SOUTH-SOUTH AND REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR PEACE BUILDING IN WEST AFRICA

Kehinde Olayode, Charles Ukeje

Abstract: The paper appraises the existing framework for peace building in West Africa under the auspices of ECOWAS as the multilateral platform for south-south cooperation, with specific focus on Liberia and Sierra Leone. The critical question for interrogation in the paper is the extent to which south-south cooperation framework (both multilateral and bilateral) has been successfully utilized in post-conflict reconstruction and development in West Africa. The paper argues that unlike in other climes, post-conflict reconstruction in West Africa usually involves multiple complex emergencies arising from the collapse of central administration (failed state phenomenon) and its attendant consequences. Under these circumstances, relative success has been recorded in multilateral regional cooperation in peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. The capacity for sustained post-conflict reconstruction through regional framework, is however weak due to political and economic constraints. A significant factor in the success story recorded in West Africa peace building project is the immense contribution of Nigeria, in strengthening ECOWAS multilateral peace-building initiatives in West Africa. The paper concludes that the West African experience has demonstrated the necessity of South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a more viable approach to peace building and post-conflict reconstruction.

Keywords: *South-South Cooperation, Triangular Cooperation, ECOWAS, Conflicts, Peace-building*

Introduction

The weak capacity of African countries to exert significant influence on the international economic order stimulated Africa's leaders to show interest in South–South cooperation as an alternative mechanism

for increasing the continent's negotiating power in global affairs. The South-South cooperation framework has been integrated into regional and sub-regional economic communities and arrangements such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD); the Southern African Development Community (SADC); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); among others (Sesay, Olayode and Omotosho 2013: 96).

Achieving regional integration was a major concern of West African leaders after independence. Aware of the weak sustainability of narrow domestic markets inherited from colonisation, political leaders of the post-colonial West Africa, while continuing the integration project at the continental level, focused on setting up a wide space for regional integration, which transcends administrative, linguistic or political divides left by the colonial domination and administration modes (Olayode 2015: 2). That political will materialised in 1975 through the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Contemporary approach to peace building and post-conflict reconstruction with its emphasis on national and community ownership, sustainability, regional solutions, governance and justice, cost effectiveness and affordability resonate with the core principles of South-South Cooperation (SSC) as an alternative mechanism for increasing Africa's bargaining power in global affairs (Sesay, Olayode and Omotosho 2013: 97). Stronger and deeper relationships among developing countries and the pivotal role of several emerging powers in the global south have created a compelling context for mainstreaming SSC framework into conflict prevention, peacemaking, post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building efforts in developing countries.

Although, initially conceived as an economic integration mechanism, ECOWAS has become famous for its conflict prevention and management, peacemaking and peace keeping initiatives in member states. The peace initiatives undertaken by ECOWAS in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and to a much lesser extent, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali have attracted global commendations.

Integrating South-South cooperation into peace building and post-conflict reconstruction also resonates with the UN Agenda for contemporary peace building, which emphasises the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements and organisations for preventive diplomacy within their respective areas of competence. In the 1992 'Agenda for Peace', the then UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali argued that the capacities of regional organisations in the key areas of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and post conflict peace building would not only lighten the UN's burden, but also help consolidate a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs' (Boutros Boutros-Ghali 1992: Chapter VI). Another compelling argument for regional arrangements for peace building is the reluctance of the western countries to sanction and participate in peace keeping operations in Africa after the unpleasant experiences in Somalia (1993) and Rwanda (1994). There is therefore the need for African states to find internal solutions to the continent's many intractable conflicts instead of looking for external interventions (Adebayo 2008: 131–132). The 1995 Report of the UN Secretary General on 'Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa' also submitted that "sub-regional organisations sometimes have a comparative advantage in taking the lead role in the prevention and settlement of conflicts' (UN 1995: A/50/711 and S/1995/911). The UN office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) has also argued for the expansion of the mandate of the South-South Cooperation from its "traditional focus on technical and development cooperation into relations within the realms of state-building and peace building" (UNOSSC 2015: 1).

Post-conflict reconstruction and peace building has not always been a complete success story as far as south-south cooperation is concerned in West Africa. Unlike in other climes, peace building in West Africa usually involves multiple complex emergencies arising from the collapse of central administration (failed state phenomenon) and its attendant consequences like – collapse of various administrative organs of the state and institutions; refugee crisis and internal displaced dislocation issues; resettlement and post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction; economic rehabilitation and civil service restructuring; democracy and elections; reconciliation; disarmament and arms destruction; security agencies rebuilding;

justice and restitution (truth and reconciliation) etc. The capacity of regional initiatives has often been over-stretched to undertake post-conflict reconstruction and peace building without external support from the North.

Against this backdrop, this paper examines the extent to which south-south cooperation framework (both multilateral and bilateral) has been successfully utilised in post-conflict reconstruction and development in West Africa. Specifically, the paper interrogates whether multilateral and bilateral regional peacekeeping operations could be successfully undertaken in West Africa without the support of western powers. The central argument of the paper is that post-conflict reconstruction in West Africa usually involves multiple complex emergencies arising from the collapse of central administration (failed state phenomenon) and its attendant consequences. Under these circumstances, there is limited capacity for sustained post-conflict reconstruction through regional framework due to political and economic constraints. Thus, relative success has been recorded in multilateral regional cooperation in peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. The following questions are explored in the paper: (i) what are the political and economic constraints that hampered south-south initiatives in peace building and post-conflict reconstruction projects in West Africa; (ii) what are the lessons that can be derived from the Liberian and Sierra Leonean cases for building sustainable peace in West Africa; and (iii) Can south-south cooperation (multilateral and bilateral) be instituted as permanent framework for peace building in West Africa.

The paper is an explorative study that relies mostly on primary and secondary materials. A critical review of the African Peace and Security Architecture as well as ECOWAS Institutional Policy Framework for Conflict Resolution was undertaken to examine the common grounds in the two documents. The paper purposively selected Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d' Ivoire, Mali and Guinea Bissau as specific cases. These countries were selected due to the intertwining nature of their crises as well as the similar approaches adopted in the resolution of the crises. The cases studies also clearly brought to the fore, the limitations of regional approaches to conflict resolution and peace building in complex emergencies.

Conceptual Clarifications
South-South and Triangular Cooperation

South-South Cooperation involves developing countries supporting each other through technical and economic cooperation and common responses to development challenges. It refers to a broad set of dynamics that involve developing countries, from temporary coalitions in multilateral negotiations to private investment flows, and cooperation in areas such as trade, finance, investment, exchanges of knowledge, skills and technical expertise (Sesay, Olayode and Omotosho 2013: 96–97). South-South cooperation has now evolved to include a version that enables a donor organisation or country to sponsor and participate in South-South interactions and relations under 'Triangular South-South' cooperation. Triangular cooperation is a more recently recognised version of South-South cooperation involving collaboration between Southern aid provider and a Northern donor for the benefit of a third Southern recipient country.

Peace Building

Peace building as conceived by the United Nations Secretary-General's Report in the *1992 Agenda for Peace* involves "action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (United Nations 1992: 21). In a further conceptual elaboration of peace building, the 2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (known as the Brahimi Report), defined it as "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war" (United Nations 2000: 13).

Drawing largely from various UN definitions of peace-building, Ismail (2008) has identified some essential features of post-conflict peace building, to include:

> Disarmament, guarding and destruction of weapons, repatriating and resettling refugees, advising and retraining security actors, monitoring elections and protection of human rights, reforming

and strengthening government institutions, police and judicial systems reforms and economic development (Ismail 2008: 13).

The concept of peace building is also intrinsically related to state building in the context of collapse of state institutions in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars. Peace building in West Africa usually involves multiple complex emergencies associated with the collapse of central administration (failed state phenomenon) and attendant consequences. Peace building in West Africa context are related to resettlement and post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction; civil service restructuring; democracy and elections; reconciliation; disarmament and arms control; security sector reform and management; justice and restitution (truth and reconciliation), etc.

Framework for Regional Cooperation and Peace Building in West Africa
The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the seemingly impotency of the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to intervene given the 'non-interference in domestic affairs' clause was a major impetus for the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The APSA was created alongside the African Union (AU) in 2002 to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in Africa. The African Union rejected the absolute respect for territorial integrity and non-intervention clause of its predecessor (OAU) and adopted the principle of 'non-indifference', thus breaking away from the dominance non-intervention principle that pervaded the continent. The APSA was premised on the principle of 'non-indifference' by seeking for African solutions to domestic conflicts. The AU's Constitutive Act and APSA allowed intervention in member state in grave circumstances like war crimes, genocide, gross violation of human rights, state terrorism, among others.

Implicit in the provisions of the AU's Constitutive Act and APSA is the concept of human security and the understanding that sovereignty is conditional and defined in terms of a State's capacity and willingness to protect its citizens (Powell 2005: 1). Traditional security paradigms were fast becoming irrelevant in explaining the apparent shift from

interstate to intra-state conflicts in the post-Cold War order. The new security paradigm therefore focused on broadening the concept of security to include the referents of security (to the individual) and a widening of the range of actors involved in the provision of security. The human security paradigm, as it became known through the popularisation of the UNDP's 1994 report, redefined security as "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear." The impact of the human security approach was evidenced in policy-making circles as many countries began to incorporate its level of analysis and variables in their security-related strategies. The realist approaches that equate national security with the protection of state sovereignty and territory mask other forms of violence and insecurity (Hunter 1999: 10; Enloe 1980: 15). The realist assertion that the state is the only legitimate provider of security denies the fact that the state itself often poses a threat to the security of people, from brutality to structural violence through perpetuating economic inequality. In general, human security approaches emphasise the security of people rather than state sovereignty, the obligation of states to ensure people's security, the cross-border nature of many security issues, the importance of non-state actors, accountability for violators of human rights and humanitarian law, the complexity of security threats and the need for multifaceted responses (Bunch 2003: 11–12).

The five pillars of APSA are: (i) the Peace and Security Council; (ii) the Panel of the Wise; (iii) the AU Peace Fund; (iv) the Continental Early Warning System; and (v) the African Standby Force (Ulrich 2014: 4–5). The AU's Peace Architecture, recognising the pivotal role of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) assigns them leading roles in conflict prevention, and resolution. Thus important components of the APSA such as the Continental Early Warning System and the African Standby Force with its five regional brigades rely on institutional pillars in the different regions of Africa. The justification for close collaboration and engagement between RECs and AU on peace and security are numerous. The RECs are closer to the scenes of regional conflicts and have better understanding of the dynamics of such conflicts. In addition, RECs appreciate the needs for intervention in specific contexts and know how it can be organised and implemented quickly and efficiently. Also, the fluidity of conflicts imposes greater pressure on RECs to intervene quickly to prevent the spreading of conflict to states with contiguous borders (Ajayi 2008: 8–9). The

relationship between RECs and the AU was formalised in 2008 with the signing of a 'Protocol on Relations between the AU and eight RECs. The Protocol requires RECs to 'align their programmes, policies and strategies with those of the AU' (African Union 2008: 3). A separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was also signed in 2008 between the RECs and AU on cooperation in the area of peace, security and coordinating mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades as provided in the APSA structure. Other provisions of the MOU include promoting democracy, good governance, the rule of law, human rights, humanitarian assistance, disaster management, post conflict reconstruction and development, arms control and disarmament, counter terrorism and border management (African Union 2008: 4).

ECOWAS Peace and Security Structures

Although, the 1975 ECOWAS Treaty made no provision for security role for the organisation that was initially conceived as an economic integration mechanism, ECOWAS has become famous for its conflict prevention and management, peacemaking and peace keeping initiatives in member states. Following widespread intra-state conflicts and instability that engulfed some parts of West Africa in the early 1990s, ECOWAS leaders realising that the goals of economic prosperity and regional integration cannot be realised in an environment devoid of peace and security developed its main conflict prevention and management framework tools. These are the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (1999); and the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001). Together they formed the basis for the ECOWAS Conflict and Prevention Framework (2008).

The most important ECOWAS Security Protocol is the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security signed in December 1999. It should, however, be noted that ECOWAS had intervened in peace-keeping project in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s even before "establishing the institutional and operational basis of a regional mechanism for peace and security" (Olakounlé Yabi 2010: 10). The various problems encountered and lessons learned in various ECOWAS peacekeeping operations were incorporated into the peace mechanism to improve future intervention.

The 1999 Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security has become ECOWAS' institutional and legal framework for collective security and peace building in West Africa. The 1999 Mechanism was modelled after AU's Peace and Security Architecture and in a clear departure from OAU's principle of 'non-intervention in domestic affairs of member states', empowered ECOWAS to intervene in internal conflicts of member states in an event of gross violation of human rights and total breakdown of the rule of law (Abass 2000: 211–212).

The ECOWAS mechanism seeks to strengthen institutional capacity of the organisation in conflict prevention and management as well as build effective peacekeeping, humanitarian support and peace-building capabilities. The Security Mechanism also highlights the structures and responsibilities of key organs in peace and security. The principal organs are the Authority of Heads of State and Government (AHSG); the Executive Secretariat; and the Mediation and Security Council (MSC). The MSC, modelled after the UN Security Council, is further assisted by three specialised institutions in matters of peace and security. These institutions are the Defence and Security Commission; the Council of the Wise; and ECOMOG (Ismail 2015: 5–6). ECOMOG, according to Articles 21 and 22 of the 1999 Mechanism is the regional standby peacekeeping force, with responsibilities over peacekeeping, humanitarian interventions, monitoring and enforcing ceasefires, preventive diplomacy, disarmament and demobilisation, among others (ECOWAS 1999: 1–2). In addition, the Mechanism also provided for the establishment of an 'Early Warning System' for conflict prevention.

The 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance was adopted as a Supplementary Protocol of the 1999 Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The Protocol envisaged promotion of good governance and democracy as panacea to incessant conflicts in the sub-region. The Protocol equally made a strong statement about the incompatibility of democracy and good governance with military dictatorship and the development of a constitutional government based on the rule of law. The Supplementary Protocol is clearly a defining moment in the regional process of preventive diplomacy "through democratic governance framework that supports economic and social development" (Diallo 2005: 3). The 2001 Protocol also supports the principle of

"army subordination to civil and legal government and democratic governance for the security sector promoting and respecting human rights" (Diallo 2005: 5). The Protocol equally prescribes sanctions authorise by the Authority of Heads of State and Government (AHSG) against a member state whenever democracy is abruptly terminated by any means or where there is massive violations of human rights.

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), developed in 2008 integrated the Revised 1993 ECOWAS Treaty, the 1999 Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security and the 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. The ECPF aims "to provide a strong conceptual understanding of conflict prevention, strengthen ECOWAS' conflict prevention capacity and integrate existing initiatives of ECOWAS institutions and mechanisms responsible for conflict prevention and peace building" (Kabia 2011: 7–8). The document also aims at clarifying the strategy for the implementation of principles contained in the 1999 and 2001 Protocols. The ECPF calls for better integration and coordination of various peace building and conflict prevention initiatives of ECOWAS. It also demands increased advocacy and dissemination of the various activities of ECOWAS and active cooperation with other international organisations and participation of civil society in monitoring and evaluation of peace building activities (ECOWAS 2008: 1–3).

West Africa's 'Bush War' and Attendant Security Emergences

Liberia set the trail of state collapse in Mano River Basin in 1990, with spill-over effects in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire in 'West African Bush War'. The interconnectedness of conflicts in West Africa should be located in the context of strong historical and cultural ties between the peoples of the sub-region. This is further cemented by undefined boundary demarcations that aided unrestricted movements across borders. The porosity of borders allowed dissident elements from one country to cross over into a neighbouring one to wage insurgency war. ECOWAS peacekeeping intervention started with the Liberian civil war in late 1989, which spilled over into Sierra Leone in 1991, triggering a brutal 10-year armed conflicts that remained closely linked to Liberia's conflicts. The spate of conflicts that engulfed

the Mano River Basin also spilled into Guinea Bissau in 1998 as combatants from both Liberia and Sierra Leone supported and aided renegades soldiers to destabilize the country. The eruption of civil war in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002 also attracted armed groups and steady flow of arms from Liberia and Sierra Leone. In a reference to the linkage between conflicts in West Africa, an analyst for an international humanitarian organisation declared:

> The arc of instability in West Africa is linked together. The violence is interwoven. War in Liberia begat war in Sierra Leone, which in turn begat attacks in Guinea and prolonged the civil war in Cote d'Ivoire. The recognised borders don't mean anything to many of the hardcore combatants. When a country finally achieves a peace treaty, the guys who make a living through the barrel of their guns seep across the border to the next country (Drumtra 2003: 1).

The collapse of central administrative structures of the state provoked unprecedented humanitarian crises in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Liberian civil war, which roughly lasted for fourteen years, can be typically divided into two phases of which the first spanned 1989 – 1997 while the second phase lasted 1999–2003 (Shilue and Fagen 2014: 1). The civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau provided vivid examples of state collapse and the attendant humanitarian crises, which justified the creation of ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Mechanism. ECOWAS peace keeping interventions began with the Liberian civil war in 1989; Sierra Leone in 1997; Guinea Bissau in 1998; Second Liberian Civil War in 1999; Côte d'Ivoire in 2002; Second Cote d'Ivoire Civil War in 2011; Mali in 2012 and Second Guinea Bissau crisis in 2012. The massive humanitarian crises trigged by these intra-state conflicts created serious security and refugee challenges in West Africa sub-region. The collapse of central state authorities was accompanied by massive dislocation, widespread human rights abuses, wanton bloodshed, outbreak of epidemics, looting and arms trafficking. The Report of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee of 1990, where a decision was taken to dispatch a peace keeping force (ECOMOG) to Liberia highlighted the attendant security emergences trigged by state collapse in Liberia:

> The failure of the warring parties to cease hostilities has led to the massive destruction of property and massacre by all the parties of

thousands of innocent civilians, including foreign nationals, women and children, some of whom had sought sanctuary in churches, hospitals, diplomatic missions and under Red Cross protection, contrary to all recognized standards of civilized behaviour. Worse still, there are corpses lying unburied in the streets of cities and towns, which could lead to an epidemic. The civil war has also trapped thousands of foreign nationals, including ECOWAS citizens, without any means of escape or protection. The result of all this is a state of anarchy and the total breakdown of law and order in Liberia. Presently, there is a government in Liberia which cannot govern and contending factions which are holding the entire population as hostage, depriving them of food, health facilities and other basic necessities of life. These developments have traumatized the Liberian population and greatly shocked the people of the sub-region and the rest of the international community. They have also led to hundreds of thousands of Liberians being displaced and made refugees in neighbouring countries, and the spilling of hostilities into neighbouring countries (ECOWAS 1990: 3–4).

Accordingly, on 7th August 1990, ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee established an ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia 'to halt the wanton destruction of human life and property and massive damage being caused the armed conflict to the stability and survival of the entire Liberian nation' (ECOWAS 1990: 3).

ECOWAS Multilateral Initiatives to Peace building and Post Conflict Reconstruction

In the context of an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and global powers disengagement from African conflicts after the Cold War, the Liberian crisis that started in late 1989, was a turning point in ECOWAS' transition from promoting economic development and regional integration to taking responsibility for collective security and conflicts management in the sub-region. With no institutional mechanism and policy framework to respond to the regional crisis, ECOWAS was forced to device ad-hoc security mechanisms for conflict resolution.

Following protracted and unproductive dialogue with various faction leaders in Liberia, ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee in August 1990, took the bold step of establishing and deploying the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) amidst bitter opposition from then rebel leader Charles Taylor and some West African leaders. ECOMOG was charged with both mediating between the warring factions and neutralizing them through forceful disarmament, if necessary. It also had peace enforcement and peacekeeping objectives. The deployment of ECOMOG to Liberia was fraught with some difficulties. The deployment was opposed by Charles Taylor, the dominant rebel leader in Liberia. Again, personal interests and ideological difference between francophone and Anglophone members of ECOWAS equally made the task of peace restoration difficult in Liberia. In addition, procedural and operational disagreement among ECOWAS members also frustrated the deployment of troops by ECOMOG to Liberia. Although initially, conceived as a peacekeeping force, ECOMOG's actual mission "bordered on peace-making and peace-enforcement, which was a clear departure from its original mandate" (Whiteman 1990: 28). Resource constraints also limited the effectiveness of ECOMOG operation. While provision was made for deployment of over 12, 000 troops, inadequate funds, materials and equipments could only permit mobilisation of limited number, which was grossly inadequate for effective peacekeeping operation. ECOWAS multilateral peacekeeping initiatives have been repeatedly criticised for being ineffective and for exacerbating the conflicts in Liberia because of inadequate resources, lack of broad political support and limited knowledge of the conflict terrains (Howe 1997: 168–169; Obi 2009 :8–9; Ismail 2015: 4–5). However, Draman and Carment have argued that, ECOMOG's operations, though largely ineffective, "succeeded in containing the Liberian conflicts in the short term and also prevented the situation from degenerating into genocide as witnessed in Rwanda in 1994" (Draman and Carment 2003: 17).

As stated earlier, the multilateral efforts of ECOWAS, though imperfect, taking into consideration the Liberian experience, was the first effort by an African sub-regional organisation to conduct peace keeping operations. The intervention also reflects an African attempt to resolve an African conflict situation through regional cooperation. Thus, without previous experience to drawn from, the modest achievements recorded in Liberia were significant indeed. While ECOWAS indeed

faced enormous challenges in peace intervention, its military and diplomatic engagements paved way for subsequent international efforts that finally ended the devastating conflicts in the Mano River Basin region between 1990 and 2003. Although critics may point to its limited effectiveness, ECOMOG intervention could be seen as "as a harbinger of potential African solutions to some of Africa's pressing security problems" (Pitts 1999: 1).

On the humanitarian front, ECOMOG was successful in reducing casualties and wanton destruction and provided safe passage for trapped civilians to be evacuated out of troublesome warring zones. In addition, by securing the port and airport, essential relief supplies were obtained for thousands of displaced civilians in dire needs. In the context of state collapse and absence of administrative functions, ECOMOG effectively functioned as a police and defence force within its occupational zone (Scott 1999: 19).

The experiences gained by ECOMOG in the Liberian experience were deployed into subsequent peace keeping operations in neighbouring Sierra Leone, where the ousted President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was successfully reinstated. ECOMOG, forces, largely comprised of Nigerian soldiers acted as the de facto army in Sierra Leone and also engaged in post-conflict reconstruction.

The 1998 crisis in Guinea Bissau occurred in a context where regional peacekeeping capacity had been overstretched by the burden of protracted peacekeeping operation in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Faced with a revolt by the army chief, General Mane, who refused to accept dismissal for arms trafficking with the rebels of the Movement of Democratic forces of Casamance (MFDC), President Vieira appealed for ECOMOG's intervention. The intervention of Senegal and Guinea in the crisis further worsened the situation and ECOMOG's subsequent intervention was largely ineffective. Although, Nigeria participated in all the mediation efforts of ECOWAS to resolve the crisis in Guinea Bissau, its non-participation in peacekeeping operations partly contributed to ECOWAS's failure, underscoring Nigeria's importance for regional peace and security in West Africa (Obi 2009: 128). A peace accord brokered by ECOWAS was signed in Abuja on November 2, 1998, which paved the way for the establishment of a broad-based government in December 1998. The UN eventually joined ECOWAS in

the peace process by establishing a Peace Support Office and ECOMOG deployed peacekeepers to monitor the peace and prepared the country for election, which brought Kumba Yala to power.

Civil war also erupted in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002 following an unsuccessful coup attempt against the government of President Laurent Gbagbo. The rebels known as the 'Mouvement Patriotic de Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI) and later as' Forces Nouvelles de Côte d'Ivoire/ New Forces (FN), set up its headquarters in Bouaké in Northern Côte d'Ivoire and mobilised for an attack on the South. However, French troops intervened and halted this southward march. ECOWAS and France made several attempts to mediate in the crisis, which paved way for peace accord signed by all the major warring factions. The peace accord resulted in ceasefire and establishment of a Transitional Government of National Reconciliation and deployment of ECOMOG peacekeepers (ECOMICI) to observe the ceasefire.

The intractable and contagious nature of conflicts in West Africa imposed enormous challenges to the traditional concept of humanitarian intervention. The collapse of central authorities as witnessed in Liberia and Sierra Leone widened the scope of ECOWAS peace intervention to also include state rebuilding. Some of the activities involved here are disarmament, demobilisation, integration and rehabilitation, security sector reforms, civil service reforms, democratic reforms and organising elections, among others.

Because of resource limitations and capacity deficiencies, ECOWAS's multilateral peace initiatives have paved the way for subsequent intervention of UN and western powers in a Triangular South-South Cooperation for peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, ECOMOG co-deployed with UN observer missions whilst ECOWAS Missions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire provided rapid deployment forces that were transformed into UN peacekeepers. Despite the problems of co-ordination, logistics and differences in mandate, the co-operation between the UN and ECOWAS allowed each organisation to maximise its comparative advantage whilst working together to resolve the conflicts. Lessons learned in these missions have provided a blueprint for how the UN and regional organisations can work together (Kabia 2011: 2–4).

In line with the principles of the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, adopted in 2001 that reiterates promotion of good governance and democracy as panacea to incessant conflicts in West Africa, ECOWAS has intervened to restore constitutionally elected governments in Mali, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Niger and Burkina Faso. The adoption of the Protocol practically translates into a zero-tolerance against unconstitutional changes of power. Any attempt at forceful change of constitutionally elected government in West Africa has been strongly condemned and threat of sanctions issued out in the most forceful terms by leaders of ECOWAS. It is thus to the credit of ECOWAS that incessant coup against elected government is no longer a popular option in the sub-region. ECOWAS as part of its mandate under the Protocol on Good Governance has also supported security and electoral reforms to pave way for peaceful conduct of elections in Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali among others. In addition, ECOWAS was actively on the ground in ensuring peaceful transfer of power during the 2015 Nigerian presidential election, by persuading the then incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan to accept the election result, a feat that was arguably crucial to preventing the election from turning violent. Hence, through this work, ECOWAS is contributing to creating a more democratic culture of governance in the region.

Triangular Cooperation for Peace Building in West Africa

Because of resource limitations and capacity deficiencies, ECOWAS's multilateral peace initiatives have paved the way for subsequent intervention of UN and western powers in a Triangular Cooperation for peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, ECOMOG co-deployed with UN observer missions whilst ECOWAS Missions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire provided rapid deployment forces that were transformed into UN peacekeepers. Despite the problems of co-ordination, logistics and differences in mandate, the co-operation between the UN and ECOWAS allowed each organisation to maximise its comparative advantage whilst working together to resolve the conflicts. Lessons learned in these missions have provided a blueprint for how the UN and regional organisations can work together (Kabia 2011: 2–4).

While regional solution has been recommended in various policy documents earlier examined, the capacity for sustainability required in a post-conflict reconstruction and peace building is currently weak within ECOWAS because of inadequate funding, poor logistics, ideological difference, weak material capacity, among others. A fall out of some of these deficiencies was the pulling out of Nigeria from direct ECOMOG peacekeeping operations due to the heavy financial cost incurred in Liberian and Sierra Leonean operations. The pulling out by Nigeria paved the way for the United Kingdom, UN, France and the AU to be more substantially involved in post-conflict reconstruction in Sierra Leone and Liberia in a Triangular South-South Cooperation. A Triangular Cooperation was also adopted with France playing a leading role and supported by the AU and ECOWAS in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Mali. The challenges of sustaining peacekeeping operations by ECOWAS also led to the 'rehatting' of ECOMOG forces as UN peacekeepers in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. In Sierra Leone, Britain assumed responsibilities for security sector reform through the British Military Advisory and Training Teams (BMATT) while India-Brazil-South Africa (IBISA) undertook a project on leadership development and institutional capacity building for human development and poverty reduction. ECOWAS also benefited from a Triangular cooperation in peace building through training activities for the military of her member states to improve operational capacities for peacekeeping. The US and France were actively involved in this capacity building project for protection of refugees, command and control and negotiation techniques, among others (Ismail 2015: 14).

Nigeria's Contributions to Multilateral and Bilateral Peace Building and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in West Africa

In line with her fundamental principles of 'Afro-centric' foreign policy and policy of good neighbourliness, Nigeria has contributed significantly to peace building and post conflict reconstruction in West Africa. The modest successes recorded by ECOWAS in peacekeeping operational under the platform of ECOMOG were largely due to financial, logistics and diplomatic support of Nigeria. As one of the founding fathers of ECOWAS, Nigeria has provided politico-economic leadership to the organisation in an effort to develop a collective

regional peace and security mechanism in West Africa (Francis 2006: 147). Nigeria as the most populous country and the largest economy in West Africa that also provides about 60 % of ECOWAS budget; there is no doubt that the multilateral peace building under the auspices of ECOWAS is intimately interlinked to Nigeria's active cooperation and contributions. This was evidently demonstrated in Liberia and Sierra Leone where Nigeria was the major provider of military and other resources for peacekeeping operations. At the peak of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean crises in the 1990s, Nigeria provided over 70 % of ECOMOG's military and civilian personnel, as well as logistical supports (Tuck 2000: 2). As the regional power, Nigeria deployed 1,500 troops to the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) for post war peace building and also dispatched a medical and signal team to the ECOWAS Mission in Cote d' Ivoire in 2003. As part of her contribution to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), Nigeria contributed 1,200 troops and equipments and also 200 police officers to African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (Ali 2012: 49–50).

Nigeria has also provided bilateral supports to peace building and post-conflict reconstruction in many states in West Africa. Nigeria committed enormous financial, military, and diplomatic resources to the post-conflict Liberian elections to ensure a successful outcome. Nigeria has facilitated and hosted bilateral peace building talks to resolve disputes relating to elections in Liberia, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Niger, among others. Nigeria has also sent medical personnel and equipments to support Sierra Leone and Liberia in the recent outbreak of Ebola fever. As part of the bilateral support for post-conflict institutional building and security reforms, Nigeria has been proving training for Liberian and Sierra Leonean military officers in Nigeria's elite military institutions. Similarly, Nigeria is supporting economic growth in post-conflict states through concessionary sale of crude-oil; deployment of Technical Aid Corps (TACs); and financial grants and loan facilities.

However, given the enormous resources committed to peacekeeping operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone through ECOMOG, domestic pressures and internal security challenges have compelled Nigeria from 1999 to shift focus from leading direct military peacekeeping operations to conflict prevention initiatives. Under the platform of the 2001 Protocol on Democracy and good Governance, Nigeria

has mediated in resolving governance crises in many West African countries.

Conclusion

ECOWAS was established in 1975 primarily to promote economic integration in West Africa but transformed into a peacekeeping organisation in the 1990s, under the pressures of armed conflicts and state collapse in West Africa. The apparent reluctance of the western powers to intervene directly in African conflicts in the post Cold War order necessitated the search for a 'home –grown' solutions to African conflicts. Supported by the preponderance power of Nigeria, the regional hegemon, ECOWAS intervened militarily through ECOMOG in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali to end bloody civil wars ravaging these countries. Arising from the experiences learnt from the ad hoc interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, ECOWAS have now adopted a Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), which integrated the Revised 1993 ECOWAS Treaty; the 1999 Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security; and the 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. Despite the mixed successes achieved in the various peacekeeping interventions, ECOWAS without any doubt is the most advanced regional organisation in Africa in the areas of economic integration, conflict resolution and peace keeping. A major lesson learnt from ECOWAS peacekeeping experiences is that while 'African solutions to African problems' is highly commendable, the capacity for sustainability required in a post-conflict reconstruction and peace building is currently weak in the sub-region because of inadequate funding, poor logistics, ideological difference, weak material capacity, among others. A fall out of some of these deficiencies was the pulling out of Nigeria from direct ECOMOG peacekeeping operations due to the heavy financial cost incurred in Liberian and Sierra Leonean operations. The pulling out by Nigeria paved the way for the United Kingdom, UN, France and the AU to be more substantially involved in post-conflict reconstruction in Sierra Leone and Liberia in a Triangular South-South Cooperation. A Triangular South-South Cooperation was also adopted with France playing a leading role and supported by the AU and ECOWAS in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Mali. The challenges of sustaining peacekeeping operations by ECOWAS also led

to the 'rehatting' of ECOMOG forces as UN peacekeepers in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire.

The policy shift within ECOWAS towards conflict prevention and peace building through promotion of human security and good governance is also commendable. In line with the principles of the Protocol on good Governance and Democracy, ECOWAS is transforming into a people-centred community that focuses attention on the well being of individuals. Political instability through incessant military take-over of governments is now an exception rather than the norm that characterised the region in the past.

The Triangular South-South Cooperation between the UN, ECOWAS, AU, France, UK and other stakeholders in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Guinea Bissau has established a framework for peace building and post-conflict reconstruction in West Africa. The emerging framework is anchored on sub-regional peacekeepers to stabilise a volatile situation as witnessed in Liberia and Sierra Leone to pave way for deployment of larger UN mission in multiple peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction responsibilities. Finally, the pivotal role of a regional power in pushing regional cooperation as demonstrated by Nigeria in ECOWAS could be advanced for other regional leaders – South Africa, Egypt and Kenya – to provide leadership role in pushing through peace building initiatives in difficult circumstances and terrain.

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