunch
1345-1530	**Presentations on good practices from Mano River region plus Cameroon** *Participants from Cote D´ivoire, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone, Cameroon*	**From strategic priorities to action** *Group Work* *Tammy Smith (PBSO)*	**M&E and reporting of gender responsive peacebuilding** *Tammy Smith (PBSO)* *Tatyana Jiteneva (UN Women)*
1530-1600	Break	Break	Break
1600-1730	**Presentations on good practices from Sahel region plus Central African Republic** *Participants from Mali, Niger, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, CAR*	**From strategic priorities to action** *Group Work* *Tammy Smith (PBSO)*	**Next steps and the way forward and evaluation** *Tolulope Lewis Tamoka (UN Women)*
1830-2000		**Reception**	

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Guiding Questions for Country Presentations

Reflect on a peacebuilding intervention in your country. Critically reflect on the consideration of a gender dimension while answering the following questions. Remember: there is no right or wrong answer. This is a learning exercise through which we exchange experiences from different countries and contexts among participants.

Background and Context   • What was the national context, policy environment, institutional background to the intervention?   • What was the problem or issue the intervention was aiming to address?
Partners   • Who were the main partners and how were they identified?   • What did each stakeholder bring to the process?   • Were there differences amongst partners that had to be managed?
Intended Results   • What were the planned results or changes that were expected?
Actual Results   • Did the actual results differ from the intended results?   • Were there any unintended impacts or changes?
Challenges   • What challenges were faced in implementing the interventions?   • Were the challenges political, operational, related to coordination, etc.?   • How did you and partners mitigate those challenges?
Good Practices   • What were the good practices and what made them good?   • How were good practices documented and communicated?
Lessons learned for future programming   • From a policy and programming perspective, what are the lessons learned for future interventions in this area?   • What are the pre-conditions that are needed to make sure our work on governance is effective and sustainable?

Annex III: Country case studies based on participants' presentations
(in alphabetical order)

Burundi:

Burundi is located in central Africa and its case study was presented by a UN Women colleague for a comparative analysis of the context outside of Western Africa. While Burundi is also a country emerging from armed conflict, several initiatives have been taken to promote gender balance in decision-making positions and to prevent and respond to the effects of armed conflict, especially during the elections. More than 530 female mediators were supported in over 100 communities. Despite all the positive initiatives in the country, the situation of displaced people, for example, is nonetheless still alarming with more than 250,000 refugees in the past years.

Cameroon:

The Republic of Cameroon gained independence in 1960 under former president Ahmadou Ahidjo. The country hosts almost 2000 different languages and is home to very diverse cultures. It currently has no national action plan on resolution 1325 and does not receive financial support by the peacebuilding fund. Nonetheless, the government has undertaken a variety of actions to include women more actively in decision-making processes. These include strategies and programs to promote women's rights, gender equality, and women's full participation in the development of the country. To date, 20 women have become senators and 10 women have been appointed ministers. Furthermore, Cameroon signed and ratified related commitments at the international level, such as CEDAW and its additional protocols, the Beijing Declaration, the Maputo Declaration, and the Declaration of Addis Ababa.

Central African Republic:

The Central African Republic has been affected by armed conflict, political insecurity and refugee streams, both domestically and due to unrest in neighboring countries. Cross-border challenges emerging from armed conflicts in bordering countries such as Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad affect efforts for national reconciliation and conflict resolution. Several cities remain under the control of armed militia and millions of people need humanitarian relief and support. As the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Reconciliation reports, there have been around 600 cases of sexual violence against women and girls. Almost 30 percent of social infrastructure, along with more than 20,000 buildings, has been destroyed. With the support of international and regional actors such as ECCAS, AU, EU, UN, and national and international NGOs, major peacebuilding efforts have been realized. Religious leaders can play a strong role in the national context. Most recently the pope of the Catholic Church visited the country and actively involved the Muslim communities during his visit, which boosted national unity for peace. Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Reconciliation confirmed that women have been at the heart of the national reconciliation. With the support of UN Women, the transitional parliament elected a woman in order to restore the peace and women became increasingly involved in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the country.

Côte d'Ivoire:

The country has faced over a decade of armed conflict and civil unrest in a challenging political environment. Women have been especially affected by displacement, sexual violence and poverty. During elections, armed violence continued and blocked the work of the independent electoral committee in 2015. As election cycles continue, fear and concerns about the security situation in the country remain. Women have made significant efforts to raise awareness and work on peacebuilding issues from a gender perspective. These include the broadcasts of electoral candidates and their programmes on national radio. Nonetheless, the capacities of women, especially rural women, need to be strengthened further, especially in areas such as leadership and decision-making. Even though significant efforts have been made towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325, further trainings and capacity building are needed to foster gender-responsive peacebuilding issues in the area.

East and Central Africa:

A brief overview of the East and Central African region was given to complement the country case studies from the West African region as well as to share good practices. Residents of the East and Horn of Africa have experienced different types of insecurities: ethnicity-based, resource-based, and region-based. In some peace agreements, such as the one in Sudan, efforts have been made to include a gender perspective. In South Sudan, too, over 500 women participated in National Women's Peace Conference in May 2016. Nonetheless, common challenges such as the lack of resources, political will, lack of data and capacities, and insecurity for women and men remain to be addressed.

Guinea Bissau:

Guinea Bissau has a history of political instability and continues to face a fragile social situation, which traps the country in a condition of dependency on international support. Nonetheless, Guinea Bissau has made significant efforts to include a gender perspective in national peacebuilding initiatives. The country is a signatory to a variety of international conventions and commitments (such as the Maputo Protocol) that address women´s rights and peacebuilding. Furthermore, judicial and security sector reform are needed changes that have already been initiated, such as through the approbation of the law against mutilation and the reform of the law for land. Inequalities between men and women are especially visible in decision-making positions in the political and institutional arena. Even though up to six female ministers have been elected in previous legislative cycles, the number has decreased to only one ministerial representative today. And while several training programmes and capacity building initiatives involve gender and peacebuilding aspects and peace huts have been built, women's groups and activists need further support.

Guinea Conakry:

Guinea Conakry is a West African country with a Muslim majority and 24 ethnic groups. Discrimination against women as well as sexual violence committed against women and girls as young as 7 years old are some of the major obstacles towards gender equality. Even though the country has several new government institutions such as the independent electoral commission, the national institute for human rights, and a national ombudsman, the public sector is not able to fully respond to the gender-related security challenges in the country. The support for survivors of sexual violence is still

inadequate. Health agents are not sufficiently trained to assist the women affected by sexual violence appropriately. Political and social reforms are needed to realize gender-equal social and political representation as well as equal access to health, education and justice.

Liberia:

Affected by decades-long armed conflict, Liberia has undergone several reforms and policy initiatives to include a gender perspective in national peacebuilding initiatives. Women in Liberia have made indisputable contribution to achieving peace after decades of armed conflict. Women in Liberia Mass Action for Peace and the Mano River Women´s Network, for example, mobilized hundreds of Catholic and Muslim women to stand up for peace and conflict resolution. They traveled to Sierra Leone and Accra to follow and monitor peace negotiations and request unconditional ceasefires. Despite the strong women´s movement in the country, obstacles (such as unequal access to education, sexual and gender-based violence and poverty) to women´s full and equal participation in the political and social sphere remain. Insufficient financial resources remain a challenge, which prevents women from participating fully in the social and political discourse and reforms. There are nonetheless several entry points for incorporation of a gender perspective into national policy-making such as the national action plan on resolution 1325, upcoming general elections, the decentralization plan as well as fruitful partnerships with women's groups and advocates.

Mali:

Since 2013, Mali has suffered the effects of the military coup and extremist violence. The humanitarian crisis and the occupation of northern Mali by the jihadists have affected a large part of the population. Women remain largely absent from the peace negotiation tables even though transitional justice and the implementation of a peace agreements require their participation. Women are affected by gender-based violence, discrimination and exclusion. Therefore, an inter-agency initiative, composed of the Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of National Reconciliation, the Reconciliation Commission, and civil society, aims to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and increased access to justice. This initiative aims to enhance capacities, further women's access to justice, and foster economic empowerment. In addition, women´s promotion centers have been established throughout the country. As outlined in the national action plan on resolution 1325, specific financial resources have been allocated to promote women´s empowerment. Inspired by Liberia's national action plan, Mali's NAP has been monitored and evaluated in a manner that focused not only on the protection of women but also on income generating initiatives.

Niger:

Niger has experienced a military coup as well as violent extremism at hands of groups such as Boko Haram in recent years. With two-thirds of its territory covered by desert, Niger has an under-developed economy. More than half of Nigeriens are under the age of 15. Even though Nigerien governments have made significant efforts to build schools, create health centres and improve infrastructure, they have not managed to provide basic services to the entire population. With the support of UN entities and the international community, the national government has attempted to improve the situation of women, men, boys and girls on the ground, even though effective coordination can still pose a

challenge. The inclusion of lessons on culture of peace in school curricula, coaching at the parliamentary level, and a national dialogue for peace are some of the good practices of gender-responsive peacebuilding in the country. The national network of women for peace continuously promotes the inclusion of a gender perspective into all peacebuilding and decision-making processes.

Senegal:

The host country of the workshop, Senegal, is not as affected by extremism and armed conflict as many of its neighbors but still faces issues of inequality and discrimination. Initiatives led by women, such as centres for action for women victims of rape and anti-mine actions, shall be highlighted as key initiatives in the country to respond to gendered peacebuilding concerns. Cross-border collaboration between Senegal and countries such as the Gambia and Guinea Bissau is key for conflict prevention and the promotion of peace and needs to build on the efforts already shared at the International Democratic Forum between a variety of actors. Representatives of Senegal consider the continuous dialogue particularly useful and important for conflict prevention and resolution. This dialogue needs to be accompanied and followed by concrete monitoring frameworks and follow-ups to the commitments made. Periodic reviews and strategic documents could support such follow-ups.

Sierra Leone:

Sierra Leone has been hit by decades of armed conflict and hostilities as well as the Ebola outbreak in the past years. The inclusion of women in peacebuilding and political decision-making (Bintumani I and II conferences) has been cumbersome but effective. Due to the continuous informal involvement of women in peace negotiation efforts, two women were seated at the official peace negotiation tables. Several partners and actors, such as Women's Forum, MARWOPNET, Forum for African Women Educationalist, the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, and UN Agencies including UN Women, UNFPA, and UNDP, contributed to the successful inclusion of women in presidential elections, transitional justice system and the government. The regional networks and solidarity across the borders have contributed to the involvement of women in decision-making and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, leading to outcomes such as the creation of a national steering committee. Even though the peace and security structures remain fragmented, Sierra Leone has had significant policy developments such as the national action plan on resolution 1325, which was already adopted in 2010.

Annex IV: Evaluation Results

After the completion of the workshop, participants were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire measuring their level of satisfaction with the different aspects of the workshop. This questionnaire was based on the format previously used by the UN Women Regional Office for similar workshops and only adapted with respect to the content-specific differences.

The questionnaire presented 23 questions and offered four options of rating (fair, good, very good and excellent) on each. Areas such as facilitation, content and organisation of the workshop were included in this ranking.

As shown by the questionnaire, the presentations' content and clarity were evaluated as very good. The facilitation was rated slightly above very good (average score 3.18 from a total of 4). Furthermore, the workshop was evaluated as very relevant (3.25) for the importance of the topics discussed.

While all sessions were considered important and of good quality, participants especially appreciated and learned from the group work. The regional introduction to the context as well as the specific country case studies were appreciated to a very high degree (3.25). The documents and background reading were considered to be of good quality (average rating of 2.65) and a high level of organization. Participants considered the service and equipment of the hotel very good and appropriate.
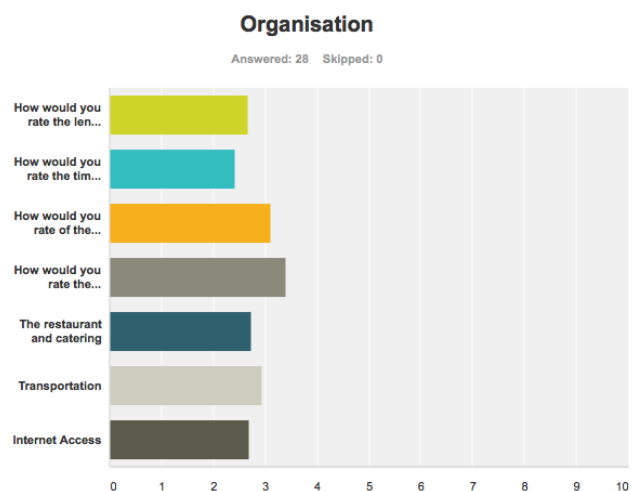
They were also satisfied with the applied interactive methodology used during the workshop. The engagement and discussions were particularly appreciated by the participants. In the qualitative comments, participants repeatedly mentioned the inspiring discussions and fruitful exchange among them. They benefitted particularly from the space given to learn from each other, to present their own experiences and good practices and to express their concerns. Some participants suggested improving the provision of translations and expanding the languages offered (to Portuguese), as well as leaving even more time for interactive activities and discussions among participants. Finally, a tourist programme outside the workshop activities was suggested.