



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**COURSE CODE: INR 322**

**COURSE TITLE: WAR AND PEACE IN WEST AFRICA SINCE 1960**

**INR 332****War and Peace in West Africa Since 1960**

Course Developer            Ndu Life Njoku  
National Open University of Nigeria,  
Victoria Island,  
Lagos.

Course Writer                Ndu Life Njoku  
National Open University of Nigeria,  
Victoria Island,  
Lagos.

Course Coordinator        Terhemba Ambe-Uva  
National Open University of Nigeria,  
Victoria Island,  
Lagos



## NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island  
Lagos

Abuja Annex  
245 Samuel Adesujo Ademulegun Street  
Central Business District  
Opposite Arewa Suites  
Abuja

e-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)  
URL: [www.nou.edu.ng](http://www.nou.edu.ng)

National Open University of Nigeria

First Printed

ISBN:

All Rights Reserved

Printed by .....

For  
National Open University of Nigeria

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Introduction.....	
Course Aims.....	
Course Objectives.....	
Working through the Course.....	
Course Materials.....	
Study Units.....	
Textbooks and References.....	
Assessment.....	
Tutor-Marked Assignment.....	
Final Examination and Grading.....	
Course Marking Scheme.....	
Course Overview/Presentation.....	
What you will learn in this Course.....	
What you will need in this Course.....	
Tutors and Tutorials.....	
Conclusion.....	
Summary.....	

**Introduction**

Welcome to INR 332: War and Peace in West Africa since 1960! You are about to embark on a wonderful academic adventure – a trip through the world of major themes or subject matters aggressively pursued and hoped for in human history. This course is available for students in the undergraduate programme of International Studies. The course provides in-depth study of war and peace in the sub-region of West Africa since 1960. Every student is, therefore, expected to acquire a detailed knowledge and understanding of the history, concepts and conflicts/resolutions of war before, during and after 1960 in the West African sub-region, and also their impact and relevance to human relations. This course guide is prepared in a way that you will be able to access necessary information that border on the different reasons for war and peace. In order to enjoy your study and be at ease with it, this module has classified all the war and peace experiences/initiatives of English-speaking and French-speaking West African peoples. The need for this classification is to avoid clustering issues or mixing up matters, and also to help you know the differences between the two. This will make for productive thinking and also allow for in-between study of underlying issues in the course. You are provided with guidance on the way to tackle tutor-marked assignments (TMAs).

It is important that you give your whole attention to classes so as to get the best from the course.

**Course Aims**

The aims of this course are to:

- (a) Explain the concept of war and peace
- (b) Highlight the concept of war and peace as major themes in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial West Africa.

- (c) Reinforce the idea of peace as a social necessity
- (d) Identify war/violence in West Africa as a carryover effect of the slave trade, colonial conquest and (Euro-African) international politics.
- (e) Identify major players in the attainment of peace in some war-torn West African states.

### **Course Objectives**

The objectives of this course are to:

- (a) Define the terms “war” and “peace”
- (b) Establish the need for peace in human development.
- (c) Appreciate why peace efforts succeeded in some countries and why it failed in others in West Africa.
- (d) Appraise the roles played by ECOWAS in restoring peace in various parts of West Africa

### **Working through the Course**

It is important that you undertake a careful study of each unit. A good approach is to start with this study guide-post to your learning the basics in War and Peace in West Africa since 1960. Also endeavour to have a note book, or jotter, that would help you prepare for classroom meetings.

### **Course Materials**

1. Course guide
2. Study units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment file
5. Presentation schedule.

## Study Units

INR 322 is a 2-credit unit 300 level course for undergraduate students offering International Studies. The course has four (4) modules made up of 4 study units. Thus, you will find sixteen (16) units in all. Listed below are the four modules in this course.

### Module 1

Unit 1	West Africa before 1960
Unit 2	Major Wars of Colonial Conquest in West Africa
Unit 3	Background to Post-colonial Wars in West Africa: A Historical Perspective
Unit 4	Causes of Wars/Conflicts in West Africa since 1960

### Module 2

Unit 1	General Principles of Conflict Resolution
Unit 2	Conflict Handling Styles
Unit 3	The Concept, and Process, of Mediation
Unit 3	Methods of Conflict Resolution amongst States in West Africa since 1960

### Module 3

Unit 1	War/Conflict in English-speaking West African Countries since 1960
Unit 2	War/Conflict in Non English-speaking West African countries since 1960
Unit 3	The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflicts/Wars in the English- speaking Sister Countries
Unit 4	The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflicts/Wars in the Non English-speaking Sister Countries

### Module 4

Unit 1	The ECOWAS in the Context of Peace/Security in West Africa
Unit 2	ECOWAS' ECOMOG: Peace-keeping Missions in West Africa

Unit 3	The significance of ECOWAS in the Maintenance of Peace in West Africa
Unit 4	Profile of ECOMOG Peace Missions in West Africa and the Issue of Regional Peace and security

Each module is preceded with a listing of the units contained in it, and a table of contents, an introduction, a list of objectives and the main content in turn precedes each unit, including Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs). At the end of each unit, you will find one or more Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA) which you are expected to work on and submit for marking.

### **Textbooks and References**

At the end of each unit, you will find a list of relevant reference materials which you may yourself wish to consult as the need arises, even though I have made efforts to provide you with the most important information you need to pass this course. However, I would encourage you, as a third year student to cultivate the habit of consulting as many relevant materials as you are able to within the time available to you. In particular, be sure to consult whatever material you are advised to consult before attempting any exercise.

### **Assessment**

Two types of assessment are involved in the course: the Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs), and the Tutor-Marked Assessment (TMA) questions. Your answers to the SAEs are not meant to be submitted, but they are also important since they give you an opportunity to assess your own understanding of course content. Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA) on the other hand are to be carefully answered and kept in your assignment file for submission and marking. This will count for 30% of your total score in the course.

### **Tutor Marked Assignment**

At the end of every unit, you will find a Tutor-Marked Assignment which you should answer as instructed and put in your assignment for submission. However, this Course Guide does not contain any Tutor-Marked Assignment question. The Tutor-Marked Assignment questions are provided from Unit 1 of Module 1 to Unit 4 of Module 4.

### **Final Examination and Grading**



The final examination for INR 322 will take three hours and carry 70% of the total course grade. The examination questions will reflect the SAEs and TMAs that you have already worked on. I advise you to spend the time between your completion of the last unit and the examination revising the entire course. You will certainly find it helpful to also review both your SAEs and TMAs before the examination.

### Course Marking Scheme

The following table sets out how the actual course marking is broken down.

Assessment	Marks
Four assignments (the best four of all the assignments submitted for marking).	Four assignments, each marked out of 10%, but highest scoring three selected, thus totalling 30%
Final Examination	70% of overall course score.
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% of course score.</b>

### Course Overview Presentation Scheme

Units	Title of Work	Week Activity	Assignment (End-of-Unit)
Course Guide			
<b>Module 1</b>			
Unit 1	West Africa before 1960	Week 1	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Major Wars of Colonial Conquest in West Africa	Week 2	Assignment 1
Unit 3	Background to Post-colonial Wars in West Africa: A Historical Perspective	Week 3	Assignment 1
Unit 4	Causes of Wars/Conflicts in West Africa since 1960	Week 4	Assignment 1
<b>Module 2</b>	<b>Development-Oriented Approaches</b>		
Unit 1	General Principles of Conflict Resolution	Week 5	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Conflict Handling Styles	Week 6	Assignment 1
Unit 3	The Concept, and Process, of Mediation	Week 7	Assignment 1
Unit 4	Methods of Conflict Resolution	Week 8	Assignment 1

<b>Units</b>	<b>Title of Work</b>	<b>Week Activity</b>	<b>Assignment (End-of-Unit)</b>
	amongst States in West Africa since 1960		
<b>Module 3</b>	<b>Behaviouralism and Emerging Approaches</b>		
Unit 1	War/Conflict in English-speaking West African Countries since 1960	Week 9	Assignment 1
Unit 2	War/Conflict in Non English-speaking West African countries since 1960	Week 10	Assignment 1
Unit 3	The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflicts/Wars in the English-speaking Sister Countries	Week 11	Assignment 1
Unit 4	The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflicts/Wars in the Non English-speaking Sister Countries	Week 12	Assignment 1
<b>Module 4</b>	<b>Structural Systems and Power Approaches</b>		
Unit 1	The ECOWAS in the Context of Peace/Security in West Africa	Week 13	Assignment 1
Unit 2	ECOWAS' ECOMOG: Peace-keeping Missions in West Africa	Week 14	Assignment 1
Unit 3	The significance of ECOWAS in the Maintenance of Peace in West Africa	Week 14	Assignment 1
Unit 4	Profile of ECOMOG Peace Missions in West Africa and the Issue of Regional Peace and security	Week 15	Assignment 1
	Revision	Week 16	
	Examination	Week 17	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17 Weeks</b>	

### **What You Will Learn In the Course**

“War and Peace in West Africa since 1960” provides you with the opportunity to master and understand the different causes of war or violence in the region being studied, as well as ways through which peace is explored and established. You will also learn the major wars fought by colonial masters in their conquest and colonization of West Africa before independence was achieved. Above all, you will be armed with the different conflict resolution approaches and the role played by regional organizations in the restoration of peace to war-torn areas.

## **What You Will Need for the Course**

Reviewing what you learned in 100 and 200 levels will immensely assist you in tackling and solving any problems you might experience in the course. Take a look at the foundation course in the 100 level. Also, endeavour to buy textbooks and visit websites on the internet to get vital information. Of course, you should not lose sight of the need for going to libraries to consult more books and also to study in a serene environment.

## **Tutors and Tutorials**

There are fifteen (16) hours of tutorials provided in support of the course. You will be notified of the dates and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group. Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, and keep a close watch on your progress. Be sure to send in your tutor-marked assignments promptly, and feel free to contact your tutor in case of any difficulty with your self-assessment exercise, tutor-marked assignment or the grading of an assignment. In any case, I advise you to attend the tutorials regularly and punctually. Always take a list of such prepared questions to the tutorials and participate actively in the discussions.

## **Conclusion**

Although this course discusses war and peace in West Africa since 1960, it is necessary to relate it to emerging trends in our society as well as use it to explore the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial experiences in Nigeria.

## **Summary**

This Course Guide has been designed to furnish the information you need for a fruitful experience in the course. In the final analysis, how much you get from the course depends on how much you put into it in terms of time, effort and planning.

I wish you success in INR 322 and in the whole programme!

**MODULE I**

Unit 1: West Africa before 1960.

Unit 2: Major Wars of Colonial Conquest in West Africa.

Unit 3: Background to Post-Colonial Wars in West Africa: A Historical Perspective.

Unit 4: Causes of Wars/Conflicts in West Africa since 1960.

**UNIT 1: WEST AFRICA BEFORE 1960****CONTENTS:**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 West Africa before World War II

3.2 West Africa during World War II

3.3 West Africa in the Post World War II Period

3.4 West Africa: The Road to Independence

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

“War” and “peace” are just two of some of the major themes in human history. This is equally true of West Africa in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. Many theories have been developed either to justify some wars or to reinforce the idea of peace as a social necessity. Wars, in many cases, are aimed at efficient attainment of victory in

conflict (through violence) to the satisfaction of one group over another or the parties involved. Peace, on the other hand, has been considered to be among humans' highest values. It relates to inter-personal, inter-group, inter-state, inter-regional and international relationships. Peace is a social condition which guarantees prosperity and well-being of individuals and the society at large. That is why one common-sense saying has it that, even though peace may not be everything, nothing works without peace! This underlines the importance of diplomacy and peaceful co-existence.

However, where diplomacy has failed, war has always become inevitable in various parts of the world (including West Africa), because of conflicting national or group interests - relating to territory, economy, glory and power, among others. Amidst the search for the reliable intellectual construct for the prediction of the causes of war and ways of preventing same, emerged the idealist theory of international politics after the First World War. Despite the divergent views held by the Idealist on world politics, there are elements of harmony in their views. Thus the Idealists collectively hold that:

1. Human nature is essentially good, and people are therefore capable of mutual collaboration;
2. The fundamental human concern for the welfare of others makes progress possible;
3. Bad human behaviour is the product, not of evil people but, of evil institutions and structural arrangements that motivate people to act selfishly and to harm others including making wars;
4. Wars are not inevitable; but their frequency can be reduced by eradicating the institutional arrangements that encourage them;
5. War is an international problem that requires collective or multi-lateral, rather than national, efforts to eliminate; and finally,

6. International society must re-organize itself to eliminate the institutions that make wars likely (Ukanwoke, 2000:12; Kegley and Wittkopf, 1993:20-21).

The prescriptions of the different idealist orientations for dealing with international conflicts tended to fall into three main groups as follows:

- (a) The first group called for the creation of international institutions to replace the anarchical and war-prone balance of power system that had precipitated World War 1.

The system then had been characterised by independent states who formed coalitions (in the form of shifting alliances) to wage war or defend weaker coalition partners from attack. Idealists therefore sought to create in its place a new system based on

*the principle of collective security to deal with the problem of war by making an aggression by any state an aggression against all who, acting in concert, would thwart the ambitions of the dominance seeking actor* (Coplin, 1980:35).

Arising from the above position, the founding of the League of Nations (and, much later, ECOWAS for the West African sub-region, as we shall later see), conceived as an embodiment of the collective security principle, was seen as an instrument that would eliminate war, once and for all (Ojo and Sessay, 1988:5). The above reflected the emphasis that the idealist placed on international institutions as a mechanism for coping with the problem of war, and the possibility of international co-operation as a mechanism of global problem solving (Ukanwoke, 2000:13)

- (b) The second group of idealist prescriptions emphasizes the legal control of war. This prescription called for the use of legal processes, such as mediation and arbitration, to settle international disputes and inhibit recourse to war. This idea, for instance, found expression in the creation of the Permanent Court

of International Justice to litigate inter-state conflicts, etc. (Ojo and Sessay, 1985:5; Ukanwoke, 2000:13).

- (c) Finally, the third group of idealist prescriptions called for the elimination of weapons of war as a means of achieving peace. Some reflections of this idealist prescription, for example, were the efforts of the Washington and London Naval Conferences during the 1920s to secure arms control and disarmament agreements (Ukanwoke, 2000:14). On the whole, however, much of the idealist programme for reform was never tried and even less of it was achieved, as events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leading to World War 11, show.

For West Africa specifically, war can be seen as a carry-over effect of the various experiences she had during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, colonial conquest and European international politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Modern West Africa is defined here as a long quadrilateral territory divided into some fourteen distinct political units. Of these political units, eight were former French colonies: Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Upper Volta (now, Burkina Faso), Togo, Dahomey (now, Benin Republic), and Niger. Nigeria and Ghana, modern West Africa's two most populous countries, as well as the smaller territories of Sierra Leone and Gambia, were once under British colonial domination. Liberia, with its dominant ruling class of African-American immigrants, has been an "independent republic" since 1849; even though she could not genuinely function as an independent state within the context of continent-wide colonialism. Portuguese Guinea was the last colony in West Africa to gain independence.

For more than a thousand years West Africa had been exposed to profound impact exerted by alien immigrants coming from areas whose peoples had evolved a more sophisticated socio-political culture. In the

15<sup>th</sup> century, direct contact had been established between West Africa and Western Europe. This was as a result of the success of the Portuguese in exploring the sea routes around the western bulge of the Sahara. As news of the commercial opportunities offered by the newly discovered “land of Guinea” gradually spread, other Europeans—especially the English, the French, and the Dutch—began regular business in West African waters. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed colonial conquest and the resistance put up by the people of the region.

By 1905, the greater part of the West African sub-region was firmly under European control. The period between 1914 (when Nigeria as a nation was born) and 1960 (when independence was gained) was a period of nationalists’ agitation, constitutional reforms and demand for independence in the region. By 1960, most West African territories had regained their independence. Thus, in most parts of the region the period of European rule lasted for little longer than a single lifetime.

The process by which West Africa produced sovereign states was a very complex one, characterized by interplay of forces and calculations on the part of various groups of West Africans, on the part of the colonial powers, and on the part of interest groups in the metropolis. West African independence was partly affected by international events such as the Second World War, the rise of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the Independence of India and China, the people’s liberation movement in Indochina, and the Bandung Conference. In West Africa, itself, the “domino theory” played its own role, so that the early independence of Ghana and Guinea helped to hasten up events on the road to independence in the other colonies. On the whole, “it must be stressed that the move for the regaining of independence was initiated by the African people; and, to whatever extent that objective was realized,



the motor force of the people must be taken into account” (Rodney, 1972: 306).

With independence achieved, political leaders in the region, as in all newly independent states, were faced with the task of formulating their country’s foreign policy, of working out a system of relationships with their former colonizers, with neighbouring West African states, and with countries in other parts of the world. They were also faced with the challenge of deciding what role to play in the then emerging movement for African unity. The line of policy taken by any one country depended partly on its internal political situation and partly on the character and ideas of the individual who occupied the office of head of state.

In this unit, we shall focus attention on the socio-political situation and developments in the region of our course of study before 1960. This will, hopefully, place you in a good position to understand, and appreciate better, latter-day developments in the region as from 1960. A Self-assessment Exercise, Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) and some references for further reading follow in the unit.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- (a) Appraise the colonial background to political developments having to do with war and peace in West Africa;
- (b) Highlight aspects of the colonial impact on post-independence West Africa;

- (c) Analyze the historical fact that, modern-day events have connections with earlier developments; and
- (d) Apply this simple logic of historical inter-connectedness in analyzing historical events in the course of study.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 West Africa before World War II**

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century all West Africans (except Liberians) were living under a colonial regime, even though the colonial powers had not, by then, finished with the task of establishing their authority firmly from end to end of their territories. In the Ivory Coast, for example, the French had to fight until 1910; the British, on the other hand, struggled to establish their authority in Nigeria at least until 1914 when Northern and Southern Nigeria became amalgamated. But, of course, in some areas, such as Sierra Leone and what later became known as Ghana, the colonial period began much earlier.

The new rulers faced enormous difficulties in the area of diseases whose causes were unknown. Additionally, there were hundreds of different languages and great differences in customs that needed to be tolerated, if not fully understood. Many Europeans were scared to come and work in an area regarded as ‘the white man’s grave’. Apart from this, it was, in any case, very expensive to hire such labour. In all, there was shortage of skilled personnel to work as staff in colonial government offices. It took the French some twenty years to work out a satisfactory structure for their territories in West Africa. The British were faced by the same problem of erecting new political structures to cover the territories they brought under their control. While the British adopted the *Indirect Rule* system of government in administering their colonies, the French opted

for the *Assimilation* system (which latter-day circumstances and developments forced to be replaced with “*Association*”). In the years between the First World War and the Second World War, the contrasting systems of native administration in the British and French West African territories began to be glaring.

### **3.2 West Africa during World War II**

In comparison with many other parts of the Afro-Asian world, British West Africa was relatively little affected by the turmoil of the Second World War. That notwithstanding, for the steadily increasing groups of politically conscious young men in Lagos, Freetown and Accra, the war brought some stimulating and disturbing experiences: the extra-ordinary sight of white men in transit through West Africa, doing menial jobs; the ironic spectacle of British administrators denouncing racialism and imperialism—as practised by their rival fellow white men, the Germans; the irksome sacrifices demanded by the war effort in the form of a shortage of consumer goods; and the stirring, hopeful affirmations of the Atlantic Charter. Some of the West African soldiers were heroes in the war. Apart from being decorated by Her Majesty, the Queen of England, they discovered that given equal weapons and training they could perform better in war. Consequently, the myth of racial superiority gradually declined. For the forty or fifty thousand West African soldiers who saw service with the allied armies in Ethiopia and Burma, there was an even wider range of novel sensations. Once demobilized, these ex-servicemen showed that “their contacts with other peoples” had led them to develop “a political and national consciousness”. West African intellectuals and ex-servicemen were not the only people to see the colonial situation in a new light. Many people in Britain, stirred by the mood of war-time idealism, were anxious to give the colonies a better deal.

French West Africans were more deeply affected by World War II than their contemporaries in the neighbouring British territories. Black troops were an important element in the French army and many African soldiers witnessed, at first hand, the catastrophic events of 1940. Africans were made aware, too, of the deep rift in the ranks of their European colonizers between the supporters of the Vichy regime, who controlled West Africa from 1940 to 1942, and the Free French under General de Gaulle. Indeed, the only fighting to occur in our region of study took place between Frenchmen when a Free French force, supported by the British navy, launched an unsuccessful attack on Dakar in September, 1940. In 1944, after all the French colonies had rallied to the Free French cause, de Gaulle summoned senior administrators to a conference at Brazzaville to discuss the future of the French empire. Little wonder why in 1945 each of the French African territories was invited to elect two African representatives to the Constituent Assembly.

On the whole, therefore, to appreciate fully the politics of decolonization in both British and French West Africa, it is essential to come to terms with the experiences of individual territories, especially during that global war.

### **3.3 West Africa in the Post-World War II Period**

The post-World War II era marked a turning point in the history of West Africa, both for the colonizers and the colonized. Having fought side by side with Europeans during the war, and the age-long mask of invincibility of the Europeans unveiled, the nationalist struggle proliferated, became better organized, and intensified. Post-war economic depression, the unemployed demobilized soldiers, the unfulfilled promises of better life and self determination, including

traces of racial segregation on African soil, are some of the factors that fanned the embers of nationalist struggle. Added to this was the exposure and literacy level of some of the leaders, as well as that of the mass media, such as *The West African Pilot*. From then on, the nationalists engaged the various colonial powers in their territories in constitutional reforms to increase the openings in the political landscape for the participation of the locals.

This era saw the use of agitations and counter-agitation tactics employed by the nationalists against obnoxious colonial policies through various constitutional reforms on the one hand, and repressive attempts by the European powers to suppress such agitations or to weaken the agitations, on the other. The aftermath of the war brought its full weight to bear on African nationalism, which shifted emphasis from the elites' quest for accommodation within the framework of the colonial government to that of radical and outright decolonization. The constitution of the newly formed National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.) published in 1945, described its aims as the achievement of internal self government in Nigeria and the Cameroons under British mandate, with the goal of exercising executive, legislative and judicial powers (Crowther, 1976).

West Africans were no longer content to take the back seat in the running of their own affairs. Whether, as in British West Africa, their demand was for self-government or, as in French West Africa, it was demand for an equal place in the French community with metropolitan Frenchmen, the effect was the same. Dramatic reforms were made in the colonial constitutions for their colonies. In Nigeria, for example, the Richard's Constitution of 1946 was an attempt to decentralize the once over-centralized state structure, and to accommodate more participation of the indigenes. The trend of decentralization continued under the

Macpherson's Constitution of 1951 until 1954 when the Lyttleton's Federal Constitution was presented in preparation for the eventual decolonization of the country.

### **3.4 West Africa: The Road to Independence**

Before 1960, however, most West African states were still under colonial tutelage. It was only Ghana and Guinea that had attained independence in 1957 and 1958, respectively. The rest were pre-occupied with struggles for independence via constitutional conferences, dialogues, independence conventions, etc. It was not until 1960 that countries such as Chad, Dahomey (now, the Republic of Benin), Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Upper Volta (now, Burkina Faso), Mali, Senegal and Nigeria attained independence. The rest, such as Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau, achieved theirs thereafter (Ejiofor, 1981).

In a real sense, therefore, one can assert that developments in the post-Second World War period prepared the road to independence in West Africa. The effect of that global cataclysm in both French and British West Africa, as in the rest of the colonial world, was to greatly strengthen the growth of independence movements. The war had a catalytic effect, speeding up two processes, one of them the development of a new, more radical, leadership; the other, the emergence of a large group of potential followers for such leaders.

Thus, the picture of West Africa prior to 1960 is that of a sub-region that was struggling with the goal, or was at the edge, of achieving independence. All the countries of West Africa (apart from Ghana and Guinea, which had their independence in 1957 and 1958, respectively) were still grappling with the struggle to attain independence. Even with

independence achieved, the colonial structures and institutions of government were not totally dismantled. The former colonial masters remained role models. This encouraged the acceptance of external influences consciously and unconsciously.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

On the whole, apart from having background knowledge of what the West African region was like in the colonial period before 1960, you have also been introduced to the historical events that contributed in shaping post-1960 socio-political developments. You would have, by now, understood that historical developments do not happen in isolation. Post-colonial developments can be linked to colonial developments. The Self-Assessment Exercise is designed to help you assess yourself on what you have learnt so far.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES**

1. Assess the validity of the statement that, the process by which West Africa produced sovereign states was a complex one.
2. Write an essay on “West Africa before World War II”.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have been introduced to the region of our study—the West African region. You have been informed on some of the major events that were going on in the region before 1960. It must be emphasized that the historical developments in West Africa before 1960, as presented in this unit, are not by any means exhausted. It is expected

that you begin to address your mind to background events as you study latter-day developments. This unit attempts to prepare you to do that.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- (i) Differentiate the external factors that contributed to independence in West Africa from the internal factors.
- (ii) Discuss the place of World War II in the history of West Africa.
- (iii) Examine how World War II contributed to the decolonization of West Africa.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Anene, J. C. and Brown, G. N. (1966): *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Coplin, W. D. (1980): *Introduction to International Politics* (Third Edition). Englewood Cliff, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Crowther, Michael (1976): *West Africa under Colonial Rule*. London: Hutchinson and Company Publishers Ltd.

Ejiofor, U (1981): *Africa in World Politics*. Onitsha: Africana Edu. Publishers Ltd.

Kegley, C. W. and Wittkopf, E. R. (1993): *World Politics: Trend and Transformation* (Fourth Edition). New York: St. Martins Press.

Ojo, O. and Sessay, Amadu (1988): *Concept in International Relations*. Lagos: JAD Publishers.

Rodney, Walter (1972): *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* London: Bogle l'Ouverture Publications.



Ukanwoke, Ngozi (2000): “Sovereignty in the New World Order: An Examination of ECOMOG in Liberia”, M.Sc Thesis, College of Social Sciences, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.

## **UNIT 2: THE COLONIAL CONQUEST OF WEST AFRICA**

### **CONTENT**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Strategies of European Penetration into West Africa

3.2 Colonial Conquest of West Africa as “Pacification”

3.3 Examples/Cases of Wars for Colonial Conquest in  
West Africa

3.4 Peace (in West Africa before 1960) as Colonial  
Subjugation and Domination.

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Prior to 1960, the picture of West Africa was that of a sub-African region in which most of its states were under colonial tutelage. It is a sub-region that was plagued with the double tragedy of forced involvement in slave trade wars and colonial wars of conquest by various European nations. It is right to assert, at this juncture, that in the context of war and peace studies in Africa, there are minor and major stages of incorporation of West Africa into Western-orchestrated conflicts, in terms of level of sophistication and frequency of the conflicts.

Before the trans-Atlantic slave trade, wars in African communities were mainly inter-ethnic wars and the war implements were simple enough (that is to say, they were not really sophisticated as to cause mass destruction of lives). The use of long range lethal weapons was not common as the arms were mostly bows, spears and arrows. Combatants were mostly warriors that were not necessarily professional soldiers. Emphatically, the lethal nature of these wars was very limited (Agbu, 2006:167-176). It is common in Eurocentric literature on Africa to assume that these wars were more or less endemic, and that they usually created serious discontinuities in inter-group relations. But, as A. E. Afigbo has rightly argued, “not only were the wars not as endemic as is popularly believed, but they did not necessarily create the degree of discontinuity in intergroup relations usually credited to them. As in

other societies, so also here, war was the continuation of relations by other [means] than diplomatic means” (Afigbo, 1981:15)

However, with the inception of the Atlantic slave trade, a good number of well-established African states were disrupted. Benin, Dahomey and Ashanti kingdoms, for example, were among the West African states which, through the prevalence of the Trans- Atlantic slave trade, diverted their energies from the peaceful development of politics, arts and culture to pre-occupation with slaving wars and wanton destruction of lives and property. The annual incursions of the state of Dahomey into Yoruba-land and into the territories of her neighbours were undertaken to keep the slave trade going. This was a major objective of the groups involved in the civil wars which dominated West Africa in the nineteenth century. Thus, the anarchic state of affairs resulting from slaving was probably worse among poorly organized African communities (Anene and Brown, 1966).

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- a.** Identify the various strategies the European colonialists adopted in penetrating and conquering their various West African colonies.
- b.** Explain the contextual meaning of the term “pacification”, as used by the European imperialists.
- c.** Give examples and case studies of European colonial conquests in West Africa.

- d. Explain the contextual meaning of “peace” in West Africa before independence.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Strategies of European Penetration into West Africa**

The application of a multi-faceted strategy to the realization of the colonial project by all the European parties involved was very much visible, and this greatly contributed in determining the nature of war and peace in West Africa within this period and even after. These strategies include direct confrontation and outright or frontal military attack and conquest, treaty alliances, instigation of wars between and among communities, alliance with one community to defeat another or defeat others, deportation of rebellious kings and even the use of gunboat diplomacy.

European penetration into West Africa, followed as it were by the establishment of European hegemony, was far from being a peaceful process, as imperial apologists sometimes imply. The penetration of (West) Africa, before the partition, involved a long series of military campaigns, most of which involved serious destruction of lives and property. In these circumstances, wrote Robin Hallett, “it seems more honest to speak of *the European conquest of Africa* rather than to indulge in genteel euphemisms” (Hallett, 1975, *emphasis mine*).

In short, apart from the use of trade relations and foreign direct and portfolio investment as strategies of penetration, West Africa (nay Africa) was defeated by force of arms. Colonial campaigns varied greatly in character. Some were decided by a few set battles; others were decided after years of tough battles. There were also areas where a

handful of European-led troops were sufficient to establish colonial claims to hegemony. In all these, it was simply violence being visited on Africans. Little wonder why a major theme running through much of modern West African history has to do with the practice of violence. Thus, the 19<sup>th</sup> century (for West Africa) could be described as a century of transformations which were often occasioned by the use of force and other forms of violence.

Any attempt to give a detailed account of how Europe became the dominant controller of the African socio-political system must point out the mechanisms of western imperialism or the strategies of European penetration into the continent. In the first place, Europeans used the superiority of their ships and fire-power to gain control of all the world's waterways. It is often said that vertical political divisions in Africa made European penetration and conquest easy. The truth however is that, even though class and ethnic divisions were not pronounced in pre-colonial African society, they too contributed to the ease with which Europe imposed itself on large parts of the continent. But, they played only a secondary role.

The following mechanisms or strategies of penetration are easily identifiable:

**The Commercial Strategy:** Trade was a fundamental strategy of European penetration into West Africa. Trade has been a regular and dominant feature of European contacts with West Africa. By trade, here, we mean the buying and selling of goods (whether they are raw materials or manufactured goods) and services among people. The trade links between West Africa and Europe brought Europeans closer to the West African people. Europe was more organized, more powerful and at a higher level of socio-economic development, while West Africa was

less well organized, less powerful and at a lower level of economic production. When, therefore, the two became involved in trade, it became easy for Europe to penetrate and lord it over the fledgling West African society. Of course, Africans naturally needed the trading relations, and could not resist exchanging their raw materials with European trade goods.

**The Religious Strategy:** The preaching of the Christian gospel (God's spell?) of Jesus Christ also provided, for European imperialists, another excuse for, and strategy of, penetration into West Africa.

It was in the interest of European imperialism that West Africans should be exposed to those aspects of Christianity which emphasized submissiveness, meekness and the virtues represented by the "pie-in-the-sky" Christian philosophy, as a way of controlling them. In a sense, then, Christianity served as a drug to keep Africans dreaming of imaginary rewards in Heaven. Seen in this light, therefore, Christianity played the role that Karl Marx attributed to religion: "the opium of the masses". When Marx termed religion the *opium of the people*, he was only making a historical statement based on the tendency for established religious leaders to delude the people that "material things of the world" are not necessary, while at the same time they were penetrating various societies and dominating them for the purpose of amassing wealth. This religious aspect, prepared the West Africans for easy, effective and efficient colonial administration.

**The Use of Brute Force/Violence:** Violence, whether overt or covert, has been the crudest and, like trade, a most pervasive weapon of European penetration into (West) Africa. The marked consistency in the use of crude force, coercion and militaristic threats, etc., by European imperialists to achieve their goals of penetration of West Africa shows

that Europeans succeeded in occupying and dominating our region of study essentially through the instrumentality of violence. Violence is integral to the ideology that hardly takes into consideration the idea of “pursuing a given goal by fair means”; rather, it believes in “achieving that goal at all costs”.

A cursory look at the over-running of Africa by the European conquerors goes to establish the fact that the continent was taken through violence. Little wonder why a major theme running through much of modern African history has to do with the practice of violence. Put differently, the penetration of Africa by Europeans, and the eventual establishment of European hegemony was not a tea-party! They were far from being a peaceful process, as imperial apologists sometimes imply. This fact could, in a way, be gauged from colonial British wars against the Asante, Fante, and the Ijebu, including that involving Kosoko, Akitoye and the British in Lagos, as well as those of Benin, Igbo-land, the Niger Delta areas and the Northern parts of Nigeria. Where the people wisely surrendered to superior weaponry as a result of experience - without putting up fierce resistance - they lived to fight another day and sometimes sabotaged the colonial administration. Rather than die in a war they knew they could not finally win or submit to colonial rule, some migrated far away from the territory of colonial administration, like the people of Koma in Nigeria. Thus, the often acclaimed statement of Lord Lugard in a part of Northern Nigeria that, *the population is on our side and welcome our advent from the misrule of the Habe rulers* is one side of the story. It has neglected the reasons why the people gave the invaders water or decided not to fight them. In short, the partition and colonisation of Africa involved a long series of military campaigns, most of which involved serious destruction of societies and civilization.

Therefore, like the rest of Africa, the West African sub-region was militarily humbled mainly because of the superiority of their invaders' arms. As many historians have noted, colonial European military campaigns varied greatly in character from place to place. Some proved to be very tough battles though, while in some areas all that a handful of Europeans needed to do to overrun the areas was to mobilize a handful of African troops.

### **3.2 Colonial Conquest of West Africa as “Pacification”**

As West Africa (alongside the rest of Africa) was being humbled through violence, and conquered for colonial occupation, domination and exploitation, the European colonizers perceived, trivialized and, indeed, represented their action as mere “pacification”! Thus, by subduing West Africa militarily, the European invaders held that they were simply enforcing a peaceful condition in the sub-region. This was, in turn, with a juxtaposition of European civilization and African assumed barbarity; a juxtaposition of European enlightened paternalism and African primitivism and benightedness. The image of Africa as the “Dark Continent” waiting to be opened up and “civilized” was also consistent with this power relations between Europe and Africa, which trivialized the nature of the brutal colonial conquest of West Africa, and indeed all Africa, as “pacification”; as an obsession with the enforcement of “law and order” in the territories. In the British ‘expedition’ to Benin kingdom in Nigeria, for instance, the British caused social disharmony; the traditional political institution and culture were violated, many lives were lost, and the arts and crafts for which the kingdom was glorious were looted, with the industrial sites paralysed. Thus, the colonial system, which came as pacification after the abolition of the slave trade, was not invented as a system of government, but it rather developed in stages. In the gradual development of colonialism,



European anti-slavery officers, consular authorities, and trading companies played one role or the other in enforcing their law and order, also known as pacification. In all the stages, force and intimidation were freely and extravagantly used.

It must be noted that before the coming of the Europeans, states, kingdoms and empires had been waging various types of war against one another, and also had been coming to armistice or peace without external intervention. This situation was equally true of Europe. Some of the wars also brought about the emergence of stronger and more united groups. The often acclaimed pacification theory has been explained outside its historical context. To be emphasised is the economic undertone of the Europeans. For rapid development of commerce in the interest of Europe, planting of cash crops in Africa for European industries, sale of industrial goods in African markets, the people must not be in conflict. There must be peace for population growth, stability for effective exploitation of human and material resources. The metropolitan countries must establish their hegemony. Ironically, a very high percentage of the 19<sup>th</sup> century violence was engineered by European demand for African captives. The Europeans themselves sponsored the violence by their demand for slaves, offering of credit facilities, giving and sales of instrument of war (fire arms) to associates. But, the effect of the Industrial Revolution on European economy and structure demanded not for slaves, but for more raw materials and external market for which Africa was found to be of great potential. Little wonder why there was a sudden twist: the violent and unsolicited 'pacification' or aggression exercise!

Hence, applications of a multi-stage strategy to the realization of the colonial project by all parties involved were very much visible, and this culminated in war and peace in West Africa within this period. These

strategies include conquest by force of arms, pacification and forced treaty-making; treaty alliance, alliance war, instigation of war between and among communities, alliance with one community to defeat another/others, deportation of rebellious kings, and even gun-boat diplomacy.

In Senegal, for example, the French forced the indigenous chiefs of the immediate hinterland by treaty or conquest to surrender their territory to what later became the colony of Senegal.

### **3.3 Examples/Cases of Wars for Colonial Conquest in West Africa**

Governor Faidherbe of colonial France organized a formidable army, and, in a series of campaigns, destroyed the petty Fulbe states of Fouta Toro, and drove Al-Hajj Umar, the empire's helmsman, who put up fierce resistance eastwards. By the treaty, signed in 1860, with 'Umar the French gained full control of the Senegal River. In addition to a compact block of territory in the Senegal, the French acquired nuclear posts along the coast of what later became Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire.

Subsequently, the Guinea base was secured in the rear by a military expedition organized from Conakry against Fouta Djallon. The holy Muslim city of Timbo was captured and the Muslim 'republics' dismembered. The French proceeded from Senegal and Guinea bases and advanced towards the Niger basin. Bamako was occupied in 1883, followed by the establishment of military posts from Medina on the River Senegal to Bamako on the Niger River. Similarly, toward the end of the 19th century, Samori was defeated by the French. In the words of Anene (1999), the dream of connecting French coastal possessions to one another and, through Timbuktu, with Southern Algeria became

realized. The French venture was, in the main, an imperialistic one based on military conquest: a piece of “the end justifies the means”! Disorganization and anarchy naturally followed the military campaigns right across the Sudanese belt territory.

There were also cases of the use of scorched-earth policy on communities, or simply the routing of villages. The French, for example, began, from their Senegal base, to burn villages within five kilometres of the Gambia River and chase the village chiefs across the river itself. This forced Britain to lay effective claim to the Gambia River; it eventually culminated in negotiations between Britain and France.

Following the settlement of the returnee slaves in Freetown, the British made it a colony in 1808. Consequently, the remainder of the coast up to the Mano River, which forms the boundary with Liberia, was acquired from the local chiefs. More so, when the Mende fought one of their many wars down to the Sherbro in 1880, the British authorities in Freetown capitalized on this conflict and sought, through treaties and arbitration, to restore peace and trade to the hinterland, while arresting and deporting recalcitrant chiefs.

In Nigeria, the Akassa war of Brass in 1896, the threat of gunboats (gunboat diplomacy), kidnapping and deportation of King Jaja of Opobo by Consul Johnson; the military attack on, and defeat of Nana of Itsekiri and Nana’s trading empire, his trial and deportation to the Gold coast; the British punitive expedition to the Benin empire, which led to destruction and looting of its great treasuries, the capture and deportation of Oba Ovenranwen; the defeat of the Egba at Ikorodu, in 1865, by Glover’s aggressive policies, and the attack and destruction of the Arochukwu *Ibini-Ukpabi* Oracle, as well as the hanging of the Aro chiefs, are all traceable to the issues of “a peace or powder policy” of the

European which led to the destabilization, instability, insecurity and militarization of the West African region. All these have continued to have profound consequences on the post-independence conflicts and the development of states of the region. The conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate, as well as the occupation of Bornu and the Nupe, among others, followed similar trends (Crowther, 1976).

## **1.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it is easy to see that, beginning from the period of initial European penetration of West Africa up to the era of eventual conquest and colonization of the region, it was sheer violence that was the order of the day. For the colonialists in West Africa, as elsewhere, “law and order” indeed meant outright subjugation and domination of their colony. Indeed, colonial authority was acquired by violence and maintained by violence, and the authority was partly relinquished as a result of violence/threat of violence.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. How valid is it to assert that, Europeans penetrated and colonized the West African sub-region through the instrumentality of violence?

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, effort has been made to identify some of the critical strategies of European penetration into West Africa, as well as what these strategies entail in terms of their lasting impact on the psychology of West Africans. You have learned that colonial conquest of territories in West Africa—violent as they were—were seen by the invading

Europeans as mere “pacification”. Finally, you have taken note of the fact that the various wars of colonial conquest which Europeans fought in the region being discussed were embarked upon to enable them to fully and firmly control or dominate their territories.

### **3.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- 1) Write a two-page essay to explain the nature of war and peace in West Africa from the time of European colonial invasion of the region up to the time of independence.
- 2) Identify and comment on the three strategies adopted by Europeans in penetrating West Africa.

### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Anene, J. C. and G. Brown, eds. (1966): *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Crowther, M. (1976): *West Africa under Colonial Rule*. London: Hutchinson and Co. Pub. Ltd.

Agbu, Osita (2006): *INR 102: Introduction to International Law and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Africa*. Lagos : N.O.U.N.

Afigbo, A. E. (1981): *The Age of Innocence: the Igbo and their Neighbours in Pre-colonial Times*. Owerri, 1981 Ahiajoku Lecture.

Law, Robin (1991): *The Slave Coast of West Africa, 1500-1750: The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society*. London: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Robert S. (1989): *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial West Africa*. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd.

Hallett, Robin (1975): *Africa since 1875: A Modern History*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

## **UNIT 3: BACKGROUND TO POST-COLONIAL CONFLICTS/WARS IN WEST AFRICA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Pre-Colonial Setting: the Slave Trade
  - 3.2 The Pre-Colonial Setting: the Religious Factor
  - 3.3 The Colonial Factor
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit seeks to provide for you a more detailed background to wars fought in West Africa before the coming of colonial rule in the region. This unit, as a follow-up to the last unit, is a complimentary attempt to deepen your knowledge by further exposing you to what was happening in our region of study before the introduction of colonial rule. The unit does this by examining the pre-colonial and the colonial settings.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- a) Explain how developments in the pre-colonial setting in West Africa contributed in laying the foundation for post-colonial wars in the region.
- b) Identify the forces in the colonial era that contributed in setting the tone for post-colonial wars in West Africa.
- c) State the attributes of the slave trade as a vicious force in the pre-colonial relationship between Europe and the West African sub-region.
- d) Define the character of colonialism

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Pre-Colonial Setting: the Slave Trade**

The European slave trade in Africa, which surprisingly lasted for about four hundred years, one can rightly argue, set the dangerous tone of unmitigated violence through its gross devaluation of the worth of human life on the African soil. The obnoxious trade in human beings, it has been shown (Uzoigwe, 1973; Njoku, 1998:), depopulated West Africa, retarded its development in all areas of human endeavour, apart from somewhat militarizing the region through its dependence, inter alia, on small-scale wars deliberately instigated to capture Africans. As R.C. Njoku rightly notes,

*“Usually, the practice of slavery comes with a degree of militarization of society. Besides the typical violence that accompany the procurement and handling of slaves, rival*



*[interest groups] engaged one another in heated competition for power and control over the lucrative overseas' commerce"* (Njoku, 2007:120).

In fact, reports of Europeans on the ground contain details of violent encounters even among the various European slave merchants on the African coasts (Njoku, 2007: 133, note 25). The slave trade also militarized West Africa through the importation of arms for use by local men of authority for enhancing their captive acquisition capacity. In this sense, therefore, the slave trade was the major fore-runner of colonialism in setting the dangerous stage for a strange "militaristic consciousness" in (West) Africa. This militaristic consciousness, or war consciousness, was later to be taken to its next level when Africa came under colonial rule.

### **3.2 The Pre-Colonial Setting: the Religious Factor**

Writing about the states of the Western Sudan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (as well as other important aspects of West Africa since 1800), J. B. Webster and others, in reference, among other things, to the Islamic jihads which engulfed the region then, have (in their book-title) aptly referred to that century as "*the revolutionary years...*" (1967). Suffice it to say that, the Jihadist revolution started in those years of 19<sup>th</sup> century West Africa has, in a sense, not abated up till now.

Muslim jurists divided the world into two parts: the 'Abode of Islam' and the 'Abode of War', by which is meant the territory not under Islamic rule. It is the duty of every Muslim to invite the unbelievers to accept Islam; if they respond positively, then they are integrated into the Abode of Islam. If, however, they turn down the request, then they should be visited by the jihadists. As a 'collective duty' (as opposed to 'individual duty'), the jihad, then, is to be carried out against the

unbelievers---that is, all those who refuse to become Muslims (Hunwick, 1966: 292-293). This seems perfectly straightforward, and quite a number of jihads were successfully undertaken in the region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the successes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century jihads in West Africa may be said to outweigh the failures, the seeds sowed during these revolutionary years have continued to generate, in the history of Islam, disputes as to who is a Muslim and who is not. The situation has become so bad that certain extremist Islamic groups would often denounce other Muslims as 'unbelievers' because they did not accept some of their stricter tenets. This has often times led to conflicts and riots in the post-colonial state.

### **3.3 The Colonial Factor**

A quick look at the colonization and decolonization processes in West Africa betray, to a large extent, a situation which set a structural foundation of the post-colonial wars in the region. Historically speaking, it is true that inter-ethnic wars had existed before the European incursion; however, there is no doubt that these inter-ethnic rivalries, where they existed, became escalated and manipulated, as well, by various European imperialists. Conversely, where such did not exist, the Europeans invented and instigated them in an attempt to justify their uninvited presence, and actualize their economic advantage at every stage of their imperialist adventures.

The spate of treaty and counter treaty making between a given European power and the indigenous chiefs, and the claims of power, the claims of territory and counter claims, or acquisition and cession of territories among the rival and friendly imperial powers are some of the issues that

were carried over to post-colonial West Africa. All these culminated to the arbitrary, erroneous and lopsided colonial boundaries which pitch one ethnic group against the other in the present, leading to a series of bitter internecine feuds which result in bloody civil wars, as well as insurgencies.

The strategies of instigating and fighting wars of colonial conquests and forceful pacification in the name of treaty making, wherein opposing chiefs were sanctioned, deported, or hanged, were somehow copied and adopted in post-colonial administration. Also, the character of colonial repression was contracted by the post independent indigenous West African rulers, leading to the quest by some ethnic groups to secede or insist on their right to self determination; the result has been numerous genocidal civil wars.

The dispersed nature of ethnic groups, a consequence of ill-drawn colonial boundaries, such that some ethnic nationalities are minorities in some countries and majorities in some other countries in West Africa, has led to recurrent sporadic insurgency and militant rebellions across national borderlines, as what looks like repression of kith and kin in a particular country is seen as a repression of their own nationality in another country, thus raising the issue of ethnic militias and insurgent groups across countries in West Africa.

Moreover, in the course of colonial conquest for territorial acquisition by military expeditions, indigenous peoples were recruited into the colonial force; besides, arms were either trafficked or supplied to local chiefs and warriors for prosecution of such wars, thereby inculcating and raising bellicosity and belligerent attitudes among the indigenous people. The stock-piling of arms in form of small arms and light weapons of mass destruction or put differently, armament gained

entrance on a large scale during the various stages of European contacts with people of West Africa.

In some cases, the elections heralding independence were overtly and covertly rigged by the colonial government in favour of one group over another. The general elections leading to self rule in Nigeria, for example, were allegedly rigged by the British in favour of the Northern Peoples Congress (N.P.C.).

Even the issue of Nigerianization of the army, it is alleged, ended up being the “northernization of the army”. The lopsided Western educational advancement of the southern part of Nigeria, in comparison with the northern part, for example, which of course is typical of other West Africa nations, has posed a post-colonial challenge and has led to hostilities between the North and the South. These have contributed to the series of post-colonial conflicts in Nigeria, the climax of which was the Nigerian Civil War.

Examples abound to buttress the above contention that the imperialist incursion contributed, to a large extent, to the structural foundation of the modern/contemporary conflicts in West Africa. Crowther (1976) aptly estimated that of the 8,400 troops of the French occupation of West Africa, the great majority were Africans; thus he reiterated that the European conquest of the sub-region, whether by the French or the British, was largely given effect through African troops and porters. Similarly, the High Court which the Royal Nigeria Company set up in Asaba, Nigeria, was backed up by a constabulary consisting of only three European officers and 150 African men. In the Gold Coast, the Fanti (ethnic nationality) contributed troops to the 1874 campaign against the Ashanti by Britain and aided in its subjugation.

Besides, the creation of the West African Frontier Force (W.A.F.F.) by the British which later metamorphosed into the various armed forces of the various independent West African countries were all preparatory to the eventual post-colonial conflicts, given their roots in the colonial context. The colonial orientation of these forces was to maintain the status quo in the quest to defend the territorial integrity of emergent sovereign states, and, by implication, maintain the arbitrary and ill-drawn colonial boundaries. This is one of the major sources of conflicts in West Africa, on the one hand, with irredentist groups challenging the sanctity of these boundaries, on the other.

Such conflicts as mentioned above include three brief interstate wars over the disputed border between Burkina Faso and Mali, rebellious and irredentist movements by ethnic minorities in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger (McGowon, 2004), and the southern Senegalese province of Casamance. In the case of Casamance, Southern Senegal, the backlash of illogical territorial maps imposed by colonial powers played a pivotal role in fuelling the crisis (Minteh, 2009)

Historically, the Casamance has a diverse colonial heritage due to Portuguese, French and English control for over 200 years (African Research Group 1999). The British assumed control of the region shortly but finally **ceded** the region to the French. The region has since then become a French colony until Senegal attained independence in 1960. Culturally, the people of the region are more aligned to the Mandigos, Jola and Balantes of the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. At times, the region has also been more politically aligned with Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia.

For instance, the people of Casamance fought along with the Party for Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Café Verde (PAIGC) during the country's quest for independence. During the 1998 Civil War of Guinea-Bissau the armed wing of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy in the Casamance were alleged to have fought on the side of the military junta led by the Late General Ansumana Manneh. On the same token, both the 2001-2002 and the 2005-2006 parliamentary and presidential elections in the Gambia were also marred by alleged voter registration irregularities amongst president Jammeh's Jola kinsmen from Casamance and Guinea-Bissau.

Economically, the region has a great potential for economic development with climate conditions that allows the production of enough food crops. Its also has rich forest resources that both the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau largely rely on for timber, and coal as a source of energy. Conversely, due to the inter-connections between the ethnic Jolas, Balantes, and Mandigos of Northern Guinea-Bissau and the troubled Casamance region of Senegal, some governments in Guinea-Bissau find themselves aiding the Movement for the Forces of Democracy in Casamance (MFDC) campaign efforts in the Casamance. Also, because MFDC rebels are predominantly President Jammeh's ethnic kinsmen, he has on numerous occasions been alleged to have provided assistance to the MFDC in the Casamance. There are also reports indicating that weapons used by rebels in the Casamance are from Gambia with the assistance of the government (Minteh, 2009).

Another notable perspective of major wars in the West Africa region is the issue of arms trafficking and proliferation which began with the slave merchants who were sufficiently armed to enable them effect slave raids. It was such stock pile of arms that fueled inter-tribal wars. A typical example of such acquisition of arms was the arms found at

Ebrohimi by the British raiding of Nana of Itshekiri capital. The arms found included 106 cannon, 445 blunder busses, 640 dane guns, 10 revolvers; 1,640 kegs of gunpowder, and 2,500 rounds of machine gun ammunition (Crowther, 1976:122). Since then till the present era, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the sub-region when the cold War ended has contributed in fuelling many conflicts. Africa has become an attractive and profitable dumping ground for nations and arm manufacturers eager to get rid of weapon stocks made 'superfluous' by the end of the cold war or by technology developments.

The above historical analogy precipitated conflicts of various kinds of wars, from war of independence to war of succession resulting from ethnicization of the polity and, military coups; electoral conflicts, ethnic conflicts leading to rising up of ethnic militias and guerrilla and irredentist groups. Some examples will suffice: a war of independence was waged by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (P.A.I.G.C.) which broke out in 1963 in Guinea Bissau, there was also the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 and Chadian; the conflict of 1983, the late 1980s, precisely in 1989, armed rebellion ensued in Liberia. The late 1990s saw the culmination of the diamond-and-corruption-fuelled rebellion in Sierra Leone. Also, Cote d'Ivoire, once a beacon of prosperity and stability was increasingly beset by its own internal political troubles that were to develop into armed conflict in 2002. The conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone had spiralling effects on Guinea Bissau.

A cursory look at the profile of conflicts in (West) Africa in the post-independence period, and in the post-Cold War era, reveals a wide spectrum of conflict types. They include the six basic historically specific categories identified by Zartman (1985, quoted in Egun, 2006:408)

- De-colonization power struggles,
- Conflicts emerging from ‘new independent consolidation’,
- Struggles from ‘leftover liberation movements’,
- Conflicts over ‘ill-defined territory’,
- ‘Structural rivalries over distribution of power’, and
- Conflict of ‘runaway means’

African post-colonial conflicts also fit into the five types of conflicts identified by Chazan, *et al* (quoted in Egwu, 2006), which include: elite, factional, communal, mass and popular conflicts.

In the above conflicts, however, peacekeeping and peace-making for a greater part of the 1990s was left to regional players, notably Nigeria which intervened first in Liberia, then in Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, under the banner of the Economic Community of West African State, (ECOWAS). We shall, therefore, examine the major causes of wars in West Africa since 1960 in the next unit.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The conclusion one is persuaded to draw here is that, although there were small-scale, short-lived wars in pre-colonial West Africa (which had a contextual rationale in the geo-political economy of fledgling African societies), the factor of the slave trade and colonialism played a major role in laying the real foundation of conflicts and wars in the region.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES**

1. Identify the various negative sources of conflicts in West Africa before 1960.



## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that there was a heinous trade that took place between Africans and Europeans, called the Trans Atlantic slave trade. You now know that this evil trade, which lasted for hundreds of years, almost destroyed whatever civilization then existed in Africa. You have also learnt that the trade, because of its very violent nature, contributed, like colonialism, in setting the stage for the spate of conflicts/wars witnessed in West Africa in the post-colonial era.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- (i) Discuss the view that, the negative impact of both the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism on West Africa has much to do with the post-colonial conflict situation in the region.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Crowther, M. (1976): *West Africa under Colonial Rule*. London: Hutchinson and Co. Pub. Ltd.

Minteh, B. S. (2009). “The Crisis in Casamance, Southern Senegal: A Constructive Conflict Resolution Approach”, <http://www.senegambianews.com/article/education>

McGowon, P. (2005): “Coups and Conflicts in West Africa, 1995-2004: Part 1: Theoretical Perspectives”, *Armed Forces and Society*, October 2005, vol. 32, pp.5-23.

Africa Research Group (1999): *The Casamance Conflict, 1982-1999*. London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Egwu, S. G. (2006). "Beyond Revival of Old Hatred: The State and Conflict in Africa", Gaya S. Best, ed.: *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Njoku, N.L. (1998): *Studies in Western Imperialism and African Development*. Owerri: Tonyben Publishers.

Njoku, R.C. (2007): "Igbo Slaves and the Transformation of the Niger Delta", in Chima Korieh and F.J. Kolapo: *The Aftermath of Slavery: Transformations in Southeastern Nigeria*. New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2007.

Uzoigwe, G.N. (1973): "The Slave Trade and African Societies" in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol.XIV, No.12, pp.187-212.

Davidson, Basil (1977): *A History of West Africa, 1000-1800*. Essex: Longman Group Ltd.

Webster, J. B. *et al* (1967): *The Growth of African Civilisation; The Revolutionary Years: West Africa since 1800*. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Hunwick, J. O. (1966): "The Nineteenth-Century Jihads" in Anene, J. C. and Brown, G. (eds.): *Africa in the Nineteenth & Twentieth Centuries*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

**UNIT 4: CAUSES OF WARS/CONFLICTS IN WEST AFRICA  
SINCE 1960**

**CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Nature of Colonial Boundaries/Illogical Territorial Map
  - 3.2 Ethnicity
  - 3.3 Economic and Political Factors
  - 3.4 Struggle for Independence
  - 3.5 The Ramifications of Bi-polarism/Cold War Politics
  - 3.6 Coup d'états, Counter-coups and Coup Plots
  - 3.7 Prevalence of Mercenaries in West Africa

3.8 Strategic Alliances/Involvements

3.9 Miscellaneous Factors

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit dwells on the various causes of wars/conflicts in the West African sub-region ever since the region produced independent or sovereign states, with the end of colonial rule. The enumerated causes go to show that some of the wars experienced by the people of West Africa are caused by external factors. In any case, it will also become clear to you that some of these wars are triggered off by social and political factors internal to given West African countries.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you are expected to be able to:

- a) Enumerate the causes of wars in West Africa since 1960.
- b) Explain why the colonial experience is considered a bad influence in the post-colonial history of West Africa.
- c) Show how the struggle for independence triggered off wars in West Africa.

d) Differentiate between economic and political causes of wars in post-colonial West Africa.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 The Nature of Colonial Boundaries/Illogical Territorial Map

Many critics complain that the current boundaries of (West) African states make little sense, and that Africans are paying a high price for retaining them. Most of these boundaries are arbitrary and sometimes ambiguous, since they were based on dubious treaties with local men of authority, or on bilateral agreements between European powers who had limited knowledge of the historical antecedents and human geography of the areas partitioned. As Nwaka has put it,

*the European-designed boundaries created several artificial states of various sizes and shapes – some too small, others too large or landlocked, and in the process split over 200 culture areas, and lumped together peoples of diverse cultures who had little or no pre-colonial experience of shared governance. In most cases, the boundaries came first, and then states began to be formed within them (2007).*

Political boundaries of African countries are arbitrary in the sense that they rarely correspond to ethnic boundaries. Illogical territorial map, leading to boundary problems, is one of the major negative legacies in West Africa from the colonial era. According to McGowan (2005), such conflicts include three brief inter-state wars over the disputed border between Burkina Faso and Mali, rebellions and irredentist movements by ethnic minorities in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, and the southern Senegalese province of Casamance. In the case of Casamance, Southern

Senegal, the backlash of illogical territorial map imposed by the colonial powers also played a major role in fueling the crisis.

### **3.2. Ethnicity:**

Ethnicity has been a fundamental driving force behind the causes and escalation of most of the West African conflicts. As Kidane Mengisteab notes, “many sub-Saharan African countries find themselves engulfed in chronic ethnic tensions that often erupt into violent conflicts...The conditions that lead to these conflicts are many and vary from country to country” (2001: 20). However, there are at least three common general factors.

1. One is the relative newness of the state-building process in West Africa. Neither the European powers who colonised territories in the region nor the post-colonial state made serious attempts to develop conditions that foster cohesion and state building.
2. The second related common factor is bad governance brought about by self-serving dictators who pay little attention to the broad socio-economic interests of their populations. Such dictators foster ethnic and clan conflicts by manipulating ethnic relations in an attempt to fragment opposition to their regimes.
3. The third common factor is the excessive extroversion of West African economies, which undermines the development of economic interdependence among different ethnic groups, regions, and economic sectors in the region. Because of its inability to rectify the internal economic fragmentation and become an agent of development and empowerment of its citizens, often the state is regarded as an alien and hostile force to be evaded, cheated, defeated and appropriated as

circumstances permit. The disengagement of the populace from the realm of the state into ethnic, religious, and other identity-based formations means that the post-colonial state in (West) Africa has failed in its primary task of sustaining the “social contract” of development and national unity (Abubakar, 2001:31-33; Ake, 1996).

The Casamance in Senegal, for example, is largely of the ethnic Jolas, Balantes and a percentage of the Mandigos. Economic disparity between the North and South of the country gave birth to the concept of marginalization that has grown deeply rooted among the Jola ethnic group in the Southern Senegalese province.

The Jola group, the largest group in an ethnically-mixed region, has traditionally rejected central authority from the Senegalese government. Even the Movement for the Forces of Democracy in Casamance (MFDC) is a Jola dominated group that was formed thirteen years before Senegal’s independence, and calls for the region’s independence often sparks off violent confrontation with the armed forces. The general contention amongst analysts is that the deeply rooted perception of marginalization among the Jola people of the Casamance became the major reinforcement mechanism to the struggle for the independence of the region.

Such a notion was quick to spread like wildfire among the predominant Jola majority in not only the Casamance, but across the borders of Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia. It could be recalled, as reported by Minteh that, when the relationship between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau was complicated by the presence of many refugees from Casamance, and by the separatist use of Guinea-Bissau as a rear base to conduct operations, Senegal responded by destroying the rebel bases, and to contain Guinea Bissau’s renegade General Ansumana Mane - a close

friend of the Casamance rebels and an ally of the President of Gambia, Yahya Jammeh. General Mane, who hailed from the Gambia and fought the independence war against the Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau, openly manifested his support for the Casamance rebels (2009).

Similarly, trends could be noticed in the Nigerian Civil War which remote cause was rooted in a suspected ethnic-based military coup of 1966 that led to a counter-coup, leading to the ethnic cleansing of mostly the Igbo, and the declaration of secession, which, in turn, led to the 30 month bitter civil war. The Liberian Civil War was no less rooted in inter-ethnic problems, and hate which the Krang-dominated government of Samuel Doe exhibited against the other ethnic groups, etc.

### **3.3 Economic and Political Factors.**

As Claude Ake laments, the failure of the African post-colonial state in meeting the basic needs of the populace, the economic stagnation and the fiscal crisis of the state have, among a plethora of negative developments, also created a great deal of stress, as well as the proliferation of violent conflicts (1996). In other words, crises and conflicts in West Africa also result from the actions or inactions of members of the political class who we may wish to refer to as 'Africlowns' (Njoku, 1998: v-vi).

Africlowns are a very strange type of species of humans in Africa. They are mostly leaders characterised by a very low type of mentality about anything. They generally have not had much formal education or proper international exposure. They do not seem to have the slightest coherent idea about anything good or edifying. Having somehow managed to find themselves in power or positions of authority, they tend to cling to it tenaciously, and would never let go. They do not seem to have any idea of what it means to be a statesman, or of respecting conventions and



rules of proper conduct. They often start as despots and strive daily to outdo themselves in showing raw power either by mindless autocracy or by excessive brutality. They are extremely insecure at home and unwelcome abroad, except among those who stand to benefit from the largesse that flows from their inept handling of their national resources. To show that they are really somebody, they would be found flaunting ill-gotten wealth, setting up palaces, stashing away huge sums of money in foreign banks, and descending with fury on critics. They generally wish to rule for life, and make opponents out of anyone who dares to criticise or oppose them, or ask for explanations. They portray West Africa (nay, Africa!) as a pack of clowns, and political governance as a circus piece. Sometimes they overdramatize inconsequential about opposition and national security. As leaders, they have nothing to show to the world except an obnoxious presence (Njoku, 2003:52). Africlowns are all over West Africa—in high and low places. Politically and economically, they are among the greatest obstacles in the way of emerging of the sub-region.

So, like other parts of Africa, economic and political factors have also been behind conflicts in the West African sub-region. The conflict in Casamance is a typical example of a case where economic and political forces have driven conflict to a battle front since the formation of the Movement for the Forces of Democracy in Casamance (M.F.D.C.). Due to its rich productive economic capacity, the Casamance region has become an important focal point for the economic development of Senegal due, in part, to its rich tropical environment. The most important source of the conflict is the political dominance of the North over the resource-rich South, known as the “breadbasket of Senegal”. The Casamance region contributes forty (40) percent of Senegal’s foreign exchange through agriculture, fishing and tourism. The tropical nature of the region made fertility of the land agriculturally viable. The region is centrally located to facilitate trade with neighbouring countries

and has some of the largest traditional markets; countries such as the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau rely on the troubled region for timber, coal and wood as a source of domestic energy.

Some other conflicts, such as that of Sierra Leone, were also driven by greed and political disintegration. The late 1990s saw the culmination of the diamond-and- corruption-fuelled rebellion in Sierra Leone.

### **3.4. Struggle for Independence**

What began as a nationalist liberation struggle by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (P.A.I.G.C.) that was founded by Amilcar Cabral and Rafael Barbosa in the Portuguese colonial territory of Guinea-Bissau in 1956, for example, metamorphosed into an armed struggle when the colonial police violently repressed a PAIGC orchestrated dock-workers' strike in 1959.

By 1960, the PAIGC moved its headquarters to Conakry in neighbouring Guinea in order to prepare for an armed struggle. The PAIGC joined forces with FRELIMO of Mozambique, MPLA of Angola and MLSTP of Sao Tome and Principe to form the Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies (CONCP) during a conference in Morocco, with the sole aim of fostering co-operation among the different national liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies.

The first insurgent hostilities broke out in January 1963 when the PAIGC guerrilla fighters attacked the Portuguese garrison in the South of the capital, Bissau. Similar guerrilla actions quickly spread across the colony, mainly in the South. Portugal responded to the attacks by deploying a large garrison force. By 1967, the PAIGC had carried out

147 attacks on Portuguese barracks and army encampments, and effectively controlled two thirds of Portuguese Guinea. On the other hand, the strategic response of the Portuguese include launching a daring raid on Conakry; in the neighbouring Republic of Guinea, 400 amphibious troops attacked the city and freed hundreds of Portuguese prisoners of war kept there by the PAIGC, Operation Green Sea, an attempt to overthrow the PAIGC-friendly government of Guinea which failed, although several PAIGC ships were destroyed. This escalated the conflict with Algeria and Nigeria offering support for PAIGC and Soviet warships being sent to the area. The USSR and Cuba began to send more weapons to Portuguese Guinea via Nigeria. Although in 1973, the PAIGC leader, Amilcar Cabral was assassinated by a disgruntled former associate, however, following the 1974 Carnation Revolution, a left wing military led revolution, which broke out in Portugal, ending the authoritarian dictatorship of Estada Noval. The new regime quickly ordered a cease-fire and began negotiating with PAIGC. Portugal thereafter, granted full independence to Guinea-Bissau on September 10, 1974, after nearly twelve years of armed conflict. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinea\\_Bissau\\_war\\_of\\_independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinea_Bissau_war_of_independence); [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/portuguese\\_colonial\\_war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/portuguese_colonial_war)).

### **3.5 The Ramifications of Bi-polarism/Cold War Politics**

Supporting and arming dictatorships in West Africa has been a cause of conflicts in West Africa. Throughout the Cold War, major powers such as the U.S.A, the Soviet Union and Others supported various regimes and dictatorships in West African countries. There was disregard by the major powers as to how this war affects the people of these countries. (\$1.5 billion worth of weapons sent to Africa came from the U.S alone (Global Issues; <http://www.globalissues.org>))

The proliferation of small arms in the sub-region when the Cold War ended has contributed in fuelling many conflicts. Africa has become an attractive and portable dumping ground for nations and arm manufacturers eager to get rid of weapon stocks made superfluous by the end of the Cold War or by technological developments. In the Guinea-Bissau War of Independence, the effective use of weapons similar to those the US was using in the Vietnam War, napalm and defoliants by the Portuguese authorities to destroy the PAIGC troops with Soviet and Cuba weapons most notably SA-7 rocket launchers, isyshin 11-4 aircraft via Nigeria is an indication of the fact that Guinea-Bissau war of independence has elements of Cold War effects by proxy. In Liberia, also, American support for Samuel Doe during the cold war helped fuel the civil conflicts in the 1990s.

Besides, stock-piling of arms in the West African region is a significant factor in understanding the root cause of armed conflicts within the sub-region since the arms are easily accessible to insurgent groups.

### **3.6 Coup d'état, Counter-Coups and Coup Plots**

According to Minteh (2009), from independence through 2004, the sixteen West African states experienced forty-four (44) successful military-led coups, forty-three (43) often-bloody failed coups, at least eighty-two (82) coup plots and seven (7) civil wars. What a nasty record!

Some of these coups have led to the outbreak of ethnic or tribal violence of insurgent types snowballing into civil wars. The Nigeria Civil War of 1967-1970 began as a coup plot in 1966, followed by ethnocentric sentiments that led to the counter-coup of 1966, ethnic cleansing of the Igbo by their Hausa counterparts in the North, and ending up in a

genocidal civil war that lasted thirty months (<http://countrystudies.us/Nigeria/70.htm>). Similarly, the civil war in Sierra Leone and the armed rebellion in Ivory Coast were sparked-off by military coup and counter coup.

### **3.7. Prevalence of Mercenaries in West Africa**

Mercenaries are in legions in West Africa and the recent war in Cote d'Ivoire made great use of these armed groups. Acknowledging the existence of mercenaries, the ECOWAS leaders meeting in an extraordinary session of the Authority of Heads of States and Governments in Abuja on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2003, undertook to ban the recruitment and training of militias and irregular groups and, to make efforts to disarm them immediately as the activities of these militias were noted to have made the fighting in Liberia become too difficult (WANEP, 2010).

These mercenaries are readily converted into insurgent groups, or could be ready tools in the hands of the government to wage war of suppression against the insurgents.

### **3.8 Strategic Alliances/Involvements**

There are many strategic alliances between African countries and former colonial powers, as there are “strategic” involvements of individual African countries in the affairs of their sister-countries. According to Adebayo (2002), for example, France’s military interventions in support of African despots from 1960 up to the early 1990s, notably is in Guinea-Bissau where France and Portugal resorted to “gunboat diplomacy” in backing different factions during the civil war. This factor

is accentuated by the fact that France has one form of defence agreement or the other with some West African countries; for example, she maintains military cooperation assistance agreements with seven states of the sub-region (Niger, Burkina Faso, Benin, Mauritania, Cote d' Ivoire, Senegal and Togo) while she has military bases in Cote d' Ivoire and Senegal (Ekoko, 1990).

It is, however, to be noted that most of the conflicts witnessed on the West African soil had third party involvements, either African or non-African in nature. The Liberian crisis for instance was strongly believed to have been supported by Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso; so also, the Chad crisis had been strongly alleged to have the involvement of Libya on the side of the Transitional Government of National Unity (G.U.N.T.), while the Central Africa Republic (C.A.R.) and France were believed to be on the side of Hissene Habre's government. The aftermath of these external involvements manifested in the protracted nature of such conflicts, thereby making resolution of such crises intractable, if not impossible (Akinbi and Akinola, 2007)

### **3.9 Other Miscellaneous Factors**

In the 1990s during the post-cold war period, the nature of conflicts in Africa altered. Ibeanu (2003) has identified three types of conflicts in Africa during this period. These are:

- i) Conflicts that arise as a result of struggle for political participation or over political space.
- ii) Conflicts caused by the contest for access to resources and

iii) Conflicts caused by the struggle over identity.

As noted by Alli (2006), conflicts are caused by a combination of two or more of the above factors. The conflict in Chad is an example of conflict which results from the struggle for political participation and inclusion. Examples of conflicts over access to resources or distribution of resources are the conflicts in Sierra Leone, and Liberia, while identity and citizenship conflicts are typified by the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

Since Africa's economic crisis began to deepen in the 1970s, there has been a proliferation of ethnic, regional and religious organizations and movements, with pronounced political agenda all over West Africa. These are associations, formed largely to promote the interests of ethnic or religious groups. Examples of such movements include the Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast (M.P.C.I.), Movement for Peace and Justice (M.P.J.), and the Popular Ivorian Movement for the Great West (M.P.I.G.D.) in Ivory Coast, the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, among others.

In many cases, ethnic militias have been formed; thereby further complicating the political landscape. These associations make claims that have far-reaching implications for the state. Some of these claims and demands include those for more equitable distribution and sharing of political power and economic resources, and sometimes a demand for the re-configuration of the state, as is being demanded by the MPJ in Ivory Coast. In most cases, these demands are pursued and promoted by well armed militias in a manner that inevitably leads to violent conflicts.

The end of the Cold War worsened the situation in Africa because it was accompanied by the intensification of the Structural Adjustment Programme (S.A.P.) and other economic reforms dictated by the Bretton-woods institutions, the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) and the World Bank. These reforms aggravated the poor economic conditions of the people, causing impoverishment and desperation, thus becoming a major root cause of many conflicts on the continent. The SAP readily led to freeze in social welfare and securities, unemployment, mass retrenchment, hyper-inflation, etc. Thus, the lack of job opportunities for youths, economic neglect and the issue of landlessness are also contributory factors to the causes and escalation of conflicts in West Africa, particularly in the Casamance region of Senegal. Many young people get easily caught up as a result of scarce economic opportunities, the lack of education and/or inability to secure a job. These have left many feeling economically neglected and vulnerable to actors advocating for autonomy, independence or political inclusion and participation. With such abysmal economic conditions, “an aging Andrews Kalashnikov (AK47)” has therefore become a “meal ticket” for most of the roving youths who are found “pillaging villages” and committing gross violations of human rights across the sub-region.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From the fore-going, one will easily note that the West African sub-region is an unenviable home to political instability due to a number of factors: some external, and some internal to individual African nations. The point also has been made that even most, if not all, of the factors responsible for wars and political instability in West Africa are, in one way or the other, connected to colonialism.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES**



1. Why is the colonial experience considered as a bad influence on the post-colonial political development of West Africa?
2. Identify the essential characteristics of politics in West Africa before 1960

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This segment of our study has dealt with the major factors responsible for the occurrence of wars in West Africa since 1960. In doing this, the unit examined important causative factors internal to West Africa, such as boundary and ethnicity challenges, fall-outs from the struggle for independence, and numerous external factors that plague the West African sub-region, quite apart from negative factors springing from the international environment.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Identify the major wars of colonial conquests in the British and French West African regions.
2. To what extent could the structural foundation of colonialism and the decolonization process be said to have contributed to the post-colonial conflicts in West Africa?

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

McGowon, P. (2005) "Coups and Conflicts in West Africa, 1995-2004: Part 1- Theoretical Perspectives", *Armed Forces and Society*, October 2005, vol. 32, pp.5-23.

Nwaka, G. I. (2007): “The Dilemma of Colonial Boundaries in Contemporary Africa: The Bakassi Peninsula in Nigeria-Cameroon Border Relations”, paper for *Society, State and Identity in African History*, Fourth Congress of the Association of African Historians, Addis Ababa, 22-24 May.

Minteh, B. S. (2009): “The Crisis in Casamance, Southern Senegal: A Constructive Conflict Resolution Approach: <http://www.senegambianews.com/article/Education>.

Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia/Guinea\\_Bissau\\_War\\_of\\_independence](http://en.wikipedia/Guinea_Bissau_War_of_independence).

Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/portuguese\\_colonial\\_war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/portuguese_colonial_war)  
(assessed on 12/03/2010)

Global Issues, <http://www.globalissues.org> (assessed on 12/03/2010)

WANEP (2010): “An Assessment of the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Good Governance”, paper written by the West Africa Network for Peace Building, in the possession of this writer.

Adebayo, A. (2002): “The ECOWAS Security Mechanism: Toward a Pax West Africana”, paper presented at the CODESRIA General Assembly Meeting, Kampala, December, 2002.

Ekoko, A. E. (1990): “The Principles and Practices of Alliance Formation and Nigeria’s Defence”, A. E. Ekoko and M. A. Vogt (eds.) *Nigerian Defence Policy: Issues and Problems*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd.

Akinbi, J.O. and O.O. Akinola (2007): “Hegemonic Factor in Conflict Resolution in Africa: A Case Study of ECOMOG”, <http://cendia007.com/publications/pubdoc/HEGEMONIC.doc>

Ibeanu, O. (2003): “Communal Conflict and Population Displacement in Nigeria: An Exploratory Analysis”, O. Nnoli (ed.) *Communal Conflict and Population Displacement*. Enugu: PACREP.

Alli, W. O. (2006): “The Impact of Globalization on Conflicts in Africa”, S. G. Best (ed.), *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Mengisteab, Kidane (2001): “Ethiopia’s Ethnic-Based Federalism: 10 Years After”, *African Issues*, volume xxix, nos. 1 and 2: 20-25.

Abubakar, Dauda (2001): “Ethnic Identity, Democratization, and the Future of the African State: Lessons from Nigeria”, in *ibid*: 31-36.

Ake, Claude (1996): *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Njoku, N. L. (1998): *Studies in Western Imperialism and African Development*. Owerri: Tonyben Publishers.

----- (2003): *Problems and Issues in Africa’s Way of Emerging*. Lagos: Peace-wise Systems.

**MODULE II**

- Unit 1        General Principles of Conflict Resolution
- Unit 2        Conflict Handling Styles
- Unit 3        The Concept, and Process, of Mediation
- Unit 4        Methods of Conflict Resolution among States in West Africa since 1960

**UNIT 1: GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION****CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Conflict Resolution Defined
  - 3.2 Processes of Conflict Resolution
    - 3.2.1 Conflict Management
    - 3.2.2 Conflict Transformation
    - 3.2.3 Conflict Suppression
    - 3.2.4 Collaboration
    - 3.2.5 Negotiation
    - 3.2.6 Constructive Negotiation
    - 3.2.7 Conciliation
    - 3.2.8 Mediation
  - 3.3 More Authoritative Conflict Management Styles
    - 3.3.1 Arbitration
    - 3.3.2 Adjudication
    - 3.3.3 Crisis Management

- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/ Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, you will be acquainted with the principles of conflict resolution. The unit begins by defining the term “conflict resolution”, followed by a listing and explanation of the processes of conflict resolution. You will come to notice in the unit that there are more authoritative conflict management approaches.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- a) Define the term “conflict resolution”
- b) List and explain the process of conflict resolution.
- c) Differentiate between “conflict resolution” and “conflict management”
- d) Identify the more authoritative conflict management styles.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1. Conflict Resolution Defined**

Miller (2003:8, cited in Best, 2006) sees conflict resolution as “a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transformation of conflict”. Mitchel and Banks (1996) use conflict resolution to refer to:

- i) An outcome in which the issues in an existing conflict are satisfactorily dealt with through a solution that is mutually acceptable to the parties, self-sustaining in the long run and productive of a new, positive relationship between parties that were previously hostile adversaries; and
- ii) Any process or procedure by which such an outcome is achieved.

On the whole, conflict resolution connotes a total elimination of the conflict where the parties to a conflict are mutually satisfied with the outcome of a settlement and the conflict is resolved in the true sense of it.

## **3.2 Processes of Conflict Resolution**

### **3.2.1 Conflict Management:**

This is the process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures, and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict. This term is sometimes used synonymously with “conflict regulation”. It covers the entire area of handling conflicts positively at different stages, including those efforts made to prevent conflict by being proactive. The term “conflict management” is perhaps an admission of the reality that conflict is

inevitable, but that not all conflicts can always be resolved; therefore what practitioners can do is to try to manage and regulate them.

### **3.2.2 Conflict Transformation:**

This concept has been introduced by John Paul Lederach of the Eastern Mennonite School of Peace building. It is assumed that this goes beyond conflict resolution to build longer standing relationship through a process of change in perceptions and attitudes of parties. The aim of conflict transformation is to change the parties, their relationships and the conditions that created the conflict in the first place. .

Conflict transformation takes place at different levels and it has a number of decisions. At the personal level, it involves emotional, perceptual and spiritual aspects of change desired for the individual. It also affects relationship, touching on communication between parties that needs to change to positively affect poorly functioning communication. Change also needs to affect structures that generate conflict through deprivation, exclusion and other forms of injustice. It also seeks to understand cultural patterns and values of parties.

### **3.2.3 Conflict Suppression:**

Conflict suppression is used to portray the unwillingness of more powerful parties, or stronger interveners who have the ability to transform or manage a conflict situation, to take necessary measures leading to the management or resolution of the conflict. Instead, they use instruments of power or force to sweep away the issues under the carpet or to impose a solution that is not sustainable and with which the parties are not satisfied. This happens in unequal relationships. Governments and repressive regimes are usually guilty of this situation by declining to

take appropriate decisions as at when due, or trying to lord it over others, leading to protected conflicts. Sometimes, the state or other third party mediators use their coercive apparatus to suppress conflicts, but this cannot be sustainable. Other conflict resolution processes include the following:

#### **3.2.4 Collaboration:**

The collaboration process is one in which parties work together on their own to resolve problems through constructive dialogue or other activities like joint projects, such as the joint management of Lake Chad Basin between Nigeria and Chad. Collaboration contributes in building trust, confidence and mutual respect. The assumption is that those who collaborate in doing things together are likely to build more friendship and mutual respect among themselves than those that do not.

#### **3.2.5 Negotiation:**

Negotiation is a direct process of dialogue and discussion taking place between at least two parties who are faced with a conflict situation or a dispute. Both parties come to the realization that they have a problem, and both are aware that by talking to each other, they can find a solution to the problem. Here, the benefits of compromise and consensus have a high probability of outweighing the cost that is likely to be incurred from the conflict due to refusal to negotiate. The ultimate goal of negotiation is to reach agreement through joint decision making between parties to the conflict.

According to Best (2006: 106) there are two types of negotiations. The first is *positional negotiation*, while the second is *collaborative negotiation*. This Positional negotiation is based on the aggressive



pursuit of interest by parties, and is typically adversarial and competitive. In this situation, parties make demands that are inconsiderate of the interests and needs of others, and this makes it difficult for these interests to be met. Parties also perceive themselves to be in competition. The desire of each party is to win, instead of working towards a mutually beneficial outcome. Thus, the demands of one Party can be met only to the detriment of the other parties. When parties tend to stubbornly adhere to their positions, and one side seems to dominate the negotiation positional negotiations tend to breakdown easily.

### **3.2.6 Constructive Negotiation:**

On the other hand, *collaborative* or *constructive* negotiation is a process where parties try to educate each other about their needs and concerns, and both search for the best ways to solve their problems in ways that the interest and fears of both or all parties are taken into consideration. The process is collaborative in principle and the emphasis is on mutual understanding and feeling, all aimed at building sustainable relationship. However, collaborative negotiation is complex and might be difficult to achieve since both parties have conflicting interest.

### **3.2.7 Conciliation:**

It is a third party activity, which covers intermediary efforts aimed at persuading the parties to a conflict to work towards a peaceful solution. Conciliation involves facilitation. Here, the conciliator communicates separately with parties and provides the assistance needed from a neutral third party. A key aim of conciliation is to reduce tensions between parties and in a conflict situation.

### **3.2.8 Mediation:**

This could be defined as “the voluntary, informal, non-binding process undertaken by an external party that fosters the settlement of differences or demands between directly invested parties” (Miller, 2003: 23). Conversely, mediation is assistance by a third party where the parties to a conflict admit that they have a problem which they are both committed to solving, but in which they require a mediator to manage the negotiation process without imposing a solution on the parties. It is a voluntary process. Mediation involves dialogue, but it is different because of the presence of a third party.

The role of the mediator is to create an enabling environment for the parties to carry out dialogue sessions leading to the resolution of a pending conflict. The mediator, being a confidant to parties, reconciles the parties through objective, neutral, balanced, supportive, non-judgmental communication in order to help the parties to identify and arrive at common grounds while overcoming their fears and satisfying their real needs. It is quite productive and helpful in settling conflicts that would have otherwise escalated easily.

### **3.3 More Authoritative Conflict Management Styles.**

#### **3.3.1 Arbitration:**

Arbitration is also a third party intervention; but it is different from mediation in the sense that the parties to a conflict lose more control over their situation than those who select mediation and other lower levels of intervention.

Arbitration is the use and assistance of a neutral third party in conflict, who hears the evidence from both parties, and thereafter renders a

decision, usually called an award, which is expected to be binding on the parties.

One advantage of arbitration over litigation (court process) is that it permits the parties to a dispute to select the arbiter they would wish to sit over their case.

### **3.3.2 Adjudication:**

This involves the use of the courts and litigation processes, in which case parties to a conflict choose to take their case to a court of law, before a judge of competent jurisdiction. Legal counsels may represent them. At the end of the process, the court gives a judgment. The judgment is legally binding on both parties.

Consequently, though adjudication seems like a peaceful means of resolving conflicts and disputes, however, its peace is only relative on the following grounds.

- i) It tends to destroy trust, love, respect and other forms of confidence between parties.
- ii) It increases suspicion, and the bitterness of litigation lingers on for a long time after the judgment must have been given.
- iii) It ends in win – lose outcomes, where the winner appears to take all, and the loser ends up with nothing.
- iv) It takes longer time to dispose of, and it is expensive.
- v) It is also totally outside the control of the conflicting parties in every respect.

### **3.3.3 Crisis Management:**

A crisis is an extreme situation of conflict which has reached a turning point where critical decisions have to be taken or else the conflict escalates to a point of extreme violence. Sometimes a crisis is a degenerated state of conflict, where threat to human security, intense violence characterized by fighting, death, injury, large-scale displacement of populations, etc, occur.

Once a crisis occurs, it is the responsibility of the governmental authorities within the state to de-escalate the situation and bring a cessation to violence. This may be done through various means, including the use of the coercive state apparatus, where necessary.

Where the state fails to handle the crisis, it may involve the authorities of other heads of government to intervene either on bilateral or multilateral basis. In the maintenance of crisis situations, many ugly situations have happened in Africa. Sometimes, crisis have consumed the state and led to state collapse, as evident in the cases in Liberia and Sierra Leone, following the end of the cold war. The collapse of these states led to the intervention of ECOWAS and other extra African countries and multilateral agencies and international organizations, like the United Nations and the former colonial powers erstwhile colonial European countries like France and Britain in the case of Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone and the United Nations.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

What you may have noted in this unit is that conflict resolution exists in two broad categories. The first is the *proactive* category, which entails methods that aim to prevent the occurrence of conflict, in the first instance. Examples include undocumented community-based trust and

confidence building measures, communication, good governance, inter-party collaboration, etc.

The second category is *reactive*, dealing with responses to situations that have already turned conflictive, or are potentially so. These include third party interventions like mediation, brokerage, conciliation, arbitration and litigation, etc.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Differentiate between “conflict resolution” and “conflict suppression”, showing how they differ from “conflict management”.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In sum, therefore, there is enough evidence to show that conflicts in human society can be tackled and resolved through many strategies. Some of these strategies include managing, transforming, suppressing, or even mediating into the conflict. But, the more authoritative conflict management styles, however, require some arbitration or adjudication.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i) List and explain at least six conflict resolution strategies and processes known to you.
- ii) Write an essay on three superior and more authoritative conflict management styles utilizable in a given conflict situation.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Best, S. G. (2006): “The Methods of Conflict Resolution and Transformation”, S. G. Best (ed.), *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Mitchell, C. and Banks, M. (1998): *Handbook of Conflict Resolution: The Analytic Problem-Solving Approach*. London: Pinter.

Miller, C.A. (2003): *A Glossary of Terms and Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies*. Geneva: University for Peace.

**UNIT 2: CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES****CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Towards an Explication of Conflict Handling Styles
  - 3.2 Factors Influencing Conflict Handling Styles
    - 3.2.1 Domination
    - 3.2.2 Avoidance
    - 3.2.3 Accommodation
    - 3.2.4 Collaboration
    - 3.2.5 Compromising
    - 3.2.6 Confrontation/Fighting
    - 3.2.7 Problem-Solving
  - 3.3 Some Extra-Territorial Aspects of Conflict Handling
    - 3.3.1 Peace-Keeping
    - 3.3.2 Good Offices
    - 3.3.3 Peace Enforcement
    - 3.3.4 Supervision
    - 3.3.5 Peace-making
    - 3.3.6 Peace-building
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The essence of this unit is to expose you to the general conflict handling styles available so that at the end you can see for yourself handling styles that are most suitable to conflict situations. Also, as future conflict managers, the point is to get you acquainted with methods of conflict handling that are most appropriate and expose you to those you should discard as negative in certain circumstances.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- a) Discuss various conflict handling styles
- b) Identify the factors influencing conflict handling styles
- c) Differentiate between “accommodation” and “collaboration” as issues to consider in conflict handling styles.
- d) Explain the extra-territorial level of conflict handling.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Towards an Explication of Conflict Handling Styles**



By conflict handling styles we refer to the responses that people make to address the situation that is considered detrimental to the attainment of a desired goal (Ojiji, 2006:120). Two typical forms of responses are usually noticed as they are related to our social and natural environment. These are cooperation and assertiveness. In the context of conflicts, cooperation manifests in a number of other methods of dealing with conflicts, such as accommodation, avoidance, collaboration and compromise.

On the other hand, assertiveness is the attempt to satisfy one's own needs and desires at the expense of the other person we relate with. In relation to conflict, assertiveness manifests in defending one's right in a given situation and pushing a position favourable to oneself or one's group. The specific conflict resolution methods that imply assertiveness are arbitration and threats to the other party.

### **3.2 Factors Influencing Conflict Handling Styles.**

The interaction of these two major orientations affects conflict handling styles. These include:

#### **3.2.1 Domination:**

This is a style dealing with conflict derived from the disposition of people to assert themselves in situations. Here, little or no interest in the wellbeing or interest of the other party is exhibited. .

The primary motivation in domination is the desire to win, and therefore make the other party lose. Thus, the assertive party behaves in a manner

to suppress the views of the other party by using strong arguments or emphasizing its rank or economic position. This approach to handling conflict can hardly lead to a lasting resolution of the conflict. Even if the assertive person “succeeds” in “winning” the case, there is a tendency that the “resolution” will leave behind “grudges” in the other party which could be expressed at some other time through some other methods. This style of handling conflict is rooted in power relationship where one party perceives that it has more power over the conflict issue than the other party or parties.

### **3.2.2 Avoidance:**

Conflict avoidance occurs when one party in a potential conflict ignores the conflicting issues or denies the significance of the issue in their relationship. It is a way of not addressing the conflict, or a tactical way of postponing the conflict for a better time, if at all such a time will come. In this situation; the person is unassertive and uncooperative. There is no intention to pursue one’s own needs or those of the other party.

However, conflict is not resolved by having the issues ignored or not getting attended to. In other words, conflict avoidance is a dangerous way of responding to a conflict, even if it guarantees some immediate sanity. In the long run, if the issues in the conflict are not addressed, a worsening relationship between the parties could ensue.

### **3.2.3 Accommodation:**

This style of dealing with conflicts comes from a cooperative disposition. Thus, the person using this style is not assertive and not

involved in competition with the other party. Rather, in accommodation there is a conscious attempt to neglect one's needs and focus on satisfying those of the other party. The underlying value here is that of self-sacrifice which may be a manifestation of self-esteem disorder. In such a situation, the person is meek so that he or she readily gives in to the demands of other people. Like the case of avoidance, it has a short-term benefit in the form of social stability. For instance, in the long run, the other party (that is assertive) may assume greater power that can be detrimental to other persons.

#### **3.2.4 Collaboration:**

Here, the parties do not avoid the conflict. They work with each other to find a solution that is satisfactory to both of them. It is about dialogue in which the parties listen actively and gain understanding of the other party as well as their own. That understanding enables them to develop a solution that satisfies the concerns of both parties. It is a situation where both parties win. This style is more socially adaptive as it leads to a situation that is acceptable to the parties involved.

Most negotiations are of this nature such that getting to the final solution can be quite tedious. When a solution is eventually found through negotiation, it tends to be binding on the parties as they both were part of the process. In other words, this style of handling conflict makes sure that the parties exercise control over the process as well as the outcome.

#### **3.2.5 Compromising:**

Compromising involves findings, an expedient mutually acceptable solution, which partly satisfies both parties. In other words, parties split their differences and make concessions in order to resolve the conflict.

In this situation, a party is partially assertive and partly cooperative. Compromise becomes necessary in situations where the positions of the parties are so incompatible that the two cannot be reconciled without one of them losing something in the process. This is different from collaboration, where the parties can be reconciled without any of them making losses. This is a “win some, lose some” situation. Compromise may succeed in reducing the intensity of the conflict but not in totally resolving the conflict. It can be a way of buying time necessary to work out a more acceptable solution to the conflict.

### **3.2.6 Confrontation/Fighting:**

Confrontation occurs when the parties in a conflict physically or emotionally “attack” each other. They could do this by threatening each other, insulting each other or generally engaging in violent acts such as one party physically hitting the other. There is considerable degree of lack of understanding of each other’s position as each one tries to hold on to its point of view and therefore disagrees with the other party’s point of view. Expectedly, this style, is characterized by violence and creates a zero outcome; that is, a situation where both parties lose. In violent conflict situations every party involved certainly loses. It is only in a few cases that confrontation leads to win/lose situation, in which case the stronger party wins. This style cannot offer a lasting resolution to a conflict. One of the parties will bear grudges after confrontation. Indeed, it would likely increase the intensity of the conflict.

### **3.2.7 Problem-Solving:**

Parties to problem solving approach listen to each other constructively with the intention to understand and deal with the underlying issues in the conflict. This approach is predicated on parties showing mutual

respect to each other, irrespective of their differences and searching for ways to resolve the problem. In this way, there is little concern about who is wrong or right; but parties consider conflict as an opportunity to improve on their relationship. It is an approach, which usually leads to mutual collaboration and a win/win solution. As the parties to the conflict listen attentively to understand each others view point, their solution will ultimately lead to addressing the needs of both parties and contribute to rebuilding other relationship. Successful problem solving style will lead to a lasting resolution of conflict.

### **3.3 The Extra-Territorial Level of Conflict Handling**

At the extra-territorial level, especially when the conflict has gone out of the control of the parties leading to full-scale hostilities, supranational organizations, such as ECOWAS at the sub-regional level, African Union at the regional level and the United Nations at the global level, employ the following mechanisms to bring the conflict under control and usher in peaceful mechanism for stemming the tide of the conflicts. These could also be referred to as forms of peace process. They include:

**2.3.1 Peace-keeping:** Peacekeeping entails the use of peacekeepers (especially military contingents) to keep conflicting parties apart and keep conflict at current low levels. This also involves interposition where the peacekeepers are designed to place barriers between the forces of the parties that are already employing violence and to supervise the withdrawal of hostile forces, from contested areas. The peacekeepers are armed with light arms weapons and are only made to defend themselves when attacked.

**2.3.2 Good Offices:** This refers to the procedures whereby third parties act as channels of communication between the opponents, passing messages between them. In addition, the third parties may propose sites for formal diplomatic sessions and urge the antagonists to begin formal discussions (Holsti, 1972).

**2.3.3 Peace Enforcement:** Here, peace contingents involve offensive heavily-armed troops to impose peace on recalcitrant parties. These forces are primarily sent to conflict situation to effect ceasefires, separate combatants, supervise withdrawal of forces, and patrol frontiers. They are not fighting forces in the sense that their function is to halt aggression. This force is needed to create the space for increasing development and reducing conflict.

**2.3.4 Supervision:** This service comes after the parties to a conflict have already negotiated a preliminary ‘armistice or ceasefire’ agreement. The third party then delimits truce lines, polices them, handles violations according to established procedures, and occasionally administers contested territory or conflict flash points.

**2.3.5 Peace-making:** This arises in situations where conflict is high even though there are viable conditions for pursuing human social development.

**2.3.6 Peace Building:** This applies to a situation of low conflict, that is when conflict has been brought to low ebb and prospects for pursuing further development initiatives are high.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This unit has shown that conflict handling styles, whether assertive or cooperative, are responses that people make to address situations they consider detrimental to the attainment of a desired goal. It is also clear from this unit that the factors that influence conflict handling styles are multi-faceted, including domination, avoidance, accommodation, collaboration, etc.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. How justifiable is it to place peace-keeping, the use of good offices and peace enforcement at the extra-territorial level of conflict handling?

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

From this unit, you have learnt that conflicts in human society can easily be handled, especially when they are still on a small-scale, or when they have not completely gone out of hand. When, however, a conflict gets out of hand or goes full-scale, then extra-territorial levels of conflict-handling styles become necessary and are called for.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- (i) Write an essay, in one and half pages, explaining what you understand by “conflict handling”.

- (ii) Comment on “domination”, “avoidance” and “accommodation” as conflict handling styles.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Holsti, K.J. (1972) *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*.  
New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Ojiji, O. (2006). Conflict Handling Styles” in Shedrack Gaya Best (ed.)  
*Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*.  
Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.



**UNIT 3: THE CONCEPT, AND PROCESS, OF MEDIATION****CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Meaning of Mediation
  - 3.2 Guiding Principles of the Mediation Process
  - 3.3 The Mediation Process
    - 3.3.1 Initiation
    - 3.3.2 Preparation
    - 3.3.3 Introduction
    - 3.3.4 Problem Statement
    - 3.3.5 Problem Clarification
    - 3.3.6 Generation and Evaluation of Alternatives
    - 3.3.7 Selection of Alternatives
    - 3.3.8 Agreement
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit sets out to introduce you, as the title suggests, to the concept of mediation and the process of mediation known in diplomatic relations. It does this by dwelling on the meaning of mediation, and identifying the guiding principles of the mediation process. Later on, it takes you through some of the stages involved in the mediation process.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- a) Define the term “mediation”
- b) Identify the guiding principles of the mediation process
- c) Enumerate the stages involved in the mediation process
- d) Differentiate between “problem statement” and “problem clarification” as vital stages of the mediation process.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Meaning of Mediation**

Godongs (citing Moore, 1996:15) defines mediation as the intervention in a negotiation or conflict of an acceptable third party who has limited or no authoritative decision-making power, but who assists the involved parties in voluntarily reaching a mutually acceptable settlement of issues in dispute...”.

There are other definitions of mediation, but all points at the direction of the involvement of a third party being called upon to help the disputing parties negotiate a settlement.

However, there are many other situations in conflict where mediation is unsuitable. These include:

- a) When a serious incident has just occurred and no useful conversation is obtainable from the parties because of panic, confusion and grief.
- b) When it is evident that the sincerity of one or more of the parties is in doubt or simply in contradiction of the aims of negotiations and settlement.
- c) Where the incapability of a party to either listen or participate in any form of useful discussion and negotiation is beyond remedy.
- d) Where the issue is non-negotiable in nature.
- e) Where two unequal parties involved such that the balance of power between parties does not favour a fair agreement.
- f) Where the issues in conflict deserve public knowledge rather than confidential negotiation under mediation.

### **3.2 Guiding Principles of the Mediation Process**

- i. Mediators should examine the suitability of their level of competence, experience and interest in handling a particular conflict before accepting to become intermediaries. Such self examination should begin with SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the mediator in the conflict.
- ii. Availability of Mediation Plan: Plans should specify the relevant people, the best location, procedures and frameworks. The plan should also foresee areas of agreements and disagreement, psychological and behavioural standards and the type or quality of infrastructural needs required for successful negotiations should be indicated in the plan.

- iii. **Impartiality:** Mediators should seek to provide the ideals of justice and fairness in consideration of all issues brought to the negotiation table.
- iv. **Confidentiality:** Confidence of the parties to discuss freely and truthfully amongst themselves without any fear that their positions, claims, defences or remedies being sought would become known to other people not directly involved in the conflict or at negotiations should receive a boost.
- v. **Self-determination:** This principle permits disputants to either include or exclude any important issues in the course of negotiation.
- vi. **Voluntariness:** This gives disputants protection against compulsion by anyone in any stage of the process, they could even withdraw at whatever stage based on their judgments.
- vii. **Empowerment and Education:** This principle ensures that the mediation process should target the empowerment and education of disputants in such a way that they are given an enhanced capacity to deal with their problems and can handle conflicts.

### **3.3 The Mediation Process**

There are several mediation stages and steps in the mediation functions which denote the reason why it is often regarded as a process. These stages are forms of intervention to assist parties in conflicts reach a voluntary settlement of their differences through an agreement that defines their future behaviour towards each other.

A typical outline of the stages involved in mediation include initiation, preparation, introduction, problem statement and problem clarification, generation and evaluation of alternatives, selection of alternatives and reaching an agreement.

### **3.3.1 Initiation:**

There are several ways that the mediation process can commence. The matter could be submitted to a “neutral” or dispute resolution organization by one or all of the parties involved in a conflict.

On other occasions, a dispute could be referred by a court of law for possible settlement through the intervention of a mediator. This practice is popularly known as ‘out-of-court’ settlement in Nigeria. Here, disputants both agree to settle outside the formal judicial system, with or without the help of a third party.

### **3.3.2 Preparation:**

At this crucial stage it is necessary for parties to be well informed about the background to their conflict and the claims, defences and remedies being sought. Also, legal advice could be sought on technical issues; however, legal representation on such matters is excluded even where lawyers are present during negotiations. To be fully informed about the parties in conflict and the major features of their dispute, the mediator should know about the following:

- i. The balance of power between the parties;
- ii. Sources of pressure and the pressures for, and against, agreement;
- iii. The economic resources of the parties;
- iv. Political and personal differences between parties

- v. The authority of delegates in negotiations;
- vi. Cultural, religious and ideological differences and fixing of convenient appointment dates, time and venues.

### **3.3.3 Introduction:**

The stage of introduction is very important to the mediator as this determines the mediator's acceptability, integrity, credibility and neutrality. When he has been able to establish the above germane qualities, the mediator could use this opportunity to determine the following issues.

- i. Control of the entire process
- ii. Identification of the issues and positions of parties.
- iii. Search for consensus grounds
- iv. Provision of motivation for continued participation in the process.

This stage sets the foundation of confidence and hope in the mediation process.

### **3.3.4 Problem Statement:**

Parties could state a problem in two basic ways. The first approach allows issues to be raised one by one and discussion is made on each, before proceeding to the next issue. The second approach allows for an exhaustive listing of all relevant issues to be made before detailed discussions commence on each.

Whether the former or the latter approach is adopted, the problem statement allows the parties to tell their stories beginning with the complaining party. While this is going on, the mediator is expected to listen effectively and attentively to confirm, clarify or elaborate issues

that require emphasis or attention. It is very common that the mediator asks both open-ended and close-ended questions, taking note of significant signals from the behaviour and body movements of each party, calm tension if necessary, clarify narrations by asking penetrating and focused questions. The mediator effectively later summarizes the stories and positions of the parties, assesses the appreciation of the listening party and thanks the party who has concluded the narration of his/her side of the story.

### **3.3.5 Problem Clarification:**

At this stage, the mediator brings out the concrete underlying issues of the conflict. The tools used in effecting this include questions, assessment of behaviour to bring out the real issues. Also important at this stage is the ability of the mediator to summarize areas of agreement and differences between the parties. This is followed by matching and ranking of the issues in order of priorities of the parties concerned.

### **3.3.6 Generation and Evaluation of Alternatives:**

In doing this, two important tools could be employed by the mediator. The first tool is the attempt that mediators make to create doubts on the extreme positions of each of the parties. In way, unviable alternatives are dropped from the negotiation. The second tool is the creation of new alternative courses of action for all parties, with the hope of achieving the desired compromise and subsequent agreement for parties in conflicts.

### **3.3.7 Selection of Alternatives:**

At this stage, the mediator is expected to assist the parties both jointly and individually to reduce the number of alternatives to a minimum of those with high prospects for desirable results needed by all parties.

### **3.3.8 Agreement:**

A mediator does not get involved in drafting an agreement for parties in conflict. It is usually a joint assignment for disputants who have been involved in negotiations. However, the mediator ensures that a clear summary of the terms of discussions, negotiated compromises, are readily available to parties drafting an agreement. Also, the mediator compliments or appreciates all parties for the cooperation enjoyed throughout the period of negotiations, before terminating the mediation process. The mediator should also set up a follow-up mechanism, indicating the relevant dates of implementation of the agreements reached by the parties in the conflict.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, you have noted that mediation is an important instrument for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Because of its significance and increased application in the management of conflict situations at different levels, beginning from the inter-personal to the international levels, mediation is usually adopted when direct negotiation does not prove to be feasible, in respect of parties' divergent interest, needs and emotions.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Comment briefly on any five mediation processes known to you.



## 5.0 SUMMARY

On the whole, the fundamental goal of mediation is the achievement of an acceptable settlement through non-violent means between disputants, as well as the attainment of peace and justice.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- (i) Write a one and half page essay on “the meaning of mediation”.
- (ii) Discuss in details the main guiding principles of the mediation process.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Godongs, S. (2006). “Mediation and the Mediation Process” in Best, Shedrack Gaya (ed.) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Duffield, Mark (1994). “Complex Political Emergencies and the Crisis of Developmentalism” *\_IDS Bulletin\_25*: pp.37-45.

## UNIT 4: METHODS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMONGST STATES IN WEST AFRICA SINCE 1960

### CONTENTS

#### 1.0 Introduction

## 2.0 Objectives

## 3.0 Main Content

### 3.1 Nature and Scope of Conflict in West Africa

### 3.2 Methods of Conflict Resolution in West Africa in the Pre-ECOWAS Period

### 3.3 Methods of Conflict Resolution in West Africa in the ECOWAS Period

### 3.4 Challenges of Peace-making Efforts in West Africa.

### 3.5 Contributions of Civil Societies to West African Peace-building Process

## 4.0 Conclusion

## 5.0 Summary

## 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit dwells on the various practical steps and methods states in the West African sub-region have been adopting in resolving conflicts since independence. The unit begins by examining the nature and scope of conflict in the region, the methods of resolving the conflicts in the period before the regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States came into existence, and after, as well as the challenges West African states have faced in the process of resolving conflicts. Finally, the unit also exposes you to the contributions of civil societies in the region to the peace-building process.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- a) Explain the nature and scope of conflict in the West African sub-region
- b) Identify the methods of conflict resolution in West Africa in the pre-ECOWAS period and in the ECOWAS period.
- c) Mention and discuss the challenges which peace-keeping efforts face in West Africa
- d) Give examples of the contributions which civil societies have made to the peace-building process in West Africa.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Nature and Scope of Conflict in West Africa**

Conflicts in West Africa can be broadly grouped along the divides of intra-state and interstate conflicts.

The intra-state conflicts come in the form of civil wars, guerrilla warfare, militant insurrections, and inter ethnic warfare. Notable ones in this category include the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), the Liberian crisis (1989-2003), the Sierra-Leone Civil War (1992-2002). This category of conflicts was more frequent, long drawn and more difficult to resolve. In most cases, they were motivated by the desire of individuals or groups of people to seize power, which were considered unrealizable through the constitutional process (Akinbi and Akinola, 2007).

The inter-state category involves state of conflict between two or more states. Mention could be made of the Guinea-Bissau border crisis with Senegal (1989); the Nigeria-Chad Lake Chad crisis (1983), and Nigeria-

Cameroon feud over the oil rich Bakassi Peninsular. In most of these conflicts, territorial claims were the paramount issue. One other issue was the allegation of harbouring of dissident elements of which attempts made to flush out such dissidents provoked inter-state conflicts.

It is, however, to be noted that most of the conflicts witnessed on the West African soil had third party involvement, which was either African or non-African in nature. The Liberian crisis, for instance, was strongly believed to have been supported by Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso; so also is the case with the Chad crisis which has been strongly alleged to have had the involvement of Libya on the side of the Transitional Government of National Unity (G.U.N.T.), while the Central Africa Republic (C.A.R.) and France were believed to be on the side of Hissene Habre's government (Akinbi and Akinola, 2007). Also, in the case of the Nigeria Civil War, some West African and other African countries supported the secessionist Biafra, while others supported the O.A.U.-backed peace mission.

The consequences of the above scenario of external involvements were to manifest in the protracted nature of such conflicts. This made the resolution of such crises intractable, if not impossible. Besides, a situation where some members of ECOWAS are deeply involved in either supporting insurgents or the incumbent regimes cast doubts on the potency and efficacy of collective action (such as the ECOMOG) in resolving the conflicts in West Africa. This is so because collective action involves the collective will of the entire member states without which activities of these independent actors may hamper the collective action and mar peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace building in the sub-region by making it something of a wild goose chase.

### **3.2 Methods of Conflict Resolution in West Africa in the Pre-ECOWAS Period**

It should be recalled that, West African countries were still grappling with issues relating to their independence as at 1960. While most attained the independence by 1960, some others were battling for their independence. Besides, after independence in 1960, most of these countries were pre-occupied with the problem of post independence nation building. Emphasis then was on membership of the Organization of Africa Unity (O.A.U.), a continental body whose emphasis was primarily focused on the decolonization process and the liberation of oppressed African countries. The OAU's conflict resolution mechanism was centred on mediation in inter-state conflicts or cross-border conflicts and not on intra-state conflicts. The principle of non-interference was a key guiding feature of the OAU. Besides, there were limited intra-state conflicts as at that time since most African countries were still basking in the euphoria of hard won independence. Ethnic hostilities were still masked by independence attainment even as there was high aspiration and enthusiasm among the African states that the indigenous governments would address their common plights, needs and aspirations; hence, there was less need for intra-tribal or intra-ethnic hegemonic conflicts.

Given that there was no mechanism among West African states for intervention in intra-state conflicts, it then follows that decisions to intervene in intra-state conflicts would be political, depending on where member state has concrete interest. Such interventions may be covert or overt support of friendly governments or support of dissidents against unfriendly governments. Some are in form of bilateral agreements and alliances. Because such interventions which may also result from giving support to ethnic militias across borders were informal, they were

somewhat ad-hoc in nature and may rather than resolve the conflicts, further complicate the conflicts. The conflicts in the Casamance region in Senegal, the Nigerian Civil War are good examples of such interventions and participation.

Also, where there was no formal mechanism for conflict resolution, the only mechanism left is non-binding mediation, negotiations, and use of good offices approaches. A good example of bi-lateral allies sending troops for mutual assistance was exhibited when Sekou Toure sent Guinean troops into Siaka Steven's Sierra Leone in 1973 and into William Tolbert's Liberia in 1979 to help restore internal stability following civil disturbances in these countries (Adebayo, 2002). Hence, during the Nigerian Civil War, some friendly countries in West Africa backed the Biafra side, and some took sides with the Nigerian side, as we shall see later in this module.

### **3.3 Methods of Conflict Resolution in West Africa in the ECOWAS Period**

When ECOWAS was finally formed in 1975, the organization merely provided for the protocol on non-aggression in 1978, patterned alongside the OAU's principle of non-interference. Also, the protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence which was signed in 1981 were not able to prevent internal dissension, conflict and large scale violence in the sub-region. As a result of these, the Chadian conflict of 1982 was handled at the continental level, even though the mediation was not very successful in ending hostilities.

A wide-scale sub-regional intervention in internal conflict contrary to the principles of non-aggression and mutual assistance on defence began with peacekeeping mechanism tinkered out during the Liberian Civil

War which broke out in December 1989. Initially, the Liberian war was treated as an internal problem of a sovereign nation. But it soon became a regional problem as other countries began to witness massive inflow of refugees considered of great threat to peace and economic well being of the region and also as variants of the crisis emerged in Sierra-Leone, Guinea Bissau and later Cote d'Ivoire.

It needs to be pointed out that, as at the time ECOWAS was taking up this responsibility it had no institutional instrument to engage in peacekeeping or mediation processes. Thus, seeing the inevitability of intervening in the Liberian crisis, the ECOWAS set up a mediation committee comprising representatives of five countries: Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia, Mali and Togo. It was this committee who, among other things, recommended the establishment of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to act as an intervention force. This did not go down well with some ECOWAS members who felt it would be a breach of the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state as enshrined in the charter of the OAU of which all members of ECOWAS were signatories (Iheme, 2004).

Eventually, the ECOMOG landed on the Liberian soil with 3,000 soldiers contributed by Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Guinea on August 24, 1990. The efforts of this force led to the resolution of the crisis, followed by the conduct of an internationally supervised election in the year 1997.

The challenge of the Liberian crisis was followed by another civil war in Sierra Leone just two years after the beginning of the Liberian crisis. The civil war was mainly motivated by the Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front (R.U.F.). The ECOMOG with the later support of OAU and United Nations (U.N.) succeeded in bringing about

a peace agreement that was signed in Lome in 2001 between the RUF and the government. This was followed by the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections in May 2002.

The third main challenge that came the way of ECOMOG was that of Guinea – Bissau. The conflict was sparked off on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, 1998, when the president of Guinea Bissau, Jogo Bernado, sacked the Chief of Army staff, Brigadier Ausumane Mane, over allegation of illegal trafficking in arms with a secessionist force, the Forces Democratique de Casamance (M.F.D.C.). The ECOMOG successfully got interest groups in the conflict to negotiate a transitional government and hold parliamentary elections in March, 2004.

The role of ECOMOG in resolving the above crises to the point that relative peace was restored and without compromising national sovereignty proved to a very large extent that the ECOMOG mechanism was a welcome development. To a very large extent, it justified the viability of regional response to crisis for a more effective handling of regional issues. In addition, the resilience of ECOMOG was well established being able to handle supposedly overlapping crises as a role (Akinbi and Akinola, 2007).

### **3.4 Challenges of Peace-Making Efforts in West Africa**

Despite some success stories, collective peace building efforts in Africa is still at a rudimentary level, generally lacking in established institutional frameworks and structures (Adetula, 2006). Because of the absence of institutionalized structures for conflict management, conflict resolution initiatives have mostly taken ad-hoc forms. In the Liberian conflict, for example, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government established a Community Standing Mediation Committee, which in turn



created the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) at its inaugural session. In Sierra Leone, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Governments did not formally approve of the ECOMOG force unit some three months after its intervention. In Guinea Bissau, the ministerial-level ECOWAS Defence Council voted to extend ECOMOG's mandate to Guinea Bissau even before the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government had time to address the issue.

A key lesson from the ECOWAS security mechanism is that all the three ECOMOG interventions were highly improvised. There was no clear mandate on exactly what the troops would be doing. Peacekeepers were sent into fragile environments without adequate logistical support and funding, and without a political settlement. Unsurprisingly, when things became difficult, ECOMOG struggled to respond decisively in all three cases and was criticized for using too little or too much force and for compromising its stated neutrality.

The Sierra Leone intervention in February 1998 clearly revealed that Nigeria, the principal hegemonic factor in the intervention failed to secure a clear mandate for its intervention from both ECOWAS and the UN immediately before the intervention. Second, it failed to act in concert with other important sub-regional states to garner key francophone support for the intervention. Third, their disastrous intelligence failure before the invasion of Monrovia in 1992 was repeated in Freetown in 1999. Fourth, Nigeria's leaders failed to secure military and logistical equipment and the necessary financial support before undertaking the intervention.

However, Sierra Leone intervention showed some improvements from the Liberia's case. In Sierra Leone, Francophone countries were actively involved in ECOWAS peacemaking efforts from the start, resulting in

less hostility and criticism of Nigeria's intervention therein with Cote d'Ivoire having negotiated the Abidjan peace agreement in 1996. Likewise in Lome in 1999, Francophone Togo took the lead, along with the UN, in peacemaking, while Burkina Faso was actively involved in efforts to reach agreement with the RUF.

The ECOMOG intervention in Guinea-Bissau repeated some of the mistakes of the Liberia and Sierra Leone interventions. The peacekeepers were logistically ill-equipped for their mission; the number of troops was grossly insufficient to maintain security in the country, and the funding for the mission depended entirely on France, an external power which had its own interest in the outcome of the conflict in Guinea-Bissau. Here, Senegal, a middle-size West African power, led an intervention with Guinea in defence of what it saw as its national security interest without an ECOWAS mandate and without Nigeria. What, one may want to know, was the result? The absence of Nigerian contingents from the ECOMOG force in Guinea-Bissau was critical to the premature end of the Senegal-led peacekeeping mission in Guinea-Bissau in 1999. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, Nigeria-led ECOMOG forces had been able to overcome their logistics shortcomings to protect Monrovia and Freetown from being over-run by rebels in 1992 and 1999 respectively. The Nigerians had also been able to repel the NPFL from Monrovia in 1990 and restore the Kabbah government to power in Freetown in 1998. This suggests the indispensability of Nigeria's military and financial muscle to largely sub-regional peacekeeping efforts.

### **3.5 Contributions of Civil Societies to Peace-Building Processes in West Africa**

Civil society actors in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau have enormous contribution in managing civil conflicts. In Liberia for example, the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee (I.F.M.C.) crafted the ECOWAS Peace Plan of 1990, while ECOMOG supported an interim government in Monrovia between 1990 and 1994 with active civil society participation. In Sierra Leone, a cross-section of women's organizations pressured the military government to hold democratic elections in February 1996, while the inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (I.R.C.S.L.) played a crucial role during the negotiation of the Lome peace agreement of 1999 in Guinea-Bissau. Also, the Bishop of Bissau played an important role in mediating between both sides during the war, while civil society groups have played an important role in post-electoral peace building activities.

However, despite the often courageous role of civil society, this role got frustrated in large-scale conflicts in which armed factions controlled large parts of the country. In the end, ECOWAS, frustrated by military stalemate and the financial burden of protracted peacekeeping, pursued a policy of appeasing warlords and rebels in all three cases often in the face of vociferous opposition from civil society groups. In Liberia, the warlords were brought into an interim government in 1995 and their allies were given government posts; in Sierra Leone, Sankoh was given the Vice-Presidency in 1999, and the RUF got cabinet posts; in Guinea-Bissau, a deal was brokered in 1998 that established an interim government between representatives of Mane and Vieira. These deals proved to be unstable; Mane launched a coup against Vieira; Sankoh attacked UN peacekeepers; and, Taylor used his war chest to win elections before continuing his destabilization policies in the sub-region. In the words of Adebayo:

*This suggests that neither an exaggerated faith in the ability of civil society to manage uncivil conflicts, nor the blatant appeasement of warlords, can bring stability to West Africa. ECOWAS leaders will have to work closely with civil society actors in developing their security mechanism, since these actors are often closest to conflicts and can contribute to preventive efforts (2002:16).*

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Conclusively, you have learnt that going by their nature and scope, conflicts in the West African sub-region—some of which have led to full-scale wars—are caused by multifarious socio-political factors. You have also learnt that the method of resolving these conflicts, which was formerly piecemeal or a “one-man” show, became improved upon when West African states began acting collectively through the ECOWAS. The challenges, no doubt, have been daunting, but certainly not insurmountable, especially with the ever-ready assistance of civil societies in the sub-region.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES**

1. Mention and discuss, in details, the challenges which peace-keeping efforts face in the West African sub-region.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

To summarize, both intra-state and inter-state conflicts have plagued the West African sub-region. The method of resolving these conflicts have been transformed from piecemeal approaches to more comprehensive

approaches, with the establishment of the ECOWAS. Even though challenges still abound as far as conflict resolution in the region is concerned, one can say that civil societies have enormously contributed to the peace-building process in the region.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- (i) Write a two-page essay, explaining the nature and scope of conflict in the West African sub-region.
- (ii) Identify, and differentiate between, the methods of conflict resolution in West Africa in the pre-ECOWAS period and in the period following the birth of ECOWAS.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Akinbi, J.O. and O.O. Akinola (2007): “Hegemonic Factor in Conflict Resolution in Africa: A Case Study of ECOMOG”, <http://cendia007.com/publications/pubdoc/HEGEMONIC.doc>

Adebayo, A. (2002): “The ECOWAS Security Mechanism: Toward a Pax West Africana”, paper presented at the CODESRIA General Assembly Meeting, Kampala, December, 2002.

Iheme, F. (2004): “The Role of ECOWAS in Conflict Management” in Best, S.G. (ed.) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Adetula, V.A.O. (2006): “Development, Conflict and Peace Building in Africa” in Best, S.G. (ed.) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

### **MODULE III**

- Unit 1 War/Conflict in English-Speaking West African Countries since 1960
- Unit 2 War/Conflict in Non-English-Speaking West African Countries since 1960
- Unit 3 The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in Conflicts/Wars in their English-Speaking Sister Countries
- Unit 4 The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in Conflicts/Wars in their Non-English-Speaking Sister Countries

### **UNIT 1: WAR/CONFLICT IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES SINCE 1960**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Nigerian Civil War
  - 3.2 The Liberian Civil War
  - 3.3 The Conflict in Sierra Leone
  - 3.4 The Gambian Conflict
- 4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit gives you a brief background of the conflicts in Nigeria (the civil war), and those of Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. The unit does this by exposing you to the various factors that watered the ground for the conflicts in these countries. It also examines the factors that are linked to the local setting in the country. Finally, the unit dwells on the Nigerian military factor as a major factor that worked in the background to set the stage for the war.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) Identify the internal social forces that led to the conflict in Nigeria between 1967 and 1970.
- (ii) Comment on the internal wrangling in Liberia that led to the civil war in that country.
- (iii) Discuss the circumstances that led to the Sierra Leonean conflict.
- (iv) Describe the negative role of the Nigerian military as a major factor that prepared the stage for the Nigerian Civil War.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 The Nigerian Civil War**

#### **3.1.1 The Colonial Background**

The land mass known today as Nigeria existed as a number of independent national states with linguistic and cultural differences until 1900. The Governor General of Nigeria between 1920 and 1931, Sir High Clifford, described Nigeria as “a collection of independent native states separated from one another by great distances, by differences of history and traditions and by ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers” (Nigeria Council Debate, Lagos, 1920). The building of Nigeria as a multi-national state began in 1900, which marked the creation of the Northern and Southern protectorates along with the Colony of Lagos by the British government. Further effort at unification and integration was made in May 1900 when the colony of Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, were amalgamated to become the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

Then, the Northern and Southern administrations were not only separate and distinct, but were independent of one another until 1914 when Lord Lugard amalgamated the administrations of the two sections of Nigeria. Even after the amalgamation, the British administered the two sections of the country separately, like independent entities. This separateness in the administration of the North and South was strengthened and deepened by the Richards’ Constitution of 1946 which inaugurated Nigeria’s regionalism, with the effect that when the Northern and Southern representatives met at the legislative house in Lagos for the first time they looked like strange bed fellows!

The political parties, which were later formed, were established on the platform of ethnic basis. In 1953, the central cabinet was split over the



acceptance of a target date for securing self-government with the resultant effect of the Kano riot. The gap between the regions widened. The North, for the first time, threatened to secede from Nigeria followed by the West for reasons of humiliation and ill-treatment and non-inclusion of Lagos in the West in the new constitution respectively.

### **3.1.2 The Post-Independence Setting**

From then onwards, the political direction was constantly away from strong centre. The failure of the Willink Commission to recommend the creation of more states in 1958 planted a seed of instability. The political actors did not help issues as these leaders “rode on the crest of tribalism and ignorance of the people to power, at the expense of national unity and the nation”. However, these ethnic animosities and resentments were swept under the carpet to achieve independence, after which they resurfaced. Nigeria was beset by strings of political problems which stemmed from the top-sided nature of the political divisions of the country and the type of the existing federal constitution, and the spirit of ethnicity and tribalism which was in operation.

Thus, the General Census conducted in 1962 was allegedly riddled with malpractices and inflation of figures that the Eastern Region refused to accept the result later; a second census of 1963 was accepted, though with reservations. Meanwhile, the people of the Middle Belt area of the North had grown increasingly intolerant of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) rule of the North. This resentment was spear-headed by the Tiv with open riot for almost three years (1962-1965). Then, there came a major crisis resulting from the General Election of 1964. The Chairman of the Electoral Commission himself admitted there were irregularities. The President, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, refused to appoint a Prime Minister in the light of these allegations. For the first time the

President and the incumbent Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, were each seeking the support of the armed forces. This marked the first involvement of the Armed Forces in partisan politics. However, the impasse was later resolved. In the wake of Western Region election of 1965, the rigging and irregularities were alleged to be more brazen that law and order broke down completely leading to an almost complete state of anarchy.

### **3.1.3 The Nigerian Military Factor**

This was the state of affairs when the coup of 15 January 1966 took place. The outcome of the ill-fated coup was a change of political balance in the country as all the politicians and senior military officers killed were from the North and Western Region, except a political leader and a senior Army officer from the Mid-West and the East respectively. Most of the coup planners were of Eastern origin; thus the Northerners, in particular, saw it as a deliberate plan to eliminate their political heavy weights in order to pave way for the Easterners to take over the leadership role from them. The above scenario culminated in the May 1966 riots throughout the North during which most Easterners residing in the North were attacked and killed.

A counter-coup was staged by the Northern military officers on 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1966 with two aims: revenge on the East, and a break up of the country. The Head of State, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi and many other senior officers of Eastern origin were killed (Adefarati, 1992) and the 'status-quo' of northern dominance was restored. Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from the Middle Belt, became the head of state after the coup. His first act was to reinstate the federal system along with the four regions and their allotted functions. But relations between the federal government and the Eastern Region,

led by its military governor Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, were strained. In addition to the elimination of many Igbo officers during the July coup, a massive pogrom against the Igbo occurred in the Northern Region. In September, Colonel Gowon summoned an *ad hoc* conference to deliberate on the country's political future. Most regional delegates to the conference, with the exception of those from the Mid-west recommended a confederal system to replace the federal system. The delegates from the Eastern Region insisted that any region wishing to secede from the federation should be allowed to do so. The conference was ended abruptly by increasing killings of the Igbo in the North and the heightening of tensions between the federal government and the Eastern Region.

A summit of military leaders at Aburi, Ghana, to negotiate peace between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Eastern Region was called under the auspices of General Ankrah of Ghana in Aburi, Ghana in 1967. The Aburi summit attempted to resolve the disagreements, and recommended the establishment of a confederation of regions. The Aburi Agreement became a source of contention, however.

In anticipation of Eastern secession, Gowon moved quickly to weaken the support base of the region by decreeing the creation of twelve new states to replace the four regions. Six of these states contained minority groups that had demanded state creation since the 1950s. Thus, the Eastern Region was divided into three states. The reaction from Enugu (capital of the Eastern Region) was sharp and quick: the declaration of Eastern Nigeria as the independent sovereign state of "Biafra" on 30 May 1967. Thereafter, the bloody Nigerian Civil War began. At the dawn of 6 July 1967, the first bullet was fired, signalling the beginning of the gruesome 30 month civil war and carnage, which saw brothers killing brothers.

## **3.2 The Liberian Civil War**

### **3.2.1 Brief Background to the Conflict**

The immediate history of the Liberian crisis can be traced back to 12<sup>th</sup> April 1980, with the assassination of President William Tolbert and other key officials in his government by Master–Sergeant Samuel Doe, on charges of corruption, neglect of the military and mismanagement of public funds. This unconstitutional action, however, received the endorsement of Liberians due to what was perceived as the domination and injustice of the minority but dominant Americo-Liberians in the socio-political and economic landscape of Liberia.

The popular support for President Doe by the masses was, however, short-lived as he embarked on filling key positions within the civilian and military administrations with members of his Krahn ethnic group. The growing dissatisfaction with the Liberian administration, in addition to President Doe's alleged interference with the electoral process and the re-composition of the electoral commission, which eventually declared him the winner of the election, worsened the existing tensions. The subsequent degeneration of the crisis into a seven year civil war (1989-1996) was later precipitated by the dismissal in 1989 of Mr. Charles Taylor, a Minister in President Doe's cabinet on charges of corruption. This promptly led to the waging of a guerrilla war against the Doe- led government of Liberia by Mr. Taylor, under the umbrella of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) (Iheme, 2006).

The other faction which arose did so because of struggle for power and control of the government. These included the United Liberian Movement (ULIMO) led by Yomi Johnson. The conflict in Liberia soon proved to be a West African regional problem, as evident in the 'trans-

border dynamics' of the conflict, spilling into Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Guinea. This became a challenge that an ill-prepared and inexperienced ECOWAS was to confront in the early 1990s, given the enormous civilian casualties including the deaths of several other West African nationals and refugee trafficking across West African borders.

### **3.2.2 The ECOWAS' ECOMOG Intervention and Role in the Conflict Resolution.**

Given the carnage in Liberia, though having no instrument to guide its involvement in what was perceived by some members of ECOWAS as an internal matter, ECOWAS established a five member standing mediation committee in May 1990, tasked to mediate in the Liberian conflict. At the meeting in Banjul (in the Gambia), the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group was established to monitor and later enforce a cease-fire among the warring factions in Liberia. Despite the initial opposition to ECOMOG by Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso suspected to be allies of Taylor's NPEL, the two countries soon joined other ECOWAS members to pursue peace in Liberia through the ECOMOG

### **3.2.3 The Liberian Peace Process**

The Liberian peace process involved various treaties and it dates from the Kairaba Banjul agreement which set up ECOMOG between August 6 and 7, 1990, to the Yamoussoukro II (July 1991), Yamoussoukro III (September 16-17, 1991), Yamoussoukro. IV (October 29-30, 1991) and the Cotonou (Benin Republic) Agreement of July 25, 1993. The peace agreement also included the Abuja (Nigeria) Accord signed on August 19, 1995 and Accra (Ghana) Accord signed early in 1996 as well as the

recommitment Accord signed again in July 1996 by the warring factions to uphold the Abuja Accord of 1995 (Adeyemo, 2002).

ECOMOG became a vital instrument throughout the period of the peace process. ECOMOG successfully backed the Liberian National Transition Government headed first by Professor Amos Sawyer and later by Mrs. Ruth Perry. In effect, Liberian refugees had full confidence to return to their country after almost a decade of civil war. More importantly, ECOMOG also monitored the Liberian transition programme that led to elected democratic government in Liberia on July 19, 1997. The successful conclusion of presidential and legislative elections in Liberia and the installation of a democratically elected Executive President on August 2, 1997 ended the civil war in that country.

#### **3.2.4 Liberia: The Post-Civil War Conflict and Mediation**

In the light of the dissent which followed the inauguration of the Taylor government in 1997, other organizations in and outside Liberia, particularly the United Nations and other international partners, were involved to contain the situation. On the escalation of the fighting between the government and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (L.U.R.D.) in May 2002, the government of Liberia requested the intervention of ECOWAS. The Authority of Heads of State and Government in a meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2002 in Yamoussoukro took a decision which led to the intensification of efforts geared towards the resolution of the conflict. Part of such action

included seeking the assistance of the international community to resolve the conflict.

The Executive Secretary, Dr. Mohammed ibn Chambers, subsequently undertook extensive consultations on the best strategy for bringing lasting peace to Liberia. This was to result in the establishment of the ECOWAS led International Contact Group on Liberia (I.C.G.L.) , comprising the UN, the European Union (E.U.), the African Union, ECOWAS, Morocco, Nigeria, France, the UK, the USA and Ghana Co-chaired by the representations of the European Union and the ECOWAS chairman, the (C.G.L.) had the broad mandate of facilitating, coordinating and complementing the existing peace initiatives, including the negotiation of cease-fire, the deployment of a UN-financed stabilization force and support for the creation of an enabling environment for building a culture of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, the conduct of credible elections and the return of refugees (Iheme, 2006).

The working session which held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2003 in Brussels was a follow up on its second session held in New York on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2003. There, General Abdulsalami Abubakar of Nigeria was endorsed as Mediator for the talks. Charles Taylor was persuaded to disengage the rebel movements, the LURD and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (M.O.D.E.L.). The Chief mediator made the talks all inclusive of major stakeholders and groups in Liberia, and this approach endeared him to the majority of Liberians who attended the peace talks. At the end of the two and a half month peace talks the community negotiated a ceasefire agreement signed in Akosombo on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2003 and a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (C.P.A.) signed in Accra on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2003.

### **3.2.5 The Post-Civil War Peace-Building**

The eleven part thirty-seven article agreement provided details of activities, responsibilities and annexed timeliness for the cessation of hostilities, disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and rehabilitation (D.D.R.R.), security sector reform, and human rights. It also provided a two stage transition in keeping with the wishes of most delegates. For the transitional period, the CPA stipulated the establishment of an all inclusive National Transition Government of Liberia (N.T.G.L.) whose accession to power under the leadership of Mr. Gyude Bryant and Mr. Wesley Johnson, as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively, would signal the dissolution of the Blah-led government and the dismantling of all irregular forces. In alignment with the constitution therefore, the three branches of the National Transitional Government of Liberia had seventy-six members. The Interim government was sworn in on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2003.

At the height of the achievement of ECOWAS was a successful and commendable negotiation with Taylor to accept to leave Liberia to create enabling environment for peace to reign. Thus, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2003, Charles Taylor (true to the negotiated exit) departed Liberia for asylum in Nigeria. This created the space for the implementation of the CPA. Charles Taylor's exit eventually led to the conduct of internationally supervised credible elections that ushered in Mrs. Sirleaf Johnson as the now and legitimate President of Liberia. Since then, with the aid of the UN-backed Resolution 1497 (2003) of the UN, ECOWAS was mandated to deploy its mission in Liberia (known as ECOMIL), and set the framework for the establishment of a UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL).



In consolidation of its support, the United Nations Security Council at its 4830<sup>th</sup> meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003 adopted Resolution 1509 (2003) authorizing the establishment of a fifteen thousand (15,000) strong International Stabilization Force (I.S.F.), which was to be established for a period of twelve months. The UN mission in Liberia, directed by the special representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, General Jacques Klein, had wide-ranging mandate to assist the implementation of the cease-fire and Comprehensive Peace Agreements. Accordingly, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003 marked the transfer of authority from the ECOWAS-led ECOMIL Forces to the UN-mandated and UN-led UNMIL forces.

On the whole, the Liberian peace process has led to the ongoing relative non-violent peace and co-existence in the area. The country has settled down once again for infrastructural and other human development.

### **3.3 The Conflict in Sierra Leone**

It is believed that the remote cause of the Sierra Leone conflict was the revisionist military regime intervention in the polity. Following that intervention, the people rose up to revise the national constitution that was set aside for long by the military when the polity became tensed up. In a follow-up to this popular demand and resistance to military rule, political parties which nominated candidates for election came into existence. The election which was upheld as free and fair even by international observers ushered in Ahmed Tejan Kabbah as the democratically elected President of Sierra Leone. Parliamentary elections also took place and produced credible parliamentarians.

In the midst of these, President Kabbah succeeded in concluding a peace agreement with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) on November 30,

1976. While the peace implementation process was on, the RUF suddenly discarded the peace agreements and joined its forces with some dissident elements of the Sierra Leonean Army, led by Major John Koromah, and violently seized power, overthrowing the democratically elected government of President Kabbah on May 25, 1997, thereby forcing the President and his close officials to flee to neighbouring Guinea Republic (Adeyemo, 2002).

The above situation not only plunged the country into anarchy, but also threatened the existing fragile peace in Liberia, as well as the peace and security in the entire sub-region.

### **3.4 The Gambian Conflict**

The rallying point of the conflict in the Gambia is the crisis in Casamance, southern Senegal, when the Movement for the Forces of Democracy in Casamance (MFDC) officially declared an armed struggle for the independence of Casamance in May, 1990. The region has since then been in an intermittent state of conflict, with numerous peace accords failing to provide a solution to the impasse (Minteh, 2009).

Culturally speaking, the people of the Casamance region are more aligned to the Mandigos, Jolas and Balantes of the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. There have been times when the region has also been more politically aligned with Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia. The existence of cultural and economic ties between the people of Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, the Gambia and Cape Verde is a historical reality that stems from the post-colonial era.

Gambia has played a crucial role in the crisis in the Casamance troubled region in Senegal. Minteh (2009), for example, has stated that President Jammeh has on numerous occasions been alleged to have provided

assistance to the MFDC in the Casamance. The MFDC rebels are predominantly President Jammeh's ethnic kinsmen and his active role in the crisis has been questioned in numerous fronts. There are reports indicating that weapons used by rebels in the Casamance are from the Gambia, with the assistance of the government.

Since then, there have been skirmishes, support and counter-support of dissidents/insurgent groups between the two countries, leading to tension and hostilities in the Gambia.

The reign in the Gambia of Yahya Jammeh who incidentally has amended the constitution of the Gambia to perpetuate himself in power has led to the emergence of dissidents, with alleged plots to overthrow him. Thus, the Gambian authorities have been accusing the Senegalese authorities of alleged plan to destabilize the Gambia and to overthrow its ruler, Yahya Jammeh. The Senegalese Interior Minister, Ousmane Ngun, was, at a stage, blamed for holding a meeting with exiled Gambian dissidents in Dakar to plan for an armed attack against Gambia. Ngun was said to have met with former AFPRC junta member, Sana Sabally, a former soldier, Ebrimah Manneh, who is a brother of the slain presidential guard, Almamo Manneh, leader of the failed armed insurrection, Kukoi Samba Sanyang, and Colonel Ndure Cham, who is accused of having master-minded the alleged March 2006 coup attempt against President Jammeh ([www.gambianow.com/news/Gambia\\_Report\\_Tf](http://www.gambianow.com/news/Gambia_Report_Tf)). The fact being established is that there is palpable tension in the Gambia. The existing peace is merely relative, in spite of the fact that there are no full scale hostilities there yet.

It has been widely reported that both the 2001-2002 and the 2005-2006 parliamentary and presidential elections in the Gambia were marred by alleged voter registration irregularities amongst President Jammeh's Jola

kinsmen from Casamance and Guinea-Bissau (Minteh, 2009), even though these elections were said to have been free and fair.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The various wars/conflicts in the English-speaking countries of West Africa go to show you that these conflicts were not happenstances, but developments that were caused by political and socio-economic factors, most of which have external connections. The timely intervention of ECOWAS' ECOMOG has, however, gone a long way in containing most of these conflicts.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Identify the major causes of conflicts in the English-speaking West African countries since independence.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this Unit, we have looked at some of the post-colonial conflicts and ensuing wars in some English-speaking West African countries. From our observation, we have seen how accumulated intra-societal grudges connected to socio-economic and political factors on the one hand, and external influences—especially those rooted in preceding colonialism and ever-present neo-colonialism—on the other hand, inevitably led, on most occasions, to an almost complete state of anarchy in parts of our region.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- (i) Identify and comment on the internal factors that led to the Nigerian Civil War.
- (ii) Write an essay on the “Liberian Civil War”, highlighting the major aspects of the internal wrangling in the Liberian conflict.
- (iii) Discuss the circumstances that led to the Sierra Leonean conflict.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Nigerian Council Debate, Lagos, 1920.

Iheme, F. (2004): “The Role of ECOWAS in Conflict Management” in Best, S.G. (ed.) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Adeyemo, F.O. (2002). *Dynamics of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy 1993-1998*, Lagos: Franc-Soba Nig. Ltd.

Minteh, B. S. (2009) “The Crisis in Casamance, Southern Senegal: A Constructive Conflict Resolution Approach: <http://www.senegambianews.com/article/Education>.  
[www.gambianow.com/news/Gambia](http://www.gambianow.com/news/Gambia) Report Tf

## **UNIT 2: WAR/CONFLICT IN NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES SINCE 1960**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Chadian Crisis
  - 3.2 The Conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire
  - 3.3 The Conflict in Guinea Bissau
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit introduces you to the conflict and political crises in Chad, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau. The unit delves into the various circumstances that heralded the conflicts in these countries. You are advised to take special note of the fact that in most of the conflicts in countries of the West African sub-region, external factors always played some causative role.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Analyse the various factors that led to the Chadian crisis.

- ii) Comment on how the socio-political conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire threatened the Ivorian state.
- iii) Discuss the circumstances that led to the conflict in Guinea-Bissau.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Chadian Crisis**

##### **3.1.1 Chad as a War- Plagued Country**

Chad has been plagued by war since 1965. One of the causes of this protracted war was weak government, caused by the uncertain security situation. The conflicts in that country are attributable to the colonial hang-over. Chad as a nation has witnessed more than three (3) French interventions in its internal affairs (in 1969, 1979 and 1983). In fact, the latest intervention saw the use of some of the most sophisticated conventional weapons that resulted in the Libyan withdrawal from the much-talked-about Aouzou strip (Vogt, 1990).

The series of conflicts in which rebels were pitched against one central government or the other in pursuit of power also witnessed many Chadian rebels entering Niger with their weapons.

##### **3.1.2 The Cold War Factor**

The main source of arms used in the various rebellions in Chad has been the "Cold War Pipeline" weapons (weapons acquired during the days of the Cold War). Most of the arms came from either France or Libya

which backed opposing sides in the Chadian conflicts. The French military presence in Chad could be viewed in the light of French base in Ndjamena, traditionally an important factor in the French military strategy in Africa. Hissen Habre provided the opportunity for France to rebuild her military presence in Chad. According to Vogt, reports have it that about “2,500 French Commandos, paratroopers, marines, foreign legionaries, engineers, airmen, communication experts, supply and maintenance units and a host of military advisers were attached to President Hissen Habre’s army”(1990: 100).

### **3.1.3 The French and Libyan Factor**

The source of the immediate externally-orchestrated conflict was France’s unilateral ignition of border disputes in Africa. For instance, “France had attempted to settle the Chadian-Libyan dispute over the Ouzou strip by reaching an agreement with Libya without initially informing or seeking the consent of the Chadian government, hence Libya’s occupation of the strip in northern Chad” (African Research Bulletin, 1984). In spite of the tremendous amount of pressure which was applied on France to intervene in the conflict by the United States of America and several African countries to expel Libyan forces stationed in Chad to support the Transitional Union Government (GUNI) headed by Goukouni Weddeye, it was only after Libya had effected the annexation of the Aouzou strip, and established rebel presence at Faya-Largeau and northward, that Francois Mitterrand finally decided to intervene with sufficient force to ensure that Libya was contained within the northern part of the country. This set the stage for peace-keeping operation in Chad, as we shall see in the next segment.

## **3.2 The Conflict in Cote d’Ivoire**



The crisis in Cote d'Ivoire commenced on 25 December 1999, when a military coup—the first of its kind in that country's history—overthrew the government led by President Henri Konan Bedie. The coup was seen as part and parcel of the cycle of corruption, coups, and counter-coups in West Africa in which the military frequently step in, claiming, often with popular support, to be guardians of the national interest, intent on cleansing the state of the politics of corruption. But, because they learn little from history, they soon repeat the mistakes or misdemeanours which they claim they seized power to eliminate. ([www.angelfire.com/control:2010](http://www.angelfire.com/control/2010))

In this context, General Robert Guei, the coup leader, held elections in late 2000, but excluded the opposition leader, Alassane Quattara, and blatantly rigged the poll results. Guei went ahead to declare himself the winner. However, popular protest forced him to step aside, and brought up Laurent Gbagbo into power. Gbagbo spent his first two years in office trying to consolidate power in a central government, but he was unable to appease his opponents. This resulted in another coup in September, 2002.

This imbroglio developed into a civil war in 2002 (Porteous, 2004). With large followers, rebel forces claimed the northern half of the country.

### **3.3 The Conflict in Guinea-Bissau**

Democracy was threatened in Guinea-Bissau on June 7, 1978 when the country's former Chief of Army Staff, General Ansoumane Wane led a rebellion against the democratically elected government of President Joan Bernado Vierra. The remote cause of this rebellion could be traced to President Vierra and his predecessor's lack of trained manpower and

poor economic management which resulted in serious economic crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

Under President Vierra, the economic condition which was the main reason for toppling the former President Louis Cabral did not in any way improve. Frequent shortages of essential goods continued so much so that the harsh economic condition pushed the farmers in Guinea-Bissau into selling their produce secretly to neighbouring Senegal and The Gambia in exchange for goods that were not available at home.

Apart from the harsh economic condition in the country, President Vierra took steps to decentralize the one-party State that was instituted by his predecessor, President Cabral. In effect, a multi-party democracy took its root in 1991, as some provisions of Guinea-Bissau's constitution were expunged to give way to a multi-party system of government.

However, the immediate cause of the crisis ensued when President Vierra's one time trusted ally, Brigadier-General Ansoumane Wane led a rebellion against Vierra's democratically elected government. Consequently, Ansoumane was dismissed as Chief of Army Staff over allegations of arms smuggling to rebels in Senegal. This later deteriorated into heavy fighting between the government troops and the rebels, allegedly supported by some neighbouring countries. The deepening conflict between the government and the rebels plunged the country into a seven-year political and economic unrest with frequent coups and power transitions.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

It has been shown here how instability in the state of affairs of African countries in general is attributable to the colonial hang-over. The French-speaking peoples of West African countries are not left out in this post-colonial story of corruption, greed, marginalization, crisis and widespread pandemonium. Coups and counter-coups were staged allegedly for the purpose of correcting the situation in the countries. Unfortunately, similar pattern of events have kept repeating themselves as regards to corruption at the level of leadership, and even followership.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Do you accede to the view that external factors are identifiable in the conflicts in the non-English speaking countries of West Africa?

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, the common maxim which says that when two elephants fight, it is invariably the grass that suffers played out in practical reality. In Chad particularly, the unfolding power tussle between successive regimes of the central government and various rebel forces was mainly provoked by the underlying patronage of France and Libya whose supply of arms to back opposing sides in the Chadian Cold War conflicts paved way for the violent conflicts engraved in long-term bitterness and indignation. Cote d'Ivoire's internal crisis erupted rather late against the background of the seemingly guaranteed trend of post-colonial, colonially-related and instigated conflicts in the West African sub-region, and indeed in Africa at large. Guinea-Bissau followed the drift early enough as her brand of democracy failed to uplift and enhance the ailing economy.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i) Critically discuss the view that the socio-political conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire immensely threatened the Ivorian state.
- ii) Attempt an analysis of the various factors which led to the crisis in the Republic of Chad.
- iii) Write a two-page essay on the circumstances that led to the conflict in Guinea-Bissau.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Vogt, M.A. (1990) "Nigeria and the World Powers" in Ekoko, A.E. and Vogt, M.A. (eds.) *Nigerian Defence Policy: Issues and Problems*. Lagos: Mathouse Press Ltd.

Africa Research Bulletin, 1984.

[www.angelfire.com/control:2010](http://www.angelfire.com/control/2010)

Porteous, T. (2004): *Resolving African Conflicts*:  
[http://www.crimesofwar.org/africa-mag/afr\\_01\\_porteos.html](http://www.crimesofwar.org/africa-mag/afr_01_porteos.html).

**UNIT 3: THE ROLE OF (THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF) WEST AFRICAN STATES IN CONFLICTS/WARS IN THEIR ENGLISH-SPEAKING SISTER COUNTRIES**

**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Role of West African States in the Nigerian Civil War
  - 3.2 The Strategic Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflicts in Liberia

3.3 The Strategic Role of (the Economic Community of)  
West African States in the Conflicts in Sierra Leone

3.4 The Strategic Role of (the Economic Community of)  
West African States in the Conflicts in the Gambia

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit dwells on the various roles the governments and peoples of the West African sub-region have played either through individual country efforts or collectively through the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, in trying to resolve the various conflicts that have arisen in some of the English-speaking areas of the sub-region since the exit of the colonial rulers. The unit shows you that, with the exception of the Nigerian Civil War (which predates the regional organization, and during which West African states played their various individual roles), the ECOWAS has been actively involved in the effort to end various conflicts in the English-speaking parts of the region.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Give a detailed account of the role played by various West African states in the Nigerian Civil War.
- ii) Discuss the strategic role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in ending the Liberian conflict.

- iii) Assess the strategic role played by ECOWAS in the conflict in Sierra Leone.
- iv) Analyse critically the strategic role of ECOWAS in ending the Gambian conflict.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Role of West African States in the Nigerian Civil War**

##### **3.1.1 The Prominent Role of Ghana**

The role of West African states in stemming the Nigerian Civil War began prior to the actual war. For instance, the Ghanaian state under the administration of General Ankrah summoned a mediating meeting in Aburi in 1967 for a peace negotiation to avert any possible conflict in that country. In fact, General Ankrah succeeded in getting the disputing parties to reach an accord (Aburi Accord) which tried to provide for a confederation. It was only the relegation of this accord that led to the full blown war (<http://countrstudies.us/nigeria/70.htm>).

##### **3.1.2 The Role of Other West African States.**

Also, most West African states under the aegis of the O.A.U., and guided by the principle of non-interference and inviolability of existing sovereign state, supported the continued existence of the Nigerian entity as it were, apart from the use of good offices by friendly governments (like that of late Emperor Hallie Selassie of Ethiopia).

However, some West African countries had sympathy for the secessionist Biafra. Countries like Ivory Coast, Republic of Dahomey (now, the Republic of Benin), Sierra Leone joined countries from other African region such as Tanzania, Gambia, Ghana, Gabon and non African states like Haiti, France, West Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden to secretly import arms and ammunition into the region (Atofarati, 1992).

### **3.1.3 The Implications**

The kind of role played by a given West African state either in support or against the Nigerian side may have been due mainly to the fact that there was no formally collective security and peacekeeping arrangement to mediate in intra-state civil war in West Africa as at then. However, the continued recognition of Nigeria by most West African states (though under the auspices of the O.A.U) contributed, in no small way, to winning international recognition and support for the Nigerian state, as well as constraining the secessionist onslaught of the Biafran Government, as it was not easy to secure and import arms and ammunitions by the Biafran side to continue to prosecute the war. This may have contributed in ending hostilities as at the time it ended and quick rapprochements with countries such as Cote d'Ivoire whom Nigeria severed ties with for supporting Biafra during the civil war for fear of being used as launch pads by external aggressors.

## **3.2 The Strategic Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflict in Liberia**

The need for a new role for ECOWAS in the West African sub-region became imperative following the disintegration of the USSR. The



disintegration of the USSR significantly marked the beginning of a new era in global politics. In other words, the era of super-powers appeared to have ended given the fundamental political and economic changes that took place in the Soviet Union, and the less fundamental, but nevertheless substantial, changes that took place in the USA (James, 1996: 321).

Consequently, the new thinking in the former USSR was that of disinvestment in the security of other states and the concomitant withdrawal from the international system. The U.S.A., on her own part, resorted to the cultivation of a UN-centred New World Order characterised by a peculiar administration of unilateralism and multilateralism at the top, with no clear evidence of monopoly by any one nation, including the United States. Against the background of the diminution of super-power involvement in regional conflicts in the 1990s, the positive diplomatic initiative of galvanizing the West African sub-region into a peace-keeping international police force represented by the ECOWAS cease-fire monitoring group, ECOMOG, became imperative for the organization's cease-fire supra-national body.

ECOWAS, therefore, performed the vacuum-filling function of peace-keeping in Liberia out of expediency, more so because the former colonial powers were pre-occupied with larger issues which had more fundamental impact on their national interests and which made them unwilling to pursue aggressive interventionist policies in Africa (Whitaker, 1991:124-25). These global changes and developments, and the challenges they ushered in their wake, on the part of both the super-powers and the former colonial powers resulted in the threatened marginalisation of Africa and African affairs.

Regrettably, the laudable objective of achieving a war-free sub-regional community through the integration of the economies of member countries and the creation of a common market—ECOWAS in name and in deed—became threatened by the increase in the incidence, scale and intensity of wars in the West African sub-region in particular, and in the African continent in general. At the end of 1990, no fewer than fifteen (15) African wars took tremendous toll of daily casualties. Five out of these wars raged in the West African sub-region: the Liberian Civil War, the Tuareg insurrection in Mali and in Niger, the Casamance insurrection in Senegal, and the armed resistance in Mauritania (Sklar, 1991: 1). Even though these conflicts were basically internal wars, nevertheless their cross-boundary ramifications embittered relations between neighbouring states. This ugly metamorphosis of West Africa, nay Africa, in the 1990s into a zone of fundamental instability, and the dramatic withdrawal of super-powers as well as the former colonial powers from intervention in Africa provided the stimulating impulse for regional supranational authorities, like ECOWAS, to assume greater responsibilities for regional peace and security (James, 1996: 322).

From the catalogue of disruptive wars and conflicts, ECOWAS recognised the symbiotic relationship that exists between regional security and harmonious development of the economies of its member states. Consequently, the growing importance of security issues and the disruptive impact of these wars and conflicts on meaningful economic development compelled the adoption by ECOWAS of a protocol relating to mutual assistance on defence in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on May 29, 1981.

The protocol, in Article 2, states that, “*any armed threat or aggression directed against any member state shall constitute a threat or aggression against the entire community*”. Equally, Article 3 further

stipulates that, “*member states resolved to give mutual aid and assistance to each other for defence against any armed threat or aggression*”. Although this defence protocol was signed in 1981, no institutional framework for its implementation was put in place. Paradoxically, at the eruption of the Liberian in 1989, the protocol was yet to be implemented in its totality, as most of its major organs were yet to be put in place; yet, it was the same protocol that provided the legal framework for the deployment of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group - ECOMOG. Given the carnage in Liberia and considering the grave danger the region was exposed to, the leaders of the ECOWAS formed a committee which comprised the heads of state of the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Mali, Togo and Guinea to deliberate on the issue. They met in Banjul (Gambia) on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 1990. The final communiqué provided for the despatching of a cease-fire monitoring group (to be known as ECOMOG) to Liberia. It was established originally for the sole purpose of keeping the peace, restoring law and order, and ensuring that a cease-fire was achieved.

ECOMOG forces left Freetown (Sierra Leone) on August 23, 1990, and landed in Monrovia, Liberia, the next day (Nwolise, 1992:64), with a Ghanaian, Lt. General Arnold Quainvo, as the pioneer commander, assisted by a Guinean deputy commander (Whitaker, 1991:10-12). As a result of non-compliance of the warring factions, the then Liberian President, Samuel Doe, was incidentally killed by the Johnson-led faction on September 9, 1990. A few days following this development, a fresh mandate was given to ECOMOG, now under Nigeria’s Major General Dogonyaro as Field Commander, to use force in carrying out its operations in Liberia. With the new use-of-force mandate, on October 12, 1990, ECOMOG took control of Monrovia and chased away the faction that had held the capital city hostage (Ukanwoke, 2000:113).

ECOMOG's long-term objectives of installing an interim government, paving the way for national reconciliation through convening a national conference of all Liberian political parties and other interest groups, and clearing the way for peaceful elections and the inauguration of a democratically elected government were to be achieved through a number of initiatives and measures. Subsequently, the initial ECOWAS programme of implementation of cease-fire became expanded to cover the whole of Liberia. ECOMOG was now to supervise the encampment and disarmaments of all the warring factions all over Liberia. However, certain preliminary accepted conditions for the materialization of the new ECOMOG mandate had to be met, and these included:

1. The granting of ECOMOG freedom of movement throughout the entire territory of Liberia;
2. The willingness of all the warring factions to abandon their fighting positions, and to move into designated camps;
3. The acceptance of certain eminent persons into Liberia during the period of the encampment and disarmament in order to reinforce the confidence of the parties;
4. The recognition by all the warring parties of the absolute neutrality of ECOMOG and the demonstration of their trust in it;
5. The location and recovery of all weapons inadvertently lost and their safe custody by ECOMOG;
6. The removal of all obstacles and the neutralization of all possible mine-fields, as well as,
7. ECOMOG to monitor all entry points into Liberia (in Ukanwoke, 2000:116).

More importantly, the ECOWAS informal consultative group drew up a new ECOMOG programme of implementation that would complement the activities already mapped out at the Yamoussoukro Accord of 30 October, 1991. A new target date

for the commencement of ECOMOG operations was set for 30 April, 1992. Finally, with the support of the United States, the ECOMOG mission was totally changed from peace keeping mission to peace enforcement mission in Liberia. This was given a legal backing by the ECOWAS Extra-ordinary Summit held in Biarritz in 1994, which re-defined the functions of ECOMOG as follows:

1. To prevent conflict;
2. To keep, restore, and consolidate peace;
3. To carry out humanitarian mission for refugees and displaced persons, and,
4. In case of need, to impose peace under the authority of the Council of Heads of States of ECOWAS (Adeyemo 2002; Iheme, 2006).

These functions were permanently designed to be carried out not only in Liberia but in any future crisis within the countries of the West African sub-region. This was why ECOMOG went into action in Sierra Leone in 1997.

ECOMOG became a vital instrument throughout the Liberian peace process. The successful conclusion of Presidential and legislative elections in Liberia and the installation of a democratically elected Executive President on August 2, 1997, ended the civil war in that country.

Remarkably, at the height of the achievement of ECOWAS was a successful and commendable negotiation with Charles Taylor to accept to leave Liberia. With his departure, and with the aid of Resolution

1497 (2003) of the UN, the framework for the establishment of a UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was set.

### **3.3 The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflicts in Sierra Leone**

First, ECOWAS, under the chairmanship of General Sanni Abacha (Nigeria's military Head of State), was quick in condemning the coup plot and asked for the reinstatement of ousted President Tejan Kabbah.

Secondly, the ECOWAS 16-member States ensured that the conflict in Sierra Leone was tabled at the OAU, and in effect, the OAU summit adopted a unanimous Resolution condemning the illegal seizure of power in Sierra Leone and demanded an immediate restoration of constitutional government in the country. Furthermore, the ECOWAS secured the support of the entire international community for the restoration of democracy in Sierra Leone; therefore, the Koromah junta was not given any diplomatic recognition. With the support given by the international community, especially the United States government, ECOWAS deployed its military arm (the ECOMOG) to maintain peace and order in the country under the command of Col. Maxwell Khobe of Nigeria. It should be recalled that Nigeria provided all the logistics needs of ECOMOG and as well as spearheaded the peace process by initiating dialogue with the parties in the conflicts—Major Koromah's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the Fodah Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

ECOWAS set up a Ministerial Committee of five on Sierra Leone which met with the representatives of AFRC severally both within and outside the shores of Africa in an attempt to find a lasting solution to the conflict. After unsuccessful attempts to bring the conflicts to an end

following the intransigence of the AFRC-RUF alliance, the ECOWAS took a number of measures to stem the tide. First, the deployment of 20,000 ECOMOG troops, the second was negotiation to be followed by sanctions, and as a last resort, the actual use of force, if the Koromah's refine failed to handover to the Tejan Kabbah by April 22, 1998.

In all, the ECOWAS committee of five foreign ministers comprising Ghana, Liberia, Guinea Republic, The Gambia and Nigeria exercised much patience through diplomatic negotiations with the Koromah's junta's representatives to no avail as the junta kept on renegeing on agreements. However, the junta's assault on ECOMOG troops and positions received counter assault thereby changing the face of the peacekeeping force to peace enforcement, although at the instance of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire who expressed some reservations about the use of force to oust Koromah's junta, made ECOWAS to adopt the principle of negotiations rather than recourse to force. Thus, in October, 1997, an accord was struck and signed between Major Koromah and ECOWAS committee of five foreign ministers in Conakry (Guinea Republic) for the reinstatement of the legitimate government of President Kabbah within 6 months of the agreement; the immediate cessation of hostilities, cooperation between the junta and ECOMOG in order to peacefully enforce the sanctions already in place, the reintegration of combatants, provisions of humanitarian assistance, return of refugees and displaced persons, granting of immunities/guarantees to the coup leaders as well as modalities for broadening the power base. (Adeyemo, 2002)

Unfortunately, Koromah's junta reneged on the Conakry Accord; rather, he made efforts to beef up his military capability by ordering three jet fighters from Ukrain in spite of UN Security Council's arms, ammunition and oil, and travel embargo on October 3, 1997. Believed to

have the sustained support of Taylor's led NPFL making use of some neighbouring territories, resumed military attacks on ECOMOG positions in Freetown. Consequently, ECOMOG forces descended heavily on the Koromah rebel force and within a week, Sierra Leone AFRC forces were routed.

According to Galadima (2006), the actual ECOMOG operations, in terms of fighting, lasted for only 7 days after which President Tejan Kabbah was restored as the President of Sierra Leone, on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1998 in a colourful ceremony attended by some ECOWAS leaders. However, in spite of the restoration of the elected President, ECOMOG became saddled with the responsibility of defending the civilian government by fighting a complicated battle against the coalition of rebel forces. Hence, the peace enforcement mission in Sierra Leone by ECOMOG played itself as war of attrition with the RUF, as well as a very difficult experience in the peace operation.

Again, in July 1999, barely eight (8) years of fighting, all parties to the conflict assigned an agreement in Lome, Togo in July 1999, signalling an end to hostilities. Nevertheless, instability and various skirmishes continued in various regions throughout the country. The conflict in Sierra Leone was to last till 2001 when a peace accord was signed in Lome between the government and the Revolution United Front (RUF). The holding of parliamentary and Presidential elections in May 2002 and the stabilization with the support activities of the UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), of the international community has led to the return of relative peace in that country (Iheme, 2006).

### **3.4 The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflicts in the Gambia**



The mediation efforts in Liberia culminated in the formation of the International Contact Group for Liberia, from where General Abdulsalami Abubakar, former military leader of Nigeria and a member of the Council of Elders successfully observed elections in The Gambia.

Also, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigerian President (former) mediated between Senegal and The Gambia over a two-month dispute that had disrupted cross-border travel and trade. President Obasanjo was appointed to mediate the dispute by the 15-member ECOWAS (IRIN, 2010). The above shows that, but for the timely intervention of ECOWAS, the dispute may have escalated into full scale hostilities which could have spread rapidly among the ethnic bonds of Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Senegal.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Guided by the principle of non-interference and inviolability of the existing sovereign state, sister West African countries always had the inclination to support the continued existence of the supreme entity of the conflicting nations. But there were also always a few countries that tended to sympathize with the secessionist minority faction.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Assess the importance of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in resolving conflict situations in West Africa since 1960.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

Even with the fact that there was no formally collective security and peacekeeping arrangement to mediate in intra-state civil war in West Africa in the pre-ECOWAS era, the countries never failed in their impulsive kindred desire to support the peaceful and mutual coexistence of their neighbours. With the establishment of ECOWAS and its military arm, ECOMOG, and consequent mediation between different factions in conflicting countries, an overall regional peace process began to ensue, and some disputes that may have escalated into full scale hostilities have been effectively nipped in the bud. On the whole, the efforts of member countries of ECOWAS and the other African countries under the aegis of the OAU, added to the contribution of the international community have led to the return of relative peace to the region.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i) Account for the various roles played by sister West African states in the Nigerian Civil War.
- ii) What role did the Economic Community of West African States play in ending the Liberian conflict?
- iii) Attempt an analysis of the nature of ECOWAS intervention in the Gambian political crisis.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

<http://countrystudies.us/nigeria/70.htm>

Atofarati, A.A. (1992) *The Nigerian Civil War, Causes, Strategies, and Lessons Learnt*. <http://www.africanmasterweb.com/Biafranwarcauses.htm>.

Adeyemo, F.O. (2002). *Dynamics of Nigeria's Foreign Policy 1993-1998*, Lagos: Franc-Soba Nig. Ltd.

Iheme, F. (2004): "The Role of ECOWAS in Conflict Management" in Best, S.G. (ed.) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Galadima, H.S. (2006) "Peace Support Operations in Africa" in Shedrack Gaya Best (ed.) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

IRIN (2010) *Gambia-Senegal: Burying the Hatchet*. <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=49689>.

Nwolise, B. C. Osioma (1992): *The Internationalization of the Liberian Crisis and Effects on West Africa*. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

Whitaker, C.S.A. (1991) "New Era of Peace-keeping: the African States", Paper presented at NIIA, Lagos, 29-31 October.

James, Ibrahim (1996): *The Role of ECOWAS in Peace-keeping in Liberia*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Pub. Ltd.

Ukanwoke, Ngozi (2000): Sovereignty in the New World Order: An Examination of ECOMOG in Liberia; M.Sc. Thesis, Department of Government and Public Administration, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.

**UNIT 4: THE ROLE OF (THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF) WEST AFRICAN STATES IN THE CONFLICTS/WAR IN THEIR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING SISTER COUNTRIES.**

**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Role of West African States in the Chadian Crisis
  - 3.2 The Role of West African States in the Conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire
  - 3.3 The Role of West African States in the Conflict in Guinea-Bissau
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Like the unit preceding it, this unit focuses attention on the various actions taken by the governments and peoples of the West African sub-region (individually and/or collectively through ECOWAS) in trying to resolve the conflicts that have arisen in some of the countries of the non-English speaking peoples of the sub-region. These would include the Republic of Chad, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea –Bissau. The unit further underlines the point that the governments and peoples of West Africa are beginning to take action against these unreasonable conflicts and the human rights violations that go with them.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Give a detailed account of the role played by West African states in the Chadian conflict.
- ii) Assess the role of external forces in the conflicts in Chad.
- iii) Discuss the actions taken by sister West African states in ending the political conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire.
- iv) Analyse critically the role of ECOWAS in the conflicts in Guinea –Bissau.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 The Role of West African States in the Chadian Crisis**

#### **3.1.1 The Nigerian-led Forces in the Chadian Crisis**

It should be recalled that during the Chadian crisis, the ECOWAS formal mechanism for conflict intervention had not evolved as in the Liberian conflicts in the 1990s. However, the much Nigeria (as a visible ECOWAS member, though under the auspices of the OAU) did was to spear-head an OAU peace-keeping force into Chad in 1981, a force which was partially equipped by the United States. Nigeria sent two peace-keeping forces into Chad, one as an independent effort and the other as part of an OAU effort.

### **3.1.2 The Problems and Setbacks**

Unfortunately, a number of the OAU member states (including West African states) did not honour their commitment to contribute troops to the mission. The force at its maximum strength consisted of only five manoeuvre battalions, which was extremely inadequate to cover an area of 801,000 square kilometres. The Nigeria-led OAU intervention in Chad between 1979 and 1981 was forced to withdraw largely because it lacked the funding and logistical support to sustain it. In less than a year the operation terminated, amidst general failure, being unable to stop the fighting and soon became the object of attack. It did little to promote peace-making as the conflict continued in various violent forms.

### **3.1.3 Ramifications of the Chadian Conflict**

France was rather persuaded to send into Chad a force of over 3,000 soldiers as well as some of the most sophisticated military hardware. The Americans financed the cost of Libyan defeat in Chad and provided the latter with a large amount of direct military assistance. Nigeria on the other hand discovered that in spite of the peace-keeping force she sent in, she could not prevent the internationalization of the crisis. As a result of the fiasco of the OAU peace-keeping effort, Nigeria (and

indeed ECOWAS states) became militarily marginalized in the resolution of the conflict. Even though in the end Nigeria provided the platform for discussing the withdrawal of Libyan and French forces, this gesture was in recognition of Nigeria's role as a neutral party and of the seriousness with which the government of General Ibrahim Babangida mediated between France and Libya.

### **3.2 The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire**

The intervention of ECOWAS coincided with the intervention of France (Cote d'Ivoire's erstwhile colonial masters), and these bodies worked together to hold peace talks between the government and the rebel forces. The Linas-Marcousis Peace Agreement of Paris gave rebels ministerial posts and major concessions in a unity government in January, 2003.

However, throughout 2003, the central government was unable to exert control over the northern regions and tension still remained high between Gbagbo and rebel leaders. In 2004, continued outbreaks in violence still occur throughout the country. Therefore, several thousand French and West African troops remained in the Ivory Coast to maintain peace and help implement the peace accords.

#### **3.2.2 Appraisal of ECOWAS Mediation Exercise in Cote d'Ivoire**

Unlike in the previous conflicts, the Cote d'Ivoire peace process was, to a large extent, controlled by France. France intervened with a military force to stabilize the situation in its former colony, to fund a West African peace keeping force (with contributions from the US and Britain), and to play the role of "diplomatic midwife" in the Ivorian

peace process. To this end, Porteous (2004) is of the view that “there is a real possibility that without such a response Cote d’Ivoire would by now have gone the way Liberia and Sierra Leone went in the early 1990s.”

However, the ECOWAS through the ECOMOG continued to play significant role in the resolution of the conflict. Even when the United Nations’ operation in Cote d’Ivoire (U.N.O.C.I.) was drafted into the fray, having determined that the situation in Cote d’Ivoire continued to pose a threat to international peace and security in the region, the mandate of UNOCI vide Resolution 1528 was to be implemented in coordination with the French forces and the forces of the ECOWAS. Even at the level of UNOCI, Ghana, a West African State was among the forty-three countries that contributed troops that made up the 3,360 UN troops, 134 military observers, and 85 civilian police. At least, ECOWAS States were able to control the crisis before alerting the international community to intervene.

### **3.3 The Role of (the Economic Community of) West African States in the Conflict in Guinea-Bissau**

In the wake of this rising conflict, President Vierra requested Senegal and The Gambia which also have bilateral defence pact with Guinea-Bissau to send troops and back his government. In spite of the military assistance from Senegal, Guinea and The Gambia, President Vierra failed to dislodge the rebels from their strongholds outside the capital of Guinea-Bissau even as the rebels occupied the country’s only airport. The rebels rejected Vierra’s call to lay down their arms before negotiation and ECOMOG intervention.

According to Adeyemo (2002), “the rebels also maintained that no meaningful negotiation would take place unless Portugal—the former



colonial master—dispatched some monitoring troops to oversee the peace deal.” Having noticed the futility of using the government military establishment against the rebels, President Vierra formally appealed to ECOWAS for intervention. In her reaction, Portugal asserted that ECOWAS should not intervene in Guinea-Bissau’s conflict and that troops from Senegal, Guinea and The Gambia which had offered support to the government of President Vierra against the rebels should desist from doing so. These culminated in ECOWAS speedy intervention to resolve the conflict.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The peacekeeping efforts of ECOWAS and other external bodies in the French-speaking West African countries that we have mentioned in this unit seem to be placed secondary to the intervention of erstwhile colonial powers. In the case of Cote d’Ivoire’s conflict, the principal meeting point for peace negotiations happened to be France. French troops also marched through the Chadian battlefield in a bid to expel the invading Libyan forces. And, in the case of Guinea-Bissau, the rebels were very keen on getting Portugal involved.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Attempt a comparative assessment of the roles of external and internal forces in the conflicts in the non-English speaking West African countries since independence.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In order to forge a peaceful coexistence, a unity government was formed in Cote d'Ivoire in which rebels were given ministerial posts and major concessions. These efforts, even with their occasional setbacks, paid off in the long run in establishing lasting peace.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i) Give a detailed account of the role played by West African states in the conflicts in Chad.
- ii) How would you assess the part played by external powers in the Chadian conflicts.
- iii) Attempt a critical analysis of the role played by ECOWAS in ending the conflicts in Guinea-Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Adeyemo, F.O. (2002). *Dynamics of Nigeria's Foreign Policy 1993-1998*, Lagos: Franc-Soba Nig. Ltd.

Porteous, T. (2004): *Resolving African Conflicts*: [http://www.crimesofwar.org/africa-mag/afr\\_01\\_porteos.html](http://www.crimesofwar.org/africa-mag/afr_01_porteos.html).

McGowan, P. (2005) "Coups and Conflicts in West Africa, 1995 – 2005: Part 1, Theoretical Perspectives", *Armed Forces and Society*, October 2005, vol. 32, pp.5-23.

Kabia, J. M. (2009): *Humanitarian Intervention and Conflict Resolution in West Africa*. Farnham Ashgate Pub. Co., 2009.

**MODULE IV**

- Unit 1 The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Context of Peace/Security in West Africa.
- Unit 2 ECOWAS' ECOMOG: Peace-Keeping Missions in West Africa
- Unit 3 The Significance of ECOWAS in the Maintenance of peace in West Africa
- Unit 4 Profile of ECOMOG Peace Missions in West Africa and the Issue of Regional Peace

**UNIT 1: THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS) IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACE/SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA.**

**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Background to the Formation of ECOWAS
  - 3.2 Key Provisions of the Treaty Establishing ECOWAS
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit sets out to get you acquainted with the circumstances that led to the formation of the regional body, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It also presents to you the key

provisions of the treaty establishing the organization. The essence of this is to enable you understand the philosophy and goals of the organization.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- a) Explain the necessity for the ECOWAS in the West African sub-region.
- b) Identify the key provisions of the treaty establishing ECOWAS
- c) State the goals of ECOWAS as a regional socio-economic body
- d) Enumerate the challenges the regional body is likely to face

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Background to the Formation of ECOWAS**

The formation of ECOWAS was first visualized by a Nigeria and Togo initiative between December 10 and 15, 1973. In effect, the government of West African states “agreed in general on necessary institutions (and provisions) of the Nigeria-Togo scheme—for a community and possible areas of cooperation as well as taxonomies and nature of various levels of integration such as institutions of the community, trade, customers, immigration, monetary-and financial matters, industrial harmonization,

natural resources, infrastructural links, transport, communications and energy, settlement of dispute etc. (Onwuka, 1982: 68-70).

Later, after detailed consideration of the Nigeria-Togo proposal, the ministers of West African countries adopted the basic principles of the document and further requested that the two “pioneering states prepare a draft treaty with the assistance of the Economic Commission for African (ECA)” (Onwuka, 1982: 71). Following the above moves, after several diplomatic shuttlings and manoeuvring in 1974, the draft treaty establishing the ECOWAS was adopted in Liberia at the end of January 1975 by delegates from seven (7) English and French-speaking countries which was submitted to the Heads of State Conference in Lagos on May 27<sup>th</sup> 1975, where the treaty establishing ECOWAS was signed by eleven Heads of State and four (4) plenipotentiaries representing fifteen (15) West African countries (Onwuka, 1982: 75).

### **3.2 Key Provisions of the Treaty Establishing ECOWAS**

As stated earlier, the Treaty of ECOWAS was signed on May 27, 1975 by fifteen West African nations. However, the Treaty officially came into effect on June 23, 1975 at which time the required minimum of seven member countries had ratified it. The ECOWAS Treaty provides 65 Articles which are arranged in 14 chapters.

**Below are the provisions in the chapters.**

Chapter one contains Articles 1-4 which spells out the Aims and objectives, the creation of an ECOWAS in which free trade and free mobility of labour and skill will enhance the harmonization of economic development, embracing agriculture, industries, transport and communication and training of skills, etc (Ebiefie, 1984).

Chapter Two covers Articles 5-12 which contain details of the establishment, composition and functions of the four institutions of the community namely, the Authority of Heads of State and Government; the Council of Ministers, the Executive Secretariat headed by an Executive Secretary, two Deputy Secretaries, with a Financial Controller and other officers of the Secretariat; the Tribunal of the Community.

Four other Commissions of the Community are provided as follows: The Trade, customs, immigration, monetary and payments Commission; the Industry, Agriculture and Natural Resources Commission, the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Commission; and the Social and Cultural Affairs Commission.

In Chapter three (3), Customers and Trade matters and various issues relating to trade are covered. Thus, Article 12 covers Liberalization of trade; Article 13-16 provides for customs duties, common customs tariff, community tariff agreement and direction of trade. In Articles 17-26, the revenue duties and internal taxation, quantitative restriction on community goods, dumping and other trade matters are treated (Ebiefie, 1984). Monetary and financial relationships are treated in Articles 36-39. Other highlights of the Treaty are the development of the Community's infrastructural links in transport and communications and postal services spelt out in Article 40-47; whereas issues relating to cooperation in exploitation, distribution and development of energy and mineral resources are provided in Article 48, the establishment of the fund for cooperation, compensation and development are spelt out in Articles 50-52.

Articles 53-55 pertain to the Budget and Articles 57-64, relate to general matters, such as the sitting of Headquarters, the official languages of the

Community (which remains English and French), status, privileges and immunities of member-states, appointment of Executive Secretary, coming into effect of the Treaty and withdrawal of membership.

In 1978, an additional Non-aggression Pact was signed by member states which laid a positive foundation for maintaining political stability in the region. Observing the inadequacy of the Non-aggression Pact of 1978 in securing the political stability in the sub-region, in a Freetown meeting of 1981, the Authority agreed to adopt the Defence Protocol which establishes a Council, Commission and a Deputy Executive Secretary (Onwuka, 1982: 110) to oversee the working of the Defence Protocol.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From this unit, you have learnt that, after several diplomatic shuttles and manoeuvrings in 1974, the draft treaty establishing the ECOWAS was adopted in Liberia at the end of January 1975 by delegates from seven (7) English and French-speaking countries. The draft treaty was submitted to the Heads of State Conference in Lagos on May 27<sup>th</sup> 1975; the Treaty of ECOWAS was signed by fifteen West African nations. However, the Treaty officially came into effect on June 23, 1975 at which time the required minimum of seven member countries had ratified it. The ECOWAS Treaty provides 65 Articles which are arranged in 14 chapters.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Attempt a critical assessment of the successes of ECOWAS in the area of conflict resolution since its formation.



## **5.0 SUMMARY**

On the whole, among the aims and objectives of its establishment, ECOWAS aspired to establish free trade and free mobility of labour and skill so as to enhance the harmonization of economic development, embracing agriculture, industries, transport and communication, etc. Treaties and pacts were drafted, signed and authorized by member nations at various times. Then, in a Freetown meeting of 1981, the authorities agreed to adopt the Defence Protocol which established a Council, Commission and a Deputy Executive Secretary to run the Defence Protocol. ECOMOG was later to become an important new arm of ECOWAS.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i) Write a two-page essay on the need for the establishment of ECOWAS in the West African sub-region.
- ii) What, in your opinion, are the key provisions of the treaty establishing ECOWAS?
- iii) Discuss critically the challenges which ECOWAS as a regional body appears to face.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Onwuka, R.I. (1982): *Development and Integration in West Africa (ECOWAS)*. Ile-Ife: Ife University Press Ltd.

Ebiefie, E.O. (1984): “Central Provisions of the Treaty of ECOWAS”,  
in A.B. Akinyemi, S.B. Falegan and I. A. Aluko (eds.), *Readings  
and Documents on ECOWAS*. Lagos: N.I.I.A.

## **UNIT 2: ECOWAS’ ECOMOG: PEACE-KEEPING MISSIONS IN WEST AFRICA**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Genesis of Peace-Keeping Missions in West Africa
  - 3.2 Arguments for and Against ECOWAS Intervention in Intra-State Conflicts.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit gives you the background to the rise of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group, ECOMOG, as the military arm of ECOWAS. It shows that ECOMOG came into existence in response to both the carnage in the Liberian Civil War and an invitation to ECOWAS by President Doe. You should, however, note that even before ECOMOG became a reality, there had been recognised in the region a symbiotic relationship between regional security and harmonious development of the economies of member-states of the region.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- i) Establish the links between the coming of ECOMOG and the end of the Civil War in Liberia.
- ii) Analyse the symbiotic relationship between regional security in West Africa and harmonious co-existence of member-states.
- iii) List arguments for, and against, ECOWAS intervention in political crises in the West African sub-region.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 The Genesis of Peace-keeping Missions in West Africa

The gruesome nature of the Liberian conflicts in which many insurgent factions were fighting on different fronts to capture the seat of power provided the ECOWAS the necessary laboratory to test their political will to intervene in crises deemed to be purely internal.

As the war intensified, there were frequent reports of genocide and gruesome atrocities against civilians and foreign nationals by both sides in the war. Furthermore, the scale of destruction expanded when Doe's forces included innocent civilians as their targets of destruction. The Gio and Mano ethnic groups were marked for elimination by Doe's forces, while Taylor's forces marked out the Khran people for elimination. From these, the killings and kidnappings became uncontrollable and spread to refugees and even foreigners thus involving other nations in the crisis (Nwolise, 1992: 56) Regrettably, Doe sent letter to ECOWAS Heads of Government requesting them to send a contingent of peace keeping forces when it became apparently clear to him that the US was not ready to come to his rescue (see, *West Africa*, 1992: 316).

In response to both the carnage in Liberia and appeal brought to it by President Samuel Doe, the Liberian crisis took the centre stage on the agenda of the thirteenth Annual Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government from May 28-30, 1991 in Banjul, the Gambia. The Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of President Ibrahim Babangida proposed a mediation group, and ECOMOG was approved by ECOWAS. ECOWAS recognized the symbiotic relationship that exists, willy-nilly, between regional security and harmonious development of the economies of its member states. This thinking compelled the adoption by ECOWAS of a protocol relating to mutual assistance on defence in Freetown Sierra Leone, 29 May, 1981 (AISP 3/5/1981:898-908).

### **3.2 Arguments for, and against, ECOWAS Intervention in Intra-State Conflicts**

The intervention of ECOWAS via the ECOMOG in Liberian crisis provoked a series of criticisms from some quarters. Arguments advanced against the ECOMOG's intervention were that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) states in its charter that all member states solemnly affirm and declare their adherence to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for inalienable right to independent existence (*News-watch*, October 1990:16-20).

Another criticism levelled against ECOMOG's intervention in Liberia rests on Articles 18(2) of the ECOWAS protocol, which states that community forces shall not intervene if the conflict remains purely internal since the essence of the protocol is to provide for regional security and not to threaten the security of the region (Johnson, 1996:291). Also, there are arguments that ECOWAS is purely an economic organization designed to facilitate regional economic cooperation and cannot therefore legally assume responsibility for mutual security (Adisa, 1993:14)

Specifically, the opponents of ECOMOG argue that Article 2 of the 1978 ECOWAS protocol on non-aggression stipulates that each member state shall refrain from committing, encouraging or condoning acts of subversion, hostility or aggression against the territorial integrity or political independence of other member states. (Adisa, 1993: 143).

However, in spite of these criticisms against ECOMOG peacekeeping mission in Liberia, one can still observe substantial flaws considering

global developments with regards to regional security arrangement. It will not be out of place to state that attempt to delink the purpose of economic cooperation from regional security is defective, for political stability is a necessary condition for any form of economic cooperation.

Similarly, proponents of ECOMOG intervention in Liberia cited Article 52 of the UN Charter which calls for sub-regional organizations like ECOWAS to play appropriate and effective role in such matters as relate to the maintenance of international peace and security, appropriate for regional actions. In addition, the Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements (Federal Ministry of Information, 1990:2-3).

The proponents of ECOMOG cited the ECOWAS protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence and, specifically, its Article 16 provides that in case of armed threat or aggression, directed against a member state, the Authority shall on receipt of a written request submitted to the current chairman, with copies to other members, decide on the expediency of military action (ECOWAS Protocols Annexed to the Treaty; 135-136). They went further to state that ECOWAS complied appropriately with this provision.

Thus, it was the above protocol that provided the legal framework for the deployment of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Although, initially the institutional framework for the implementation of the ECOWAS defence protocol was not put in place, as the ECOMOG intervened in later crisis in ECOWAS sub-region, these institutional mechanisms were strengthened and this has resulted in the successful peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace enforcement efforts of ECOWAS through ECOMOG.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Although, initially the institutional framework for the implementation of the ECOWAS defence protocol was not put in place, as the ECOMOG intervened in later crisis in ECOWAS sub-region, these institutional mechanisms were strengthened and this has resulted in the successful peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace enforcement efforts of ECOWAS through ECOMOG.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Would you accede to the view that ECOMOG has not been completely successful in its task of peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-enforcement in West Africa?

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

As we have observed in this unit, the gruesome nature of the Liberian conflicts in which many insurgent factions were fighting on different fronts to capture the seat of power provided the ECOWAS the necessary laboratory to test their political will to intervene in a crisis deemed to be purely internal. Two main schools of thought were opposed to the idea of ECOWAS mediating through ECOMOG. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) categorically states in the charter that all member states solemnly affirm and declare their adherence to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state. And Articles 18(2) of the ECOWAS protocol which states that community forces shall not intervene if the conflict remains purely internal since the essence of the protocol is to provide for regional security and not to threaten the

security of the region. But the peace keeping mission was nevertheless properly backed as supporters cited Article 52 of the UN Charter which calls for sub-regional organizations like ECOWAS to play appropriate and effective role in such matters as relate to the maintenance of international peace and security, appropriate for regional actions. Hence, the wheel of ECOWAS-ECOMOG intervention was set in motion.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i) Write an essay to show that without the intervention of ECOMOG, it would have been rather difficult to bring an end to the Liberian civil war.
- ii) In what sense is it correct to say that without ECOMOG, there would be lacking in the West African region a symbiotic relationship between regional security and harmonious co-existence of member-states.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Nwolise, B.C.O. (1992) *The Internationalization of the Liberian Crisis and Effects on West Africa*. ECOMOG Book on Liberian Crisis, N.I.I.A. Lagos.

*West Africa*, 24Feb-March 1992.

*Newswatch*, October 1, 1990, pp.16-20.



Adisa, Jinmi (1993): “Nigeria in ECOMOG: The Burden of Community Spirit” in Owoeye, Jide (ed.): *Nigeria in International Institutions*. Ibadan: College Press, Ltd.

Federal Ministry of Information (1990) *Liberia: A Mission of Peace*. Lagos: Federal Government Printer.

ECOWAS (2010) *Achievements of ECOWAS*:  
<http://www.sec.ecowas.int/sitecedeo/english/peace.htm>.

WANEP (2010) *An Assessment of the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Good Governance*; West Africa Network for Peace Building.

## **UNIT 3: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ECOWAS IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IN WEST AFRICA**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Compelling Need for ECOWAS Peace-Keeping Initiative
  - 3.2 The Significance of ECOWAS Interventions in Intra-State Conflicts
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignmen
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit dwells on ECOWAS and the value of its regional security mechanisms. In a sense, the unit shows that humanitarian intervention, as demonstrated by ECOWAS, is no longer just about air-dropping bags of rice into famine-stricken regions. Now, it is about how to stop the slaughter of civilians by machete; how to provide safe havens for war-

ravaged women and children; when to use non-violent strategies, and when to use force, if the need arises.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- i) Defend the view that ECOWAS would appear to have transitioned from economic integration project to regional security mechanism.
- ii) Explain the position that regional bodies such as ECOWAS are legitimate and necessary security tools, bridging the local with the global.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 The Compelling Need for ECOWAS Peace-Keeping Initiative**

The ECOWAS, no doubt, was founded in 1975 for economic development and integration; however, the organization had to engage in a plethora of conflicts that have debilitated its resources intended for economic development and regional integration so much so that, over the past twelve years, the sub-regional organ has witnessed extreme violence and armed conflict resulting in loss of lives, wanton destruction of property and economic infrastructure, and the displacement of thousands, most of whom have been rendered homeless (WANEP, 2010)

Prolonged civil war in Liberia (1989-2003), and Sierra Leone (1997-1998), military disturbances in Guinea Bissau (1997-1998) and the

armed rebellion in Cote d' Ivoire (2002-2003), have brought acute suffering to the citizens of these countries, thereby constituting a major set-back to economic development. Conversely, there is no gain saying the fact that economic prosperity, cooperation and integration can only thrive in an environment that is peaceful, stable and secure. Peace and security are therefore pre-requisites for sustainable economic development and advancement even as these are largely the determinants of the direction and pace of economic and political reforms in a given sub region.

Prior to the development of the ECOWAS peace-keeping and mediation mechanism, two legal instruments, the Protocol on Non-aggression (1978) and the Protocol on Mutual Assistance Defence (1981) were signed to promote peace within the sub-region. But these instruments merely addressed matters of inter-state conflicts at a time when intra-state conflicts were rapidly increasing all over the sub-region. There were also little or no provisions for issues of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and humanitarian action and peace-building.

In the face of successive outbreaks of conflicts, ECOWAS was compelled to undertake several conflict management initiatives. Liberia presented the first challenge that ECOWAS leaders resolved to face, and did face it successfully too. The rationale for the intervention of ECOWAS in the face of the insensitivity of the international community to the plight of the helpless civilians was that ECOWAS was well placed to find an African solution to an African problem--a concept that was promoted since the 1960s when many African states were marching forward in the struggle for independence (WANEP, 2010).

The ECOWAS initiative involved the mobilization of the political will, the diplomatic economic and military resources to handle these conflicts

that had the potential of destabilizing as well as many a spill over effect in the sub-region and one for which the international community had not much concern. In the long run, in spite of the initial logistic and diplomatic difficulties and challenges, the ECOWAS was able to set up mediation, peace keeping, peacemaking and peace enforcement mechanism to restore formality, relative peace, stability and domestic culture to the troubled member states of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire. Even the inter-state feud between Senegal and the Gambia was successfully mediated without allowing it to generate full scale hostilities.

### **3.2 The Significance of ECOWAS Interventions in Intra-State Feuds**

The mediation and peace-keeping machinery which appeared adhoc at the initial stage of the ECOWAS intervention in Liberia has been further strengthened to gain the confidence and total support of even the sceptical member states by the adoption of more formal structures for the deployment of logistics and personnel for conflict resolution among member states. Moreover, the ECOWAS has been able to lobby and attract the attention and support of hitherto unconcerned members of the international community to contribute to conflict ridden states in West Africa.

In attestation to the relevance of the ECOWAS in conflict resolution, the organization decided to broaden its scope and institutionalize the structure of the mechanism. Given that successive operations under the aegis of the ECOWAS were not without a situation in which some member-states raised issues/objections such as the composition of forces, mode of deployment, command and control of the operations, lack of involvement of some ECOWAS members, conflicting and

competing national interest, and the sidelining of the Executive Secretary by forces on the ground; the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government were unanimously encouraged and empowered by Article 58 of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty of 24 July 1993 to consolidate the sub-regional experiences in conflict management and set a security mechanism for collective sub-regional security. The member countries' key institutions, organs and strategies such as the Authority of Heads of State and Governments; the Mediation and Security Council, the core institutions; the Defence and Security Commission made up of Defence Chiefs and Security technocrats, ECOMOG (now formally recognized as the multi-purpose stand by force), the Early Warning System; the Council of Elders and eminent personalities; and the Executive Secretariat, (WANEP, 2010).

In order to address the root causes of conflicts, ECOWAS further adopted a Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance to anticipate and prevent violent conflicts. The supplementary protocol deals with issues of elections and accession to power, decentralization of power and participatory democracy, poverty alleviation, human rights and education.

A major innovation in the revised mechanism is the provision that ECOWAS should intervene to undertake peace-keeping operations in internal conflict where the situation:

- ⇒ Threatens to trigger off a humanitarian disaster
- ⇒ Poses a serious threat to peace and security in the sub-region
- ⇒ Erupts following the overthrow or attempted overthrow of a democratically-elected government (ECOWAS, 2010).

The revised mechanism lays down the procedure to be followed where the decision is taken to intervene; the composition of ECOMOG, its

chain of command, duties and functions and funding for administrative and logistics support. Also, the scope of the mechanism was widened to include security issues, in accordance with the directives of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, internal Affairs and Security. A number of recommendations in the mechanism attempt to address the concerns of our leaders concerning the movement of light weapons and ammunitions and the increasing incidence of cross-border crime.

Thus, with the support of the European Union which generously made available to ECOWAS an amount of 1.9 million Euros for undertaking certain operational activities of the mechanism (ECOWAS, 2010), it means that there is confidence in the ECOWAS conflict management and prevention mechanism and that its pivotal sub-regional conflict-handling mechanism has come to stay. This, in itself, speaks volumes of the significance of ECOWAS in the maintenance of peace in West Africa.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Imperatively, ECOWAS has had to engage in a plethora of conflicts that have debilitated its resources intended for economic development and regional integration so much so that over the past twelve years, the sub-regional organ has witnessed extreme violence and armed conflict resulting in loss of lives, wanton destruction of property and economic infrastructure, and the displacement of thousands, most of whom have been rendered homeless.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. Write an essay in support of the view that ECOWAS has indeed transitioned from a purely economic integration project to regional security mechanism

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

Indisputably, peace and security are pre-requisites for sustainable economic development and advancement even as these are largely the determinants of the direction and pace of economic and political reforms in a given sub region. Prolonged civil war in member nations of ECOWAS have brought acute suffering on the citizens of these countries, thereby constituting a major set-back to economic development. It is only necessary to execute sustainable measures aimed, ultimately, at bolstering the economic status quo of ECOWAS member states. In so doing, it is equally crucial to consider the fact that economic prosperity, cooperation and integration can only thrive in an environment that is peaceful, stable and secure.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- (i) With reference to ECOWAS, justify the argument that in some cases humanitarian intervention is a valid reason to violate state sovereignty.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Harbeson, John W. and Rothchild, Donald, eds. (2000): *Africa in World Politics: The African State System in Flux*. Boulder, Co: Westview Press.



Rashid, Ismail (2004). “West Africa’s Post-Cold War Security Challenges” in Adebayo, Adekeye and Rashid, Ismail (eds.) *West Africa’s Security Challenges*. Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

## **UNIT 4: PROFILE OF ECOMOG PEACE MISSIONS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE ISSUE OF REGIONAL PEACE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Liberia
  - 3.2 Sierra Leone
  - 3.3 Guinea Bissau
  - 3.4 Regional Peace: Towards Sustainable Peace in West Africa
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

ECOWAS became concerned very early with peace and regional security which are necessary factors in the socio-economic development of the member states. Thus, the Authority of Heads of state and Government adopted a non-aggression protocol in 1978, a Defence Assistance Protocol in 1981 and a Declaration of Political Principles in July 1991. This declaration which is a plea for democratic principles in the sub-region condemns unequivocally any seizure of power by force

of arms. It should also be pinpointed that in 1990 the Authority of Heads of State and Government created an 'ECOWAS cease-fire follow-up group called ECOMOG. This peace-keeping force had cause to intervene in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Cote d'Ivoire.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- i) Distinguish, from the example of ECOMOG, when to use non-violent strategies from when to use force.
- ii) Defend the view that ECOMOG's intervention in the conflict areas of West Africa is a humanitarian intervention.
- iii) Explain the meaning of "peace-keeping", with reference to the practical example of ECOMOG

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Liberia**

After it had been deployed to the Republic of Liberia in August 1990, ECOMOG worked there to restore peace, ensure security, law and order. It also engaged in many humanitarian activities aimed at reducing the sufferings of the people. In sum, ECOMOG helped considerably to create favourable conditions for the holding in Liberia of the free and democratic presidential and parliamentary elections of 19 July, 1997.

Eleven member states of ECOWAS provided contingents for the operations in Liberia; these are Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia,

Ghana, Guinea; Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo. Two other African states that also participated were Uganda and Tanzania.

### **3.2 Sierra Leone**

The intervention of ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone occurred following the overthrow of the lawful government of the country headed by President Ahmed Teejan Kabbah. In February 1998, ECOMOG restored constitutional legality and reinstated the government of the democratically elected president.

All the antagonists in the conflict, namely, the lawful government, the RUF rebels and the members of the (AFRC) military junta signed in Lome in September 1999 an agreement protocol on the final settlement of the Sierra Leonean crisis. Following appeals made to the international community for it to give meaningful assistance for a final restoration of peace, a United Nations Peace-keeping Force “UNAMSIL” replaced ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone. The ECOWAS countries which provided contingents for ECOMOG operations in Sierra Leone are Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Nigeria.

### **3.3 Guinea Bissau**

In June 1998, units of the armed forces of Guinea Bissau led by the former Chief of Defence Staff went into rebellion. On account of the bilateral defence and security agreements that linked his country to Guinea and Senegal, President Joao Bernardo Vierra asked for the intervention of the armed forces of these two countries. At the request of the lawful authorities of Guinea Bissau and in order to reaffirm its supports for the elected government of Guinea Business, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government decided to restore peace and reinstate

President Vierra in authority over the entire country. A mechanism for supervision and control of the cease-fire was set up by ECOWAS with the contingents of soldiers sent by Benin, Niger and Togo.

In spite of the numerous cease-fire agreements signed between the parties to the conflict in Guinea Bissau, the democratically elected government of President Vierra was finally overthrown.

### **3.4 Regional Peace: Towards Sustainable Peace in West Africa**

This study sees a historical link between the exploitative Euro-African relationship and the crisis of political (and economic) development that has plagued West Africa since 1960. However, this writer is not willing to blame the Western world for all of West Africa's contemporary political problems. While it is important to recognize the implications of a continuous stream of unequal power relations between the West African sub-region and the West, beginning with the slave trade in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, through to the Western-dominated forces of neo-colonialism, this writer believes that these phenomena, in and of themselves alone, do not constitute the reason that West Africa continues to experience conflicts and wars. This interpretation, it appears, places the burden of responsibility on nebulous forces (or great global forces) beyond the control of West African states, making the actions and decisions of West Africans largely irrelevant in determining the course of events in their countries. The ideology of oppression itself perpetuates the age-long view of Africa as incapable of combating its own problems. This conception of Africa's history blames Europe for all of Africa's woes, suggesting that Africans had no voice in the relationships developed between themselves and white men

over the course of the last six centuries. This explanation, to say the least, does not do much to help explicate the situation that many African countries currently find themselves.

For West African governance to improve and sustainable development to occur, West Africans must believe that they can take action themselves to bring about a better future: West Africans need to take responsibility for their past, present, and future and must become active participants in creating peaceful change. The main problem, however, is that West African states, while continuing to blame many of their problems on their historical relationship of exploitation with the West, continue to seek answers to their problems from the same places that they claim caused those problems in the first place. Nobody will dispute the fact that in many ways the West African elite (who continue to think along Western lines, having been raised in an educational system that teaches them to think along those lines) has maintained a Western focus in terms of governmental and academic inspiration. In government, for example, this reliance on Western methods has resulted in failed policy after failed policy.

Rather unfortunate are the tendencies of West African governments always to borrow ideas from Western countries instead of developing locally appropriate methods of governance. Several factors are responsible for this. In the first place, government institutions have a penchant for a quick-fix mentality (what Nigerians call 'the fire-brigade approach'), preferring to address a problem by making the easiest change available as quickly as possible, rather than spend time and resources to figure out exactly what the problem is and come up with an appropriate response. This usually means borrowing an idea already tested elsewhere. Secondly and unfortunately, West African

governments justify such modes of action on the premise that since Western ideas are well established and effective in Western countries, then West African governments should be able to copy Western models of success to receive similar results. One example of this process of borrowing from the West can be seen in Nigeria's two-time failure to create a constitutional republic. Nigeria's efforts at independence and in 1979 to create a constitutional republic failed primarily because Nigerians have never bothered to challenge the generally-accepted view that their method of governance should resemble the representational models of Western countries.

*Since demographic makeup and traditional modes of governance in Nigeria at the time of independence and after were significantly different than in Europe or the United States, adopting wholesale their modes of governance was not an appropriate way to meet Nigeria's needs. Until the Nigerian elite takes into account the basic ways in which the political realities of Nigerian society differed from those of Western societies, the political and economic situation in Nigeria will not improve (Falola and Heaton, 2009: 51).*

This writer is persuaded to suggest that, in order for Nigeria and her sister West Africa countries to break their pattern of bad governance and underdevelopment, they must break their reliance upon the Western models that have so far failed to live up to expectations. The West African elite must, in the words of Falola and Heaton, "recognize the need to turn its gaze back towards its local, indigenous roots in order to combat underdevelopment and political turmoil at the levels where they have the greatest impact;

that is among the relatively uneducated, rural majority” (2009:52).

Available evidence suggests that, what is urgently needed to address the impasse of the post-colonial state in West Africa (nay, Africa) is the imperative of reconstructing the state to embody the various identities that exist within its boundaries, and to respond, in meaningful and transparent ways, to issues of social equity, human rights, and political and electoral pluralism, a viable economy, and accountable public institutions. Therefore, in the final analysis, any genuine effort to achieve sustainable peace in the West African sub-region must address, through the instrumentality of the state, the challenges facing the various countries of the sub-region. These centre around the accommodation and management of diversity; the re-thinking of citizenship in the framework of a renewed social contract between the state and society; the expansion of the base for social inclusion, especially the rural and urban working poor; the promotion of a civic culture underpinned by basic democratic rights, and which pays particular attention to disaffected youth; the revitalization of associational life in a direction that strengthens popular democratic participation; the restoration of a developmental agenda to the policy process; the promotion of an all-round project of regionalization; the encouragement of the further opening-up of the political space to allow for the exaction of greater accountability, and the building of the state and the policy process in an environment of peace and stability. These challenges can sincerely be addressed only if the post-colonial state is re-invented to reflect the pluralism of the West African society in an open, democratic process which permits the full participation of popular pro-democracy movements (Abubakar,

2001:35). To round off, one must agree with Claude Ake that like the rest of Africa, West Africa needs the kind of democracy

- 1.) In people exercise genuine decision-making power through powerful democratic institutions that could articulate and aggregate public interests;
- 2.) That not only places emphasis on abstract political rights, but also incorporates concrete social, economic, cultural, and citizenship rights and invests heavily in the development of social capital through education, health, agriculture, etc.;
- 3.) That emphasizes collective as well as individual rights; put differently, it puts in place consociational principles and institutional mechanisms that recognize nationalities and sub-nationalities, ethnic groups, communities, and religious identities, and grant them the channels for cultural expression as well as political and economic participation; and,
- 4.) That is inclusive and incorporates a broad representation from civil society such as trade unions, youth organizations, professional groups, and women's associations to ensure mass participation and political legitimacy (in Abubakar, 2001: 35)

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

ECOMOG worked in various conflicting countries to restore peace, ensure security, law and order. It also engaged in many humanitarian activities aimed at reducing the incidence of human suffering. In sum, ECOMOG helped considerably to create favourable conditions for the conduct of free and democratic elections in some otherwise chaotic nations. Yet, the search for a sustainable peace in the West African sub-region goes beyond ECOMOG alone. It calls for a genuine effort to address the many socio-economic challenges which the countries of the West African sub-region have had to face.



## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Explain the meaning of “peace-keeping”, with reference to the practical example of ECOMOG

## 5.0 SUMMARY

ECOMOG restored constitutional legality and reinstated the government of the democratically elected regimes when called upon. At the request of the lawful authorities, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government acted to restore peace, and if possible, reinstate estranged leaders to power in conflict-ridden countries. At necessary intervals, the mechanism for supervision and control of the cease-fire is often set up by ECOWAS with the contingents of soldiers sent by neighbouring sister countries.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. How valid is it to say that ECOMOG’s involvement in the conflict areas of West Africa is a humanitarian intervention?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Abubakar, Dauda (2001): “Ethnic Identity, Democratization, and the Future of the African State: Lessons from Nigeria”, *African Issues*, volume xxix, nos. 1 and 2: 31-36.

Falola, T. and Heaton, M. (2009): *Emergent Themes and Methods in African Studies-*

*Essays in Honour of Adiele E. Afigbo*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc.

Harbeson, John W. and Rothchild, Donald, eds. (2000): *Africa in World Politics: The African State System in Flux*. Boulder, Co: Westview Press, pp.188.

Rashid, Ismail (2004): “West Africa’s Post-Cold War Security Challenges” in Adebayo, Adekeye and Rashid, Ismail (eds.) *West Africa’s Security Challenges*. Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp.386.