



## WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING, GHANA (WANEP-Ghana)

*Building relationships for peace*

### INTRODUCTION

#### **About WANEP-Ghana**

WANEP-Ghana is a civil society's effort meant to prevent, resolve, and transform violent conflicts through collective and coordinated efforts of non-governmental organizations, para-state institutions and individuals actively engaged in peacebuilding practice in Ghana in order to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize resources for more effective responses to conflict situations. The organization seeks to facilitate the creation of a sustainable culture of non-violence, justice, peace and social reconciliation in Ghanaian communities. The Ghana version of the organisation was launched in 2002. To date, the organisation continues to engage in network strengthening and partnership building; research; conflict prevention, management and resolution; outreach and capacity building; and advocacy on Human Security issues.

#### **(A) Commitment to the Voluntary Principles**

##### **Within the Ghana In Country Working Group (ICWG)**

Since 2016, WANEP-Ghana, together with the Fund For Peace (FFP) and The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNRs), has served as co-chair of the In-Country Working Group (ICWG), in which capacity WANEP-Ghana assists in the implementation of the Working Group (WG) by engaging in bilateral meetings with government, corporate and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) pillar members about the VPSHRs in mining, oil and gas, convening NGO Pillar as well as the general VPs quarterly ICWG meetings, and supporting with documentation of the activities, and implementation of planned and follow-up activities.

In the year under review, WANEP-Ghana assisted in organising quarterly meetings among members of the ICWG and engaged bilaterally with corporate and NGO members, and encouraged meetings by the government pillar. WANEP-Ghana as the lead organisation of the NGO pillar coordinates and mobilises NGO members and International Agency members (Embassies and High Commissions) to participate in the ICWG meetings. WANEP-Ghana is leading an advocacy aimed at increasing the NGO as well as other sector participation in the WG. This inclusive membership drive, and consultation seeks to increase participation, encourage inclusivity in taking decisions, as well as broaden the tenets and best practices of the VPs in Ghana. In view of this, current NGO members have been tasked to continuously nominate/recommend other NGOs to become members of the pillar. The list of new members will be 'vetted' by WANEP-Ghana and KAIPTC before being added to the NGO pillar.

As a local partner, it is supporting the FFP and Ghana's Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNRs) to finalise baseline study (led by Ghana's Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice – CHRAJ) report on human rights in the mining, oil and gas sector in Ghana, and a curriculum for training of public security.

### **VPI global activities**

WANEP-Ghana has been participating in the annual VP Global plenary since 2017 and participating in member verification discussions towards admitting new members into the VPI. The organisation has also participated in design processes towards strategic review of the VPs.

#### **(B) Procedures**

WANEP-Ghana has submitted its annual report to the VPA for the year 2021.

#### **(C) Promotion of the Voluntary Principles**

WANEP Ghana continues to raise awareness about the VPs through bilateral engagements in its efforts of NGO Pillar membership drive.

#### **(D) In Country Implementation**

### **Community sensitization understanding natural resources conflicts and peacebuilding**

In February, August and December, WANEP-Ghana serving as the local implementing partner in the FFP led Responsive Engagement on Collective Learning Approaches to Inform Mercury Substitution in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana (RECLAIMS ASGM Ghana) project funded by the US Department of State, conducted community sensitization on social impacts of ASGM activities in two communities in Ghana. These communities were Sefwi-Nkateso in the Bibiani Municipality of the Western North Region, and Gbani in the Talensi district of the Upper East Region. The program provided opportunity for government, miners, concession owners, community members and traditional leaders to come together and address social impacts of ASGM operations in the communities. Among others, operational issues of security, human rights and peace between the targeted mines and communities were discussed towards facilitating peaceful co-existence between these two stakeholders and within the communities. To ensure rapid responses to threats to peace and security, and prevent and protect human rights, RECLAIMS has set up Local Dialogue Facilitation Committees that receive reports on grievances and proactively respond to those threats before they escalate in the communities.

### **Local media sensitization on conflict resolution**

Similarly, in order to increase community outreach in the RECLAIMS regions with the sensitisation on peace, WANEP-Ghana in partnership with FFP conducted radio programs on peacebuilding, conflict management and resolution in mining communities. The program was carried out in two radio stations in two regions of Ghana (Upper East and Western North regions). Again, the discussions bothered on conflicts associated with social impacts of mining activities in communities and how to identify and resolve those issues as and when they arise.

## **IEC materials developed for education in project mining communities**

WANEP-Ghana in collaboration with FFP continued the development and production of IEC materials for the training and sensitization of mining communities on the potential impacts of mining activities in their communities and how to handle those impacts. The materials are used for stakeholder engagement and sensitization, as well as school outreach programs. Copies of the materials have been given to selected schools in the two regions for educating students on the potential effects of mining activities in a community.

## **Formation of education clubs in selected schools**

WANEP-Ghana in collaboration with FFP has set up education clubs in eight (8) schools in two regions of Ghana (Upper East and Western North regions). These school clubs have increased from eight (8) to eleven (11) in the two regions of Ghana. Members of the club in the selected Senior High Schools are being trained on social and environmental effects of ASGM activities in the mining communities and how to identify and address those problems. These members would in turn conduct peer education of their peers in schools, as well as carry out outreach programs to mining and non-mining family and community members.

## **Develop peace sensitization manual to manage land and natural resource conflicts**

### **Technical support to DASGOPs and RASGOPs for improved Natural Resource Management through development of byelaws**

The AGREE Activity through WANEP-Ghana is supporting four Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and their District Agriculture Governance Platforms (DASGOPs) to formulate and pass bylaws to regulate herder-farmer relations and women's access to farmlands. These districts include Jirapa in the Upper West, Bongo District in the Upper East, West Gonja District (WGD) in the Savannah, and Tolon in the Northern Regions. In the previous quarter, the Jirapa District has already submitted their bylaw to the regional coordinating council (RCC) for Review, but the RCC is yet to provide its feedback. The WGD Assembly debated the draft bylaw in their December 2021 General Assembly meeting but passage of the bylaws was put on hold because some of the assembly members requested to hold further consultative meetings there was the need to further consult with their constituents and other technical bodies to inform their decision on the bylaw. It was expected that the bylaws would be passed in the year 2022.

Similarly, the Agriculture and Justice and Security Sub-Committees of the Tolon District Assembly discussed and referred the need to formalize bylaws to regulate crop farmer and herder relations as well as enact land tenure regimes that are friendly towards women access and use of lands especially for farming as well as regulate activities of cattle herders to promote peace and security of agro-pastoralists' communities. However, during the discussions, some assembly members were initially sceptical that the bylaws on secured land access for women farmers could interfere with their existing cultural and traditional practices, and cause family disunity and conflicts. This therefore informed their quest to consult broadly for inputs to enrich the byelaw and for acceptance. The committee meetings eventually established a technical committee to draft

the byelaws while all assembly members engaged stakeholders for inputs to enrich the byelaws during discussions. The remaining district, the Bongo District, has planned to continue discussions on the byelaws in 2022.

**(E)Lessons and Issues**

- i. Promotion of local and national human rights, security and peace platforms facilitates community ownership of processes towards stable natural resource extraction communities
- ii. Just like the national level policy formulation, processes to formulate local level byelaws are rigorous and bureaucratic at the local general assembly level which makes it time consuming. Lack of capacity, diverse interests and views that CSO efforts are not part of government business could contribute to such bureaucracies.