



Ajuntament de Barcelona
Barcelona International Peace
Resource Center



UNDP Regional Parliamentary Working Group

REPORT



Parliaments and Crisis Prevention and Recovery in West Africa

30 November – 03 December 2010, Barcelona (Spain)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
AFDR	Democratic Forces for the Republic Alliance (Niger)
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
BIPRC	Barcelona International Peace Resource Center
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CENI	Independent National Electoral Commission (Guinea and Niger)
CFDR	Coordination of Forces for Democracy and Republic (Niger)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CNT	National Transitional Council (Guinea)
CPR	Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSRD	Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (Niger)
DGG	Democratic Governance Group
ECOFEPA	ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians Association
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GPSP	Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
NDC	National Democratic Congress (Ghana)
NPP	New Patriotic Party (Ghana)
NPRC	National Patriotic Revolutionary Council (Sierra Leone)
PC	Parliamentary Centre
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SLPP	Sierra Leone Peoples Party
SSG/R	Security Sector Governance / Reform
UFR	Union of Republican Forces (Guinea)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNREC	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa
WAANSA	West African Action Network on Small Arms
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peace-building

Executive Summary

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the Barcelona International Peace Resource Center (BIPRC), with the financial support of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized a **Regional Parliamentary Working Group** entitled '*Parliaments and Crisis Prevention and Recovery in West Africa*' in Barcelona (Spain), on **30 November - 03 December, 2010**. The Working Group was a direct follow up to the **Regional Seminar** hosted by UNDP in Accra (Ghana) on **June 27-29, 2010**. Its purpose lies within the framework of UNDP's initiative and strategy which aims to empower parliaments as actors in peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery, as stipulated in '*UNDP's Guidelines for the International Community on Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery*'. The Working Group brought together around **30 selected participants** including members of national parliaments, transitional councils and parliamentary staff from West Africa, as well as representatives from the Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States Parliament (ECOWAS), the Parliamentary Centre, and UNDP colleagues.

The Working Group provided an opportunity to foster sub-regional parliamentary coordination and collaboration as well as facilitate south-south solutions and sharing of experiences related to crisis prevention and recovery in West Africa by offering reform-minded parliamentarians the adequate space and time to actively engage in discussions and more specifically: reflect on armed violence and political parties in crisis prevention and recovery on the basis of **background research papers** commissioned by UNDP; identify mediation and dialogue opportunities for parliamentarians; review the **UNDP self-assessment tool** on parliaments and crisis prevention by discussing the two national case studies where the tool was piloted in 2010 (**Togo** and **Guinea-Bissau**); consolidate the sub-regional parliamentary network on crisis prevention and recovery; identify and approve general **principles (benchmarks)** and key activities for the **2011 work plan**, to be carried out in collaboration with the ECOWAS Parliament and partner organizations.



Left to right: Hon. Singo (Togo), Hon. Tchankpana (Togo), Hon. Kouagou (Togo), Hon. Touré (Guinea), Hon. Naluak (Guinea-Bissau), Hon. Sissé (Guinea-Bissau)

Participants underlined that democratic societies do not and should not suppress conflicts (since they are only an expression of diverse opinions which is the basis of democracy) but establish *effective* political institutions such as parliaments that can regulate and channel conflicts to avoid the outbreak and escalation of violence. The role of parliaments in managing violence includes the adoption of conflict sensitive laws which address the very sources of violence (poverty, availability of arms, unemployment of youth, political contestation, etc.) by voting laws which ensure for instance the equal distribution of resources, the equal access to education and employment opportunities, the restriction of the fabrication of arms, etc. Participants mentioned the benefits of having structured dialogues in the sub region to push for the harmonisation of these laws. That being said, participants noted that the “*normative force*” alone of parliaments wasn’t enough to guarantee crisis prevention and insisted on the importance of “law enforcement” and oversight - mainly achieved through the establishment of mechanisms which ensure the effective implementation of laws once they are voted.

When it comes to **mediation**, the Working Group identified multiple areas where national parliaments can play an active role (electoral disputes; post-conflict/peace building initiatives; chieftaincy disputes; land and border disputes, etc.) by providing a venue for dialogue between various belligerent groups. Participants put forward the different tools and mechanisms at the disposal of parliaments to carry out their mediation role in terms of promoting dialogue, interactions, and negotiations through plenary debates, reconciliation commissions, committee work and cross-party caucuses, constituency/field visits, cooperation with the ECOWAS Parliament, etc. Through *effective* parliaments, governments and civil society are able to interface. Although participants recognized the undeniable role played by civil society organizations (**CSOs**) as “*democracy supporting institutions*” in terms of all the assistance, facilitation and complementarity they provide, they also expressed their frustration as they consider the role of parliaments is being overlooked and minimized by the proliferation of CSOs and many donors choose to support CSOs rather than strengthen the parliamentary institution directly. Some participants also questioned the legitimacy of certain CSOs referring to their affiliation to political parties. In this regard, the working group agreed on the importance to better organize, define, and regulate the relation and division of work between parliaments and CSOs.

Political parties were also recognized by the working group as relevant actors in the peacebuilding / statebuilding process. When it comes to preventing electoral and **political violence** for example, in theory – *effective* political parties can help ensure a trustworthy electoral process through inter-party dialogue to ensure more responsible campaigning of political actors, and civic and voter education of their militants. In post-conflict and fragile states, comprehensive dialogue between parties enables political leaders to make informed decisions to ensure an efficient, peaceful and responsive state. However, in practice, poor inter-party relations make it difficult for parties to effectively represent the population; most of them suffer from weak internal structures and are ethnically or religiously ingrained. In this regard, there were a number of suggestions and examples on how political parties and parliaments can increase the political participation of women. Better representing the population through the diversification of its members (including women and representatives of minority groups), was seen as a way political parties and parliaments can prevent conflict. Moreover, participants agreed on the need to elaborate constrainable codes of conduct for political parties which foster democratic principles and a culture of ethics, thereby inducing the professionalization of political parties. Participants also brought up the importance of having clear and fixed rules and regulations on how political parties are funded.

Furthermore, the relevance and legitimacy of **local parliaments and transitional councils** in terms of crisis prevention and recovery were thoroughly questioned and debated by the Parliamentary Working Group. The federal political system, through the model of the Spanish state, was presented to showcase how diverse local social identities are better taken into account by local parliaments thus contributing to the prevention of crisis. Through the analysis of the **Spanish Parliament** and the **Parliament of Catalonia**, participants learned more about the constitutional rules and institutions which can help regulate the relation between the two levels. Through the case studies of **Guinea** and **Niger**, the Working Group acknowledged the importance of national councils of transition in crisis prevention and recovery. Although their members are not elected, they represent all the socio-economic entities of a nation and can contribute to the establishment of consensual constitutional, organic and electoral laws; the setting up of political institutions to manage and monitor the transition process such as independent electoral commissions or crisis management committees; the implementation of national reconciliation mechanisms and promotion of national unity and social dialogue - all which pave the way to peaceful and stable transitional societies.



Left to right: Ms. Pangalos (UNDP), Hon. Touré (Guinea), Hon. Lahai (Sierra Leone), Mr. Pierre-Louveaux (UNDP), Hon. Diomandé (Côte d’Ivoire), Mr. Gorgui (Côte d’Ivoire), Hon. Singo (Togo), Hon. Tchankpana (Togo), Hon. Kouagou (Togo)

At the **regional level**, the Parliamentary Working Group acknowledged the effective contribution of the **ECOWAS Parliament** to the maintenance of peace and security within the sub-region through: joint committees of MPs to monitor intelligence/security issues; harmonization of security laws to respond to the threat of drug trafficking and small arms in particular (such as the legislation to ban small arms and light weapons). The notion of **‘parliamentary diplomacy’** was highlighted by the participants and discussed in the framework of the capacity of the ECOWAS Parliament to act as a mediator and provide a venue for dialogue and interactions with national parliaments to monitor crisis/engage in negotiations (i.e.: Niger and Guinea). However, as the ECOWAS Parliament enters its third Legislature and slowly moves from an “ECOWAS of States” to an “ECOWAS of the People”, embracing its ambitious **vision 2020** which expands its scope of activities and mandate – the institution is impeded by a number of **constraints** (no direct elections, no legislative power, lack of administrative and financial autonomy vis-à-vis the commission in particular, high turnover of MPs, etc.).

In order to surpass these obstacles, representatives of the ECOWAS Secretariat stressed the major need to enforce the Parliament institutionally and enhance its co-decision and law-making powers as a full, functional and *effective* regional Parliament through capacity building and provision of resources to: a) strengthen first response intervention and monitoring in emerging crises situations; b) enhance liaison with national parliaments / foster effective collaboration especially in information sharing and provision of the necessary expertise to compliment and support the efforts of national parliaments; c) increase the autonomy of the ECOWAS Parliament so that it can further focus on political/peace/security issues and meditation/dialogue activities; d) strengthen its capacities to sanction recalcitrant member states for non compliance with protocols and conventions. In this respect, the Working Group pointed out the worth of looking into the functioning of the model of the **Regional Parliament in East Africa** and the advantages of having joint sessions with the **African Union**. The new ECOWAS Legislature and 2011 Agenda present new opportunities to further push this agenda forward.

The Parliamentary Working Group was also an opportunity for the representatives of national parliaments and the ECOWAS Parliament to discuss and agree upon a set of key priorities regarding **UNDP's 2011 work plan**. At the **national level**, UNDP will implement the activities and recommendations of the evaluations of the self-assessment tool in **Togo** and **Guinea Bissau**; and, on the basis of additional demands from parliaments, further engage UNDP Country Offices in the region. Participants will also mobilize and engage their colleagues and parliament in their respective country on crisis prevention issues using the different material provided (such as the knowledge products, movie '*Testimonials from MPs and practitioners on crisis prevention and recovery in West Africa*', etc.). At the **regional level**, UNDP will continue to consolidate the network of parliamentarians by encouraging its members to engage on issues relevant to crisis prevention (through scrutinizing the media, work of the parliament, parliamentary committees and political parties, constituency visits, attendance to meetings at the national, regional and international levels) and disseminate good practices and lessons learned from their respective countries, exchange experiences, identify and pilot south-south solutions and share recommendations, including on the trusted area of **AGORA** and the group related to '*Parliaments and Crisis Prevention in West Africa*' in particular, where members will be able to blog and share articles on a regular basis, connect members of parliaments and parliamentary staff, comment on articles and lessons learned posted on AGORA, provide feedback on suggested research or comparative case studies to be conducted by UNDP. UNDP will also continue to work in close collaboration with the ECOWAS Parliament and finalize a handbook/practice guide on Parliaments and Crisis Prevention and Recovery compiling regional research and national case studies. At the **global level**, UNDP will continue to contribute to the development of additional key learning modules to be created on-line under the dedicated West Africa page available in French and English on AGORA (www.agora-parl.org) - as part of the knowledge building on parliamentary development and crisis prevention and recovery.

Introduction

The challenges of drug trafficking, small arms proliferation, political violence and instability call for an increased attention to parliaments as peace building and conflict prevention institutions. On the basis of the '*UNDP Guidelines for the International Community on Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery*', the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy (**BDP**) through the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening III (**GPPS**) and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (**BCPR**) have pulled together their expertise and resources for a more effective action towards empowering parliaments as actors in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction. To this end, a **dedicated programme** is being implemented with the financial support of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the following **objectives**:

- Inform the role that national parliaments can play in supporting the prevention of conflict and of violence and the restoration of community security through research and case studies;
- Promote the involvement of national parliaments in conflict prevention and armed violence reduction with a view to influence policy changes;
- Build the capacity of regional organizations and of national parliaments on conflict prevention and armed violence reduction related issues;
- Foster parliamentary coordination on conflict prevention and recovery with a first thematic window on armed violence and community security related issues at the international, regional and national levels, on AGORA (www.agora-parl.org), and within sub -regional parliamentary networks.

The programme is working at the global, regional and national levels, with a regional focus on Central America, West Africa and the Arab States Region. **Activities for 2010 and 2011** include:

- Knowledge development and dissemination of case studies on the role of parliaments in supporting the restoration of community security through dedicated research (<http://www.agora-parl.org/node/2713>);
- Regional working groups composed of parliamentarians on specific regional relevant issues of community security;
- Capacity development of MPs skills in law review / modification or in drafting new laws related to community security issues;
- Building the capacities of relevant national parliamentary committees.

In the framework of the abovementioned initiative, UNDP hosted a **Regional Seminar 'Towards Strengthening the Role of Parliaments in Crisis Prevention and Recovery in West Africa'**, in Accra (**Ghana**) on **June 27-29, 2010** with 60 participants representing 13 parliaments from the region¹, the ECOWAS Parliament, key international and regional organizations [such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the *United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa* (UNREC), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)], civil society organizations [West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA), West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)], and practitioners (European Commission Delegation, Canadian CIDA, the Parliamentary Centre, and UNDP colleagues).

¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Congo, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone and Togo.

On the basis of the recommendations of the Regional Seminar, UNDP shared the findings with its Country Offices in the region to better integrate this conflict-sensitive approach in existing parliamentary development projects. The **UNDP self-assessment tool** on parliaments and crisis prevention was piloted in **Togo** and **Guinea-Bissau** (October 2010) to identify key activities to empower these two parliaments to better address crisis prevention and recovery through seed funding for 2011. Papers produced for the Regional Seminar have been uploaded on AGORA together with key presentations, and parliamentarians have been invited to join a dedicated regional parliamentary group on the Trusted Area of AGORA.

In the context of the consolidation of the Parliamentary Working Group, UNDP, in collaboration with the Barcelona International Peace Resource Center organized a **Regional Parliamentary Working Group meeting** entitled '*Parliaments and Crisis Prevention and Recovery in West Africa*' in Barcelona (Spain), on **30 November - 03 December, 2010**.

The Working Group brought together around **30 selected participants** including members of national parliaments, transitional councils and parliamentary staff from West Africa, as well as representatives from the Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States Parliament (**ECOWAS**), the Parliamentary Centre, and UNDP colleagues.

The **objectives** of the Barcelona Working Group meeting were:

1. To share knowledge and analysis on national processes and on the UNDP self-assessment tool on parliaments and crisis prevention - which has been piloted in **Togo** and **Guinea-Bissau** - with the objective of identifying best practices and key activities for the 2011 workplan;
2. To consolidate the regional network of parliamentarians on crisis prevention and recovery and approve the 2011 workplan.

On the basis of discussion papers prepared by UNDP, the Regional Working Group also discussed and addressed issues related to '*armed violence and parliaments*' and '*political parties and crisis prevention*' in West Africa.



West African Parliamentary Working Group – Barcelona, 2010

Session 1: Introductory Session

Mr. Cedric Jurgensen, UNDP Parliamentary Development Advisor, presented the **objectives and outcomes** of the Regional Working Group (cf. Introduction) and invited each participant to introduce themselves and share one story from their respective country on parliament and crisis prevention.

Dr. Kabeer Garba, Bureau Manager of the ECOWAS Parliament, reminded participants that the Working Group was a direct follow up to the Regional Seminar hosted by UNDP in Accra (**Ghana**) on June 27-29, 2010. Its purpose lies within the framework of UNDP's initiative and strategy which aims to empower parliaments as actors in peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. Dr. Garba thanked UNDP and the Barcelona International Peace Resource Center for organizing the meeting. He expressed his interest in discussing benchmarks and recommendations for parliamentary performance in crisis prevention and recovery (**CPR**) as well as the findings and lessons learned from the case study reports on the application of the parliamentary self-assessment tool in **Togo** and **Guinea-Bissau**.

Mr. Jordi Capedevila, Coordinator at the Barcelona International Peace Resource Center, explained that the Center is a new initiative promoted by the City Council of Barcelona. The Center promotes the dissemination of the culture of peace by means of exhibitions and cultural activities; the provision of international specialized trainings for specialists around the world working in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations; and the promotion of an applied research program to develop practical tools and methodologies for peacebuilding and early recovery of a society affected by a conflict.



Left to right: Mr. Capedevila (BIPRC), Dr. Garba (ECOWAS Parliament), Mr. Jurgensen (UNDP)

Highlights of the tour de table:

- Participants acknowledged the role of MPs and effective parliaments in conflict prevention.
- Mediation efforts are only fruitful when based on an inclusive approach.
- While it is useful to identify champions of CPR, every MP needs to be involved in CPR or at least be sensitive to these issues.
- Multi-party parliamentary caucuses offer good CPR opportunities.

- **Togo case study:** Togo has recently experienced a post electoral crisis. The Parliament managed the crisis by undertaking the democratization of the army, the creation of an ad hoc consultancy commission for peace, and negotiations to reach a peace agreement. MPs have prevented conflict at the individual level, through personal investment and initiatives, mainly in the framework of land conflicts. The Defense and Security and the Human Rights Committees have also been visiting prisons in the framework of their oversight function.

- **Guinea-Bissau case study:** In Guinea-Bissau the control of small arms and light weapons (**SALW**) is crucial and should constitute one of the first parliamentary actions for conflict prevention. Oversight of the defense, security and intelligence services is also an essential component of CPR. A last important element is the drafting and implementation of laws which empower women's political participation in conflict resolution, and child protection laws.

Session 2: Parliaments and Armed Violence in West Africa

The second session was devoted to the presentation and summary of the findings and recommendations of the background research paper written by Dr. Linda Darkwa (UNDP Consultant) on “Parliaments and Armed Violence in West Africa”.

Dr. Darkwa first provided some **statistical and background information** indicating that 2000 people die every day in the world as a result of armed violence. Moreover, violence associated with armed conflicts and large and small scale criminal violence makes 740,000 victims a year; 490,000 of the 740,000 deaths occur in non conflict settings. The direct **consequences of armed violence** mainly include:

- The closure of public facilities such as schools;
- The disruption of socio-economic activities (i.e.: production, investment, etc.);
- The disruption of livelihood activities due to insecurity;
- Injuries and deaths;
- The provocation of other forms of criminal activities.



Dr. Darkwa (UNDP)

Dr. Darkwa, highlighted the **main sources of armed violence** identified in her research: Conflict; Burgeoning youth populations without employment opportunities; Poverty; Availability of arms; and Lack of rule of law.

More concretely, the **causes of armed violence**, as stipulated by Dr. Darkwa, are related to:

- Criminality and drug trafficking;
- Political contestation (at the national and inter-party levels);
- Chieftaincy disputes (at the local level);
- Religious intolerance;
- *Turf Wars*² i.e.: in **Guinea Bissau**, there was a clash between two different institutions when trying to control the drug trade.

Dr. Darkwa gave various examples to illustrate **West Africa’s experience with armed violence** such as:

- Terrorist violence: The attack of two pipelines in the southern region of **Nigeria**, cutting oil productions and affecting investment and insurance businesses;
- Armed robbery violence: Criminal, Johnson Kombian, broke into the Nakpanduri police armory in 2007 and stole uniforms and weapons, killing two security guards (**Ghana**);
- State sanctioned violence: September 28th 2009, soldiers of **Guinea's** Presidential Guard burst into a football stadium and opened fire on unarmed pro-democracy demonstrators. Several women were raped and 150 people were estimated dead;
- Election related violence: Ten people were killed and 215 others injured in violence in **Guinea** after the announcement of the provisional results of the 2010 presidential elections.

² *Turf war* is a colloquial term for a contention between two or more parties resulting in confrontation for access to resources or capital, control of operations, recognition of their work, etc. Turf wars are also fought between street gangs and organized crime for control of a particular area, especially to control the rackets.

Dr. Darkwa's **concluding remarks and recommendations** centered on parliament's role and need to:

- Enact stronger laws through a conflict sensitive lens and which address the sources of violence – poverty, unemployment, lack of skills and knowledge;
- Cooperate with the Executive to exercise effective oversight over issues of peace and security;
- Exercise effective control over the security sector;
- Collaborate with other parliaments in the sub-region to have structured dialogues on the harmonisation of laws linked to reducing armed violence.

Hon. Akosua Frema Osei-Opare, Member of the Parliament of Ghana, and Hon. Mamy Diomandé, Member of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, commented on Dr. Darkwa's presentation and shared their own expertise on the matter and experience of their respective Parliament when dealing with armed violence.

✓ Ghana

According to Hon. Osei-Opare, armed violence in Ghana is mostly a result of chieftaincy and land disputes. Most often, ethnic groups involved in armed violence are attached to political parties. In the case of the *Bawku*³ *crisis*, the *Kusasis* were perceived as being part of the National Democratic Congress (**NDC**) while the *Mamprusis* were seen to be affiliated to the New Patriotic Party (**NPP**). The fact that political parties align themselves with different ethnic groups is a real challenge as most MPs adopt a biased opinion which jeopardizes the quality of their work and debates on armed violence, and more importantly, exacerbates these crises.

Hon. Osei-Opare informed the Working Group that there is no specific law on armed violence in Ghana. The role of the Parliament in armed violence is reduced to: its decisional prerogative- as specified in the 1992 Constitution - as to whether the proclamation of the State of Emergency by the President should remain in force or should be revoked; and the work of its Committee on Defense and Interior. The Committee can invite the executive and others to discuss the State of Emergency, as well as, issues related to arms ammunition and how people handle their weapons. The Committee mostly meets with the security agencies to deliberate on the appropriate measures to take to stabilize the crisis situation (impose dusk-to-dawn curfew; prohibit all persons from carrying arms and ammunition or any other weapons; security presence on the ground, etc.).

Although the prerogatives of the Ghanaian Parliament in terms of armed violence control are limited, Hon. Osei-Opare listed a number of **successful armed violence prevention initiatives** in which MPs have been actively engaged: MPs have often cooperated with the government and the security agencies to restore peace and stability in conflict prone areas (i.e.: Bawku); moreover, the Northern Caucus of Parliament which consists of members from both sides of the House (majority and opposition) has come together several times to intervene in conflict situations thereby contributing to the restoration of relative peace and normalcy.

As an elected representative, Hon. Osei-Opare pointed out that community security is a major preoccupation for constituents when it comes to armed violence, given the high rates of armed robberies. Hon. Osei-Opare personally engaged in mobilizing resources to set up a police station and sponsor police posts, and levied funds to start police/military patrol, community watchdog groups, and clear bushy areas and provide more street lights, etc.

³ Upper East Regional town in Ghana.



Left to right: Dr. Darkwa (UNDP), Hon. Osei-Opare (Ghana), Hon. Diomandé (Côte d'Ivoire); Mr. Jurgensen (UNDP)

✓ Côte d'Ivoire

Hon. Mamy Diomandé stressed the **triggering factors** which contribute to armed violence in Côte d'Ivoire, namely: socio-economic inequalities, local conflicts over land, electoral disputes, high youth unemployment and high immigration. The political instability endured by the country ever since the coup d'état in 1999 and the civil war which broke out in 2002, have also exacerbated the spread of armed violence, mainly affecting youth and women, while creating a climate of insecurity and undermining prospects of human development. According to Hon. Diomandé, armed violence manifests itself through: the proliferation of small arms, the rise of crime, assaults against travelers commonly known in Côte d'Ivoire as the '*phénomène des coupeurs de route*'. The *Dozos* (traditional hunters) are also often involved in armed violence and tend to use locally manufactured weapons.

Based on Hon. Diomandé's experience as an MP, the **role of the Parliament in Côte d'Ivoire** comes down to 3 crucial elements:

1. The adoption of laws i.e.: ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2008 (followed by the setting up of a national Committee against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons); A law on rural land adopted in 2004 to deal with armed violence generated by rural land disputes.
2. The establishment of parliamentary fact-finding missions and inquiry committees on armed violence related issues such as: the Committee of inquiry on the events of 25 and 26 March 2004; the Committee of inquiry on the events of November 2004 at the Hotel Ivoire; the Committee of inquiry on racketeering in 2003 and 2006; the Committee of inquiry on armed violence between indigenous populations in Daloa in 2002.
3. Parliamentary information sessions to grasp and tackle the causes and issues related to armed violence, increase availability of database, statistics, rates, etc.

In order to eradicate the problem of armed violence, Hon. Diomandé **recommended parliaments to:**

- Adopt laws to restrict the production and carrying of weapons;
- Increase the number of police to deter criminals /reduce crime;
- Adopt strict laws to sanction those who illegally possess weapons;
- Establish a partnership between police and communities to collectively address violence and eradicate the phenomenon of organized crime/racketeering;
- Create better youth employment opportunities;
- Take measures to identify and trace arms, stop a culture of violence from spreading.

Many noteworthy reflections emanated from the **Questions & Answers session**. Participants discussed the responsibility of some politicians who purposely incite social tensions (ultimately generating armed violence) in order to serve their personal interest (i.e.: **Nigeria**), by employing divisive and provocative expressions in their allocutions or by deliberately supporting/arming certain militias, rebel groups or other components of society which best serve their interest or display affinity and conformity in terms of ethno-religious ties. In some cases, politicians of neighboring countries are the ones who play this role regardless of existing territorial borders and national sovereignty, either to corrode the government in place, control the country by destabilizing it, or because of ethno-religious ties with certain groups. Participants also agreed that the enforcement of the rule of law is indispensable if parliaments are to stem the repercussions of armed violence. For instance, electoral courts should be set up following occurrences of electoral violence. On the same note, efforts should be put into ensuring the effective implementation of existing laws at the local level, such as laws which concern the artisanal production of weapons.

Session 3: Political Parties and Crisis Prevention in West Africa

The third session was devoted to the presentation and summary of the findings and recommendations of the background research paper on “Political Parties and Crisis Prevention in West Africa” by Ms. Christianna Pangalos, UNDP Policy Specialist in Parliamentary Development and Political Party Strengthening.

In West Africa, there is a low level of trust in political parties and poor inter-party relations make it difficult for parties to effectively represent the population. Representation is often still skewed either in ethnic or in gender terms. Many political parties also have weak internal structures and are dominated by the president who is often the founder and the main financier of the party. However, when well equipped with the leadership, capacity and resources to effectively mediate and create space for dialogue, political parties can play a role in preventing conflict as explained below by Ms. Pangalos:



Ms. Pangalos (UNDP) and Mr. Pierre-Louveau (UNDP)

✓ **Electoral and Political Violence Prevention**

Political parties can help ensure a trustworthy electoral process and responsible comportment of political actors by:

- Advocating for transparency of the electoral process;
- Making compromises on contentious issues;
- Through inter-party dialogue to ensure more responsible campaigning;
- Through civic and voter education of their militants.

✓ **Post-Conflict Settings and Fragile States**

During the development of constitutional frameworks in post-conflict environments, political parties can agree on basic laws drafted in parliament to avoid relapse to conflict. Through comprehensive dialogue between parties, political leaders can make informed decisions to ensure an efficient, peaceful and responsive state. Moreover, capacity development for political parties to become fully representational and functional is also crucial to a peaceful democratic transition to improve inter-party dialogue and mediation.

✓ Inclusion of Excluded Groups

While the exclusion in government appointments of specific (often ethnic or religious) communities, creates resentments and struggle for power, political parties can establish sub-national and local party units by which local voices of citizens, especially excluded groups, are heard at all levels, thereby fostering a climate of peace and entente.

Ms. Pangalos put forward a number of **guidelines applicable to political parties**:

- Foster inclusiveness to ensure that the opposition is able to engage fairly in the parliamentary process;
- Create the space for dialogue and negotiation on the basics of constitutional reform (electoral laws, political party laws, and constitutional framework);
- Work with the media and CSOs for greater dissemination of parliament's actions;
- Adopt democratic principles in internal party structures to minimize monopoly of power within the party.

Within parliaments:

- Level the playing field for the opposition. Support to parliamentary development should contribute to fostering an open and responsible environment for debate, disagreement and criticism. E.g. establishment of parliamentary rules that allow for opposition representation in the internal governance of parliament and in the leadership of key committees;
- Promote peace-building efforts for parliaments. This could include assistance or immunity provisions and other such protections;
- Train parliamentarians and political parties in their roles and responsibilities.

Electoral violence related:

- Foster respect for principles of good governance. E.g. Review of fundamental legal texts of the country, making sure they are amended only in a consensual and consultative process;
- Foster inclusiveness. E.g. Avoid creating frustrations in certain communities by discriminating against them and treating their political representatives unfairly;
- Ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and adhere to its principles;
- Use collaborative language and avoid inflammatory speech;
- Advocate for genuine reforms, clear procedures and regulatory frameworks;
- Educate militants and party members about the country's legal texts, particularly the constitution, electoral laws, and voting procedures.

Hon. Bernadette Lahai, Member of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, and Hon. Abdoulaye Touré, Member of the National Transitional Council of Guinea, commented on Ms. Pangalos' presentation and shared their own expertise and knowledge on their country's experience regarding the role of political parties in peace building and state building processes.

✓ Sierra Leone

Political Parties, by nature of their roles and the power and control over their constituents, can play a determining role in peace building, by pressuring warring factions to adhere to peace agreements.

Hon. Lahai substantiated her statement by referring to **3 relevant examples**:

- The peaceful protest march on May 8th 2000 of all political parties which led to the arrest and trial of the Revolutionary United Front (**RUF**) Rebel Leader, Foday Sanko, and his group;

- The famous “Election before Peace” campaign by all political parties in 1996 despite the intimidation by the then National Patriotic Revolutionary Council (NPRC) military junta; and
- Women in political parties joint missions – urging rebels to ceasefire and to take part in the peace negotiations.

Hon Lahai added that political parties in Sierra Leone have strongly defended multi-party democracy and the establishment of democratic institutions such as the National Electoral Commission, the Political Parties Registration Commission, Human Rights Commission, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Special Court of Sierra Leone and the Anti Corruption Commission, etc. as measures to ensure good governance, free, fair, peaceful and well-regulated elections, justice, transparency and accountability - as ways of redressing some of the causes of conflicts.

Voter education, training and sensitization are also important roles political parties have played to ensure that the electoral processes and its outcomes are fully understood and accepted by all, so as to avert post electoral violence. The **2007 presidential election runoff** greatly benefitted from such education by the losing candidate immediately conceding defeat and seeking redress from the Courts for unconstitutionally invalidating 477 polling stations by National Electoral Commission, 80% of which were in the stronghold of the losing party. Together with civil society organizations, UN Agencies and NGOs, political parties embarked on a series of “non-violent free and fair” campaigns, marches, float parades and signed a Memorandum of Undertaking before, during and after public elections. These exercises had the potential to reduce tensions and intimidation, increase reporting and investigation of election violence and punishing perpetrators.

According to Hon. Lahai, the **strengths and opportunities of political parties** in Sierra Leone lie in the fact that they recruit their members from every region, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic status, bringing different and rich perspectives into politics. Political Parties in Sierra Leone also have the advantage of being politically mature, most of them being relatively old [the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) was founded in 1951] and having participated in the processes leading to self-rule in 1961 after years of British colonial domination. These strengths coupled with the opportunities of donor recognition of the role of political parties, donor support for inter-party activities, availability of successful technologies, techniques, tools and strategies for use by political parties to be effective, and the existence of mechanisms for inter-political party exchange and networks have positioned political parties in Sierra Leone to effectively contribute to good governance.

Despite the many encouraging tools at the disposal of political parties, Hon. Lahai pointed out a number of **challenges political parties face** in addressing crisis prevention:

- Poor resources (finance, human and institutional);
- Lack of Think-Tanks to provide timely, accurate and adequate data;
- Political intolerance excludes opposition’s input in most national development discourses and programmes;
- “Winner-take-it-all” policy which affects equitable distribution of power, employment and socio-economic infrastructures in favor of the governing party’s region, ethnic group and supporters;
- Thin line between political parties and the government tends to blur the difference between national and political interest and is often the cause of most political tensions and violence between the ruling and opposition parties.
- Very little inter-party experience sharing outside their own;
- High attrition rate;
- Most political party functionaries lack grounding in political party ethics, principles, models, the appropriate legal frameworks-National and Party Constitutions, Electoral and Political Party Registration Commission laws, and international instruments related to good governance,

election and democracy such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).

Hon. Lahai finalized her observations on a positive note by explaining that these obstacles can be overcome through the professionalization of political parties.



Left to right: Ms. Pangalos (UNDP), Hon. Touré (Guinea), Hon. Lahai (Sierra Leone), Mr. Pierre-Louveaux (UNDP)

✓ Guinea

Hon Touré strongly believes that the strengthening of parliaments may be achieved through the strengthening of political parties, the "hidden skeleton of parliaments". Dialogue, mutual understanding and harmony between political parties in parliament are conducive to the management and prevention of conflicts. However, Hon. Touré also called attention to the **ambiguous / two-sided role of political parties**: they have the power to contain conflicts or on the contrary inflame and aggravate them. Many political parties are community oriented meaning that their policies are based on the interest of the ethno-religious/tribal community they are associated with instead of the nation's interest as a whole. In some occasions, political parties tend to instrumentalize ethnicity and religion, creating communal tensions which serve their own electoral interests. By doing so, political parties directly threaten national unity and civil peace. For this reason, Hon. Touré believes that it is crucial to promote a democratic, civic, and ethical culture within political parties, as well as develop codes of conduct which render political parties accountable and responsible for their actions (i.e.: transparency of electoral processes). Political parties, when effective, have a great potential to improve the quality of voter registration and voter education.

Participants extended the discussions by questioning the **external funding of political parties**, insisting on the imperative to establish clear rules and regulations to ensure donors do not abuse of their position to influence or exploit political parties they support to their own advantage.

Session 4: Crisis Prevention, Recovery, and Mediation at the sub national level: the case of the Parliament of Catalonia

During Session 4, Mr. Antoni Comín, Member of the Parliament of Catalonia, advocated the **relevance and legitimacy of local parliaments** through the model of the Spanish state, and showcased how diverse local social identities are better taken into account by local parliaments thus contributing to the prevention of crisis. Below are the highlights of Mr. Comín's remarks.

Mr. Comín began by recalling an essential feature of democratic societies: conflicts should not be suppressed since they are only an expression of diverse opinions which is the basis of democracy. Democratic societies should rather guarantee the effective functioning of political institutions such as parliaments that can regulate and channel conflicts to avoid the outbreak and escalation of violence.

Mr. Comín reviewed the existing **conflicts and key crisis prevention and recovery challenges** that the Parliament of Catalonia currently faces. They are related to the tensions between rural and urban Catalonia (half of the inhabitants of Catalonia lives in Barcelona), as well as to the social tensions resulting from the high percentage of non-European immigration (more than 10 percent of the population of Catalonia). The Parliament of Catalonia deals with these issues through consensual legislation and the adoption of socio-economic laws concerning immigrants and integration questions.

There are also frequent **legitimacy conflicts** between laws passed by the local parliament and those passed by the Spanish Parliament. Mr. Comín brought this up in depth by explaining the interactions between the Cortes Generales⁴ and the Parliament of Catalonia, enabling participants to learn more about the constitutional rules and institutions which can help regulate the relation between the two levels.



Mr. Comín (Parliament of Catalonia) and Mr. Capdevila (BIPRC)

⁴ Congress of Deputies and Senate of Spain

The Spanish Constitution, which remains the supreme reference, defines the legislative competencies, mandates, and prerogatives of the Spanish National Parliament and the local parliaments of the autonomous communities. Autonomous communities are responsible for **primary functions**. These include planning, public works, agriculture, and tourism. Health and education are considered primary, but there are variations between 'high' and 'low' level regions, and therefore some of the autonomous communities share responsibilities for these areas with the central Parliament. Regarding education in the case of Catalonia, Mr. Comín specified that the National Parliament defines the fundamental rules and the guidelines on education policy, in order to preserve national unity, whereas the local specificities are taken into account by the Parliament of Catalonia through complementary laws. The national Parliament and the autonomous communities have **shared responsibilities** for other areas. These include local government, transport policy, and environmental protection. **Reserved matters** which are exclusive to the national Parliament include topics such as: nationality, immigration, emigration and asylum, international relations, defense and armed forces, customs and excise, foreign trade, monetary policy, control of banking and insurance, Inland Revenue and state budget, navy and shipping, ports and airports, telecommunications, etc.

When asked by the floor what procedures exist to help resolve legal conflicts between the two levels, Mr. Comín explained that the Constitutional Court frequently acts as an arbiter in disputes between the national and local parliaments. The fact that the state can formulate legislation in many areas without any regional involvement is a cause of continued controversy although conflicts arise less regularly now than they did before largely because of further transfers of powers.

Participants also questioned how immigrants could be better represented in the Parliament of Catalonia, especially since their number keeps increasing; they also reflected on the material capacities of legislative drafting of the local Parliament, particularly questioning its ability to effectively compete with the national Parliament on this matter.

Session 5: Mediation: tools and relevant opportunities for parliamentarians

Parliaments contribute to crisis prevention and peacebuilding through mediation. Session 5 gave the opportunity to Hon. Victoria Sylvia Saidu-Kamara, Member of the Parliament of Sierra Leone and Fourth Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, and Dr. Fholisani Sydney Mufamadi, Former Member of Parliament in South Africa, to share their testimonials and insights regarding relevant mediation opportunities and tools at the disposal of parliaments to effectively engage in crisis prevention, with a particular focus on entry points, challenges, success stories, enabling factors, and recommendations for MPs in West Africa.

✓ Sierra Leone

Hon. Saidu-Kamara first reviewed the **root causes of conflicts and current problems** which nourish a climate of insecurity and violence in Sierra Leone, namely: tribal tensions, tribalism, nepotism, discrimination, marginalization, discrimination against girls/women, limited access to higher education, forced removal from school, illiteracy, lack of basic social amenities, hunger, poverty, drugs, availability of small arms and crimes.

Hon. Saidu-Kamara affirmed that conflict prevention can be guaranteed by parliaments through the **enforcement of conflict-sensitive legislation** which promotes equal distribution of resources, equal access to education, and equal employment opportunities. **Mediation** also belongs to the spheres of competence of parliaments; their representational function allows them to facilitate dialogue between antagonistic factors, as well as carry out public outreach activities and field/constituency visits to promote social tolerance and cultural understanding. In Sierra Leone, despite the will of MPs, mediation action is impeded due to the lack of technical and financial resources which remain the biggest challenge today. Hon. Saidu-Kamara pointed out that **collaborative work between the Parliament of Sierra Leone and CSOs** has been very fruitful when it comes to mediation initiatives. CSOs have financed and facilitated many parliamentary field visits. Thanks to joint programmes, and the support and contribution of CSOs, the Parliament has had many opportunities to interact with the different components of the Sierra Leonean population.

✓ South Africa

Dr. Mufamadi insisted on the difficulty to pin down a particular role that parliament plays in conflict mediation given the vast diversity of factors that lead to conflict. He advised MPs to keep the prescription of best practices to minima in order to leave room for innovative solutions. That being said, he also recognized the utility of sharing insights, and the following one in particular: parliaments should act as mediators by encouraging antagonistic social groups to resolve differences and reach consensus through negotiation and dialogue.

Dr. Mufamadi cited the example of the **Lesotho conflict** to illustrate the capacity of parliaments to interface between government and society, as well as facilitate interactions and dialogue. Following the post electoral dispute in Lesotho, it became clear the people were no longer protesting against the freeness and fairness of the electoral results, but the whole electoral system itself - known as the '*first pas the post*' or '*winner takes all*'. This electoral system sparked off much controversy as it was considered exclusionary. The Parliament mediated and facilitated the dialogue among all the party

leaders. The conflicting parties finally came to an understanding and agreed to open up the electoral process by creating a space for inclusivity of significant minorities. Thanks to the mediation efforts of Parliament, the electoral system was finally amended based on the principle of proportional representation. Parliament gave a legal/normative force to those agreements through the adoption of a new electoral legislation in Lesotho.

Moreover, Dr. Mufamadi emphasized the notion of “**democracy supporting institutions**” which implies the inclusion of and collaboration with independent structures and stakeholders in the mediation process leading to conflict resolution and peace building such as CSOs and the media. He referred to the historic peace agreement and **political settlement in the Democratic Republic of Congo** as an example – the interim parliament at the time had led the inter-Congolese dialogue between the key actors it represented (armed rebel movements, members of the transition government, CSOs) and managed to pass specific laws on reconciliation.

Through mediation, Parliament is an important instrument in bringing about reconciliation, by opening up and being inclusive. Dr. Mufamadi alluded to his own country’s Parliament - **The South African Parliament – which represents an emblem of reconciliation.** The way it is structured, the issues it deals with and the process it uses to solve CPR are all an outcome of negotiations between parties that were once at war with one other. While the Apartheid Parliament had passed laws aimed at repressing and excluding a majority of South Africans from having a voice in political life, inevitably leading to social conflict and tensions, the newly elected Parliament, established in 1994 after the constitutional change, opted for a policy change based on integration, national unity and cohesion, social justice and equity and joint responsibility for transforming the country into a non racial, non sexist and democratic South Africa. In practice, the new Constitution guaranteed seats to minorities within all the political entities of the country.

Furthermore, Dr. Mufamadi indicated that South African MPs have been particularly successful in fostering dialogue between CSOs, municipal or regional government members and political party members at the local level. The Parliament intercedes to prevent human rights’ abuse and resolve local conflicts by ensuring that all parties and stakeholders of a conflict are represented in the negotiation process. For example, the provinces of *KwaZulu-Natal* and *Gauteng* reached flash points of violent conflicts before 1994 and even after the advent of democracy. Parliament had prioritized this area for attention, and on a continual basis, MPs would interact with the authorities responsible for reaching a peace agreements.

Based on Dr. Mufamadi’s feedback, the **keys to success in mediation** require MPs to overlook their political party allegiance by working closely together to find an effective approach to handling the crisis. This allows them to display a credible image of unity, political tolerance and neutrality, which are essential elements in the mediation process. Equally important is Parliament’s ability to join both mediation and oversight activities (i.e.: enquiry missions during field visits, hold public meetings, carry out interviews, question locals and follow up on the enforcement mechanisms of peace agreements).

To conclude, Dr. Mufamadi indicated that the Parliament of South Africa has also been involved in dealing with **domestic and gender based violence.** A Gender Parliamentary Commission was established to encourage parliamentary knowledge and access to information. The Parliament and government are also waging a nationwide campaign against the perpetration of violence against women and children. Parliament and the executive unite their efforts on an annual basis and actively engage against gender based violence by heightening awareness and also encouraging victims to come forward and report incidents.



Left to right: Hon. Saidu-Kamara (Sierra Leone), Dr. Mufamadi (South Africa), Mr. Some (ECOWAS Parliament)

General reflections on the following points were shared and discussed by the Working Group:

- Mediation is at the heart of the work done in parliament which consists of debating, discussing and building consensus. Enhancing parliamentary mediation should be a priority;
- The diverse areas where national parliaments can play an active role in mediation: electoral disputes; chieftaincy disputes; land and border disputes, gender-based violence, etc.
- The different mediation tools and mechanisms at the disposal of parliaments: providing a venue for dialogue between various belligerent groups; promoting interactions and negotiations through plenary debates, national forums, reconciliation commissions, cooperation with the ECOWAS Parliament, etc. their representational and oversight functions as well as their aptitude to interface between governments and civil society.
- The relevance of committee work and parliamentary caucuses in mediation through their ability to go beyond partisan differences, increase access to and analysis of information, ask questions, and carry out proactive research, fact-finding missions, and outreach activities, constituency/field visits. Participants stressed the need to further support these structures.
- The correlation between the percentage of women represented in parliament and the efficiency of parliamentary mechanisms for mediation and dialogue.
- The importance of better organizing, defining, and regulating the relation and division of work between parliaments and CSOs involved in mediation – CSOs represent national society and therefore undoubtedly provide substantial assistance, facilitation and complementarity. However sometimes they may lack legitimacy (if they are steered and directed by political parties), or may even undermine and minimize the role of parliaments.

Session 6: Mediation: lessons learned from political transitions and constitutional changes

During Session 6, through the **case studies of Guinea and Niger**, the Parliamentary Working Group thoroughly questioned and debated the **relevance and legitimacy of transitional councils** in terms of managing crisis, mediating conflicts, restoring peace and national unity, especially during political transitions.

✓ Case study: Guinea

Hon. Abdoulaye Touré, Member of the Guinean National Transitional Council, first provided some **background information** on the crisis situation which started after President Lansana Conté's death in December 2008. Captain Moussa Dadis Camara led a military coup, seizing power and suspending the constitution. The military junta established the National Council for Democracy and Development. Although it had promised to return power to civilian rule, most of the key posts in the government were held by the military and the junta continued to consolidate its grip on power. Heightened political tensions culminated in September 2009 when presidential guards opened fire on unarmed demonstrators at an opposition rally in Conakry, killing at least 150 civilians. That incident widened the rift between the ruling military authorities on the one hand and opposition parties and civil society on the other, aggravating tension across the country. Captain Moussa Dadis Camara was replaced by General Sekouba Konaté after surviving an assassination attempt. General Sekouba Konaté put the democratic transition back on track by quickly bringing members of civil society into the transitional government and beginning preparations for democratic presidential elections which were finally held in November 2010 and won by Alpha Condé.

The **purpose of the creation of the National Transitional Council (CNT)**, a deliberating independent political body, was to create in the Republic of Guinea the conditions for a swift return to constitutional order and a consensual democratic transition based on the rule of law, individual freedom and principles of good governance, through the establishment of consensual constitutional, organic and electoral laws.

The **CNT's main weakness** according to Hon. Touré results from the fact that, contrary to parliaments, its members are not directly elected by the people and therefore lacks legitimacy. This hinders the force of transitional councils which end up detaining less prerogatives than parliamentary institutions especially in terms of governmental control and oversight. For example, during the post electoral violence in Guinea (November 2010) between the supporters of Cellou Daliel Diallo and those of Alpha Condé, the government declared a state of emergency without consulting the CNT. If the CNT had the same recognition as parliaments, this act would have been considered as a direct violation of the Constitution.

On the other hand, Hon. Touré stressed that its **strength** comes from the fact that every single socio-political and economic entity in the county is represented within the Council. Thereby, the Council is capacitated to implement national reconciliation mechanisms and promote social dialogue between conflicting groups. The Council is also qualified to play a mediator role between conflicting parties by restoring a trust-based relation between civil society and the political institutions of the nation. For example, when opposition leader of the Union of Republican Forces party (**UFR – Union des Forces Républicaines**) Sidya Touré, came third in the June 2010 presidential election, he initially challenged the results, initiating a wave of political protests led by the main opposition groups (UFR militants,

CSOs, trade unions, etc.) against the transitional government led by General Konaté. The CNT immediately stepped in and offered its good offices by mediating a frank political dialogue between the **junta** (the Head of the State Transition, the members of the National Council for Democracy and Development, the Prime Minister, the members of the National Unity Government and the members of the Defense and Security Forces) and the **nation's lifeblood** (civil society, political parties, trade unions, etc.). Civil stability was finally restored after Sidya Touré agreed to publicly accept the outcome of the first round on 22 July 2010.

The Council's effective CPR role also constitutes in overseeing the activities of the National Unity Government and the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) as well as planning and supervising the electoral processes. Moreover, a number of **committees contribute to supporting the CNT in terms of management and monitoring of the transition process**, such as:



Hon. Touré (Guinea) and Mr. Buzanski (UNDP)

- The Constitutional Committee which is responsible for amending the Constitution and organic laws;
- The Monitoring Committee in charge of monitoring governmental action and the implementation of public policies;
- The Committee on National Reconciliation, Solidarity and Human Rights responsible for creating the legal and institutional framework of political and social dialogue to promote peace, harmony and national unity;
- The Electoral Code Committee which is responsible for the revision and harmonization of laws which regulate the electoral process;
- The Defense and Security Committee, responsible for monitoring the reform of the defense and security forces;
- The Committee on Monitoring and Evaluation of the Independent National Electoral Commission, etc.

Furthermore, the CNT has undertaken many actions with other state authorities and defense and security forces in an attempt to contain violence and crisis. In this regard, Hon. Touré shared a **success story** on the way the CNT proceeded to manage the electoral crisis and post-electoral violence following the first round election. Both presidential candidates, Diallo and Condé, contested the results and the CENI was accused of fraud. The second-round election could not be held in July 2010 due to these tensions. The poll was postponed until September 19th, but on the eve of the poll, the Supreme Court convicted the president of the CENI – Ben Sekou Sylla – on the basis of electoral fraud and elections were postponed once again until October 7th. The electoral crisis deepened as it became impossible to find a new president for the CENI. Due to the political stalemate, elections were delayed again until October 24th. The CNT then created a Monitoring and Crisis Management Committee and convened CENI, government officials and members of other political institutions to join efforts into finding a consensual solution. Finally, a Malawian neutral election observer, General Siaka Toumany Sangare, was appointed as head of CENI. The second round was finally held on

November 7th 2010 - Alpha Condé obtained over 52.5% of the popular vote. Guinea has never before run fair national elections. Though it could have been better organized, the election in Guinea is now considered as one of the unexpected **successes achieved by the CNT in terms of peacebuilding by providing the means to ensure the country's first free and fair elections** since the independence. The CNT also actively engaged in **security sector oversight** activities by regularly meeting and fostering synergy with the General Staff of the Armed Forces on matters relating to the protection of human rights, especially during the state of emergency (particularly in the town of Ratoma), to prevent the abuse of military force and renewed violations of Human Rights.

Hon. Touré ended his presentation with a call for donors and development practitioners to pay more attention to Transitional Councils given the major role they play in CPR during political transitions. The importance of Transitional Councils in the minds of most people still remains underrated and their contribution to peace and stability in times of crisis is also often taken for granted and overlooked. Priorities should focus on technical and financial institutional support and capacity building in crisis prevention and mediation techniques.

✓ Case study: Niger

Ms. Gourouza Zeinabou, Rapporteur at the National Consultative Council of Niger, was unable to attend the Working Group Meeting. Therefore, Ms. Diane Sheinberg, UNDP Parliamentary Development Programme Specialist, presented the case study on her behalf and shared the lessons learned of Niger's Consultative Council's experience in dealing with crisis prevention and recovery following the 2010 military coup.

The presentation first recapitulated the **successive steps leading to a successful and peaceful constitutional change in Niger**. On February 18, 2010, a military coup ended the serious political and institutional crisis that Niger was undergoing since the end of 2009, following the refusal of President Tandja to leave office after his second and final term. The military junta established the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CSRD) and pledged to hand over power to civilian rule by organizing free, fair and transparent elections. The transitional government set the 3 main goals for the transition period: (1) restore democracy, (2) ensure national reconciliation (3) stabilize the sociopolitical and economic situation, by equipping the country with legal texts and institutions which form the basis for Niger's return to a constitutional order and democracy. A National Consultative Council was also established in March 2010, and is charged with providing guidance on all questions of national interest and producing, reviewing, amending all the "fundamental documents," notably a draft constitution, a draft electoral code, a draft political parties' charter, draft statutes for the opposition, a draft law on public access to information, etc. The National Consultative Council also makes recommendations regarding the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) which is responsible for planning the local, parliamentary and presidential elections, national reconciliation and national unity strengthening mechanisms and questions related to public administration management and the innovation of Niger's overall institutional architecture. The new electoral code and draft constitution were put to referendum on October 31, 2010 and promulgated on 24 November 2010.

An **effective crisis prevention and mediation approach** adopted by the National Consultative Council and highlighted in the presentation consists in interacting and working closely with political parties. All the political parties, whether independent ones or coalition parties such as the *Coordination of Forces for Democracy and Republic (CFDR)* and the *Democratic Forces for the Republic Alliance (AFDR)*, are represented in the Council. Moreover, the Council has become a place where all political parties can gather and discuss. The Council also involved representatives of political parties in the

referendum campaign and, except for the sessions, they are constantly encouraged to participate in all activities that are organized by the Council in Niger and abroad including training workshops and seminars.

Furthermore, the fact that the National Consultative Council is a representative body of all Nigeriens is what enables it to play an effective role in crisis prevention, recovery and mediation. The Council is a **meeting venue** where the voices, requests and concerns of all the socio-economic and political actors of the country are expressed, discussed and debated, particularly within the framework of national reconciliation and peace building activities which are organized by the Council. For example, the Council's presidency took the initiative in organizing a **capacity building seminar on peace and national reconciliation** for the socio-political actors of Niger which was held in Rome, on 11 – 16 October 2010. The mediation effort of the Council successfully ended with the signing and adoption of the "**Rome Declaration**" which calls on:

- Political actors to conduct peaceful electoral campaigns based on mutual respect, tolerance, and the law;
- All political actors to accept and respect poll results and submit possible disputes to arbitration or judicial settlement;
- Institutional and socio-political actors to mainstream civic education and promote a culture of peace and democracy.

Proceedings of the session continued with a general reflection on the **diplomatic approach of the ECOWAS Parliament** when dealing with the crises in **Niger** and **Guinea**.

The crisis prevention and recovery strategy of ECOWAS is based on *parliamentary diplomacy*. Through its capacity to coordinate diplomatic negotiations, the ECOWAS Parliament was uniquely positioned to facilitate the democratic transition in **Guinea**. Following the suspension of Guinea's membership within the regional organization, the junta finally handed over power to a transitional government after a concerted squeeze by ECOWAS. ECOWAS had also taken the lead by convening negotiations between coup leaders and pro-democracy groups, and marshaled diplomatic pressure from western and African countries. The ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with the EU, also arranged and supervised the monitoring of the elections.

In **Niger**, the ECOWAS has similarly assumed a central role. It suspended Niger's membership in October 2009 when President Tandja dissolved the Parliament. ECOWAS has coordinated the diplomatic efforts to resolve tensions in Niger through negotiations several months before the coup. Despite their continuous mediation efforts, President Tandja remained reluctant to cooperate. After the Coup, the ECOWAS Parliament, along with the African Union, monitored the progress made towards the return of constitutional order, the restoration of civilian rule, the strict adherence to the transition timetable, as well as the coup makers' promise to hold free and democratic elections and not run in those elections. The legislative elections and first round of the presidential elections were peacefully held on the 31st of January 2011. The ECOWAS and the European Union observers who monitored the elections expressed satisfaction with the peaceful and transparent manner the elections were conducted acknowledging the effective contribution of the National Consultative Council.

Session 7: Opportunities for parliamentarians on mediation

Session 7 was dedicated to providing an overview of the opportunities available for MPs on mediation in their daily work.

Dr. Kabere Garba, Bureau Manager of the ECOWAS Parliament, presented the **role of the ECOWAS Parliament in mediation**. He first pointed out the **scope of activities within the Parliament's competence**. The Parliament's mandate entitles it to consider any matter concerning the Community particularly issues related to Human Rights and fundamental freedoms, and to make recommendations to other institutions and organs of the Community. The Parliament may also be consulted for its opinion on matters concerning the Community in the following areas: Communication links between Member States; Telecommunication systems; Energy networks; Cooperation in the area of radio, television and other media; Public health policies; Common educational policy; Youth and Sports; Scientific and technological research; Community policy on environment; Treaty review; Community citizenship; Social integration; and Peace and security.

On **mediation**, Dr. Garba indicated that there is no formal support mechanism in place. That being said, at each Ordinary Session of Parliament, *Country Reports* are presented providing an opportunity for the plenary to assess events, political situation, and security issues in individual countries. The *Activity Report* of the President of the ECOWAS Commission also provides additional information to Members of issues around the sub-region.

The ECOWAS Parliament's leeway is impeded by a number of **constraints** (no direct elections, no legislative power, lack of administrative and financial autonomy vis-à-vis the Commission in particular, high turnover of MPs, etc.). In order to surpass these obstacles, Dr. Garba stressed the major need to enforce the Parliament institutionally and enhance its co-decision and law-making powers as a full, functional and *effective* regional Parliament through capacity building and provision of resources. Dr. Garba outlined the **key steps to follow in order to promote mediation**:

- Strengthen first response intervention and monitoring in emerging crisis situations;
- Enhance liaison with national parliaments / foster effective collaboration especially in information sharing and provision of the necessary expertise to compliment and support the efforts of national parliaments (perhaps by installing liaison offices as focal/coordination points);
- Increase the autonomy of the ECOWAS Parliament so that it can further focus on political/peace/security issues and mediation/dialogue activities;
- Strengthen its capacities to sanction recalcitrant Member States for non compliance with protocols and conventions. In this respect, the working group pointed out the worth of looking into the functioning of the model of the Regional Parliament in East Africa and the advantages of having joint sessions with the African Union;
- Make Members of Parliament permanent with a definite tenure.

To conclude, as the ECOWAS Parliament enters its **Third Legislature**, Dr. Garba stated that there are still no formal interactions between the ECOWAS Commission and Parliament on mediation at this stage. During the **First Legislature (2000-2005)**, the leadership of the Speaker spawned a lot of opportunities to embark on mediation (i.e.: Mano River crisis; Ivorian crisis) where as during the **Second Legislature (2005-2010)**, in the cases of **Guinea** and **Niger**, it was the National Parliament's initiative to engage the ECOWAS Parliament in the mediation process (two ad-hoc ECOWAS Committees in charge of continuous negotiations with Guinea and Niger were created).

The second presentation was made by Ms. Nansata Yakubu, Parliament and Conflict Expert at the Parliamentary Centre (PC). She first identified multiple **areas where national parliaments can play an effective role in mediation** by adopting conflict-sensitive laws and providing a venue for dialogue and negotiations between various belligerent groups:

- Electoral disputes and reforms;
- Post-conflict/Peace building initiatives, i.e.: Reconciliation Commissions, Special Courts, Tribunals;
- Chieftaincy disputes; Cultural norms and customs;
- Energy security issues (oil, gas, solar, water, climate);
- Land reforms;
- Border disputes;
- Compliance to international treaties and conventions;
- Political development;
- Constitutional reform/Guiding to referendum.

Ms. Yakubu then put forward the different **opportunities, tools and mechanisms** at the disposal of parliaments to carry out their mediation role in terms of promoting dialogue, interactions, and negotiations:

- Committee work;
- Cross party caucuses;
- Plenary debates;
- National/International initiatives and processes, MDGs, PRSPs;
- Oversight role;
- Reconciliation commissions;
- Constituency/field visits; interaction/communication with constituents;
- Cooperation at the regional level through the ECOWAS Parliament.



Left to right: Dr. Garba (ECOWAS Parliament), Ms. Yakubu (PC), Mr. Jurgensen (UNDP)

Ms. Nansata Yakubu ended her presentation by enumerating the current **challenges parliaments face in terms of mediation**: Strong executive; Partisanship; Limited mandates; 'Aged' /Archaic Constitution; Political party dynamics; etc.

General reflections on the following points were shared by the Working Group participants:

- Given the high turnover of MPS and the loss of capacities in mediation which this implies, the usefulness of collaborating with or consulting former MPs who have acquired substantial experience and knowledge on mediation work;
- The importance of having liaisons and continuous exchanges of information between the regional, national and local levels;

- **Regional – National levels:** The ECOWAS Parliament and national parliaments should develop mechanisms to strengthen their collaborations and foster the flow of information by establishing effective and functional ECOWAS country offices at the national level while ensuring the presence of national parliamentary delegations within the ECOWAS headquarters at the regional level;
- **National – Local levels:** West African parliaments tend to be out of reach and out of touch with many local and remote areas within the borders of their country. Parliaments should implement a communication strategy at the constituency level to create closer relations with the people;
- The need to involve CSOs and NGOs in the mediation process ;
- The role and impact of the media on the mediation process: depending on the way it covers a conflict, the media is capable of distorting a mediation efforts or supporting it. Participants therefore agreed on the necessity to plan a communication strategy, collaborate closely with the media, and inform the nation what is at stake.
- The interconnection between the success of the mediation process and the level of neutrality and objectivity of the parliament's approach; favoring the interests of a particular conflicting party or group immediately jeopardizes mediation processes.

Session 8: National activities

In October 2010, BDP and BCPR conducted joint missions in **Togo** and **Guinea-Bissau** to **pilot UNDP's parliamentary self-assessment tool on crisis prevention and recovery**. The objective was to identify key activities for the 2011 Work Plan that strengthens the role of the Parliaments of Guinea-Bissau and Togo in the area of conflict prevention and security sector reform. During Session 8, a parliamentary delegation from both Togo and Guinea-Bissau presented the **results of the mission** and the findings of the parliamentary self-assessment reports. They particularly discussed the opportunities and constraints of both parliaments in terms of crisis prevention, the presentation of planned activities/recommendations, and the lessons and implications of the use of the tool for other countries.

✓ Case Study: National Assembly of Togo

The **Togolese parliamentary delegation** was composed of 3 Members of the National Assembly:

Photo - Left to right:

-Hon. N'térantémou Kouagou, Member of the Human Rights Committee;
-Hon. Itidou Oga Tchankpana, Vice President of the Human Rights Committee;
-Hon. Ayitou Singo, President of the Defense and Security Committee.



Based on the delegation's analysis of the self-assessment exercise, it appears that the national parliament in Togo has so far played a very **limited role**

in the prevention of conflict in the country, due to the political context and the general lack of understanding of the role that a parliament can play in order to prevent and diffuse conflict. The main forms of crisis the Parliament deals with are of a socio-political and economic nature. The strong polarization of the political system in Togo, with a governance system divided between the party in power and the opposition, has, in the past, led to recurrent violent confrontations which mostly occur during elections. Land-related conflicts also often involve different ethnic or socio economic groups. They are exacerbated by the widespread presence of small arms in the country and politicized by local leaders during elections periods.

Despite's the Parliament's willingness to play a more proactive role in the prevention/reduction of conflict and violence, the self-assessment exercise revealed that **many challenges stand in the way of its constitutional functions**:

- Subordination of the National Assembly to the executive;
- Limited access to information;

- Limited interaction between MPs and their constituents, lack of institutional framework for information exchange and interaction with community-based organizations (civil society, traditional chieftdom, etc.);
- Lack of technical and analytical expertise;
- Lack of physical, financial and logistical means to function effectively;
- Lack of means to ensure appropriate follow up action regarding the information collected during public hearings and field visits around the country;
- Lack of means to ensure efficient follow-up and oversight of recommendations;
- Lack of visibility and consideration: Given the political context and lack of independence of legislative vis-à-vis the executive, the Parliament in Togo is negatively perceived by the population and its credibility is very low. This situation is aggravated by the fact that MPs spend very little time with their constituencies.

That being said, the parliamentary delegation pointed out multiple **opportunities and incentives** for a proactive and efficient parliamentary action on CPR. The Togolese constitution, and more specifically, Articles 51 (legislature) and 96, 97, 98 (executive oversight), provides significant opportunities for MPs to engage in CPR. Furthermore, the Togolese National Assembly is one of the few parliaments in the sub region to have 7 standing committees, including a Committee on Human Rights which is currently headed by a woman. For instance, the National Assembly of Togo has played, as mandated the Constitution, its role in the ratification of the ECOWAS convention on Small Arms. Also, the Parliamentary Committee on Human rights undertook fact-finding field visits in 2009. The focus of these visits was to examine the current situation and living conditions in prisons and to propose recommendations to the executive. Also, in 2009, when the prices of gasoline went up and the situation became tense, parliament questioned the executive in order to effectively pressure the executive to change its policy.

The Togolese parliamentary delegation concluded by summarizing the **major recommendations** which were made in the self-assessment mission report:

- Promote and increase the role of parliamentarians as effective actors for conflict and violence prevention;
- Technical support in the drafting of legislation within the National Assembly;
- Capacity development of parliamentarians and staff for effective functioning of the institution;
- Strengthen the capacities of the institution as such;
- The establishment of permanently manned parliamentary offices in every constituency to ensure instant access to information and timely detection of conflicts in gestation by MPs;
- Increase the visibility and legitimacy of the Parliament;
- Putting in practice the mandate of the institution;
- Install a parliamentary cell dedicated to conflict-sensitive budget and finance analysis;
- Foster internal dialogue within the parliament between the majority and the opposition;
- Ensure an inclusive approach by engaging constituents in the dialogue process through public hearings and field visits on themes of interest related to conflict prevention and recovery, in order to understand their views and perspectives as a means to take into account citizen concerns in legislative and oversight work.

✓ Case Study: People's National Assembly (PNA) of Guinea-Bissau

The **delegation of the National Popular Assembly of Guinea-Bissau** was composed of 2 Members:

Photo – left to right:

- Hon. Nhima Sissé, President of the Commission of Women and Children Affairs;
- Hon. Vesa Gomes Naluak, President of the Defense and Security Committee.



The parliamentary delegation from Guinea-Bissau first reviewed the **major crises their country has undergone since gaining independence in 1974**.

Guinea-Bissau has been affected by political instability and

recurrent violent conflict, including a civil war between military and political factions (1998-1999), which deepened mistrust between Bissau-Guineans and political authorities. The period 2000 to 2005 was again characterized by political assassinations, threats of a coup d'état, and growing uncertainty amongst the population. Deep factions within and between political parties, the military and politicians continue to threaten the stability of the country. The main challenges that the Parliament now face include ongoing power struggles between the politico-military elite that are taking an ethnic dimension, increased criminalization and violent youth groups, drug trafficking and a weak state that is unable to provide services, enforce the rule of law, promote development or manage conflicts.

During these times of crises and the recurrent confrontations between the military and political authorities in particular⁵, the Parliament was unable to provide an adequate counterbalance to the Executive or the armed forces, thus revealing specific problems in terms of parliamentary oversight of the security sector governance. Although the Parliament failed to prevent the conflict, the parliamentary delegation acknowledged the **stabilizing role played by the Parliament** by allowing effective representation and dialogue between differing political and military entities.

Parliamentary attempts to end the fighting between the self-proclaimed military junta and the government forces began at an early stage in the conflict. The **Goodwill Commission** composed of parliamentarians, but also representatives of religious groups and of NGOs had been very active in efforts to achieve peace between the rebels and the government. Members of the Goodwill Commission met President Vieira and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mané and tried to bring the belligerents to a less extreme point of view in order to expand the opportunities for agreement. They acted in liaison with ECOWAS and diplomatic representatives of **Sweden, Portugal and France**. Apart

⁵ In January 1998, Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Brigadeiro Ansumane Mané, was dismissed by the president of **Guinea-Bissau**, João Bernardo Viera, and accused of having failed to take measures against the traffic of arms to armed separatist groups in the Casamance region of Senegal. Mané led a mutiny that soon plunged the entire country into civil war. Violence increased when troops from **Senegal and Guinea-Conakry** intervened to support the government.

from its mediation work, the Commission also staged '**Marches for Peace**' and has contacted the United Nations and the European Union to urge them to intervene. The efforts undertaken by the National Popular Assembly to **establish dialogue between the conflicting groups** and engage key actors (civil society, regional and international organizations) contributed to resolving the conflict and paving the way to the November 1999 and January 2000 legislative and presidential elections.

After the cease-fire, the Parliament also set up an **enquiry commission** to investigate the arms-trafficking allegations, which had been used as the pretext for launching the military coup. The report accused President Joao Bernardo Vieira of violating the constitution by calling in foreign troops without consulting the Parliament. The report also revealed that President Vieira had known of the arms deal, but made no attempt to stop it. In parliament, a majority - including members of the President's own party- demanded his resignation and a trial.

Currently, the Parliament is engaged in addressing key governance and peacebuilding challenges in the country. The Parliament takes part in the **Steering Committee** in charge of reforming Guinea-Bissau's defense and security sector by implementing a wide reform program focused on the Armed Forces, Police and Justice with the support of several bi and multilateral partners. The Parliament is also involved in the **National Reconciliation Dialogue** intended to bring together various stakeholders from government, opposition parties and civil society into a constructive and inclusive dialogue on national unity, stability and peace.

In terms of parliamentary **constraints and bottlenecks in the field of CPR**, the self assessment exercise brought to light the following factors:

- The parliament is not adequately exercising its oversight role as it does not dispose of the means to check whether adopted laws are implemented. Work plans to enhance the role of the Permanent Committees in this regard exist, but are not executed due to a lack of Committee budgets and a lack of government or external support. Planned field visits usually do not take place due to a lack of funds to cover transportation expenses;
- A number of security sector reform laws adopted by the Parliament have still not been implemented, partly due to a lack of knowledge about the content of these laws. These include the law on the Intelligence and Security Service and the organic laws on the organization of the Armed Forces, on the National Guard and on the Public Order Police;
- Many MPs are illiterate and lack the necessary skills to carry out their primary functions; basic office supplies are often lacking.

The parliamentary delegation finally shared the different **activities identified in the mission report to push forward the institutional strengthening of the Parliament:**

- Support the Parliament in the dissemination of laws;
- Enhance the Parliament's oversight role through the facilitation of field visits and follow up of the information collected;
- Training of MPs and parliamentary staff;
- Participation of MPs in international conferences, exchange visits and study tours;
- Enhance Parliament's research capacity;
- Strengthen the capacities of parliamentary support staff;
- Appointment of a permanent secretary and/or permanent national expert to the Permanent Committees;
- Development of joint work plans with civil society and selected NGOs;

- Support the operationalization of the Parliament’s Strategic Development Plan for 2010-2015 and include a budgeted, multi-year results framework which can be used for resource mobilization;
- Foster Parliament-Government interaction and collaboration between Permanent Committees regarding joint field visits;
- In terms of armed violence prevention, provide technical assistance to develop legislation on small arms control, based on the convention signed with ECOWAS. Also encourage parliamentarians to be more involved in awareness raising activities and the dissemination of laws passed by Parliament on matters related to defense, security and gender-based violence (GBV), including the **UN resolution 1325** on Women and the **ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons**;
- In the field of small arms control, carry out a public information campaign to incite people who detain weapons to surrender them by granting compensations in return.



Parliamentary delegations of Togo and Guinea-Bissau: From left to right: Hon. Tchankpana (Togo), Hon. Kouagou (Togo), Hon. Singo (Togo), Hon. Sissé (Guinea-Bissau), Hon. Naluak (Guinea-Bissau), Ms. Pangalos (UNDP)

Session 9: Regional framework

The first part of Session 9 was dedicated to the presentation of the **terms of references for the Regional Parliamentary Working Group** by Ms. Diane Sheinberg, UNDP Parliamentary Development Programme Specialist.

Ms. Sheinberg explained the **reasons and benefits of having a regional approach** and set of activities on crisis prevention and recovery.

- The regional working group model is a useful approach in helping controversial and sensitive issues to be tackled more easily. It also helps to address issues that cannot be directly tackled at the national level;
- The regional approach provides an informal opportunity for reform-minded MPs to collaborate together across the West African region. It thereby supports the building of a West African network of parliamentarians who may act as a nucleus to bring forward democratic reforms in their respective country;
- Regional parliamentary working groups also contribute to knowledge building: Working groups are supported by extensive background commissioned research papers and other supporting documents. The knowledge acquired is compiled in key publications and distributed to parliaments in the region;
- Finally, linkages between regional and national democratic governance programmes and activities in a region facilitate the scaling up of activities and agendas for democratic governance reforms.

The Regional Parliamentary Working Group's rationale and relevance are based on the grounds that it is a **logical and necessary follow-up action to the Accra Regional Seminar** (June 2010) as it provides an open space for the champions identified during the Accra Seminar to take the lead in the implementation of the recommendations which were made in Accra, push forward efforts and initiatives, and pursue the exchange of inspiring good practices and challenges. The Regional Work Group is also a strategic means by which the ECOWAS Parliament can interface with national parliaments on matters related to crisis prevention and recovery.

Ms. Sheinberg then reviewed the **duties and responsibilities** of the Parliamentary Working Group which was mobilized to:

- Review and discuss the two national case studies on the self-assessment tool tested by UNDP on how to support parliament in addressing conflict;
- Assist with the development of regional benchmarks for crisis prevention and recovery in West Africa. The regional benchmarks will identify a set of principles for parliamentary engagement in crisis prevention and recovery;
- Identify key activities to strengthen parliamentary performance in CPR in the region; Draft a preliminary Joint Action Plan to be carried out in 2011, in collaboration with the ECOWAS Parliament and partner organizations;
- Discuss the content and also finalize, print and disseminate the publication: "Towards Strengthening the Role of Parliaments in Crisis Prevention and Recovery in West Africa", compiling regional research and national case studies;
- Promote knowledge creation and dissemination: Through AGORA, the members of the Parliamentary Working Group are also expected to: engage parliamentary staff and parliamentarians on issues relevant to crisis prevention activities; disseminate good practices and lessons learned from their respective countries; bring forward relevant initiatives and ensure

national solutions are shared in the region; become champions and active members of the West Africa Group on the Trusted Area of AGORA. The Parliamentary Working Group will also be determining if additional research and comparative case studies need to be carried out to improve knowledge in the region on selected and relevant crisis prevention and recovery issues.

To conclude, Ms. Sheinberg provided further details and information on the efforts and **type of action requested from the Parliamentary Working Group** to effectively achieve the objectives which were set:

- Complete their profiles on the Trusted Area of AGORA and become active contributors to the group related to “Parliaments and crisis prevention in West Africa”;
- Monitor and share on the Trusted Area of AGORA findings from their respective countries, but also in the sub-region, of parliamentary interventions in the area of conflict / violence prevention (through scrutinizing the media, work of the parliament, parliamentary committees and political parties, constituency visits, attendance to meetings at the national, regional and international levels); Members will be requested to blog and share articles on a regular basis;
- Connect members of parliaments and parliamentary staff through AGORA;
- Comment on articles and lessons learned posted on AGORA;
- Provide feedback on suggested research to be conducted by the UNDP;
- Provide feedback on draft research papers developed by UNDP.

The second part of Session 9 was dedicated to discussing **the role of the ECOWAS Parliament** in crisis prevention and the **opportunities for the new legislature to further engage in peacebuilding and recovery in 2011**. Both Hon. Victoria Sylvia Saidu-Kamara, Member of the Parliament of Sierra Leone and Fourth Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, and Dr. Kabeer Garba, Bureau Manager of the ECOWAS Parliament, shared their expertise and knowledge on this matter.

Hon. Saidu-Kamara first pointed out the two important **security issues which undermine peace and stability** in the sub-region, namely drug trafficking and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. These challenges are worsened by the lack of adequate resources within the ECOWAS Parliament which constitutes a serious barrier to effective parliamentary collaboration especially in information sharing and provision of the necessary expertise to compliment the efforts of the executive branch of national governments to monitor borders and airports in West Africa.

In her presentation, Hon. Saidu-Kamara highlighted the various **areas where the ECOWAS Parliament plays an effective role** in peace, security, and conflict prevention:

- Joint Committees of MPs to monitor intelligence/security issues;
- Harmonization of security laws at the regional level;
- Promotion of good governance;
- Regional legislation to ban small arms and light weapons;
- Framework to monitor porous borders;
- Information sharing on immigration;
- Capacity building on intelligence gathering;
- Provide direct support to national parliaments to monitor and prevent crises before they occur or escalate;
- The capacity of the ECOWAS Parliament to act as a mediator (through *parliamentary diplomacy*) and provide a venue for dialogue and interactions with national parliaments to monitor crisis/engage in negotiations (i.e.: **Niger** and **Guinea**). In the **case of Niger**, the ECOWAS Parliament called on the Government of the Republic of Niger to respect the various Community texts relating to democracy, good governance and elections, especially

the provisions of the *Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security* as well as the provisions of the *Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*. The ECOWAS Parliament established an ad-hoc Committee under the leadership of the First Deputy Speaker, to embark on a sensitization mission for the purpose of ensuring that constitutionalism and democracy return to the Republic of Niger.

Hon. Saidu-Kamara strongly believes that the enhancement of the powers of the ECOWAS Parliament as a full regional Parliament will foster more cooperation in the community and empower the ECOWAS Parliament to ensure the sustainability of peace and security in West Africa.

Left to right: Hon. Saidu-Kamara (Sierra Leone, ECOWAS Parliament), Ms. Sheinberg (UNDP), Dr. Garba (ECOWAS Parliament)



According to Dr. Garba, the ECOWAS Parliament sits at a **critical stage of evolution** from which spawns many opportunities for a greater contribution of the ECOWAS Parliament to the maintenance of peace and security within the sub-region: the **transformation of the “ECOWAS of States” into an “ECOWAS of the people”** with the establishment of a single economic region (single currency, single central bank, and a legislative community parliament), the newly adopted **Vision 2020**; the fresh start of the **Third Legislature**, all present opportunities for the ECOWAS Parliament to act as the lead institution developing the norms, values and principles that govern state action and CPR in the sub-region.

The **Vision 2020** envisages a borderless, peaceful, prosperous and cohesive ECOWAS sub-region, built on good governance, poverty eradication, gender equality, where all the people have the capacity to access and harness the region’s abundant resources through the creation of equal opportunities for sustainable development and environmental preservation. The ECOWAS’s **scope of activities and mandate** will be expanded in order to foster greater regional integration in West Africa. The ECOWAS will be called upon to further engage in the management of cross border challenges, especially conflicts and the promotion of democracy and good governance; the promotion of sub-regional economic integration; the development and interconnection of the infrastructure; the increase of human capital and facilitation of mobility within the Community.

Dr. Garba called for heightened and continued efforts and initiatives to enhance the powers of the ECOWAS Parliament. The new Work Plan for the 3rd Legislature should integrate prospects going in this direction and refute the assumption according to which an MP needs to be elected directly to be able to exercise effective powers.

Observations on the following topics were made during the plenary discussion:

- ECOWAS parliamentary elections do not necessarily need to be direct at the present stage. What is important is how the powers of the Parliament are enhanced. Participants indicated that it was worth looking into the functioning of the model of the regional parliament in East Africa. Even though there are no direct elections, MPs in EA Parliament are allowed to pass legislation. The ECOWAS Parliament should move in this direction;
- Install effective mechanisms and liaison offices to better report activities of the regional parliament to national parliaments and vice versa;
- Mainstream peace and security issues throughout the 13 standing ECOWAS committees;
- The launch of the ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians Association (**ECOFEPA**) as another opportunity to further engage on gender equality and gender-based violence issues in the region.

Session 10: Global level

During the first part of Session 10, Mrs. Diane Sheinberg, UNDP Parliamentary Development Programme Specialist provided information on the **purpose, utility and functioning of AGORA** (www.agora-parl.org).

Agora is an online network created for knowledge sharing and discussions on parliamentary development, as well as women empowerment in parliaments and the role of parliaments in conflict prevention and recovery (<http://www.agora-parl.org/node/1057>). Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, donors, practitioners, as well as academics, civil society and the media can participate and come together to analyze ways to implement and promote best practices in the fields of democratic governance, both at regional and global levels.

The Portal seeks to consolidate knowledge, expertise and lessons learned as well as facilitate active collaboration among the worldwide parliamentary development community of practice. The platform displays key documents, guidelines and knowledge products on parliamentary performance in crisis prevention and recovery, such as:



Ms. Sheinberg (UNDP) and Mr. Buzanski (UNDP)

- **A short promotional / awareness raising movie** on the important role parliaments can play in crisis prevention and recovery in West Africa, compiling testimonials of parliamentarians and parliamentary development practitioners (<http://www.agora-parl.org/node/2713>);
- **Video interviews** of Members of Parliaments, parliamentary development experts, and other relevant actors, sharing their expertise, experience and knowledge on parliaments and CPR in West-Africa, with a particular focus on challenges, success stories, and recommendations (<http://www.agora-parl.org/node/3159>);
- **A private discussion space for West African MPs** on Parliaments and CPR where group members can post articles, have access to documents, blog and inform members of upcoming events (<https://agora.trustedarea.net/groups/35/home>). Some of the key documents available online for example are the research papers commissioned by UNDP on parliaments and specific thematic areas such as armed violence, gender-based violence, regional crisis prevention mechanisms, or political violence; the Accra Regional Seminar report summarizing the key discussions; the self-assessment tool designed by UNDP to assess parliamentary performance in CPR, and identify entry points for development partners to adequately respond to the needs of parliamentarians to better address crisis prevention and recovery; the two national case studies summarizing the findings and recommendations of the self-assessment tool which was piloted in October 2010.

Ms. Sheinberg then invited participants to identify **key priorities to strengthen UNDPs parliamentary support activities in 2011** in terms of crisis prevention and recovery, and make concrete **recommendations to help MPs engage in these issues at the national level**. Below are the highlights of the Working Group's discussion:

- UNDP Country Offices can provide direct support to West African Parliaments upon demand and also have the possibility to revert to the parliamentary development teams at HQ or at the Regional Center in Dakar for backup in terms of expertise and human resources.
- Regional work on crisis prevention will enable MPs to become Peace Ambassadors, but this requires them to embrace a neutral stance, especially vis-à-vis their political party affiliation.
- Following the example of **Togo** and **Guinea-Bissau**, other countries in West Africa are encouraged to use the parliamentary self-assessment tool.
- Regional CPR work and research should cast light on the double role of youth as actors and victims of crises.
- Women's contribution to reconciliation processes in West Africa should be given more credit and importance.
- Partnerships of West African Parliaments with external actors/institutions could be very beneficial. AGORA in particular can supply MPs with ideas or examples of best practices to guide them in their legislative work. For instance, by sharing information on West African countries which introduced quota systems in their Constitution (such as **Burkina Faso** or **Ghana**), or passed effective laws to promote the political empowerment of women.
- AGORA and the self-assessment questionnaire are still rather recent tools and most MPs in West Africa are not familiar with them. A possible option to be considered by UNDP would be to present these tools to the ECOWAS Parliament. Beyond the lack of awareness of AGORA, the limited access to internet and adequate computers also constitute an important technical impediment to the utilization of AGORA.
- Unlike the high turnover of MPs which implies a considerable loss of capacities during every legislative election, parliamentary administrators tend to maintain fixed positions for many years and should therefore be more often associated to UNDP's work on parliaments and crisis prevention with a view to preserve long term capacities and ensure a certain continuity with regard to progress undertaken and achieved by previous legislatures.
- The creation of a regional fund, gathering contributions from UNDP, NGOs and national parliaments for the purpose of coordinating support given to West African Parliaments should be envisaged and debated, especially in terms of feasibility and utility. However managing a single fund might be a difficult endeavor primarily because the goals and expectations of donors are not necessarily the same.

UNDP will take into account all these comments and work to improve and facilitate cooperation and information exchanges at the regional level in 2011.

Session 11: Closing session and presentation of the 2011 Work Plan

The closing session provided an opportunity for the participants of the Parliamentary Working Group to discuss and agree upon a set of **key priorities regarding the 2011 Work Plan** of UNDP and the ECOWAS Parliament.

Dr. Kabere Garba, Bureau Manager of the ECOWAS Parliament, reviewed some of the priorities listed on the **ECOWAS Parliament's Agenda for 2011**: The ECOWAS Secretariat intends to develop a Work Plan for the entire duration of the new legislature (2011 -2015), to be submitted and adopted by the members of the new Parliament. The ECOWAS secretariat will also welcome a UNDP delegation in Abuja in February to collaborate on the elaboration of the strategic work plan, concretize the UNDP



Dr. Garba (ECOWAS Parliament) and Ms. Pangalos (UNDP)

/ECOWAS relationship ideally through the signing of a MOU, and discuss the possibility of extending UNDPs support beyond peace and security issues, on matters related to agricultural/rural development, human rights, health, gender, employment, education, for instance. Finally, the ECOWAS Parliament expressed interest in being more involved in AGORA, including ways to increase the visibility of the ECOWAS Parliament through AGORA.

Ms. Christianna Pangalos, UNDP Policy Specialist in Parliamentary Development and Political Party Strengthening, highlighted **UNDP's planned activities for 2011**:

At the national level, on the basis of a 2010 call for proposals, seed funding has been allocated to Togo and Guinea-Bissau in order to implement the activities recommended in the evaluation reports of the parliamentary CPR self-assessment tool. Looking at the electoral calendar for 2011, democratic transitions and statebuilding processes, UNDP will further support UNDP country offices to respond to the demands of parliaments to address these critical issues and remain available to service country offices, through our teams based in the Regional Centre in Dakar and Headquarters.

At the regional level, UNDP will continue to consolidate the network of parliamentarians in West Africa by encouraging its members to actively engage on issues relevant to crisis prevention (through scrutinizing the media, work of the parliament, parliamentary committees and political parties, constituency visits, attendance to meetings at the national, regional and international levels) and disseminate good practices and lessons learned from their respective countries, exchange experiences, identify and pilot south-south solutions and share recommendations, including on the

Trusted Area of AGORA and the group related to “Parliaments and crisis prevention in West Africa” in particular, where members will be able to blog and share articles on a regular basis, connect members of parliaments and parliamentary staff, comment on articles and lessons learned posted on AGORA, provide feedback on suggested research or comparative case studies to be conducted by UNDP. UNDP will also continue to work in close collaboration with the ECOWAS Parliament and finalize a handbook/practice guide on Parliaments and Crisis Prevention and Recovery compiling regional research and national case studies. A 2nd Regional Parliamentary Working Group will be organized by UNDP during the course of the year (November 2011).

At the global level, UNDP will contribute to the development of additional key learning modules to be created on-line under the dedicated West Africa page available in French and English on AGORA (www.agora-parl.org) as part of the knowledge building on parliamentary development and crisis prevention and recovery.



Left to right: Hon. Touré (Guinea), Mr. Some (ECOWAS Parliament), Hon. Singo (Togo), Hon. Kouagou (Togo), Mr. Capdevila (BIPRC), Hon. Tchankpana (Togo), Hon. Sissé (Guinea-Bissau)

ANNEX 1: Agenda

Opening: Tuesday 30 November 2010: Arrival at hotel – accreditation

19:00–20:00 (Catalonia Barcelona Plaza Hotel - Room 7.5, 7 th floor)	Welcome reception: registration and screening of the movie on parliaments and crisis prevention in West Africa Moderators: <u>Ms. Christianna Pangalos</u> (Policy Specialist, Parliamentary Development and Political Party Strengthening, UNDP) <u>Mr. Olivier Pierre-Louveaux</u> (Parliamentary Development Knowledge Manager, UNDP) Welcome dinner at the Hotel Restaurant
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Day 1: Wednesday 01 December 2010

<u>Outcome of the day: To reflect on armed violence and political parties in crisis prevention and recovery</u>	
09:00	<i>Bus departs the hotel for the Barcelona Peacekeeping centre (Montjuic)</i>
Session 1: Introductory session	
09:30–10:30	1) Objectives and outcomes of the regional working group 2) Tour de table (share one story from respective country on parliament and crisis prevention) – Introductions Moderators : <u>Dr. Kabeer Garba</u> (Bureau Manager, ECOWAS Parliament) <u>Mr. Cedric Jurgensen</u> (Parliamentary Development Advisor, UNDP)
10:30 - 10:45	Tea & coffee break
Session 2: Parliaments and Armed Violence in West Africa	
10:45–12:30	1) Presentation and summary of the findings and recommendations of the background research paper on Parliaments and Armed Violence in West Africa. <u>Dr. Linda Darkwa</u> (UNDP Consultant) - 15 minutes 2) Respondents: <u>Hon. Akosua Frema Osei-Opare</u> (Member of Parliament, Ghana) and <u>Hon. Mamy Diomandé</u> (Member of Parliament, Côte d’Ivoire) - 5 minutes each 3) Questions and Answers to collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region. Comments will be integrated in the final version of the background paper. Moderator: <u>Mr. Cedric Jurgensen</u> (Parliamentary Development Advisor, UNDP)
12:30 - 14:00	LUNCH BREAK
Session 3: Political Parties and Crisis Prevention in West Africa	
14:00 - 15:30	1) Presentation and summary of the findings and recommendations of the background research paper on Political Parties and Crisis Prevention in West Africa. <u>Ms. Christianna Pangalos</u> (Policy Specialist, Parliamentary Development and Political Party Strengthening, UNDP) and <u>Ms. Diane Sheinberg</u> (Parliamentary Development Programme Specialist, UNDP) - 15 minutes 2) Respondents: <u>Hon. Bernadette Lahaj</u> (Member of Parliament, Sierra Leone) and <u>Mr. Abdoulaye Touré</u> (Rapporteur, Defense and Security Committee, Guinea) - 5 minutes each

	<p>3) Questions and Answers to collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region. Comments will be integrated in the final version of the background paper.</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Olivier Pierre-Louveaux (Parliamentary Development Knowledge Manager, UNDP)</p>
15:30 - 15:45	Tea & coffee break
Session 4: Crisis Prevention, Recovery, and Mediation at the sub national level: the case of the Parliament of Catalonia	
15:45 - 16:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Types of existing conflicts and key crisis prevention and recovery challenges in Spain/Catalonia ✓ Opportunities and role of the Parliament of Catalonia in crisis prevention ✓ The role of individual parliamentarians and political parties in conflict prevention/mediation ✓ Interactions with the <i>Cortes Generales</i> (Congress of Deputies and Senate of Spain) on crisis prevention and recovery <p>1) Mr. Antoni Comín (Member of the Parliament of Catalonia) – 15 minutes</p> <p>2) Questions and Answers to collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region. Comments will be integrated in the final version of the background paper.</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Jordi Capdevila (Director, Barcelona International Peace Resource Center)</p>
20:00	Dinner at the Hotel Restaurant

Day 2: Thursday 02 December 2010

Outcome of the day: Mediation opportunities for parliamentarians and crisis prevention	
09:00	<i>Bus departs the hotel for the Barcelona Peacekeeping centre (Montjuic)</i>
Session 1: Mediation: tools and relevant opportunities for parliamentarians	
09:30 - 10:30	<p>Testimonials / personal experience of parliamentarians regarding mediation issues at the local, national and regional levels: entry points, challenges, success stories, enabling factors – recommendations for MPs in West Africa.</p> <p>1) Hon. Victoria Sylvia Saidu-Kamara (Member of Parliament, Sierra Leone and Fourth Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament) – 15 minutes</p> <p>2) Dr. Fholisani Sydney Mufamadi (Former Member of Parliament, South Africa) - 15 minutes</p> <p>3) Questions and Answers to collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region.</p> <p>Moderator: M. Bertin K. Somé (Parliamentary Assistant, ECOWAS Parliament)</p>
10:30 - 10:45	Tea & coffee break
Session 2: Mediation: lessons learned from political transitions and constitutional changes	
10:45–12:30	<p>Constitutional reforms during political transitions: lessons learned for parliamentarians.</p> <p>1) Mr. Abdoulaye Touré (Rapporteur, Defense and Security Committee, Guinea) – 15 minutes</p> <p>2) Ms. Zeinabou Gourouza (Rapporteur, Niger)-15 minutes (Presented by Ms. Diane Sheinberg)</p> <p>3) Questions and Answers to collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region.</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Marcin Buzanski (Consultant - Conflict and Governance, UNDP – BCPR)</p>
12:30 - 14:00	LUNCH BREAK
Session 3: Opportunities for parliamentarians on mediation	

14:00 - 15:30	1) Dr. Kabeer Garba (Bureau Manager, ECOWAS Parliament) 2) Ms. Nansata Yakubu (Parliament and Conflict Expert, Parliamentary Centre) 3) Questions and Answers to collect feedback from parliamentarians in the region. Moderator: Mr. Cedric Jurgensen (Parliamentary Development Advisor, UNDP)
15:30 - 15:45	Tea & Coffee break
16:00	Bus depart for tour of Barcelona
20:00	Dinner at the Hotel Restaurant

Day 3: Friday 03 December 2010

Outcome of the day: To reflect on global, regional and national activities on parliamentary development and crisis prevention in the region - Parliamentary working group consolidated and work plan presented	
09:00	<i>Bus departs the hotel for the Barcelona Peacekeeping centre (Montjuic)</i>
Session 1: National activities	
09:30–10:45	1) Presentation of the Guinea-Bissau and Togo parliamentary self-assessment exercise reports - 30 minutes per delegation ✓ Key CPR challenges in each country and for each parliament ✓ Opportunities for each parliament to address them ✓ Presentation of the planned activities / results from the mission ✓ Feedback on the mission / exercise and any other recommendations 2) Discussion of lessons and implications of the use of the tool for other countries - 15 minutes Moderator: Ms. Christianna Pangalos (Policy Specialist, Parliamentary Development and Political Party Strengthening, UNDP)
10:45 - 11:00	Tea & coffee break
Session 2: Regional framework	
11:00–12:30	1) Review of the terms of reference for the regional parliamentary working group 2) ECOWAS Parliament: opportunities with the new Parliament and agenda for 2011 Hon. Victoria Sylvia Saidu-Kamara (Member of Parliament, Sierra Leone and Fourth Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament) – 15 minutes Dr. Kabeer Garba (Bureau Manager, ECOWAS Parliament) – 15 minutes Moderator: Ms. Diane Sheinberg (Parliamentary Development Programme Specialist, UNDP)
12:30 - 14:00	LUNCH BREAK
Session 3: Global level	
14:00 - 16:00	1) News on AGORA (www.agora-parl.org): knowledge, exchanges and testimonials 2) Research: identification of key priorities for 2011 Moderator: Mr. Marcin Buzanski (Consultant - Conflict and Governance, UNDP – BCPR)
16:00 - 16:15	Tea & Coffee break + Group Photo
Session 4: Closing session and presentation of the Work Plan	
16:15 - 17:00	1) UNDP 2) ECOWAS Parliament Moderators: Dr. Kabeer Garba (Bureau Manager, ECOWAS Parliament)
20:00	Dinner at the Hotel Restaurant

ANNEX 2: Participants List

Last Name	First Name	Title /Organization	Country	E-mail	Phone
National Parliaments					
Diomandé	Mamy	Member of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, Member of the Defense and Security Committee	Côte d'Ivoire	madio2008@yahoo.fr	+225 01 00 14 61 +225 22 47 08 02 +225 07 90 25 84
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Tchankpana	Itidou Oga	Member of the National Assembly of Togo, Vice President of the Human Rights Committee	Togo	itkpana1@yahoo.fr	+228 925 65 03

International / Regional Organizations

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

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