

REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR PEACE BUILDING IN WEST AFRICA

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The Context of Regional Cooperation for Peace-building in West Africa

- Contemporary approaches to peace building resonate with core principles of South-South
- South-south cooperation framework integrated into regional cooperation through ECOWAS
- Dynamics of conflicts in West Africa influenced by shared cultural identities

Context of Regional Cooperation (Contd)

- Contrasting experiences of Western powers in peace-keeping operations in Africa advanced the search for local solutions.
- Regional cooperation in peace-building resonates with the UN Agenda for contemporary peace building

Framework of Regional Cooperation for Regional Cooperation for Peace-building

- ❖ ECOWAS Protocol on Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security (1999)
- ❖ 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance .
- ❖ African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) hinges on collaboration with the RECs

Emergence of Complex Security Challenges in West Africa (Peace building and State building)

- ❖ Liberia set trail of state collapse in Mano River Basin in 1990, with spill-over effects in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire in 'West African Bush War'
- ❖ Collapse of central administrative structures of the state provoked unprecedented humanitarian crises

ECOWAS Multilateral Initiatives to Peace-building and PCRDR

- ❖ ECOMOG operation in Liberia (1990) and Sierra Leone (1997); Liberia (again in 2003); Guinea Bissau (2002); and Côte d'Ivoire (2002).
- ❖ Restoration of fragile peace but confronted by daunting post-conflict challenges – state building and peace building.

ECOWAS Multilateral Initiatives to Peace-building and PCRCD

- ❖ ECOWAS demonstrated remarkable ability to intervene quickly in violent conflicts but inefficient in sustainable peace-keeping and state building.
- ❖ ECOMOG interventions often created necessary bridgehead for subsequent deployment of larger UN peace-keeping & humanitarian missions

- ❖ Restoration of peace in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau & Cote d'Ivoire
- ❖ Prevention of war through effective diplomacy in Togo and Burkina Faso
- ❖ Institutionalization of "home-grown" strategies in preventive diplomacy and military intervention

The Nigerian Factor in Regional Cooperation

- ❖ Central pillar behind ECOMOG's military interventions in MRU in the 1990s,
- ❖ Committed enormous resources to post-conflict elections in Liberia to ensure success.
- ❖ Facilitated processes to stabilize political situation in Guinea-Bissau (2003) and Togo (2005).

The Nigerian Factor in Regional Cooperation

- ❖ Bilateral supports for PCRCD in Liberia and Sierra-Leone through training of officers in Nigeria's elite military institutions
- ❖ Economic supports through concessionary sale of crude-oil; deployment of Technical Aid Corps (TACs) ; supports for rebuilding health facilities to contain Ebola, etc

Challenges of Regional Cooperation for Peace-building in West Africa

- ❖ Ideological differences between Anglophone and Francophone blocks frustrating regional cooperation
- ❖ Personal interests and diabolical roles of regional leaders in different contexts

Conclusions

- ❑ South-south/ triangular cooperation seems a more viable approach as experienced in different contexts in West Africa
- ❑ The pivotal role of an hegemonial power in pushing regional cooperation demonstrated by Nigeria could be advanced for other regional leaders – South Africa, Egypt, Kenya