

## **WEST AFRICA ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS (WAANSA)**

### **COMMUNIQUE**

We, the participants and delegates to the West Africa Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) Training of Trainers' Workshop on Lobbying and Campaigning and General Assembly respectively, coming from Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo met at Erata Hotel, Accra, Ghana from 27 to 28 January 2007 under the theme: "Help Fight the Small Arms Proliferation in West Africa".

At the training workshop, participants had the opportunity to share best practices and skills in lobbying and campaigning. The need to utilise events, celebrities, media, research, etc. to sensitise and educate the public and opinion leaders at community levels were underscored.

The General Assembly was presented with a draft constitution which was discussed and adopted. Following the adoption of the constitution of WAANSA the first Executive Committee was elected into office. This marked the end of the formative years and the life of the Steering Committee of the Network.

The seven-member Committee is led by Mr. Baffour Dokyi Amoa, who was unanimously elected as first President of WAANSA. The other elected officers are Dr. Christian Agboton-Johnson (First Vice President, Senegal), Mr. Adelino Handem (Second Vice President, Guinea Bissau), Ms. Florella Hazeley (Treasurer, Sierra Leone), Ms Afi Yakubu (Member, Ghana), Ms Michele Pepe (Member, Côte d'Ivoire) and Mr. Dixon Orji (Member, Nigeria). With a formal structure and a legal status, WAANSA is now poised to lead civil society to

continue to fight the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Another major outcome of the General Assembly was the decision to widen the scope of WAANSA's set of objectives to include fighting the causes of demand and the negative impact of small arms and light weapons.

WAANSA calls on:

- National Networks and Coalitions to increase their lobbying and campaigning toward the ratification of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and to lobby for Governmental support to the Arms Trade Treaty to be discussed later this year by a UN Group of Governmental Experts.
- West African Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS to intensify their efforts towards the speedy ratification of the Convention on Small Arms.
- The International Community to continue to support the efforts of ECOWAS and Civil Society in the fight against the proliferation of small arms.

WAANSA takes this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas on his assumption of office as the first President of the ECOWAS Commission.

Recognising that corruption, bad governance, poverty, hunger, unemployment among others constitute the major cause of conflict in West Africa, WAANSA requests Heads of State and Government to intensify their efforts and take effective measures to eradicate this menace which exacerbate the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons to the detriment of human security.

The events currently taking place in Guinea Conakry which has led to the death and hurt of innocent people are because of the maximum use of force in violation of human rights. WAANSA deploras these acts of violence and the use of live ammunition to repress the right of people to demonstrate peacefully. WAANSA salutes the memory of the innocent victims who lost their lives during the people's demonstration.

WAANSA, however, appreciates the tolerant and responsible manner that characterized negotiations leading to the acceptance by the President to appoint a Prime Minister and Head of Government.

WAANSA acknowledges the role played by and support received from its partners – the ECOWAS Secretariat, UNDP, International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), OXFAM GB, OXFAM AMERICA, ECOWAS Small Arms Project (ECOSAP), and Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur la Paix et La Securite (GRIP-Brussels)

The General Assembly wishes to express its appreciation to His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, the President of the Republic of Ghana and his Government; the National Commission on Small Arms and the People of Ghana as a whole for the hospitality.

Signed by,

The President of WAANSA  
29 January 2007