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PEACE AND GOVERNANCE FACT SHEET

USAID/West Africa's Peace and Governance programs aims to strengthen systems of non-violent conflict management in West Africa at local, national and regional levels by focusing on countering violent extremism (CVE) and promoting conflict early warning and response.

Over the past decade the West Africa region has made significant progress in promoting economic growth, consolidating democratic norms, reducing the rates of HIV/AIDS, and protecting the environment. However, some countries in the region continue to suffer the devastating effects of conflict and violence.

In West Africa, evolving transnational terrorist groups in the region are a threat to U.S. national security. The recurring pattern of conflict and terror jeopardizes decades of development gains in governance, agriculture, health, and infrastructure. Violent extremist organizations, such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and ISIS, have displaced millions and reversed economic and social progress across the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin. Throughout the region, political competition continues to be a major catalyst for conflict, with elections often igniting violence. Lastly, scarce natural resources, herder/farmer differences, ethnic divisions, and economic and social exclusion are all drivers of conflict across West Africa. Through targeted programming, USAID/West Africa seeks to reduce vulnerability of communities to violent extremism and reduce the likelihood of political violence destroying communities and disabling states.

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

USAID/West Africa aims to reduce sympathy and support for Boko Haram, AQIM, ISIS, and similar organizations by strengthening resistance to violent extremism in communities at risk of recruitment and radicalization. As the primary implementer of the development arm of the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP), USAID/West Africa coordinates closely with the State Department and the Department of Defense to bring a whole of government approach to bear on this critical challenge. To this end USAID/West Africa hosts a Military Liaison Officer to ensure effective communication and coordination.

USAID/West Africa coordinates closely with other USAID CVE-relevant programming in the region, including USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, which has ongoing cohesion and transition activities throughout the region. Together with OTI and our Military Liaison Officer, USAID/West Africa coordinates initiatives and develops responses through a joint CVE Unit.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PEACE (P4P)

The P4P project is a capacity-building and networking effort that supports West African regional institutions, national governments, and civil society organizations to more effectively counter violent extremism in the Sahel region. The project approach is rooted in empowering West African institutions and organizations to lead sustainable, long-term peacebuilding efforts.

At the regional level, the project supports the efforts of regional bodies, such as the G5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat, to assist their member states in developing effective and sustainable programs to improve security, reduce conflict, and counter violent extremism. At the national level, Partnerships for Peace assists governments in developing national strategies for CVE and programs to serve at-risk communities. Finally, the project will support networks of West African advocacy and practitioner groups to improve stakeholder coordination on CVE approaches among traditional and religious leaders, youth, and women's groups.

VOICES FOR PEACE (V4P)

V4P is a regional project aimed at CVE and promoting democracy, human rights and good governance by leveraging both traditional and new media at the community level in areas affected by violent extremism. The project builds partnerships with respected leaders, institutions, and networks to address drivers and root causes of violent extremism such as marginalization, exclusion, and poor governance. It supports a culturally effective communications environment to empower locally influential voices, establish interactive media platforms, and engage at-risk youth, women, and communities. The project's approach is rooted in communities' culturally diverse traditions of social cohesion and solidarity that have effectively served in the past to promote resilience to increased radicalization and violence in the region.

PEACE THROUGH EVALUATION LEARNING AND ADAPTING (PELA)

In order to address the collaboration, learning, and adaptation deficiencies in the areas of CVE and peace promotion in West Africa, an integrated, regional approach is required that is both inward and outward looking.

The PELA Activity is a support effort aimed at enhancing USAID/WA's effectiveness at CVE and promoting peace through: (1) enhanced knowledge acquisition to improve strategic and programmatic decision-making, and (2) enhanced knowledge utilization—by processing and disseminating the information—to improve strategic and programmatic decision-making. Under the goal of enhanced knowledge acquisition, PELA created a learning agenda in October 2018 to identify gaps in CVE knowledge in West Africa. Guided by a learning agenda, USAID/WA will provide thought leadership, identify best practices, and catalyze innovation and further reinforce itself as a knowledge center where it can share successful and scalable approaches, challenges, and lessons learned for development interventions in West Africa.

CONFLICT EARLY WARNING AND RESPONSE

West African countries have experienced frequent incidents of violent conflict. Although the causes of state fragility and political instability in the region are deeply rooted and structural in nature, there have been occasions when large scale violence and instability have been sparked by elections or election-related processes. Despite best intentions embodied in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, and the Conflict Prevention Framework, violence is still commonplace during elections in the region. Conflict early warning and response are therefore seen as critical conflict mitigation priorities by West African governments. Strengthening early warning and response around key elections in the region is critical to increasing stability and reducing the potential for future conflicts.

MITIGATING ELECTION VIOLENCE THROUGH NATIONAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS (NEWS)

NEWS is a five-year, \$2.5 million project implemented by the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). The aim of the project is to mitigate election violence in target countries in West Africa, including Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Ghana, and Sierra Leone. WANEP assists community organizations to identify potential election violence risks by developing and monitoring a set of customized indicators and analyzing the resulting data. If monitoring in a given area reveals a heightened risk of violence at any point in the election cycle, WANEP will develop recommendations for peace-building activities to prevent it, and will channel these recommendations to targeted national and regional stakeholders for early action before the situation escalates.

REACTING TO EARLY WARNING AND RESPONSE DATA (REWARD)

The REWARD activity is part of a broader U.S. Government initiative, the Early Warning and Response Partnership (EWARP). The objective of EWARP is to bolster the capacity of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network to monitor, gather, analyze and disseminate threat information to its 15 member states to support peace and security in the region. In support of this objective, REWARD addresses critical gaps in the conflict early warning and response systems of ECOWAS. REWARD has a two-tier approach:

(1) Work with the ECOWAS Commission for Political Affairs Peace and Security (CPAPS) to enhance conflict early warning and response systems to reduce the risk of violence in the 15 ECOWAS member states.

(2) Support national and local stakeholders in Niger, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mali and Togo to mitigate electoral violence triggers before they escalate into violence.

PEACE AND GOVERNANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION

ACTIVITY	GOAL	LIFE OF PROGRAM	USAID FUNDING	GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER
Partnerships for Peace (P4P)	Strengthening West African capacity to counter violent extremism	September 2016 – September 2021	U.S. \$13 million	Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and the G5 Sahel	Creative Associates International
Voices for Peace (V4P)	Engaging communities against violent extremism by promoting good governance and social cohesion in West Africa	September 2016 – September 2021	U.S. \$ 24.9 million	Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Northern Cameroon, and Eastern Mali	Equal Access International
Peace through Evaluation Learning and Adapting (PELA)	Strengthen systems of nonviolent conflict management in West Africa through learning	February 2018 – March 2022	U.S. \$7 million	Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and other West African states as needed	International Business and Technical Consultants Inc. (IBTCI)
Mitigating Election Violence through National Early Warning Systems (NEWS)	Enhance early warning and response systems to reduce the risk of violence in West Africa	February 2015 – June 2019	U.S. \$2.5 million	West Africa (Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Ghana, Sierra Leone)	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)
Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data (REWARD)	Enhance early warning and response systems to reduce the risk of violence in West Africa	September 2015 – March 2020	U.S. \$ 20.5 million	15 ECOWAS Member States; with focus on elections in Niger, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mali and Togo	Creative Associates International (lead implementer) with Fund for Peace and Karuna Center for Peacebuilding