

Peace, Security and Development Update

Strengthening Citizens' Security

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conciliation
resources



Centre for
Development &
Security Analysis



Mano River Women's Peace Network

Search for
Common
Ground

Introduction

This is the fifth in the series of six Peace, Security and Development Updates issued as part of the Strengthening Citizens' Security pilot project. The first four editions focused on a theme: *build up to the 2007 elections, strategies for building peace and security following the elections, women in security and youth and security*. This update departs from the format of the first four updates by providing an overview of the successes, challenges and lessons from the year of work on the pilot by the four partners: Conciliation Resources (CR), Mano River Union Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), Search for Common Ground/Talking Drum Studios (SFCG/TDS) and the Centre for Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA).

We are presenting some of the results of the pilot project in this issue under four broad headings: communication, public awareness, citizens' engagement with the security sector and knowledge and skills of civil society on security. These themes cover the planned Project Outputs. For each theme we show how the work of the four partners with a wide range of participating stakeholders has contributed and combined to achieve progress and learn lessons from experiences in the three focus locations for the project: the districts of Kenema and Kailahun and the capital city of Freetown.

Our aim is to show what might be achieved in sustaining peace and security across Sierra Leone and the neighbouring Mano River Union countries, Guinea and Liberia, by extending the activities developed beyond the pilot project locations. We show that by including Freetown in the pilot project it has been possible to engage high level security sector leaders and decision-makers, including the Members of the Sierra Leone Parliament, in recognizing the value of investing in strengthening citizens' participation in securing peace and development. With this recognition, there is more chance that valued, demonstrated experiences from the pilot project will be included and supported in the plans and operations of security sector actors and civil society organisations concerned with maintaining peace and stability as a base for the development of Sierra Leone and the sub Region.

Adam Platt

Strengthening Citizens' Security Project Coordinator
Conciliation Resources

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Editors for this issue of Peace, Security and Development Update
Rosalind Hanson-Alp, Abdulai Jalloh, Adam Platt

Produced as part of the Strengthening Citizens' Security Project Partnership

Conciliation Resources (CR), 17 Kingharman Road, Brookfields, Freetown, Sierra Leone
tel: +232-(0)76-478707 email: cr@c-r.org website: www.c-r.org

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Improved Communication between Civil Society and the Security Sector



Following a decade of war in Sierra Leone, communication and trust between civilians and armed forces, which included Government supporting military, police, militias and rebels, reached a very low point. Most citizens became alienated from the national military, suspicious that contact with them could result

Trust between local people and the police, military and Office of National Security has been built through a series of meetings facilitated and supported by the SCS project in the districts of Kenema and Kailahun. By focusing on events and local situations, solutions to some potential and actual problems have been worked out with both civil society and security personnel cooperating in providing solutions and implementing them. Suspicions that any information on crime would be mishandled by police have been reduced and people admit they are more willing to provide information that might help fight crime.

In Kailahun at a meeting facilitated by Conciliation Resources between civil society and security personnel, participants resolved to undertake a campaign against violence around forthcoming District elections. This resulted in planning and undertaking a series of rallies in five key locations in the District. The campaigns were led by young people from both civil society and the security

in being a victim of their violence, as they had come to expect little or no protection from the security forces and chose to have a little contact with them as possible. In this context, the project partners planned confidence building activities between the security sector and civil society to improve relations.

sectors. Kenema readily decided to undertake its own successful campaigns.

This spirit of cooperation has extended to less formal events such as football galas between military barracks and local civilian teams. Large numbers of spectators were attracted to the football matches held in the military compounds. These events have led to increased understanding of the lives led by both the community and security personnel. Tensions and misunderstandings have been reduced, with local children welcomed into military run schools and military personnel and local people socializing together. Uniforms are worn only for official work and not to intimidate civilians. Military commanders have added their weight to improving relations by supporting joint civil society and security sector events with appropriate budgets, through the Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC), welcoming civilians to their barracks and explaining the support the military can give.

Roundtable Discussions

To improve discussion and debate between professional security personnel, analysts such as academics and the media the Centre for Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA) organised seven round table discussions on topical subjects throughout the year of the project:

The first roundtable focused on the preparedness for the Elections 2007 and the Sustainability of Peace in Sierra Leone. The second roundtable brought together academics from Fourah Bay College, members of the security forces and the Office of National Security, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and civil society representatives to debate issues around Creating a level playing field for free, fair and transparent 2007 elections. Following the Presidential elections in August 2007, a roundtable provided the opportunity for citizens to share their views on how security was implemented during the peaceful elections.

Other roundtables, such as the role of women and youths in peace, security and development enabled participants to voice their concerns about the near exclusion of women and youths from the decision-making process, particularly around security. The discussions brought to the fore the crucial role of women, youths and students in sustaining peace and democracy in Sierra Leone. The final round table discussed The Role of External Actors in Peace, Security and Development in Sierra Leone and considered issues of security and development as two sides of the same coin, the international community's pivotal role in consolidating the peace in the nation.

These round tables have helped create a forum for positive interaction and dialogue among security personnel, government functionaries, academics, civil society activists and external actors. The outcomes of these round tables have, among other things, helped the partners of the project to realise the importance of networking in creating awareness about peace, security and development in Sierra Leone.



Training Women in Early Warning Systems

Recognising that many women require confidence and support to be able to communicate effectively with Government and traditional authorities (who are predominantly male), a key activity was to build and strengthen the capacity of women in the project areas to involve themselves in their own safety and security.

The Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) designed this component to help build the capacity of women's organisations in Kenema and Kailahun to engage with the security apparatus in a more meaningful way, particularly as women are potentially a prime source of information on events in the community.

MARWOPNET conducted a four-day Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop for 35 women from the project target areas. The training content was based on modules of a training manual 'Engendering Conflict Early Warning and Response at Community Level' developed by MARWOPNET with support from project partners. Lectures, guided discussions, role plays and group work were used by three facilitators from MARWOPNET, CR and the ONS to discuss and define; early warning for conflict prevention women's understanding of conflict and the varying types; methods of conflict analysis and to review current conflict monitoring, warning and response being applied in West Africa to help identify mechanisms for linking communities to the security sector at national level.

Women participants said that they view the promotion of household and community safety as one of their most important roles. However, in general, they lacked adequate knowledge and confidence to engage with security sector personnel. Following 2 days of training, the participants drew up a Plan of Action for both Kenema and Kailahun districts.

Recommendations made by participants included the need to involve more women in DISECs and monitoring of activities at border crossing points. In addition they called for a more structured link between women and the national security apparatus. The ONS were involved in both the training component and initial validation of the manual which has helped to create formal links between MARWOPNET and the security sector. On the last day, officials from the ONS, SLP, Immigration, RSLAF and District Council were invited to make closing statements.

As a result of this training initiative and the value of developing particularly women's skills in identifying early warning signs, MARWOPNET were formally invited to participate in DISEC and PROSEC meetings by the ONS' Watta Kamanda *"I recommend that women be included in the District Security Committee and the Provincial Security Committee as the act makes provision for the nomination of two other members...these have always been men. There are possibilities for expansion of membership of the National Security Council Coordinating Group to include certain people, like these women, who have the capacity to address current security issues"*.

Increased Public Awareness of Security Issues

Post war efforts to improve security and maintain peace have been mostly the work of Government security departments, with considerable international support. Limited time and attention has been given to increasing the knowledge and understanding of the general public on the significant changes to the security systems and structures. In trying to address this gap, SCS project partners implemented specific activities towards increasing public awareness on security.

Encouraging security discussion through radio

At In order to improve communication and information flows between the security sector and public so as to provide an opportunity for relationship building and decreasing tensions, Search for Common Ground–Talking Drum Studios (SFCG-TDS) in collaboration with local radio stations, Radio Moa (Kenema) and Eastern Radio (Kailahun), developed a series of radio broadcasts.

Over the course of the project, SFCG-TDS produced 16 episodes of *Security Link* that were broadcast at national level and 27 episodes of *Security Talk*, both in Kenema and Kailahun. These programmes served as a platform for discussion between a diverse cross section of Sierra Leone’s security apparatus, civil society and the general public. Through the weekly *Security Talk* programme, it was even been possible to resolve tension among citizens and local authorities (see box).

Public call-ins showed growing interest in the programmes and their issues. In Kenema, on several occasions phone-in sessions accompanying the weekly radio discussions have provided security personnel on the panel salient information that has led to the arrest of business people who are smuggling huge quantities of agricultural products such as palm oil and timber to neighbouring countries because of porous borders.

Public awareness has also been raised through ensuring the participation of the media in project events supported by the project partners. For example, journalists were invited to accompany non-violence youth campaigns prior to the elections in 2007 and 2008 (Presidential and Local Council). During the 2007 Presidential elections, the project encouraged discussion around security issues and through radio programming provided a safe space for the security stakeholders to communicate with their communities. The panel participating in *Security Talk* appreciated the opportunity to be able to discuss answer questions and provide guidance around the early warning signals of elections violence using this platform.

In addition, the two sub-regional conferences attracted television, radio and print press coverage, including responsible analytical articles in some newspapers. Radio journalists were especially active in interviewing civil society and security personnel attending joint meetings to improve relations between these groups and broadcasting these on local radio programmes.



Radio discussion eases tensions in Kailahun

The chiefs in Kailahun mandated traders and vegetable sellers to move from their original market site in the township to two newly constructed sites. It did not bode well with the traders. This situation subsequently led to a embarrassment to the business community in Kailahun when they could not pay back loans received from the Community Bank and an international NGO in Kailahun. The women traders immediately met and unanimously agreed that there should be no market on Friday, the usual market day, but instead would publicly walk naked in the streets of Kailahun in protest to the decision.

The situation was brought up at the next District Security Committee (DISEC) meeting as a security issue and it was decided that the local radio discussion “*Security Talk*” should capture it as the topic of discussion. During the radio discussion, panellists implored the women to refrain from such acts, but encouraged them to exercise restraint until all parties concerned were brought together to reach an amicable solution. The traders agreed to abort the proposed demonstration and worked together with the LPPB and DISECs to resolve the situation peacefully without affecting market business.

A Security Analysis Course for Students

At a Security Analysis School organised by Conciliation Resources, students from Fourah Bay College, Milton Margai College of Education, Science and Technology, Njala University and Civil Society Organisations took part in an innovative academic course that studied the concepts and dimensions of security. Students compared theoretical and practical issues related to national and international security through lectures from security practitioners, University academics, Paramount Chiefs, Members of Parliament, civil society organisations, the media, and international donors.

Students went on a field trip to Kenema, in the east of Sierra Leone, to see for themselves how the various security offices and divisions are working in the provinces and their links with the public through new initiatives like Local Police Partnership Boards and District Security Committees.

Their perceptions on security, both global and national, deepened as most were able to carry on with their study course work and essays while guiding their fellow students on matters of security within Sierra Leone. In fact most of these students can now access security-related information from the relevant sources easily. Their understanding of security was measured at the end of the course through presentations to a panel of experts from the ONS, RSLAF, SLP and DFID on the topics: Security and the role of youths; Early Warning signs, security threats and its challenges in Sierra Leone; Civil Society and its role in Security Sector Reform. The panel were impressed by the students' depth of knowledge of security issues and professionalism in presenting. As one student announced "we could sit down right now and pass next year's security sector module exam!"

Both panelists and students requested that there be a Security Analysis School on an annual basis as it would

build a generation of knowledgeable students who would be valuable assets to the security sector and academia. As Garry Horlacher, advisor to the ONS, said "There are lots of things that need to be done (in the security sector), but you are the ones that have to be positive, because you are your future."

Student Debate Series

The Centre for Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA) facilitated a series of Student Debates at Fourah Bay College (FBC), Freetown as well as the Eastern Polytechnic in Kenema.

The debates were carried out in the form of panel discussions. Presentations on a broad range of topics were made by panelists which opened the floor to debate among the wider student body in the form of comments, observations and questions.

Debated topics covered the role of young people and students in: 2007 Elections and the democratic process; Post election peace and reconciliation; Ensuring peaceful coexistence in tertiary and formal academic institutions; Peace Consolidation and in Promoting democratic accountability in Sierra Leone.

The debates provided the opportunity for students to analyse how crucial the contribution of youths has been in previous elections, as the next generation of leaders and as willing victims of political manipulation. In general, as young people have been judged at national level as being instigators of conflict and problematic within society, such discussions have helped rekindle students' sense of purpose and direction by way of initiating discussions among themselves and offering a forum to be heard. The debates also challenged students to consider their roles and

responsibilities in the development of Sierra Leone and to look at the underlying tendencies that undermine their peaceful coexistence on the one hand and the opportunity to engage in policy issues on the other.



Mechanisms for Civil Society Engagement in the Security Sector Strengthened

The Government's Security Sector Review of 2005 recognised the need to establish formal and informal processes and procedures by which the public and their representatives would be able to engage in the maintenance of peace and security. These mechanisms include the participation of civilian leaders (Chiefs and Councillors etc.) and civil society representatives in District and Provincial Security Committees (DISECs and PROSECs). Furthermore, Local Policing Partnership Boards (LPPBs) were constituted in all districts as part of the mechanism to ensure communities would be part of the decision making processes on policing priorities and be able to hold the police accountable. Project partners have supported these structures in Kenema and Kailahun and helped show how they can work effectively. In Freetown, project partners undertook advocacy and promotional activities to gain recognition of the value of civilian participation in security management

Exchange visits between Local Policing Partnership Boards

Recognising that Local Policing Partnership Boards (LPPB) experience is variable across the country, Search for Common Ground facilitated exchange visits for Kenema and Kailahun LPPBs to study practice, successes and lessons from LPPBs in Makeni and Kono.

The exchange visits were significant in a number of ways. First, some board members still had only a limited understanding of the LPPB concept and the roles they should play in community policing. By having the opportunity to visit other district LPPBs and share experiences, it helped participants to see firsthand what they could accomplish and reinforced their ideas that with focus on planning and commitment from members, LPPBs really can strengthen community security. This helped to motivate members from all of the boards.

The LPPB in Kailahun was rejuvenated as a result of its first exchange visit to Makeni and came back to Kailahun inspired to build on their achievements as a board. This eventually led to the establishment of Community Local Policing Partnership Boards (CLPPB) with the objective to increase awareness and greater involvement of rural communities, which has in turn helped to strengthen the view that successful community policing has to be a true collaboration between civil society and the police.

In Kailahun, local authorities, particularly Chiefs who are the custodians of the law, have been actively involved in LPPB activities. These LPPBs have helped with conflict mediation and mitigation exercises in their communities. This, to an extent, has helped to restore the public's confidence in the policing institutions and traditional authorities.

"I have served the Sierra Leone Police for over 30 years and have held very senior positions, the latest being Commissioner of the South, but have always assumed that I had a wealth of knowledge on the LPPB concept. The visit to Makeni has been the greatest eye opener for me to discussing the concept of community policing and I really appreciate the efforts of the project".

Local Unit Commander
Kenema Division

Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Defence, Internal and Presidential Affairs

The Parliamentary committee specifically responsible for oversight of the security sector is the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Defence, Internal and Presidential Affairs (POCDI&PA) which has the oversight mandate of defence, security and intelligence. Conciliation Resources and the Centre for Development and Security Analysis produced an assessment of the Oversight Committee, with the aim of gauging the capacity of the security sector's oversight structures and functions of this committee.

The assessment report emphasized the Committee's lack of financial resources, adequate support staff and facilities offices to effectively function as an oversight body. Parliamentarians themselves were apprehensive about Committee functions, as outlined in the report *"there was general concern about the existence of a plethora of oversight bodies provided for in the 1991 Constitution."* The report went on to say that there is a *"lack of clarity of the specific role of the Committee dealing with defence matters. Almost all those interviewed called for clarity of the functions of this Committee"*.

The assessment illustrated that most Committee members *"still see security matters in terms of state security and the physical security. They do not see it in human security terms*

which has implications for their role in broader security matters". Being aware of the need for Members of Parliament to better understand the security structures now in place, the Office of National Security (ONS) were keen to facilitate a workshop to present the security architecture to all Parliamentarians.

Conciliation Resources supported the ONS' initiative to hold a one day 'Parliamentarian Training Day' to upgrade the knowledge of Members of Parliament on the structures and operations of the security sector. Opened by the Vice President and Speaker of the House, Members of Parliament engaged in lively discussions with senior representatives of the ONS, Police, Military, Prison and Fire services, each of whom described their combined and separate roles in maintaining national security.

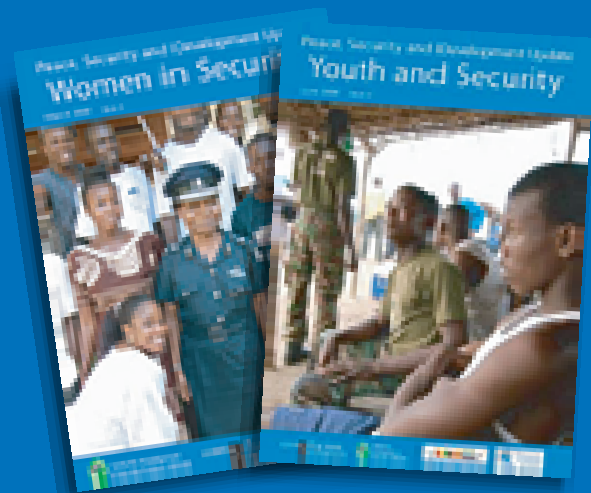
A project representative presented the highlights of the Parliamentary Oversight Committee assessment and discussed some of the recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the committee. The National Security Coordinator, Brigadier Kellie Conteh, urged Parliamentarians to *"recognize that the Nation's future will depend not only on the success of recent elections, but the smooth development of democracy and election processes in the year 2012."*

The Office of National Security emphasized to Members of Parliament that:

- There are systems and structures in place that enable information from local level to be assessed and presented to the highest levels when necessary for decision-making, citing the example of the recent Guinea military unrest, which was carefully monitored and accurate information and advice provided to the National Security Council.
- Parliamentarians should engage with their constituency level District and Provincial Security Committees (DISEC and PROSEC) as a means to support local solutions to local security issues. They should always work within these structures and avoid attempting to give direct orders to local commanders when faced with challenges to local security.
- Chiefs represented in Parliament are a valuable means to ensure that security is understood and maintained by security sector actors and civilians at community level who are working together.

Peace, Security and Development Updates published

In order to document the ways in which different civil society groups are affected by and engaged in peace building, security and development mechanisms, Conciliation Resources and the Centre for Development and Security Analysis published six Peace, Security and Development Updates with specific themes: *Elections 2007 and the Sustainability of Peace and Security; Post-election Peace and Reconciliation in Sierra Leone; Women in Security; Youth in Security; Strengthening Citizens' Security project and Security Structures in Sierra Leone.*







Building Civil Society's Knowledge and Skills in Security

To raise the levels of knowledge and skills of citizens in the pilot project areas and more widely in Sierra Leone and the Mano River Union (MRU), a range of training and knowledge sharing activities have been supported by the project partners.

Training Media in Security Structures

Recognising that journalists and other media professionals are key providers of information to the entire population Search for Common Ground undertook media training in Kenema. The purpose of the training was to provide the radio journalists with tools to report appropriately on security issues and to take ownership of the initiatives. The presenters focused on building connections and strengthening the links between journalists, civil society and state security systems. The training also sought to enhance timely and accurate reporting by increasing the journalist's awareness of security issues, particularly around elections reporting and identifying who to access for specific information about security threats or early warning signs.

A professional journalist made the first presentation on media ethics and reporting techniques on security issues. This was followed by the Provincial Coordinator of the Office of National Security (ONS) – Eastern Region, who discussed the structure of the national security apparatus. After each completed their talk, the facilitator initiated discussions to assess the understanding of participants on the key issues raised. Both journalists and presenters were given the chance to present their perspectives and ask questions of each other, in order to build the relationships and understanding on topics. Other subjects discussed during the two days included: The role of the electronic media in security; The role of military in mitigating conflict (Military Aid to Civil Power (MACP)); Interview and reporting

techniques; The role of the LPPB in enhancing state security; and Classification of information and media ethics.

In groups, participants were then able to identify the challenges of reporting as journalists. They then identified existing gaps in security reporting from the perspective of the security apparatus, civil society and journalists.

Participants made recommendations that would make sharing of information between the security sector and civil society more sustainable:

- Regular interactive forums between journalists, security apparatus and civil society in order to build a culture of trust between these groups.
- Improve the ease in which journalists can make use of the Media Units within the security sector for dissemination of relevant information.
- Contact commercial stakeholders, Government institutions and heads of parastatals to raise sponsorship in support of security radio discussions.

To extend and share knowledge and skills across the MRU two sub-regional conferences were organised as part of the pilot project. The first focused on Women in Security and the second, Crossing Boundaries, on differences in the security systems of the MRU countries and cooperation in maintaining peace across the sub-region.



"We have learnt that peace and security depends on the rapid response to early indications of conflict..."

...which requires imaginative strategies, creative and flexible approaches to which our womenfolk have always taken the lead and yet the potential contribution of women in the sub region remains severely undervalued. This, in my view, is what this conference aims to address"

Pallo Conteh
Minister of Defence, Sierra Leone

Mano River Union Conferences

Women in Security

In December 2007, MARWOPNET organised a sub-regional conference in Freetown with the theme: 'Women in Security: Challenges and Opportunities', designed specifically to create space for Government security sector, civil society organizations and community representatives from Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia to analyze the barriers that exclude women from the security policy formulation and implementation process and to map a way forward for effective involvement of civil society, particularly women, in security issues. In his opening remarks Sierra Leone's Minister of Defence, Pallo Conteh, expressed the interest of Government to "reinforce women's role in security" as part of the 'broader goal of empowering women which is one of the avowed aspirations of the President, Ernest Bai Koroma".

Presentations and plenary discussions focused on understanding current security sector structures and women's involvement in relationship building, community policing and national security policy making. Participants discussed current security concerns and shared experiences on the reality of the security infrastructures interface with the local population and the gaps between theory and practice.

The Concerns common to the three countries were women's insecurity around border crossings, gender-based violence, early pregnancy and barriers to women's involvement in decision-making processes. Evident is the need for Government and civil society to work together to effectively respond to the issues. As advocates of peace, it was stated that the MRU need to collaborate more, particularly in helping stimulate dialogue and peace along the borders.

MARWOPNET were nominated as the representatives to present a strong statement, produced by the conference participants, to MRU Heads of States on: Security Concerns and Recommendations of Women in Mano River Union Countries (see overleaf). The usefulness of the conference can be captured in the words of the Assistant Inspector General of Police, Kadi Fakondo, who said that "Women are often among those most acutely affected by conflict, though they frequently have little or no role in creating the situations in where they find themselves. It is important to know the impact conflict has on women's lives in practical terms and how, as women we can participate in regulating information for which they are simultaneously subjects and producers".

Outcomes

Having deepened their understanding on the structure and operations of national and sub regional security systems, participants utilised the knowledge and skills acquired from the conference to design recommendations and strategies necessary for women's active involvement and participation in security policy formulation and implementation.



Security Concerns and Recommendations of women from the Namo River Union

The following recommendations were proposed by participants of the sub-regional 'Women in Security' conference.

- MARWOPNET be empowered to engage in the processes of peace and security within the MRU, for instance, managing Early Warning Responses and establishing Village Peace Committees.
- Create a forum of MRU Custom officials & joint Security Networks as a way of addressing hardships endured by women at border crossings.
- MARWOPNET use various national and international agreements that call for women's involvement in decision making as a means of advocating for increased engagement within the MRU.
- Develop a sub regional action plan on UN resolution 1325 and other treaties and a sub regional approach to GBV.
- Work in collaboration with MRU, Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Education and Family Support Units in sensitizing the grass root women about the implications of early pregnancy.
- Develop a West African moratorium against the traffic and purchase of light weapons and small arms.
- Work with cultural groups and traditional festivals as way of sensitizing communities and optimizing participation and ownership of security.
- Engage communities in the MRU for the purposes of Adult Education, Girl Child Education and Life Skills Acquisitions.
- Work with traditional authorities and communities to sensitize men and women on issues of gender-based violence and solicit their support to fight gender based violence (GBV).
- Work through or with MRU women's organizations, to encourage civil society and young people to prioritise education, hard work, commitment and other positive behaviours.



Crossing Boundaries

Some of the issues that emerged from the 'Women in Security' sub-regional conference, such as border security and the potential abuse of particularly women traders, helped to define some of the objectives for discussion at the Mano-River Union conference that was coordinated by Conciliation Resources at the end of April 2008.

The main aim of the '*Crossing Boundaries: Sub-Regional Conference on Civil Society & Security Sector Cooperation*' conference was to facilitate networking and experience sharing between civil society and security sector institutions across the MRU countries to address key challenges in sub-regional security policies and implementation, particularly related to border security.

It was clear that both MRU security personnel and civil society representatives needed to better understand the varying security structures in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. MRU security practitioners presented their country's security structures which highlighted the challenges of implementing national security policies in isolation from other MRU countries. Both grass roots and high level participants from civil society and security sector institutions attended the conference and were able to share experiences of how civil society and security sector have engaged and learn from each country's methods of collaboration.

At the end of the two day conference a "Statement with Recommendations for Sustained and Enhanced Civil Society and Security Sector Cooperation in the MRU countries", agreed upon by all participants, included

important messages to Governments and civil societies across the MRU (see overleaf). Participants agreed that their understanding of the security challenges faced by each country, especially border security and procedures, were increased through attendance at the conference.

One of the conference's outcomes was the inclusion of a Director from the Office of National Security in the May 2008 Sierra Leone MRU Summit delegation, which had been made at the request of H.E. the President following His Excellency's reading of the Conference Statement.

At a more local level, a trader from Kenema District who attended the conference was inspired to cross the Liberian and Guinean borders with fellow traders, in order to fully understand the challenges they faced. As he was aware of the security procedures, the conference participant and trader was able to use his knowledge to guide traders through the border crossings successfully by refusing to pay any of the demands by officials for unauthorized charges. As a result of his knowledge and leadership he was later elected Chairperson of the Kenema Traders Association.

Recommendations from the Crossing Boundaries conference, if taken forward with adequate political and financial support, would ensure the experiences and lessons of the SCS Pilot Project are built upon. Thus establishing the peaceful and secure base required for poverty reduction and development and achievement of the internationally agreed Minimum Development Goals across the MRU countries.

A Mano River Statement for Sustained and Enhanced Civil Society – Security Sector Cooperation

The Mano River Union and member states should:

- Strengthen the Mano River Union Secretariat so that it can improve the performance of its coordinating functions.

For example to effectively implement joint border patrols, review protocols, exchange learning and convene periodic joint meetings to address security challenges such as: the border area of Yenga between Sierra Leone and Guinea, human, drug and arms trafficking and the downsizing of military forces in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

- Expedite the issuing of the ECOWAS passports in their respective countries.
- Widely disseminate protocols among the populace in more accessible formats such as printed materials and radio broadcasts.
- Harmonize and publicly display cross border tariffs to ensure free movement for MRU citizens.
- Publicly commit to expose and eradicate corruption and other abuses by security personnel and ensure best practice.

The Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone should:

- Remain committed to mobilize resources for the security sector to function effectively.

For example improve conditions of service, provide adequate human resources and equipment and build the capacity of security sector personnel.

- Renew commitment to the Mano River Union and its protocols.
- Promote awareness raising activities about security sector structures among the populace and create more opportunities to dialogue with and engage civil society.
- Encourage Parliament/ Legislature to take their rightful role in providing oversight of the security sector.
- Pay special attention to the challenges faced by women in the security sector and to violations perpetrated against them.
- Provide National ID cards to their citizens that are recognized within the Mano River Union.

The Government of Liberia should:

- Ensure the sustainability and national ownership of the Security Sector Reform process.

Civil Society Representatives should:

- Create a Sub-Regional Working Group on Security to support the Mano River Union Secretariat and monitor its performance.
- Encourage a broader interest and participation in security matters and exercise their rights.
- Strengthen their capacity to engage with the Security Sector.

For example facilitate meetings between communities and security sector officials.

- Encourage women's inclusion and participation in civil society organisations' involvement in the security sector.

Strengthening Citizens' Security Project

Lessons Learned

- Military and other security personnel have developed a stronger relationship with the public, but more work needs to be done to broaden trust building project activities across the country.
- Holding meetings in areas where roads are bad, especially in the rainy season, makes organizing meetings and sustaining such links a challenge.
- In the pilot areas, women's capacity to talk about security has been increased but more women need to be targeted so they are not a minority in security discussions.
- Informal civil society–military events are easy to organise and greatly strengthen relations between them providing a minimum budget is available to support them.
- While the students attending the project's Security Analysis School have been capacitated in their general knowledge of security, it would be beneficial to incorporate this type of extra course into the curriculum coursework so that more students can benefit from engaging directly with security practitioners.
- The 2008 rioting of students during their own Student Union elections points to the need to extend education on security to a broad range of students, as they are the nation's future professionals leaders.
- Radio broadcasts have raised the profile of public responsibility for security and some have provided police with information leading to the solving of crimes.
- Some people who would wish to participate in broadcasts are far from radio studios and scheduling of broadcasts is important to avoid clashes with popular religious and other broadcasts.
- Participation in LPPBs, DISECs and other structures are valued and valuable, but they are also costly and require funds and support to ensure meetings are attended by civil society actors.
- Parliamentary oversight of security sector actors is essential to ensure their political and financial accountability, but most parliamentarians have low understanding of the reformed security apparatus and are overstretched in their roles to give adequate priority to oversight.
- Published updates of high visual standard are a strong means to disseminate basic information on security and to promote understanding of the mechanisms for security and ways in which civilians can engage.