

**DECLARATION OF THE ‘SECURITY ALONG THE IVORIAN-LIBERIAN BORDER:
IDENTIFYING COMMON SOLUTIONS’ DIALOGUE SESSION**

23 – 24 MARCH 2015

Representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations in Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia met for a dialogue session in search for common solutions to improving security along the Ivorian-Liberian border region in Accra, Ghana from 23 to 24 March 2015.

The dialogue session was opened by the Ministry of Interior Ghana. Speaking on behalf of the Minister, Mr Samuel Amankwah noted the importance of the dialogue sessions and stated: ‘Insecurity in border regions is far from unique to Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia; we see similar problems and issues throughout West Africa. This is why we are so interested in the outcome of your discussions, which can pose as inspiration and the basis for similar work both here in Ghana and throughout West Africa.’

Mr Francis A. Azuimah, Executive Secretary of the National Peace Council in Ghana, urged the delegates from both countries: ‘Work on behalf of your people, work on behalf of the voiceless. Peace is not about this government or that government. Work for a common good and that is the good of your people. Enter these two-days with an open heart and open head and I know the discussions will be fruitful.

After two-days of forthright discussion the participants mutually agreed to the following declaration.

DECLARATION

WE, REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE AND LIBERIA IDENTIFYING COMMON SOLUTIONS’ DIALOGUE SESSION IN ACCRA, GHANA FROM 23 TO 24 MARCH 2015

Considering the value and importance of peace and security in promoting social cohesion, mutual understanding, goodwill and economic and social development;

Understanding the regional nature of peace and security in the Mano River Union sub-region;

Recognising the urgency to find a lasting solution in addressing issues of cross-border peace and security through cooperation, and the importance of coordinating joint initiatives of Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia;

Acknowledging and commending the principles set out in the Mano River Union Security Strategy;

Appreciating the series of Quadripartite Meetings between the governments and the UN missions of the respective countries, the Joint Council of Chiefs and Elders Meetings and all other initiatives to foster cross-border collaboration, cooperation and dialogue;

Declare our shared commitment to contribute to improving peace and security along the Ivorian-Liberian border region;

WE HEREBY JOINTLY COMMIT TO:

1. *Train and sensitise* security officers on the sub-regional protocols and human rights issues so to mitigate and prevent incidences of civilian harassment, intimidation and exploitation.
2. *Collaborate* more effectively with the security and defence forces from the neighbouring country to secure the border region. This will include:
 - a. *Conducting* joint security patrols and regular meetings between the respective security forces. Existing initiatives are often led by the UN, and given the planned downsizing of the UN in the region, it requires collaborative efforts to sustain the initiatives. It is therefore imperative that the respective national apparatus take ownership of and expand upon the current UN-led collaborative initiatives.
 - b. *Exchanging* explicit and frank intelligence with authorised personnel in the national security apparatus of the neighbouring country to ensure peace and security in the border region.
3. *Foster* peace, reconciliation and social cohesion among the border population, particularly between different ethnic groups and tribes in the region. This will include making reconciliation a core issue at the Joint Council of Chiefs and Elders Meetings.
4. *Meet* again before the end of 2015 to review our commitments as part of early warning and to further develop practical steps to improving our cross-border security.

WE, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF LIBERIAN GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, HEREBY STATE OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ABOVE JOINT AGREEMENTS AND HEREBY AGREE TO ALSO:

1. *Improve* knowledge of the requirements to cross the border in order to foster the free movement of people and trade. More specifically, we will achieve this by:
 - a. *Publishing* and displaying all custom and immigration regulations at every classified border post.
 - b. *Providing* education and sensitisation to the border community through community based organisations, town hall meetings and community radio stations to mitigate community vulnerability to exploitation.
2. *Build* the capacities of young people with skills training, agriculture training and recreational activities. Thus addressing youth vulnerability in the border region, which has grown with high rates of unemployment and a lack of meaningful empowerment.

3. *Implore* the Government of Liberia to provide basic social services in the border communities such as schools, health clinics, electricity, safe drinking water and latrines.
4. *Engage* the Liberian Marketing Association and the local traditional leadership in order to further enhance cross-border trade in a more organized and structured manner.
5. *Strengthen* cooperation, coordination and collaboration among state and non-state actors by:
 - a. *Conducting* regular meetings between security officials, local traditional leaders, CSOs, and women and youth groups.
 - b. *Holding* regular town hall meetings between border community members and security officials in order to foster confidence and trust. Community members will be able to ask questions and share concerns whilst security officers can outline their responsibilities.
6. *Improve* the capacity of security officers in the border region to carry out effective monitoring and patrolling of the borders. This includes significantly improving the transportation resources, communication systems, allowances and training of security officials.
7. *Administer* all treaties, conventions, regulations and laws on the proliferation and possession of small arms and light weapons.

RECALLING THE INSIGHTFUL, HEARTFELT AND VALUABLE RECOMMENDATIONS OF OUR IVORIAN COUNTERPARTS, WE FURTHER AGREE TO:

1. *Assist* security forces in Côte d'Ivoire to identify attackers who may be Ivorian combatants residing in Liberia or Liberians engaging in mercenary activity.
2. *Enhance* efforts to manage and monitor ex-combatants residing in Liberia. This will include:
 - a. *Continuing* to register and monitor ex-combatants with the appropriate agencies of the Liberian Government.
 - b. *Removing* identified ex-combatants from living amongst civilians in refugee camps and relocating them according to UN protocols.
3. *Maintain* the sensitization of people in the border region in regards to the Ebola virus. Whilst great efforts have been made to educate people throughout Liberia since the initial outbreak, we remain vigilant to the continued threat of Ebola and avow to continue with preventative measures going forward.
4. *Enforce* all provisions ensuring the free movement of trade and people. The conventions, protocols and policies of the MRU and ECOWAS in regards to the free movement of trade and people are now a part of core training for all officials. We commit to maintain this education process and will keep officials abreast of any legislative changes. Furthermore, as stated above, officials will continue to receive explicit training on human rights issues in an attempt to build confidence with community members.

WE, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF IVORIAN GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, HEREBY STATE OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ABOVE JOINT AGREEMENTS AND HEREBY AGREE TO ALSO:

1. *Establish* Gendarmerie stations and posts and provide them with the capacity to carry out effective monitoring and patrolling of the borders. This includes providing sufficient transportation resources, communication systems, allowances and training of the Gendarmes.
2. *Intensify* the work of ComNat ALPC in the border region to address the continued problem of small arms and light weapons. This includes:
 - a. *Raising awareness* in the border region of the issues around the proliferation of small arms and the work of ComNat ALPC.
 - b. *Collecting* weapons more frequently.
 - c. *Storing* collected weapons securely.
3. *Support* the development of community-based mechanisms for peace and security, including the development of early-warning systems
4. *Encourage* income-generating activities in the border region to address the high rates of youth unemployment in the border region.
5. *Bolster* efforts to reintegrate ex-combatants by providing skills training to ex-combatants in line with the job opportunities in the region.
6. *Implement* a policy of economic development of the border by developing the infrastructure, part of which will include fostering road connectivity, in the border area.
7. *Maintain and strengthen* the preparedness of the border region in the event of an Ebola outbreak. This includes:
 - a. *Raising awareness* at the community level to increase the prospect of early detection.
 - b. *Committing* to mobile Ebola treatment centres in the border region and increasing their capacity with enhanced resources and staff training.
8. *Develop* a common strategy to respond to on-going and future health emergencies in the MRU sub-region.
9. *Fully administer* a humanitarian corridor across the Ivorian-Liberian border, which will include allowing Ivorian refugees in Liberia to return to Côte d'Ivoire

RECALLING THE INSIGHTFUL, HEARTFELT AND VALUABLE RECOMMENDATIONS OF OUR LIBERIAN COUNTERPARTS, WE FURTHER AGREE TO:

1. *Strengthen* efforts to engage with community leaders and civil society to promote peace in the border regions. There are on-going efforts to engage with community leaders with the 3rd Quadripartite Meeting recommending that we conduct periodic meetings with Elders, whilst the Second Session of

the Joint Council of Chiefs and Elders Meeting will take place in May 2015 in Guiglo, Côte d'Ivoire. We recognise the need to maintain and strengthen these initiatives going forward.

2. *Enhance* trust and confidence between officials and the border community by creating spaces for both groups to share their concerns. Greater levels of trust foster an environment where information can be shared without fear or suspicion and is potentially extremely valuable for efforts to enhance peace and security in the border regions.
3. *Collaborate* with our Liberian counterparts and learn from their experiences of the Ebola outbreak. Understanding which aspects of the Ebola response in Liberia were successful and which could have been improved will inform our own preparedness and response strategies for Ebola and any other future health crises.

We, REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND LIBERIA, agree to the terms outlined in this Declaration.

Signed on behalf of the Ivorian delegation by:

Signed on behalf of the Liberian delegation by:

Mme Jacqueline Konan

Hon. Varney Sirleaf

Signed as a facilitator by:



Janet Adama Mohammed

The 'Security along the Ivorian-Liberian border: Identifying common solutions' dialogue session was held at the Paloma Hotel, Spintex Road, Accra, Ghana on 23 and 24 March 2015. The dialogue session was co-facilitated by Conciliation Resources, the Institute for Research and Democratic Development in Liberia and the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding in Côte d'Ivoire.

The dialogue session was held as part of a joint European Union funded project between Saferworld and Conciliation Resources, entitled 'Capacities for Peace.' The views and information expressed at the conference and in this declaration do not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for these views lies entirely with the authors.



Appendix 1 – List of participants

Representing governmental and non-governmental organisations in Côte d'Ivoire:

Jean-Paul ASSANDÉ, National Institute of Public Hygiene
Angui ASSOUAKON, Mano River Union Representative in Côte d'Ivoire
Tiohazon I. COULIBALY, Côte d'Ivoire Transition Initiative (CITI2)
Kehi Edouard DJOUHA, Programme for Reintegration and Community Rehabilitation
Kouaho Casimir KANGAH, Ivorian National Police
Sylvère Tchédoh KOFFI, ComNat-ALPC
Jacqueline KONAN, Ministry of African Integration and Ivoirians Abroad
Justin N'DRI, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Public Liberties
Sekou Boukadry TRAORE, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) - Côte d'Ivoire

Representing governmental and non-governmental organisations in Liberia:

Harold M. AIDOO, Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD)
Gregory O.W. COLEMAN, Liberian National Police
Lemuel E. A. REEVES, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
Hon. Varney A. SIRLEAF, Ministry of Internal Affairs
Togar Saye TARPEH, Liberia Peacebuilding Office
Victoria WOLLIE, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) - Liberia
Moses K. YEBLEH, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization

Observers:

Samuel AMANKWAH, Ministry of the Interior – Ghana
Francis A. AZUIMAH, National Peace Council – Ghana
Evans A. DZIKUM, Ministry of the Interior - Ghana
Lt Colonel Madice KÉÏTA, Peace and Security Unit, Mano River Union Secretariat
Walter KWAO-ANATI, Ministry of the Interior - Ghana

Facilitators:

Dr Shaibu Ahmed GARIBA, Consultant
Janet Adama MOHAMMED, Conciliation Resources
Daniel TUCKER, Conciliation Resources
Zadi Patrick ZADI, Consultant