

**Final report**

**Interlinkages between the development, peace and  
security, human rights and humanitarian pillars in  
West and Central Africa**

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## Abbreviations

APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AUDA	African Union Development Agency
CAF	conflict assessment framework
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahelo-Saharan States
COVID-19	coronavirus disease
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GDP	gross domestic product
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
NEPAD	New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSAA	Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

## **Executive summary**

### **A. Introduction**

The multiplicity and growing complexity of the challenges of human security in West and Central Africa, with conflicts threatening peace and security, development and the exercise of human rights and overburdening humanitarian response, necessitates an examination of the interlinkages approach as it relates to conflict prevention and resolution. The intent of the approach is to promote synergistic, complementary and integrated modalities for the implementation of interventions addressing the four pillars, in the search for effective and lasting solutions to conflicts, in the two subregions. The study was also aimed at contributing to the larger objective of promoting the integrated implementation of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the context of relevant African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks.

The present report documents the findings of the study on the interlinkages in West and Central Africa, including the associated Sahel region. It contributes to raising the awareness and developing the capacities of member States of the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States on the four-pillar interlinkages as they relate to conflict situations in the subregions. The African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency and the African Peer Review Mechanism are also targeted beneficiaries of the report. In addition, the report will contribute to informing the regional (namely, continental) report on the issue being led by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

### **B. Findings**

#### **1. Peace and security**

Conflicts and threats to peace and security remain major challenges in West and Central Africa. Notable outcomes of conflicts include increased human suffering, poverty, material destruction, loss of livelihoods, and increased numbers of vulnerable and internally displaced persons. Conflicts in the subregions pose a major threat to sociopolitical and economic stability, critical in the allocation of public resources, private sector investment and growth, the building and retention of capacity and sustained economic growth and poverty reduction. ECOWAS and ECCAS have recorded commendable progress in the promotion of peace and security over the past three decades, but this is seriously threatened by various forms of violence. Countries in the Sahel are vulnerable to regular outbreaks of insecurity.

Armed conflicts from religious and ethnic problems, terrorism and illicit trafficking in drugs fuelling illicit small arms trafficking, along with fundamental humanitarian problems have been sustaining a cycle of conflicts. In the Lake Chad basin, attacks by the Boko Haram group continue to threaten peace, security, human rights and humanitarian responses. While West Africa recorded a slightly above average score in the Agenda 2063 aspiration of “a peaceful and secure Africa”, Central Africa had a below average score. The continuing violence and conflict in the subregions threaten hard-won economic gains, contribute to political instability and undermine future development.

Climate change impacts, such as land degradation, drought and desertification, continue to worsen the subregions' age-old farmer-herder relations. Inefficient State institutions, weak human rights protection, governance deficit and corruption have continued to undermine progress. The cycle of conflicts has also made it impossible to break out of the vicious circle of poverty, which fuels perennial conflicts. There are many frameworks and initiatives addressing conflict, the four pillars and their interlinkages, and also governance at global, regional and subregional levels, specifically those of ECOWAS and ECCAS. Despite this, several West and Central African countries continue to experience conflict situations.

## **2. Development**

Human development indexes confirm the slow pace of development in West and Central Africa. Furthermore, the two subregions had low scores in the Agenda 2063 aspiration for “a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development”. This is in the context of relatively high poverty rates, a young and growing population coupled with high fertility rates, low growth rates and falling commodity prices occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. West and Central Africa are also on the front line of internal and external migration, as the countries of these subregions are countries of origin or transit to Europe, with migration routes that mostly pass through Libya.

Among the five subregions of Africa, West and Central Africa are ranked by the Africa SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2020 of the Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa and Sustainable Development Solutions Network as third and fifth, respectively, in terms of their progress towards the Goals. Generally speaking, the low performers in Africa were fragile States, with high levels of poverty and conflict, namely: Chad, Central African Republic and South Sudan, which scored 40.34, 38.05 and 32.36, respectively. The report notes that the challenge for West African countries will be to accelerate currently stagnant performance in terms of social welfare without undermining environmental sustainability.

In 2020, West Africa had an estimated population of 400 million inhabitants, 176 million of whom (44 per cent of total population) were below 15 years old. The subregion recorded the highest fertility rate, on average 5.5 children per woman during the period 2010–2015. It is imperative to reverse this trend through the implementation of policies that build and strengthen human capital through quality health and education and economic opportunities to harness the demographic dividend.

## **3. Human rights**

West and Central African countries face a range of human rights issues, notably the following: intimidation and repression of citizens; threats to rights of peaceful assembly; threats to housing rights; sexual and gender-based abuses; threats to religious and political freedoms; abuses by security forces; humanitarian and refugee-related human rights issues; encroachments on the freedom of civil society and media; unlawful arbitrary killings and extrajudicial killings; forced disappearances; unlawful infringement on citizens' privacy rights; and forced or bonded labour. West and Central Africa scored 17 and 14 per cent, respectively, against aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063, which is focused on an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The effects of poor implementation of human rights protection on younger people continue to grow. The lack of empowerment opportunities and increasing unemployment are central to the issues faced by many young people. Efforts to promote and protect human rights are yet to yield desired results owing to the weak implementation and coordination of instruments and policies, including: constitutional and international obligations; national and local policies and legislation; and administrative rules and procedures. In addition, there are lapses on the part of regulatory and monitoring bodies, along with challenges posed by the lack of adequate resources.

#### **4. Humanitarian**

West and Central African countries face humanitarian challenges that undermine progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063. Together, the two subregions account for one of the continent's largest displaced populations (UNHCR, 2020). They are afflicted by growing poverty, hunger and food insecurity, the effects of increasing gender-based violence and alarming numbers of internally displaced persons. These result from challenges, including non-inclusive growth, conflict, environmental degradation, climate change and natural disasters, all exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In West Africa, displacements induced by years of conflict and crisis, terrorist activities, crisis over poor management of resources, farmer-herder crises, the effects of pandemics and very low levels of development continue to trigger humanitarian crises. In the ECOWAS region, the humanitarian crisis is characterized by insecurity, farmer-herder conflicts, migrant smuggling and trafficking, droughts, floods, climate change, the problem of internally displaced persons, critical food insecurities and malnutrition.

Central African countries are increasingly exposed to numerous risks from disasters, in particular geophysical, hydrometeorological and health-related disasters, thus hindering their development. These problems are further exacerbated by climate change. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, has warned, "climate change will increase the severity and frequency of natural disasters. The lack of development, human rights violations and humanitarian disasters all combined worsen tensions and conflicts in West and Central Africa and the disparity between people targeted for humanitarian assistance in the two subregions and those in need continue to increase beyond projections."

#### **5. Transboundary and cross-cutting issues**

The enforcement of COVID-19 lockdowns in cities and towns by armies has left borders weakly guarded and susceptible to the free movement of extremists and rebel groups across countries. Border closures prompted by security and COVID-19 concerns have resulted in clashes between security personnel of affected countries. Conflict and insecurity situations are threatening the volume and prospects of national and regional trade within States in West and Central Africa, including those in the Sahel, posing a potential threat to the smooth operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Such issues as the COVID-19 pandemic, other health and economic challenges, job losses, deepening poverty and gender-based violence are disproportionately affecting women and young people, in particular those living in fragile economies and refugee camps. Young people are prey to recruitment by armed groups. Having been left for long periods without access to education and lacking employment as a consequence of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, they are the



primary targets of these groups, which lure them by promising better living conditions and wages if they join them. Numerous conflicts within the subregion, socioeconomic crisis, environmental conditions and natural disasters, terrorism and trans-border crime have led to problems of migration in West and Central Africa, while COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected migrants across the region.

## **6. Governance and institutions**

West and Central African countries have not fared well against the Agenda 2063 aspiration of building capable institutions and transformative leadership. Countries should continue to improve quality transformative and visionary leadership, with a view to promoting the participation of all stakeholders in national development and ensuring transparency and accountability in the management of public resources and public policy development, and also in improving electoral systems. In certain instances in the two subregions, governance and political leadership consist in exploiting weaknesses or fault lines in the history, constitution, system, and ethnoreligious composition of the people for sustained political and economic gains. The outcome of this has been weakened institutions and infrastructure, accompanied by human rights challenges.

Corruption affects the two subregions with serious implications for peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian work. In addition to political parties, the importance of the roles of the three arms of government, the executive, judiciary and legislature, in promoting a four-pillar interlinkages approach in West and Central Africa cannot be overemphasized. These institutions should be empowered to discharge their roles and responsibilities to ensure peace and security, development and to promote the four-pillar interlinkages approach. In this regard, there is a need to ensure the legitimacy of ascension to power, independence, the viability of civil institutions and the availability of resources, and to prohibit the use of coercive force. Worthy of note is that local and national civil society organizations and the private sector are increasingly seen as having a role complementary to that of the government and have been meaningfully engaged in conflict prevention and resolution.

## **7. Harnessing and mainstreaming the four-pillar interlinkages approach**

The four-pillar interlinkages add human rights as a fourth pillar to the triple nexus of humanitarian work, development, and peace and security in furtherance of what is known as the “new way of working” ideology, given its links with the other three pillars and governance, an important prerequisite for the maintenance of peace and security. The nexus referred to in the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, signed in 2018, relates to development, peace and security and human rights. Furthermore, a useful justification for this extension may be found in the United Nations reforms, which recognize human rights as integral to the interlinkages. There are guiding frameworks and initiatives at global, regional and subregional levels for mainstreaming the interlinkages into policies and strategies, including those related to the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. Methodologies and tools for mainstreaming the global and regional goals could be adapted for this purpose.

There are several challenges to promoting a four-pillar interlinkages approach, including: possible resistance to the approach; coordinated and collaborative approaches; aligning programming cycles and funding mechanisms; waning donor funds; concerns of the humanitarian

community; challenges specific to West and Central Africa; capacity requirements; and the COVID-19 pandemic. Opportunities include: existing initiatives and frameworks based on the four pillars; the United Nations reform process; buy-in at the national level; strengthened engagement of civil society organizations and the private sector; the work of programme 9 of section 11 of the United Nations programme budget for 2022, on United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development; the new narrative for the Sahel; and building forward better from the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations on promoting the interlinkages approach derive from responses to the challenges and proposals on leveraging the opportunities.

In relation to conflict analysis that factor in the interlinkages, numerous toolkits and manuals provide models of how to conduct conflict analysis. There is no one best practice or one methodology for conflict analysis that will lead to better programming. Choosing the most appropriate tool depends on the context, the commissioning entity, the purpose of the conflict analysis, the focus of analysis, and the available resources, such as staff, funding and capacity. The methodologies and tools involve qualitative and quantitative analysis across development, peace and security, and humanitarian work and, in the case of the tool developed by the United Nations Development Programme for conflict-related development analysis, includes the human rights pillar. In this regard, the UNDP conflict-related development analysis is well suited to the requirements of the interlinkages approach, as it relates to conflict. This advantage notwithstanding, the others could be adapted to cater to the human rights pillar. Capacity should be built for the effective application of the methodologies and tools. This includes targeted training on the use of the guidance documents and in conducting qualitative and quantitative analysis.

### **C. Key messages and recommendations**

#### **1. Existing frameworks and initiatives addressing conflict, the four pillars and their interlinkages, and also governance are critical to finding effective and lasting solutions to conflicts and contribute to attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063**

There is a need to fast-track the implementation of the frameworks and initiatives at all levels. Expressions of political will must be demonstrated in practical terms, entailing the enactment of legislation, mainstreaming conflict prevention and resolution in policies and strategies and strengthening institutions to foster effective implementation within a framework of good governance. The States of Central and West Africa should leverage the African Union and United Nations reforms for accelerated implementation.

#### **2. Conflicts and threats to peace and security remain major challenges in West and Central Africa**

Effectively addressing conflicts call for holistic and inclusive processes. This should entail, among other measures, disarmament, reintegration and community reconciliation; the delivery of public services to improve the standard of living and livelihoods; putting in place tangible human security measures; designing and implementing dedicated programmes or intervention for the most vulnerable populations, including women and young people. The continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region necessitates sustained regional and international engagements. A fully integrated response, bolstered by the collaboration of governments in the two subregions and the support of the international community, encompassing the simultaneous pursuit of progress in security, governance, humanitarian assistance and

development, is required. The negative image of the Sahel constitutes a great challenge to its potential for development. A more balanced narrative would trigger action for a productive Sahel based on its vast natural resources, including water and land, agriculture, tree and non-forest timber resources, added to its abundant renewable energy sources.

### **3. The pace of development is slow in West and Central Africa, amid low growth rates occasioned by the coronavirus disease pandemic**

The accelerated implementation of subregional development frameworks, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 is critical to enhancing growth and development in the subregions. Cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategies that integrate relevant frameworks, supported by integrated national financing frameworks, are necessary for successful implementation. Strong institutions and effective policies are instrumental in promoting integrated and interlinked approaches for the integrated implementation of the two agendas. In this regard, there is a need for clear institutional mandates that guarantee strong leadership, as well as coordination and consultation mechanisms that facilitate the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, in line with the principle of inclusivity and the mantra of “leaving no one behind”. Also crucial are strengthened capacities for evidence-based policymaking and effective links between the development plan, the annual budget and the multi-year expenditure framework. While COVID-19 constitutes a major challenge, opportunities abound to build forward better, including by leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area.

### **4. Human rights and humanitarian challenges undermine progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals**

ECOWAS and ECCAS should promote the ratification, incorporation into domestic law and implementation of key subregional, regional and international human rights instruments. They should support States, national human rights institutions and civil society stakeholders on their engagement with regional (continental) and international human rights bodies and mechanisms. Countries should establish strong and independent national human rights commissions with statutory authority to defend the rights of aggrieved parties. The Commissions should be involved in educating and raising the awareness of citizens on human and civil rights, as well as civic duties and obligations to guarantee their own rights. Civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to campaign for, monitor and report on human rights in countries. In the absence of a national human rights commission, the office of the ombudsperson in countries should be mandated to investigate human rights complaints. Given the cost associated with the justice system, the training of paralegals should be considered as a means of improving public access to the courts. The African Court of Justice will be crucial for citizens of countries with weak judiciaries.

ECOWAS and ECCAS should promote the ratification of the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). In addition, the subregional bodies should support member States in the incorporation into national law and implementation of the Humanitarian Policy Framework and efforts to enhance understanding on the underlying causes of humanitarian crisis in general and of specific causes and nature and circumstances of particular crisis as well as national and international responses, as and when they occur. This should be done in collaboration with the African Union Commission and United Nations humanitarian bodies, such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. They should also support member States in incorporating

into their domestic legal frameworks and implementing the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Programme of Action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. In addition, they should enhance the capacity of member States in early warning, disaster preparedness and response and facilitate coordination and collaboration on disaster risk management and preparedness, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and relevant international bodies, such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

**5. Poor governance and political leadership, as well as corruption continue to undermine peace and security, and development aspirations**

Countries should continue to improve quality transformative and visionary leadership. This should include promoting the participation of all stakeholders in national development; ensuring transparency and accountability in the management of public resources and public policy development as well as improved electoral systems. Transformative governance would also create a conducive environment for civil society organizations and the private sector participation, promote equity and reduce all forms of inequalities, respond effectively to political instability, strengthen the rule of law, and effectively address corruption. Countries should continue to subscribe to the African Peer Review Mechanism of the African Union, which assesses performance of member States on key governance indicators. Implementation of the resulting action plan following country assessments is instructive in promoting democracy, political, economic, corporate and natural resource governance and socioeconomic development.

**6. Promoting the four-pillar interlinkages approach necessitates building on the triple nexus experience, addressing the challenges and leveraging opportunities**

While entirely valid, the four-pillar interlinkages approach is a new concept and should be promoted as one that builds on the triple nexus to strengthen the new way of working, in line with the United Nations reforms, which recognize human rights as integral to the interlinkages approach. In this regard, there is a need to carry out consultations on the approach supported by further research to demonstrate its validity and value addition. Coordination and collaborative approaches should be informed by lessons from the United Nations working as one at the national, regional and global levels, including those related to the implementation of the triple nexus. Collective action should be based on respective mandates and comparative advantages, thereby minimizing overlaps and conflicts. Joint planning and programming necessitate aligning programming cycles and funding mechanisms as implementation of the United Nations reforms progresses.

There is a need to support the development and implementation of capacity-building programmes that respond to the specific needs of West Africa. Civil society organizations and the private sector should be meaningfully engaged in the approach. The four-pillar interlinkages approach is an important aspect of the work of programme 9 of section 11 of the United Nations programme budget for 2022, comprising the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Global Communications. Given the impetus given to this work by the United Nations reforms, the Programme should be strengthened to ensure that it provides the required support to member States to effectively apply the interlinkages approach to their conflict prevention and resolution programmes, and at the same time, contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals.

# **I. Introduction**

## **A. Background**

For Africa, through the “silencing the guns” initiative, the year 2020 was expected to mark a significant progress in the search for peace and an end to many of its conflicts. That aspiration notwithstanding, several countries in West and Central Africa continue to witness recurring conflicts, adding to their humanitarian demands. By November 2019, there had been 21,600 armed conflict incidents in Africa, a 36 per cent increase from 15,874 in 2018.<sup>1</sup> As at July 2018, the African Union had on record 21 conflicts in its member States, the Mano River region, the Great Lakes region and the Sahel and Maghreb region being hot zones. There are recurring armed conflicts in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. In Central Africa, violence has emerged regularly in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In West Africa, Nigeria has continued to battle with Boko Haram, and incessant killings arising from farmer-herder disputes. Observers have been closely watching the tense political situations in Côte d’Ivoire and Guinea. The conflicts in West and Central Africa are bound up with the human rights, humanitarian, peace and security and development situations in the respective subregions.

Two resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in April 2016 – resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016) – recognized the imperatives of coherence and complementarity between the United Nations peace and security efforts and its development, human rights, and humanitarian work (ECA, 2020). The 2020 report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations Economic and Social Council on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the context of the United Nations reforms outlined continuing work across the pillars to achieve the 2030 Agenda in crises or emergency settings. Furthermore, the United Nation Secretary General and the African Union Commission Chairperson expressed commitment to working together on peace and security and development matters through memorandums of understanding signed in 2017 and 2018, respectively. The African Union-United Nations Framework on Human Rights is expected to be signed soon. In addition, in 2010, the African Union Commission and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding on humanitarian action. The various instruments of cooperation are listed below:

- Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in 2017 (Peace and Security Framework)
- African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, signed in 2018 (Development Framework)
- Draft joint African Union-United Nations framework on human rights
- Memorandum of understanding between the African Union Commission and OCHA on humanitarian action, signed in 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> As revealed by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, which monitors conflicts around the world.

In addition to the joint cooperation frameworks, the African Union and the United Nations have over the years adopted many frameworks and initiatives related to the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars. These are also embodied in their foundational documents – the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Charter of the United Nations.

The frameworks relevant to the four pillars in West Africa and Central Africa fall under the purview of their respective regional economic communities, namely, the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States. In West Africa, relevant frameworks include: the ECOWAS policy framework for security sector reform and governance, the ECOWAS conflict prevention framework, the ECOWAS peace and security architecture, the ECOWAS conflict management framework and the ECOWAS social protection framework. In Central Africa, frameworks include the ECCAS peace and security architecture and a mutual pact and protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council for Central Africa (Conseil de paix et de sécurité de l’Afrique centrale, also known as COPAX).

## **B. Justification for the study**

Against this backdrop, the Economic Commission for Africa, through the NEPAD Section of its Regional Integration and Trade Division, and the subregional offices for West and Central Africa commissioned a study on the interlinkages between the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars as they relate to conflict situations in the two subregions. The study was conducted in partnership with OSAA, within the framework of programme 9 of section 11 of the United Nations programme budget for 2022. The United Nations Office to the African Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Office for West African and the Sahel are important collaborators in the study process.

The study is particularly timely, given the lack of sufficient understanding, and application in theory and policy of the four-pillar interlinkages. Effective application of the approach would not only foster an integrative operational process, reduce situations of conflict and threats to improved living standards, but also contribute meaningfully to the achievements of the development goals embodied in the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. It must be noted from the outset, however, that the four-pillar interlinkages analysis should be seen as a work in progress, being a new concept, which builds on the triple nexus of humanitarian, development and peace pillars by adding the human rights pillar, in line with the United Nations reforms.

The study covers countries in West and Central Africa that are members of the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States. It covers the Sahelian countries of West and Central Africa. It forms an integral part of a collaborative continental assessment of the interlinkages of the four pillars, in West and Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa and North Africa. The findings of the West and Central Africa study will ultimately be relevant at the continental level.

## **C. Objectives of the study**

The study was aimed at critically examining the interlinkages between the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars in the West and Central African subregions, including associated Sahelian countries. The intent is to promote synergistic, complementary and integrated approaches in the implementation of interventions addressing the four pillars, in order to contribute to effective and lasting solutions to conflicts, insecurities and

other threats to humanity in the two subregions. The study was also aimed at contributing to the larger objective of promoting the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in the context of relevant African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks.

The present report documents the findings of the study on the interlinkages in West and Central Africa, including the associated Sahel<sup>2</sup> region. It contributes to awareness-raising, and the development of capacities of member States of ECOWAS, ECCAS and CEN-SAD on the four-pillar interlinkages as they relate to conflict situations in the subregions. The African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency and the African Peer Review Mechanism are also beneficiaries of the report. In addition, the report will contribute to informing the regional (or continental) report on the issue being led by OSAA – the report on the introductory meeting.

While providing a balanced overview of the four pillars, the report pays special attention to extrapolating the dynamic role of conflicts and the imperatives of conflict prevention and management and the four-pillar interlinkages. The report also examines the situational impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and youth and gender as cross-cutting issues. It also looks at transboundary issues related to the four-pillar interlinkages and conflicts, in the neighbouring subregions of North and Eastern Africa, in what is considered as the Great Lakes region, aimed at promoting intraregional cooperation in conflict prevention and resolution.

In harnessing the interlinkages, key issues related to the synergistic and complementary implementation, as well as mainstreaming the interlinkages into policies and strategies related to Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda are assessed. Methodologies and tools on conflict analysis and associated capacity development implications related are also examined. Throughout the analysis, frameworks and agreements of ECOWAS, ECCAS and CEN-SAD, African Union, United Nations, African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks are examined with a view to leveraging them to contribute to effective and lasting solutions to conflicts and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals.

#### **D. Methodology**

In terms of methodology, the study employed the following: desk review; survey questionnaire; non-structured interviews; and case studies.

*Introductory meeting:* The launch of the study process was preceded by an introductory meeting of the ECA and OSAA teams, and the four consultants supporting the subregional studies. This was aimed at reaching a common understanding on the study objectives, expected outcomes and outputs, and promoting a collaborative process in the four subregional, and Africa level studies.

*Literature review:* The study followed an analytical approach, using a literature review of relevant United Nations and African Union documents, documents from the regional economic communities (ECOWAS and ECCAS) and other relevant academic studies.

*Questionnaire survey:* The questionnaire survey was designed to elicit responses on issues relevant to the objectives of the study. The targeted respondents were drawn from the English-speaking and French-speaking countries of West and Central Africa. In all, 231 completed

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<sup>2</sup> Sahel: geographical name for the transitional zone between the arid Sahara to the north and the humid savannas to the south. When used in this study, the term refers to the portion of that zone that lies within West and Central Africa and not beyond.

questionnaires – or 82.4 per cent of the total – were received from English-speaking countries and 53 – 17.6 per cent of the total – from French-speaking countries. In terms of geographical distribution, 10.1 per cent of the respondents were from Central Africa and 89.9 per cent from West Africa. The questionnaire and breakdown of the respondents are presented in annex II to the present report.

*Non-structured interviews:* The non-structured interviews were conducted with officials of ECOWAS and ECCAS and African Union organs and agencies at the regional level. The latter included the African Union Commission Department of Strategic Planning and Department of Political Affairs (Humanitarian Division), the African Union Development Agency and the African Peer Review Mechanism.

*Country case studies:* The analysis was further supported by four case studies from the two subregions. Mali, a Sahelian country with modest resources and limited development that has been in and out of conflicts and coups d'état, proved to be a very representative choice when coupled with Nigeria, which has far more resources but has been almost equally afflicted by conflicts of different types. Cameroon and the Central African Republic were looked at closely in Central Africa. In the former, the conflict situation in the northern region is exacerbated by the cross-border spillover of terrorist activity by Boko Haram, with its allegiance to an international terror franchise. Similarly, the Central African Republic has been very turbulent for a while and provided a useful opportunity for a study of the associated interlinkages. All the four case-study countries are encountering development and human rights challenges and dealing with humanitarian problems arising from natural phenomena and conflicts both within and outside their territories. All four case studies provided rich data for an analysis of the four-pillar interlinkages as they relate to the conflict situation in the two subregions.

*Analytical framework:* The analysis was guided by the four-pillar interlinkages framework presented in chapter II. The framework depicts the interlinkages between the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars. In line with its primary objective of the study, namely, to promote synergistic and complementary approaches to the search for effective and lasting solutions to conflict in the two subregions, the framework situates conflict prevention and resolution at its centre. In this manner, it recognizes the importance of positive interactions among the pillars and the significance of good governance and strong institutions in strengthening them. It also takes due account of the negative influence that bad governance and weak institutions could have on the interlinkages, thereby negating conflict prevention and resolution objectives. Furthermore, while not specifically included in its schematic outline, the framework recognizes gender, youth and transboundary problems issues as cross-cutting issues and the COVID-19 pandemic as both a challenge and an opportunity for conflict prevention and resolution. It also takes into consideration that, in the search for solutions, the implementation of relevant subregional, regional and global frameworks, along with the United Nations-African Union cooperation frameworks will contribute to attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063.

*Data analysis:* Quantitative data were analysed with the use of the statistical package for the social sciences (Version 24), including frequency and percentages, pie charts, histograms and bar charts to represent the data across countries and regions. Mean values, standard deviations and chi square tests were used to compare and contrast data between countries. The blend of qualitative and quantitative data enriched the production of this report and informed its recommendations.



*Validation process:* The study was validated through an internal peer review by the ECA team and collaborators, entailing an iterative process from inception to finalization, and external peer review through the inception and experts group meetings, held in October and December 2020, respectively.

## **E. Limitations of the report**

The limitations of the report mainly relate to the questionnaire survey. The aim of the questionnaire survey was to reach 3,000 respondents from West and Central Africa. This goal could not be achieved, however, owing to a number of challenges, some due to the prevailing situation during the COVID-19 situation and others relating to the difficulties encountered by respondents in gaining access to good quality internet services. In addition to the low response level, respondents were concentrated in English-speaking countries (82.4 per cent), although the population of this group of countries represented around 55 per cent of the total population of the two subregions.<sup>3</sup> In geographical terms, however, the number of respondents from the Central African subregion (10.1 per cent) is close to the percentage of this population in the total population of the two subregions (12.6 per cent).

## **F. Organization of the report**

The report has eight chapters, including the present introductory chapter.

Chapter II examines the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars. It starts with the concepts, definitions and principles then looks at the operational frameworks at the level of the African Union, United Nations, African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks relevant to the four pillars, and those of ECOWAS and ECCAS, all of which guide implementation in West and Central African countries. It then presents the analytical framework of the report, which conceptualizes the four pillar interlinkages with conflict at the centre and governance and institutions as encompassing policy themes, while recognizing their relationships with the issues addressed in the report.

Chapter III examines the status and trends in development, peace and security, human rights and the humanitarian pillar with regard to conflict situations in West and Central Africa. It presents most of the findings from the questionnaire survey and the case studies in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Mali and Nigeria, which vividly bring out the interlinkages between the four pillars and conflict. It also looks at the significance of existing frameworks initiatives in terms of their contribution to conflict prevention and resolution, and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. It concludes by highlighting the new narrative for the Sahel, in particular with regard to its vast natural resources potential that could drive development, dampen the gloomy narrative of conflict and poverty, and propel the region towards prosperity.

Chapter IV provides an overview of transboundary and cross-cutting issues as they relate to conflict and the four-pillar interlinkages. It looks at transboundary conflict arising from increased insurgency due to COVID-19 and disputes over transboundary resources and border governance. It discusses how conflict and insecurity situations threaten regional trade, while noting that trade, in particular the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area, could contribute to peace and security. It illustrates how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to exacerbate the humanitarian situation and create social crises. It examines how women and young people are

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<sup>3</sup> Population details available at <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>.

affected differently by conflicts, fragility and other threats to peace and security, human rights and development and confront varying humanitarian challenges. It concludes with a brief review of the humanitarian challenges of migration, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter V appraises governance and institutions as they relate to conflict and the four-pillar interlinkages. It provides a snapshot of the performance of West and Central African countries on governance indicators and discusses the effect of governance on conflict and the pillars. It features the African Peer Review Mechanism as an African Union instrument aimed at promoting good governance, and also at the African Union normative framework on good governance. It looks at corruption as a major causal factor of conflict adversely affecting all four pillars and notes the potentially positive impact of external influence and interests. In conclusion, it examines the critical role of institutions, including political parties, the arms of government, civil society organizations and the private sector, in promoting the interlinkages in the context of conflict prevention and resolution.

Chapter VI examines the significance of the four-pillar interlinkages and strategies and approaches that could be deployed to harness them to contribute to effective and lasting solutions to conflicts. It looks at the guiding frameworks for mainstreaming most of which were presented in chapter II. It considers mainstreaming the interlinkages into policies and strategies relating to the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 and into national development plans. It presents challenges to, and opportunities for, promoting the interlinkages approach. In conclusion, it examines methodologies and tools for conflict analysis, presenting examples of how they have been used in several West and Central African countries, and discusses their capacity-building implications and needs.

Lastly, chapter VII draws conclusions, highlights key messages and offers recommendations on the basis of the study findings.

## II. Conceptual issues and analytical framework

The present chapter examines the development, peace and security,<sup>8</sup> human rights and humanitarian pillars. It starts with the concepts, definitions and principles then looks at the operational frameworks at the level of the African Union, United Nations, African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks relevant to the four pillars, and those of ECOWAS and ECCAS, all of which guide implementation in West and Central African countries. It then presents the analytical framework of the report, which conceptualizes the four-pillar interlinkages with conflict at the centre and governance and institutions as encompassing policy themes, while recognizing their relationships with the issues addressed in the report. It considers the four-pillars,<sup>4</sup> namely: development,<sup>5</sup> peace and security,<sup>6</sup> human rights,<sup>7</sup> and humanitarian work,<sup>8</sup> as interrelated and mutually reinforcing

### A. Context

The four-pillar interlinkages approach is aimed at strengthening coherence and complementarity and collaboration among the pillars of development, peace and security, human rights, and also humanitarian work in conflict-related interventions. It is also aimed at contributing to the broader objective of contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 within the context of the African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks relevant to the four pillars. In this regard, it seeks to maximize the advantages of each pillar in order to reduce overall vulnerabilities and the number of unmet needs. It is further aimed at strengthening risk management capacities and, given the focus of the study on conflict prevention and resolution, the approach will facilitate understanding of the root causes of conflicts with a view to finding effective and lasting solutions (OECD, 2019)

Conflicts generally, have multiple causes and can rarely be traced to a single origin. Generally, in the West and Central subregions, conflicts are driven by ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, political and regional issues. The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes has described conflict situations in Africa along seven categories: (a) stigmatization and discrimination; (b) trust between citizens and institutions; (c) livelihood and food security; (d) domestic and gender-based violence; (e) crime-related incidents; (f) political unrest and violence; and (g) cross-border or inter-State tensions (ACCORD, 2020).

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<sup>4</sup> A number of documents and frameworks have established the relevance of the nexus. These include Issue Paper May 2016 to the World Humanitarian Summit 2016 (IOM, 2016); the January 2016 report of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report to the Secretary-General (2016); remarks by the Secretary-General-designate, António Guterres, to the General Assembly on taking the oath of office Secretary-General, available at: [www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2016-12-12/secretary-general-designate-antónio-guterres-oath-office-speech](http://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2016-12-12/secretary-general-designate-antónio-guterres-oath-office-speech); the “New way of working” initiative, outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit (A/71/353); and the Agenda for Humanity, set out in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit (A/70/709).

<sup>5</sup> African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

<sup>6</sup> African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy; and the Joint United Nations –African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

<sup>7</sup> 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted 27 June 1981, entered into force on 21 October 1986.

<sup>8</sup> See Badejo (2019).

The four-pillar interlinkages approach builds on the so-called “triple nexus” concept. A review of relevant literature, however, shows some conceptual inconsistencies in the application of the triple nexus. The focus with which it is applied often varies. Some triple nexus analyses are focused on the nexus between human rights, development, and peace and security (Nelson and Dorsey, 2003, p. 2013) while others emphasize that between humanitarian work, development and peace and security. For example, the study commissioned by OSAA for the expert group meeting on 9 and 10 December 2019, and other similar documents focused on the peace, development and humanitarian nexus.<sup>9</sup> Nexus in this sense is a synonym for interlinkages. The increased pressures on limited global resources due to escalating levels of conflict and crises, in concert with the search for integrative, holistic and sustainable approaches for managing and responding to crises and their aftermaths, renders application of the triple nexus more relevant (Obi, 2019, p. 3).<sup>10</sup> Since the 1980s, stakeholders in the humanitarian and development sectors have attempted to deploy a nexus approach linking relief, rehabilitation and development, and disaster risk reduction to provide relief to or build resilience in fragile or disaster-affected contexts (ibid.).

Table 1

**Key issues in each pillar and their interlinkages**

<i>Human rights</i>	<i>Peace and security</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Humanitarianism</i>
Intimidation and repression of citizens by those in authority and terror groups	Political and electoral systems	Comprehensive measures of human development	Governance and political interests
Threats to rights of peaceful assembly	Terrorism	Longevity (long-lasting healthy lives)	Gender and youth issues, such as inequality and violence, increasingly complicated by the pandemic
Threats to housing rights	Natural resource exploration-related issues	Knowledge	Disaster risk reduction
Sexual and gender-based rights abuse	Economic issues resulting in violence in pursuit of sources of livelihoods (outdated cattle herding methods, a major issue permeating Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria)	Access to resources for a qualitative level of living	Resilience
Threats to religious and political freedoms	Exploitation of ethnic differences	Role of the private sector and investment in development, through inclusive and innovative economic growth	Food security
			Migrations: refugees and internally displaced persons
			Natural and human-caused disasters, including climate and environment

<sup>9</sup> The “triple nexus” is often used to refer to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace elements and is in line with the United Nations “New way of working” initiative, following the outcome of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (A/71/353) and the adoption of Agenda 2063. See also Obi, 2019 (Executive Summary) and OSAA, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Obi uses the term “nexus”, which corresponds to “pillar interlinkages”, as used in this study.

## **B. Four pillars of development**

### **1. Development pillar**

Development is not purely an economic phenomenon but rather a multidimensional process involving reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social system. It is a process of improving the quality of all human lives with three equality important aspects:<sup>11</sup>

- Increase in availability and improvements in the distribution of food, shelter, education, health and other attributes through relevant growth processes
- Improvements in the standards of living, including income, jobs, education and so forth, by creating conditions conducive to growth through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity and respect
- Expansion in the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and countries, such as the varieties of goods and services

In the 1970s, the primary concern in development work was economic sustainability, with ecologists pointing to the limits of growth. Since then, concerns have shifted to the sound State economy, which presents a state of equilibrium that allows environmental issues to be addressed. Thus, the concept has resulted from a gradual shift in the focus of development theories. In the 1950s and 1960s, development mainly focused on economic growth and increases in outputs based on efficiency theories. In the 1970s, the growing gap between rich and poor within and between regions resulted in a shift to addressing equity issues, with emphasis on social development and income distribution as key elements. Around the same time, the impact of economic growth on the environment brought into focus the importance of integrating environmental concerns in the development agenda (ECA, 2012).

It is in this context that the seminal work by the World Commission on Environment and Development, known as the Brundtland Commission, may be argued to have contributed significantly to the recognition of the need to integrate economic, social and environmental concerns in the development process. The definition advanced by the Brundtland Commission in its 1987 report as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainable development places challenges facing growth and development within the context of the absorptive or carrying capacity of natural ecosystems and recognizes the limits of such systems. It also places emphasis on intragenerational and intergenerational equity.

The international community agreed on the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted in September 2015, is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity, which seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. The 2030 Agenda embodies 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which are integrated and mutually reinforcing. This global agenda seeks to end poverty, protect the planet, ensure sustainable peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 Goals address issues pertinent to the four pillars of peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarianism. Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security

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<sup>11</sup> On this issue, see [www.governanceinstitute.edu.au/magma/media/upload/ckeditor/files/International%20Development\(1\).pdf](http://www.governanceinstitute.edu.au/magma/media/upload/ckeditor/files/International%20Development(1).pdf).

will be at risk without sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice that are based on respect for human rights (including the right to development), on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions (para. 35).

Development is also considered as a conflict prevention mechanism. Through equitable and sustainable development, security is enhanced, directly serving as a conflict prevention instrument. In addition to international efforts, scholars over the years have advanced concepts and definitions of development. The work of Amartya Sen, for example, is worthy of note. Sen's thesis is that "freedom" is both the primary end and the principal means of development. Sen gives two reasons why freedom should be the primary element of development: first, the only acceptable evaluation of human progress is primarily and ultimately enhancement of freedom; second, the achievement of development is dependent on the free agency of people. Sen mentions five distinct freedoms: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security.

The centre of Sen's vision is what he calls a "capability approach", where the basic concern of human development is "our capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value", rather than the usual concentration on rising GDP, technical progress or industrialization. His approach is inescapably focused on the agency and judgment of individuals, including their capability, responsibility and opportunity. Raising human capability is good because it improves the choices, well-being and freedom of people, their role in influencing social change and their role in influencing economic production. This approach formed the basis for the human development index developed by UNDP in 1990.

For Africa, Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want, of the African Union and its accompanying goals provide the framework for transformative and sustainable development of Africa. The seven aspirations of Agenda 2063 are indicative:

- Aspiration 1: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- Aspiration 2: An integrated continent; politically united and based on the ideals of pan-Africanism and the vision of the African renaissance
- Aspiration 3: An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law
- Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa;
- Aspiration 5: An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics
- Aspiration 6: An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children
- Aspiration 7: Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player

Subsequently, after the adoption of the Agenda 2063 Framework Document by the Summit in January 2015 as the blueprint for long-term socioeconomic and integrative transformation of Africa, it directed the African Union Commission to prepare the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063.

The medium-term development plans include the first 10-year implementation plan (2014–2023) of Agenda 2063, the flagship projects of the Agenda, including the African Continental Free Trade Area, and the protocol on the free movement of persons. The priority areas of the first 10-year plan embody issues pertinent to the four-pillar interlinkages. The priority areas are: sustainable and inclusive economic growth; human capital development; agriculture or value addition and agribusiness development; job creation, especially for young people and women; social protection; gender equality and the empowerment of women and young people; good governance, including capable institutions; the development of infrastructure; science, technology and innovation; manufacturing-based industrialization; peace and security; and culture, arts and sport (African Union Commission, 2015).

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of Agenda 2063 are the member States, the regional economic communities and the African Union Organs. Each of these entities has the responsibilities outlined below.

#### **Member States:**

- To adopt or integrate Agenda 2063 and the associated 10-year implementation plan as the basis for developing their national visions and plans
- To use the national planning systems – structures for monitoring and evaluating the implementation, methodologies, systems and processes, rules and regulations, forms and formats in the fulfilment of Agenda 2063
- To develop policy guidelines on the design and implementation, and on monitoring and evaluation by various stakeholders
- To ensure that the legislatures adopt Agenda 2063 as the blueprint for the social, economic and political development of Africa in the next 50 years
- To encourage all political parties and private candidates to use Agenda 2063 as a basis for preparing their political manifestos

#### **Regional economic communities:**

- To adopt Agenda 2063 and its associated 10-year implementation plans as the basis for developing their regional visions and plans
- To serve as focal points to enable the adoption, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all continental frameworks related to Agenda 2063 by member States of the African Union
- To organize annual forums for member States to review regional performance (monitoring and evaluation) in the implementation of Agenda 2063
- To report annually to the African Union Assembly on regional implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the first 10-year plan
- To facilitate, coordinate and support the resource mobilization and capacity development initiatives of members States for the implementation of the 10-year plan

## **African Union organs:**

- The African Union Commission will be the body to follow up the formulation and adoption of decisions on Agenda 2063. These decisions and policies will cover the 50-year Agenda; the 10-year plans; and guidelines on their implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- The African Union Commission will organize annual consultations between the African Union organs and the regional economic communities on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063
- The African Union Commission or the New Partnership for Africa's Development will ensure the formulation of policies and frameworks for the assessment of regional economic communities and national capacities for the execution of Agenda 2063 at the inception and midterm review of every 10-year plan
- The African Union Commission will provide a continental framework, strategy or platform for the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the 10-year plan by member States of the Union
- The Pan-African Parliament will hold annual consultations with the African Legislatures on the progress towards the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063

In 2018, the Chairperson of the African Union and the Secretary-General signed the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The main objective of the framework is to provide the foundation for stronger coordination and, through the alignment of the two agendas, to maximize the comparative advantages and mandates of and synergies between the African Union and the United Nations for the purposes of effective implementation and reporting. The framework comprises the nine following thematic areas relevant to the two agendas:

- Advocacy and awareness-raising of the joint implementation of the two agendas
- Coherent integration of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 into national development frameworks
- Analytical work and research to enhance evidence-based policymaking
- Data ecosystems of member States and regional economic communities for effective performance tracking, follow-up and evidenced-based policymaking
- Integrated frameworks for monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- Trade and regional integration agenda
- Nexus between peace and security, human rights and development
- Global representation and voice of Africa
- Integrated financing mechanisms

The seventh thematic area, the nexus between peace and security, human rights and development, is of particular relevance to the present report.

For close to 30 years now the human development approach of UNDP has been focused on promoting freedom and opportunities, beyond mere economic growth, and continued to spread globally those solutions and policy actions inspired by development. The UNDP human



development index, for 2018 to 2019, reiterates and validates the fact that the four pillars, should be addressed from the perspective of interlinkages. For example, the 2018 national human development index report by Nigeria provides a conceptual and analytical framework for implementing the interlinkages approach in the context of north-east Nigeria and the wider Lake Chad basin, the area where Boko Haram activities are widespread. The report proposes what it terms a “3+5 integrated framework”, comprising three integrated pillars of response (peace and security, humanitarian and development), supported by the five principles of good governance, effective partnerships, human capacities, predictable and sustained financing, and investments in reliable data.<sup>12</sup>

A similar approach is followed at the levels of the regional economic communities. For instance, in 2007, ECOWAS adopted its 2020 Vision, focused on transforming ECOWAS from a body of States to a community of people. In order to achieve this aim, a long-term regional development strategy was defined, one of the major instruments of which was the community development programme. In addition, a regional strategic plan for 2011–2015 and a community strategic framework for 2016–2020 are intended to integrate the programmes of the institutions and agencies of the region from an interlinkages standpoint. The vision was implemented successively through both the regional strategic plan and the community strategic plan. According to the evaluation of how the regional strategic plan was implemented, an average annual physical execution rate of 36.8 per cent emerges during the period 2011–2015.

For its part, the ECCAS regional integration capacity development framework coordinates issues of strategic sectors, such as peace, security and stability, environment, infrastructure, energy and water, institutional capacity-building, agriculture and rural development, multi-sectoral capacity development, and the trade and customs union (African Union, 2015a).

Thus, at the levels of both ECOWAS and ECCAS, this type of development is seen from a broad perspective, cutting across economic growth indicators, per capita income, GDP, standard of living, quality of life, life expectancy, human capacity, resource optimization, private sector inclusion, fiscal stability; access to basic social services and poverty alleviation; democracy, human rights and civil liberties; reasonable level of security; and good governance virtues, such as accountability, transparency and others (Sen, 1999, pp. 13–34)). In other words, some of the goals of sustainable development (both human development and human security) are to advance human rights, peace and security, and humanitarianism.

The work of OSAA in the areas of peace, security, and development, highlights the fact that there is no peace without development, no development without peace and no peace and development without human rights. Any absence or deficiency in the pillars of peace and security, human rights, and development leads to a humanitarian crisis.<sup>13</sup> Humanitarian interventions designed to build resilience are linked with development and avert tensions and conflicts, hence ensuring respect for human rights.

The Sahel Alliance was also set up in 2017 by France, Germany and the European Union to facilitate development assistance in the area and serve as a contact point for the Group of Five for the Sahel on development issues. It coordinates the activities of major development partners in the

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<sup>12</sup> On this point, see Steiner, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> In the study we will link the work of OSAA (subprogramme 1) with that of ECA (subprogramme 2) within the framework of Programme 9 (United Nations support to the NEPAD Programme of the African Union).

region, to speed up the implementation of development actions which address population needs, including economic empowerment and job creation for young people, education and training, agriculture, rural development and food security, energy and climate, governance, support for rolling out basic services and internal security (France Diplomacy, 2020).

The interlinkages are relevant when it comes to promoting the synergistic and integrated interventions that address the four pillars in the subregions. Harnessing the interlinkages would contribute to efficient and lasting solutions to conflict and development also represents a mechanism for conflict prevention. Human needs are being met through equitable and sustainable development, which is thereby reducing tension, enhancing security, and directly serving as a conflict prevention instrument.

## **2. Peace and security pillar**

The phrase “peace and security” is by far one of the most used terms in international discourse. The present report is focused on realities of West and Central Africa in trying to understand peace and security. Tackling armed conflicts, violent clashes and the activities of militias and violent non-State actors, curbing attacks on civilian populations, and addressing transboundary or transnational violence and the attendant humanitarian consequences that at times fuel new conflicts are key to the pursuit of peace and security and the furtherance of human rights, development and addressing humanitarian concerns in West and Central Africa.

Academic research continues to throw light on peace and security as it relates to other pillars in understanding the nature and possible management of conflicts in the two subregions. Peace may be viewed from two angles: negative and positive peace. While negative peace refers to the absence of violence, positive peace defines the set of attitudes, institutions and structures which, when strengthened, will lead to a more peaceful society (ibid.). In turn, this results in cooperation for mutual benefit and a situation where individuals and society are in harmony (Galtung, 1985).

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (2013), countries with higher levels of peace tend to be more resilient to external shocks, whether they are economic, geopolitical or natural disasters. This institute is the first to rank the nations of the world by their peacefulness on its Global Peace Index. Inaugurated in 2007, the index ranks 162 nations by their “absence of violence” or absence of the “fear of violence”. In measuring negative peace, the Global Peace Index uses 22 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources, which encompass three broad themes: the level of safety and security, the extent of domestic or international conflict, and the degree of militarization. It is useful to understand the different types of violence and relative levels of violence between nations, but this in itself does not foster our understanding of the maintenance of a peaceful society.

According to the institute, the pillars of peace provide a framework for assessing the positive peace factors that create peaceful societies. This forms an ideal base for measuring a society’s potential for peace. These positive peace factors also indicate the extent to which the underlying environment supports development, as they are positively associated with developmental outcomes and therefore the fulfilment of human potential. These pillars of peace provide an ideal touchstone against which to measure the performance of the broader aspects of social development and the overall resilience of a country when confronted with social upheavals. In constructing the pillar of peace, over 900 indices, data sets and attitudinal surveys were analysed in conjunction with current thinking about what drives peace, resilience and conflict. The pillars are:

- Well-functioning government
- Sound business environment
- Equitable distribution of resources
- An acceptance of the rights of others
- Good relations with neighbours
- Free flow of information
- High level of human capital
- Low levels of corruption

In the broadest definition, security covers such varying critical issues as individual security; collective or group security; national security (response to internal and external threats); and social, political, economic, legal, judicial, food, financial, health, humanitarian and environmental security (Moulaye and Niakate, 2015). Security could also be seen as having a double edge, with military and non-military dimensions, performing such functions as defence, the maintenance of law and order, intelligence, management of threats and attacks against State security and peace. The concept of security as “human security” gives it a humanitarian and developmental dimension. Security can also be linked with human rights as it relates to core human rights values, such as freedom and development.

The 1994 Human Development Report recognized the importance of human security as an approach. It associates security more with people than with territories, and prioritizes development over arms. This thinking has engendered a new paradigm of sustainable human development, with peace as a reward (UNDP, 1994). Human security also involves freedom from fear and want in a number of dimensions of daily life, including freedom from fear of hunger, poverty, diseases such as COVID-19 and the Ebola virus disease, environmental degradation and accompanying offences, terrorism, violations of human rights, all forms of natural and human-caused disasters, and so forth. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, considered the right to freedom from want, the right to freedom from fear and the right of future generations to inherit a healthy planet as components of human security (Annan, 2005). It is manifestly clear that human security cannot be achieved without the combination of the rule of law, the respect for democracy, the protection of human rights, good governance, environmental protection and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The conceptualization and practical operationalization of peace and security through key policy frameworks and documents offer opportunities to promote the four-pillar interlinkages approach in the two subregions. These include the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and the related peace and security architecture, the ECOWAS conflict prevention framework, the ECOWAS peace and security architecture, the Central African early warning system, the ECCAS peace and security architecture and the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Additional opportunities are embodied in the African governance architecture, the African peer review mechanism, Agenda 2063 and the development frameworks of the regional economic communities.

Specifically, article 3 of the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union provides important frameworks to complement those of the regional economic communities. The protocol set out the following six objectives that promote coordinated approaches:

- (a) Promote peace, security and stability in Africa, in order to guarantee the protection and preservation of life and property, the well-being of the African people and their environment, and the creation of conditions conducive to sustainable development;
- (b) Anticipate and prevent conflicts. In circumstances where conflicts have occurred, the Peace and Security Council shall have the responsibility to carry out peacemaking and peacebuilding activities to resolve these conflicts;
- (c) Promote and implement peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction activities to consolidate peace and prevent the resurgence of violence;
- (d) Coordinate and harmonize continental efforts in the prevention and combating of international terrorism in all its aspects;
- (e) Develop a common defence policy for the Union, in accordance with article 4 (d) of the Constitutive Act;
- (f) Promote and encourage democratic practices, good governance and the rule of law, protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law, as part of efforts for preventing conflicts.

The African peace and security architecture of the African Union is a structure guiding the African Union and other regional agencies in consolidating peacekeeping and security efforts on the continent. It constitutes a structural response to conflicts on the continent. The architecture includes: a policymaking body (the Peace and Security Council); a centre for analysis and data collection (the Continental Early Warning System); two military structures (the African Standby Force and the Military Staff Committee); an advisory body of outside mediation (the Panel of the Wise); and a special fund to finance the operations (the Peace Fund) (Grasa and Mateos, p. 18).

Of these, the Peace and Security Council is more of a decision-making body for conflict prevention, management and resolution, with the following principal objectives:

- To promote peace, security and stability in Africa
- To prevent conflicts
- To promote the activities of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction
- To coordinate efforts to fight terrorism
- To develop a common defence policy for the African Union
- To strengthen democratic practices, good governance, human rights or fundamental freedoms protection

The African Standby Force aims to provide military intervention with its rapid reaction force. Its mandate would provide for various functions in the area of support to peace operations, including election observation and monitoring, supervision of the disarmament and demobilization, and others (ibid.).

Furthermore, in 2017, the Chairperson of the African Union and the Secretary-General signed the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. The objective is to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, in line with the 2002 Protocol relating to

the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The partnership comprises four themes, namely:

- Preventing and mediating conflict and sustaining peace (with six subthemes, including humanitarian assistance related to reducing the impact of both natural and human-induced disasters)
- Responding to conflict
- Addressing root causes
- Continuous partnership review and enhancement

The ECOWAS conflict prevention framework clearly outlines programmes, objectives, activities and stakeholders for implementing ECOWAS protocols on peace and security focused on conflict prevention, human security and peacebuilding (ECOWAS, 2008). Adopted in January 2008, the framework pursues human security as a broader context for achieving peace and security and seeks to provide a comprehensive operational conflict-prevention and peacebuilding strategy. It identifies 15 ambitious components, including early warning, preventive diplomacy and a peacekeeping force, cross-border initiatives, and promoting the interests of youth and women, peace and security, and the good governance of natural resources.<sup>14</sup> Through this framework, ECOWAS has made significant contributions to peace and security in Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. ECOWAS preventive diplomacy initiatives have also averted large-scale violence in Guinea, the Niger and Togo (Atuobi, 2010).

The ECCAS subregion adopted the protocol establishing the founding principles and organs of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa in 1999 to deal with the conflict and political instability in the subregion. The protocol made way for the establishment of the subregion’s Security Council, with three instruments, the Commission for Defence and Security, the Central African Early Warning System and the Central African Multinational Force.<sup>15</sup>

The CEN-SAD community signed its Security Charter in 2000 at N’Djamena. This subsequently led to the Niamey Declaration on Conflict Prevention and Peaceful Settlement of Disputes.

### **3. Human rights pillar**

Human rights are at the core of international law and international relations, representing basic values common to all cultures, to be respected by all countries. Human rights are thus inalienable fundamental rights to which individuals are inherently entitled simply because they are human beings. The 1984 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the bedrock for all of today’s human rights frameworks and actions. From it several human rights instruments have emerged, including the International Bill of Human Rights, regional conventions and the Conventions of the International Labour Organization.

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<sup>14</sup> The 14 components are: 1) early warning; 2) preventive diplomacy; 3) democracy and political governance; 4) human rights and the rule of law; 5) media; 6) natural resources governance; 7) cross-border initiatives; 8) security governance; 9) practical disarmament; 10) women, peace and security; 11) youth empowerment; 12) ECOWAS Standby Force; 13) humanitarian assistance; 14) peace education (the culture of peace).

<sup>15</sup> See also <https://ecfr.eu/special/african-cooperation/eccas/>.

Despite the existence of international and regional frameworks for governance, human rights and rule of law, reports of abuses or threats to human rights in West and Central Africa remain widespread. This derives from the challenges posed by weakened or fragile States and institutions, corruption, disruption of the rule of law, impunity, the intimidation and repression of citizens, threats to rights of peaceful assembly, threats to housing rights, sexual and gender-based rights abuse, threats to religious and political freedom, abuses by security forces, human rights issues related to humanitarian work and refugees, issues with freedom of civil society and media, along with education and cultural rights, unlawful arbitrary killings, extrajudicial killings, forced disappearance, unlawful infringement on citizens' privacy rights, forced or bonded labour and so on.

Key foundational documents and operational frameworks that are focused on human rights and recognize their value within the four-pillar interlinkages include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Protocol on the Rights of Women, the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the draft United Nations-African Union human rights framework.

The African Charter makes provision for key rights which, when defended, would promote peace, security and development. Article 2 of the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights clearly states that every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in the present charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth, or any status. Article 8, significantly, makes the case for freedom of conscience and religion. Article 13 stipulates the right to participation in governance and access to public services. Social and economic rights are covered by various articles. They include the right to own property (article 14), the right to work (article 15), the right to enjoy physical and mental health (article 16), the right to education and cultural life of a community (article 17), the right to economic, social and cultural development (article 22), the equality of persons (article 19), the right to life and integrity (article 4), the right to liberty and security of persons (article 6), the right to a fair hearing (article 7), the freedom of association and free assembly (articles 10 and 11) and others.

The Human Rights Strategy for Africa is a guiding framework for collective action by the African Union, regional economic communities and member States for strengthening the African human rights system. The strategy seeks to address critical challenges hampering the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa. These include inefficient coordination and collaboration, limited capacity of human rights institutions, poor implementation of human right standards and decisions, and limited awareness of and access to the African human rights mechanisms. In this context the strategy serves the following purposes:

- To enhance coordination and collaboration among the African Union and the organs and institutions of the regional economic communities
- To strengthen the capacity of human rights institutions at the African Union and regional economic communities and institutions
- To accelerate the ratification of human rights instruments
- To ensure effective implementation of human rights instruments and decisions

- To enhance the promotion and popularization of African human rights standards<sup>16</sup>

The African Union works with a number of institutions to address human rights abuses. The African Union General Assembly, the Executive Council, the Pan-African Parliament, the office of the Chair of the African Union Commission, the Panel of the Wise, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court of Justice and Human Rights are all components of the system of human rights of the African Union.

The draft African Union-United Nations joint framework on human rights is expected to be signed soon. The development of the framework was triggered by realization of the need to address the interlinkages between peace and security, development and human rights. These three foundational pillars of the United Nations are connected and mutually reinforcing and must be advanced simultaneously. The overarching objective of the framework is to enhance the respect for, promotion and protection of human rights and, to that end, it has eight thematic areas:

- (a) Early warning, prevention and the protection of human rights;
- (b) Strengthening the rule of law and accountability;
- (c) Human rights in development;
- (d) Enhancing equality, inclusivity and countering discrimination;
- (e) Enhancing participation in civic and democratic spaces;
- (f) Promoting the ratification, incorporation into domestic law and implementation of regional, continental and international human rights instruments;
- (g) Emerging human rights concerns;
- (h) Addressing the African Union theme of the year from a human rights perspective.

Thus, adoption of the framework would enhance the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in the domain of human rights. It would also corroborate the annual African Union-United Nations high-level dialogue on human rights, in addressing human rights abuses and violations, by consolidating such frameworks as the African Decade on Human Rights and its 10-year action plan, the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, and the joint African Union-United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa with recommendations from the regional and international human rights mechanisms (ReliefWeb, 2018).

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, speaking against the backdrop of the African Union-United Nations Framework on Human Rights, reaffirmed the place of human rights in the peaceful development of States: "Human rights are not an afterthought. They are not a second stage, which countries can begin to construct after development is well under way. They are not a project which unfolds after peace has been established. Rights are the drivers of development. Rights are the constructive elements of peace. ... We – and the human rights we stand for – have a powerful capacity to make States stronger. Stronger, because they are more fair. Richer, and more sustainably developed, because they can count on the full expression of the skills, talents, and views – including critical views – of their

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

people. More peaceful, because their people are not torn apart by festering grievances, biting inequalities and injustice” (Morgan, 2018).

The African Union Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, highlighting the importance of local involvement, said: “Our action can only succeed if it is based on genuine African ownership” (ibid.).

Human rights normative frameworks adopted at the levels of ECOWAS, the African Union, and the Mano River Union are being supported by the engagement strategy of UNOWAS, through combating impunity following the violation of human rights, promoting free and fair elections as a fundamental human right, engaging citizens and civil society organizations in promoting ownership and popular participation in issues of elections free from violence, respect for human rights, and consultations with networks of civil society organizations in West Africa and the Sahel.<sup>17</sup>

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights have key importance in the ECOWAS and ECCAS definition of human rights.<sup>18</sup> All member States of ECOWAS and ECCAS also universally ratified and signed up to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.<sup>19</sup> The right to development is captured under the broad range of socioeconomic rights that are tied to the ECOWAS objective of improving the standard of living. Democracy and good governance, peace, security and humanitarian law are key elements of the ECOWAS human rights framework. It has been argued that, as a regional integration initiative, the ECOWAS framework could be conceptualized as a mechanism for the right to development (Nwogu, 2007, p. 345). Strengthening democratic governance, direct humanitarian intervention and the judicial protection of rights are key to the ECOWAS human rights focus as articulated within the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework.

The ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, in its section VII, article 32, affirms the agreement of member States that good governance and press freedom are essential for preserving social justice, preventing conflict, guaranteeing political stability and peace and for strengthening democracy. Article 33 holds that the rule of law involves not only the promulgation of good laws that are in conformity with the provisions on human rights, but also a good judicial system, a good system of administration, and good management of the State apparatus. Member States also recognized that a system that guarantees the smooth running of the State and its administrative and judicial services contributes to the consolidation of the rule of law. Article 34 provides that member States and the executive secretariat shall endeavour to adopt at national and regional levels practical modalities for the enforcement of the rule of law, human rights, justice and good governance. Member States shall also ensure accountability, professionalism, transparency and expertise in the public and private sectors.

Article 35 provides that member States shall establish independent national institutions to promote and protect human rights. In addition, the executive secretariat shall take measures to strengthen their capacities. The institutions shall be organized into a regional network within

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<sup>17</sup> See UNOWAS web post on human rights, governance and rule of law at <https://unowas.unmissions.org/human-rights-governance-and-rule-law>.

<sup>18</sup> Most cases decided by the ECOWAS Court were based on either the African Union Charter or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

<sup>19</sup> Effectively, as of December 2008, all member States of the ECOWAS were parties to the African Charter.



whose framework each national institution shall systematically submit to the executive secretariat any report on human rights violations observed on its territory. Article 36 calls on member States to have an institutionalized national mediation system (Ebobrah and Tannoh, 2010, pp. 235–236).

Article 37 provides that each member State shall work towards ensuring pluralism of the information sector and the development of the media. Each member State may give financial assistance to privately owned media. The distribution and allocation of such assistance shall be performed by an independent national body or by a body freely appointed by the journalists themselves. Article 38 states that member States undertake to fight corruption and manage their national resources in a transparent manner, ensuring that they are equitably distributed. Thus, member States and the executive secretariat undertake to establish appropriate mechanisms to address issues of corruption within the member States and at the community level. Article 39 stipulates that Protocol A/P.1/7/91 adopted in Abuja on 6 July 1991 relating to the Community Court of Justice shall be reviewed so as to give the Court the power to hear, among other matters, cases relating to violations of human rights, after all attempts to resolve the matter at the national level have failed (*ibid.*).

The Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, established in 1999, focuses on capacity-building and the promotion of human rights and democracy and aims to strengthen the capacities of governments, lawmakers, armed forces and civil society organizations in the 11 ECCAS member States. The centre supports endeavours by member States to cooperate with human rights mechanisms, promote security and early warning, protect the civic space and peoples' participation, promote democracy and the rule of law, and provide support to media and civil societies organizations.

#### **4. Humanitarian pillar**

The humanitarian pillar is a complex endeavour involving the efforts of crisis-affected populations alongside a myriad of local, national and international institutions and organizations, working to assist them. The humanitarian pillar works with the three core principles of humanity: impartiality, neutrality and independence, based on international humanitarian law according to the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention). The humanitarian pillar is defined in the light of environmental and human-induced factors, considering how these ultimately lead to conflicts and threats to human security, freedom and development.

In a number of studies scholars have reasoned that armed conflicts have been hurtful to biodiversity and creatures through such effects as habitat destruction and fragmentation, the overuse, misuse and corruption of regular assets and the incremental pollution of land and water (Negasi and others, 2018). On the one hand, the environmental impact of conflict on the environment is rarely evaluated. Equally, understanding how climate variability could have played a part in expanding or diminishing the effects of conflicts in Africa is not well documented (*ibid.*). According to the Conflict and Environment Observatory (2020), the environmental impacts of conflicts begin long before the war itself. The work of building and sustaining military forces consumes vast quantities of resources, which might be common metals or rare earth elements, water or hydrocarbons. Maintaining military readiness means training and training consumes resources. Military vehicles, aircrafts, vessels, buildings and infrastructure all require energy, which is often sourced from carbon-intensive oil. The carbon dioxide emissions of the largest militaries are greater than many of the world's countries combined.

During conflicts the environmental impacts vary greatly. Some international armed conflicts may be brief but highly destructive, whereas some civil wars may last for decades but are fought at low intensity. Many contemporary conflicts have blurred the lines between the two, lasting years but with sustained periods of high intensity warfare (ibid.). High-intensity conflicts require and consume vast quantities of fuel, leading to widespread physical damage to sensitive landscapes and biodiversity; this is also true of the intensive use of explosive ordnance. The use of explosive weapons in urban areas creates vast quantities of debris and rubble, which can cause air and soil pollution. Pollution can also be caused by damage to light industry and environmentally sensitive infrastructure, such as water treatment plants. The loss of energy supplies can have reverberating effects that are detrimental to the environment, shutting down treatment plants or pumping systems or the absence thereof can lead to the use of more polluting fuels or domestic generators.

Severe pollution incidents can be caused when industrial, oil or energy facilities are deliberately attacked, inadvertently damaged or disrupted. In some cases, deliberate attacks on such facilities are used as weapons of war to pollute large areas and spread terror. Other techniques include the destruction of agricultural canals, wells and pumps, and the burning of crops (ibid.). Such tactics threaten food security and livelihoods, increasing the vulnerability of rural communities (ibid.). Furthermore, the weapons and military materials used during conflicts leave environmental legacies. Landmines, cluster bombs or munitions and other explosive remnants of war can restrict access to agricultural land and pollute soils and water sources with metals and toxic energetic materials (ibid.). In major conflicts, military scrap may be produced or abandoned, causing a wide range of polluting materials, contaminating soil and groundwater, while exposing those who work on it to acute health risks. Wrecked or damaged ships, submarines and offshore oil infrastructure can cause marine pollution. Many conventional weapons of warfare have toxic constituents, such as depleted uranium, which is also radioactive (ibid.). In addition, easy access to small arms and light weapons can harm wildlife through facilitating increased hunting and poaching, and the ungoverned spaces created by conflict create ideal conditions for wildlife crime.

There are links between humanitarian issues and the other pillars: development, peace and security, and human rights. For instance, a humanitarian burden may emerge alongside human rights abuse, when State agencies embark on certain development projects. For example, clearing traders from the roadside, demolishing residences around swampy areas or too close to a river, or any other related situation posing a potential threat to safety of lives, could readily stir up a crisis of internally displaced persons, even without any form of violent conflict. This may also amount to an abuse of human rights if not well handled. There is also a connection between armed violence and insecurities, resulting from pandemics, drought, flood, famine and food insecurity; and from unemployment, all of which trigger challenges to peace and security, and development, and may lead to a humanitarian and human rights crisis.

In its resolution 46/182, on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations, adopted in 1991, the General Assembly holds that humanitarian assistance is of cardinal importance for the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies. In the guiding principles set out in the annex to the resolution, the Assembly further underscores the relationships between emergency, rehabilitation and development (paragraph 9), and also the links between economic growth, sustainable development and prevention and preparedness against

emergencies (paragraph 10).<sup>20</sup> The below instruments are key to tackling humanitarian challenges in Africa, including those related to conflicts.

The 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), the humanitarian policy framework, the study on the modalities for the operationalization of the African Union Humanitarian Agency, the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the programme of action for its implementation (2006–2015) are key policy documents on humanitarian action. The Kampala Convention is aimed at promoting and strengthening regional and national measures to prevent, mitigate or prohibit the root causes of internal displacements and seek lasting solutions, establishing a legal framework for preventing internal displacement and protecting internally displaced persons in Africa, providing for the obligations and responsibilities of States parties, in respect of the prevention of internal displacement, protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons, providing for the respective obligations, responsibilities and roles of armed groups, non-State actors, civil society organizations and other such bodies, in respect of the prevention of internal displacement and assistance to such persons.

The humanitarian pillar is well recognized and provided for in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council. The African Union humanitarian policy framework complements the African peace and security architecture, the African Governance Architecture and other similar initiatives in Africa. The Framework emphasizes early warning, preparedness and response, protection and assistance to victims and vulnerable groups, protection of civilians in armed conflicts, disaster management and risk reduction, inclusive peace process and post-conflict reconstruction and development as core priorities (African Union, 2015b). It recognizes the links between humanitarian assistance, peace and security, natural and human induced disasters and development issues.

The above-mentioned foundational documents guided the study on the operationalization of the African Union Humanitarian Agency. The Agency would operate under core humanitarian principles, such as “humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality; including principles of State responsibility, solidarity among member States as a customary extension of hospitality, egalitarianism and solidarity with peoples in situations of need; and also lays emphasis on participation and ownership by the affected populations and host communities as a cornerstone of humanitarian action” (Badejo, 2019). The Agency would take leadership of humanitarian policy and response in Africa. It would ensure viable resources coordination, define the nature of relationship with stakeholders and ensure as best possible local ownership in many ways (Boateng, 2019).

Furthermore, the African Union Commission and OCHA signed a memorandum of understanding on humanitarian action in 2010. The memorandum was born out of concerns about inadequate protection of populations affected by conflict and disaster, humanitarian access constraints impeding effective humanitarian action, and insecurity affecting relief personnel and operations in Africa. In that context, its main objectives are the following: to enhance the capacity of the African Union Commission in early warning, disaster preparedness and response; to strengthen the capacity of the African Union Commission in coordinating humanitarian assistance;

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<sup>20</sup> The inception report for East Africa by Olawale Ismail drew attention to this point.

and to strengthen the capacity of the African Union Commission to advocate the protection of civilians affected by conflict and natural disasters (ReliefWeb, 2010).

The humanitarian assistance commitment of the ECOWAS conflict prevention framework seeks, first, to mitigate the impact of humanitarian disasters and emergencies that could result in social and political upheaval; second, to serve as a bridge between relief and emergency assistance and medium-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in post-conflict and disaster settings; third, to protect sustainable development, including individual and community livelihoods, through effective crisis prevention and preparedness activities; and, fourth, to foster interregional harmony and security through cooperative arrangements to ensure effective humanitarian crisis prevention and preparedness programmes (ECOWAS, 2008).

### **C. Analytical framework**

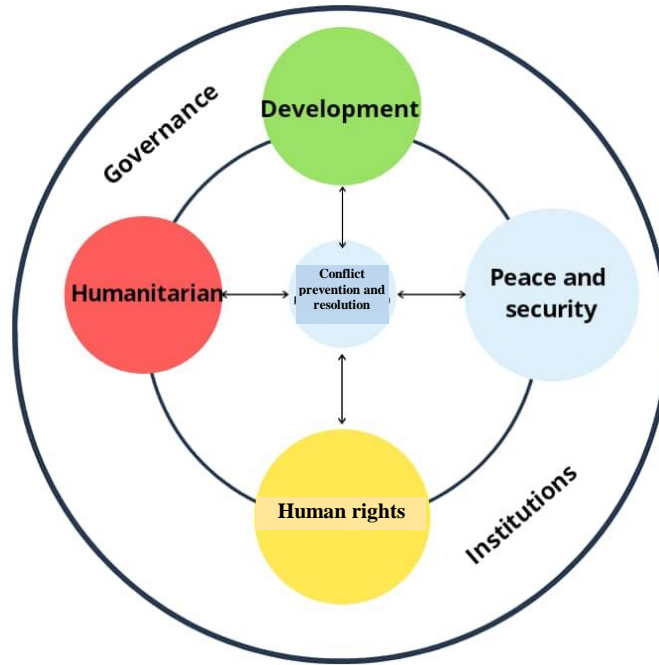
The analytical framework reflects the interlocking relationship of the four pillars: development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian assistance, all of which are situated within a framework of governance and institutions. The foregrounding of conflict is deliberate, to raise both negative and positive questions on the interlinkages. It shows the negative reality of the prevalence of both violent and non-violent conflicts, with the challenges posed by bad governance, leadership and ineffective institutions as affecting each of the pillars in the subregions. Conflict is also examined in a constructive manner – in terms of conflict prevention and resolution, exploring good governance and effective institutions that leverage the linkages of the four pillars. Effective and lasting solutions to conflicts would promote human development and security and contribute to the quest towards a wider freedom, as articulated in the preamble of the 2030 Agenda.

The analysis was informed by the interactions between each pillar and conflict, and the relations between the four pillars and conflict as indicated by the arrows in figure I. It recognizes good governance and effective institutions as enabling factors that interact positively with the pillars in relation to conflict prevention and resolution. The reverse is true if governance and institutions are found wanting. While not shown in the diagram, other important elements of the analysis are those issues considered to be transboundary as they promote interregional cooperation to address conflict situations. Gender and youth are analysed as cross-cutting issues, and the COVID-19 pandemic is seen as both a challenge and an opportunity for addressing conflicts through the four-pillar interlinkages. The regional and subregional cooperation frameworks of the African Union and the United Nations are crucial to conflict prevention and resolution through the interlinkages approach.

Figure I

**Analytical framework**

**Four-pillar interlinkages and conflict**



*Source: ECA.*

### III. Status and trends of the four pillars in West and Central Africa

The present chapter examines the status and trends in development, peace and security, human rights and the humanitarian pillar with regard to conflict situations in West and Central Africa. It presents most of the findings from the questionnaire survey and the case studies in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Mali and Nigeria, which vividly bring out the interlinkages between the four pillars and conflict. It also looks at the significance of existing frameworks initiatives in terms of their contribution to conflict prevention and resolution, and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. It concludes by highlighting the new narrative for the Sahel, particularly in regard to its vast natural resources potential that could drive development, dampen the gloomy narrative of conflict and poverty, and propel the region towards prosperity.

#### A. Development

The development pillar encompasses critical issues in economic, social, political and environmental sustainability, as they all affect the general state of well-being of people in West and Central Africa. Some of the critical issues in development are provided for in the constitutions of member States. For example, in its article 15(1), the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria states clearly that it is “a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice”. Specifically, on environment, article 20 (subsection 2), of the Constitution states that, “the State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air and land, forest and wildlife of Nigeria”.

However, development that is sustainable, and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, goes beyond economic and sociopolitical variables, especially for countries of West and Central Africa. Development in the broadest sense cuts across all issues relating to the safety, quality and dignity of life. In other words, the threats to the other pillars, inadvertently undermine development. Creative solutions that address issues in the other pillars, in the long run, would contribute to tackling development challenges. It is therefore important to assess the key issues, performance, challenges and opportunities related to development in the two subregions.

From the results of the survey, 1.4 per cent of the respondents rated their country as highly developed, 7.0 per cent rated their country as adequately developed while 91.5 per cent of the respondents rated their country as underdeveloped. This is largely because of the infrastructure deficits, shortcomings in such social sectors as health care and education and the governance challenges in West and Central African countries.

Table 2  
Respondents’ rating of development in their countries

<i>How do you rate the level of development in your State or country?</i>		
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Highly developed	5	1.6
Adequately developed	24	7.8
Underdeveloped	278	90.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Four-pillar interlinkages study questionnaire survey, 2020.

Given the already established interdependent nature of relationship among the four pillars, especially the understanding that, broadly speaking, development is a reflection of the state of the four-pillar interactions. Sustainable development cannot be attained without inclusive progress on human rights, peace and security and better coordination of humanitarian response to minimize human suffering.

The realities in the subregions with regard to conflicts and peace and security are in line with the thinking of Kofi Annan and validate the work of the distinguished economist and philosopher Amartya Sen on development. In the introduction to his book *On Economic Inequality*, Sen puts it thus: “the relationship between inequality and rebellion is indeed a close one” (Sen, 1973, p. 1). The survey shows that the forces responsible for the relatively low level of development, also affect progress towards addressing situations of conflicts and threaten peace and security in the subregions. Conflicts hinder or at best slow down sustainable development. It is then very critical to pay attention to the nature of conflicts, if development is to be achieved and the cost of conflicts and threats to peace and security reduced.

The interaction or relationship between conflict and development affects progress in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. For example, the 2012 conflicts in the northern parts of Mali, accompanied by a military coup, almost ruined the efforts and investments of two decades in building democracy and pursuit of development (Clark, 2013). The absence of inter-State crisis or wars in the subregions, cannot transcend to significant development, as long as a majority of the population continue to live in very fragile and high conflict and crime risk States. The effects of conflicts go beyond socioeconomic cost, it damages institutions, allows for impunity, exacerbates corruption and inequalities, and ultimately undermines development (ibid.).

## **1. Sustainable growth, human development and poverty reduction**

The critical economic challenges relate to failure to foster sustainable and rapid economic growth that addresses the needs of populations (Nigeria, 2012). Inclusive and sustainable growth challenge is fundamental to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Human development indexes confirm the slow pace of development for peoples of West and Central Africa. The visible state of hunger and malnutrition, lack of access to health-care services and the level of performance in key development indicators, such as life expectancy, happiness index, corruption perception index, press freedom and so on, are valid concerns of development.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the fact that Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa, its human development index has remained in the region of 0.53 or less since records began through to 2019, constantly remaining in the category of low human development. Out of 189 countries measured annually, the ranking of Nigeria has been dismal especially considering its abundance of natural resources. A look at the UNDP data shows that the situation is similar in other African countries south of the Sahara, including those in West and Central Africa, with most falling in the low human development index category.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> According to the UNDP African Human Development Report, of the 44 countries worldwide in the low human development group, 36 are African (UNDP, 2016, p. 3). See also UNDP, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Analysis from cumulative annual human development index rankings.

It is noteworthy that various metrics, such as the ease of doing business, corruption perception index ratings, happiness index, press freedom and labour productivity, affect the development opportunities of people. These include enjoying a good standard of living that would permit a long and healthy life, and access to opportunities for quality education and human capital development. Sustainable economic development requires private sector participation. The government and its agencies must continually evolve and invest in a conducive policy environment, infrastructure and effective public sector institutions, and guarantee security of investment. African countries need an enabling environment for both domestic and foreign private investment to flourish (Sako and Ogiogio, 2002).

West Africa has an estimated population of 400 million inhabitants in 2020, with 176 million below 15 years (44 per cent of total population). Nigeria has the largest population in the continent, with 200 million inhabitants. The subregion recorded the highest fertility rate, on average 5.5 child per women during the period 2010–2015. It is imperative to reverse this trend through the implementation of policies that build and strengthen human capital through quality health and education and create economic opportunities to harness the demographic dividend. The two subregions are also on the front line of internal and external migration, with many countries of origin or transit to Europe, mostly through Libya.

Poverty in Nigeria is rising, with nearly 50 per cent of the population (86.9 million Nigerians) living in extreme poverty.<sup>23</sup> Despite economic growth in recent years except 2016 (-1.6 per cent), the economy is not able to generate decent jobs to reduce widespread poverty (Edet, 2014). This implies that growth is not inclusive, which negates a key tenet of the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind. Critical social indicators are in areas of quality and efficient health care, education and other critical needs. Corruption, mismanagement, insecurity and the abuse of human rights have continued to clog the wheel of meaningful progress towards sustainable development.

In Mali the poverty rate stood at 44.9 per cent in 2017, a percentage point higher than the level estimated in 2010 (43.7 per cent). The good economic performances recorded recently (economic growth has been relatively high, around 5 per cent on average between 2012 and 2017), failed to significantly reduce poverty (IMF, 2011).

In Cameroon, economic growth has slowed and stood at 3.5 per cent in 2017 (against 4.5 per cent in 2016 and 5.2 per cent in 2015), basically as a result of the drop by 17 per cent in oil production. In the midterm, prospects remain positive after the revival of 2018 (3.8 per cent) and a projection of 4.4 per cent in 2019 and 5 per cent in the medium term. However, these achievements and growth prospects are largely below the 7 per cent required to achieve the goals expected in terms of sustainable development (United Nations, 2019a). The Government is therefore planning to strengthen the conditions that will enable the private sector to take the relay from public investment to drive growth, through the promotion of greater diversification of the economy.

ECA has cautioned that COVID-19 is a significant headwind against growth in Africa. The uncertainty around the virus and the consequent policy actions, such as physical distancing and lockdowns, have led to a drop in demand for African products due to a sharp decline in global manufacturing activities, compounded by a decline in economic activity on the continent as the

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<sup>23</sup> See the World Poverty Clock by World Data Lab.



labour force remains at home to combat the virus. Average growth in West Africa and Central Africa will fall from 3.6 per cent in 2019 to -1.4 per cent, and from 1.8 per cent to -1.7 per cent, respectively (IMF, 2020). Nigeria, the leading economy of the two subregions and of the entire continent will be more affected, with an anticipated growth rate of -3.4 per cent in 2020, mainly due to the drop of oil prices and lockdown measures.

## **2. Findings of the 2018 Africa Sustainable Development Report**

The Africa Sustainable Development Report 2018 is the second in a series of reports and provides an integrated assessment of the continent's progress towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063. The report is currently the only document that simultaneously tracks the continent's performance on both agendas using the Continental Results Framework endorsed by the African Union Heads of State and Government (African Union and others, 2018).

The 2018 edition is aligned with the theme of the 2018 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies", and is focused on five Sustainable Development Goals, namely:

- Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy
- Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss

In addition, the challenges and opportunities for nurturing science, technology and innovation hubs in Africa are examined, highlighting the following key findings:

- Access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation is improving but remains very low in Africa.
- Access to electricity in Africa is increasing, albeit at a pace lower than the population growth; the continent's renewable energy potential remains largely untapped.
- Efficiency in energy use is improving but reliance on biomass poses a challenge to progress.
- Africa is the fastest urbanizing region globally, but the potential benefits are not yet being fully exploited.
- Implementation of national disaster strategies reduces the vulnerability of cities to the impact of disasters.
- The air quality in most African cities is poor and poses health risks, in particular for children.
- Africa, excluding North Africa, wastes over 30 per cent of its approximately 230 million tons of annual food production, owing to large post-harvest losses.
- Africa outperforms most of the world's regions in the conservation and sustainable use of its mountain resources.
- Africa is losing forest cover at a rate that is much higher than the global average.

Thus, apart from sustainable use of mountain resources, Africa needs to improve its performance on all the goals reviewed in 2018. The report noted that while Africa is making steady progress in building the critical ingredients for sustainable and resilient societies, the pace is slow. Furthermore, the aggregate performance of the continent masks wide disparities across countries. The United Nations system, in partnership with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank committed itself to continuing to work closely to leverage and optimize the use of collective financial and human resources to advance the development objectives of member States. This recognizes the need to strengthen regional and national capacities for the coherent implementation of the two agendas.

### **3. Findings of the Agenda 2063 assessment report on West and Central Africa**

According to the 2020 report on implementation of the Agenda 2063 (AUDA, 2020), West Africa and Central Africa recorded 30 per cent and 24 per cent progress, respectively, on aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063, on a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. With regard to the goals, the following achievements were recorded. On the desire for a high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all, as a major goal of Agenda 2063, West Africa recorded 60 per cent progress, while Central Africa stood at 54 per cent. On other goals for measuring development, such as human capacity development, in terms of the development of educated citizens with relevant skills in harmony with revolutions in science, technology and innovation, West Africa recorded 23 per cent progress, while Central Africa stood at 9 per cent. In terms of health and quality nutrition, Central Africa achieved progress of 11 per cent, while this indicator was 53 per cent for West Africa. With regard to economic transformation and job creation, West Africa achieved 12 per cent progress, while Central Africa had zero per cent. In relation to modern agriculture and improved technology, Central Africa scored zero per cent while West Africa had 4 per cent progress (ibid.).

For the Central African Republic, the first continental report strongly recommends stronger efforts to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rates, increasing infrastructure connectivity, reducing youth unemployment, reducing gender-based discrimination and violence, curbing child labour, child marriage and human trafficking. It also recommends strengthening institutions and leadership for enhanced service delivery (ibid, p. 62). In Mali, increasing the contribution of manufacturing to GDP, increasing enrolment rates at basic education level, enhancing biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management and securing more political representation for women are key objectives (ibid.). In Nigeria, the focus must be put on reducing unemployment rates, increasing electricity generation and distribution, promoting measures to boost per capita income and contributing to an increase in GDP growth rates. In this regard, there is a need to diversify the economy by, among other measures, leveraging the potential of the manufacturing and fisheries sectors.

### **4. Findings of the Africa 2020 SDG Index and Dashboards Report on the performance of West and Central Africa**

The 2020 Africa SDG Index and Dashboards Report, the third in a series, was prepared jointly by the Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network under the theme of “leaving no one behind” with a view to better understanding the performance of African States on all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It provides an assessment of where African countries stand in respect for the

Goals and their progress toward their attainment. The Sustainable Development Goal Index and Dashboards series complements official assessments of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa.<sup>24</sup>

The 2020 Africa Sustainable Development Goal Index ranks 52 African countries based on 97 indicators across all 17 Goals. The top five States are North African countries – Tunisia (1), Morocco (3), Algeria (4) – and the island States of Mauritius (2) and Cabo Verde (5). These top performers are still at least 35 per cent short of achieving the Goals by 2030, however, and their scores have not progressed much since 2015. Low performers are mainly composed of fragile States, with high levels of poverty and conflict in their territories – Chad, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, which scored 40.34, 38.05 and 32.36, respectively. Equatorial Guinea and Seychelles are excluded because of insufficient data coverage. Overall, the average score across all countries is 53.82, which is slightly higher than the 2019 average, but still indicates that, four years in, the continent is only halfway to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In terms of regional performance, North Africa is the best performer, followed by Southern Africa, West African and Central Africa. Snapshots of the findings of the 2020 report pertaining to West and Central Africa are provided below.

**(a) West Africa**

West Africa is the largest region, with 15 countries, and is home to the most populous country and largest economy on the continent, Nigeria. Overall, the region has the third highest average score of 54.27 and the highest proportion of red and orange Goals at 81 per cent. Goal 3 (health), Goal 5 (gender equality) and Goal 9 (infrastructure) are imperative challenges, with 93 per cent of reds across those Goals. Goal 4 (education), Goal 6 (water and sanitation), Goal 7 (sustainable energy) and Goal 11 (sustainable cities) face great difficulties as well, with 80 per cent of countries scoring red – 87 per cent for Goal 6.

Despite 51 per cent of the Goals scoring red in West Africa, this region has the highest share of countries achieving green on certain Goals – although this is only 4 per cent. Cabo Verde and Ghana are the best performers, ranking fifth and eighth in the Index. The best performances are in Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production) and 13 (climate action), with 20 per cent and 33 per cent green, respectively, and 67 per cent yellow each. However, this could be because secondary industries, such as the manufacturing sector, are not very developed, and pollution in the form of various emissions and wastes is not substantial. In terms of overall trends, there is no Goal for which a regression is observed across a majority of the region. West Africa has the highest share of moderate improvement and on-track trends at 53 per cent.

Goals 1, 2, 3, 8, 14, 15, and 17 demonstrate this dominant trend of moderate improvement. However, stagnation is not far behind at 39 per cent, with Goals 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 16 revealing this blockage. Goal 11, in particular, shows the most off-track and stagnant trends. One notable exception is climate action, where all countries are on track to meet the goal. The challenge for West African countries will be to accelerate currently stagnant performance in terms of social welfare without undermining environmental sustainability.

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<sup>24</sup> See, for example, the 2020 Africa SDG Index and Dashboards Report of the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, available at [https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2020/2020\\_africa\\_index\\_and\\_dashboards.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2020/2020_africa_index_and_dashboards.pdf).

## **(b) Central Africa**

Central Africa has the lowest average regional score of 47.63 and the largest share of Goals in red, at 55 per cent. With no change from last year, Goal 3 (good health and well-being), Goal 16 (peace and strong institutions) and Goal 17 (global partnerships) are critical, as all of the countries scored red. Substantial challenges remain in Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation), Goal 7 (sustainable energy), Goal 9 (infrastructure) and Goal 11 (sustainable cities), with 75 to 88 per cent in red. The best performers are Goal 13 (climate action) and Goal 15 (life on land), with 25 per cent and 13 per cent green, respectively, and the rest mainly yellow.

In terms of trends, progress is regressing or stagnating on 62 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals in Central African countries. This is the highest share of all the subregions. Goals 9, 11, 16 and 17 fare the worst, which is troubling given that this situation prevails in almost all of the countries in the subregion. Goal 16, in particular, is stagnating or decreasing. Performance on Goal 13 is strong, with all countries on track, although data are insufficient to assess Equatorial Guinea. Goals 3 and 8 are seeing moderate improvement, and there is mixed performance on Goal 15. Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals would require a drastic transformation for all countries in the subregion.

### **5. Proposed recommendations and actions**

The accelerated implementation of subregional development frameworks, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 is critical to enhancing growth and development in the subregions. Cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategies that integrate relevant frameworks, supported by integrated national financing frameworks are necessary for successful implementation.

Strong institutions and effective policies are instrumental in promoting integrated and interlinked approaches for the integrated implementation of the two agendas. In this regard, there is a need for clear institutional mandates that guarantee strong leadership, along with coordination and consultation mechanisms that facilitate the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, in line with the principle of inclusivity and the mantra of “leaving no one behind”. Also crucial are strengthened capacities for evidence-based policymaking and effective links between the development plan, the annual budget and the multi-year expenditure framework.

Strong follow-up and review mechanisms are key. Important elements of a follow-up and review system include indicator development and data collection, disaggregating data, participatory monitoring and data collection and monitoring and reporting systems. Risk assessment and adaptive governance constitute important aspects of follow-up and review. This includes learning lessons and taking timely corrective measures for implementation efficiency.

Realizing strong growth necessitates critically examining the main sources of growth and how such growth could be sustained, including the policy instruments that should be put in place. Government policy to spur growth and reduce the unemployment rate could target labour-intensive industries and incentives, such as well-conceived tax holidays and tax exemptions. The focus should be placed on overarching development objectives, such as poverty eradication and sustainability. The African Continental Free Trade Area with its promise of bolstered productive capacities, enhanced decentralization, employment creation and poverty reduction provides an opportunity to spur growth and development in the two subregions.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is an immense challenge for the global community, it provides an opportunity to build forward better in a more inclusive and sustainable way, leaving no one behind. The pandemic has laid bare the inequalities and inequities in societies evident in the manner in which the vulnerable, including women, young people and the poor, have been disproportionately affected, together with the challenges related to access to vaccines. Apart from the health crisis, it has sparked civil unrest in countries mainly because of lockdowns that severely restrict economic activities, resulting in the loss of jobs and livelihoods. The impacts of the pandemic which are all interrelated cut across the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars, a further justification for the interlinkages approach. Building forward better will leverage the comparative advantages of the two subregions, in particular their natural resource endowment and demographic dividend.

## **B. Peace and security**

Over the past three decades, ECOWAS and ECCAS have recorded some commendable progress in the promotion of peace and security as part of their respective mandates. This is evidenced by the reduction in the frequency and intensity of inter and intra-State wars. The threats posed by other sources of violence, however, such as activities of armed non-State actors have started to undermine and weaken the State structures, leaving human security in a deplorable situation. Jihadist activities and the turbulence of irregular migration have exposed the region to great instability. Countries in the Sahel are vulnerable to regular situations of insecurity. Armed conflicts from religious and ethnic problems, terrorism, illicit trafficking in drugs fuelling illicit small arms trafficking, and fundamental humanitarian problems have been sustaining a cycle of conflicts. In the Lake Chad basin, attacks by the Boko Haram group continue to threaten peace, security, human rights and humanitarian solutions in West and Central Africa.

The situation continues to worsen with the inability of member States to make good progress on the path of sociopolitical and economic development. Climatic changes in the Sahel, Lake Chad and the Great Lakes region contribute to food insecurity and violent extremism (Muggah and Cabrera, 2019). Such violence has been accompanied by unprecedented violations of human rights by State and non-State actors further fuelling humanitarian problems in the subregions. Inefficient State institutions, weak human rights protection, a governance deficit and corruption have continued to undermine progress in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Mali, Nigeria and other countries in the two subregions. The cycle of conflicts has also made it impossible to break out of the vicious circle of poverty, which fuels perennial conflicts.

### **1. Trends**

Conflicts and threats to peace and security remain major challenges in West and Central Africa. The outcome of conflicts has increased human suffering, poverty, material destruction, the loss of sources of livelihoods, and the number of vulnerable and internally displaced persons. Conflicts in the subregions pose a major threat to sociopolitical and economic stability, which are critical in the allocation of public resources, private sector investment and growth, capacity-building, sustained economic growth and poverty reduction. In the subregional assessment of progress on Agenda 2063 (AUDA, 2020), Central Africa recorded a progress rating of 33 per cent in aspiration 4, focused on a peaceful and secure Africa, while West Africa recorded progress of 53 per cent. For performance in meeting the goal of peace, security and stability, West Africa stood at 20 per cent while Central Africa scored zero per cent. On the goal of a stable and peaceful Africa, West Africa scored 60 per cent, and Central Africa 67 per cent. In terms of progress towards

a fully functional and operational African peace and security architecture, West and Central Africa scored 80 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively (AUDA, 2020).

The findings of the questionnaire survey have been very helpful in understanding the importance of peace and security to nationals of the West and Central Africa. Table 3 and figure II depict perceptions on the significance of peace and security by the nationals of surveyed countries.

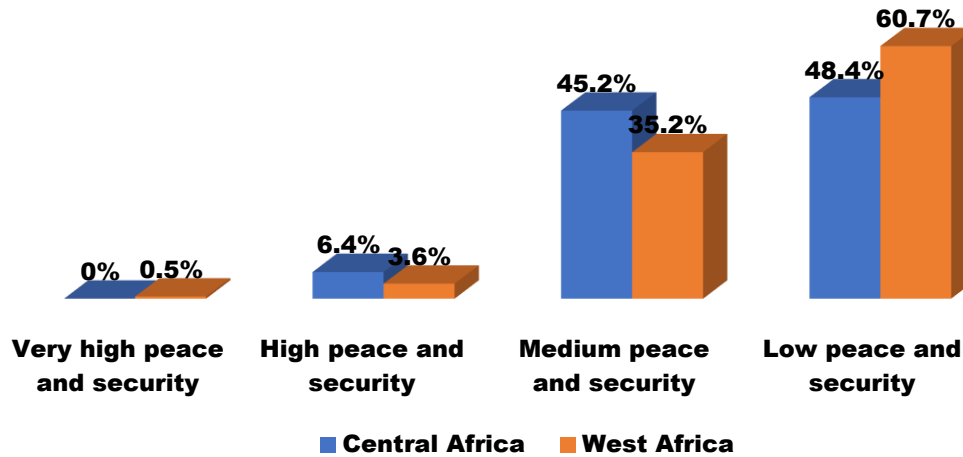
Table 3

**Rating of peace and security situation by respondents**

<i>How do you rate peace and security situation in West and Central Africa</i>					
	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Very High</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Benin</b>	0(0.0%)	4(80.0%)	1(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(100%)
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	0(0.0%)	3(75.0%)	1(25.0%)	0(0.0%)	4(100%)
<b>Burundi</b>	0(0.0%)	5(62.5%)	3(37.5%)	0(0.0%)	8(100%)
<b>Cameroon</b>	2(8.7%)	9(39.1%)	12(52.2%)	0(0.0%)	23(100%)
<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	1(6.6%)	7(46.7%)	7(46.7%)	0(0.0%)	15(100%)
<b>Gambia</b>	0(0.0%)	1(25.0%)	3(75.0%)	0(0.0%)	4(100%)
<b>Ghana</b>	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	0(0.0%)	10(100%)
<b>Guinea-Bissau</b>	0(0.0%)	2(33.3%)	4(66.7%)	0(0.0%)	6(100%)
<b>Liberia</b>	0(0.0%)	3(50.0%)	3(50.0%)	0(0.0%)	6(100%)
<b>Mali</b>	0(0.0%)	3(60.0%)	2(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(100%)
<b>Niger</b>	0(0.0%)	3(60.0%)	2(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(100%)
<b>Nigeria</b>	7(3.4%)	138(66.7%)	61(29.5)	1(0.4%)	207(100%)
<b>Senegal</b>	0(0.0%)	1(20.0%)	4(80.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(100%)
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(100%)
<b>Togo</b>	0(0.0%)	2(75.0%)	1(25.0%)	0(0.0%)	3(100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>13(4.2%)</b>	<b>186(60.6%)</b>	<b>107(34.9%)</b>	<b>1(0.3%)</b>	<b>307(100%)</b>

**Figure II**

**Rating of peace and security situation by respondents**



*Source* : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

West Africa also has a long history of political crisis, characterized by military coups and forceful elongation of tenure in offices, leading to dubious constitutional reforms and political instabilities. For example, changes in power have often been combative, with few cases of peaceful power transfer (Badejo, 2017). Furthermore, the western Sahel is confronted by unique regional challenges that continue to disrupt peace and security. The crisis situations in Mali and Nigeria revolve largely around the absence of governance, characterized by increasing cases of illicit trade, including the proliferation of small arms and the radicalization of groups to join externally controlled terror franchises. Incremental climate changes, such as desertification, continue to worsen the age-old farmer-herder relations. Recalling that 70 per cent of West Africans derive their livelihoods from agriculture, including rearing livestock, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed ibn Chambas, has emphasized the need to promote peaceful farmer-herder relations (United Nations, 2019b).

The ethno-political situations are also critical to understanding peace and security in West and Central Africa. Many States in the subregions are made up of various ethnic and sociocultural bodies. The multiplicity of ethnicities has posed a challenge for social cohesion, in particular when exploited along political and constitutionally faulty lines. This has not only hampered peace and security, but also affected development in the longer term (Badejo, 2008). Identity-based conflicts, as seen in Côte d'Ivoire and in the activities of jihadists in Burkina Faso and Mali, have exacerbated existing instabilities formed from the lack of social cohesion among the various peoples that constitute the State. This weakness from the legacy of colonial socioeconomic administration has been further exploited along primordial and religious lines, in particular for strategic political interests or what could be referred to as the politicization of ethnicity. Added to this is the reality that the subregion has a track record of State fragility (International Crisis Group, 2016).

For most ECCAS member States, there is a high possibility that conflict in one State could increase the volatility of its neighbour. Security threats in Cameroon, marked by activities of terrorist groups and other non-State actors, are common challenges for other countries in Central Africa. Since gaining independence from France in 1960, the Central African Republic has experienced chronic instability and outbreaks of violent conflict (USIP, 2019). These have taken on a different dimension since late 2013, when a coalition of armed groups (Séléka) sought to assume control of the country. This was followed by an unprecedented wave of violence that led to a bloody coup d'état that was headed by Michel Djotodia (BBC, 2018). While a transitional government was able to hold the country's first peaceful democratic election in 2016, there is still continuing violence and instability that threaten the progress made. By 2018, intensifying clashes and deep divisions caused a spike in the violence, leading to a record 1.1 million people being displaced by the conflict and making the Central African Republic one of the deadliest countries in the world for aid workers (USIP, 2019). The Cameroon Defence Force and the joint force of neighbouring States in Central Africa have been waging a war against Boko Haram terrorists and the Séléka militia rebel groups originating from the Central African Republic (OSAC, 2020).

The peace and security situation in the Central African Republic has not improved in the aftermath of the presidential and legislative elections that were held in December 2020 and March 2021, respectively. Indeed, the announcement that the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadéra, has been re-elected in the first round of the presidential elections with more than 53 per cent of votes in the first round has not brought peace. The opposition described the elections as a farce (Davies, 2021). Tension and violence resulting from a rebel offensive accompanied the legislative elections run-off in March 2021 (Deutsche Welle, 2021). The report also reveals major violations of human rights and international humanitarian law characterized by targeted killings, sexual violence and the forced relocation of displaced communities by combatants in Ndele and Birao. The series of clashes is reported to be fuelled by transboundary arrivals of fighters and weaponry from the Sudan (ibid.).<sup>25</sup>

Such regional issues as armed trafficking and the illegal or corrupt exploitation of resources have continued to pose a threat to peace and to fuel crimes and crises (Global Initiative, 2020). The authorities have repeatedly seized arms in transit to the Central African Republic. Armed groups continue to benefit from the increase in artisanal gold production as a result of shortcomings in the procedures and rules intended to allow the Central African Republic and neighbouring countries to effectively tackle gold smuggling. The Government also continues to issue mining permits in areas outside of its control, raising the risk of armed groups receiving financing through the exploitation of natural resources (Refworld, 2019). The year 2020 in the Central African Republic has also shown the potential threats to peace and security by strategic and sponsored incendiary positions, from politicians and other interest groups across the social media space and other news media (USIP, 2019).

The security situation in some areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is characterized by sustained inter-ethnic conflicts and political violence among various groups, such as those in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri (Refworld 2019). According to UNHCR, the activities of several non-State entities and armed groups continue to threaten peace and security, as the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the

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<sup>25</sup> See also United Nations, Security Council (2020a).



Democratic Republic of the Congo have had to contend with them on several attacks on civilians. Exchange of fire between the Congolese forces and non-State armed groups in several States, such as North Kivu, Beni, Masisi, Rutshuru and Lubero, have resulted in large-scale civilian deaths, displacements of people and grave human rights violations. UNHCR has tried to describe how the situation continues to deteriorate since 2018, in spite of efforts aimed at resolution (ibid.). In December 2018, UNHCR estimated that 88,000 homes were destroyed in North Kivu and Ituri as a result of ongoing violence and 100,000 people in the Djugu territory of Ituri have been displaced as a consequence of new waves of violence since September of that year (UNHCR, 2018).

In Mali, the activities of jihadist groups have resulted in long periods of threats to peace and security, directly hampering the realization of development aspirations. For example, the prevalent infrastructure challenges, exacerbated by crises, typically prevent the State from reaching areas where people have the greatest need for infrastructure and basic social services. Economic empowerment and sources of livelihoods are central to development. Long-standing situations of insecurity directly affect certain sectors, such as tourism, investors' confidence for international trade, and sources of livelihoods. In addition, the diversion of significant resources to managing armed conflicts reduces the availability of resources for investment in economic development.

The Central Mali research project conducted by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has identified four main findings that could help strengthen global strategies for peace and development (Chauzal, 2020):

- (a) Inclusive processes (of disarmament, of reintegration and community reconciliation);
- (b) Delivery of public services (the State should take advantage of the delivery of public goods);
- (c) Tangible human security measures (employment or economic development), the absence or inadequacy of which has heightened the lack or loss of trust in State and formal institutions, and led to a recourse to other types of non-State actors;
- (d) Dedicated programmes or interventions for the most vulnerable populations (women, young girls and boys), which are more likely to suffer the consequences of the Government's failures, including poor judicial systems, health care, quality of education, food insecurity and low employment, and are also more likely to be exploited by non-State actors.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel while acknowledging the interlinkages between terrorism, organized crime and intercommunal violence, argued for the importance of distinguishing each as a driving force of violence (United Nations, 2019b). He identified factors driving local conflicts in West Africa and the Sahel, including:

- Governance deficit, in particular the poor management of natural resources
- Inequalities and marginalization
- Corruption
- Governments' failure to deliver on security and justice, which is often exploited by extremists, who provide safety, protection and social services in areas under their control (ibid.)

According to the International Peace Institute, the complex security challenges of West Africa are a function of three broad factors (ibid.):

- The subregion’s natural resources, endowments, the vulnerabilities inherent in its geographical location, and environmental and demographic factors
- Pressures from internal and international governance processes
- Pressures from regional and external politics

With regard to the questionnaire survey, 48.4 per cent of the respondents were of the view that violent conflict, tension and protracted conflicts were very prevalent in their country; 7.5 per cent that violent conflict, tension and protracted conflicts were prevalent in their country; and 44 per cent opinion that violent conflicts, tension and protracted conflicts were not prevalent in their country. This illustrates that the absence of conflicts or decline in the general levels of conflicts does not necessarily mean high levels of peace and security, indicating the prevalence of negative peace in the two subregions.

Table 4

**Response from the survey turned in the following reactions as key issues affecting peace and security in West and Central Africa**

Country	Peace and security threats that are prevalent in respective countries
Benin	Terrorism, violent crimes and extremism, local conflicts and unemployment
Burkina Faso	Terrorism, violent extremism, injustice, maritime piracy
Burundi	Inter-community conflicts, electoral violence, violent crimes, corruption
Cameroon	Terrorism, corruption, electoral violence, violent crimes
Côte d’Ivoire	Terrorism, electoral violence, corruption, violent crimes
Gambia	Smuggling, police brutality, unemployment
Ghana	Electoral violence, violent crimes, unemployment
Guinea-Bissau	Political instability, corruption/mismanagement, drug trafficking
Liberia	Social inequality, absence of good governance, corruption and lack of inclusive development
Mali	Civil-war, risks, military coup, kidnapping, assassinations, terrorism, intercommunity violence, ethnic violence
Niger	Terrorism, human rights abuse, unemployment
Nigeria	Terrorism, armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping, human rights abuse, cattle rustling, farmer-herder conflicts, unemployment, corruption, electoral violence, police brutality
Senegal	Terrorism, smuggling, unemployment
Sierra Leone	Governance deficits, human rights abuse, rising political tensions
Togo	Smuggling, electoral violence, injustice, corruption

Source : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

## 2. Terrorism

Terrorism and related activities continue to pose a serious threat to the sustainable development aspirations of several ECOWAS and ECCAS member States. The economic cost of fighting terrorism is drowning regional economies and frustrating economic growth in the subregions.

The challenge of growing transboundary terrorism movements, such as the cases of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin that started in 2002, the rise of Al-Qaida loyalists in the Islamic Maghreb, the Islamic State West Africa Province, Jama'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihad taking hostages from Cameroon and the Niger, Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan (Defenders of the Muslims in the Land of the Blacks), the Islamic State in Greater Sahara, Al Murabitoun, Ansar Eddine and other similar movements in the Sahel, northern Nigeria, the Central African Republic and other areas continue to gain momentum. The Lord's Resistance Army has been perpetrating terror in Central Africa since the 1980s, in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. Transnational organized crime, such as drugs and arms peddling, human trafficking, kidnapping, illicit arms deals, money-laundering and many other practices, have all become linked with the activities of terrorist groups and their financing. This development has made the search for peace, security and stability very difficult in the subregions (African Union, 2014; United Nations, 2019b). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel noted that the strategy and objectives of armed groups in the region are "in the public domain", citing Al-Qaida militants as using local dynamics to spread extremism (United Nations, 2019b).

There has been an escalation of casualties from terrorist activities in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria. As of 2016, there were 770 casualties, which increased to some 4,000 by 2019. The recent shift in such activities from Mali to Burkina Faso extended the threat for coastal States in West Africa. Deaths in Burkina Faso also rose, from 80 in 2016 to over 1,800 in 2019 (United Nations, 2020c). In the past 10 years, the Boko Haram insurgency has ravaged the north-east of Nigeria. In all, more than 30,000 people have been killed in that country's long-standing conflict with Boko Haram. Some 2 million have fled their homes and another 22,000 are missing, believed to have been conscripted. In April 2014, the abduction of 276 girls from a school in Chibok, a village in Borno State in north-eastern Nigeria, was a headline story across the world. A few managed to escape or be rescued, but more than 112 girls remain missing, despite all the efforts of the Government. Regrettably, Boko Haram remains a powerful force in the subregion and its attacks continue (Obasanjo, 2019).

The continuing violence and conflict in the subregions have sparked concerns that the threats from terrorism could derail hard-won economic gains, contribute to political instability and undermine future development. Terrorism activities in Africa have had multidimensional effects. These include the loss of lives, economic costs, security threats, human insecurity and fragility. The economic cost continues to reduce prospects for development. For example, in 2016, the economic cost of terrorism in Africa was \$15.5 billion (UNIDO, 2019, p. 1), representing a more than tenfold increase since 2007, when the economic cost was estimated at \$1.54 billion. In relative terms, the African share of the global economic cost of terrorism increased from 4.2 per cent in 2007 to 20.3 per cent in 2016 (ibid.). Between 2007 and 2016, terrorism cost the African continent a minimum of \$119 billion. In reality, this figure is much higher once estimates for the loss of

GDP and lost informal economic activity, extra security spending and the costs for refugees or internally displaced persons are taken into account (ibid.).

Persistent insecurity accompanied by and linked to delayed economic and political reform and integration and other factors has had a profound effect on development trajectories in Central Africa for decades (UNDP, 2017). The situation is no different in West Africa. Communities in these areas have experienced the devastating impact of extremist violence from a multiplicity of terrorist groups. It is easy to envisage how a steadily growing population of young people lacking rights and opportunities in the two subregions may be more affected by migration push or pull factors, including displacements that force them to flee further afield (ibid.).

Reports from the Global Terrorism Index and the Fragile States Index provide a pictorial representation of the extent of the threats of terrorism, and the level to which State control and the capacity of governance has deteriorated in West and Central Africa. The Global Terrorism Index released on 26 November 2020 showed that, for the sixth consecutive year, Nigeria has retained its position as the third country most ravaged by insurgency in the world (Sahara Reporters, 2020), with the sustained activities of Boko Haram in the neighbouring States of Cameroon, Chad and the Niger leaving the region heavily threatened (ibid.). This latter point is according to the fragile States rankings compiled by the United States Fund for Peace (Hallmark News, 2020). Indicators used to measure fragility show that most of the States in the West and Central African subregions are regressing in terms of development. Common indicators are the effectiveness of the central Government, control over territorial integrity, sectional tendencies, lines of schism, non-provision of public services, widespread corruption and criminality, a deteriorating refugee situation, the forced movement of people and rapid economic decline.

Mali has been struggling to build peace and ensure security especially after the armed rebellion in northern Mali in January 2012. The crisis began as a Tuareg rebellion against the Government of Mali, the fourth in a series of rebellions in the country since 1963. The 2012 rebellion turned into a violent extremist insurgency as a number of violent extremist groups joined them and took over from several towns and territories in northern Mali (Chauzal and van Damme, 2015, pp. 10–11). The military and security response to the 2012 events, including increased international efforts since January 2013, so far has had limited impact, with Mali remaining very volatile. The country is struggling to improve the security situation despite the presence and support of regional and international forces and missions, including Operations Serval and Barkhane from France, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the Group of Five for the Sahel, and technical and financial partners. Instead, new battle lines have emerged. There has been a proliferation of armed groups and local militias and vigilantes and illicit border trafficking, with deleterious effects on high-risk populations, in particular young people (Chauzal, 2015), while other civilians have become the direct target of attacks, and the instrumentalization of ethnic identities has fuelled intercommunity conflicts of unprecedented violence.

As experienced with the terrorist organization, Da'esh, however, in a more globalized world, the threats from a regional conflict can spread to affect the global community. The regional and potentially global impacts of terrorism highlight the need for the international community to take all necessary steps to find ways to deprive terrorist organizations of their funding (FATF, 2020). Such sources of funding as extortion, robberies, looting, cattle rustling, donations, illicit trade and other forms of profiting from crimes need to be disrupted.

Table 5

**Cumulative data from the Global Terrorism Index**

<i>No.</i>	<i>ECOWAS State</i>	<i>2019/20 rank</i>	<i>2018/19 rank</i>	<i>2017/18 rank</i>	<i>ECCAS States</i>	<i>2020 rank</i>	<i>2019 rank</i>	<i>2018 rank</i>
1	Mali	13 H	22	25	Angola	52 M	43	117
2	Nigeria	3 V.H	3	3	Burundi	33 H	32	28
3	Burkina Faso	27 M	37	43	Cameroon	15 H	16	15
4	Ghana	86 V.L	122	110	Central African Republic	14 H	15	19
5	Togo	138 N.I	138	130	Chad	33 M	38	34
6	Benin	138 N.I	138	130	Congo	70 L	61	48
7	Côte d'Ivoire	72 L	63	54	Democratic Republic of the Congo	10 H	11	13
8	Liberia	126 V.L	119	121	Equatorial Guinea	138 N.I	138	130
9	Sierra Leone	108 V.L	95	101	Gabon	105 V.L	93	130
10	Guinea	100 V.L	112	101	Rwanda	66 L	76	81
11	Guinea-Bissau	138 N.I	138	130	Sao Tome and Principe	-		
12	Gambia	138 N.I	138	130				
13	Senegal	93 V.L	96					
14	Cabo Verde	-						
15	Niger	23 H	23	20				

*Source: Global Terrorism Index*

*Abbreviations: VH – very high, H– high, M– medium, L – low, VL – very low, NI – no impact.*

Table 6

**Data and ranking from the Fragile States Index**

No.	ECOWAS State	2019/20 rank	2018/19 rank	ECCAS State	2020 rank	2019 rank
1	Mali	16 Alert	21 Alert	Angola	34 HW	37 H.W
2	Nigeria	14 Alert	14 Alert	Burundi	12 Alert	15 Alert
3	Burkina Faso	37 H.W	47 H.W	Cameroon	11 Alert	16 Alert
4	Ghana	108 W	110 W	Central African Republic	6 HA	6 HA
5	Togo	38 H.W	38 HW	Chad	7 HA	7 HA
6	Benin	77 E.W	75 EW	Congo	25 Alert	27 Alert
7	Côte d'Ivoire	32 H.W	29 Alert	Democratic Republic of the Congo	5 HA	5 VHA
8	Liberia	31 Alert	30 Alert	Equatorial Guinea	45 HW	53 HW
9	Sierra Leone	42 H.W	39 HW	Gabon	90 W	92 EW
10	Guinea	15 Alert	11 Alert	Rwanda	35 HW	37 HW
11	Guinea-Bissau	23 Alert	19 Alert	Sao Tome and Principe	83 EW	88 EW
12	Gambia	51 H.W	47 HW			
13	Senegal	71 E.W	66 EW			
14	Cabo Verde	106 W	106 W			
15	Niger	19 Alert	18 Alert			

*Source:* Fragile States Index

*Abbreviations:* VS – very sustainable, S – sustainable, VS – very stable, MS – more stable, W – warning, EW – elevated warning, HW – high warning, A – alert, HA – high alert, VHA – very high alert.

The following factors have hampered progress in the fight against terrorism in West and Central Africa:

- Governments' institutional weaknesses
- Porous and poorly managed borders, enabling transboundary criminal activities to thrive
- Increasing poverty, unemployment and underempowerment, and high illiteracy rates, all of which create a vulnerable and readily available pool of recruits and loyalists for terror

groups. For example, in Nigeria, there is only about 50 per cent literacy in the north-east with over 70 per cent unemployment (Obasanjo, 2019)

The limited capacities of the security and defence forces are a major factor of ineffectiveness. In Nigeria, for example, while defending the security services' 2019 budget, the then acting Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, informed the country that understaffing was the main problem affecting the Nigerian police force. In addition, a problem was posed by underfunding, resulting in the security forces being ill equipped to fight crime. He pointed out that the ratio of 1 police officer to 662 citizens was grossly inadequate (Badejo, 2020, p. 60) and had prompted the conscription of local forces or vigilante groups, bring with it the particular challenges of gross human rights abuse, compromise and corruption, high-handedness and sometimes lawlessness. These forces include the civilian joint task force created under the previous administration called Borno Youth Volunteers,<sup>26</sup> the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, the Special Task Force in Plateau and the Hisbah Police.

### **3. Regional and subregional responses**

The continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region has necessitated sustained regional and international engagements. A fully integrated response bolstered by the collaboration of the Governments from both subregions requires the support of the international community, encompassing the simultaneous pursuit of progress on security, governance, humanitarian assistance and development. The various frameworks and instruments discussed in chapter II, namely those of ECOWAS, ECCAS, the African Union, the United Nations, and African Union-United Nations cooperation on peace, security and conflict prevention, are being used to tackle the peace and security situation in the two subregions. These interventions involve the interlinkages between peace and security and the other pillars.

The Security Council has called for multisectoral and integrated approaches<sup>27</sup> in the maintenance of peace and security. On several occasions, the Secretary-General has drawn attention to the nexus between peace and development: "There is no development without peace, but there is also no peace without development" (United Nations, 2018b), and "Inclusive and sustainable development not only is an end in itself but also happens to be the best defence against the risk of violent conflict" (United Nations, 2018a).

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel has called for enhanced support for the implementation of the regional stabilization strategy for the Lake Chad basin and the priority investment programme of the Group of Five for the Sahel, along with a concerted effort to support national development plans to boost the development of the subregion (UNOWAS, 2019). The Group of Five for the Sahel, a joint force set up to tackle security threats, focuses on three missions, namely counter-terrorism; organized cross-border crimes; and climate change and human trafficking, in the five Sahel States of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. This is a political, military and development intergovernmental framework for addressing critical issues of State fragility in the Sahel. In the area of security, the Group set up the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in 2017 (France Diplomacy, 2020). The Group has driven initiatives relating to infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, and telephone services),

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<sup>26</sup> On this issue and for further details, see the detailed report in [www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/01/13/23states-run-local-security-outfits-as-groups-demand-decentralised-policing/](http://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/01/13/23states-run-local-security-outfits-as-groups-demand-decentralised-policing/).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

access to resources and electrification, the improvement of governance through the inclusion of women, and justice.

The goals of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel are: inclusive and effective governance, national and regional security mechanisms for addressing cross-border threats, humanitarian and development plans and interventions for long-term resilience. The strategy is focused on promoting cross-border cooperation for stability and development, preventing and resolving conflicts, promoting access to justice, and empowering youth for peace and development in the Sahel – attempts at broader or holistic solutions inspired by the United Nations. A security-focused method would be ineffective, given that the region faces more security challenges and threats to peace and knowing the interconnectedness of the challenges. Interlinked approaches using ideas spanning national, regional and international levels would be very important.

Other support organizations and missions include: MINUSMA; Operation Barkhane of France; the Centre for Strategies for Security in the Sahel Sahara Region, which was set up in 2011 to help countries in the Sahel region address daunting security and development challenges; and the European Union training mission in Mali.

A number of efforts have been mounted by the African Union and the United Nations to combat terrorism. These include the 1999 Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, the 2002 Plan of Action of the African Union for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, the African Union cooperative mechanisms being implemented by the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, the Nouakchott Process on the enhancement of security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region, the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, and the African Union Mission in Somalia (African Union, 2014).

ECOWAS has made progress in addressing human security concerns, one of the pillars of its visionary development strategy. In its Vision 2020, adopted in June 2007 in Abuja, ECOWAS envisioned the transformation of the organization from an “ECOWAS of States” into an “ECOWAS of peoples” (Gbeho, 2011, p. 9). Achieving human security in West Africa would entail addressing the following concerns: extreme poverty and social exclusion; human rights violations, in particular the rights of women and children; poor political and economic governance; the proliferation of small arms; food insecurity; environmental degradation; illiteracy; and endemic diseases.

Addressing the menace of transboundary crimes – in particular illicit deals in arms and drugs and illicit financial flows and funding – requires international cooperation. ECOWAS adopted an anti-terrorist strategy for the first time in February 2013. The strategy is focused on prevention, prosecution and reconstruction, and provides for the creation of an anti-terrorist coordination unit, an ECOWAS arrest warrant and a blacklist of terrorist and criminal networks (International Crisis Group, 2016, p. 8). At the heads of State summit on 21 December 2019, ECOWAS adopted a 2020–2024 action plan to eradicate terrorism in the subregion (United Nations, 2020c; Security Council, 2020b).

ECOWAS also adopted a regional action plan against drug trafficking and transnational crime. At the joint summit of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS and ECCAS in Yaoundé, and the meeting of the Gulf of Guinea Commission on Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, three strategic documents were endorsed, namely: a political declaration; a



memorandum of understanding; and a code of conduct on the repression of piracy, armed robbery and other illicit maritime activities in West and Central Africa (Neptune P2P Group, 2013). ECOWAS formulated an integrated maritime security strategy that was adopted by the Heads of State at the summit in March 2014; it also created three operational zones and a regional maritime coordination centre. The first test of this new undertaking was the creation of a practice pilot zone, identified as the area experiencing most maritime crime, which included Benin, the Niger, Nigeria and Togo.<sup>28</sup>

In 1999, at the initiative of Mali, which has grappled with the problem of arms trafficking for several decades, ECOWAS adopted a moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms in West Africa. An even more restrictive convention on small arms and light weapons followed in 2006. These two documents prohibited the transfer of small arms and introduced a system of exemptions managed by the ECOWAS Commission. States wishing to import arms must submit a request with their reasons for doing so to the Commission, which then consults member States for approval. This gives each State the right to scrutinize the arms imports of its neighbours (International Crisis Group, 2016).

Similarly, Central Africa also has the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (known as the Kinshasa Convention), which is aimed at regulating small arms and light weapons and combating the illicit trade and trafficking of such arms and weapons in Central Africa (chapter 1, article 1).

## **C. Human rights**

### **1. Trends**

West and Central African countries face human rights issues revolving around the following: the intimidation and repression of citizens; threats to the right of peaceful assembly; threats to housing rights; sexual and gender-based abuses; threats to religious and political freedoms; abuses by security forces; human rights related to humanitarian and refugee issues; issues with freedom of civil society and media; unlawful arbitrary killings, extrajudicial killings; forced disappearances; unlawful infringement on citizens privacy rights; and forced or bonded labour.

The survey results show that most nationals of West and Central Africa seriously lack confidence in the level of respect for human rights in their respective countries. Of the respondents, 1.3 per cent rated the level of respect for human rights in their countries as very high; 4.9 per cent as high; 18.6 per cent as medium; 40.4 per cent as low; and 34.8 per cent as very low.

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<sup>28</sup> According to the International Crisis Group report on the implementation of the Peace and Security Architecture (III) in West Africa (2016), this interregional cooperation initiative involved ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission and resulted in September 2014 in the creation of a centre in Yaoundé.

Table 7

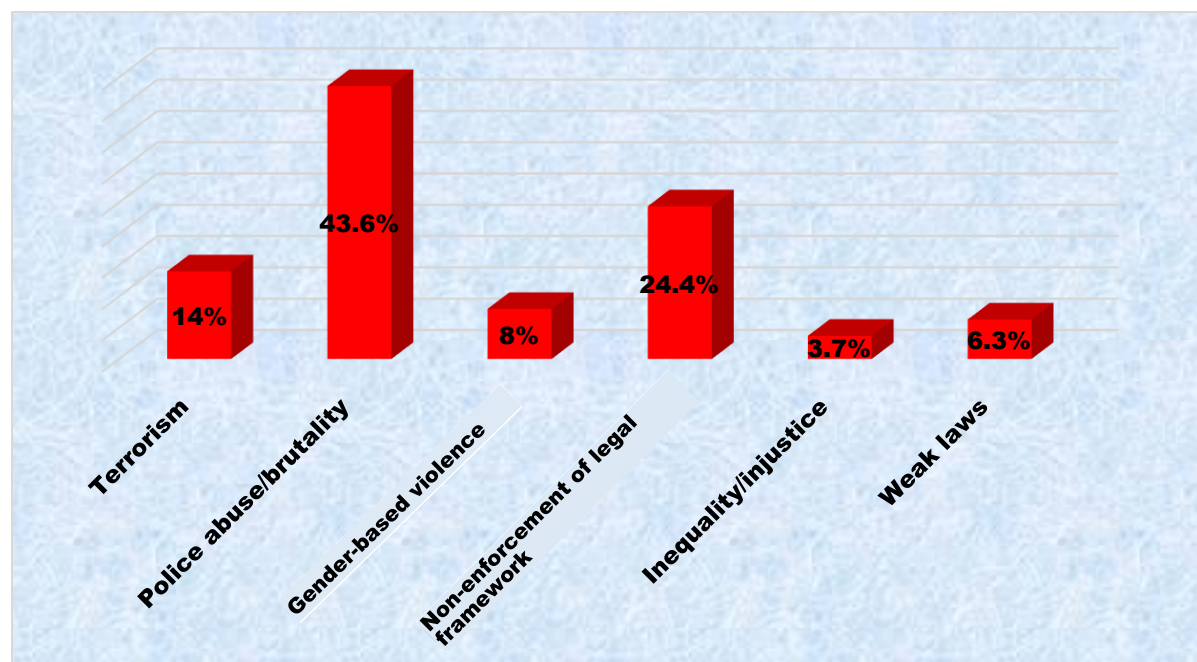
**Rating by respondents of human rights in their countries**

<i>How do you rate the level of respect for human rights in your country?</i>		
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very high	4	1.3
High	15	4.9
Medium	57	18.6
Low	124	40.4
Very low	107	34.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source* : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

Figure III

**Opinion of respondents on what they consider the greatest threat to human rights in their country**



*Source* : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

In accounting for the sources of violation of human rights, the survey shows that 14 per cent of the respondents identified terrorism as the greatest threat to human rights in their country; 43.6

per cent police abuse or brutality; 8 per cent gender-based violence; 24.4 per cent the non-enforcement of a legal framework; 3.7 per cent inequality or injustice; and 6.3 per cent weak laws. This indicates that police brutality and abuse are considered the greatest threat to human rights in West and Central African countries.

As indicated in table 8, reactions from survey respondents show that the abuse of human rights by law enforcement agencies in West and Central Africa is a major challenge. This reflects the high rate of police brutality, extortion, intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest and illegal and protracted detention of innocent citizens by law enforcement agents in the subregions. A subsequent analysis of the case study countries shows that abuses of human rights by State agencies were widely reported by various sources, including the International Crisis Group.

Table 8

### Law enforcement agencies and citizens' rights

<i>Law enforcement agencies do not respect the rights of their citizens</i>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	160	52.1
Agree	97	31.6
Neither agree nor disagree	36	11.7
Disagree	14	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100</b>

Source : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

Generally, the survey results on human rights coincide in demonstrating that there are large-scale human rights abuses in most of West and Central Africa. The following are issues often cited:

- Abuse of civil, political, economic and social rights
- Restrictions on freedoms of speech and assembly
- Unchecked impunity and widespread corruption in the judiciary and the police
- Domestic violence and discrimination against women
- Child labour, trafficking in persons
- Discrimination on the basis of primordial or religious backgrounds of certain ethnic groups<sup>29</sup>
- Limited popular participation in elections and the absence of a strong opposition
- Poor social service delivery, in particular in border areas
- Poor handling of group grievances, in particular regarding claims of marginalization
- Poorly trained, ill-equipped, unmotivated and divided national army
- Weakened political institutions and poor economic growth

<sup>29</sup> United States Department of State, 2011.

- Extreme poverty<sup>30</sup>
- Undue grip on the judiciary, with limited access to legal knowledge and assistance
- High cost of justice<sup>31</sup>

Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063 looks forward to an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. The Agenda 2063 implementation report of 2020 shows 17 per cent and 14 per cent progress towards this aspiration in West and Central Africa, respectively. In terms of the goal of adherence to democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law, West Africa scored 33 per cent. Despite the practice of democracy and the existence of relevant frameworks, the rule of law and the human rights situation in West and Central Africa continue to deteriorate.

## **2. Insights from case study countries and others**

Long-standing conflicts in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the activities of armed groups in Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria and other countries have left many people vulnerable. This ranges from displacement, to exposure to sexual exploitation and forced labour. In many cases, State security agents have committed serious human rights violations, such as the use of violence, extrajudicial killings, torture and disappearances. Often, the enforcement of State policies and programmes results in human rights abuses. Details from the country case studies are reviewed in the following sections.

### **(a) Cameroon**

In spite of the best efforts of the Government, the state of human rights and the rule of law in Cameroon remains cause for concern. There are suggestions of significant human rights issues (Cameroon Country Reports, 2019), such as unlawful or arbitrary killings from armed anglophone separatists and Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa fighters, and extrajudicial killings, including by security forces. Other challenges reported by some partners include problems with the independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press and unrestricted access to the internet, forced child labour and political participation (ibid.).

### **(b) Mali**

Jihadists and Islamic fighters have been present in the northern regions of Mali since 2012. Deliberate killings of unarmed civilians by security forces in Mali, and also in Burkina Faso, may constitute war crimes under international law. These armed conflicts often lead to numerous human rights violations, from both armed groups and regular forces, reported by international non-governmental organizations. In central Mali, attacks by Islamist groups increased from 2017, including attacks with explosive devices on the roads, killing many villagers and leading to numerous human rights violations. In addition, certain non-governmental organizations have claimed that, in the process of responding to insurgencies, security forces in Mali, and also in Burkina Faso and the Niger, have committed human right violations (Deutsche Welle, 2020).

In 2018, at least 300 civilians were killed in more than 100 incidents of community violence in central and northern Mali. The violence pitted ethnically aligned vigilante groups against

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<sup>30</sup> See Affa'a-Mindzie, 2013, noting that, according to the March 2013 report of the United Nations Secretary-General (Security Council, 2013), over 77 per cent of the Malian population remained under the international poverty line.

<sup>31</sup> American Bar Association, 2012.

communities accused of supporting armed Islamist groups, leading to the looting and destruction of dozens of villages and the displacement of tens of thousands of people (ibid.). The human rights situation in Mali deteriorated in 2019, with hundreds of civilians killed by ethnic self-defence groups in numerous incidents. In most cases, killings were blamed on their alleged support for Islamist groups, in particular during attacks launched by Islamists in the northern and central regions of the country. These groups, linked to Al-Qaida and the Islamic State, targeted Malian security services, peacekeepers, international forces and, increasingly, civilians. Aid agencies have suffered dozens of attacks, mostly by bandits, which have undermined their ability to deliver aid (World Report, 2018).

Much still needs to be done to bring justice to victims of abuse, and rule of law institutions have remained weak. The military has, however, opened investigations into allegations of extrajudicial killings by their forces. Restorative or transitional justice is a critical tool in strengthening human rights and the rule of law in the subregions. Transitional or restorative justice systems would facilitate the resolution of past human rights abuses through accountability, truth and reparations to the victims.

In terms of solutions and responses, article 15 of the Constitution of Mali, promulgated in February 1992, sets out a bill of rights proclaiming individual civil and political rights, social and cultural rights, and a group of third-generation rights, such as the right to a clean environment. Mali has adopted several pieces of legislation protecting human rights, such as the 2009 acts on medical assistance and on a compulsory health-care scheme, a 2012 act to combat human trafficking, and a family code first adopted in 2009, which includes measures to increase equality between men and women in relation to marital status, parental rights, ownership of land inheritance, wages and pensions, employment laws and education. The country has also established a number of institutions to support these legislative frameworks. These include the 2009 human rights commission mandated to promote and protect human rights. It has also set up the office of *Médiateur de la République*, which offers ombudsperson services to mediate between citizens and public administration, with a mandate that cuts across conflict resolution, the promotion of governance, human rights and the rule of law.

In addition, the country adopted a transitional road map in January 2013 that created the Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission, a truth-seeking mechanism to facilitate inclusive national dialogue towards addressing the root causes of crises. Among other things, the Commission identifies armed groups to participate in national dialogues; takes inventory of human rights violations committed during crises; proposes all necessary measures to help the victims overcome their trauma; and makes proposals for actions that can help strengthen social cohesion and national unity focusing on dialogue and peace. Furthermore, MINUSMA has a mandate to protect civilians (in particular women and children), and facilitate the promotion and protection of human rights, national and international justice, humanitarian assistance and cultural preservation.

These efforts notwithstanding, little progress has been made in the peace process, in particular in disarmament and the restoration of State authority. While relevant frameworks and instruments exist at national, regional and international levels, political will is now required to achieve much needed results with the necessary impact.

### (c) Nigeria

In Nigeria, the activities of task forces and other specialized agencies with regulatory mandates are usually carried out in ways that result in human rights abuses. For example, on 26 January 2017, a high court in Lagos State ruled that the demolition and threatened demolition of Lagos waterfront communities without adequate notice or provision of alternative shelter amounted to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments in violation of section 34 of the Constitution of Nigeria. During the current COVID-19 crisis, many jobs and businesses have been lost as a consequence of various restrictions, including lockdown, affecting the socioeconomic rights of many (Ajide and Alimi, 2020) without appropriate compensation and mitigating policies.

Furthermore, gender-based violence, rape, trafficking, female genital mutilation (Okeke and others, 2012), denial of access to education, early or child marriage, domestic servitude and other cultural practices need urgent attention. Regrettably, women and girls have suffered disproportionately during the pandemic, mainly as a result of lockdowns. There has been an increase in gender-based violence and domestic abuse, and women have been cut off from essential protection and sanitary services and social networks (Plan International, 2020; Africa Renewal, 2020). The imposed lockdowns provide indications of several other still unclear situations in which the rights of women could be under threat.

The effects of the poor implementation of human rights protection for younger people continue to grow. The lack of empowerment opportunities and increasing unemployment are central to the issues faced by many young people. For example, non-governmental organizations reported that young people in Nigeria are victims of human rights abuses and threats (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Human rights violations were also reported, following confrontations between persons alleged to be members of the proscribed organization Indigenous Peoples of Biafra and the Nigerian military, in Rivers State (Nigerian Bar Association, 2020).

Efforts at promoting and protecting human rights are yet to yield desired results, owing to weak implementation and coordination of instruments and policies, including: constitutional and international obligations; national and local policies and legislation, and administrative rules and procedures. In addition, there are lapses on the part of regulatory and monitoring bodies, and challenges associated with inadequate resources.

The Act of the National Human Rights Commission set up by the military regime of General Sani Abacha in 1995 was amended in 2010 to coordinate government responses to human rights problems in the country. Trust in this entity remains very low, however. A case in point was the establishment by the National Human Rights Commission of a 12-member panel in October 2020 for the independent investigation of the popular claims of human rights violations against police during the #ENDSARS protests. Some members of the announced panel refused to take part in the effort out of fear of losing their credibility.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. Proposed responses and actions

West and Central African countries have subscribed to a range of regional frameworks to promote the principle and practice of democracy and governance, and to advance human rights and the rule of law. These include the principle prohibiting unconstitutional changes of government, the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate

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<sup>32</sup> See <https://nairametrics.com/2020/10/17/endsars-national-human-rights-commission-sets-up-independent-investigative-panel/>.

Governance and the associated African Peer Review Mechanism, and the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. The Charter seeks to ensure that African countries adhere to shared key values, such as democracy, human rights, rule of law and the independence of the judiciary. It also reaffirms the importance of regular, transparent, free and fair elections; gender equality; transparency, fairness and citizen participation in development processes and the management of public affairs; and the condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional changes of government.<sup>33</sup> The ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance adopted in 2001, and the ECOWAS Court of Justice have an important role to play in upholding human rights. Besides these, the instruments and institutions discussed in chapter II are crucial in advancing human rights in the two subregions.

ECOWAS and ECCAS should promote the ratification, incorporation into domestic law, and implementation of key subregional, regional and international human rights instruments. They should support States, national human rights institutions and civil society entities in their engagement with regional and international human rights bodies and mechanisms. In doing so, they should foster interactions and partnership with the African Union Commission and United Nations human rights bodies, such as OHCHR. Among other things, they should identify gaps in subregional, regional, and international law, provide guidance on emerging human rights issues, and facilitate peer learning, knowledge transfer, the sharing of experience and good practices.

Efforts at promoting and protecting human rights will only yield results if the implementation of policies and instruments are well coordinated. These include constitutional and international obligations, national and local policies and legislation, and administrative rules and procedures. In addition, there is need to strengthen regulatory and monitoring bodies to systematically monitor and report cases of human rights abuses. This should go hand in hand with the promotion of the principle and practice of democracy and good governance.

Countries should establish strong and independent national human rights commissions with statutory authority to defend the rights of aggrieved parties. The commissions should be involved in educating citizens about and raising their awareness of human and civil rights, alongside civic duties and obligations to guarantee their own rights. Civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to advocate, monitor and report on human rights in countries. In the absence of a national human rights commission, the office of the ombudsperson in countries should be mandated to investigate human rights complaints. Given the high costs associated with the justice system, training of paralegals should be considered as a means of improving public access to the courts. The African Court of Justice will be a crucial recourse for citizens of countries with weak judiciaries.

ECOWAS and ECCAS should work with the African Union and United Nations human rights bodies to support African States in their efforts to respect, promote and protect human and peoples' rights, ensure early preventive action and sustain peace to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. This will be attained by improving national and regional frameworks and institutions in the field of human rights, with an emphasis on integrating and mainstreaming human rights into policies, strategies and programmes; monitoring and ensuring compliance with States' reporting obligations, and the implementation of and follow up on decisions and recommendations from relevant bodies.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

## **D. Humanitarian issues**

West and Central African countries are faced with humanitarian challenges that undermine progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063. The two subregions together account for one of the continent's largest populations of internally displaced persons (UNHCR, 2020), with their growing poverty, hunger and food insecurity and effects of increasing gender-based violence. These result from challenges, including non-inclusive growth, conflict, environmental degradation, climate change, and natural disasters exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In West Africa, displacements induced by years of conflict and crisis, terrorist activities, poor management of resources, farmer-herder clashes, effects of pandemics, and very low levels of development continue to trigger a humanitarian crisis. In the ECOWAS region, a humanitarian crisis is characterized by insecurity, conflicts between farmers and herders, migrant smuggling and trafficking, droughts, floods, climate change, internally displaced persons, critical food insecurities and malnutrition.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation. The realities and the effects of the pandemic on governance, rule of law and human rights is a major issue of interest to the work of the ECOWAS Commission. The pandemic has not only caused the loss of lives, but has also affected political governance systems and economic well-being in most member States of ECOWAS. COVID-19 negated the political governance process of most member States, as new drastic protocols and governance procedures were put in place. Executive orders restricted ordinary citizens' right to movement, freedom to work and earn, and association. Many people in the informal economy with precarious livelihoods and those in rural areas with very basic subsistence economy experienced heightened livelihood needs.<sup>34</sup>

Central African countries are increasingly exposed to the numerous risks from disasters, in particular those of a geophysical, hydro-meteorological or health nature, thus hindering their development. Climate change is further increasing the incidence of natural disasters.<sup>35</sup> As the Secretary-General pointed out: "Climate change will increase the severity and frequency of natural disasters."<sup>36</sup> The combination of lack of development, human rights violations and humanitarian disasters worsen tensions and conflicts in West and Central Africa.

The disparity between people targeted for humanitarian assistance in the two subregions and those in need continues to increase beyond projections. People in rural areas and the informal sectors are particularly vulnerable and need more protection and measures to increase their resilience. The lack of social protection poses a particular problem. This was observed in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria in 2019 and 2020 (FTS, n.d.).

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<sup>34</sup> The analysis in this paragraph is based on an interview on 27 November 2020 with Remi Ajibewa, Director of Political Affairs, ECOWAS Commission.

<sup>35</sup> As affirmed by, for example, the Action Plan for Implementation of the Central Africa Gender Responsive Regional Strategy for Risk Prevention, Disaster Management and Climate Change Adaptation, adopted by Ministers on 13 June 2012 and approved by Heads of States and Government on 25 May 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

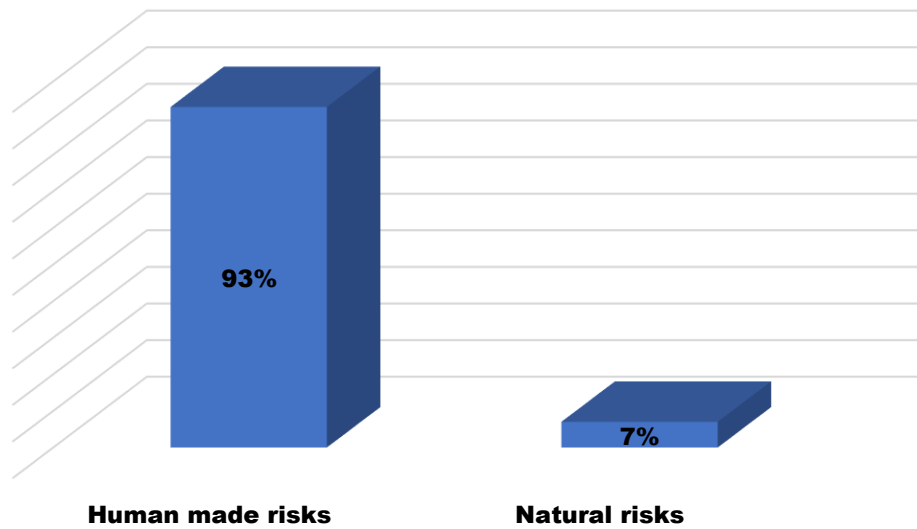


## 1. Survey results on humanitarian risks, threats and effectiveness of responses

The survey report shows that 93 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that human-made risks were more prevalent in their countries, while 7 per cent of the respondents believed that natural risks were more prevalent in their countries. They also considered that, to a high degree (43 per cent), human-made disasters rather than natural disasters (2 per cent) posed more humanitarian threats. This indicates that conflicts are a major concern in the two subregions, thus validating the significance of the present report. With regard to humanitarian responses, the majority (57.9 per cent) were of the view that these were ineffective. Only 4.6 per cent indicated that responses were very effective, and 37.5 per cent rated them as effective. This points to the need for more coordinated actions and judicious use of resources. In terms of unmet needs, security, and economic empowerment and employment were rated high, at 30.6 per cent and 24.1 per cent, respectively. This is to be expected, given the challenges related to inclusive and job-creating growth. Social welfare for older persons was rated the lowest, at 0.7 per cent. This is not surprising in view of the duty of care accorded to older persons in African culture.

Figure IV

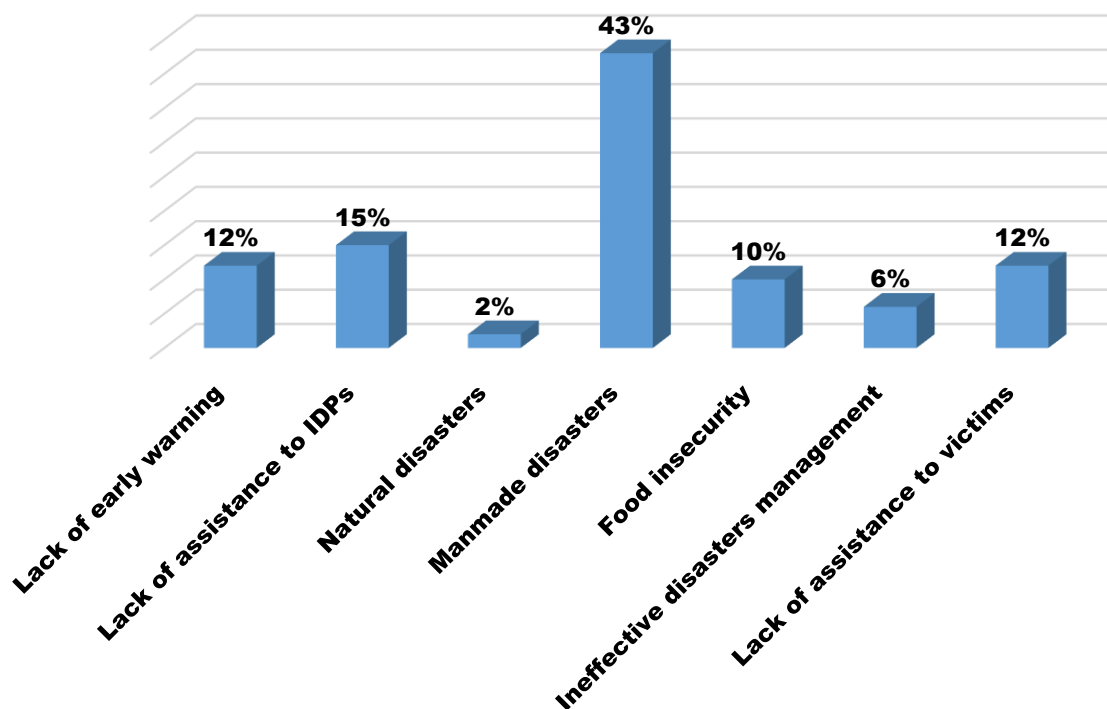
### Opinion of respondents on the risks that are more prevalent in their country



Source: Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

Figure V

**Opinion of respondents on the humanitarian threats in their community or country**



Source : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

Table 9

**Respondents' rating on the effectiveness of humanitarianism in their country**

<i>How do you rate the effectiveness of humanitarianism in your country?</i>		
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very effective	14	4.6
Effective	115	37.5
Ineffective	178	57.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100</b>

Source : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey ,2020.

Table 10

**Opinion of respondents on the most unmet humanitarian need of their country**

<i>Most unmet humanitarian need</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Economic empowerment/Unemployment	74	24.1
Youth empowerment	16	5.2
Access to water and health care	9	2.9
Needs of internally displaced persons and street children/Vulnerable population	19	6.2
Beggars and persons living with mental illness	5	1.6
Education	38	12.4
Food	14	4.6
Security	94	30.6
Health	8	2.6
Shelter	9	2.9
Poverty	19	6.2
Social welfare for older persons	2	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source* : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

## 2. Governance and humanitarian action

For such reasons as inefficiency, corruption and mismanagement, humanitarian assistance does not always get to those who need it the most. This is evident in the survey results, which show that 33.5 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed and 46.1 per cent of the respondents agreed that humanitarian assistance and support do not reach the people who need it in their countries, while only 4.2 per cent of the respondents disagreed that humanitarian assistance and support do not reach people who need it in their country.

About two thirds (69 per cent) of the respondents strongly agreed and 25.4 per cent agreed that lack of good governance negatively affects humanitarian services in their country, while only 5.6 per cent of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that lack of good governance negatively affects humanitarian services in their country.

Table 11

**Opinion of respondents on the claim that “lack of good governance negatively affects humanitarian services in their country”**

<i>Lack of good governance negatively affects humanitarian services in your country?</i>		
<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	214	69.8
Agree	75	24.4
Neither agree nor disagree	18	5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source* : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey ,2020.

### **3. Insights from case study countries**

#### **(a) Cameroon**

In Cameroon, the poor are largely concentrated in the most environmentally vulnerable areas. The four poorest regions in Cameroon (the far north, the north, the north-west and Adamawa) are part of the Sudano-Sahelian, Western Highlands and Guinea Savannah zones, which are home to 80 per cent of the country’s poor people. The Sudano-Sahelian regions, in particular, are ecologically fragile and likely to be subject to increasing incidence of drought, high temperatures, water shortages and salinization of water and soil, owing to climate change. Cameroon is more exposed to multiple climate-related risks, including the risk of drought, flooding and rising sea levels (Cameroon Country Study, 2019).

Furthermore, continued violence in the north-west and south-west regions resulted in increased abuses against civilians, forced displacements and hampered humanitarian access. By April 2020, more than 679,000 people had been displaced and faced significant protection risks in those two regions. An additional 58,000 people had sought refuge in Nigeria. High rates of sexual and gender-based violence went unaddressed in the face of limited capacity to respond. More than one third of the health facilities were seriously affected, disrupting immunization, measles prevention and other essential treatments, including critical sexual and reproductive health services for women.

While school attendance had improved throughout the last quarter of 2019, more than 70 per cent of children in the north-west and south-west regions were still out of school. Over 80 per cent of health and education services in the two regions were not functioning. As of 31 March 2020, Cameroon was hosting more than 384,000 refugees and asylum seekers, including over 272,000 refugees from the Central African Republic. The country also had almost 977,000 internally displaced people and over 354,000 returnees, mainly in the north-west, south-west and far north regions (Humanitarian Response Plan Cameroon, 2020).

### **(b) Central African Republic**

The Central African Republic is said to be home to the third largest humanitarian crisis in the world. There are an estimated 611,338 refugees from the Central African Republic, nearly half whom have sought refuge in neighbouring Cameroon (ReliefWeb, 2020c). The extremely poor level of infrastructure development continues to hamper humanitarian support, throwing millions into precarious situations. Insecurity is also a key factor driving displacement in the Central African Republic. About 93 per cent of displaced households have reportedly fled their areas of origin out of fear for their security (ibid.). In total, one fifth of the population had to flee their homes to survive the eruption of violence.

### **(c) Democratic Republic of the Congo**

In its study of the environmental impact of conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2008, pp. 2–3), the University of Gothenburg identified as principal impacts deforestation, loss of biodiversity, water availability and pollution.

*Deforestation and soil erosion:* The Congolese rainforest is of great national and global importance. It stores carbon and slows down global climate change and provides a number of ecosystem services, including climate regulation and water purification, and it helps to regulate one of the world's largest river basins, the Congo basin. Currently, the deforestation rate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is 0.3 per cent lower than the global average of 0.5 per cent. It is argued, however, that deforestation (the logging and conversion of land) could become a large-scale issue when stability is ensured and infrastructure is developed. In 2002, almost half of the Congolese forests (43.5 million of a total of 108 million hectares) were earmarked for industrial logging, locked up in a 25-year contract before and during the war. Despite the fact that industrial logging has not yet taken off due to instability, deforestation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains an issue locally, especially around the villages and in overpopulated areas where people are fleeing conflicts to seek refuge. This population concentration uses wood as fuel for cooking, thereby leading to deforestation and soil erosion.

*Loss of biodiversity:* The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a unique reservoir of biodiversity ranking fifth in the world in terms of plant and animal diversity and contains more natural world heritage sites than the rest of Africa combined. The conflicts have had a devastating effect on flora and fauna, leaving only small populations of elephants, gorillas (one of the world's most endangered animals), okapis and other endangered species. Of the forests in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, only 8 per cent are protected, leaving the rest at the mercy of illegal poachers.

Such factors as pollution and the overcrowding of refugee camps and villages serving as a refuge for those internally displaced due to conflicts have led to a shortage of water supply in most of these communities. Pollution of water sources, for example by human corpses and animal carcasses in groundwater and streams, have led to numerous outbreaks of epidemics, such as cholera (ibid.).

### **(d) Mali**

An increase in the number of armed conflicts, intercommunal clashes, and other threats to peace and human security, including food insecurity, continues to deepen the humanitarian situation in Mali. Since early 2018, the number of internally displaced persons has risen to 700,000.

In 2020 alone, more than 287,000 people have become internally displaced persons (August 2020 Malian fact sheet). The refugee situation is also worsening, with more than 139,700 Malian refugees in neighbouring countries. Mali also hosts about 43,700 refugees from Burkina Faso and the Niger (European Commission, 2021). Factors fuelling the Malian humanitarian situation include: the effects of climate change; age-old tensions between nomads and farmers; weak State systems or institutions; and the increased availability of weapons. The COVID-19 pandemic has also dealt a sharp blow to the country's poor health-care system, food supply and education.

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Mali increased from 4.3 million in January 2020 to 6.8 million in August of the same year following the revision of the humanitarian response plan, representing an increase of over 58 per cent. This means that the equivalent of one in three Malians is in need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA, 2020b; United Nations, 2020a). The increase in the vulnerable population is explained by the persistence of humanitarian needs linked to conflicts exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the consequences of pockets of drought and seasonal flooding.

Civilians continue to pay a heavy price in the conflicts, especially in the centre part of the country and areas within the Liptako Gourma region. Attacks on villages, killings, kidnapping, threats and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the destruction of fields and granaries and the theft of livestock represent clear violations of the rights of civilians and also an aggravation of their vulnerability.

Regarding natural disasters, more than 26,700 people – or 3,993 households – are affected by the floods in Mali. The floods resulted in the internal displacement of 5,400 people in the regions of Gao, Mopti, Ségou (ReliefWeb, 2020d), Kayes, Timbuktu, Ménaka and Kidal according to data collected by State technical services. Overall, 58 per cent of those affected live in the regions of Mopti and Ménaka. The material damage caused by the floods includes the destruction of 1,460 houses and over 100 tons of food, and the loss of 736 hectares of crops and over 300 herds of cattle. Data from the OCHA weekly regional humanitarian snapshot for West and Central Africa for November 2020 show that, between July and October, the number of internally displaced persons in the Ménaka region increased from 21,000 to nearly 33,000 owing to fights between non-State groups and military operations along the border with the Niger (OCHA, n. d.).

Gender-based violence is also increasing in Mali, but responses remain ineffective. The number of reported cases of gender-based violence increased from 2,021 over the period from January to July 2019 to 2,981 cases from January to July 2020, representing an increase of 47 per cent. Of those affected, 99 per cent are women, and 36 per cent of the cases involve sexual violence. According to the gender-based violence information management system, in 2020, 4,617 incidents were recorded, of which 97 per cent of survivors were women and 45 per cent girls under 18 years of age. The absence of a specific law to respond to gender-based violence and the weak enforcement of legal instruments protecting women and girls remain the factors contributing to the increase in cases.

In terms of responses and humanitarian assistance, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Mali for 2015–2019 takes the fragility of Mali into consideration, showing the need to consolidate peace and recognize the mandate of MINUSMA, which traverses humanitarian support (IOM, 2019). The humanitarian needs overview in Mali also includes a humanitarian-development nexus map with security as a pivot. The country's humanitarian response plan also highlights the need for stabilization, emphasizing that security stability is

essential not only for access to vulnerable populations, but also to give them the opportunity to rebuild their homes and to redevelop their livelihoods.

**(e) Nigeria**

The 2015 humanitarian needs overview of Nigeria, prepared on behalf of the humanitarian country team, examined the key humanitarian issues in the country (ReliefWeb, 2015). These include: massive displacements and violations against civilians due to conflicts; crisis-level food insecurity especially in the north-east; severe constraints to access to basic services; near exhaustion of resources of host communities; and acute health and nutritional needs especially in areas with little humanitarian access.

*Underdevelopment:* Over a long period of time, Nigeria has ranked poorly in the UNDP human development index rankings. Reports from the World Bank show that over 70 per cent of the country's 180 million people live on less than \$1 per day. The situation is far worse in the north-eastern States, driven by the Boko Haram insurgency. National surveys in 2013 and 2014 showed that the north-east region ranked worst or near the bottom of States in such key indicators as water and sanitation, maternal health, and nutrition (ibid.).

*High degree of vulnerability to natural hazards:* Nigeria has also been hit by a number of devastating floods caused by both human-made and natural forces. In July and October 2012 devastating floods affected vast populations around the river Benue and the Niger and their tributaries across 33 of the country's 36 States, leaving an estimated 2 million people temporarily displaced (ibid.). The States of the north-east region were also directly affected; Bauchi and Taraba, in particular, hosted some of the displaced communities. Three years later, many of these internally displaced persons had not recovered and continued to experience post-disaster needs arising from protracted displacement (ibid.).

*Long-standing intercommunal violence and resource disputes:* As highlighted earlier in the conflicts session, conflicts between farmers and herders are widespread in the country's middle belt and north-east region.

The insecurities, violence and conflicts in most parts of the country, in particular those instigated by Boko Haram, are driving massive displacement in the north-eastern parts of the country, with ripple effects in Cameroon, Chad and the Niger (ibid., highlights). In 2020, the humanitarian landscape of Nigeria continued to be dominated by the Boko Haram insurgency, together with its subsidiary force, the Islamic State West Africa Province, growing banditry and armed killings in the north-west (Kaduna, Kebbi, Katsina and Zamfara), sustained farmer-herder clashes in the middle belt, plus a growing Cameroonian refugee population further south (in Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River and other areas).<sup>37</sup> The report by the independent information provider ACAPS also shows the crisis to be severe in terms of its impact, humanitarian complexity and constraints on access. Violence, trauma, disruptions of means of livelihoods and supplies of essential products and services are threats faced by people trapped by the activities of insurgents (ACAPS, 2019).

Data from OCHA show that the north-east of Nigeria and Burkina Faso are among the world's hunger hotspots with the highest humanitarian risk. The OCHA weekly report indicates

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<sup>37</sup> For further details, see the various Nigeria country reports by the independent information provider ACAPS, available at [www.acaps.org](http://www.acaps.org).

that, according to warnings from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, the most vulnerable communities could slip into famine within months if things get worse (OCHA, n. d.). In Nigeria, between July and August alone, the number of people projected to face acute food insecurity, already at the level of 8.7 million, increased under the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (ibid.). OCHA further indicates that reports on the humanitarian situation in north-east Nigeria published by ReliefWeb as of August 2020 paint a picture of a complex health emergency with devastating impacts on civilians, due to very poor camp conditions challenging an already insecure environment whose future is at risk ReliefWeb, 2020a). The overwhelming effects of hosting persons already internally displaced by volatile communities, extreme poverty, vulnerabilities to natural hazards and pre-existing intercommunal conflicts, have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **4. Proposed responses and actions**

Chapter II provides an overview of frameworks and instruments on humanitarian action in Africa. These include the memorandum of understanding between the African Union Commission and OCHA on humanitarian action, the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), the humanitarian policy framework, the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the programme of action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2006–2015). Furthermore, in West Africa, the peace and security architecture of ECOWAS embodies its humanitarian work, covering issues of preventing and limiting the impact of conflict and disasters, natural and human-made disaster, mixed migration and refugee protection.<sup>38</sup>

ECOWAS and ECCAS should promote the ratification of the 2009 Kampala Convention. In addition, the subregional bodies should support member States in the incorporation into domestic law and implementation of the humanitarian policy framework and to enhance understanding on the underlying causes of humanitarian crisis in general and of specific causes and nature and circumstances of this particular crisis alongside national and international responses, as and when they occur. This should be done in collaboration with the African Union Commission and United Nations humanitarian bodies, such as OCHA.

ECOWAS and ECCAS should support member States in incorporating legal frameworks into their domestic agendas and implementing the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Programme of Action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. In addition, they should enhance the capacity of member States in early warning, disaster preparedness and response and facilitate coordination and collaboration on disaster risk management and preparedness, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and relevant international bodies, such as the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation should be carried out in an integrated and coordinated manner to facilitate coherent actions and the disbursement of resources to strengthen highly vulnerable groups and priority sectors. In this context, strong emphasis should be placed on

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Sintiki Ugbe, Director of Humanitarian and Social Affairs at the ECOWAS Commission, on 27 November 2020.



promoting institutional frameworks that are adapted to the implementation requirements of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation policies.

## **5. New narrative for the Sahel**

The negative image of the Sahel is a stranglehold on the great potential for development in the region. A more balanced narrative could trigger action for a productive Sahel and be based on innovative approaches and a conducive policy environment to value natural resources. Despite a rich set of information, the potential of the Sahel is still not flagged with sound knowledge that can be opposed to the conspicuous depressed perception. While the Sahel has its fair share of challenges, there is a need to move away from this rigid one-dimensional understanding of its challenges, to a new and stronger vision to harness its full potential. The proposed approach is to innovate and optimize the value of natural resources and ecosystems, and ensure a fair sharing of benefits with a particular focus on the poor, youth and women (Mbow and others, 2021). A change of narrative will inspire people both within and outside the Sahel to think differently about the region. It can spark raised ambition and action from political leaders, businesses and investors. It can accelerate development and policies that serve people and nature. It can deliver innovative private-sector finance (Dieye and Thiaw, 2020). In their article, Mbow and others (2021) highlight the potential of the Sahel, as outlined below.

### **(a) Water resources**

The Sahel has large transboundary regional watersheds and groundwater reservoirs. The water resources in the Sahel comes from the large transboundary regional watersheds, including those of the Niger, Senegal, Gambia and Volta rivers and Lake Chad, and large transboundary groundwater reservoirs, such as Lullemeden and Taoudeni. Groundwater resources exist both as the superficial water tables recharged during the rainy season and the fossil water reserves, including the deep water tables of sedimentary basins. Considerable reserves of fresh water are stored in these deep water tables, on a scale of thousands of billions of square metres. These reserves could meet the current and future needs of West Africa. Less than 1 per cent of their potential is in use, however. Tapping the potential of the deep-water reserves would require harnessing the solar energy potential of the region.

### **(b) Agriculture, tree and non-timber forest products**

Promising opportunities exist to transform agriculture in the Sahel and stabilize food production to tackle the food insecurity challenges of the region. The Sahel has large areas of fertile soil that have sustained livelihoods in highly densely populated regions, such as the Senegal peanut basin, the Mopti region in Mali, the Maradi area in the Niger and the central regions of Burkina Faso and western Senegal. There is considerable potential for smallholder farmers to improve agricultural efficiency and meet the countries' growing food demand.

The pastoral system in the Sahel is a way of life, combining economic and predominantly social and cultural aspects. As part of the solutions to addressing the herder-farmer conflict, the significant economic potential of this age-old tradition should be leveraged. The increased demand for meat in urban centres can be met if the pastoral system gains benefits from public and private investment to improve feed and forage production and reduce reliance on natural pastures that are prone to productivity variability amid rainfall uncertainty. Animal feed of good quality and reliable water sources are critical limitations to increasing livestock productivity in the region.

Achieving food and nutrition security under resource-poor conditions of the Sahel requires the use of all potential food sources. The underused tree products have a huge untapped potential. A large proportion of the Sahelian population depends on tree products for food, animal feed, burning and as a source of fibre. In addition to ecological functions, trees have important roles for subsistence and commercial uses in semi-arid areas of sub-Saharan Africa.

**(c) Land restoration**

Land restoration offers another opportunity to achieve the goal of food security by balancing sustainable land management and ecosystem services, such as water and nutrients recycling. The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, launched in 2008 by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, and the African Union, seeks to address land degradation and desertification in the Sahel and Sahara, and boost food security and support to local communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The 11 countries of the Great Green Wall have a population of close to 500 million, mostly young people, which is expected to grow to 1.6 billion by the end of the century. This will create 10 million rural jobs and reduce forced migration (ibid.).

**(d) Renewable energy**

The Sahel with its abundant sunshine has huge potential for solar energy, in addition to the existing wind and hydroelectric energy potential. A renewable-energy revolution would benefit the climate and the region's energy security (ibid.). The Sahel renewable energy programme is oriented towards a decentralized distributed renewable energy sources that offer an unprecedented opportunity and ownership to power the development aspirations of the region. The programme will seek synergies with such initiatives as the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, the Least Developed Countries Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiative for Sustainable Development and others in the region (UNOWAS, 2021).

**(e) Positive transformation pathways**

A new narrative on the Sahel may be developed from its natural resources to sustain a growing prosperity. The proper management and harnessing of the value of natural resources can accelerate green and climate-smart growth in the Sahel. There are many mechanisms that can attract investment in natural products while supporting land restoration. Rethinking the Sahel can trigger transformation from business, science and policy partnerships and lead to positive transformation pathways. Positive transformation pathways require many improvements in governance, finance and equality issues, with particular reference to young people and women.

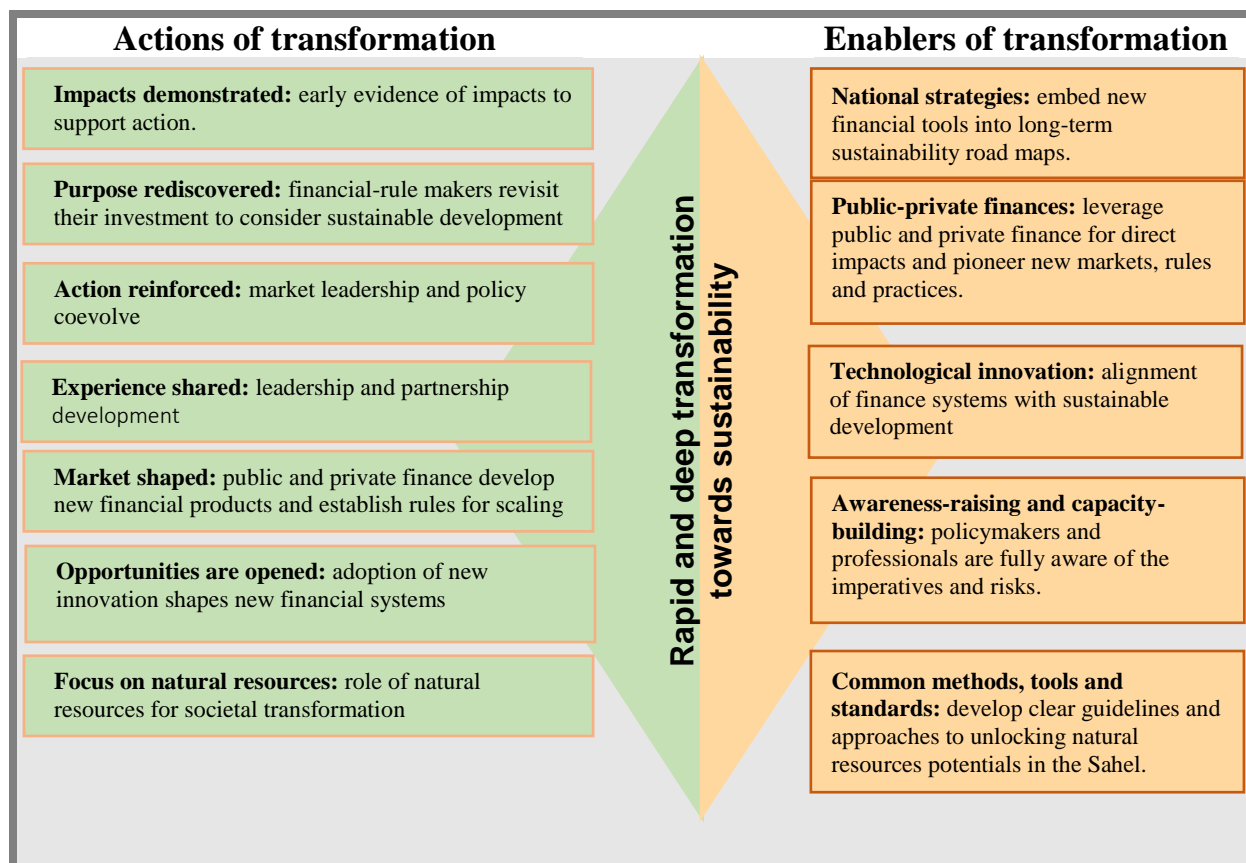
**(f) International support**

Increasingly, African institutions, such as the African Development Bank and the African Union through its Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, are encouraging major investments in agriculture as an engine for economic and social growth (Mbow and others, 2021). The 2019 Development Finance Forum held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, deliberated on issues of agribusiness, transport and logistics, and digital infrastructure, selected in the light of their potential to create significant growth and jobs with a focus on countries of the Sahel and the West African Economic and Monetary Union. The Forum brought together business leaders,

policymakers, thought leaders and financiers from private and public sectors in the regions and beyond to explore what could be done to address some of the biggest challenges to scaling up private investment in these areas.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the Great Green Wall for the Sahel and Sahara Initiative has received more than \$14 billion in new funding. This will fast-track efforts to restore degrading land, save biological diversity, create green jobs and build the resilience of the Sahel.<sup>40</sup>

Figure VI

### Positive transformation pathways for the Sahel



Source: Mbow and others, 2021.

#### (g) Looking ahead

Changing the narrative creates a self-reinforcing cycle of improvement and of hope that can promote the creation of well-funded, effective programmes and innovation. This should be driven by local needs and high-scale structural transformation initiatives, with the meaningful engagement of local communities, the private sector and the diaspora. There is goodwill on the

<sup>39</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/events/2019/09/25/2019-development-finance-forum-scaling-up-investment-in-the-sahelian-and-waemu-countries](http://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2019/09/25/2019-development-finance-forum-scaling-up-investment-in-the-sahelian-and-waemu-countries).

<sup>40</sup> [www.unccd.int/news-events/great-green-wall-receives-over-14-billion-regreen-sahel-france-world-bank-listed-0](http://www.unccd.int/news-events/great-green-wall-receives-over-14-billion-regreen-sahel-france-world-bank-listed-0).

part of the international community to unleash the potential in the Sahel and reshape perceptions of the region. Unrest comes largely from poverty and lack of opportunities. If the economic situation is improved, the unrest will dampen and the positive narrative will take root, in spite of such setbacks as the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

## **IV. Transboundary and cross-cutting issues**

The present chapter provides an overview of transboundary and cross-cutting issues as they relate to conflict and the four-pillar interlinkages. It looks at transboundary conflict arising from increased insurgency due to COVID-19, disputes over transboundary resources and border governance. It discusses how conflict and insecurity situations threaten regional trade, while noting that trade, in particular the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area, could contribute to peace and security. It illustrates how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to drive a health and economic crisis that has exacerbated the humanitarian situation and created a social crisis. It examines how women and young people are affected differently by conflicts, fragility and other threats to peace and security, human rights, development and are exposed to varying humanitarian challenges. It concludes with a brief look at the humanitarian challenges of migration, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **A. Transboundary issues in relation to conflict and trade**

#### **1. Transboundary conflict from insurgency and transboundary resources**

The Sahel, and in particular the Lake Chad basin, consisting of Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, have been the theatre for many transboundary issues. This situation has been accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the fight against COVID-19, most countries are deploying their military to urban areas to enforce lockdowns, leaving more borders weakly guarded and susceptible to the free movement of extremists and rebel groups, traffickers and other criminal elements. For example, Boko Haram launched an offensive in Chad on 30 March 2020, killing 92 Chadian soldiers – one of the worst attacks to hit Chad. In addition, 47 Nigerian soldiers were ambushed and killed in north-eastern Nigeria by Islamic State insurgents at about the same time. The Islamic State has recently issued a statement calling on its followers to use the space created by the spread of the virus to intensify its offensive (Gounden, 2020).

Nomadic pastoralism is another transboundary economic activity that could fuel tensions, in particular with restrictions to control the spread of the virus. In such countries as the Central African Republic, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where transhumance is a major concern, attempts at curbing the community-level spread of the virus may lead to proactive moves to curb transhumance movement. This, in turn, is likely to generate violent conflicts.

In the Lake Chad basin, a combination of such environmental issues as desertification and the distribution of resources, in particular water resources from the fluctuating Lake Chad, mean that the realities of climate change have been at the centre of the transboundary issues prevalent in the region. Lake Chad, connecting Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, provides vital resources for about 35 million people living around it (Margrin, 2016). The basin's natural resources have been largely altered, with grave consequences for local economies and such livelihoods as fishing, irrigation and pastoralism. This has also increased fragility and conflict risks (Climate Diplomacy, 2020). The fluctuating levels of the lake also affect the relations between States. For instance, there have been disputes over legal status, national affiliations and emergent resources. A major case in this respect is the Nigeria-Cameroon land dispute.

The instability that has existed in Libya since 2011 led to assaults by such armed rebel groups as Ansar Eddine, Islamic State West Africa Province and Boko Haram on Sahelian countries in West and Central Africa, resulting in the outbreaks of conflict in Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, the

Niger and Nigeria. This transboundary issue from North Africa has hampered progress on the four pillars in West and Central Africa.<sup>42</sup> The insecurity resulting from the Libyan transboundary problem has hampered developmental progress in the Sahel, exacerbated violations of human rights by rebel movements and governments, and heightened humanitarian problems of immigrants. The Chairman of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, has stressed the need to end the continent's many conflicts, which remain the cause of so much internal displacement and cross-border movements (Africa Times, 2019). He has noted that the goal to end conflict by 2020 remains ambitious but not impossible. No meaningful continental trade or integration can be achieved if these numerous conflicts are not resolved.

Africa has the second highest global burden of displacement, hosting some 37 per cent of the world's 19.6 million refugees and accounting for 38.1 million internally displaced people (ibid.). These conflicts have created major human and regional security threats through rub-off effects and the transfer of bad practices dampening prospects for development in the region. Through the transboundary effect, the Casamance conflict has embroiled neighbouring Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia in much the same way that the Liberian conflict has engendered acute insecurity in western Côte d'Ivoire. Similarly, the situation in the north of the Niger has influenced, to some extent, the resurgence of separatism and banditry in northern Mali among the local Tuareg (Musah, 2009, p. 5).

## **2. Border governance and conflict between States**

Border governance and administration in Africa are major factors in the complex socioeconomic, political, environmental and demographic challenges that Africa faces. A series of borders have been closed in response to security concerns, such as terrorism, trafficking, the movement of illegal or potentially harmful goods, activities of rebels, health concerns, and diplomatic, political and economic issues. All these have not only heated up levels of inter-State tensions (ibid.), but threaten the meaningful movement of persons, economic integration and development. For instance, the Nigerian land borders had been closed even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the closure of air borders until 5 September 2020, with Nigerian land borders remaining totally shut until December 2020, when the land border crossing points were announced to be open again (Reuters, 2020).

Other countries in the ECOWAS and ECCAS subregions also shut down their respective borders in line with COVID-19 prevention and control protocols. For example, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea remained shut for different reasons, such as the lack of effective border management resulting in insecurity. In January 2018, the border between Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, which was closed temporarily, was associated with the previous border disruption on 24 December 2017 just before the coup attempt on 27 and 28 December 2017. There were also associated clashes between the security forces of Equatorial Guinea and suspected mercenaries in Ebibeyin in Gabon, close to the border with Equatorial Guinea (GardaWorld, 2018). This border tension between Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea was heightened by plans of the Government of Equatorial Guinea to erect a wall along its 183-kilometre-long border with Cameroon (Atabong, 2019). This situation undermines peace and security, impedes the free movement of persons, progress in trade and commercial activities, and the regional integration agenda of member States.

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<sup>42</sup> On this issue, see also [www.trtworld.com/magazine/libya-in-the-african-context-33208](http://www.trtworld.com/magazine/libya-in-the-african-context-33208).

Transboundary issues arising from insurgencies, shared natural resources and border governance should be tackled through bilateral cooperation and intraregional cooperation involving the countries concerned, such subregional bodies as ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Arab Maghreb Union, and other African Union organs and agencies with the support of such partners as the United Nations, bilateral and multilateral partners, international non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and so on.

### 3. Trade

Conflict and insecurity situations threaten the volume and prospects of national and regional trade within States in West and Central Africa, including those in the Sahel. For instance, the crises in the Lake Chad area and the Central African Republic continue to disrupt regional markets; in the same manner, the pressures of catering to displaced populations and insecurity for States in the areas have grave local and macro-level economic impacts (Cameroon Country Study, 2019). If not well handled, regional trade could lead to outbursts of crises, with massive movements of people and goods across national boundaries. The numerous religious, ethnic, economic and politically inspired conflicts across various parts discourage investor confidence. Productive and deliberate trade governance is capable, however, of expanding income generation and could positively enhance peace and stability. The operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area provides such an opportunity.

A large percentage of regional trade is informal or undocumented in official data. The informal sector throughout West Africa, and in particular in Benin, represents approximately 50 per cent of GDP (70 per cent in Benin), and 90 per cent of employment (Golub and others, 2019). Illegal cross-border trade generates 20 per cent of GDP of Benin, while the smuggling of gasoline employs about 40,000 people in that country, equivalent to the public sector, and direct and indirect jobs from used car smuggling are roughly estimated to employ 15,000 and 100,000 people, respectively (ibid.).<sup>43</sup> In an interview, ECCAS officials indicated that ineffective border management and illicit dealings are major threats in Africa.<sup>44</sup> For example, 64 per cent of ECCAS borders are not demarcated and are often conflict hotspots. An important security and human rights issue pertains to the harassment of informal traders – in particular women and girls – at borders, resulting in continued and increasing revenue losses. Many women moving farm produce into Nigeria from Benin must pay toll rates to different uniformed Nigerian officials at more than 10 different locations, despite the ECOWAS agreement that allows the free movement of goods (The Nation, 2019).

The African Continental Free Trade Area, with its potential to boost productive capacities, promote diversification, create jobs and lift millions out of poverty, should be leveraged for peace and security dividends. This is in line with the seminal publication of the World Bank, *Trading Away from Conflict* (Cali, 2015), which describes the relationship between sharp changes in trade and conflict arising from shifts away from productive commercial activities to fighting, including the extent to which export commodity prices and export and import prices affect the probability

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<sup>43</sup> In spite of the long border closure, however, there was no appreciable drop in the GDP of Benin. This may also mean that trade continued in spite of the announced closures.

<sup>44</sup> According to an ECCAS official, 64 per cent of Central African borders are not demarcated hence accentuating conflicts. The problem is similar in West Africa.

and intensity of conflict (ibid., p. 2). In effect, trade could be a basis for conflict just as it could also be a basis for conflict prevention and amelioration.

Transboundary issues arising from insurgencies, shared natural resources and border governance should be tackled through bilateral, intraregional and interregional cooperation involving the countries concerned, such subregional bodies as ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Arab Maghreb Union, and other African Union organs and agencies, with the support of such partners as the United Nations, bilateral and multilateral partners, international non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and others.

## **B. Four-pillar interlinkages, the coronavirus disease pandemic, gender and youth**

### **1. Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to leave multidimensional traces in and have an impact on the lives of people in West and Central Africa. The pandemic is causing increased mental health issues, with more cases of depression, worry, fear and general anxiety, increased stress levels, feelings of uncertainty and hopelessness, sleep abnormalities and the abuse of drugs and substances (WHO, 2020). The impact is also felt across every aspect of human life, from access to housing and work safety to access to food, clothes, finance and other support. Significantly, the most vulnerable populations face more threats. Forecasts from the African Development Bank show that African economies will, in two years, record a cumulative loss of \$409 billion to COVID-19 (Nweze, 2021).

In some cases, the COVID-19 pandemic not only revealed inefficiencies and failures in governance and institutions but also sent a wake-up call to governments and societies in general.<sup>45</sup> Governments and societies saw how vulnerable, weak and threatened their health-care systems and capacity to handle emergencies were. Apart from the potential to influence local governance issues, the pandemic left a different trail on the nature and practice of diplomacy. This is evident in countries across Africa, including those in the West and Central subregions.

### **2. Gender**

Women, men, girls and boys are affected differently by conflicts, fragility and other threats to peace and security, human rights and development, and are also exposed to varying humanitarian challenges. The poorest and most vulnerable in such situations, however, are women and children, who are disproportionately threatened by the lack of access to justice, physical insecurity, poverty and limited access to State institutions (Kangas and others, 2015).

The 2018–2027 African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment lays out the implementation plan of aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 and the principles enshrined in article 4, paragraph 1, of the Constitutive Act of the African Union: the promotion of gender equality and key continental and global commitments. The strategy was adopted by the Executive Council in July 2018 and is the road map of the African Union for meeting its commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment. It also forms the core of the gender strategies for the two subregions.

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with ECCAS official, 11 December 2020.



In the gender discourse, women and girls deserve more attention because they are disproportionately affected by violent conflicts. These effects range from the outcomes of situations of war and destruction, displacement, disrupted livelihoods and access to public goods, increased pressures and demands, and domestic violence, and include rape and other forms of sexual violence, and the use of women and girls as a targeted strategy of attack in war and crisis.

On a positive note, the role of women during and after conflicts is increasingly understood, with opportunities for transforming gender relations and promoting more inclusive, equitable socioeconomic and political systems. The COVID-19 pandemic, which affects all four pillars, has had significant impacts on gender issues, notably in households across the world, including in Africa. Women have encountered issues related to social and economic inequalities and grave human rights abuses. These inequalities have greatly affected the progress made over the years in curbing gender inequalities in most countries of West and Central Africa.

According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), economic and social tensions, combined with restrictions on movement and cramped living conditions, have led to an increase in cases of gender-based violence.<sup>46</sup> Prior to the pandemic, an estimated one in three women experienced violence in their lifetime and, with restrictions on movement in place, more people are spending more time online so forms of online violence against women and girls on gaming and other platforms are likely to increase. It is equally likely that the economic impact of the pandemic will lead to increased sexual exploitation and child marriage, exacerbating in particular the vulnerability of women and girls living in fragile economies and refugee camps. This scenario reflects the current situation prevailing in such countries as Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Many of those affected by the numerous conflicts within the subregions are women and young girls, as their rights have been neglected in a predominantly patriarchal society. The fear of violence resulting from political and socioeconomic crises restricts women's freedom of movement. The traditional or interventional options of protection for women could easily be seen as a human rights abuse. In addition, in West and Central Africa, the international standards for the five priority reproductive health interventions for emergencies are poorly provided for or implemented. This includes humanitarian coordination, the prevention of and response to sexual violence, minimization of HIV transmission, the reduction of maternal and neonatal death and disability, and planning for comprehensive reproductive health services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undone development gains achieved notably through the various conventions and treaties that were ratified by countries, including those of West and Central Africa. In April 2020, the Secretary-General called for an end to all forms of violence everywhere, in war zones and in homes, and for a focus on fighting the pandemic (UN-Women, 2020). This call to action by the Secretary-General shows the need for a collaborative approach to tackling the inequalities that the crisis has created within States and to creating a more equal society where all voices will be heard, in particular those of the vulnerable.

Men are generally more directly exposed, as front-line agents in situations of conflict, violence, fragility and other threats to peace and security. Men are also more exposed to injuries and deaths, arrest and detention, and forceful conscription into State and non-State militias. Cases of sexual

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<sup>46</sup>See further discussion at [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women) and <https://data.unwomen.org/resources/covid-19-emerging-gender-data-and-why-it-matters>.

violence against men and boys, in particular during armed conflicts, are poorly reported and documented or do not get adequate attention.

### **3. Impact on young people**

Conflict and forced displacement have an impact on young people during what is a transformative time in their cognitive and physiological development. The marginalization, isolation and hardship of forced displacement can increase the vulnerability of young refugees to violence, including sexual violence, exploitation, substance abuse, radicalization and recruitment into gangs or armed groups. Other major challenges that young refugees face include difficulties in securing access to quality learning, formal education and opportunities to build skills, find jobs and livelihoods, gain legal recognition and obtain personal documents; and the lack of safety, security and freedom of movement. With limited prospects for education or employment, few opportunities to develop their talents and no certainty for the future, young refugees are often unable to prepare for life ahead (ReliefWeb, 2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected young people, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa, where they constitute 60 per cent of the population. According to statistics from UNESCO, at the end of March 2020, more than 89 per cent of the world's pupil-to-student population was no longer in school or university because of school closures imposed to curb the spread of the virus.<sup>47</sup> This unprecedented situation forced many students to take courses online, yet a large portion of the population lives in places where technology has not yet penetrated, without the internet, putting all these young people at a great disadvantage. This is reflective of the situation in the two subregions, where a vast majority of students and schoolchildren live in rural communities and do not have access to electricity and internet facilities.

The current conflict situation has left many internally displaced and refugees across West and Central Africa, many of whom are young people, without access to education, owing partly to the current security situation and the COVID-19 pandemic. In Cameroon, for example, in a report published in August 2020, the United Nations Children's Fund revealed that 80 per cent of schools had closed in the north-west and south-west regions since the beginning of the crisis, preventing over 3,000 students from attending classes (OCHA, 2020a). Young women and girls living in poverty, in remote rural areas, or with disabilities are the most likely to have to withdraw from school to meet the increased need for care and domestic work. They are also more prone to child marriage and other forms of anachronistic cultures and violence as families seek ways of easing their economic burdens (Giannini and Albrechtsen, 2020). In subregions that have already been severely affected by conflict the likelihood that these forms of violations will occur are much higher – in particular among the displaced and refugee communities.

Unemployment has also severely affected young people. After the economic recession in 2008, youth unemployment rates in many regions were significantly higher than the overall average, and the recent expansion of the gig economy is likely to accentuate this disparity. Even before the pandemic hit, there was already an upward trend in the number of unemployed young people without education and training. Of the approximately 267 million young people in this category worldwide, two thirds, or 181 million individuals, are young women (ILO, 2020). Poverty and inequality have risen significantly under the impact of conflicts and sociopolitical tensions – notably in Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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<sup>47</sup> For further details, see <https://fr.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>.

According to the African Development Bank, Central Africa remains the least egalitarian region, accounting for 10 of the 19 most unequal countries in the world. From 2010 to 2017, agriculture was the largest source of employment in Central Africa, accounting for close to 70 per cent of employment compared with 20 per cent for services and 11 per cent for industry (African Development Bank, 2019, p. 15).

The crisis has equally led to the recruitment of many young terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram in northern Cameroon and Chad, and separatist armed factions fighting for secession in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. Many youngsters have fallen prey to some of these armed groups, which take advantage of their vulnerability to radicalize them into joining their cause. Young people who have been left for long periods without access to education and lack employment because of hardships due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions are primary targets of these groups, which lure them by promising better living conditions and wages if they join them.

African Governments should harness the demographic dividend, which has the potential to yield positive economic and social benefits for the region, primarily by countries to reap these benefits. To that end, policies must be implemented to shape and absorb the capacities of young people in the areas of education, health, employment, governance and civic engagement, among others (ECA, 2017a). In the absence of the right policies and structures, Africa will miss out on the demographic dividend and the great numbers of its young population may become, at best, an unoccupied and unfulfilled group and, at worst, a disruptive force, fomenting political and social instability.

### **C. Migration**

Migration is a source of problems in West and Central Africa, owing to the numerous conflicts within the subregion and other factors, such as socioeconomic crises, environmental conditions and natural disasters, terrorism and transborder crime. Statistics from the International Organization for Migration indicate that, since 2017, over 75,000 migrants who were stranded along the central Mediterranean routes were assisted in returning to their countries of origin in West and Central Africa, among whom 45,000 returned to the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected migrants across the region, as a consequence of the closure of borders, curfews and the restriction of movements, leaving many stranded with no means of returning. Many migrants have been confined to camps and settlements or are living in urban areas with overcrowding, poor sanitation, and overstretched or inaccessible health services. Those confined to immigration detention centres and other places where migrants and refugees are deprived of their liberty are at particular risk. According to IOM, some 1,100 Chadian students in Cameroon were stranded, while over 2,500 are waiting in transit centres across the subregion (IOM, 2020).

Migrants often face obstacles in securing health care, including language and cultural barriers, cost, lack of access to information, discrimination and xenophobia. Migrants in an irregular situation may be unable or unwilling to seek health care or provide information on their health status because they fear or risk detention, deportation or penalties as a result of their immigration status. The major obstacle, however, remains that, in sites for internally displaced persons, camp-like settings or transit centres, the recommended preventive measures, such as social distancing and hygiene measures, for example, hand washing with soap, are difficult to

achieve in overpopulated areas with limited access to water. This is the case across most of the Lake Chad basin, because of climate conditions in that area. It is essential that governments take the appropriate measures to ensure prevention and protection among the displaced communities in a bid to avoid the spread of the virus.

The 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) is a pioneering regional treaty that promotes a strong and effective national system of protection and durable solutions for internally displaced persons. It gives tangible legal expression to the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. It recognizes internally displaced persons as right-holders and establishes national responsibilities and obligations in displacement situations triggered by violence and conflict, disasters, the effects of climate change and projects.

With regard to migration, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2018, is a non-binding agreement that could be deployed to tackle migration challenges in Africa. It is worth noting that the African Union contributed significantly to the negotiation and adoption of the Compact. The instrument includes a wide range of commitments and actions embodied in a set of 23 objectives aimed at addressing the numerous challenges associated with unsafe, disorderly and irregular migration, while also recognizing and respecting a broad range of migrant rights (African Union, 2019).

## **V. Governance and institutions in the context of the four-pillar interlinkages**

The present chapter appraises governance and institutions as they relate to conflict and the four-pillar interlinkages. It provides a snapshot of the performance of West and Central African countries on governance indicators and discusses the effect of governance on conflict and the pillars. It features the African Peer Review Mechanism as an African Union instrument aimed at promoting good governance, along with the African Union governance policy framework. It also looks at corruption as a major cause of conflict, with a negative impact on all four pillars. In conclusion, it examines the critical role of institutions, including political parties, the arms of government, civil society organizations and the private sector in promoting the four-pillar interlinkages in the context of conflict prevention and resolution.

### **A. Governance**

Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs. Good governance is considered a prerequisite for sustainable development in Africa. Good governance is widely considered to be strongly normative. As championed by the World Bank, the concept includes "accountability, transparency, rule of law and government efficiency and effectiveness" (Maldonado, 2010) and is seen as decisive for a country's development. The African Union Commission, through its African Governance Architecture and the African Peer Review Mechanism, has emphasized the importance of governance. In addition, the broad thrust of the work of OSAA as part of the United Nations partnership with the African Union in the peace-security-development relationship, underscores the interconnections between peace, security, development, governance and human rights as key to the attainment of inclusive and sustainable development in Africa.

Many international yardsticks for measuring progress in governance show the sustained weak performance of governance on range of interrelated issues in countries in West and Central Africa. The resulting rankings of those countries on various indices, such as the Fragile States Index, the Corruption Perception Index, the Global Terrorism Index and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, clearly demonstrate the extent of the challenges of governance in West and Central Africa. The Ibrahim Index measures anti-corruption innovations, the protection of civil liberties and environmental protection. Angola, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Guinea, Nigeria, Somalia and the Sudan are all ranked low in terms of these indicators.<sup>48</sup> In the period 2010–2019, the report showed that more than 60 per cent of Africans live in countries that made progress in good governance. There has been some regression, however, against this indicator over the last five years. The regression is linked to an increasingly uncondusive environment for human rights and civic participation and a worsening security situation. For instance, the recent elections in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea in West Africa have resulted in deaths (Africanews 2020). Governance is key to achieving development, peace and security, human rights and the upholding of humanitarian values and the effective harnessing

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<sup>48</sup> Such variables as: politics (Government effectiveness, rule of law, transparency and accountability, corruption control, types of freedom, etc.); security (political stability, recurrence of conflicts, incidence of coups d'état or human rights violations); economics (GDP per capita, inequality index, inflation, etc.); and socioeconomic factors (infant mortality rate, literacy, malnutrition or access to drinking water etc are used).

of their interlinkages.<sup>49</sup> Weak performance in governance therefore impedes progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063.<sup>50</sup>

### **1. Effect of governance on the pillars in West and Central Africa**

Undoubtedly, internal politics, regional power plays and poor governance produce interactions that result in the multiplicity of challenges in west Africa, in particular insecurity in West Africa. Despite being richly endowed with human and natural resources, the region remains one of the poorest and least developed. This is mainly due to a dearth of leadership and poor political and resource governance capacity (UNDP, 2007). The popular depiction of the Sahel as “ungoverned spaces” in literature underlines not only the deficit of governance and its institutions, but also the complex nature of challenges, including the external dynamics at play. The term is intended to refer to both physical territory and non-physical policy space in which there is an absence of effective State sovereignty and control (Piombo, 2007).

Empirical data from conflict zones in west Africa point unequivocally to a correlation between bad governance and political instability (Musah, 2009). For most West African States, political leadership has consisted largely in direct or indirect circulation within the military class. There are also widespread governance issues in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, characterized by corruption, low infrastructure development and the weak empowerment of youth and women. To some extent these factors have affected the integrity of the State and led to the weakening of the formal economy (ibid.).

Data from the survey questionnaire clearly demonstrate the importance of governance on informed perception<sup>51</sup> of the driving forces or causes of conflicts in West and Central Africa. The overwhelming emphasis was on governance. Of the 284 respondents, the driving factors ranged from 60.8 per cent (bad governance, including corruption and mismanagement as threats to peace and security in their countries) to 1.3 per cent (human rights abuses). The remainder, in descending order, are seen as: poverty, 12 per cent; unemployment, 7.2 per cent; lack of political will, 5.1 per cent; injustice and marginalization, 4 per cent; religious intolerance, 3.6 per cent; lack of equipped and effective security agents; and nepotism, tribalism and sectionalism, with an equal score of 3 per cent.

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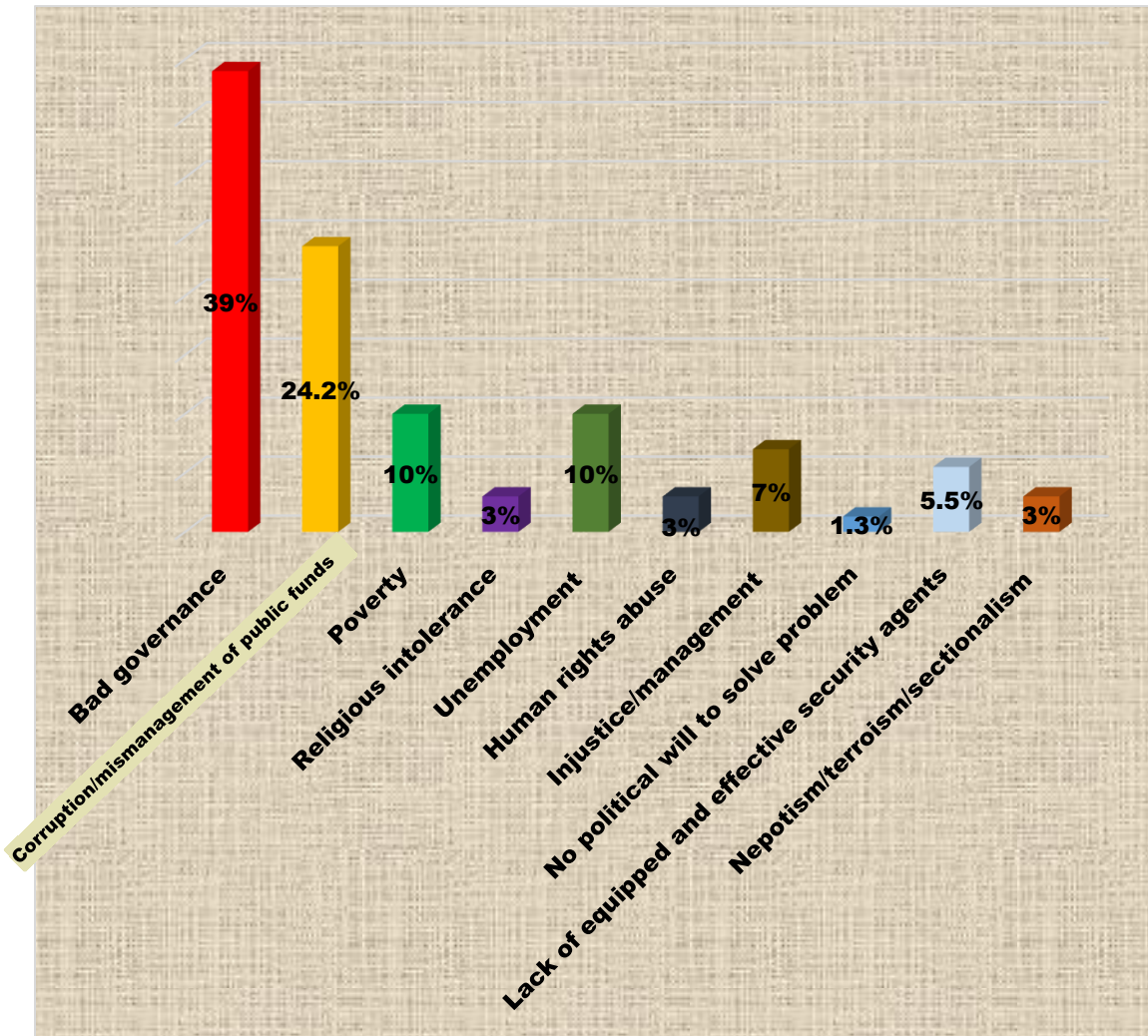
<sup>49</sup> Interview with Rita Amukhobu of the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission on 30 November 2020.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Most of the respondents had tertiary, including postgraduate, education. For further details, see annex III.

Figure VII

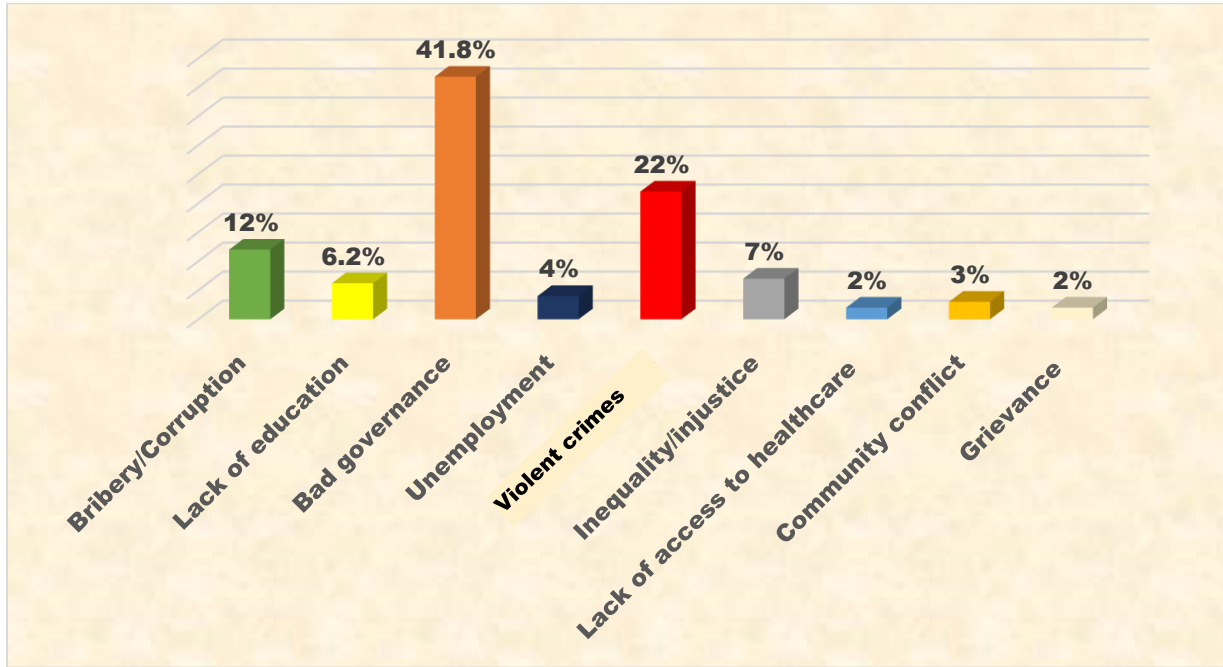
**Opinion of respondents on the factors conducive to threats to peace and security in their countries**



Source: Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

Figure VIII

**Opinions of respondents on what they think hinders development in their State and country**



*Source* : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

Furthermore, in certain instances, governance or political leadership in the West and Central Africa thrives on exploiting weaknesses or fault lines in the history, constitution, system and ethno-religious composition of the people for sustained political and economic gains. The outcome has been weakened institutions and infrastructure accompanied by failures in the domain of human security, including violations of human rights.

While problems with electoral systems exist in African countries, some, including Ghana, are showing progress in terms of good leadership, effective management of resources and relatively credible electoral systems. The country has been commended on its progress in pushing for multiparty democracy and an improved electoral system, an independent judiciary and more responsive leadership and governance (Eberlei, 2012). For instance, Ghana ranks among the top three countries in Africa for freedom of speech and the press (Mbamalu, 2018). At the same time, a 2006 African Peer Review Mechanism analysis concluded that, while Ghana is an “oasis of peace and tranquillity” in West Africa and is moving increasingly towards consolidating democracy, its progress remains “fragile” (Harsch, 2006). There is a need to institute good governance in most of Africa, in order to build strong and responsible institutions (Odusanya, 2020).

**2. Governance and leadership challenge**

West and Central African countries should continue to improve high-quality transformative and visionary leadership. They should promote the participation of all stakeholders in national development and ensure transparency and accountability in the management of public resources and public policy development and through improved electoral systems. Transformative governance would also create a better playing field for civil society organizations and the private



sector, promote balance and reduce all forms of inequalities, respond effectively to political instability, strengthen the rule of law and effectively address corruption.

In the Central African Republic, the main government development and recovery planning document and institution is the Central African Republic national recovery and peacebuilding plan for the period 2017–2021. The plan has three main pillars: supporting peace, security and reconciliation; renewing the social contract between the State and society; and supporting economic recovery and the redevelopment of productive sectors (NRC, 2018).

The first continental assessment of Agenda 2063 shows that, where progress in building capable institutions and transformative leadership at all levels is concerned, the Central African subregion scored 33 per cent. The West African subregion scored only 1 per cent (AUDA, 2020). Literature review, interviews and surveys generally agree that governance-related challenges pose a major threat to development in the subregions.

Motivation and freedom for political participation are very critical in measuring development, especially in democratic settings. In its articles 2, 3 and 4, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance makes it a government’s responsibility to promote the establishment of the necessary conditions to foster citizen participation in democratic and development processes. It goes on to affirm that the States parties “shall recognize popular participation through universal suffrage as the inalienable right of the people”. It is therefore incumbent upon governments to ensure participation in country’s political development (Tah, 2014, p. 151).

Between 1992 and 2018, Mali held regular presidential and legislative elections, except for the legislative elections of 2018, which were delayed until 2020. Where the presidential elections are concerned, participation rates are low, never rising above 50 per cent. The reasons for this low level of participation include insecurity, electoral fraud and lack of confidence in the commitment of political parties to improve the lives of people, as evidenced by the survey carried out among the populations on their perceptions and aspirations (Bratton and others, 2000).

In addition to governance and leadership shortcomings, the survey findings indicate that ethnic marginalization and economic deprivation are major issues hindering development in the subregions.

### **3. Towards good governance and positive impacts on the four pillars**

The African Union has charted a number of initiatives to support governance and democratization in Africa. The African Peer Review Mechanism encourages countries to voluntarily undergo a process of self-assessment on four main pillar issues:

- Democracy and political governance
- Economic governance and management
- Corporate governance
- Socioeconomic development

The African Peer Review Mechanism uses four types of reviews during its review missions, namely the base review, which is carried out as soon as a country joins the Mechanism; the periodic review carried out every four years; the requested review from the member country itself; and a review commissioned by the African Peer Review Forum when signs of pending political and

economic crisis begin to surface. As of 2017, most countries had only undergone the base review. By December 2017, 10 countries in West Africa had voluntarily acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Out of these countries, seven have been peer-reviewed: Ghana on 19 June 2005, Benin on 30 January 2008, Nigeria on 25 October 2008, Burkina Faso on 25 October 2008, Mali on 30 June 2009, Sierra Leone on 30 January 2012 and Senegal on 28 January 2017. In Central Africa, six countries, namely, Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe had voluntarily acceded by the end of December 2017. Only Chad had been peer-reviewed by that date, on 28 January 2017 (APRM, 2017).

As the main standard-setting framework of the African Union for good governance, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which was adopted by the African Union on 30 January 2007, seeks to further the commitment of member States to democratic principles, elections, the rule of the law and respect for human rights. A major outcome of the African Charter is the development of the African governance architecture. The level of acceptance and implementation of the African Charter varies and explains the level of progress in achieving its objectives. The African Union has undergone a significant shift from the defunct principle of non-interference, espoused by the Organization of African Unity, to the new principle of non-indifference to human rights abuses, mass atrocity and crimes against humanity (Matlosa, 2014). Even though inter-State conflicts have declined in Africa, through this instrument and countries' renewed commitments, intra-State conflicts and threats to peace have continued in some countries of the two subregions.

## **B. Corruption**

Corruption in multiple forms and levels is one of the major issues that can hold up human development and security. Corruption usually hampers the effective implementation of national development plans, rendering the associated strategies ineffective in reaching the desired national goals. It impedes economic, social and environmental development. Investigation of the impacts of corruption on the multidimensional macroeconomic indicators of development has always been a crucial area of research among economists and policymakers worldwide (Murshed and Mredula, 2018).

The World Bank analysts Ritva Reinikka and Nathaniel Smith (2004) illustrate the negative relationship between corruption and economic development by showing how rising corruption rates severely dampen national incomes in economies. Similarly, a reduction in corruption could result in boosted social development. According to Gupta and others (2000), curbing the rates of corruption within an economy can lead to social development in the form of lower child and infant mortality rates, reduce the percentage of babies with low birth-weights, and ensure a decrease in the number of school dropouts.

On the other hand, an increase in corruption adversely affects progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in that country. For example, when resources are diverted from development programmes for the selfish benefit of a few, the development aspirations of the people are affected. This also leads to disenfranchisement, human rights abuses and conflict situations, with grave consequences for peace and security and humanitarian values, and fuels the vicious cycle of underdevelopment. For most States in West and Central Africa, corruption in various forms remains a critical issue (Badejo, 2018).

Corruption is affecting the ECOWAS and ECCAS subregions with serious implications for peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian projects in the subregions, in particular in countries beset by deep poverty and high level of unemployment. It affects trust in governance and security.<sup>52</sup> In West Africa, corruption threatens the stability and security of societies, undermining their institutions, ethical values and justice and jeopardizing sustainable development. The link between corruption and State instability in West Africa has been demonstrated by the Corruption Perceptions Index and the Fragile States Index. A State that has become fragile as a result of corruption is more prone to collapse. Corruption naturally diminishes the capacity of the State to provide public goods, health care, security and other critical infrastructures and can lead to the failure of the State (Atuobi, 2007). Corruption also constitutes a threat to peacebuilding and human rights in West and Central Africa, as brought to light by bounceback protests and mass actions (ibid.). Corruption equally adversely affects the promotion of humanitarian values in respect of the delivery of support or building of resilience and also in disaster risk preparedness.

The ECOWAS Commission has put in place a number of frameworks and structures to address corruption, including preventive approaches, whistle-blower policies, corruption risk assessments and working with national anti-corruption bodies of member States. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore concerns related to funding, corruption, integrity and transparency in governance in most member States. For example, in Nigeria, COVID-19 relief items, meant to alleviate the suffering of people during the forced lockdowns, were discovered in warehouses where they were awaiting private appropriation. The weakness in the management of the health-care sector in member States was also laid bare. ECOWAS supported members States in conducting corruption risk assessments of their health sector.<sup>53</sup>

Table 12

**Opinion of respondents on whether corruption and lack of transparency are the greatest issues in development**

<i>Are corruption and lack of transparency the greatest issues in development?</i>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	212	69.1
Agree	77	25.1
Neither agree nor disagree	15	4.8
Disagree	3	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Interviews with ECCAS and ECOWAS Senior Officials. See also OECD, 2013, chapter 1.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Ajibewa Remi, Director for Political Affairs, ECOWAS Commission, on 27 November 2020.

## **C. Institutions**

The successful national-level implementation of the four-pillar interlinkages approach depends to a large extent on the level of government commitment and the effectiveness of institutions. Institutional capacities, their appropriateness and functionalities are of critical importance. Primary functions attributed to institutions are the facilitation of collective action and the reduction of transaction costs. Researchers have argued that it is not the mere establishment of institutions that matters for development, but public perceptions about their credibility (OECD, 2013). Capacity-building for leadership development and efficiency is a critical role of institutions.

### **1. Political parties**

The world over, political parties are the main instruments for organizing political representation, democratically healthy political contests and democratic accountability. Political parties serve as a bridge between the State and civil society; thus they play a critical role in public policy engineering, political recruitment and guiding the nature of political changes and key decisions. African democracies are progressively working towards ensuring the existence of strong democratic States. As long as they remain the basis for leadership recruitment, political parties will always be relevant for the progressive achievement of democratic governance, building capable States and accountable leaders. This is essential for promoting synergistic and integrated approaches across the whole of society.

### **2. Branches of government: executive, judiciary and legislature**

The executive branch of government is the highest level of government, consisting of the president, vice-president and cabinet members responsible for enforcing legislation. The executive is of key importance in the promotion of peace and security, considered to be a very political issue. The executive is also largely responsible for creating a conducive policy space and environment across the four pillars, including facilitating coordination and collaborative approaches for multisectoral, integrated and complementary implementation.

The judiciary plays a critical role in the protection of democracy and human rights. The situation in several West and Central African countries is such, however, that a shift is needed to judicial effectiveness. Only with an effective judicial system will it be possible for countries to ensure the ratification and implementation of international, regional and subregional human rights frameworks.

The legislature, which is called “parliament” in some countries, plays a critical role in sustaining democratic values and good governance, and ensuring checks and balances in State matters across the four pillars. Members of parliaments in countries serve in the Pan-African Parliament for a given period of time, providing an opportunity for exchange of ideas and experiences across Africa. The legislature scrutinizes draft legislation and policies tabled by the executive and passes laws. It also reviews and approves the budget, taking into account public financial management and accountability. These important functions carried out independently from the executive could be leveraged to promote an interlinkages approach for efficiency and effectiveness of State functions. To this end, awareness-raising and capacity-building are key.

In addition to political parties, the three arms of government play a vital role in promoting a four-pillar interlinkages approach in West and Central Africa. The extent to which these institutions of governance are able to promote coordinated and collaborative approaches for

effective and efficient implementation, depends on four critical factors, namely, the legitimacy of their ascension to power, the viability of civil institutions, the availability of resources and the level of monopoly in the use of coercive force.

## **D. Supporting organizations**

### **1. Civil society organizations**

Government and State entities have political and legal limitations that restrain them from effectively addressing some conflicts and engaging with all conflict stakeholders (Cristescu, 2010). In such cases, non-State entities, such as civil society organizations at the local, national and international levels, play important complementary roles (ibid.). Civil society should play its customary role as the watchdog of national, regional and continental State entities and the implementation of policies and programmes, and should also be engaged in the implementation process.

Table 13

### **Opinion of respondents on roles played by civil society organizations in humanitarian and development works in their country**

<i>Roles played by civil society organizations in humanitarian and development work in West and Central Africa</i>
Supply of relief materials to internally displaced persons
Acting as a pressure group to the government
Advocacy against gender-based violence
Carrying out grassroots development by curbing hunger and poverty
Advocacy and provision of social amenities
Advocacy and awareness creation and developing essential services
Advocacy for the promotion and protection of human rights
Citizen enlightenment, advocacy and awareness-raising
Complementary roles to the government
Coordination, collaboration and supportive roles
Civil society organizations help to identify those most in need and provide some support from their limited funds
Disaster management
Empowerment programme, provisions of basic amenities, education, advocacy for conflict areas
Enlightening people on humanitarian issues and ensuring equity and justice
Supporting the government and implementation of foreign donor agency projects for internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups
Carrying out projects on community development, supporting with relief materials and responding to early warning
Provision of soft loans, legal aid, educational scholarships, support for humanitarian response
Liaison with international civil society organizations to work in very remote and enclave areas of the country

*Source* : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

The responses indicate that civil society organizations are involved in a wide range of activities from local to national level covering the development, humanitarian and human rights pillars, all of which interact with, and have a positive impact on, the peace and security pillar, thereby contributing to conflict prevention and resolution. They carry out education, awareness-raising and advocacy work, which promotes understanding and appreciation of the issues, thereby engendering action. In addition to this work, the coordination, collaboration and supportive roles that they play are crucial in promoting integrated and coherent planning pertinent to the interlinkages approach. It is worth noting that local and national civil society organizations are seen as having a complementary role to government and, among other things, provide support in the implementation of projects and programmes, collaborate with international non-governmental organizations, and provide soft loans and legal aid to communities in need. This goes well beyond their traditionally recognized roles of advocacy and acting as pressure groups, representing a step in the right direction.

In West and Central Africa, this extends to security sector reform processes, as evidenced by the study on the state of play of security sector governance and the inclusion of civil society in security sector reform processes in Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria and the wider ECOWAS and ECCAS regions (Bagayoko, 2020), p. 17). The Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy of the African Union provide for and recognize the role of civil society organizations in building peace and security and in conflict prevention and resolution. This includes the following roles of civil society organizations in security sector reform:

- Promotion of dialogue among the different sectors of society on security issues as a confidence-building measure
- Active participation in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of security sector policies and legislation
- Promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa
- Promotion and defence of a culture of good governance, democratic principles, participation, human rights and freedoms, and social justice in the security sector
- Promotion and defence of best practices in the security sector
- Conducting research and providing training on security-related issues
- Advocacy and awareness-raising on security related issues, in particular on security budget analysis and the monitoring and evaluation of security policy and practice
- Promotion of the implementation of this policy at national, regional and continental levels (ibid.)

Many civil society organizations in West and Central Africa are engaged in areas relevant to strengthening human security (Musah, 2009, p. 14). In Nigeria, these include the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, the Centre for Democracy Development, and the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project. Related civil society organizations in Ghana include the Action on African Women Foundation; and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Actions

Communautaires pour le Développement Integral (Community Action for All-Round Development). In some countries, in particular in Central Africa, the activities of associations of women, religious groups, local traditional authorities, unions and interest groups are also recognized. Some of the international non-governmental organizations involved in this area include Amnesty International and Transparency International.

The responses to the survey referred to above indicate that, increasingly, civil society organization activities are recognized as complementary to those of governments. In Cameroon for instance, many international organizations and non-governmental organizations have been described as agents for peace, and interviewees were of the view that refugees and host communities alike would be worse off without them (Catholic Relief Services, 2016). Beyond their responses to such urgent humanitarian needs as shelter or food security, many non-governmental organizations, such as the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, Plan International, Première Urgence Internationale, Action against Hunger, and Care International, have supported work on conflict management, capacity-building for young people, and gender and social cohesion and inclusion (ibid.).

## **2. Private sector**

From the responses, it may be seen that the private sector is considered as a partner of governments in development, humanitarian action and human rights. Initiatives and actions across the three pillars produce results with positive impacts on the peace and security pillar. The private sector supports the provision of basic social services, produces goods and services, provides employment and financial support to communities, including those ravaged by natural and human-caused disasters. More important, their improved social corporate responsibility is important in fostering inclusive and socially and environmentally responsible development.

While governments are primarily responsible for the development of their countries, the private sector has an important role to play as the engine of growth. In this regard, governments are continuously working on improving the business environment by creating a conducive macroeconomic environment and promoting business-friendly policies and taking actions to maintain favourable rankings on the ease of doing business register.

The Group of 20 Compact with Africa was initiated under the German Presidency of the Group to promote private investment in Africa, including in infrastructure. The primary objective of the Compact is to enhance the attractiveness of private investment through substantial improvements of the macro, business and financing frameworks. It brings together reform-minded African countries, international organizations and bilateral partners from the Group and beyond to coordinate country-specific reform agendas, support respective policy measures and publicize investment opportunities to private investors. Since it was launched in 2017, 12 African countries have joined the initiative, including 7 from West Africa, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Senegal and Togo.<sup>54</sup> The 2019 Development Finance Forum held in Abidjan was convened in line with the Compact and was focused on countries of the Sahel and the West African Economic and Monetary Union, as described above, in subsection D 5 (f) of chapter III.

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<sup>54</sup> For further details, see [www.compactwithafrica.org/content/compactwithafrica/home.html](http://www.compactwithafrica.org/content/compactwithafrica/home.html).

The private sector contributes to humanitarian action by OCHA, in both financial and in-kind terms, by providing a pro bono service, supporting humanitarian appeals, engaging in advocacy, raising awareness of crises and promoting philanthropy among staff, clients and networks.<sup>55</sup> Analysts studying humanitarian action have found that the private sector is contributing to emergency response and preparedness at many levels and in diverse ways. Despite a former tendency for aid agencies to view businesses as prospective donors, in recent years their greatest direct contribution has come in the form of new technologies and other innovations and the sharing of technical capacities in such areas as logistics, telecommunications and cash transfers. In addition, businesses, as seen in the growth of social enterprises, are increasingly developing models which are commercial in nature but which ultimately help to meet humanitarian needs and reduce vulnerability to future disasters (Zyck and Kent, 2014). The authors note that such organizations as ECOWAS are generally eager to engage with both private and humanitarian sectors, and there are a growing number of instances in which they have done so in the midst of crises.

Table 14

**Opinion of respondents on roles played by the private sector in humanitarian and development work in West and Central Africa**

<i>Roles played by the private sector in humanitarian and development work in West and Central Africa</i>
Assistance to orphanages, hospitals, public schools, public boreholes and wells for potable water
Assisting the government in the provision of amenities
Complementary humanitarian role and awareness-raising
Donation of aid and relief materials
Donations to help support the government in meeting the needs of the people
Employment, production of goods and services at a reduced price
Financial assistance, logistics awareness campaign
Protection and promotion of human rights
Improved corporate social responsibility
Provision of relief materials to victims of natural/man-made disasters
Partnership with the government/support government in several ways
Provision of some basic amenities for the people or the community

*Source* : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

The Agenda 2063 aspiration of building capable institutions and transformative leadership is key to the realization of the peace and security and development aspirations. Countries should continue to improve quality transformative and visionary leadership. This endeavour should include promoting the participation of all stakeholders in national development; and ensuring

<sup>55</sup> See [www.unocha.org/es/themes/engagement-private-sector/how-private-sector-helps-emergencies](http://www.unocha.org/es/themes/engagement-private-sector/how-private-sector-helps-emergencies)



transparency and accountability in the management of public resources, public policy development and improved electoral systems. Transformative governance would also create a conducive environment for participation by civil society organizations and the private sector, promote equity and reduce all forms of inequalities, respond effectively to political instability, strengthen the rule of law and effectively address corruption.

Each of the three arms of government, the executive, judiciary and legislature, has an important role to play. These institutions should be empowered to discharge their responsibilities to ensure peace and security and development and to promote the four-pillar interlinkages approach. In this regard, there is a need to ensure that their ascension to power is legitimate, that they are independent, that civil institutions are viable and that resources are available, and to prohibit the use of any form of coercion.

Countries in West and Central Africa should continue to subscribe to the African Peer Review Mechanism of the African Union, which assesses performance of member States on key governance indicators. Implementation of the resulting action plan following country assessments will be crucial in promoting democracy, political, economic, corporate and natural resource governance and socioeconomic development.

## **VI. Harnessing the interlinkages and mainstreaming them into policies and strategies**

The present chapter examines the significance of the four-pillar interlinkages and the strategies and approaches that could be deployed to harness them to contribute to effective and lasting solutions to conflicts. It looks at the guiding frameworks for mainstreaming, most of which were outlined in chapter II. It considers the mainstreaming of the interlinkages into policies and strategies related to the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 and their incorporation in national development plans. It reviews the challenges to, and opportunities for, promoting the four-pillar interlinkages approach. In conclusion, it examines methodologies and tools for conflict analysis with examples of how these have been used in several West and Central African countries, and discusses their capacity-building implications and needs.

### **A. Harnessing the interlinkages**

The four-pillar interlinkages add human rights as a fourth pillar to the triple nexus of humanitarian work, development, and peace and security in furtherance of what is known as the “new way of working” ideology. Given the links between human rights, the three other pillars and governance, the addition of this fourth pillar is an important prerequisite for the maintenance of peace and security. The triple nexus approach aspires to transform the way that humanitarian, development and peace activities are planned, implemented and financed in fragile situations to more effectively and coherently meet human needs, mitigate vulnerability and promote peace (Pedersen, 2020). Its approach in practice then seeks to transcend the humanitarian-development-peace divide, reinforce national and local systems and anticipate crises. Its associated new way of working details how stakeholders involved in designing and implementing individual country plans go about adapting this approach. Specifically, this involved setting out and working towards collective outcomes over multi-year time frames, based on comparative advantage (Nguya, 2020). Thus, in addition to the practical approaches adopted for the triple nexus, the four-pillar interlinkages factor in the human rights dimension.

As shown in table 15, more than 96 per cent of survey respondents in West and Central Africa agreed that the four pillars are interlinked, the majority of them asserting this interlinkage strongly. The written responses indicate a strong awareness of the interlinkages. Humanitarian values do not feature, most likely because the responses were contextualized within a humanitarian situation and the humanitarian connections were therefore a given. It is notable that eight out of ten of the respondents who provided comments linked human rights to one or two of the other pillars. This is a strong indication of the significance of human rights in the nexus and interlinkages concept.

Table 15

**Opinion of respondents on whether peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian issues are interlinked**

<i>Whether peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian issues are interlinked</i>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	216	70.4
Agree	81	26.3
Neither agree nor disagree	10	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.*

Table 16

**Opinion of respondents on ways in which the pillars complement one another**

Proper knowledge about human rights and how not to trample on the rights of others is important for peace and security
Freedom of association must be ensured as it is essential to development, peace and security
Ensuring respect for lives and property will enhance peace, security and development
Freedom of speech creates room for dialogue during conflict and freedom of worship makes most people better humans
Human rights bring about freedom and justice. This naturally engenders peace, security and development
Human rights complement peace and security when they are upheld and they give hope to people who are being marginalized
Human rights contribute to justice and that is linked to peace and security
Human rights ensure effective synergy between peace, security and development
Human rights encourage people to live with confidence and function optimally and that enhances development
Promotion of human rights will promote peace, security and development
When the human rights of every citizen are respected, especially by the government and law enforcement agencies, this will lead to development

*Source : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.*

To harness the interlinkages, there is need for research into their interactions, both positive and negative, in theory and practice, and to consider how the positive interactions could be brought to bear on conflict prevention and resolution, while mitigating those that are negative. This should take into account the guiding initiatives and frameworks at the global, regional, subregional and national levels and experiences on the ground. The frameworks provide direction in terms of collective vision and goals and implementation paths that lead to desired results and impact. For the purpose of the present report, this relates to the search for effective and lasting solutions to conflicts, while contributing to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

Joint planning and programming are important and necessitate the establishment of a multidisciplinary team of agencies and other stakeholders across the four pillars to ensure integrated results-based planning and programming that is focused on collective outcomes and impacts. Horizontal linkages (across pillars) and vertical linkages (across different government levels) should be analysed as part of the planning and programming exercise. Results should be linked to the budget and supported by pooled funding. Implementation should be on the basis of mandates and comparative advantages. These should define who does what, where and when – the process referred to as the “4 Ws” (ReliefWeb, 2020b). Monitoring, evaluation and reporting should complete the cycle, with subsequent cycles informed by experiences and lessons of past cycles. Given the different mandates and administrative procedures of agencies and their partners, and also the need for accountability, commitment is required at the highest level if such complementary and collaborative approaches are to work. Programming should, however, be informed by analysis to provide a good understanding of the situation and issues, hence the importance of methodologies and tools for conflict analysis, in particular those that permit integrated analysis.

Through the watchdog effect of the “do no harm” principle, it should be ensured that programmes contribute to sustaining peace and the realization of sustainable development goals in line with national priorities. This will ensure that stakeholders do not unintentionally exacerbate latent conflicts or reinforce dynamics that could lead to violent conflict, and at the same time work on preventive measures to address the root causes and prevent relapse into conflict (ibid.). Programming should also factor in risk and include risk-informed decisions. This will require capacity to identify and reduce existing risks, and as far as possible to avoid the creation of new risks and build resilience to multiple threats and hazards (ibid.). The vulnerability of women and young people to the effects of conflicts necessitates the mainstreaming of gender and youth in programming. Transboundary issues should also be factored in, with a view to promoting intraregional cooperation for conflict prevention and resolution. Capacity-building should be conducted across the implementation cycle, including the use of conflict prevention and resolution methodologies and tools.

Awareness-raising is key to promoting understanding and acceptance of the four-pillar interlinkages concept, which is new. It should be linked to the triple nexus concept, which is gaining increasing acceptance, although more work to this end remains to be done. There is a strong case for the acceptance of human rights as the fourth pillar, as evidenced from the United Nations reforms and the African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks. The nexus referred to in the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the Development Framework) relates to development, peace and security and human rights. While most reference to the triple nexus point to humanitarian values, development and peace, some references do also make reference to the human rights pillar. The addition of the fourth pillar will introduce consistency in relation to the use of terms.

Thus, one survey respondent mentions building on the triple nexus to operationalize the four-pillar interlinkages, while another notes the significance to peace of respect for human rights. The importance of research to an effective response to the ever-evolving political, economic and sociocultural environment was also deemed important. Consultation, awareness-raising, education, training and participation with a view to popularizing the concept were all considered integral to the process. Where implementation is concerned, the need for leadership, collaboration,

access to financial resources and measures to tackle the challenge of weak institutions and corruption (within the framework of good governance) was considered critical.

Table 17

**Opinion of respondents on how the four pillars could be harnessed or promoted in complementary interventions to contribute to an effective and lasting resolution of conflicts**

Good governance will help to promote effective and lasting solutions to conflicts
The four pillars should have research and development units to provide secondary inputs to policies in a constantly evolving political, economic and sociocultural environment
Transparency in all aspects will help to contribute to effective lasting solutions to conflicts
The four pillars are institutionally weak and will require adequate financial and human resources for robust operations and the achievement of set objectives
All stakeholders in the four pillars must work to contribute to effective lasting solutions to conflict only when corrupt practices, nepotism and favouritism have been curbed to the maximum extent
Both the public and private sectors should synergize in sincerity and truth
Effective collaboration is required with the relevant State and non-State stakeholders
Humanitarian principles must be strictly adhered to
Consultation, awareness-raising, training and participation in decision making are all vital
Education of young people on these four pillars will be fundamental in achieving an effective and lasting solution to conflicts
Equity and fairness are critical
The four pillars will complement one another when the practitioners focus on synergizing through the humanitarian development and peacebuilding nexus.
Effective implementation of policies is essential
Until the aspect of leadership is addressed, all other variables may be hindered by corruption and greed, which tend to be the hallmark of most countries in West and Central Africa
Peace must be made possible by respecting human rights

*Source* : Four-pillar interlinkages questionnaire survey, 2020.

**B. Mainstreaming the interlinkages into policies and strategies**

Since 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit and its principal outcomes, which reaffirm that a siloed approach to humanitarian assistance is an inefficient manner of tackling interlinkages, have been key doctrinal instruments guiding the interlinkages approach. Inspired collaboration between humanitarian and development stakeholders gave more credence and popularity to the ideological approach referred to as the “new way of working”. Furthermore, the dual resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, adopted by the General Assembly and Security Council in April 2016 (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively), while recognizing the importance of sustaining peace, underscores the need for coherence and complementarity between the United Nations peace and security efforts and its development, human rights, and humanitarian work (ECA, 2020, para. 6). The recent United Nations reforms place a premium on coherence and integrated action of the United Nations development system across the four pillars, to ensure efficient delivery of results and impact on the ground in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In the same spirit, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission have committed themselves to coordinating efforts and collaborating on peace and security matters in Africa and to working together towards the integrated implementation of the

2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. This commitment is embodied in the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the Development Framework). The existing memorandum of understanding between OCHA and the African Union Commission on humanitarian action, along with the expected joint African Union-United Nations framework on human rights (*ibid.*), complete the partnership across the four pillars. Furthermore, the ECOWAS and ECCAS frameworks across the four pillars examined in chapter II provide guidelines for mainstreaming in West and Central Africa.

The interlinkages build on the interactions among the four pillars as they pertain to conflict prevention and resolution and promote the integrated implementation of related frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Given that interventions on conflict take place at the national level, however, there is a need to mainstream the interlinkages into national-level policies and strategies, in particular those related to the two agendas. Increasingly, African countries are mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals into their national vision documents and development plans with the support of development partners and the international community.

The tools being used for this purpose include the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy of the United Nations Development Group, which is focused on policy coherence and multi-stakeholder engagement, with special attention paid to the cross-cutting elements of partnerships, data and accountability. Other complementary tools include the rapid integration assessment tool developed by UNDP, the national briefing package for the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and the ECA integrated planning and reporting toolkit, for integrating Agenda 2030 and 2063 into national development plans (ECA, 2017b).

Given that the present report is also intended to contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals, experiences and lessons in Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goal mainstreaming and implementation could inform mainstreaming of the interlinkages as they pertain to conflict situations into related policies and strategies. The first continental level report on the implementation of Agenda 2063 indicated a weak performance under aspiration 1 of the Agenda: “A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development”, and aspiration 3: “An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law”.

Performance against aspiration 4, “A peaceful and secure Africa”, was considered good based on the number of member States reporting the existence of functional national peace mechanisms, in addition to the continental level Peace and Security Architecture. Highlights of the performance of Central and West African countries against the aspirations and related goals are provided in chapter III. Among the five subregions of Africa, the 2020 Africa SDG Index and Dashboards Report ranks West and Central Africa third and fifth, respectively, on progress towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. Low performers in the whole of Africa were from fragile States, with high levels of poverty and conflict in their territories: Chad, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, which scored 40.34, 38.05 and 32.36, respectively. The report notes that the challenge for West African countries will be to accelerate currently stagnant performance in terms of social welfare without undermining environmental sustainability.

With regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, Africa is not on track to achieving them by 2030. While the region has made notable progress in education, health and other social outcomes, the pace of poverty reduction is slow, and inclusive growth remains elusive. Africa has the highest prevalence of hunger, which increased from 18.3 per cent in 2015 to 19.9 per cent in 2018. This means that almost 40 million Africans, in particular women and children, went hungry during this period. Major gaps exist in the area of employment and decent jobs, and also in gender equality, putting at risk the continent's efforts to leverage the demographic dividend. Thus, overall, action to meet the Sustainable Development Goals has not advanced at the speed or scale required.<sup>56</sup> The 2020 Africa SDG Index and Dashboards report provide the latest information on progress towards achieving the goals on the continent, including the West and Central African subregions.

A systematic mainstreaming would ensure that due consideration is given to conflict prevention and resolution, as well as peacebuilding in the implementation of the global and regional sustainable development frameworks. Indeed, while Sustainable Development Goal 16 ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"), directly points to conflict, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian action in relation to development, the analysis carried out in the present report indicates that the four-pillar interlinkages are related to all the other goals, in particular in view of their indivisibility and interrelated nature. Conflict and development analysis can support scenario planning for development programming, including the management of risks in a particular context, and lead to a better definition of outcomes and targets in programmes to enable the assessment of progress towards development goals United Nations Development Group, 2016).

Methodologies, tools and approaches will need to be developed, building on existing ones and capacity built on their application. Through its regional study on the interlinkages, OSAO intends to develop policy guidelines and conduct training on the interlinkages, while ECA aims to develop technical guidelines for mainstreaming.

### **C. Challenges and opportunities for promoting the four-pillar interlinkages approach**

In proposing the four-pillar interlinkages approaches, the present report notes that, in addition to the development, peace and security and humanitarian pillars, which are considered in the triple nexus approach, the issue of human rights is integral to conflict prevention and resolution and the maintenance of peace and security. The thematic area on "nexus" of the African Union-United Nations Development Framework refers to the development, peace and security and human rights pillars. In addition, the 2020 report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council in relation to the United Nations reforms, mentions development, peace and security and human rights in humanitarian situations, thus recognizing all four pillars. Accordingly, the four-pillar interlinkages approach adds the human rights pillar to the triple nexus in line with the United Nations reforms. In this way, the approach could be regarded as the triple nexus plus human rights and the challenges encountered in the implementation of the triple nexus and the opportunities identified provide an indication of those that could apply to the four-pillar interlinkages approach, taking into account new and emerging ones emanating from the present study.

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<sup>56</sup> See further details at [www.sustainabledevelopment.report/reports/2020-africa-sdg-index-and-dashboards-report/](http://www.sustainabledevelopment.report/reports/2020-africa-sdg-index-and-dashboards-report/).

## **1. Challenges**

### **(a) Possible resistance to the four-pillar interlinkages approach**

While entirely valid, the four-pillar interlinkages approach is a new concept and has not been tried and tested and might meet with resistance from agencies and their partners, in much the same way that the triple nexus is yet to be fully accepted and operationalized. Furthermore, the United Nations system should operationalize a single instrument in relation to the new way of working, thus necessitating consultations on the inclusion of the human rights pillar in the nexus in line with the United Nations reforms, to avoid confusion and the stalling of progress.

### **(b) Navigating coordinated and collaborative approaches**

Much like the triple nexus, the four-pillar interlinkages approach is premised on coordinated and collaborative approaches that call for breaking silos across the pillars and harnessing the interlinkages, while enhancing positive interactions and mitigating negative ones. Such initiatives are not new in the United Nations and have brought with them challenges related to the distinct mandate, administrative, financial and accountability of individual entities. A review of the work of the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams along with the now defunct regional coordination mechanisms, show that results have been mixed and collaboration is still a work in progress. For efficient and effective delivery, there is a need to build on these experiences and the triple nexus in the operationalization of the four-pillar interlinkages and to act collectively on the basis of respective mandates and comparative advantages, thereby minimizing overlaps and conflicts.

### **(c) Need to align programming cycles and funding mechanisms**

Agencies and partners across the four pillars have different programming cycles, administrative procedures and accountability mechanisms, which could hamper joint planning and programming. In addition, funding is usually tied to specific activities, such as development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian action. The silo approach to funding does not mesh well with the interlinkages approach. In addition, agencies and their donors have different accountability and reporting mechanisms tied to distinct results. There is a need to recognize this challenge and work towards reconciling programming cycles as implementation of the reforms progresses. There is also a need to tailor funding, accountability and reporting to the requirements of an interlinkages approach. Both the United Nations and donors should adopt pooled funding for the purposes of the interlinkages approach. In terms of accountability and reporting, the programming exercise could take due account of the distinct contribution of the agencies and other stakeholders to the collective results.

### **(d) Waning donor funds**

Despite growing conflicts and humanitarian needs, resources to respond to these challenges are under pressure. Humanitarian funding peaked in 2017 but has since slowed. Development aid also levelled off in 2018, in particular for the least developed countries. Conflict prevention is also severely underfunded, receiving only 2 per cent of gross overseas development assistance in 2016. Peacekeeping faces similar financial constraints, leading to the drawdown and preparations for the closure of some of the largest multidimensional peacekeeping missions, despite the still tenuous nature of peace in certain host States (Caparini and Reagan, 2019). While this is a challenge, it



provides further justification for coherent and complementary approaches. Furthermore, the build-back-better strategies from the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to revive growth and increase liquidity, some of which could be channelled into conflict prevention and resolution.

**(e) Concerns of the humanitarian community**

The humanitarian community has expressed several concerns about the triple nexus. Some are of the view that there is a disconnect between high-level declarations and policy frameworks and the realities on the ground. Others see it as an attempt to implement top-down coordination, or to train humanitarian practitioners in the methods of development and peace, and vice versa. Concerns have also been voiced over the risk that humanitarian assistance will be politicized by peace and security stakeholders. Perpetuation of these beliefs could result in a loss of neutrality in the eyes of local entities and potentially reduced access to areas in need of humanitarian assistance. Likewise, development stakeholders also seek to strengthen State institutions and, in this way, are pursuing political aims. This raises the possibility of misalignment between humanitarian and development purposes (ibid.). It is highly likely that the same concerns would be raised in the case of the four-pillar interlinkages. These concerns could, however, be addressed by continuous consultations, and further research on the interlinkages to demonstrate its value addition.

**(f) Challenges specific to West and Central Africa**

The challenges identified in West and Central Africa include: limited structures, incentives and road maps for complementary or synergistic planning, policy design and experimenting at the continental, subregional and national levels; inadequate understanding of the interlinkages approach, traditional silo approaches and resistance to change; lack of political level to tackle conflict situations due to vested interests; and pressing needs of countries leading them to choose short-term humanitarian needs over longer-term plans that cater to an interlinkages approach. This points to the need for awareness-raising and advocacy in relation to the four-pillar interlinkages approach, together with the design and implementation of capacity-building programmes to tackle the challenges identified.

**(g) Capacity requirements**

The interlinkages approach to conflict prevention and resolution is contingent upon synergistic and integrated approaches, as well as long-term planning and programming. This requires the adoption and application of methodologies and tools that would facilitate such planning and programming. In addition to the collective results, there is a need to monitor and evaluate results across the four pillars. Experience with Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals to date have laid bare the weakness of the statistical systems and the dearth of data on the continent. Capacity needs to be built on these and several other areas if operationalization is to be successful.

**(h) Coronavirus disease pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic is a health and economic crisis that has exacerbated the humanitarian situation in all regions of the world, in particular Africa. It has also caused millions of people to lose their jobs and livelihoods and pushed them into poverty, thereby creating a social crisis, with women and young people disproportionately affected. It has caused a liquidity crisis, diverting to the needs of the pandemic funding that could otherwise have gone into funding programmes across the four pillars. The opportunities section includes thoughts on building back better, which could address the challenges.

## **2. Opportunities**

### **(a) Existing initiatives and frameworks on the four pillars**

Chapter II of the present report highlights initiatives and frameworks on the four pillars at the global, regional and subregional levels. All these instruments recognize the interlinkages approach as critical to achieving results in an efficient and effective manner. In addition to their organization-specific instruments, the African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks, including the draft human rights framework, are a clear demonstration of the commitment of the two organizations at the highest level to peaceful societies and integrated development.

### **(b) United Nations reforms**

The reforms provide ample opportunities for the four-pillar interlinkages approach. The reforms recognize the need for coordinated and collaborative approaches and coherence across the four pillars. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework has now been replaced by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which addresses the four pillars and their interlinkages. The offices of the resident coordinators and the United Nations country teams have been strengthened to effectively coordinate the design and implementation of the frameworks. Regional peer support groups under the auspices of the regional development coordination offices have been established to support the cooperation framework process. The newly established regional collaborative platforms provide oversight for the work of the peer support groups. The set-up augurs for attainment of the objective of promoting complementary and synergistic approaches.

### **(c) Buy-in at the national level**

Governments have welcomed the cooperation frameworks, which are being developed in line with national development priorities and factor in the interlinkages across the pillars and the regional dimension. There is increased demand for the development of frameworks to guide collective and coordinated United Nations interventions in countries. In addition to coordinated planning and programming, the United Nations system and member States signed a funding compact in 2019, which establishes mutual commitments to help to improve the funding base of the United Nations and provide further incentives for collaboration. United Nations entities are also urged to do whatever is necessary to adjust reporting systems, address consistency gaps and report funding data in a timelier fashion (United Nations, 2020b). This puts the United Nations on the right path to fostering coordination and collaboration in its support to countries across the four pillars.

### **(d) Strengthened engagement of civil society organizations and the private sector**

The previous chapter highlights the engagement of civil society organizations and the private sector in conflict prevention and resolution. In addition to their traditional advocacy and watchdog role, civil society organizations are now working in partnership with governments and international non-governmental organizations to fund, design and implement programmes and projects. In addition, the private sector is branching out of its donor role to diverse areas, including technology, social enterprises and commercial ventures that support humanitarian work and reduce vulnerability in the long term. In view of the efficiency gains inherent in the four-pillar interlinkages approach and its potential reach, both private sector and civil society organizations should be encouraged to apply the concept in their interventions.

**(e) Work of programme 9 of section 11 of the United Nations programme budget for 2022**

The four-pillar interlinkages have now become an important area of work of OSAA and ECA within the framework of programme 9 of section 11 of the programme budget. ECA has prepared the present report and three others covering the same issue with relation to the other subregions of Africa. These will feed into the OSAA regional report on the issue. As part of its interlinkages project, OSAA will prepare policy guidelines and train relevant stakeholders on the concept and its application. Subsequent work of ECA in this area includes the preparation of technical guidelines and tools for the practical application of the concept and its mainstreaming into policies and strategies, including those related to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The Department of Global Communications responsible for the outreach and communication aspects of programme 9 will be instrumental in promoting the concept and disseminating results.

**(f) New narrative for the Sahel**

Countries of the Sahel, with the support of the United Nations and other partners, have embarked on changing the narrative for the Sahel from a region of extremism, terrorism, conflict, poverty and insecurity to a region of potential. A change of narrative will inspire people both within and outside the Sahel to think differently about the region. This is premised on harnessing the region's potential, including water, land, agriculture and energy, to drive its development, improve livelihoods, spur economic growth, create jobs and lift millions of people out of poverty. Thus, development will be the pivot for harnessing the interlinkages in the Sahel for conflict prevention and resolution. This will eventually eliminate the main causes of conflict in the region, and also remove incentives luring young people into extremist and terrorist groups, and contribute to the realization of peace and security in the region.

**(g) Building forward better from the pandemic**

While the COVID-19 pandemic poses a significant challenge to the global community, it also provides an opportunity to build forward better in a more inclusive and sustainable way, leaving no one behind. The pandemic has laid bare the inequalities and inequities in societies evident in the manner in which the vulnerable, including women, young people and the poor, have been disproportionately affected, and also the challenges related to access to vaccines. Apart from the health crisis, it has sparked civil unrest in countries mainly because of lockdowns that severely restrict economic activities resulting in loss of jobs and livelihoods. The impacts of the pandemic, which are all interrelated, cut across the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars, a further justification for the interlinkages approach. Building forward better will leverage the comparative advantages of the two subregions, in particular their natural resource endowments and demographic dividend.

**D. Methodologies and tools for conflict analysis and associated capacity-building needs**

Conflict analysis is a structured process of analysis used to understand conflict by focusing on the conflict profile (history of conflict), the agents and entities involved and their perspectives, the structural and proximate causes and the dynamics of how these elements interact (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012, cited in Herbert, 2017). A conflict analysis examines open conflict (conflict that is very visible and deep-rooted), surface conflict (visible but shallow or with no roots), and also latent conflict (below the surface with potential to emerge) (Fisher and others, 2000, cited in Herbert, 2017). The important distinction between a conflict analysis and a context

analysis is that conflict analysis always addresses the relationship of the issue with conflict, instability and peace (Herbert, 2017).

Conflict analysis is aimed at providing a comprehensive and easily accessible assessment of the issues and documentation for policymakers and practitioners who are new to a country or issue. For policymakers and practitioners who already have knowledge and experience of the context, it can offer an overarching or shared understanding and narrative on the situation. It also presents a model and process to facilitate more frequent and updated analysis. When used in combination with programming decisions and a conflict-sensitive approach, it is aimed at improving the positive impacts and minimizing the negative impacts of working in conflict-affected countries by ensuring that practices are conflict-sensitive, and it can provide a baseline analysis for evaluating the impact that interventions have had on the relevant aspects of the conflict. Gender-sensitive conflict analysis identifies the gender-based nature of the causes of conflict, the gender-based impact of conflict and the gender-based dimensions of peacebuilding (ibid.).

Numerous toolkits and manuals provide models of how to conduct conflict analysis. There is no one best practice or one methodology for conflict analysis that can lead to better programming. Choosing the most appropriate tool depends on the context, the commissioning entity, the purpose of the conflict analysis, the focus of analysis, and the resources that are available, such as staff, funding and capacity.

## **1. Analytical tools**

The following analytical tools guide key questions for conflict analysis. Some of the tools and frameworks simply analyse the information. Others help make the bridge from analysis to programme choice and design. The tools can be used in sequence or combination, depending on the core purpose of the process (GPPAC, 2017).

### **2. Stakeholder-oriented analysis**

#### **(a) Stakeholder analysis: positions, interests, issues and power**

This tool examines each important group or individual in the conflict, identifying their stated positions, interests, needs, issues and sources of power. This offers a way to understand the role that each party plays in the conflict. It is especially important to perform this kind of exercise before working directly with any of the groups involved.

#### **(b) Mapping relationships among stakeholders**

This tool offers a graphic way to demonstrate the relationships among the different groups and individuals involved. It helps users to understand all the different stakeholders actors and how they interact with one another.

#### **(c) Issue-related and causal analysis**

##### **(i) Conflict tree**

This exercise offers a very simple way to explore the causes and effects of key conflict factors. The roots represent the underlying causes, while the branches represent the effects or results of the conflict. It is a good way to start thinking about conflict systems.

## **(ii) Dividers and connectors analysis**

This is a method for understanding the conflict context, by identifying factors that bring people together (connectors) and factors that push people apart (dividers). This is one tool that may be used for examining conflict sensitivity and also for ensuring that humanitarian and development programming is sensitive to conflict factors.

## **(iii) Threat analysis: immediate to long-term threats and vulnerabilities**

This process helps us to sort through the various conflict factors to identify which represent urgent threats of violence and which might eventually lead to violence, but not soon.

## **(iv) Levels of potential change**

This process examines the different levels and layers of conflict: deeper structural and cultural factors, formal and informal institutions, social norms, intergroup relations, personal attitudes, behaviour, perceptions and prejudice.

## **(d) Integrative tools**

### **(i) Scenario development**

Scenario development suggests two or three possible stories about the future of the conflict area, as a tool for discussing ways to influence which of the potential futures comes true, based on interactions among stakeholders and issues.

### **(ii) Conflict systems mapping**

This process treats conflict as a system of causes and effects, often resulting in vicious circles. It helps to uncover the dynamics and interactions among conflict factors and stakeholders, and produces a conflict map that can be used in strategy development and programme planning.

#### **Box 1. Key questions for conflict analysis**

##### **Profile**

What is the political, economic, and sociocultural context?

What are the emergent political, economic and social issues?

Are there important regional/international dynamics?

What are the geographic dimensions? What areas that are prone to conflict and fragility, or affected by them, can be situated within the context?

Is there a history of conflict?

##### **Conflict causes and potentials for peace**

What are the structural causes of conflict and fragility?

What issues can be considered as proximate or dynamic causes of conflict and fragility?

What triggers could contribute to the outbreak or further escalation of violence?

What are the strategies or habits for dealing with conflict that contribute to violence?

What new or emerging factors contribute to prolonging conflict and fragility dynamics? Have original causes shifted due to events during war and mass violence?

What factors can contribute to peace and stability? What existing factors bring people together, and can be built upon or reinforced?

What are the most important drivers of conflict and peace? Which factors have the greatest influence on the situation?

**Actors**

Who are the main actors (people who perpetuate or mitigate the situation of conflict, and fragility)? How do they contribute to or mitigate conflict?

What are their interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships?

What capacities for peace and stability can be identified? Who can make a difference?

What actors can be identified as “spoilers” (those who benefit from ongoing violence or who resist movement towards peace and stability)? Why? Are they inadvertent or intentional spoilers?

**Dynamics and future trends**

What are the relationships and dynamics among the key drivers of conflict and peace?

What are the current conflict and fragility trends? What are the negative reinforcing cycles?

What are the windows of opportunity?

What scenarios can be developed from the analysis of the conflict and fragility profile, drivers and actors?

How might different scenarios play out given likely future developments (in the short and long run)?

*Source: OECD, 2012.*

### 3. Toolkits and manuals

The subparagraphs below provide a snapshot of selected toolkits and manuals, showcasing examples of their application in certain West and Central African countries.

#### (a) “Do no harm” framework

Any intervention in a conflict situation has the potential to raise or lower tensions depending on perceived benefits for one group over another. After completing the conflict analysis, it may become apparent that earlier programming decisions and ongoing projects are either no longer suitable or may possibly exacerbate the conflict situation and need to be recalibrated. Understanding potential interactions between the results of the conflict analysis and programming decisions will help predict the impacts of programming.

The “do no harm” approach (United Nations Development Group, 2016) to minimizing harmful impacts of engaging in conflict prone areas is a tool comprised of the following key components:

- Analyse which issues divide and exacerbate tensions between groups (“dividers”).
- Analyse which issues bring groups together with a common focus to build peace or reduce conflict (“connectors”).
- Analyse the existing programme in view of why an entity is implementing the programme or project. Where does the programme or project take place? What is the objective of the programme or project? When and how will the programme or project be implemented, by whom and with whom?
- Consider implicit, ethical messages associated with the project.
- Analyse the programme’s impact on either reducing or increasing conflict.

- When necessary, consider how to adapt the project to ensure it is in-line with the “do no harm” principles and helps to strengthen local capacities to actively build peace within their communities.

In practice, minimizing harm in programming means:

- Recruiting representatives of different groups (ethnic, religious, gender and others) among project staff, project monitors and beneficiaries, and also throughout planning processes
- Conducting participatory planning: this can be an effective peacebuilding mechanism as bringing different factions together helps deepen understanding of their respective viewpoints. The importance of including all stakeholder groups, and ensuring that a balance of views is represented between the different groups is critical to remaining transparent and to ensuring that one group does not feel (rightly or mistakenly) excluded or discriminated against, which may heighten tensions and vulnerabilities.
- Conducting evaluations that balance the inclusion and views of different groups (groups should be informed of the results of the situation and conflict analysis to the extent that this will not exacerbate tensions), and participation should be reflected in the selection of evaluation staff, interviewees, field visits and documents consulted. To the extent that it is possible, all information gathered should be triangulated to prevent bias.

Accordingly, the “do no harm” framework is focused on how to provide assistance more effectively and how key stakeholders providing assistance in conflict areas can become more responsible and accountable for the effects of their assistance in either worsening and prolonging, or in reducing and shortening destructive conflict between groups targeted by the assistance (CDA, 2004). The tool provides a better grasp on the complexity of the conflict environments. It helps aid workers to think of different ways of doing things with a view to achieving better results. The aim is to help aid workers to deal with the real complexities of providing assistance in conflicts with less frustration and more clarity, leading to better outcomes for the societies where assistance is provided (ibid., p.1). It also provides a tool for finding better ways and programming options for aid or assistance providers (ibid.).

**(b) Conflict assessment framework of the United States Agency for International Development**

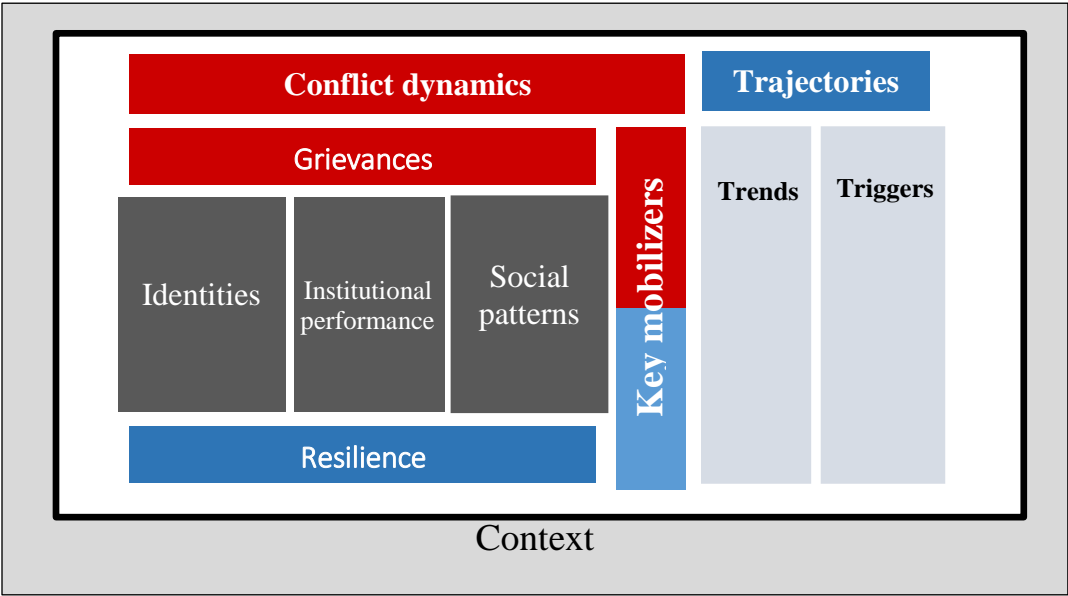
The conflict assessment framework (CAF 2.0) (USAID, 2012) is a specific unique methodological approach followed by the United States Agency for International Development in implementing a conflict assessment, to enable its missions and operating units better to evaluate the risks of armed conflict and the peace and security goals that are most important in a given country context, and to determine how existing development programmes interact with these factors, how the programmes may – perhaps inadvertently – be doing harm, and where and how development and humanitarian assistance can most effectively support local efforts to manage conflict and to build peace.

CAF 2.0 provides a rigorous framework for collecting and analysing data in an objective manner that can be applied uniformly across conflict settings. The importance of a tool that facilitates dispassionate and objective analysis of conflict cannot be overstated. Conflicts

necessarily involve at least two perspectives on an issue or dispute. To avoid unwanted negative outcomes from assistance, such as inadvertently supporting one side against the other, it is essential for international stakeholders to develop an independent, objective view of the conflict facilitated by a conflict assessment tool.

Over the course of a conflict assessment, CAF 2.0 is applied to two analytical tasks. First, it is used to diagnose the current conflict dynamics and possible future trajectories. In this framework, dynamics include the factors of grievance, resilience and key mobilizers. Trajectories consist of trends and triggers for future conflict. Second, CAF 2.0 is used to identify and recommend conflict response options appropriate for missions of the United States Agency for International Development to pursue. Conflict response is a term used in this framework to denote both conflict-sensitive development and direct conflict mitigation, conflict management and conflict prevention (namely, peacebuilding) programming.

Figure IX  
**Conflict diagnosis**



**Box 2. Framework as applied to Nigeria**

**Context**

Histories of State formation – legacies of colonialism and post colonialism, for example – may be particularly salient to conflict. History, however, can also mitigate violence. In the case of Nigeria, the civil war of the 1970s and the protracted experience with military rule has convinced many Nigerians that a return to such a system would be unacceptable. In both cases, it is important to understand how historical factors are influencing actor’s current motivations, perceptions and behaviour.

**Grievances**

Latent grievances almost always precede physical acts of violence. For example, in Nigeria, control of the city of Jos has long been a particular source of tension between the Muslim settler Hausas and the largely



Christian indigenous population. Although the Hausas are a minority in Plateau State, they are the largest ethnic group in Nigeria overall. Thus, many Berom and other Christian groups voice fears of Hausa domination at the national level. Meanwhile, the Hausa minority harbours similar fears of being forced out of Jos. Rumours abound of threats from both sides, including allegations of so-called “silent killings”, weapons stockpiling, and so on. Tensions are so high that any minor incident between two individuals across the religious divide could escalate rapidly, facilitated by the barrage of hate messages and other alarmist texts sent across extensive cellular networks. Occasional outbreaks of violence do in fact occur.

### **Key mobilizers**

Armed conflict arises from the interaction of key mobilizers and underlying patterns of grievance and resilience in a particular context. There are several ways in which an agent may mobilize groups and resources to drive mass action. In some cases, key agents mobilize themselves by drawing upon resources which are already under their control. For example, when the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta – a militant group operating in the south of Nigeria – uses funds garnered from kidnapping to purchase weapons to engage in further violence, it is mobilizing its existing resources. In other cases, key agents mobilize others by appealing to particular grievances related to institutional performance, or use longer-term social patterns to their advantage. For example, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta frequently seeks to win the material and moral support of surrounding communities by condemning the national Government’s use of oil resources and pledging to fight for greater allocations of revenue to the delta region.

### **Strategies for addressing key conflict factors**

Good governance remains a challenge in Nigeria. Pro-violence groups from Boko Haram to militias in the Niger Delta share a common narrative of anger over the nation’s poor governance. Thus, a natural response would be to infuse the overall country strategy of the United States Agency for International Development for Nigeria with adherence to principles for good engagement in fragile States. Two illustrative goals include continuing and expanding the State-focused strategy of the Agency to improve State service capacities and working to enhance the service delivery capacity of local governments in lead States. A technical approach may, however, also be complicated by political factors that might resist and prevent positive change (such as so-called “negative resilience”). A systems approach would help in assessing any negative resilience that may hinder the effectiveness of a programme and set appropriate expectations for change.

### **Identifying and supporting existing bright spots**

At the height of the religious conflicts in Nigeria in the early 2002s, the governor of Kaduna brokered a political agreement known as the Kaduna Compromise, which has held since 2002. As Christian-Muslim clashes have raged in nearby States, Kaduna has faced tensions and occasional fighting, but has remained relatively peaceful in the face of extremist provocations. One neighbourhood in southern Kaduna, Barnawa, is particularly remarkable for having remained peaceful throughout the 2000 and 2002 crises. In both instances, Christians and Muslims worked together to protect one another and to prevent outsiders who were intent on engaging in conflict from coming to their neighbourhood. Identifying what factors have allowed Kaduna, and Barnawa in particular, to manage their conflicts and then working with these communities to replicate those factors elsewhere, if possible, is the essence of the bright spots approach.

## **(c) Peace and conflict impact assessment**

The peace and conflict impact assessment (Nyheim and others, 2011) is a planning and management tool that can assist development and humanitarian organizations in analysing situations of (potential) conflict and identifying strategic opportunities for conflict prevention and

peacebuilding. It can also be adapted for monitoring the impact of these activities. It thus provides an integrated approach to the main stages and levels of a development programme.

The peace and conflict impact assessment methodology is based on good development practice and related approaches to conflict analysis, such as early warning. It is premised on the principles of stakeholder consultation, commitment to indigenous visions for peace and local ownership of the peace process. At the same time, it allows the users to consider regional dynamics influencing the conflict. Thus, the tool has the potential to be used in all interventions including trade and investment, emergency relief and development assistance. It should assist in ensuring coherence between different policy interventions on micro and macro levels and between international and local interventions.

The tool provides a framework for:

- Assessing the peace-building environment (situation analysis and trends)
- Identifying conflict parties and peacebuilders (stakeholder analysis)
- Defining objectives and activities
- Inputting analyses into a planning framework (logical framework)

**(d) Conflict and development analysis of the United Nations Development Programme**

The conflict-related development analysis tool developed by the United Nations Development Group (2016) is aimed at understanding the links between development and conflict, and increasing the positive impact of developmental efforts. It is best used in conflicts driven by a combination of security, political, economic and social causes and is very adaptable at country or sector level. It assists with analysing a specific context and developing strategies for reducing or eliminating the impact and consequences of violent conflict. It provides a deeper understanding of the issues that can drive conflict and the dynamics that have the potential to promote peace in a wide variety of countries where the United Nations operates.

The conflict-related development analysis tool is designed to meet the needs of programme officers working at the country level who want to better understand the structures, stakeholders and dynamics of conflict, together with the forces promoting either violence or peace. Conflict analysis as a practice has evolved over the past decade and is now generally accepted as the foundation for effective conflict-sensitive programming. Such a tool as conflict-related development analysis is a powerful mechanism for supporting national stakeholders in their efforts to engage in reflection and analysis to better understand the national and local contexts, while also building consensus around approaches that can contribute to effective resolution of the challenges that they face. Furthermore, the tool constitutes an instrument to assess the level of resilience of each given context to the risk of conflict and gross human rights violations.

In line with the launch by the then Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, of the Human Rights Up Front initiative, particular attention is required to identify and address human rights violations as potential precursors of atrocity crimes and conflict. In this regard, conflict analyses and related interventions need to integrate human rights protection into their design and implementation. Accordingly, conflict-related development analysis can constitute a platform for identifying, preventing and addressing human rights violations through engagements that are aimed at strengthening the resilience of States and societies to the risk of such crimes. A conflict-related development analysis process must therefore be undertaken with awareness of – and with the intent

of helping the United Nations to implement – the responsibilities defined under the Human Rights Up Front initiative.

Conflict-related development analysis can:

- Bring to the fore conflict issues and consequences that are not always taken into account, such as gender-based violence, issues of environmental degradation, the weak management of natural resources and other cross-cutting issues
- Assist with advocacy and policy-related activities and help establish the value added of the United Nations system in a particular context
- Complement human rights and political analyses to ensure that early warning signs are detected and acted upon
- Support scenario planning for development programming, including the management of risks in a particular context
- Allow for a better definition of outcomes and targets in programmes to enable assessment of progress towards development goals

**(e) Tool of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on evaluating peacebuilding activities in settings of conflict and fragility**

The process of developing the key peacebuilding initiative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility*, also referred to as “the Guidance” (OECD, 2012), was spurred by a recognition in the peace and conflict prevention community of the lack of solid information about the actual results of peacebuilding efforts. Recognizing the need for better, more tailored approaches to evaluation in conflict settings, the OECD Development Assistance Committee launched an initiative to develop guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities.

The initiative brought together practitioners and policymakers from the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (then the Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation of the Development Assistance Committee) with evaluation experts from the Committee’s Network on Development Evaluation. OECD produced draft guidance in 2008, which was used to evaluate various conflict prevention activities and external peacebuilding and State-building support in a number of major conflict settings, including Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Southern Sudan and Sri Lanka. The guidance has been revised on the basis of the substantive and methodological findings from this application phase.

The goal of this guidance is to promote critical reflection. It is aimed at filling the learning and accountability gap in settings of conflict and fragility by providing direction to those undertaking or commissioning evaluations and helping them to better understand the sensitivities and challenges that apply in such contexts. At the same time, it is aimed at assisting policymakers and practitioners working on peacebuilding and State-building to better understand the role and utility of evaluation and grasp how an evaluation lens can help strengthen programme design and management. With these objectives in mind, the guidance offers advice on aspects of evaluating donor engagement in conflict-affected and fragile situations that differ from evaluation in more stable environments.

**Box 3****Use of the conflict analysis tool of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo****Example of the use of conflict analysis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the conflict analysis – a combination of scientific research and workshops in the field – identified four important drivers of conflict during the inception phase. The four drivers – land ownership, weakness of the State, security sector, natural resources – helped delineate the scope of the evaluation. The drivers also helped evaluate the relevance of interventions (Did they target the right drivers of conflict?) and their impact (Did the conflict prevention and peacebuilding assistance have an effect on these drivers?)

**Using conflict analysis to inform the scope of an evaluation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

A multi-donor evaluation was launched in 2008 to assess the role of external partners in supporting peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The use of a conflict analysis was very helpful for determining what key conflict factors – both the obvious and the less obvious ones – should be covered in the evaluation. At first, the evaluation was focused on sexual and gender-based violence, child soldiers and natural resources, which the commissioning evaluation departments considered to be key factors in the conflict. At that time (2008), these were generally accepted as important but the choice of those three factors was not based on a conflict analysis. Once the evaluation got under way, the team used conflict analysis to identify land issues and the weakness of the State as major conflict drivers, and these became part of the evaluation scope.

*Source:* OECD, 2012.

**(f) Conflict analysis framework of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict**

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict developed a framework and practical guidelines for conflict analysis, referred to as the Conflict Analysis Field Guide (GPPAC, 2017), with the objective of: strengthening civil society organizations' capacity for conflict analysis as a basis for preventive action; promoting self-assessment and conflict sensitivity; and informing programming and project planning, whether it be direct intervention or advocacy to mobilize other stakeholders. Its guiding principles include the following: “do no harm”; inclusivity; local ownership; the relationship of insider and outsider roles and dynamics; gender sensitivity; the need to be purpose-oriented; and continuity. The guide complements the Partnership's Manual on Multi-Stakeholder Processes for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, which is focused on how to bring together different stakeholders around conflict analysis, action planning and peacebuilding processes.

#### **Box 4**

### **Example of use of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict analysis framework to identify the arena or level of analysis**

#### **Understanding community tensions in Liberia**

A non-governmental organization was preparing to organize dialogue and negotiation sessions between two ethnic communities that had conducted mutual massacres during the civil war in Liberia. Groups formerly living side by side were now housed in separate but nearby communities, and land-use issues were intense. Before bringing elders from each group together, organizers interviewed women and men, young people and ex-combatants from each group, seeking to understand not only the history, but also the current feelings and tensions.

#### **Box 5**

### **Example of use of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict analysis framework in Ghana**

#### **Systems mapping of key conflicts and causes in Ghana**

Chieftaincy disputes, land and other natural resource disputes, ethnic disputes, religious disputes, and sociocultural disputes are cited by local observers as the most frequent types of conflicts in Ghana. Each of these is exacerbated by the dominant political climate and culture. Nationally, politicians typically focus on gaining and maintaining power, rather than governing, policy development, service delivery, or equitable economic development. Thus, the political culture is dominated by a high stakes struggle between the two major political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Once parties assume power, they tend to break developmental promises made to Ghanaians, leading to very poor service delivery and policymaking. For instance, the country is still unable to provide enough drinking water to its citizens or sufficient electricity to homes and businesses, to name just two shortcomings.

Underlying these conflict types are a series of structural causes of conflict, including economic inequalities. At the macro level, southern Ghana has more resources and controls development and investment allocations and enjoys relative prosperity, while northern Ghana continues to endure relative deprivation. At the local level, access to land and other resources is controlled by chiefs, who often make decisions based on a system of patronage and loyalties, which in many cases have become tied to the main political parties. As a result, certain groups benefit from favourable treatment, while others are excluded and grow restive at their persistent inability to make gains. In the mineral rich areas of southern Ghana, mining companies and, more recently, oil industries have caused displacement, ecological damage and human rights abuses, a situation of growing concern. In addition, local chiefs and civil society organizations raise questions about whether the communities are receiving a fair share of revenues from the natural resource exploitation.

Most local people interviewed emphasize politicization and polarization along party lines as the principal drivers of conflicts in the country, a dynamic that distorts and magnifies all other conflicts. Without this pervasive political culture, the underlying structural factors would be less likely to result in violence. For instance, it is a known fact in Ghana that NDC is aligned with the Adani group and NPP is aligned with the Abudu group, the two contending parties in the well-known Dagbon chieftaincy crisis. Accordingly, the issue of politicization stands out as the most important driving force of conflict. In terms of the potential for precipitating widespread violence, chieftaincy disputes are of almost equal concern, recognizing that political factors magnify the problem.

### **(g) Conflict risk analysis of the Institute for Economics and Peace**

A key question for policymakers, business and civil society today is the need for a better understanding of the likelihood of big risks, such as conflict onset, and of what can be done to mitigate the risk of these events occurring. In this regard, the Institute for Economics and Peace has developed two types of forward-looking risk models to predict future changes in the Global Peace Index (IEP, 2017). The Index is used as the key variable to measure large deteriorations in peace as it captures a comprehensive and objective measure of violence, conflict and societal safety and security.

The two risk models developed by the Institute are called the “IEP like-country model” and the “IEP positive peace deficit model”. The results from both models have been performance tested in a number of ways and compared against five other measures commonly used to forecast conflict and understand vulnerability to violence.

The positive peace deficit model has successfully forecast several notable deteriorations in country peacefulness since 2008. Looking at the 10 most at-risk countries according to the model in 2008, five countries experienced significant declines in peace, namely Eritrea, Mozambique, the Niger, the Syrian Arab Republic and Viet Nam.

Looking more broadly at the 20 countries that fell into conflict between 2008 and 2017, all were positive peace deficit countries, meaning the model determined that they had weak institutions and social measures and were vulnerable to deteriorations in peace. Five of these 20 were measured in the 10 most at-risk of conflict according to the positive peace deficit model. For 2017, five of the 10 countries most at-risk according to the positive peace deficit model were also in the list in 2008, namely Bhutan, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Sierra Leone. The five new countries were all from sub-Saharan Africa: Angola, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi and Togo.

If countries that are at risk of falling into conflict can be identified up to seven years in advance, then meaningful interventions can potentially be staged. Given the high costs of conflict compared to prevention, the potential of acting upon these models with a relatively high level of positive predictive accuracy has the potential to guide resource allocation and lead to better and more cost-effective decision-making.

### **3. Capacity-building**

The methodologies and tools discussed above involve qualitative and quantitative analysis across development, peace and security, humanitarian issues and, in the case of the UNDP tool for conflict-related development analysis, include the human rights pillar, as they relate to conflict situations. The conflict-related development analysis tool is well suited to the requirements of the four-pillar interlinkages approach as it relates to conflict. At the same time, the other tools could easily be adapted to cater for the human rights pillar.

With regard to the methodologies, the toolkits and manuals provide a step-by-step approach to the conduct of conflict analysis. This guidance notwithstanding, the training of relevant stakeholders in their application using available guides is imperative. There is also a need for stakeholders to be able to sift through the numerous conflict analysis guides to identify those that are most relevant for the contexts they are working. This can be done through workshops and dedicated training sessions.

The analytical tools vary in complexity depending on the type and stage of the analysis, ranging from stakeholder-oriented analysis, issue-related and causal analysis, and integrative tools. Stakeholders require adequate training in the application of the tools. For multidimensional analysis, the collaboration required across the pillars calls for dedicated training on multi-stakeholder processes. There is also a need to establish multi-stakeholder platforms and institutions to enhance integrated planning effort.

The integrative tools, such as scenario development and systems mapping, are data-intensive and technical and may prove challenging in the African context. At the same time, they are important tools for integrated analysis across various pillars and dimensions relevant to conflict and capacity should be developed for their effective application. There is a need, however, to strengthen statistical systems for data collection, analysis, presentation and reporting. Conflict prediction tools used in conflict prevention involve models and scenario analysis. Skills are required in these areas for simulating future scenarios and to inform decision-making.

The development of skills in the use of system analysis as a foundation would help stakeholders understand better how several sectors, and the indicators within them, are interconnected. There is also a need to develop indicators relevant to conflict analysis, including vulnerability and resilience indicators. Collaboration among multiple stakeholders is key to the effective application of integrative tools and should be encouraged.

## **VII. Conclusion, key messages and recommendations**

### **A. Conclusion**

The multiplicity and growing complexity of the challenges of human security in West and Central Africa, with conflicts threatening peace and security, development, human rights and overburdening humanitarian response, warrant an exploration of the interlinkages approach as it relates to conflict prevention and resolution, as is the aim of the present study. The intent is to promote synergistic, complementary and integrated approaches to the implementation of interventions across the four pillars, in finding effective and lasting solutions to conflicts, in the two subregions. The study was also aimed at contributing to the larger objective of promoting the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in the context of relevant African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks.

The analysis reveals that, while ECOWAS and ECCAS have recorded some commendable progress in the promotion of peace and security in the past three decades, they currently face other forms of threats, including conflicts from religious and ethnic problems, terrorism and trafficking in drugs, fuelling illicit small arms trafficking. The pace of development is slow, amid low growth rates occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, a range of human rights and humanitarian challenges that undermine progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063. This is despite the existence of frameworks and initiatives addressing conflict, the four pillars and their interlinkages, as well as governance at global, regional and subregional levels, specifically those of ECOWAS and ECCAS, thus pointing to an implementation deficit. The West and Central African subregions have not fared well in terms of realizing the Agenda 2063 aspirations and goals. Among the five subregions of Africa, West and Central Africa are ranked third and fifth in 2020, respectively, by the Africa Sustainable Development Goal Index and Dashboard Report on progress towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. Low performers were from fragile States, including the Central African Republic and Chad. The report notes that the challenge for West African countries will be to accelerate currently stagnant performance in terms of social welfare without undermining environmental sustainability.

Transboundary issues, including weakened borders, border governance, transboundary resources and Lake Chad and its dynamics, including the instability of Libya, have heightened the conflict situation and undermined peace and security. Trade, while threatened, provides opportunities that could drive development, in particular in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area. COVID-19 has created a health and economic crisis and deepened social challenges, with women and young people disproportionately affected, in particular those living in fragile economies and refugee camps. Inadequate governance, lack of political leadership and corruption continue to undermine peace and security development aspirations. Hope lies in civil society organizations and the private sector, however, which are increasingly playing important supportive roles, beyond their traditional roles of advocacy and funding, respectively.

The interlinkages add human rights as a fourth pillar to the triple nexus of humanitarian work, development and peace and security, given its links with the other three pillars and also with governance, an important prerequisite for the maintenance of peace and security. Furthermore, the United Nations reform process, which recognizes human rights as integral to the interlinkages, is instructive in terms of justification. Where mainstreaming the interlinkages into policies and



strategies is concerned, an analysis shows that methodologies and tools for mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 could be adapted for this purpose. Informed by the experiences of the United Nations in coordination, collaborative and integrated approaches, including the triple nexus, along with the findings of the survey, a range of challenges and opportunities have accordingly been identified in the present report. The recommendations offered below on promoting the four-pillar interlinkages approach derive from responses to the challenges and proposals on leveraging the opportunities.

The methodologies and tools for conflict analysis examined show that they entail qualitative and quantitative analysis across development, peace and security, humanitarian issues and, in the case of the UNDP conflict-related development analysis, include the human rights pillar. In this regard, the conflict-related development analysis is well suited to the requirements of the interlinkages approach as it relates to conflict. Notwithstanding, the others could be adapted to cater to the human rights pillar. Capacity should be built for the effective application of the methodologies and tools. This includes targeted training on the use of the guidance documents, and to conduct qualitative and quantitative analysis.

## **B. Key messages and recommendations**

In the light of the survey findings and the ensuing analysis, the following key messages and recommendations are put forward.

### **1. Existing frameworks and initiatives addressing conflict, the four pillars and their interlinkages, and governance are critical to finding effective and lasting solutions to conflicts and contributing to attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063.**

There is a need to fast-track implementation of the frameworks and initiatives at all levels. Expressions of political will must be demonstrated in practical terms, entailing the enactment of legislation, mainstreaming of conflict prevention and resolution in policies and strategies and strengthening institutions to foster effective implementation within a framework of good governance. Member States of Central and West Africa should leverage the African Union and United Nations reforms to accelerate implementation.

The transformation of NEPAD into the African Union Development Agency, with responsibility for implementation of Agenda 2063 at the national level, and the institutional reform of the African Peer Review Mechanism represent important opportunities. The adoption of the subsidiarity principle establishing an effective division of labour between the African Union, the regional economic communities, member States and continental organizations is also important in this context. In terms of the regional economic communities, including ECOWAS and ECCAS, this is a step in the right direction towards operationalization of the Abuja Treaty of 1991 on the African Economic Community. The reorganization of the structure and portfolios of the senior leadership of the African Union Commission, including the consolidation in one body of the Political Affairs, Peace and Security, and Economic Affairs and Trade Departments, demonstrates the determination of the African Union to break silos and promote coherence, integration and collaboration, which are key to the four-pillar interlinkages approach.

The United Nations reforms are complementary to the African Union reforms, thus supporting collaborative implementation in Africa. As an integral part of its reforms, the United

Nations is rationalizing its assets at the regional, subregional and national levels for a more coherent, coordinated and collaborative delivery of the 2030 Agenda. This includes the establishment of regional development coordination offices, regional collaborative platforms, regional peer support groups and the strengthening of resident coordinator offices and United Nations country teams. The reforms also entail coordinated implementation of the development, peace and security and human rights pillars in humanitarian situations. Preparation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, which have now replaced the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, involves analysis that factors in the interlinkages and transboundary issues.

## **2. Conflicts and threats to peace and security, remain major challenges in West and Central Africa.**

Holistic and inclusive processes are required for conflicts to be effectively addressed. This should entail, among other measures: disarmament, reintegration and community reconciliation; delivery of public services to improve the standard of living and livelihoods; putting in place focused human security measures; designing and implementing dedicated programmes or interventions for the most vulnerable populations, including women and young people.

The continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region necessitates sustained regional and international engagements. A fully integrated response, bolstered by the collaboration of governments of countries in the two subregions, the support of the international community, encompassing the simultaneous pursuit of progress in the areas of security, governance, humanitarian assistance and development, is required. In line with the above recommendation, the various frameworks and instruments of ECOWAS, ECCAS, the African Union, the United Nations, and the African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks on peace, security and conflict prevention should be effectively leveraged on all fronts to tackle the peace and security situation in the two subregions. These interventions should take into account the interlinkages between peace and security and the other pillars.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel has called an enhanced support for the implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region and for the Priority Investment Programme of the Group of Five for the Sahel, along with a concerted effort to support national development plans to boost the development of the region. The United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel also follows an integrative approach to all its goals: inclusive and effective governance, national and regional security mechanisms for addressing cross-border threats, humanitarian and development plans and interventions for long-term resilience.

Transboundary issues arising from insurgencies, shared natural resources and border governance should be tackled through bilateral, intraregional and interregional cooperation involving the countries concerned, such subregional bodies as ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Arab Maghreb Union, and other African Union organs and agencies, with the support of such partners as the United Nations, bilateral and multilateral partners, international non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and others.

Furthermore, the negative image of the Sahel constitutes a great challenge to its potential for development. A more balanced narrative could trigger action for a productive Sahel based on its vast natural resources, including water and land, agriculture, tree and non-forest timber resources,

along with its abundant renewable energy sources. A new narrative for the Sahel could be developed from its natural resources to sustain growing prosperity for the region. Rethinking the Sahel would be conducive to transformation through business, science and policy partnerships and open up to positive transformation pathways. Positive transformation pathways require many improvements in the areas of governance, finance and equality, with particular reference to young people and women. There is goodwill on the part of the international community to unleash the potential in the Sahel and reshape perceptions of the region. Unrest comes largely from poverty and lack of opportunities. If the economic situation is improved, the unrest would decrease and the positive narrative would take root.

### **3. The pace of development is slow in West and Central Africa, amid low growth rates occasioned by the coronavirus disease pandemic.**

The accelerated implementation of subregional development frameworks, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda is critical to enhancing growth and development in the subregions. Cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategies that integrate relevant frameworks, supported by integrated national financing frameworks, are necessary for successful implementation.

Strong institutions and effective policies are instrumental in promoting integrated and interlinked approaches for the integrated implementation of the two agendas. In this regard, there is a need for clear institutional mandates that guarantee strong leadership, and also coordination and consultation mechanisms that facilitate the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, in line with the principle of inclusivity and the mantra of leaving no one behind. Strengthened capacities for evidence-based policymaking and effective links between the development plan, the annual budget and the multi-year expenditure framework are also crucial.

Strong follow-up and review mechanisms are key. Important elements of a follow-up and review system include indicator development and data collection, the disaggregation of data, participatory monitoring and data collection and monitoring and reporting systems. Risk assessment and adaptive governance constitute important aspects of follow-up and review. This includes learning lessons and taking timely corrective measures for implementation efficiency.

Realizing strong growth necessitates a critical examination of the main sources of growth and how such growth could be sustained, including the policy instruments that should be put in place. Government policy to spur growth and reduce the unemployment rate could target labour-intensive industries and incentives, such as well-conceived tax holidays and tax exemptions. This should take due account of overarching development objectives, such as poverty eradication and sustainability. The African Continental Free Trade Area, with its promise of bolstered productive capacities, enhanced decentralization, employment creation and poverty reduction, provides an opportunity to spur growth and development in the two subregions.

While the COVID-19 pandemic poses a major challenge to the global community, it also represents an opportunity to build forward better in a more inclusive and sustainable way, leaving no one behind. The pandemic has laid bare the inequalities and imbalances in societies evident in the manner in which the vulnerable, including women, young people and the poor, have been disproportionately affected, along with the challenges related to access to vaccines. Apart from the health crisis, it has sparked civil unrest in countries, mainly due to lockdowns that severely restrict economic activities resulting in loss of jobs and livelihoods. The impacts of the pandemic, which are all interrelated, cut across the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian

pillars, a further justification for the interlinkages approach. Building forward better will leverage the comparative advantages of the two subregions, in particular their natural resource endowments and demographic dividend.

#### **4. Human rights and humanitarian challenges undermine progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063.**

Where human rights are concerned, ECOWAS and ECCAS should promote the ratification, incorporation into domestic law and implementation of key subregional, regional and international human rights instruments. They should support States, national human rights institutions and civil society stakeholders in their engagement with regional and international human rights bodies and mechanisms. In doing so, they should foster interactions and partnership with the African Union Commission and United Nations human rights bodies, principally OHCHR. Among other things, they should identify gaps in subregional, regional and international law and provide guidance on emerging human rights issues, and facilitate peer learning, knowledge transfer and the sharing of experience and good practices.

Efforts at promoting and protecting human rights will only yield results if the implementation of policies and instruments are well coordinated. These include constitutional and international obligations, national and local policies and legislation, and administrative rules and procedures. In addition, there is need to strengthen regulatory and monitoring bodies to systematically monitor and report cases of human rights abuses. This should go hand in hand with the promotion of the principle and practice of democracy and good governance.

Countries should establish strong and independent national human rights commission with statutory authority to defend the rights of aggrieved parties. The commissions should be involved in the education and awareness-raising of citizens on human and civil rights, their civic duties and their obligations to guarantee their own rights. Civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to advocate, monitor and report human rights in countries. In countries where there is no national human rights commission, the office of the ombudsperson should be mandated to investigate human rights complaints. Given the cost associated with the justice system, the training of paralegals should be considered to improve public access to the courts. The African Court of Justice will be crucial for citizens of countries with weak judiciaries.

ECOWAS and ECCAS should work with the African Union and United Nations human rights bodies to support African States in their efforts to respect, promote and protect human rights, ensure early preventive action and sustain peace for the purposes of achieving the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. This will be attained by enhancing the effectiveness of national and regional frameworks and institutions in the field of human rights, with emphasis on integrating and mainstreaming human rights into policies, strategies and programmes; monitoring and ensuring compliance with States' reporting obligations; and the implementation of and follow-up to the decisions and recommendations of relevant bodies.

To address humanitarian challenges, ECOWAS and ECCAS should promote the ratification of the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). In addition, the subregional bodies should support member States in the incorporation into domestic law and implementation of the humanitarian policy framework and work to enhance understanding of the underlying causes of humanitarian crisis in general and of specific causes and the nature and circumstances of particular crises, as

well as national and international responses, as and when they occur. This should be done in collaboration with the African Union Commission and humanitarian United Nations bodies, such as OCHA.

ECOWAS and ECCAS should support member States in incorporating into their domestic legal frameworks and implementing the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the programme of action for implementation of the Strategy. In addition, they should enhance the capacity of member States in early warning, disaster preparedness and response and facilitate coordination and collaboration on disaster risk management and preparedness, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and relevant international bodies, such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation should be undertaken in an integrated and coordinated manner to facilitate coherent actions and disbursement of resources for enhancing the resilience of highly vulnerable groups and priority sectors. In this context, emphasis should be placed on promoting institutional frameworks that are adapted to the implementation requirements of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation policies.

#### **5. Poor governance and political leadership, together with corruption, continue to undermine peace and security and development aspirations**

The Agenda 2063 goal of building capable institutions and transformative leadership is key to the realization of peace and security and development aspirations. Countries should continue to improve quality transformative and visionary leadership. This should include promoting the participation of all stakeholders in national development; ensuring transparency and accountability in the management of public resources and public policy development; and the improvement of electoral systems. Transformative governance would also create a conducive environment for civil society organizations and private sector participation, promote equality and reduce all forms of inequality, respond effectively to political instability, strengthen the rule of law and effectively address corruption.

The institutional roles of the three arms of government, the executive, judiciary and legislature, are laudable. These institutions should be empowered to execute their roles and responsibilities to ensure peace and security, further development and promote the four-pillar interlinkages approach. In this regard, there is a need to ensure the legitimacy of their ascension to power, independence, the viability of their civil institutions and the availability of resources, and to prohibit the use of coercive force.

Countries in West and Central Africa should continue to subscribe to the African Peer Review Mechanism of the African Union, which assesses the performance of member States on key governance indicators. Implementation of the resulting action plan following country assessments is instructive in promoting democracy, political, economic, corporate and natural resource governance and socioeconomic development.

**6. Promoting the four-pillar interlinkages approach necessitates building on the triple nexus experience, addressing the associated challenges and leveraging the resulting opportunities.**

The four-pillar interlinkages approach, while entirely valid, is a new concept and should be promoted as one that builds on the triple nexus to strengthen the new way of working in line with the United Nations reforms, which recognize human rights as integral to the interlinkages approach. In this regard, there is a need to carry out consultations on the approach, supported by further research to demonstrate its validity and value addition.

Existing initiatives and frameworks on the four pillars at the global, regional and subregional levels, which recognize the interlinkages approach, should be leveraged to promote the four-pillar approach. In addition to their organization-specific instruments, the African Union-United Nations cooperation frameworks, including the draft human rights framework, are a clear demonstration of the commitment of the two organizations at the highest level to peaceful societies and integrated development.

Coordination and collaborative approaches should be informed by lessons from the United Nations working as one at the national, regional and global levels, including those related to the implementation of the triple nexus. Collective action should be based on respective mandates and comparative advantages, thereby minimizing overlaps and conflicts. Joint planning and programming necessitate aligning programming cycles and funding mechanisms as implementation of the United Nations reforms progresses. Funding, accountability and reporting should be tailored to the requirements of an interlinkages approach. Both the United Nations and donors should adopt pooled funding for the purposes of the interlinkages approach. In terms of accountability and reporting, the programming exercise should factor in the distinct contribution of the agencies and other actors to the collective results.

The challenges identified by respondents to the survey questionnaire warrant the design and implementation of capacity-building programmes that respond to the specific needs of West and Central Africa. Initial responses indicate the need for awareness-raising and advocacy in relation to the four-pillar interlinkages approach, training in the application of methodologies and tools that would facilitate joint and integrated planning, programming, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of results across the four pillars. At the same time, however, a capacity needs assessment should be carried out for a complete picture of the needs and requirements.

Civil society organizations and the private sector should be meaningfully engaged in the four-pillar interlinkages approach. In addition to their traditional advocacy and watchdog role, civil society organizations are now working in partnership with governments and international non-governmental organizations to fund, design and implement programmes and projects on conflict prevention and resolution, including interventions related to interlinkages. In addition, the private sector is branching out of its donor role into diverse areas, including technology, social enterprises and commercial ventures that support humanitarian work and reduce vulnerability in the long-term. In view of the efficiency gains inherent in the approach and its potential reach, both private sector and civil society organizations would be amenable to applying the concept in their interventions.

The four-pillar interlinkages approach is an important aspect of the work of the United Nations, under section 11, programme 9 of its programme budget for 2022, OSAA, ECA and the

Department of Global Communications. In view of the impetus given to this work by the United Nations reforms, the programme should be strengthened to ensure that it provides the required support to member States to effectively apply the interlinkages approach to their conflict prevention and resolution programmes, and at the same time, contributes to attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063.

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## **Annex I**

### **Questionnaire and breakdown of responses**

The links to the questionnaires can be found in both English and French in the links below:  
**English version**

<https://bit.ly/ECASurveyENG>

**French version**

<https://bit.ly/ECAFRSurvey>

**The questionnaire**

#### **Questionnaire on Peace and Security, Human Rights, Humanitarian and Development**

##### **Survey Questionnaire**

**Dear participant,**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. ECA through its Regional Integration and Trade Division (RITD) and five Subregional Offices (SROs) for Eastern, Southern, North, West and Central Africa has commissioned subregional studies on the interlinkages between the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars covering the five subregions of Africa. The studies seek to interrogate and analyse the interlinkages between the pillars in the various subregions with the aim of promoting synergistic, complementary and joined-up implementation of interventions addressing peace and security, human rights, humanitarian and development situations. The intent is to contribute to effective and lasting solutions to conflicts in the subregions. Cross-cutting issues to be factored in the studies include gender and youth, and COVID-19. They will also address transboundary issues to help promote intra-regional cooperation in tackling conflict situations by harnessing the interlinkages.

The studies are being conducted in partnership with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), with the Department of Global Communications, the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Office on the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) being important collaborators in the process. They are designed to lead to the production of robust study reports on harnessing the interlinkages to inform policy and practice in conflict prevention and resolution situations. They will be published as standalone reports, and at the same time feed into the regional study being conducted under the leadership of OSAA. The primary beneficiaries are the eight African Union recognized Regional Economic Communities across the five subregions of Africa. Member States of the regional economic communities, the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency and the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism will also benefit from the study findings.

Please provide your opinion about the issues raised in the questionnaire, which would take about 10 to 15 minutes.

The questionnaire is designed to be anonymous. Your response will be confidential. You have the right to refuse to answer any question – it is totally voluntary. Completion and return of this questionnaire imply consent.

**INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY**

1. Read each question carefully.
2. Answer each question by filling in the required space, and putting an **x** or a  $\checkmark$  in the box of your choice, unless asked otherwise.

**SECTION A: Socio-demographic and general profile of respondents**

This set of questions is about you

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	CODE
A1	Sex	Male Female Others	1 2 3
A2	Age		
A4	Marital status	Married Single Divorced Separated Widowed	1 2 3 4 5
A4	Highest education completed	No formal education Primary school Secondary school Tertiary education Post tertiary	1 2 3 4 5
A5a	Sector	Public (Government) Sector Non State Regional/International Institutions	1 2 3
A5b	Specific sector	Development Regional and International work NGO/Humanitarian work Private work Legal/Human rights Academic and Media	1 2 3 4 5 6
A6	Country		
A7	Region	Central Africa West Africa	1 2
A8	How prevalent are conflicts (simmering tensions, violent conflicts and protracted conflicts) in your country?	Highly prevalent Prevalent Not prevalent	1 2 3
A9	Can you mention the prevention and resolution approaches employed in your country to tackle these conflicts?		

## Section B: Peace and Security

Please tick [√] the correct answer and also fill in the appropriate response by giving the necessary details in the spaces provided below.

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	CODE
<b>B1a</b>	How do you rate the peace and security situation in your country?	Low peace and security Medium peace and security High peace and security Very high peace and security	1 2 3 4
<b>B1b</b>	How do you rate the peace and security situation in your subregion?	Low peace and security Medium peace and security High peace and security Very high peace and security	1 2 3 4
<b>B2</b>	What are the threats to peace and security in your country and subregion?	<b>Tick as many that apply</b> Violent crimes Terrorism Electoral violence Herders-farmers conflict Religious extremism Maritime piracy Inequality/injustice Greed/corruption/mismanagement Grievance Inter/intracommunity conflict Youth delinquency/violence Climate change risks Drug trafficking Human trafficking Separatism/rebellion Unemployment Others specify-----	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
<b>B3</b>	Which peace and security threat is/are most prevalent in your community or country?		
<b>B4</b>	What factors would you say promote/encourage the threats to peace and security in your country?		
<b>B5a</b>	Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your safety and security?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>B5b</b>	If yes to question B5a above, please specify in what way(s) the pandemic has affected your safety and security?		
<b>B6a</b>	Is the fear of the police force and other security agents a major	Yes No	1 2

	concern in your community or country?	Indifference	3
<b>B6b</b>	If yes to question B6a above, please state why you are afraid of police and other security agents in your community or country?		
<b>B7</b>	Does terrorism pose an immediate challenge to you and your household in your country?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>B8</b>	Are corruption and lack of transparency the greatest threat to achieving peace and security?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>B9</b>	In the past 12 months preceding this study, how many times have you or your household been a victim of insecurity? For example, robbed, attacked?		
<b>B10</b>	How often do people suffer loss of properties, assets or investment as a result of insecurity issues in your community/country?	Very often Often Not very often Rarely	1 2 3 4
<b>B11</b>	Does fear of crime and insecurity affect business activities in your community or country?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>B12</b>	How much do you trust the State security system?	High trust Low trust Don't trust them at all	1 2 3
<b>B13</b>	A society where conflicts are resolved peacefully through dialogue would experience sustainable development faster?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>B14</b>	Does lack of good governance in your country hinder the existence of peace and security?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5

## Section C: Development

Please tick [✓] the correct answer and also fill in the appropriate response by giving the necessary details in the spaces provided.

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	CODE
C1	How do you rate the level of development in your State and country?	Highly developed Adequately developed Underdeveloped	1 2 3
C2	Which of the following do you think hinders development in your State and country?	<b>Tick as many that apply</b> Bribery/corruption Bad/greedy leaders Violent crimes Lack of education Capital flight Fragility of political institutions Inequality/injustice Lack of social protection Greed Grievance Inter/intracommunity conflict Youth violence/gang Climate change risks Unemployment Lack of access to health care Lack of financial resources (SMEs) Others specify-----	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
C3	Are corruption and lack of transparency the greatest issues in development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
C4	Is freedom of democratic rights critical for sustainable development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
C5	Is respecting human rights the most critical issue in sustainable development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
C6	Cultural/religious tolerance is critical for sustainable development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5

<b>C7</b>	Do poor people around you have access to education in your community and country?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>C8</b>	How difficult is it for the poor to secure a modest accommodation in your community?	Very easy Easy Difficult Very difficult	1 2 3 4
<b>C9</b>	Poor access to low quality infrastructure is a major threat to sustainable development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>C10</b>	Providing young people with access to quality education is a prerequisite for development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>C11a</b>	Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your source of livelihood?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>C11b</b>	If yes to question C11a above, please can you state how it affected your source of livelihood?		
<b>C12</b>	Environmental preservation is critical for sustainable development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>C13</b>	Empowering youth and women are critical for sustainable development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>C14</b>	Improving health care is necessary for sustainable development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>C15</b>	How can civil society organizations promote sustainable development in your state and country?		



## Section D: Human Rights

Please tick [✓] the correct answer and also fill in the appropriate response by giving the necessary details in the spaces provided.

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	CODE
D1	How do you rate the level of respect for human rights in your country?	Very high High Medium Low Very low	1 2 3 4 5
D2	What do you consider the greatest threat to human rights in your country?	<b>Tick all that apply</b> Police abuse/brutality Terrorism Religious extremism Inequality/injustice Inter/intracommunity conflict Youth violence/gang Gender based violence Weak laws Non-enforcement of legal framework Others specify-----	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
D3	Do more developed societies with greater respect for human rights have more effective government?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
D4	Most people in your country are not aware of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
D5	How serious is the general human rights challenge in your country?	Very serious Serious Less serious Not serious at all	1 2 3 4
D6	How free are you to practise any religion of your choice in your country?	Very free Free Not free Not free at all	1 2 3 4
D7	Law enforcement agencies in your country do not respect the rights of citizens?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
D8	Reinforcing the rights of women and the girl child is very critical for	Strongly agree Agree	1 2

	sustainable development in your community/country?	Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	3 4 5
<b>D9</b>	Did the COVID-19 and State measures worsen the abuse of human rights in your community/country?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>D10</b>	If yes to question 9 above, please state ways your rights was abused		

## Section E: Humanitarian Pillars

Please tick [✓] the correct answer and also fill in the appropriate response by giving the necessary details in the spaces provided.

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	CODE
E1	How do you rate the effectiveness of humanitarianism in your country?	Very effective Effective Ineffective	1 2 3
E2	Which risk is more prevalent in your country?	Human made risks Natural risk	
E3	What are the threats to humanitarian pillars in your community/country?	<b>Tick all that apply</b> Lack of early warning Lack of assistance to IDPs Natural disasters Manmade disasters Lack of protection for IDPs Food insecurity Ineffective disaster management Lack of preparedness & response Lack of effective rehabilitation Lack of assistance to victims Others specify-----	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
E4	Do humanitarian organizations in your country have the capacity and flexibility to adjust and adapt and work in synergy with other stakeholders?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
E5	What are the most unmet humanitarian needs of your country?	i. ii. iii. iv.	
E6a	What roles do civil societies organizations play in humanitarian and development works in your country?		
E6b	What roles does the private sector play in humanitarian and development works in your country?		
E7	Humanitarian aid and support do not get to the people who need it in your country?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
E8	Rendering aid and help to the most vulnerable is also a humanitarian service?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree	1 2 3 4

		Strongly disagree	5
<b>E9</b>	Lack of good governance negatively affects humanitarian services in your country?	Strongly agree	1
		Agree	2
		Neither agree nor disagree	3
		Disagree	4
		Strongly disagree	5
<b>E10</b>	Targeting youth and women is critical in humanitarian services?	Strongly agree	1
		Agree	2
		Neither agree nor disagree	3
		Disagree	4
		Strongly disagree	5
<b>E11</b>	Partiality negatively affects humanitarian services?	Strongly agree	1
		Agree	2
		Neither agree nor disagree	3
		Disagree	4
		Strongly disagree	5
<b>E12</b>	Lack of neutrality negatively affects humanitarian services?	Strongly agree	1
		Agree	2
		Neither agree nor disagree	3
		Disagree	4
		Strongly disagree	5

### Section F: Interlink between the four pillars

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	CODE
<b>F1</b>	There is an interlink among peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>F2</b>	Do you think technology affects humanitarian issues, human rights, peace, security and development?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>F3</b>	Do humanitarian and development actors work together in your community/country?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>F4</b>	In what ways do human rights complement peace and security and development?		
<b>F5</b>	Are the effects of the threats to peace and security similar or the same with the effect of underdevelopment?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>F6</b>	Lack of peace and security hinders development?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>F7</b>	Underdevelopment is the cause and effect of human rights abuse in your country	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>F8</b>	Addressing transboundary issues is critical in tackling conflict situations by harnessing the interlinkages?	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree	1 2 3 4 5
<b>F9a</b>	Has your institution or organization been utilizing methodologies and tools for integrating the four pillars into their policies and practices.	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>F9b</b>	If yes, could you name them?		
<b>F10</b>	Have there been opportunities in the application of the interlinkages approach for conflict prevention and resolution?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>F10a</b>	If yes, please mention them?		

<b>F11a</b>	Have there been challenges in the application of the interlinkages approach for conflict prevention and resolution?	Yes No Indifference	1 2 3
<b>F11b</b>	If yes, please mention them?		
<b>F12</b>	Please comment on how you think that the four pillars could be harnessed or promote complementary interventions to contribute to effective lasting solutions to conflicts		

## Annex II

### Summary of survey results

#### A. Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents

Section A dealt with the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents: the sex, age, marital status, highest educational qualification obtained, sector, country and region of the respondents were ascertained in this section.

Table 1

#### Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents

Sex						
Country	Female	Male			Total	
Benin	1(20.0%)	4(80.0%)			5(1.6%)	
Burkina Faso	1(25%)	3(75.0%)			4(1.3%)	
Burundi	3(37.5%)	5(62.5%)			8(2.6%)	
Cameroon	2(8.7%)	21(91.3%)			23(7.5%)	
Côte d'Ivoire	4(26.7%)	11(73.3%)			15(4.9%)	
Gambia	0(0.0%)	4(100.0%)			4(1.3%)	
Ghana	3(25%)	7(75%)			10(3.3%)	
Guinea-Bissau	4(66.7%)	2(33.3%)			6(2%)	
Liberia	2(33.3%)	4(66.6%)			6(2%)	
Mali	2(40%)	3(60%)			5(1.6%)	
Niger	2(40%)	3(60%)			5(1.6%)	
Nigeria	74(35.7%)	133(64.3%)			207(67.4%)	
Senegal	3(60.0%)	2(40.0%)			5(1.6%)	
Sierra Leone	0(0.0%)	1(100.0%)			1(0.3%)	
Togo	1(25%)	2(75%)			3(1%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>101(32.8%)</b>	<b>206(67.2%)</b>			<b>307(100%)</b>	
Age (Mean Age = 38.5)						
	18 – 27	28 – 37	38 – 47	48 – 57	58 and above	Total
Benin	0(0.0%)	2(40.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(20.0%)	2(40.0%)	5(100%)
Burkina Faso	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(50.0%)	1(25.0%)	1(25.0%)	4(100%)
Burundi	0(0.0%)	1(12.5%)	7(87.5%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	8(100%)
Cameroon	6(26.1%)	14(60.9%)	0(0.0%)	2(8.7%)	1(4.3%)	23(100%)
Côte d'Ivoire	3(20.0%)	5(26.7%)	6(40.0%)	2(13.3%)	0(0.0%)	15(100%)
Gambia	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(25.0%)	2(50.0%)	1(25.0%)	4(100%)
Ghana	0(0.0%)	2(28.6%)	5(42.8%)	2(28.6%)	0(0.0%)	10(100%)
Guinea-Bissau	0(0.0%)	1(16.7%)	1(16.7%)	2(33.3%)	2(33.3%)	6(100%)
Liberia	0(0.0%)	1(16.7%)	2(33.3%)	1(16.7%)	2(33.3%)	6(100%)
Mali	0(0.0%)	3(60.0%)	2(40.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(100%)
Niger	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	3(60.0%)	2(40.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(100%)
Nigeria	34(18.1%)	85(37.9%)	59(29.5%)	17(8.0%)	12(6.4%)	207(100%)
Senegal	0(0.0%)	4(80.0%)	1(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(100%)
Sierra Leone	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(100%)
Togo	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	3(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	3(100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>43(14%)</b>	<b>118(38.4%)</b>	<b>90(29.3%)</b>	<b>35(11.4%)</b>	<b>21(6.8%)</b>	<b>307(100%)</b>
Marital Status						
	Divorced	Married	Separated	Single	Widowed	Total
Benin	0(0.0%)	4(80.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(20.0%)	5(100%)

Burkina Faso	0(0.0%)	4(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	<b>4(100%)</b>	
Burundi	0(0.0%)	7(87.5%)	0(0.0%)	1(12.5%)	0(0.0%)	<b>8(100%)</b>	
Cameroon	0(0.0%)	7(30.4%)	0(0.0%)	16(69.6%)	0(0.0%)	<b>23(100%)</b>	
Côte d'Ivoire	1(6.7%)	6(40.0%)	1(6.7%)	7(46.7%)	0(0.0%)	<b>15(100%)</b>	
Gambia	1(12.5%)	2(50.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(12.5%)	0(0.0%)	<b>4(100%)</b>	
Ghana	0(0.0%)	7(71.4%)	0(0.0%)	3(50%)	0(28.6%)	<b>10(100%)</b>	
Guinea-Bissau	0(0.0%)	3(50.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(16.7%)	2(33.3%)	<b>6(100%)</b>	
Liberia	1(16.7%)	2(33.3%)	0(0.0%)	3(50.0%)	0(0.0%)	<b>6(100%)</b>	
Mali	0(0.0%)	3(60.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(40.0%)	0(0.0%)	<b>5(100%)</b>	
Niger	0(0.0%)	4(80.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	<b>5(100%)</b>	
Nigeria	1(0.5%)	126(58.8%)	1(0.5%)	79(39.6%)	1(0.5%)	<b>207(100%)</b>	
Senegal	0(0.0%)	3(60.0%)	1(20.0%)	1(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	<b>5(100%)</b>	
Sierra Leone	0(0.0%)	1(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	<b>1(100%)</b>	
Togo	1(25.0%)	2(75.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	<b>3(100%)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5(1.6%)</b>	<b>180(58.6%)</b>	<b>3(1%)</b>	<b>115(37.5%)</b>	<b>4(1.3%)</b>	<b>307(100%)</b>	
<b>Highest Education</b>							
	Post Tertiary	Tertiary education	Secondary education			<b>Total</b>	
Benin	2(40.0%)	3(60.0%)	0(0.0%)			<b>5(100%)</b>	
Burkina Faso	0(0.0%)	4(100.0%)	0(0.0%)			<b>4(100%)</b>	
Burundi	4(50.0%)	3(37.5%)	1(12.5%)			<b>8(100%)</b>	
Cameroon	12(52.2%)	10(43.5%)	1(4.3%)			<b>23(100%)</b>	
Côte d'Ivoire	5(33.3%)	10(66.7%)	0(0.0%)			<b>15(100%)</b>	
Gambia	2(50.0%)	2(50.0%)	0(0.0%)			<b>4(100%)</b>	
Ghana	5(42.9%)	5(57.1%)	0(0.0%)			<b>10(100%)</b>	
Guinea-Bissau	4(66.7%)	2(33.3%)	0(0.0%)			<b>6(100%)</b>	
Liberia	3(50.0%)	3(50.0%)	0(0.0%)			<b>6(100%)</b>	
Mali	2(40.0%)	3(60.0%)	0(0.0%)			<b>5(100%)</b>	
Niger	1(20.0%)	4(80.0%)	0(0.0%)			<b>5(100%)</b>	
Nigeria	136(67.4%)	66(32.6%)	5(2.7%)			<b>207(100%)</b>	
Senegal	1(20.0%)	4(80.0%)	0(0.0%)			<b>5(100%)</b>	
Sierra Leone	1(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)			<b>1(100%)</b>	
Togo	0(0.0%)	3(100.0%)	0(0.0%)			<b>3(100%)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>178(58%)</b>	<b>122(39.7%)</b>	<b>7(2.3%)</b>			<b>307(100%)</b>	
<b>Sector</b>							
	Public Governmental Sector	Non State	Regional/International Institutions			<b>Total</b>	
Benin	1(20.0%)	1(20.0%)	3(60.0%)			<b>5(100%)</b>	
Burkina Faso	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4(100.0%)			<b>4(100%)</b>	
Burundi	1(12.5%)	3(37.5%)	4(50.0%)			<b>8(100%)</b>	
Cameroon	9(39.2%)	7(30.4%)	7(30.4%)			<b>23(100%)</b>	
Côte d'Ivoire	1(6.7%)	9(60.0%)	5(33.3%)			<b>15(100%)</b>	
Gambia	1(12.5%)	2(50.0%)	1(12.5%)			<b>4(100%)</b>	
Ghana	6(71.4%)	4(50%)	0(28.6%)			<b>10(100%)</b>	
Guinea-Bissau	2(33.3%)	0(0.0%)	4(66.7%)			<b>6(100%)</b>	
Liberia	2(33.3%)	1(16.7%)	3(50.0%)			<b>6(100%)</b>	
Mali	2(40.0%)	1(20.0%)	2(66.7%)			<b>5(100%)</b>	
Niger	3(60.0%)	1(20.0%)	1(20.0%)			<b>5(100%)</b>	
Nigeria	122(59.8%)	62(29.4%)	23(10.7%)			<b>207(100%)</b>	
Senegal	0(0.0%)	2(40.0%)	3(60.0%)			<b>5(100%)</b>	
Sierra Leone	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(100.0%)			<b>1(100%)</b>	
Togo	2(66.7%)	1(33.3%)	0(0.0%)			<b>3(100%)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>152(49.5%)</b>	<b>92(30%)</b>	<b>63(20.5%)</b>			<b>307(100%)</b>	
<b>Specific sector</b>							
	Academic and Media	Development	Legal/Human rights	NGO/ Humanitarian work.	Private work	Regional and International work	<b>Total</b>
Benin	1(20.0%)	1(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(20.0%)	2(40.0%)	0(0.0%)	<b>5(100%)</b>
Burkina Faso	0(0.0%)	2(50.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(50.0%)	<b>4(100%)</b>



Burundi	2(25.0%)	1(12.5%)	3(37.5%)	0(0.0%)	1(12.5%)	1(12.5%)	8(100%)
Cameroon	3(13.1%)	1(4.3%)	9(39.0%)	4(17.4%)	3(13.1%)	3(13.1%)	23(100%)
Côte d'Ivoire	4(26.7%)	3(20.0%)	1(6.7%)	1(6.7%)	2(13.3%)	4(26.6%)	15(100%)
Gambia	2(50.0%)	1(25.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(25.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4(100%)
Ghana	6(57.1%)	2(14.3%)	0(0.0%)	1(14.3%)	1(14.3%)	0(0.0%)	10(100%)
Guinea-Bissau	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(16.7%)	0(0.0%)	1(16.7%)	4(66.6%)	6(100%)
Liberia	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(16.7%)	1(16.7%)	2(33.3%)	2(33.3%)	6(100%)
Mali	2(40.0%)	1(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(40.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(100%)
Niger	3(60.0%)	1(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(20.0%)	5(100%)
Nigeria	89(41.7%)	27(11.7%)	7(3.7%)	39(18.7%)	41(22%)	4(2.1%)	207(100%)
Senegal	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(20.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(40.0%)	2(40.0%)	5(100%)
Sierra Leone	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(100%)
Togo	1(0.0%)	1(50.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(50.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	3(100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>113(36.8%)</b>	<b>41(13.3%)</b>	<b>23(7.4%)</b>	<b>52(17%)</b>	<b>55(18%)</b>	<b>23(7.5%)</b>	<b>307(100%)</b>
	<b>Region</b>						
	Central Africa		West Africa			Total	
Benin	0(0.0%)		5(100%)			5(100%)	
Burkina Faso	0(0.0%)		4(100%)			4(100%)	
Burundi	8(100%)		0(0.0%)			8(100%)	
Cameroon	23(100%)		0(0.0%)			23(100%)	
Côte d'Ivoire	0(0.0%)		15(100%)			15(100%)	
Gambia	0(0.0%)		4(100%)			4(100%)	
Ghana	0(0.0%)		10(100%)			10(100%)	
Guinea-Bissau	0(0.0%)		6(100%)			6(100%)	
Liberia	0(0.0%)		6(100%)			6(100%)	
Mali	0(0.0%)		5(100%)			5(100%)	
Niger	0(0.0%)		5(100%)			5(100%)	
Nigeria	0(0.0%)		207(100%)			207(100%)	
Senegal	0(0.0%)		5(100%)			5(100%)	
Sierra Leone	0(0.0%)		1(100%)			1(100%)	
Togo	0(0.0%)		3(100%)			3(100%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>31(10.1%)</b>		<b>276(89.9%)</b>			<b>307(100%)</b>	
	<b>How prevalent are conflicts in your country?</b>						
	Highly prevalent		Prevalent		Not Prevalent		Total
Benin	0(0.0%)		5(100.0%)		0(0.0%)		5(100%)
Burkina Faso	2(50.0%)		0(0.0%)		2(50.0%)		4(100%)
Burundi	2(25.0%)		0(0.0%)		6(75.0%)		8(100%)
Cameroon	15(65.2%)		0(0.0%)		8(34.8%)		23(100%)
Côte d'Ivoire	2(13.3%)		2(13.3%)		11(73.4%)		15(100%)
Gambia	1(25.0%)		2(50.0%)		1(25.0%)		4(100%)
Ghana	3(28.5%)		7(71.5%)		0(0.0%)		10(100%)
Guinea-Bissau	3(50.0%)		0(0.0%)		3(50.0%)		6(100%)
Liberia	0(0.0%)		1(16.7%)		5(83.3%)		6(100%)
Mali	1(10.0%)		2(40.0%)		2(40.0%)		5(100%)
Niger	0(0.0%)		4(80.0%)		1(20.0%)		5(100%)
Nigeria	130(63.1%)		10(1.1%)		67(35.8%)		207(100%)
Senegal	0(0.0%)		3(60.0%)		2(40.0%)		5(100%)
Sierra Leone	0(0.0%)		1(100.0%)		0(0.0%)		1(100%)
Togo	2(66.7%)		0(0.0%)		1(33.3%)		3(100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>161(52.4%)</b>		<b>37(12.1%)</b>		<b>109(35.5%)</b>		<b>307(100%)</b>

Source: Field survey, 2020.

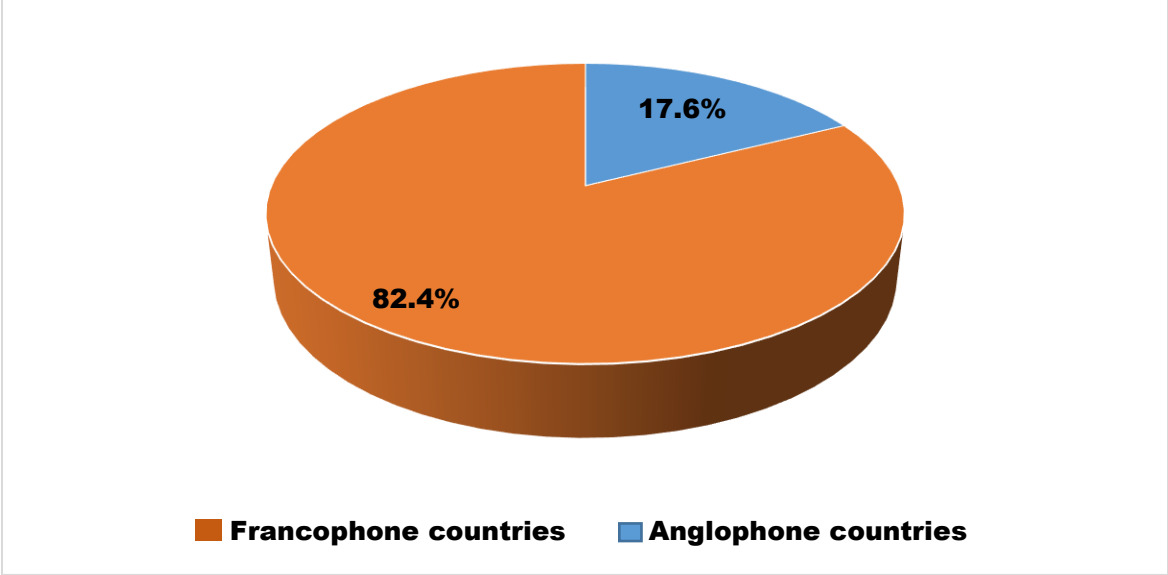
Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents, who were predominantly male (67.2 per cent). Where the age of respondents was concerned, the largest age cohort, with 38.4 per cent, was that in the age bracket of 28–37 years. This is probably attributable to the fact that the data were collected online and members of this age category are more tech savvy.

With regard to marital status, the majority (58.6 per cent) of the respondents were married. The distribution of the respondents by highest educational qualification shows a preponderance (58 per cent) with post-tertiary educational qualifications, including masters degrees and doctorates. This has positive implications for awareness of the peace, security, development, human rights and humanitarian pillars in the various communities and countries.

The distribution of the respondents according by employment sector shows that the highest percentage (36.8 per cent) work in the academic and media sectors. The distribution by subregions shows that 10.1 per cent of the respondents are from Central Africa and 89.9 per cent from West Africa.

Figure I

**Distribution of respondents by official language**

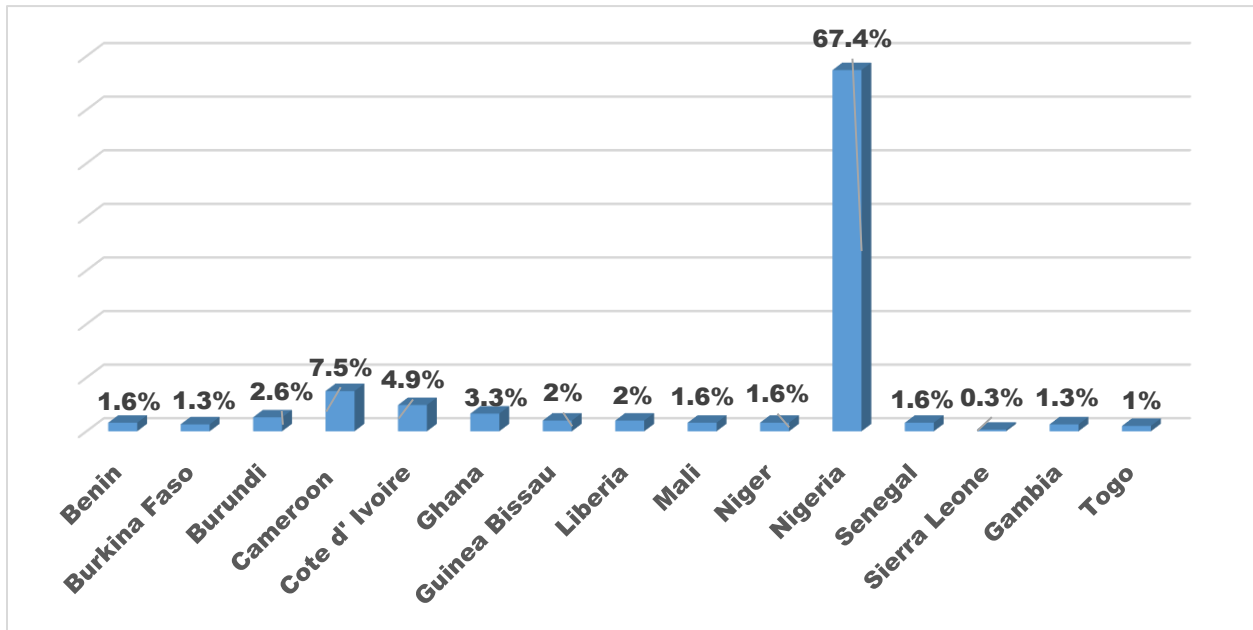


Source: Field survey, 2020.

As shown by the pie chart in figure I, the overwhelming majority of respondents (82.4 per cent) are from French-speaking countries.

Figure II

**Distribution of respondents by country**

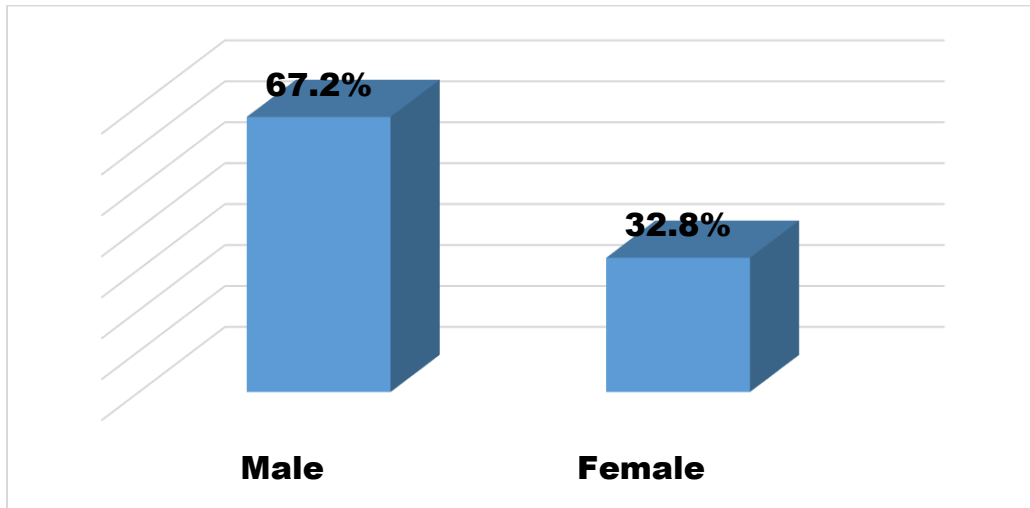


Source: Field survey, 2020.

Figure II shows the distribution of the respondents by country. As might be expected, the large majority (67.4 per cent) are from Nigeria, given that Nigeria is the most populous country in West and Central Africa.

Figure III

**Distribution of respondents by gender**

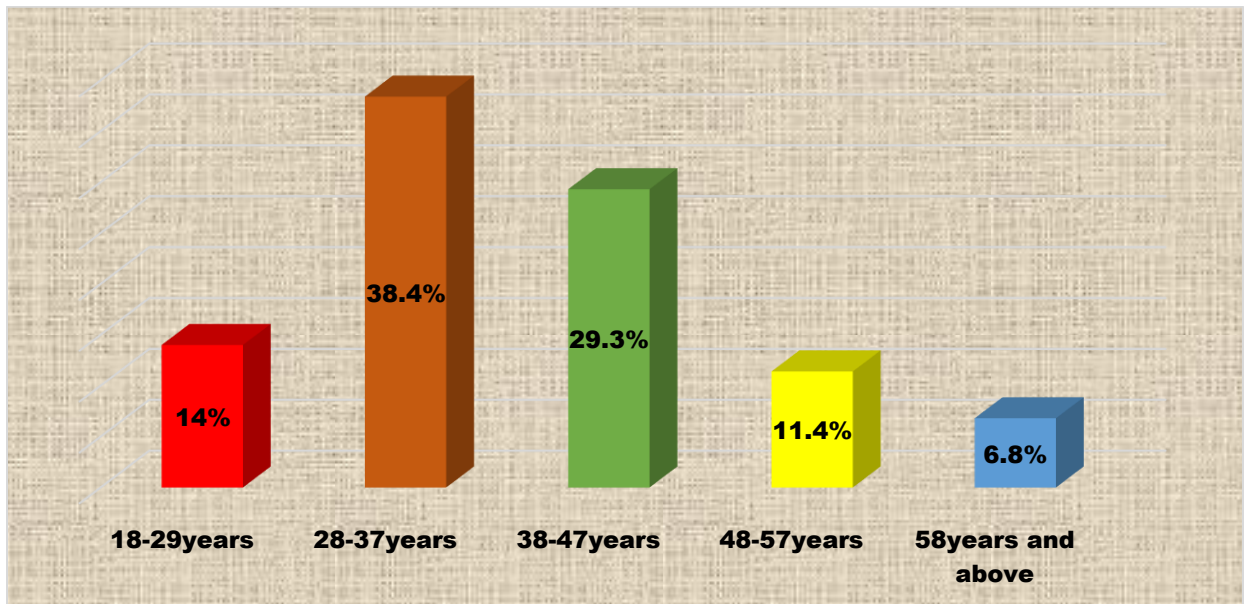


*Source:* Field survey, 2020.

The bar chart in figure III shows that the majority (67.2 per cent) of the respondents are male.

Figure IV

**Distribution of respondents by age category**

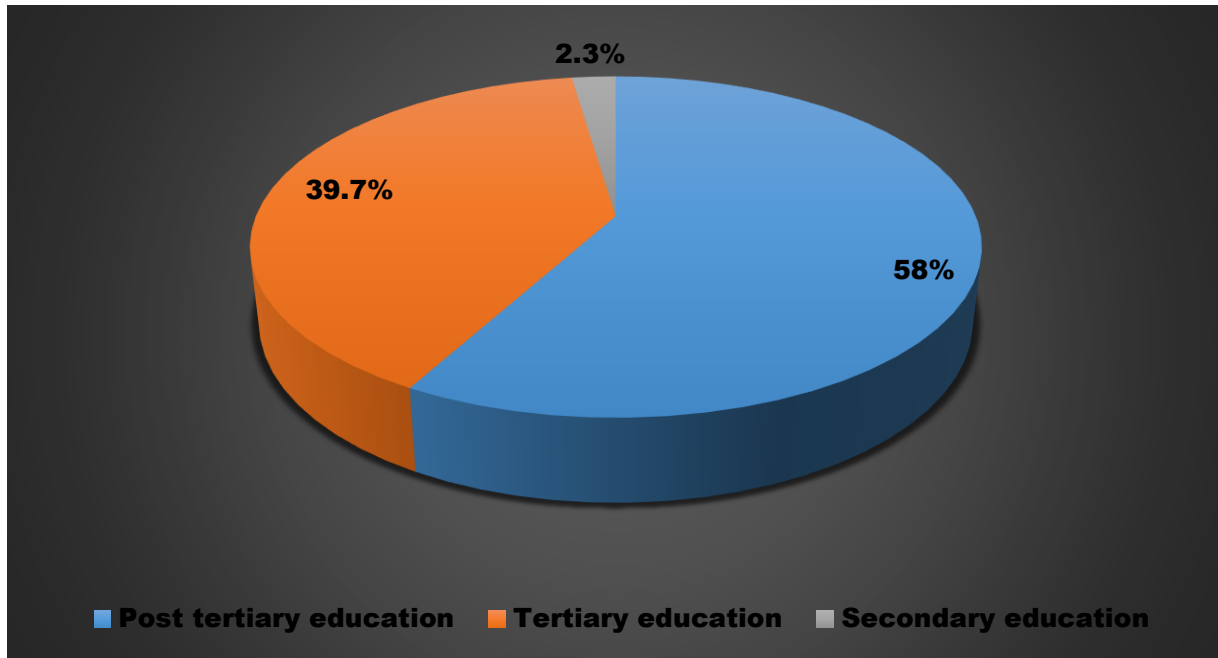


*Source:* Field survey, 2020.

Figure IV confirms the sociodemographic finding above, namely that the largest percentage of the respondents (38.4 per cent) are in the 28–37 year cohort.

Figure V

**Distribution of respondents by educational level**

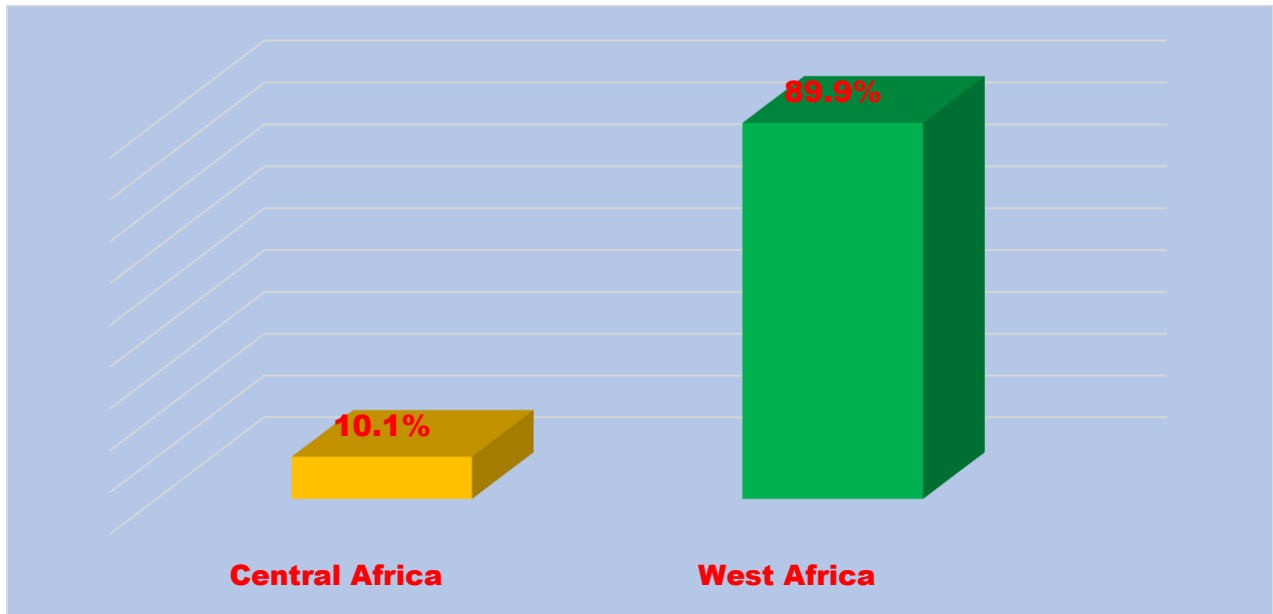


*Source:* Field survey, 2020.

Figure V shows the distribution of the respondents by level of educational qualification. As seen in the table of sociodemographic characteristics, the majority (58 per cent) of the respondents had a post-tertiary educational qualification.

Figure VI

**Distribution of respondents by their region**



*Source:* Field survey, 2020.

Figure VI shows the preponderance of West African respondents in the study.

## **Annex III**

### **Persons consulted for the non-structured interviews**

Remi Ajibewa, Director Political Affairs, ECOWAS Commission, 27 November 2020

Sintiki Ugbe, Director of Humanitarian and Social Affairs, ECOWAS Commission, 27 November 2020

Mublin Mubarak, ECOWAS staff member, 27 November 2020

Yvette Ngandu, ECCAS Commissioner, 11 December 2020

Rita Amukhobu, AUC-DPA, 30 November 2020

Sara Hamouda, Officer in charge of the Agenda 2063 Unit and SDGS and South-South Cooperation of the African Peer Review Mechanism, 25 November 2020

## Annex IV

### Inception meeting for the subregional studies on the interlinkages between the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars, held online from Addis Ababa, 27 October 2020

African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency, regional economic communities and African Peer Review Mechanism	
Salah S. Hammad Head of the AGA Secretariat African Union Commission	Heldana Tekeste Early Warning Officer Conflict Prevention Advisor to the African Union, African Union Commission
Neema Chusi Policy Officer AUC	Robert Gerenge (African Union) (guest)
Martin Bwalya Head, AUDA-NEPAD Centres of Excellence	Abiola Shomang Ag Principal Programme Officer Knowledge Dissemination AUDA-NEPAD
Sara Hamouda Officer in Charge, SDGs & Agenda 2063 Unit African Peer Review Mechanism	Salvator Matata Head and Liaison Officer to AUC Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Secretariat
Pillay Ponisamy Jevin Senior AUC Liaison Officer Southern African Development Community	Valentine Atonde Ag Representative to the African Union ECOWAS
Hatem Ghemari Political Advisor Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)	
United Nations agencies, funds and programmes	
Nicholas Shalita Chief of Staff UNOAU	Joseph Birungi Political Affairs Officer UNOAU
Steven Bourke Political Affairs Officer UNOAU	Samuel Udoko Political Affairs Officer UNOAU
Shadrack Mbogho UNOAU	Natal (Moussa) Saleh Batraki UNOAU
Edda Mekuria National Information Officer UNOAU	Chafi Bakari Human Rights Officer, (AU Matters) UN Human Rights (OHCHR)-Eastern Africa Regional Office
Adwoa Kufuor Regional Gender Advisor/OIC OHCHR-EARO	Joseph Noubadoum Human Rights Officer



OHCHR	OHCHR - EARO
Mohamed A Douksieh Senior Economic Affairs Officer and CNMC Programme Manager, UNOWAS	Clemence Aissatou Bare Director Liaison Office to African Union and Economic Commission for Africa, UNAIDS
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Aurelia Patrizia Calabrò UNIDO Representative and Director of the Regional Office Hub in Ethiopia	Khaled El Mekwad UNIDO Representative Head of Regional Office for Southern Africa
Ana Elisa Santana Afonso, Director United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Liaison Office to AUC, ECA and Representative to Ethiopia	Malebo Bowe United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Liaison Office to AUC, ECA and Representative to Ethiopia
Yumiko Yokozeki United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Liaison Office to AUC, ECA and Representative to Ethiopia	Mathewos Hunde Tulu UN office for Disaster Risk Reduction Liaison office to African Union
Kachi Madubuko Unit Head African Union Projects and Liaison to ECA IOM Special Liaison Office to the African Union and ECA	Selamawit Haile International Organization for Migration Liaison Office to the African Union and ECA
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<b>International Federation of the Red Cross</b>	
Richard Hunlede Head of Delegation and Permanent Representative to African Union and International Organization Delegation to Ethiopia and Representation office to the African Union and International Organizations, IFRCRCS	
<b>United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa</b>	
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Liwaaddine Fliss Programme Management Officer	Rumbidzai Adebayo

UN OSAA	UN OSAA
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Khaled Hussein Officer-in-Charge ECA Subregional Office for North Africa	Prof. Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi Economist ECA Subregional Office for North Africa
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Aminata Fofana	Chaibou Idrissa Chekaraou

Edem Blege	Ehab Amin Taha Hussien
Magdalena Moshi	Marie Goretti Nduwayo
Marikki Helena Rieppola	Mohamed Douksieh
Mohamadi Ouedraogo	Oumar Kane
Patrick Buse	Sidiki Kone
Williams Moki Lifongo	Valerie Ndaih Chia

## Annex V

### Expert group meeting, subregional studies on the interlinkages between the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars, 17 and 18 December 2020

<b>African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency, regional economic communities</b>	
Mesfin Ashagrie Director Strategic planning African Union Commission	Rosette y Randrianarivelo Strategic Planning Directorate African Union Commission
Oluwafemi Olamuyiwa Programme Officer African Union Commission	Aboubakar Diane African Union Commission
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Rabii Sakhii Arab Maghreb Union	Oita Etyang Conflict Analyst COMESA Secretariat
Fabrice Tunda Peacebuilding Officer SADC Secretariat	
<b>International and non-governmental organizations</b>	
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Betelehem Tsedeke Programme Coordinator and liaison officer to the African Union IFRC African Union and International Organizations Representation Office	Olamuyiwa Oluwafemi Solomon Project Administrator, AUDPA Free Movement of Persons in Africa
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Liwaaddine Fliss Programme Management Officer United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa	Kei Tagawa Programme Management Officer United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
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Chafi Bakari Human Rights Officer, (AU Matters) Eastern Africa Regional Office, OHCHR	Adwoa Kufuor Regional Gender Advisor/OIC OHCHR- Eastern Africa Regional Office, OHCHR
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Zewditu Befekadu (Ms.) Staff Assistant Economic Commission for Africa	
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Babafemi Badejo Consultant Yintab Strategy Consults	Abraham Ameh Special Assistant to Dr. B Badejo Yintab Strategy Consults.
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