



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**Roundtable Proceedings –
Strengthening the Civil Society
Africa Needs:
Challenges and Opportunities
in West Africa**

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May 2012
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IDA Document D-4616
H12-000661

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES
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Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1882



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About this Publication

This work was conducted by the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) under contract 2012-12062700-003, Global Coverage Analyses Program. The views, opinions, and findings should not be construed as representing the official position of the U.S. Government.

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Executive Summary

Background

This document presents a summary of discussions held during an international roundtable on Civil Society in West Africa co-hosted by the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) and the Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). The event opened with an informal get-acquainted reception on November 8, 2011, and continued with discussions over the following two days. The agenda for the discussions can be found in Appendix D. The views expressed here represent those of the participants, who included representatives of various civil society, educational, and research institutions and organizations from Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Senegal. A list of participants and their institutional affiliations can be found in Appendix C.

In order to encourage an open and frank exchange of ideas, IDA and GIMPA agreed that the discussions should be conducted on a non-attribution basis. Because IDA's principal goal was to gain insight into realities on the ground concerning the current and future role of civil society in West Africa, we also chose to keep the structure of the roundtable informal. The topics for each session were intentionally broad. Instead of soliciting formal papers or presentations, IDA and GIMPA tapped participants to act as moderators and provide a brief outline of key issues or questions to get the discussion started.

IDA approached this event as an exercise in strategic listening. Rather than suggest the issues IDA thought might be important, we encouraged the participants to tell us what issues they see as important. The summaries that follow reflect the views expressed by the African participants. The "Key IDA Observations" found at the end of the Executive Summary are a distillation of impressions that members of the IDA team developed over the course of the three days of informal interaction with roundtable participants, GIMPA staff and students, and others.

A follow-on engagement in early 2012 will expand the scope of countries represented and the issues explored by drawing on the set of "issues for further investigation" presented at the end of each discussion summary.

Discussion Topics

- Defining Civil Society: The definition of civil society in Africa is broad, encompassing the space between official (government) activity and private life (the family and home). African civil society today fills three primary functions: advocating for and giving a voice to people and groups outside the circles of government and political power; delivering services in areas and sectors where the government has failed to do so; and building African capacity to perform the development, good governance, and advocacy functions that were previously carried out by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). There seems to be a widespread belief that those large, international organizations too often put the interests of the external powers that help fund them (the U.S. and other Western Powers) ahead of those of the African societies. There is also a growing challenge from what some participants called “un-civil” society groups (such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Boko Haram) who turn to resistance and, occasionally, illegal or violent activity. These groups emerge from marginalized regions or groups.
- Women Rights and Roles: Women are underrepresented in the upper ranks of politics and business in West Africa. While women represent a growing percentage of graduates from institutions of higher education, primary education for girls is in decline and dropout rates for girls are increasing. Meaningful change in the social and professional status of women is unlikely until women are fairly represented at all levels of government. At present, the political will does not exist in a male-dominated power structure to undertake the deliberate policy actions needed to provide greater opportunity, representation, and social support for professional women.
- Youth: West African youth is in crisis. Despite the fact that West African economies are growing, young people are anxious about their future. They do not see the increasing wealth in their societies “trickling down” to them. They are disengaged politically and disillusioned with what they see as a corrupt system. There is a serious and potentially explosive disconnect between a rapidly growing, tech savvy, but frustrated youth cohort and national leaderships in denial, who are not building “shock absorbers” to deal with the inevitability of change.
- Economic Interdependence: There is a deep generational divide on the proper direction for Africa’s economic future. The current leadership generation is still focused on increasing Africa’s presence in the global economy. A new generation of entrepreneurs and thinkers takes a more pragmatic focus that emphasizes the need for Africans to invest in Africa. According to this view, the states of West Africa should undertake measures – free trade zones, open labor

migration, currency reform, regional communication and transportation infrastructure – that enable the growth of a viable regional economy. Increasingly, entrepreneurs are developing and implementing “disruptive technologies” that will enable business to work around corrupt and dysfunctional governments.

- Education: While higher education in West Africa has improved since independence, primary education is in crisis. There are critical shortages of classroom teachers, especially in rural areas. There is also a need to replace the badly out-of-date “rote learning” curricula inherited from colonial education systems with a new, African-centric curriculum that prepares students to be effective and productive citizens of a new Africa. In the absence of effective education, some businesses are providing their own training designed to instill critical thinking and other skills in their workers. Civil society has a role to play in providing civic education and monitoring the performance of teachers and schools.
- The Civil Society Africa Needs: Civil society across Africa needs a vision, a sense of mission, and a transformational agenda. Before that can happen, African civil society needs to break its dependence on foreign donors, develop an indigenous resource base, increase its professional capacity, and find ways to share capacity and best-practices. Engagements like this, along with collaborative research and virtual think tanks, can be a valuable tool for developing African civil society capacity.

Key IDA Observations

- The West Africans who participated in this roundtable struggled to define the scope and responsibilities of civil society. The general definition they agreed on was “the space between government and the household.” They seemed to draw a clear distinction between civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations. The term *NGO* was used primarily to refer to large, formal, usually international NGOs. These are viewed with considerable suspicion and are still seen as fronts for Western powers to promote their political and economic interests in Africa. The term *CSO* was generally used to refer to local groups and movements. African businesses and entrepreneurs were also included in this group’s conception of “civil society.” While the subject seldom came up, large, international corporations seemed to be viewed as partners with government and, thus, not part of African civil society. The group also drew an important distinction between “membership” organizations (like political parties and labor unions, which raise funds through dues, and “non-membership” organizations (market-women’s groups, grassroots political

movements, issue advocacy groups) that have no formal membership roles or dues. This group believed the role and potential power of non-membership groups is growing and, so far, underappreciated.

- West Africans have a strong sense of national identity, but the notion of “national interest” is suspect. In societies in which the people have little voice in shaping government, the interests defined by those governments are seen as benefiting a narrow power elite and have little or no broad legitimacy.
- These representatives of West African civil society were willing, and even eager, to engage with the United States on issues of mutual concern. They are, however, wary of the motives of U.S. interlocutors and are reluctant to discuss overt “security” issues. This seems to stem from two issues. First, they define “security” almost entirely in terms of human security – economic development, income inequity, poverty, human rights, gender justice, the crisis of youth – rather than in terms of “regime security” – which they see largely as a drain on national resources, human rights, and democratic freedom. Second, they suspect that discussion of “international security” issues that interest the United States – terrorism, violent Islamist extremism, and the rise of China in particular – serve only the agenda of the United States and the West and distract attention from the issues that they see as most crucial for Africa’s future.
- West Africans see the rivalry between China and the United States for influence as an opportunity. The “Beijing Model” of development – economic and private sector development without civil society development or democratization – does not have much resonance. While there are still un-free countries in the region that stifle political opposition and civil society, these are not models that their neighbors want to emulate.
- The partially free or free West African states do not seem to feel any responsibility to encourage democratic or human rights progress in neighboring, un-free states. During the discussions, representatives of Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique tried, with little success, to engage their fellows in discussions of these issues.
- West Africans, especially in the younger generations, see themselves as citizens of the world. They read about global events and are very much aware of trends in other parts of the world. They are technically savvy and aware of the discrepancies between economic and political change in Africa and other parts of the developing world. Internet penetration is still limited in much of West Africa, but Smartphone technology is proliferating rapidly and is almost certain to become a vector for grassroots political action in the very near future.

- International NGOs have grasped the importance of Smartphone technology for development. Many NGO projects – for both economic development and humanitarian operations – are based on SMS and MMS communication. This makes it easier for projects to stay in touch with their clients and coordinate and monitor performance. It is, however, only a matter of time before people start using this new communication tool to do other, more political things. Innovating entrepreneurs are already looking for ways to exploit the proliferation of cell phones and smartphones to work around weak government and financial infrastructures to facilitate trade and commercial development.
- It is becoming more and more common for influential members of African civil society and private sectors to be invited to China for meetings with Chinese business and government leaders. While eager to take advantage of the opportunities to establish professional connections, the participants who visited China commented on the degree to which they were met, outside official circles, with a high degree of racism and were not, for the most part, made to feel welcome in China. As one reported, Africans who visit China tend to take part in official functions then return to their hotels rather than confront the racism that prevails even in China's major cities.
- Even in relatively stable countries like Ghana and Senegal, disruptive and divisive shifts seem inevitable in three areas – the expanding political and economic role of women, the economic, social and political aspiration of youth, and technological change – yet current governments are not taking serious steps to implement “shock absorbers.” The result is a serious and unsustainable disconnect: the leaders who are managing the rapidly evolving technological world do not have the skills to cope, but the young people with the skills to understand that world are being kept on the outside or exploited as “foot soldiers.” The average age of African heads-of-state is 72.4¹.
- A new generation of successful entrepreneurs is emerging in West Africa, but they tend to operate outside the political realm. A uniquely “African Model” is emerging as disillusioned young Africans increasingly see their corrupt or incompetent governments as irrelevant and entrepreneurs develop ways to conduct trade by working around dysfunctional systems. They see this “passive resistance” as a way of forcing change by making their corrupt and unaccountable governments irrelevant. The question remains, however, whether this is an effective way to benefit the broader goal of West African development over the long term.

¹ See Charles Ongyango-Obbo, “The Oldest Living Things in Continent Are Its Leaders. Why?” *The Monitor*, 6 June 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006151306.html>.



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ROUNDTABLE PROCEEDINGS

**Strengthening the Civil Society Africa Needs:
Challenges and Opportunities in West Africa**

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DECEMBER 23, 2011



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1. Civil Society in West Africa – Past and Present

A. Summary

- Governments in West Africa are pursuing one of two strategies for dealing with the growth of civil society: supporting and co-opting them, or repressing and banning them.
- “Interests” are a complex issue in the realm of civil society: there is tension between “national” interest, public interest, group interest, individual self-interest, and the interests of international NGOs and foreign donor states.
- Formal, membership-based groups and organizations (labor unions, traditional development and governance NGOs, for example) and informal, sometimes illegal, non-membership groups (grassroots peoples’ movements, women’s groups, resistance groups, consumer advocates, artists, musicians, and the media) influence West African society and perspectives. There is also a level of “uncivil” society (such as insurgent groups, criminal gangs, and youth gangs) that has increasing influence in society.
- Building the capacity of civil society is tied directly to improving the society in which all Africans live. It is important to recognize and enable groups that share the goal of developing stronger societies.

B. Discussion

The definition of civil society is difficult to grasp. There is no single accepted definition unless one were to be very broad – loosely defining civil society as the space between the home and the state and, at times, overlapping with these two spheres. Although there are many CSOs and NGOs in Africa today, civil society as a whole is still a work in progress. It is largely destructured and unorganized. Africa is at a crucial stage – politically and economically; it needs a strong, diverse civil society that is uniquely fitted for African nations.

In the 1920s and 1930s, West Africa had vibrant, transnational civil societies united in their opposition to colonialism. Various ethnic, identity, and political groups came together to pursue the shared goal of independent nationhood. In the post-independence era, civil society in most West African countries atrophied under the pressure of militarism and conflict. Both governments and civil societies turned their attention almost exclusively to internal, national consolidation and development; important transnational

issues and agendas were ignored. If West Africa as a region is to rise to the next level of economic and political development, civil society needs to revive these transnational agendas.

There is a strong culture of “speaking truth to power” in the context of traditional African governance. Individuals and groups had the right to raise grievances to their chiefs. These traditional leadership relationships have not, for the most part, been well integrated into official government systems, but they still play a powerful role in West African societies in parallel with the government, especially in rural areas.

Starting in the 1980s, the trend toward democratization led to a revival of civil society as various interest groups sought a voice in the political process. Political parties were closed and undemocratic, governments had failed to deliver services to the people, and the reputation of NGOs had been tainted by their role in furthering the agendas of the Soviet Union or the United States during the Cold War. The struggle against British and French colonial administrations did instill some legacy of civic identity and democratic principles. This left West Africa with much stronger civil societies than is the case in other parts of Africa that were ruled by the more brutal Belgian, Portuguese, and Spanish colonial administrations. The nature of civil society has also been determined in part by the method through which the African countries gained independence (such as by treaty or conflict). Countries with stronger state institutions tend to have stronger civil society institutions.

The number of registered civil society organizations in West Africa has grown dramatically in recent years. Most claim to operate in the public interest, but their activities are seldom transparent. There is an ongoing struggle to define the “space” in which civil society operates, with governments trying to claim more by co-opting or creating its own “civil society.” In some cases, CSOs are more influential than governments, yet there is very little visibility into how they work. In most cases, the leadership in larger CSOs (including out-of-power political parties) and NGOs is as undemocratic as the regimes they criticize. Can groups whose leadership is not chosen democratically legitimately promote democratization? Do long-term goals require long-term leaders? In too many cases, the self-interests of CSO and NGO leaders come to outweigh the larger societal interests they claim to represent, leading to corruption.

All civil society groups are self-interested to some extent and have political interests. What is their role, however, in determining national interests? As it is, small CSOs can place pressure upon a political party that can in turn impose those demands upon the state. These groups can therefore have a disproportionate measure of influence in national policymaking. Inequality, poor funding, and illiteracy, however, keep some civil society groups from being noticed. There can be a healthy balance between CSOs and the state as each fulfills different functions. Some states, however, make it difficult for CSOs to operate for fear they will support the opposition parties.

The agendas of the large domestic and international NGOs are viewed with some suspicion. Some are seen as legacies of the Western powers' attempts to build soft-power influence in Africa – first to contain the Soviet Union's influence, now to counter China's growing influence. Others are seen as government or regime “puppets” created to co-opt and “domesticate” political opposition. For example, as churches grow and become influential, governments move to co-opt them. As a result, the churches become apolitical and concern themselves with social issues (like homosexuality) rather than social change (challenging the economic and social status quo). The private sector has a role to play in supporting civil society activities, but thus far it has not engaged as fully as it can.

Civil society capacity is growing dramatically, with more professionals seeking a role in civil society as an alternative to political activity (which is often inaccessible). Funding remains a constraint, however, especially in rural areas. CSOs and NGOs often turn to external sources of funding, but there is a real risk that doing so undermines their legitimacy, creating the perception that they are serving foreign agendas. There is a double standard: often the governments that use external funding as a tool to undermine the credibility of CSOs and NGOs are, themselves, accepting extensive external funding. Conversely, CSOs that accept payment-in-kind from the state are viewed as extensions of the government. Ultimately, oversight and accountability are the key: where CSOs and NGOs get their funding is less important than what they do with it. If they deliver on their promises and respond to African rather than international interests and needs, the source of funding will be less of a problem. Such transparency will also make it more difficult for governments to use punitive auditing to undermine CSO/NGO credibility. External donors should put more pressure on African NGOs and CSOs to democratize their internal procedures. This would go far toward removing the stigma of outside influence.

As one participant shared, there is a love-hate relationship between West African societies and their CSOs and NGOs: they are loved when they provide needed services that the government cannot or will not provide (such as health care, housing, and education) and hated when they are seen as agents of foreign governments and their agendas. The reality is that in much of West Africa, given the corruption and ineffectiveness of most governments in the region, NGOs and CSOs (including business) are the only institutions with the vision and leadership capable of implementing transformational change over time. African CSOs need to seriously engage the United States and other donor nations about where Africa sees itself and what its regional priorities are. What do donor nations want?

The center-of-gravity for civil society activity seems to be shifting away from formal domestic and international NGOs (membership organizations) toward citizen movements (such as women's groups; *asafu* groups – which constitute a sort of traditional, informal local police; and grievance-driven groups) that express the authentic voices and concerns of Africans. There has been growing disillusionment with NGOs that

have become as autocratic as the state. In terms of issues, there has been a shift from an early focus on development toward a greater emphasis on good governance. A “gray” civil society is emerging that operates outside government sanction but with considerable economic and social influence. These movements are often savvy at exploiting modern communication technology and are becoming influential in some vulnerable communities – especially among youth.

C. Issues for Further Investigation

- As the influence of CSOs and NGOs expands, sometimes beyond the influence of the government, researchers must develop a better understanding of the role of civil society in Africa’s future social, economic, and political development.
- What types of civil society groups (operational service providers, issue advocates) and organizations (membership/non-membership, formal/informal) exist in West Africa today? Who are they? What do they want? Have they achieved results? Who are the actors/leaders?
- Research and documentation of CSOs and NGOs across African society and their respective activities.
- What is the current nexus of CSOs and governments? How should those relationships change when CSO leaders enter politics or when politicians start/support CSOs? What is the role of CSOs when states fail to deliver services or address socio-economic needs? How should those relationships change?
- Are resistance groups a part of civil society? Can we develop a better understanding of how grievance-driven groups evolve from advocacy to violent resistance and develop approaches to prevent that shift?
- How can West African governments/organizations better educate Africans to instill civic values and a call to social service, philanthropy, and participation in civil society? What training and education services can be provided to civil society organizations to better enable them to express themselves and finance their operations?
- Being educated, however, should not be the sole prerequisite for power – either in government or in CSOs. Leaders must have the right mindset and vision that may not come from education alone. Furthermore, if education is a prerequisite, a vast percentage of the population would be excluded from participation. What steps can be taken to ensure that individuals and groups lacking formal education can still develop a political voice and influence civil society?

2. Women's Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities

A. Summary

- Gender justice is the most important need that African civil society can address. Improving the relative lot of girls and women is a prerequisite to economic and social development in West Africa, thereby benefitting society as a whole. For society to advance, women must also advance. Education parity needs to be ensured, both at the primary and secondary levels.
- There is a serious disconnect between the levels of educated women and the rates of female participation in government. In fact, West Africa has among the lowest rates of women's participation in government on the continent. The foot-soldiers, or young rank-and-file in West African political parties, are still overwhelmingly male. Women are thus blocked from gaining a foothold in political activity from the earliest stages.
- A degree of division emerged during the conversation about the responsibilities of men and the responsibilities of women. Who needs to take a greater role in ensuring gender equality? Some felt that women had made it too easy for men to take dominant roles, have lacked political will, have become complacent, or have given up halfway; thus, women need to be more rebellious and assertive. Others felt that women are left behind and struggle to find their identity in a male society; therefore, the issue of equality must be raised by CSOs as a whole – not just females. Governments and nations must decide what type of society is desirable and then take deliberate policy actions to achieve parity.

B. Discussion

In many respects, women's status in West Africa has improved dramatically. Many of the top schools in West Africa are women's institutions, and many of the top graduates from West African universities are women. A large number of West Africa's leading entrepreneurs are women, and West Africa has the highest level of female participation in the labor force on the entire continent. At the local level, women have long been the backbone of local markets. Market women's groups are an increasingly important economic force.

Despite that progress, women's access to and visibility in the top levels of government is minimal. West African governments are not tapping into their female talent base and have the lowest levels of female participation in government. Some African nations have met goals of increasing their percentage of female representatives in

parliaments. According to the October 2011 statistics of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,¹ Rwanda currently has the highest percentage of women in parliament in the world: 56.3 percent. Thirty percent is seen as the critical mass for change, but no country in West Africa has achieved this percentage. Senegal has one of the highest percentages of women in parliament in West Africa at 22.5 percent. Cameroon has 13.9 percent while Ghana has only 8.2 percent. (The United States is tied with Turkmenistan at 16.8 percent.) Regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have, at best, paid lip service to issues related to women's rights. In fact, when the current Ghanaian government was elected in 2008, it promised to fill 40 percent of appointed government positions with women. When the government failed to meet that goal, it claimed it could not find qualified women willing to work in government. So the question is: What happened to all those bright, young, female college graduates? This disconnect merely perpetuates the image that women are not succeeding at higher levels. Furthermore, there is no framework for affirmative action to ensure that competent, qualified women are granted jobs.

Major social and structural barriers remain in place to discourage women's participation in politics and government. Social and religious norms continue to put pressure on young women, even highly-educated ones, to marry and have children. At times, women censor themselves because it is not viewed as culturally "proper" for them to participate in the rough-and-tumble realm of West African politics, gravitating more toward social issues and service delivery (in health, education, and housing). Women-led CSOs often shy away from the larger and more contentious issues such as democratization and rule of law. Moreover, a broad support infrastructure for professional women, especially child and elder care, does not exist. This creates barriers for women to rise to the top levels in all areas of pursuit, not just in politics but also in business and academia, although women are beginning to make inroads in the latter two sectors. The disproportionate representation of women in civil society organizations may be testimony to the fact that it is one of the few routes to success and influence available to ambitious West African women.

Political parties are structured in a way that also inhibits women from rising to positions of power and influence. Women are often relegated to auxiliary support roles. The vast majority of party "foot soldiers" are young men; women are rarely included. There is also a "club" of West African first ladies who claim to represent women's issues within the government despite the fact that they are unelected. The perception among several participants (mostly women) was that their intention is to "de-fang" and co-opt women's movements and issues in a way that prevents them from creating challenges to the government's power base.

¹ See <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>.

The principal barrier to increased women's representation in government seems to be a lack of political will. Although many traditional African societies are matrilineal, men have held the real power. A change in the status of women will depend on the male power structure becoming aware of the societal and developmental cost of gender inequality. Increasing women's presence in government will require some male politicians and office holders to stand aside. That is unlikely until men, as well as women, recognize the real costs of gender discrimination in terms of economic as well as political development. That, in turn, will depend upon the emergence of strong women's movements at the local, national, and regional levels that can educate and mentor young women to take a greater role in politics and convince the entrenched politicians that the development of the societies and economies of West Africa will not take off as long as half the population is prevented from realizing its full potential.

C. Issues for Further Investigation

- What have regional CSOs like ECOWAS done to support women's rights? Not much. What improvements could therefore be implemented so women can look with confidence to a regional CSO?
- If women need to be better organized, what would this look like? What is needed economically or politically (e.g., incentives)?

3. West African Youth and Their Elders

A. Summary

- West Africa is facing a youth crisis for which its current leaders are unprepared. Unless steps are taken to build social, economic, and political “shock absorbers” to deal with the inevitable results of a youth bulge coming of age, an African “Arab Spring” is not impossible.
- West African youth are anxious about their future. They do not see a path to success and well-being.
- Popular culture (e.g., hip-hop and rap music) provides a valuable outlet for African youth to vent their frustrations and express their aspirations. They are ripe for mobilization (or exploitation) by a charismatic leader or movement.
- Many members of the post-independence generation resent *Jeunism* – the fascination with youth. This older generation believes it is their turn and that the youth have not paid their dues, are not politically mature or ready to assume leadership, and do not have a vision for the future of Africa.
- On the social level, better care for the elderly is needed, but who should provide this care? Moreover, if female relatives are expected to be the caregivers, their role in civil society and the state will continue to be underdeveloped.

B. Discussion

West Africa sits at the cusp of intergenerational tension that has the potential to spark considerable social and political instability if not adequately addressed. Politics and government in the region are still controlled largely by gerontocracies with their political and philosophical roots in the independence movements of the 1950s and 1960s. Just below them is a post-colonial “middle generation” – those who came of age in the 1980s and 1990s – who feel they have paid their dues in terms of building democratic systems and pushing for improved governance, and believe it is their turn to implement their “vision” for Africa. They are, however, vastly outnumbered by the youth cohort whose expectations are informed less by the historical struggles for independence and democracy than by globalization and a cosmopolitan awareness shaped by modern

communication and information technology. According to recent statistics, 43.9 percent of West Africans are under age 15, and another 51.2 percent are between 15 and 64.³

Traditional African culture places a strong emphasis on valuing the wisdom of elders. An old African proverb teaches that “when an elderly person dies, a library burns down.” Yet today’s younger generation of Africans does not believe its elders have passed down any legacies worth venerating. They feel contempt for post-independence African leaders who, through their corruption and ineptitude, squandered the opportunities of independence. Poverty, conflicts, and an unwillingness to share power have fostered a growing sense of dissatisfaction. A fundamental challenge that West Africa faces is finding ways to “pour old wine (the wisdom of elders) into new skins (the minds of the youth)” through intergenerational communication and learning. Many of the elders with the most wisdom have not exercised political power. How can that be passed on to the emerging generation of civil society and political leaders?

West Africa faces a fundamental and potentially dangerous disconnect: the technological and economic realities of the modern world present vast opportunities, but the older generation of African leaders is ill-equipped to manage that change. The younger generation, which has the technological savvy to cope with and exploit those opportunities, is being kept outside the power structure.

The dramatic demographic shift toward youth in West Africa means change is inevitable and coming fast. Governments and political systems in the region are either unaware of current realities or (more likely) are “in denial.” As a result, they are not taking steps to build “shock absorbers” to deal with this shift and turn challenges into opportunities. Instead, young people are being held back from achieving political influence and power. The existing political structures and regimes exploit youth to shore up their political control (as political and military foot soldiers), but they are not, for the most part, mentoring young people to prepare them for positions of leadership. Sooner or later, someone will find a way to address the issues that are important to youth and channel their pent-up political energy. An African “Arab Spring” is not impossible and may, in fact, be probable unless governments and political parties find positive ways to incorporate youth and their aspirations.

West African youth are, for the most part, motivated by a set of values that is very different from those of older generations. They have no memory of colonialism or the fight for independence. They are communication savvy and keenly aware of events and trends across Africa and the world. They are not politically active in the traditional sense – the majority do not vote and are disillusioned with party politics as conducted in the relatively free West African states. In the still un-free states, youth have few

³ See <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/24/39802965.pdf>.

opportunities outside the military or paramilitary ranks. The youth of West Africa are, however, expressing their emerging values and frustration with the existing system through other means, including social networking and popular culture.

West African youth are also in crisis. They are frightened for their future. African youth live in a world in which the speed of change is rapid, but not for them. They do not see a clear path to well-being and success; a large proportion face serious, long-term unemployment. They see their options for success as limited compared to those of previous generations, and most resent the elder generations for squandering opportunities to build strong and effective societies.

The youth crisis in West Africa is exacerbated by a serious crisis in education. Across the region, the quality and quantity of primary and secondary education are in decline, and the younger generation is not getting a sound educational foundation. Dropout rates are high, especially for girls. The situation is particularly acute when it comes to the kind of civic education that will prepare young people to be responsible stewards of society when they come into power.

Just as the youth are not integrated into society, many elderly have also been excluded and are uncared for by the state. There are no structures to support them and engage them. Even today, the elderly do not receive proper care in hospitals, nor are there homes for the elderly. Many must rely on younger, female family members for care – thus removing more women from participating in society.

C. Issues for Further Investigation

- Are there ways in which youth can be more engaged as local leaders, thus receiving necessary experience and training at the same time? What qualifications are needed for youth to receive legitimacy in the eyes of elders?
- How does one balance respect for elders, especially the “founding fathers,” with the courage to speak out when policies/systems are wrong? How should elders who have erred be respected?
- What role can civil society and the private sector play in filling the educational gaps and in training African youth in skills and ways of thinking that will better equip them to thrive in the modern economy?
- How are elders defined? Does this impact how they are valued (e.g., are biological elders valued in one way and structural elders valued in another way)? How fundamental is one’s mindset in determining their “age”?
- Is there a space for CSOs to fill wherein elders can receive care and social companionship from their peers, while reducing the strain on their family members to provide care? What is the role of the state (e.g., funding, planning)?

4. Economic Independence and Interdependence

A. Summary

- There is a divide between the older generation that seeks independence (economic, political) from Western nations and the younger, more pragmatic generation that seeks global and regional interdependence.
- Despite the focus on interdependence, regional African institutions such as ECOWAS lack strength and impact. Africans need to invest in Africa.
- Civil society can, again, play an important role by encouraging fiscal accountability and transparency.
- Local economic activity is a key component for African economic development.
- China has shown increased interest in African partnerships and economic projects; this interest has spurred the U.S. to recommit to the region.

B. Discussion

The discussion of economic independence versus interdependence reflected a clear generational divide among the roundtable participants. The post-independence generation is still focused on securing West Africa's independence from economic and political manipulation by outside powers, especially in the West. They place a great deal of importance on developing national and regional mechanisms to enable West African nations to have greater control over the market price of their commodities (such as cocoa) and the value of their currencies (which are still largely pegged to the Euro or the dollar). They also express resentment toward Western institutions (such as the World Bank and Millennium Development Goals) that link economic assistance to an agenda for structural reform that often does not reflect the priorities of West African societies themselves.

The younger generation expresses a greater degree of economic pragmatism. They see globalization as an opportunity that, thus far, West African regimes have failed to exploit to the broader benefit of their societies. There is a growing entrepreneurial class that is less concerned with political philosophies and more interested in getting on with business. These businessmen are developing their own ways to work around corrupt and incompetent systems to conduct trade. This has given rise to an emerging African model of development in which young African entrepreneurs increasingly see their corrupt and unaccountable political systems as irrelevant. If the entrenched political system makes

poor decisions in respect to development, one credible option is to create alternative economic infrastructures (such as selling products on the Internet) to circumvent them.

The new generation of West African leaders needs to think less in terms of national independence and more in terms of a broader goal of regionalizing African economics. Africans need to invest in Africa. The existing regional institutions created to undertake the kinds of reforms necessary to Africa, such as building viable regional economies – especially free trade zones, labor migration, and currency reforms – have not lived up to expectations.

West Africans, for the most part, welcome China's increased investment in the region and see it as an opportunity to capitalize on Western attempts to contain or balance Chinese influence. China is viewed as a valuable counter-balance to Western manipulation. The Beijing model of development – economic growth through open private sector development coupled with a strong central government, minimal democratization, and weak civil society – is not generally seen as a desirable option for West Africa. There are still several countries in the region controlled by autocratic regimes, but the general trend in the region is toward greater democratization. Most participants agreed that the only way Africa can reach its full economic potential is if Africans refocus on investing in Africa, rather than on relying on or competing with major economic powers (both East and West).

Economic development will, ultimately, depend on more effective government and West African civil society has an important role to play in forcing regional governments to be more accountable and transparent in the economic as well as the political realm. There is a need for civil society-based “watchdogs” to hold governments and regional institutions accountable, particularly with respect to the use and trade of natural resources and the development of fiscal policies. There is a great deal of skepticism about the ability and will of regional institutions like ECOWAS and the African Union. Designed to represent national and regional interests to the rest of the world, they have, more often, been used as a forum for outside powers to implement their agendas in Africa. These institutions are badly in need of reform.

A consensus seemed to emerge among participants that a new economic vision for West Africa is emerging that focuses less on trying to emulate the First and Second World development model – centering on the development of large scale heavy industry and extractive industries – than on the local, “informal” economic activity that is the backbone of most West African countries. Few African countries can compete globally at that level. Africa still only represents about three percent of global trade.⁴ Accordingly, African regimes put too much emphasis on securing foreign investment at the expense of

⁴ See <http://dallasfed.org/institute/annual/2010/annual10d.cfm>.

inter-African investment that could build viable African economies. Africans must demand regimes that reinvest national wealth into building Africa's economic infrastructure (transportation, communication, markets) and capacity (including language training and education).

C. Issues for Further Investigation

- What types of changes are necessary in order that ECOWAS have a true, legitimate, regional voice? For example, are better monitoring and transparency needed? If so, what role can CSOs and/or the media fulfill to help achieve that goal? What smaller items can ECOWAS begin to better facilitate regional trade? Furthermore, once policy recommendations are suggested, how can ECOWAS implement them? As has been observed during the discussions of other topics, leadership is needed.
- What other countries might be looked to as role models (e.g., Kenya) with respect to best practices for regional trade?

5. Education

A. Summary

- Education has improved in many West African nations during the last few decades. Despite this progress, there are still serious problems (such as overcrowding, lack of resources, shortage of materials, little or no training for teachers, and insufficient access) that need to be overcome.
- Rural areas tend to have the greatest problems. Many schools are in decline, and gender disparities are present.
- Education is not sufficiently funded; most resources pay salaries of teachers who are not in the classroom. Further compounding the problem, the teachers with the most experience too often leave the classroom for more lucrative administrative careers. Government bureaucracies may also need to be reformed.
- An African curriculum needs to be established that is relevant for today's youth. Civic education and linguistic instruction are two subjects that require further attention.

B. Discussion

West Africa has made real progress in education since the 1960s, particularly in higher education. Africans now have the professional education and skills they need to run their countries and develop their economies without having to rely on outside expertise. There are also, however, substantial problems: schools in urban areas are overcrowded and in a poor state of repair, there is a widespread shortage of textbooks (computers are, in general, beyond reach), rural schools have a hard time finding teachers, and curricula are often ill-suited to African realities. At the post-secondary level, West Africa has a number of quality institutions of higher education, although universities tend to focus on liberal arts and business education programs and have fallen behind in science and technology education. Although most countries have free and compulsory education laws, the reality is that basic education in many areas is in decline, children are generally spending fewer years in school, and, in some countries, literacy rates are falling, especially for girls. Dropout rates for girls are increasing.

Most West African countries are struggling to meet Millennium Development Goals (MDG) benchmarks for education. Educational capacity grew rapidly in the immediate post-independence era, but beginning with the economic downturn in the 1970s,

education spending dropped dramatically. In the 1990s, the investment priorities shifted from higher education to universal public education; the situation is slowly improving. That said, the vast majority of the education budget is dedicated to paying salaries; there is little left for anything else (curriculum development, classroom modernization, physical repairs, and construction of new schools). Civil society and regional and international NGOs are playing a major role in promoting education, especially in rural areas. In the view of many participants, however, this is not a sound long-term approach – universal public education is a basic government responsibility, and large injections of foreign donor funding for education crowds out government spending rather than supplementing it. Furthermore, donations are often inextricably linked with the priorities and curricula of the donor states. But even here, the emphasis is too often on the quantity rather than the quality of education. African societies must develop a vision of what they want education to accomplish.

Perhaps the greatest weakness in education across West Africa is the lack of adequate civic education that instills a sense of community, national values, and national identities. Some participants blame this deficiency on the legacies of the “rote” education system inherited from colonizing powers that had little interest in fostering a sense of national identity in African students. Without this foundation in primary and secondary education, African societies find it difficult to promote a sense of citizenship, community service, philanthropy, and the responsibility of individuals to reinvest in African society. Such civic education could go far toward creating a new generation of Africans who are comfortable with their layered identities: family, tribe, ethnic group, religious, national, professional, regional, and international. CSOs also play a role in how minds are shaped.

The governments and bureaucracies of West African nations are ill-equipped to oversee the kind of education reform the region badly needs. Responsibilities are often divided within governments, with separate ministries for primary, higher, and vocational education. Programs are seldom coordinated; when governments change, programs are often abandoned. There is very little continuity in education policy. There was some disagreement as to the proper role of CSOs – should they pressure government to fix the problems through staunch advocacy, or should they step in and fill the capabilities gaps through direct action? Some consensus eventually emerged that, while universal primary education is an inherently governmental function, there is an urgent need for civil society to step in and find ways to fill the gaps. Children who are not receiving education cannot wait for governments to fix themselves. Civil society groups can also supply information to the formal system to ensure needs are not only known, but met.

There is a critical shortage of trained classroom teachers in West Africa, particularly in rural areas. According to a 2009 survey by the Transparency and Accountability

Program, roughly 50 percent Ghanaian teachers are absent from their classrooms at least one day a week.⁵ Various factors account for this high rate of absenteeism, such as the need to travel long distances to collect paychecks or attend training seminars, and a lack of school infrastructure and capacity (staff common rooms, proximity to public transportation, school clinics, and parent-teacher organizations to hold teachers accountable). Civil society could play an important role in monitoring and holding teachers accountable. Moreover, teachers are offered few incentives to stay in the classroom. Experienced teachers often opt for higher-paying, more prestigious administrative jobs in ministries or in teacher unions at the local, regional, and national levels. Most of the education budget funds the salaries of teachers outside of the classroom; civil society groups should take a more active role to challenge the current budget allocations. More money should also be budgeted for other necessities – such as teacher training and textbook publication.

Most participants agreed that the development of an African-centric curriculum is a high priority. The goal of higher education still seems to be to prepare African college graduates to emigrate and compete in the West (and to a much lesser but increasing degree, China). African students still learn more about the Western world than they do about the culture and history of their own continent. Education experts in Africa should put a higher emphasis on developing general education curricula that are more authentic and relevant to living and succeeding in Africa. Education in West Africa still does not prepare Africans to do business in Africa. For example, few West Africans (except in bilingual countries like Cameroon) speak the languages of neighboring countries. Nor do they receive education in the cultures of other African countries. There used to be West African education and training centers, largely set up during the colonial era, which fostered a sense of regional identity and facilitated cultural and linguistic training on a regional basis. ECOWAS has not maintained that capability, but it is one that needs to be revived in the interest of building a community spirit that could greatly facilitate regional economic and political development and integration. Investment in curriculum development is an extremely low priority.

C. Issues for Further Investigation

- What is the proper role of CSOs in establishing a higher standard of primary and secondary school education in Africa: advocacy or direct action?
- How can African civil society and the increasingly wealthy African private sector promote the expansion of science and technology programs in institutions

⁵ See “Tracking Absentee Rates among Primary School Teachers in Ghana,
<http://tap.resultsfordevelopment.org/resources/tracking-absentee-rates-among-primary-school-teachers-ghana>.

of higher learning in West Africa? Does the lack of options for advanced degrees in science and technology in Africa contribute to a brain drain? If so, how can it be reversed?

6. The Civil Society Africa Needs Today and Tomorrow

A. Summary

- The growing and increasingly wealthy African entrepreneurial class has not yet developed a widespread sense of duty to reinvest in African society.
- Civil society in Africa needs a clear and focused vision, mission, and agenda. Only once these are defined can a regional strategy be developed and implemented with respect to the unique challenges faced by each nation.
- Legitimacy is a constant battle fought by African CSOs and NGOs – particularly with respect to their source of funding. These entities must pursue African goals and agendas. Leaders must be held accountable and CSOs may need to undergo a process of internal democratization.
- A network of experts from think-tanks, academic institutions, and other CSO bodies will be fundamental in determining the direction and success of civil society in Africa.

B. Discussion

Africans are highly skeptical of many of the activities and agendas of the big, international NGOs, which they often see as agents of great power agendas that have more to do with the global balance of power than with improving day-to-day life for Africans. African civil society is better able to understand and respond to the needs and priorities of Africans. At present, however, Africa lacks the capacity in its civil society sector to establish and sustain the kind of long-term, big-picture agendas that global NGOs like the International Crisis Group, Doctors without Borders, Human Rights Watch, and Transparency International implement.

Civil society across Africa needs a vision, a sense of mission, and a transformational agenda. Once civil society knows where it wants Africa to go, it can begin to work together to develop a strategy for getting there that can be implemented differently in each nation. For that to happen, however, civil society organizations need to develop a sense of professionalism and move beyond voluntarism and dependence on the big, international NGOs. Part of developing a professional civil society will require developing and sharing ways of training and best practices. Agenda-setting is another area in which CSOs can exert their presence and power.

There are not, at present, any umbrella organizations for NGOs and CSOs in Africa that can partner or interact with international CSOs. Reaching across the language barrier is often a challenge. The emergence of such regional cooperation and collaboration can serve as a capacity-multiplier. Institutions like GIMPA and the Center for Management Development in Nigeria, which are already set up to teach management techniques to bureaucrats, legislators, and business leaders should be encouraged to develop training programs for civil society leaders. For example, many parliamentarians do not understand the budget process – CSOs could be used to provide education and training.

Participants from a wide variety of civil society sectors overwhelmingly agreed that funding is the greatest barrier to the emergence of a truly effective African civil society that can pursue authentic African agendas rather than serving as the middleman for implementing the aid and development priorities of international NGOs and foreign benefactors. If African NGOs and CSOs are seen to be pursuing authentic African goals and agendas, potential partners and benefactors will feel a greater sense of ownership and commitment to seeing them succeed. The growing and increasingly wealthy African entrepreneurial class has not yet developed a sense of duty to reinvest in African society through creating or providing financial support to civil society organizations. Creating such a sense of *noblesse oblige* among the growing cadre of African millionaires and billionaires (in U.S. dollars) should be a high priority for civil society leaders.

There is also a shortage of oversight for NGOs and CSOs in Africa. Many are one-man or one-woman organizations; others are long-established organizations with entrenched, autocratic leaders. Neither model makes for responsible and sustained civil society activities in pursuit of a broader set of goals. As a result, NGOs and CSOs are often seen as being as corrupt as their governments. There is a need to establish organizations and institutions that are committed to monitoring the activities and finances of civil society organizations and holding them accountable to both their clients and their donors. NGOs and CSOs must be democratized and made more transparent in how they operate, how they choose leadership, and how they establish priorities.

Civil society in Africa has an important advocacy role. In particular, given the widespread corruption and cronyism in African politics, civil society organizations have a responsibility to challenge the power center, advocate on behalf of the interests of the people, and fight for necessary change. West Africa needs, in addition to developing a professional civil society sector, to nurture its growing grassroots movements – such as market women’s associations, local groups fighting for social and economic justice, and consumers rights groups. These movements already play important roles both in shaping economic and social life at the local level and providing badly needed basic services (such as girls’ education, shelters for abused women, basic business skills training, vocational training, and petty crime deterrence). Academic institutions and think tanks

need to develop a better understanding of what kinds of grassroots operations are currently at work in West Africa, as well as how they do business and where the gaps are.

African civil society faces many challenges, but it is also on the cusp of an era of great opportunity. Chinese interest in Africa has revived Western interest in Africa as well. This presents African nations with a golden opportunity, provided they have government and civil society leaders who are determined to ensure that future economic activity and investment in Africa serves the African agenda as well as the agendas of the foreign powers. In order to take full advantage of that opportunity, however, African civil society needs a stronger vision of where they want Africa to go.

The transnational nature of African linguistic and cultural ties has often been seen as a weakness, but Africans can turn it into an advantage. If Africans exploit these transnational ties as a vector for economic integration, they can help break down some of the economic and social barriers that have held regional integration and economic development – especially of the local economic infrastructure – back.

Africa is beginning to develop a network of think tanks and policy research institutions, but much greater development of this sector is needed. Such institutions, by providing unbiased and rigorous analysis of economic and policy issues, can guide change. Virtual think tanks that conduct cooperative research and analysis based on bringing together expertise and experience from across the region will be an important first step in building a civil society capable of bringing transformational change to Africa.

C. Issues for Further Investigation

- While training is clearly needed for a more successful and vibrant African civil society, what benchmarks/matrices can be used to measure success? How can civil society be fostered when freedom of expression is not guaranteed?
- African CSOs are uniquely situated to provide services to the people. Should this capacity, then, be filled by CSOs? What sorts of partnership opportunities exist for CSOs and governments? Right now, attitudes are very antagonistic among the private sector, CSOs, and governments. However, CSO leaders often enter into politics, bringing their passion and interests with them. As personnel move between civil society and bureaucracies, expertise is traded.
- What types of key issue areas are best suited for civil society organizations to progress (e.g., gender equality, environmental protection, justice, empowerment)? What skill sets are needed? For example, few African CSOs specialize in disaster response but many international NGOs do – but they require specific skills. African civil society should find its niche.

- Why did the West Africa Civil Society Forum go underwater? Should a similar regional structure be encouraged?
- How can philanthropy be encouraged to support CSOs? Are laws that encourage giving needed? If an organization is established, it is very difficult to keep it running – they often fall like so many modern trends. How can they stay relevant and effective?

7. Conclusions: The Way Forward

A. Summary

- Regional cooperation is needed. Institutions such as ECOWAS must be supported. New bodies, such as the proposed West African Civil Society Research Network, may need to be created. Regardless, support must be given – politically and financially – to ensure they do not fall into disuse.
- Greater communication is needed among different sectors. This will improve cooperation and sharing of responsibilities.
- This first roundtable was merely the beginning of the conversation. There are many more topics that can and should be addressed.

B. Discussion

There is a need for West Africa to create frameworks for regional cooperation on building civil society capacity, developing visions and agendas, and sharing experiences and best practices. The reality, however, is that there are severe resource limitations across the region. There are some useful interim steps that West Africa could pursue, both regionally and in partnership with U.S. facilitators, including: creating networks among existing civil society groups and organizations at the national and regional level, and building virtual think tanks of civil society leaders, academics, and policy experts to answer some basic questions about the nature and effectiveness of civil society organizations in West Africa. The participants agreed that the United States and other outside facilitators have a role to play, provided they are interested in pursuing African agendas.

There needs to be greater communication and cooperation among the public, private, and civil society sectors. The most pressing need is to foster greater cooperation between civil society and the private sector. Such a sense of partnership could help to resolve the resource problem that has stifled civil society development. As the African private sector becomes more aware of the importance of developing a vibrant and self-sufficient African civil society, it will become more willing to invest in it. Political and cultural borders must be broken down to enable a better, regional West African civil society.

The creation of a West African Civil Society Research Network could build on the insights and understanding gained through this meeting. A sustained engagement among the participants in this roundtable, their institutions, and IDA would ensure that the

agenda defined here continues to move forward toward creating concrete products that will benefit researchers, policymakers, and civil society leaders. Some important issues need to be explored: Why have past efforts to create civil society networks in West Africa failed? What is the role of civil society in conflict management? What is the current funding structure for civil society groups, what challenges are present, and what should the funding process look like to ensure effective operation and legitimacy? How can civil society facilitate a paradigm shift for African women that will enable the emerging generation of talented young women to play a more active role in the political sphere? What is the role of civil society in instilling civic values and a sense of national and regional citizenship among young West Africans? More broadly, how can civil society leaders establish intergenerational dialogs to learn more about what the youth – who are, after all, the emerging leadership of the region – think, how they view the world, what they value and want for the future, and what their vision is of the future with respect to their countries and regions? How can civil society contribute to preparing the younger generation for leadership and helping them become positive agents for change?

C. Issues to Address in Future Roundtables

- The role of civil society in conflict management and conflict resolution.
- The role of religious institutions, leaders, and groups in civil society; in particular, the influence of religious institutions, leaders, and movements on African youth.
- The implications of the proliferation of smartphones on community and group identities, grassroots political mobilization, and the emergence of African consumer markets and inter-African informal economies.
- The impact of “disruptive technologies,” such as social networking and SMS-based financial tools on the emergence of grassroots and transnational movements.

Appendix A

IDA Guidance to Participants and Letter of Invitation

Thank you all for taking the time out of your busy schedules to travel to Accra to participate in this International Roundtable on “Strengthening the Civil Society Africa Needs: Challenges and Opportunities in West Africa. Thanks also to Professor Yaw Badu and Dr. Koryoe Anim-Wright for rising to IDA’s challenge to organize and coordinate this event on very short notice.

IDA hopes that this will be the first in a sustained series of engagements with experts on and representatives of Africa civil society. Our goal is to create a venue for open, creative, and productive discussions to explore the challenges and opportunities that face African civil society today, and in the future, as it strives to partner with governments and populations in the regions to build Africa’s future.

Over the next two days, and in the weeks and months to come, the IDA team looks forward to working with you to identify a set of key themes for collaboration. We also will look for ideas on how best to structure such collaboration through both virtual interaction and future roundtable and seminars.

Because we want everyone to feel comfortable in expressing their views freely, this roundtable will be conducted under the Chatham House rule of non-attribution: no one will be directly quoted in conference proceedings or subsequent products without their permission.

In an effort to explore the broadest possible range of topics and spark a broad range of ideas, IDA and GIMPA have kept the program informal and the topics for discussion general. Many of these topics are inter-related and we hope, as the discussion unfolds, you will also explore these connections between them. We also hope you will make use of the informal time – tea breaks, meals, and evening conversations – both to continue your discussions and forge the relationships upon which we might build a sustained engagement network.

At the end of the conference, the IDA team will come back to you and solicit your ideas as to what the best ways are to proceed, both in terms of issues for further exploration in future collaboration and in terms of whom else we should seek to bring to the table.

The IDA team is committed to collaborative engagement and what we like to call “strategic listening.” For this reason, we do not come to this meeting with an agenda of

our own, other than to learn what issues are of concern to Africans as they strive to build a more robust civil society capable of supporting and shaping the dramatic period of transformational change ahead.

GHANA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (GIMPA)

MOTTO: EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION



Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....

P. O. Box AH 50
Achimota, Accra

October 6, 2011

Dear Friend:

We are pleased to invite you to participate in the two-day international roundtable on "Strengthening the Civil Society Africa Needs: Challenges and Opportunities in West Africa" that will be held in Accra, Ghana on November 8 and 9, 2011 at the GIMPA Executive Conference Center. The roundtable will be co-hosted by the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) and the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), a non-profit think tank in Alexandria, Virginia.

Africa is a region in transition. Between 1996 and 2008, most African countries experienced growth in their economies, trade and investment doubled, school enrollment rates increased, and health indicators improved. Additionally, democracy has become the norm rather than the exception in most African countries and governance has improved. Contemporary African countries require leaders who are able to tackle the challenges and opportunities emerging today. However, in addition to a new generation of visionary leaders, African nations require a strong and active civil society.

Today, Africa is working toward an authentic African model of political and economic development and reform that will enable Africans to find and take ownership of the solutions to their problems and challenges. A vibrant and independent civil society is essential to that process. Civil society also provides a mechanism for individuals to express their interests and to counterbalance government authority and the business sector. For civil society to be relevant, it needs to be rooted in the culture, traditions and values of a nation, including, for example, traditional authority structures such as councils of elders and emerging social structures of urban African communities.

This two-and-a-half day conference will bring together African experts on civil society to share their views on the development of African civil society, its strengths and weaknesses, and what is needed to build a strong and vibrant civil society for Africa's future. Participants will include civil society leaders and experts from across West Africa. In order to promote open and honest brainstorming, the sessions will be conducted according to Chatham House rules of non-attribution.

If you are able to attend, the hosts will cover all travel and lodging costs associated with the roundtable. A tentative agenda is included with this letter of invitation. We very much hope you can attend this important event. As time is short, we would appreciate hearing from you soon so we can start making the necessary travel arrangements. We look forward to seeing you in Accra in November.

Sincerely,

Prof. Yaw Agyeman Badu, Ph.D.
Rector,
Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration

Dr. Caroline F. Ziemke-Dickens
Research Staff Member
Institute for Defense Analyses

Appendix B

About GIMPA

General Information

Setting/Location

The Institute, located about thirteen kilometers north of the city of Accra, is housed on 150 acres of high ground at Greenhill, off the Achimota - Legon road and within a stone's throw of the University of Ghana, Legon. Greenhill, with its white buildings and surrounded by green vegetation and the Achimota Forest Reserve, is a spot of striking and restful scenic beauty. On clear days it commands in one long panoramic sweep a view embracing the University of Ghana with the undulating Accra Plains in the background, the Kotoka International Airport, the plush Westlands Residential area and the hills of the Akwapim Range.

Historical Development

Named the Institute of Public Administration, GIMPA was established in 1961 as a joint Ghana Government/United Nations (UN) special fund project established as one of the key strategic institutions to develop the public administrative system, to produce civil servants with administrative and professional competence, and to plan and administer national, regional and local services.

In 1966, the joint sponsorship ended and the UN formally handed over the Institute to the Government of Ghana. The Institute was then re-designated Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration in 1969 to reflect its expanded functions.

Over the past 49 years, GIMPA's activities have been guided by five successive mandates beginning with the first legislative instrument of 1961 to the current GIMPA Act, 2004 (Act 676). Each mandate affirmed the status of the Institute as the national leading management development institute to provide the study of public administration and management of Ghana. By the new mandate, GIMPA can now offer courses leading to the award of certificates, diplomas and degrees up to the doctoral level in its areas of competence. The area of competence is defined to include training and education in the areas of leadership, management, public administration and technology.

Today, GIMPA has transformed itself into the leading management development institute in Ghana with a vision of becoming a world class Center of Excellence for training in Leadership, Management and Administration, Policy Analysis, Consultancy and Research, Distance Learning, Gender and Development programs. The key to

GIMPA's success over the years has been consistency of purpose. Through the provision of high quality programs and services, caring faculty, customized educational approaches and the cultivation of a participant-centred learning environment, GIMPA has contributed to the national development efforts by building the much-needed capacity development.

GIMPA is an independent public tertiary institution with financial and operational autonomy. The Institute has effectively stopped receiving government subventions and has become financially autonomous. GIMPA has learned to earn its own keep, thriving on significantly revamped, redesigned, demand-driven and expanded program offerings. GIMPA is now a self-financing organization with a new structure to meet its new mandate.

Objectives and Functions of the Institute

By its Charter which is GIMPA Law 2004 (Act 676), the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) is mandated to do the following:

- Promote education, training and services in the fields of leadership, business management and administration;
- Provide professional, unbiased and dedicated advisory support services to various areas of government to enhance their capacity for sustainable development and management;
- Promote the development of managerial skills for persons employed in the public and private sectors including non-governmental organizations, and create awareness of the need for education, training and the provision of services in the fields of leadership, management and administration as a necessary requirement for maintaining the vitality of the organisations in the development of the economy;
- Promote the use of information technology as an essential tool to create a competitive advantage and enhance output for national development;
- Assist Ghanaian enterprises through cost-effective education, training and the provision of services, research and consultancy to achieve efficient cost control;
- Promote understanding and cooperation between public and private sector institutions in respect of public administration and management obligations; and
- Offer courses leading to the award of certificates, diplomas and degrees in the Institute's areas of competence subject to such conditions as the authorities responsible for tertiary education in the country shall direct.

Vision

As the top-most management development institute in Ghana, GIMPA aims to be a world-class Center of Excellence for training, consultancy, and research in leadership, business management and public administration, using top-class motivated staff with state-of-the-art facilities.

Mission

GIMPA's mission is to maintain a Center of Excellence for training in public and business administration, by continuously enhancing the capability of middle and top level executives in public and private sectors, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) both in Ghana and internationally to manage their institutions and enterprises efficiently and effectively.

Accreditation

Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration is accredited by the National Accreditation Board. In addition to the Institutional accreditation, GIMPA's academic programs are accredited by the National Accreditation Board. The Institute is therefore given the recognition for satisfactorily meeting standards in performance, integrity, and quality. Qualifications obtained from GIMPA are therefore comparable to international standards and acceptable to employers/institutions both in Ghana and overseas.

GIMPA is on the list of institutions accredited by the National Accreditation Board and as such comes recommended by the Board and Ministry of Education to parents, students and guardians looking for reliable tertiary institutions.

Constituent Divisions

The Institute is made of five schools, namely:

- GIMPA Business School offers the following degrees:
- School of Governance & Leadership
- School of Technology
- GIMPA Public Services School
- GIMPA Law School

Programs offered by the schools are mentioned below.

Business School

Graduate Unit

- Executive Masters in Business Administration (EMBA),
- Regular Masters in Business Administration (RMBA)
 - Master of Science in Business Administration (MSc).

Undergraduate Unit

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Accounting | 6. Human Resource Management |
| 2. Economics | 7. Operation and Supply Chain Management |
| 3. Entrepreneurship | 8. Hospitality And Tourism Management |
| 4. Finance | 9. Procurement Management |
| 5. Marketing | 10. Project Management |

Law School

Bachelor of Laws

School of Technology

Bachelor of Science in Information and Communications Technology

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

School of Governance and Leadership

Executive Master of Governance and Leadership (EMGL)

Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA)

Master of Development Management (MDM)

Master of Public Sector Management (PSM)

Master of Governance and Leadership (MGL)

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

Master of Public Sector Management (PSM)

Appendix C

Participants

IDA

Ms. Karen Buckley

Dr. Kongdan Oh Hassig

Dr. Janette Yarwood

Dr. Caroline Ziemke-Dickens

GIMPA

Professor Yaw Agyemen Badu, Rector

Dr. G. Koryoe Anim-Wright, Director, Corporate Affairs and Institutional Advancement

Professor Kwaku Osei-Hwedie, Dean, School of Governance and Leadership

Cameroon

Dr. Bernard T. Ngo-Nguty, International Consultant on Governance

Professor Stephane Ngwanza, Senior Research Fellow, International Relations Institute of Cameroon

Equatorial Guinea

Mr. Manresa (Mene) Bodipo, Visual Artist

Ghana

Ms. Lawrencina Adams, Program Manager, STAR-Ghana

Mr. Kofi Blankson Ocansey, Managing Partner, Dixcove Ventures

Mr. Herman Chinery-Hesse, Chairman, SOFTtribe

Mrs. Angela Dwameno-Aboagye, Executive Director, The Ark Foundation

Mr. Emmanuel Kuyole, Africa Regional Coordinator, Revenue Watch Institute

Professor Takyiwwa Manuh, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana

Professor Atukwei Okai, Secretary General, Pan-African Writers' Association

Mr. Kwaku Sakyi Addo, CEO, Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications

Ms. Kakra Taylor-Hayford, International Consultant, UN Habitat

Mozambique

Mr. Manuel Araujo, Director, Center for Mozambican and International Studies, former Member of Parliament

Nigeria

Mr. Adamu Ahmed, Senior Administrative Officer, Center for Management Development

Senegal

Mr. Adama Gaye, Journalist, Founder, New Force Africa

Dr. Ousmane Sene, Director, West African Research Center

Appendix D

Agenda

Strengthening the Civil Society Africa Needs: Challenges and Opportunities in West Africa

8-10 November, 2011

Accra, Ghana

AGENDA

Tuesday, 8 November, 2011

Participants arrive at GIMPA

6 p.m. Welcome Reception for Participants and GIMPA Staff

Wednesday, 9 November, 2011

- 09:00-09:30 Welcome Remarks by GIMPA and IDA
- Professor Yaw Agyeman Badu, Rector of GIMPA (GHANA)
 - Dr. Caroline Ziemke-Dickens, Research Staff Member, IDA (USA)
- 09:30-10:30 Overview of Civil Society in West Africa Today
Moderators:
- Mr. Adama Gaye, Journalist/Founder, New Force Africa (SENEGAL)
 - Gani Joses Yoroms, Senior Research Fellow/Director, Dept. of Security Studies, National War College (NIGERIA)
- 10:30-11:00 ***Coffee/Tea Break***
- 11:00-12:30 Trends in Civil Society Development Since Independence
Moderator:
- Dr. Bernard Nzo-Nguty, Int'l Consultant on Governance (CAMEROON)
- 12:30-14:00 ***Lunch***

14:00-15:00 Women's Rights and Responsibilities: A Look Back
Moderators:
· Prof. Takyiwaa Manuh, Professor/Director, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana (GHANA)
· Ms. Kakra Taylor-Hayford, International Consultant, UN Habitat (USA/Ghana,)

15:00-16:00 The Youth Yesterday and Today
Moderator:
· Dr. Janette Yarwood, Research Staff Member, IDA, (USA)

16:00-16:30 ***Coffee/Tea Break***

16:30-17:30 Valuing Our Elders: Changes since Independence
Moderator
· Prof. Kwaku Osei-Hwedie, Dean, GIMPA School of Governance & Leadership (GHANA)

19:00-21:00 *Dinner*

Thursday, 10 November, 2011

Roundtable Discussions

09:00-10:00 The Impact of Economic Independence on Today's West African Society
Moderators:
· Mr. Kofi Blankson Ocansey, Managing Partner, Dixcove Ventures (GHANA)
· Mr. Herman Chinery-Hesse, Chairman, Soft Tribe (GHANA)

10:00-10:30 ***Coffee/Tea Break***

10:30-11:30 Educating the People Since Independence
Moderators:
· Prof. Yaw Agyeman Badu, Rector of GIMPA (GHANA)
· Dr. Ousmane Sene, Director, West African Research Center (CAMEROON)

11:30-13:00 The Civil Society Africa Needs Today
Moderators:
· Ms. Lawrence Adams, Programme Manager/Team Leader, STAR-Ghana (GHANA)

- Mr. Manuel Araujo, Director, Center for Mozambican and International Studies (MOZAMBIQUE)

13:00-14:30 ***Lunch***

14:30-16:00 Fostering the Next Generation of Civil Society Leaders

Moderators:

- Mr. Mene Bodipo, Visual Artist, (EQUATORIAL GUINEA)
- Dr. Samuel Nii Noi Ashong, Deputy Rector, GIMPA (GHANA)

16:00-17:30 The Way Forward: Building Regional Cooperation to Strengthen Civil Society in West Africa

Moderators:

- Ms. Lawrence Adams, Programme Manager/Team Leader, STAR-Ghana (GHANA)
- Dr. Kongdan Oh Hassig, Research Staff Member, IDA (USA)

19:00-21:00 ***Closing Dinner***

Appendix E Group Photo



Front Row: Dr. Ousmane Sene, Dr. Kongdan Oh Hassig, Prof. Takyiwwa Manuh, Prof. Yaw Badu, Dr. Caroline Ziemke-Dickens, Mr. Mene Bodipo, Ms. Kakra Taylor-Hayford, Dr. Bernard Ngo-Nguty.

Second Row: Mr. Kwaku Sakyi Addo, Mr. Emmanuel Kuyole, Dr. Janette Yarwood, Mr. Manuel Araujo, Ms. Karen Buckley, Prof. Kwaku Osei-Hwedie, Mr. Adama Gaye, Mr. Herman Chinery-Hesse, Dr. Koryoe Anim-Wright, Prof. Stephane Ngwanza, Mr. Adamu Ahmed.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) Mc{ 2012		2. REPORT TYPE IAD Draft Final		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) 03-2012 – 03-2013	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Conference Report: Strengthening the Civil Society Africa Needs: Challenges and Opportunities in West Africa, 23 December 2011				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER 2012-12062700-003	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER — — — —	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER — — — —	
6. AUTHOR(S) Caroline F. Ziemke-Dickens, Karen Buckley, Kongdan Oh Hassig, Janette Yarwood				5d. PROJECT NUMBER — — — —	
				5e. TASK NUMBER EE-55-3401	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER — — — —	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Institute for Defense Analyses 4850 Mark Center Drive Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1882				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER IDA Document D-4616 Log: H"12-000661	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Institute for Defense Analyses 4850 Mark Center Drive Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1882				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) — — — —	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited (18 July 2013).					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES — — — —					
14. ABSTRACT This document presents a summary of discussions held during an international roundtable on Civil Society in West Africa co-hosted by the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) and the Ghana Institute for Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). IDA approached this event as an exercise in strategic listening. Rather than suggest the issues IDA thought might be important, we encouraged the participants to tell us what issues they see as important. The definition of civil society in Africa is broad, encompassing the space between official (government) activity and private life (the family and home). African civil society today fills three primary functions: advocating for and giving a voice to people and groups outside the circles of government and political power; delivering services in areas and sectors where the government has failed to do so; and building African capacity to perform the development, good governance, and advocacy functions that were previously carried out by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).					
15. SUBJECT TERMS civil society, West Africa, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Cape Verde, Mozambique, South Africa, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, rule-of-law, entrepreneurs, Non-governmental organizations, economic integration, infrastructure.					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Unlimited	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 46	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Richard Porterfield
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 703-578-2812