



Youth,
Peace &
Security

Summary Report

West and Central Africa Regional Consultation For the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security

Cotonou, Benin

11 – 13 September, 2017



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



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Resilient nations.



Acknowledgements

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Introduction

In December of 2015, the Security Council adopted ground-breaking Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). For the first time, the UN Security Council dedicated a full resolution to the positive role young people can and do play in conflict prevention, the prevention of violent extremism and peacebuilding. The Resolution was championed by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and adopted unanimously.

UN SCR 2250 mandates the Secretary-General “to carry out a progress study on the youth’s positive contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution, in order to recommend effective responses at local, national, regional and international levels”, and to present the results of the Study to Member States of the United Nations. The Study will provide evidence of young people’s contribution to sustaining peace, through an independent and participatory research process. An independent Lead Author, as well as an Advisory Group of 21 experts, were appointed by the Secretary-General to undertake the Study. Consultations with young people and youth-led civil society organizations offer an essential contribution to the Study, in order to gather the views, aspirations and demands from young people for peace and security issues. For more information about the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, please [click here](#).

The West and Central Africa regional consultation, held in Cotonou, Benin from 11 to 13 September 2017, was the sixth in a series of regional consultations for the Progress Study. It was organized by UN Volunteers, UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNOCA, CONFEJES and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). A total of thirty-nine participants took part in the 3-day consultation, and were nominated by United Nations country offices and selected through an online open call for applications.

Participants came from: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, The Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome Principe, Senegal and Togo. The precise number of participants from each country is listed in Annex A. Participants were selected on the basis of their engagement in peace and security issues, their involvement with youth-led organizations, volunteer associations, youth-focused organizations and/or their affiliation with peacebuilding networks. Consideration was given to ensure a diverse age range and gender balance.

The consultation was organized into three parts: the first day was dedicated to young people’s discussions on youth, peace and security as concepts, as well as to a conversation on the relevance of UNSCR 2250 in their context; the second day involved participants describing their peacebuilding work and the partnerships and relationships they have built as a result of their work; and the third, and final day was set aside for participants to discuss some of their challenges and priorities and develop recommendations in relation to these. These consultations were facilitated by 3 co-facilitators, from civil society and the UN. The list of organizations that attended are included in Annex B.

This report provides an analytical summary of the main issues discussed by the young people who attended the meeting, as well as their recommendations for peace and security in West and Central Africa. To ensure objectivity and accuracy in the reflection of participants' views, this report was shared with participants for their inputs and feedback prior to being finalised. The consultation was held under Chatham House rules, hence no comments or views expressed have been attributed.

1. Defining Youth, Peace and Security

Youth

“Youth shouldn’t be on the table, but around the table...”

For participants, the concept of youth could be defined by the innovation and dynamism of young people, their ability to find new solutions to old problems and the potential they have to contribute to peace and development if they are meaningfully engaged. “Youth is a mindset” and is about the energy, determination and commitment that young people can and do contribute to peace and security.

Peace

Tolerance and Social Cohesion: Participants described the importance of tolerance and respect for different cultures, viewpoints and ethnicities as key to achieving social cohesion and ultimately, peace.

Development: The centrality of development as a necessary prerequisite for peace was discussed by most participants, who described the interconnected nature of both concepts, “...when there is development there is peace and vice versa.”

Stability and Tranquillity: For most participants, peace manifests as stability and tranquillity both in terms of external or environmental stability (social, political and economic) and internal stability (inner peace or a ‘quiet spirit’). This does not, however, mean the absence of conflict entirely but rather that when conflict does emerge it is dealt with peacefully.

“Cohesion in communities is important. In our communities there are religious, linguistic and other differences. So, it is important that we accept ourselves in our diversity, otherwise we will not be able to have peace.”

Security

Protection: Participants described how feeling protected was key to feeling secure. This manifested as the absence of risk to their personal safety, feeling assured and being able to trust their government and those around them, and having personal and emotional security.

Prevention: To some participants, prevention was a means to achieve and sustain security in their communities.

Freedom: Freedom of expression and mobility were emphasized as necessary for feeling secure in their communities.

Development: As with participant discussions on the concept of peace, in their discussions on security participants highlighted the importance of inclusive, sustainable social and economic development as vital to contributing to feelings of security.

2. Young People's Work

Education and Awareness-raising

- Identifying areas that may be prone to conflict and conducting cultural and recreational educational activities (i.e. using theatre, film, etc.) to prevent violent conflict.
- Providing civic education and promoting civic engagement in communities.
- Providing peer education on sustainable development, drug prevention, child rights and human rights.
- Teaching young people how to manage their emotions in a peaceful and effective way.
- Training conflict mediators to go into conflict prone communities.
- Providing training to communities on mediation, leadership and communication to promote social cohesion.
- Providing informal education on moral courage, freedom of expression and a culture of peace.
- Conducting awareness raising and education for parents on the importance of sending their children to school.
- Raising awareness among University students on the sustainable development goals.
- Raising public awareness around access to justice.
- Sensitising civil society to the importance of access to justice and judicial mechanisms.

“We need a system of government that will work with us rather than for us.”

Nigeria¹: The importance of health for peace

“I support sexual and reproductive health and rights...when young people are healthy, they are productive and can contribute to that society. If a young man is not able to productively or actively participate in society, the same for a young girl if she gets pregnant at a young age, if you are isolated you will try to figure out how to get into the system.” – Nigeria, Male Participant¹

Access to Basic Services

- Providing communities with access to basic services, particularly those heavily affected by violent extremism.

Political Participation

- Lobbying the government to lower the age requirements to run for political office.
- Pressuring national governments to follow through on their national and international commitments, i.e. commitments related to UNSCR 2250.
- Advocating for youth to be involved in decision-making processes.
- Promoting women's political participation.
- Conducting election monitoring.

Dialogue

- Creating 'safe spaces' for young refugees and internally displaced persons to freely express themselves and discuss their past experiences, and providing education on sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Promoting and supporting interreligious dialogue.
- Promoting dialogue and mediating conflict between youth and law enforcement.
- Supporting the social integration of marginalised groups at the grassroots level.
- Working with communities to encourage the opening up of spaces for dialogue and debate among all community members.

Nigeria²: The need to be heard

"In my country, most youth become violent because of their frustration. Poverty is not the only issue, unemployment can lead to that but to me the most important thing that can make young people frustrated is when they are not recognized and they can't express their views and opinions." – *Nigeria, Male Participant*²

Employment and Vocational Training

- Using culture and arts to demobilise youth and provide them with training on income generation and entrepreneurship.
- Countering violent extremism by providing young people with mentorship and employment opportunities.
- Providing training to farmers on the importance and process of environmental safeguarding.
- Providing young people with business training and skills to develop solutions for their communities.
- Providing capacity training to out-of-school youth to promote social cohesion and bridge the gap between in-school and out-of-school youth.

The Gambia: FGM, child marriage and education

"Child marriage and FGM are often associated with Islam. We draw inspiration from religious leaders and there are leaders who advocate for these practices. They are important partners for countering this...FGM and child marriage have serious consequences on the health of young girls. We do sensitizations around these topics using education because FGM and child marriage mean young girls are withdrawn from school." – *The Gambia, Female Participant*

Gender

- Conducting community sensitisation on and capacity-building in response to female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage.
- Providing access to legal services for women who are at risk of or have experienced FGM and child marriage.

Governance

- Advocating for good governance to promote the equitable distribution of resources.

Youth Work and Partnerships

Participants were asked to unpack and discuss the partnerships they have built through their work, the role those partnerships play in their ongoing work, stakeholders they would like to continue to work with or build new relationships with going forward and some of the challenges they face in creating partnerships (see Section 3 on Challenges for the latter discussion).

Existing Partners

Participants described partnering with a wide variety of stakeholders including: multiple levels of government (local, provincial/regional and national), civil society organizations, grassroots level non-governmental organizations, private sector, international organizations, youth associations, youth organizations and associations, multilateral organizations, UN entities, government ministries, leaders in the community with a shared vision/goal, and religious leaders/institutions.

How do youth organizations develop partnerships?

A number of key factors emerged in participant discussions on the ways in which they identify, foster and strengthen partnerships with various stakeholder groups, including:

- **Mutual interests:** Identifying a mutual interest, common agenda, strategic priorities and/or a shared vision.
- **Reciprocity:** Reinforcing the reciprocal nature of the relationship by highlighting the way each party will benefit from the partnership.
- **Pre-existing relationships:** Developing partnerships based on pre-existing relationships with individuals, institutions or networks.
- **Networking:** Attending networking events, using online platforms and social media, volunteering and organizing conferences/events.
- **Results:** Producing noticeable programmatic results.

How Partnerships Help Youth Organizations

Participants identified several ways in which partnerships with different stakeholders were beneficial to the work that they do, which they categorised based on whether they were partnerships with civil society, government or international organizations.

- Strategic partnerships can enhance the visibility and credibility of youth organizations, and increase their chance of being able to participate in peacebuilding dialogues.
- Partnering with government actors creates space for young people to participate in decision-making processes.
- Developing partnerships helps bridge the gap between different sectors of society and contributes to social cohesion.
- Larger organizations may be able to provide smaller youth peacebuilding organizations with training and capacity-building opportunities.
- When partnerships with larger organizations are built, youth peacebuilding organizations gain access to previously unattainable resources (material, financial, technical, information, etc.).
- Developing partnerships can support and create opportunities for knowledge exchange and mentorship.
- Partnerships with organizations that have a shared vision can help prevent duplication of efforts and amplify the impact of shared work.
- Through partnerships youth peacebuilding organizations can gain recognition for their work, and in turn address prevailing negative stereotypes surrounding young people.

3. Challenges

Partnerships

- Participants cited the limited experience of young people as a challenge to knowing how to form strong partnerships and to being able to convince others to form partnerships with youth organizations.
- Cultural and religious norms make it difficult for young women to form partnerships with religious leaders.
- Partnering with other youth is challenging as they often expect remuneration, which youth organizations are unable to provide.
- Partnerships can be challenging where some young people are unwilling to participate in volunteerism.¹
- Due to strong hierarchical and gerontocratic structures, youth are considered “too young to speak up” and not mature enough to participate in peacebuilding, therefore older members of society and established institutions are unwilling or hesitant to form partnerships.
- Due to the stereotyping of young people, there is a lack of trust in youth organizations and young people writ-large.

“Young people don’t have jobs, they’re not in schools, they feel they have nothing to lose. They feel there’s no point in voting, they don’t believe in the system.”

“...it’s not that we want them [government] to take our words. We just want them to listen to us, let us express our view and propose our solutions.”

- Where partnerships have been formed, young people are often engaged tokenistically.
 - When entering partnerships, youth organizations are wary of the risk of being manipulated to serve the objectives of their partner, in particular when partnering with government actors or institutions.
 - Youth organizations have limited trust in potential partners as in the past, project proposals they have submitted have been given to other groups that the potential partner has an existing relationship with.
- Forging partnerships with large organizations often requires administrative capacities that grassroots youth organizations do not always have.
 - Government actors perceive peace and security to be their sole responsibility and are therefore unwilling to involve youth.
 - Limited access to information makes it difficult for youth organizations to identify potential partners and to know who to contact and how.
 - Religious and/or ethnic divisions can make it difficult to partner with those from a different religious/ethnic group.
 - When a key individual/champion leaves a partnering organization it can make it challenging to maintain a strong partnership.

¹ While most youth described the strong value of volunteering in their communities, some identified the challenge for young people who are struggling to survive of doing unpaid volunteer work.

- Competition for limited resources makes forming partnerships with other organizations challenging.
- Lack of direct contact between youth association and donors, resulting in donors funding organizations they already know and work closely with – excluding small, lesser known youth organizations.

Funding

- It is difficult to obtain sustained funding as youth organizations are often not equipped to monitor and evaluate their work to the standard expected by donors.
- Lengthy bureaucratic processes mean that youth organizations often do not receive the funding they require in time for planned work.
- Some youth organizations are not formally registered, making it difficult to obtain donor support.

“Since youth don’t have anything to lose, they are more likely to embrace violent extremist narratives. Where they really feel they have been abandoned...[these narratives] give a sense of belonging.”

Employment and Education

- High levels of unemployment force young people to become involved in illicit and illegal activities as a means of survival.²
- Limited or lack of access to quality education, particularly for girls and young women.
- Current educational curricula do not include a focus on a culture of peace and is not designed to respond to the needs of the labour market.
- High levels of violence mean young people migrate elsewhere to obtain an education, resulting in ‘brain drain’ of local communities.
- Low literacy rates make it difficult for all young people to access information and make informed decisions; it increases their risk of being manipulated by the State or non-state armed groups.
- Cronyism and corruption make it difficult for young people to access employment opportunities.

Justice

- High levels of corruption coupled with weak judicial institutions, results in little respect for rule of law and human rights, and a lack of accountability.

Governance and Politics

- Youth are excluded from decision-making; therefore, conflict erupts when national governments impose legislation or policies that fail to reflect the issues young people are facing.
- National youth councils are not representative of youth needs as they are highly politicised and often co-opted by political parties.

² It is worth noting that almost all participants identified unemployment as a major challenge facing them and their peers throughout the region.

- Participants expressed general mistrust in state institutions that are plagued by corruption and have proven unable to address long-standing social issues.
- Limited access to information and a lack of transparency makes it difficult for young people to trust government actors and institutions.
- There is limited government support for youth initiatives that are viewed as having the potential for disrupting existing power structures.
- There are limited resources available to support the rehabilitation of young people who have committed a crime or have left violent extremist groups.
- Many governments are highly centralised, which creates frustration amongst those living outside capitals and major urban centres.
- Young people are not included in the design and implementation of policies and programmes, which limits their utility at the local level.
- There is limited political will to engage with young people on peace and security.

“When they are not interested in your agenda, they will find a way to kill your agenda or make sure you drop out of your agenda.”

Social Cohesion

- There are strong divisions throughout the region based on ethnicity, religion and language that result in discrimination and limit young people’s opportunities.
- The presence of terrorist groups has increased mistrust between different members of society, particularly towards diaspora communities rumoured to be associated with terrorist groups.
- Social development within countries is not distributed equally, which leads to certain parts of the country feeling marginalised (and as described by participants, these are the areas where rebel and terrorist groups tend to emerge).
- It can be challenging to convince community members of the relevance of peace and security discussions.
- There is limited dialogue between law enforcement/security forces and citizens, which contributes to strong feelings of mistrust.

“The biggest issue in Nigeria is politics along ethnic lines. When a government comes to power everything it does is to try and be divisive so people don’t feel included.”

Personal Safety

- Young people are fearful for their safety and well-being to express views that may be considered dissident by their governments.

Gender

- Due to traditional beliefs, young women experience harassment and discrimination making it challenging and dangerous for them to implement peacebuilding activities.
- It is challenging to get young men to discuss their feelings and emotions as it is deemed culturally inappropriate.
- Gender-based violence, child marriage and FGM disrupt the ability of girls and young women to obtain an education and subsequently, meaningful employment.

“It’s not important to invest in girls because they will go from their father’s home to their husband’s. They don’t want to spend money on you. Not having access to education...[means] you don’t know that you have rights.”

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed in response to the challenges identified by participants in an earlier session (as detailed in the previous section (3)). In their discussions on possible recommendations, participants were asked to think about four key areas: actions, actors, resources and results.

Funding

- Provide support (financial, technical, etc.) to youth organizations/associations.
- Create grants and funding pools dedicated to supporting youth peacebuilding work.
- Simplify and streamline financial processes to obtain project support.
- Invest in youth entrepreneurship through small grants.

Capacity-building

- Support and enhance the monitoring and evaluation capabilities of youth organizations/associations.
- Support and develop youth leadership skills.

Employment and Education

- Introduce peace and civic education, and respect for diversity into primary and secondary school curricula.
- Use arts (theatre, film, etc.) and non-formal education to address negative stereotypes, discrimination and provide positive counter-narratives.
- Provide young people with an opportunity to learn technical skills in formal educational institutions.
- Use social media and other online platforms as a tool to provide peace education to other young people.
- Educate parents and caregivers on the importance of sending their children to school.
- Include socio-emotional learning as an important component of educational curricula.

Access to Information

- Create platforms where young people can learn about the employment opportunities available to them, exchange information and share best practices.
- Increase transparency and government accountability by providing citizens with access to information and open data related to government legislation, policies and programmes.

Partnerships

- Develop extensive partnerships between governments, youth organizations, young people and communities to coordinate peacebuilding activities.
- Strengthen existing relationships and build new relationships between youth organizations to amplify their impact, increase visibility and encourage knowledge exchange.

- In order to prevent violent extremism, the State should strengthen and build relationships with religious leaders in the community and young people.
- Governments should foster partnerships with the private sector and Universities to generate employment opportunities for young people.

Social Cohesion and Dialogue

- Better support the rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants and other youth who have been involved in criminal activity into society.
- Organise regular opportunities for intergenerational dialogue in communities between young people, elders and government actors.
- Foster trust and promote dialogue between law enforcement/security forces and young people.
- Create opportunities for young peacebuilders from different regions or countries to come together and discuss their work.
- Decentralise public services so that youth living in rural communities can gain access.

Youth Participatory Structures

- Rearrange youth councils so that they run autonomously from the State, are inclusive and more representative of youth needs.
- Establish a national youth committee that will oversee national governments' implementation of UNSCR 2250.
- Support young people's participation in political parties.
- Promote volunteerism among youth in order to stimulate their participation and engagement at all levels.

Justice

- Strengthen weak judicial structures and institutions to promote accountability and reduce impunity.
- Support equitable access to justice for all members of society irrespective of ethnicity, socioeconomic background, gender, age, etc.

Annex A: Participant Information

Countries Present		Age Range	
Country	Number of Participants	21 – 31 years old	
Benin	6	Gender Balance	
Burkina Faso	2	Male	19
Cameroon	3	Female	20
Chad	2		
Central African Republic	3		
Congo-Brazzaville	1		
Côte D'Ivoire	2		
Democratic Republic of Congo	1		
Gabon	2		
The Gambia	1		
Guinea-Conakry	3		
Ghana	1		
Liberia	1		
Mali	3		
Niger	2		
Nigeria	3		
Sao Tome Principe	1		
Senegal	1		
Togo	1		

Annex B: List of Participating Organizations

Organization
Think Young Women
Pan Africain des Jeunes pour la Culture de la Paix/Pan African Youth Network for a Culture of Peace (PAYNCOP)
Office Beninois du Service du Volontariat des Jeunes (OBSVJ-Benin)
AfriYAN Ghana Chapter
AfriYAN Guinea Chapter
L'Union Fraternelle des Croyants (UFC) de Dori
ONG-AFESD – Guinee
Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Youth
National Council of Youth – Niger
African Union Students Council
UNDP
Centre for the Observation and Promotion of the Rule of Law – Togo
West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
UNV
Groupe Redonner L'espoir Res
Local Youth Corner Cameroon
Organisation de Jeunes Resident de Bamako
Buswe Institute
DRC Youth Agenda
As-Vi (Association des victims des evenements du 29 Octobre 2015 et suivant)
Sankorelabs/Tech hub social
World Peace Initiative Foundation

Annex C: Concept note and Agenda

Programme: Regional Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security Voices of youth in West and Central Africa Cotonou September 11 - 13, 2017

Time	Sunday 10.09	Monday 11.09	Tuesday 12.09	Wednesday 13.09	Thursday 14.09
7:30-8:45	Arrivals	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9:00-10:30		Official welcome and Intergenerational Panel	Youth initiatives in peace and security: An overview	Recommendations: Challenges for youth, peace and security	Departures
10:30-10:45		Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
10:45-12:30		Teambuilding	Youth initiatives in peace and security: Sharing in thematic groups	Recommendations: Challenges for youth, peace and security	
12:30-13:30		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
13:30-15:00		Exploring the concepts of youth, peace and security	Youth initiatives in peace and security: Partnerships	Recommendations: Solutions for youth, peace and security – Actions and Actors	
15:00 - 15:15		Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
15:15-16:30		UNSCR 2250: presentation and reflection	Youth initiatives in peace and security: Partnerships	Recommendations: Solutions for youth, peace and security – Resources and Results	
16:30-17:30		Reflections and Agenda for Next Day	Reflections and Agenda for Next Day	Next Steps and Closing	
19:00		Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	



Consultation Régionale « Jeunesse, Paix et Sécurité Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre

-NOTE CONCEPTUELLE-

INTRODUCTION

Le 9 décembre 2015, le Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies a adopté unanimement la [Résolution 2250 concernant la Jeunesse, la Paix et la Sécurité](#) (JPS). Cette résolution est la première à reconnaître le rôle important et positif des jeunes femmes et des jeunes hommes dans le maintien et la consolidation de la paix et de la sécurité. Les résolutions « Sustaining Peace » adoptées en Avril 2016, mentionnent explicitement la résolution 2250 et réaffirment « le rôle important de la jeunesse pour la prévention et la résolution de conflits ainsi que comme aspect clé des efforts durables et inclusifs de maintien de la paix », et demande aux « Etats Membres et entités appropriées des Nations Unies de considérer tous les moyens pour augmenter la participation inclusive de la jeunesse dans les efforts du maintien et de consolidation de la paix (...) ».

En 2016, pour sensibiliser et appuyer la mise en œuvre de la Résolution 2250 et des cadres normatifs y afférant, les agences de l'ONU ont travaillé en étroite collaboration avec leurs partenaires pour réaliser des activités de sensibilisation, pour la mise en œuvre d'une nouvelle plateforme mondiale de gestion des connaissances, pour la création de fonds et programmes axés sur la jeunesse ainsi que sur la réalisation d'une étude mondiale de progrès mandaté par la Résolution 2250. L'étude de progrès apportera une vue d'ensemble sur le travail de renforcement de la paix que les jeunes sont en train de mettre en œuvre au sein de leur communautés et identifiera des lignes de collaboration directes avec jeunes à travers des canaux nouveaux et innovants dans les questions de paix et de sécurité.

« L'exclusion des jeunes n'est pas due à leur silence, ni à leur faible capacité de s'exprimer, c'est à cause de l'autre côté, pourquoi est-ce que l'autre côté ne les écoute pas ? »³.

An des objectifs majeurs de la résolution 2250 consiste dans l'inclusion effective des jeunes comme acteurs clés dans l'agenda pour la paix et la sécurité. Il est donc capital que le modèle de méthodologie participative suggérée par l'étude de progrès soit appliqué. La jeunesse doit constituer une partie prenante des différentes étapes qui forment le processus de consultation, car cela leur permet de répondre efficacement aux défis de paix et sécurité qui affectent leurs communautés. Leur implication et participation aux processus d'analyse et de diagnostique constitue également la manière la plus efficace pour assurer qu'ils seront en mesure d'identifier les solutions pour accomplir les objectifs de l'agenda JPS et pour assurer sa mise en œuvre pour et avec les jeunes. Les consultations régionales sont une composante indispensable de cet approche participative, comme l'ont démontré les Consultation régionales déjà réalisées dans les états arabes, Asie et Pacifique, Europe de l'Est et Asie centrale et Amérique Latine et Caraïbes.

CONTEXTE REGIONAL

L'organisation d'une consultation régionale en Afrique de l'ouest et du centre est cruciale pour plusieurs raisons. Les pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre sont caractérisés par une large population de jeunes : plus du 40% de la population a entre 0 et 15 ans et plus de 18% a entre 15 et 24 ans. Ces jeunes représentent 36% de la force de travail du marché africain et ils constituent également un potentiel incroyable pour le développement économique et

³ Nur Laiq, Advisor on Progress study on Youth Peace and Security Advisor, Youth4Peace Progress Study overview, 12 august 2016.

sociale, spécialement si des politiques publiques inclusive sont mise en œuvre pour promouvoir la participation active de jeunes dans tous les segments de la société⁴.

L'Afrique Centrale et de l'Ouest a vécu une forte instabilité sociale et politique qui a souvent mené à l'éclatement des différents conflits armés. Depuis la période de l'indépendance, la grande majorité de ces conflits ont pris la forme de conflits intra-étatiques parmi lesquels 5 guerres civiles à grande échelle⁵. Aujourd'hui la région a atteint une nouvelle phase de stabilité politique et ses sociétés ont renforcé leurs capacités de résilience aux conflits donnant beaucoup d'espoir pour le futur. Cependant, certains aspects préoccupants persistent dans la région : une augmentation dans le trafic de drogue et des êtres humaines, troubles violente liées aux élections politiques, anciennes frictions ethno-nationales et l'extrémisme violent⁶. La présence de groupes terroristes (AQIM, Boko Haram, Mujao, Etat Islamique, Ansar Dine, entre autres) a augmenté l'instabilité sociale et l'insécurité en favorisant le développement de l'extrémisme violent qui touche surtout les jeunes. Les conditions de vulnérabilité dans lesquelles ils se trouvent représentent un facteur qui influence directement les possibilités de radicalisation. Le chômage, la difficulté d'accès aux services sociaux de base, la déscolarisation ainsi que le manque d'opportunités contribuent directement au développement d'un sentiment de désespoir dans le futur et de défiance envers les institutions⁷. Malgré ces défis, la jeunesse forge des sentier créatifs pour la paix recherchant des nouvelles pistes qui mènent à des sociétés plus résilient.

La consultation régionale sur la résolution 2250 pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre constitue une opportunité pour la jeunesse de faire entendre sa voix et de jouer un rôle actif dans les questions de paix et sécurité qui les concernent.

OBJECTIFS ET RESULTATS ATTENDUS

Tenant compte des approches différentes de chaque pays et sous-région, les objectifs spécifiques de la consultation sont :

1. Identifier et prioriser les questions de paix et de sécurité qui affectent les jeunes dans un contexte local, national, régional, ou mondial ;
2. Analyser les obstacles et les priorités pour promouvoir la participation active des jeunes femmes et hommes dans la prévention et médiation des conflits, la cohésion sociale et le maintien de la paix dans leur communauté, leurs institutions, leur pays et leur région ;
3. Récolter des information précises sur les activités, les initiatives et les innovations des jeunes pour prévenir la violence et maintenir la paix ;
4. Identifier des recommandations substantives basées sur les expériences des jeunes aux niveaux locaux, nationaux et régionaux afin d'apporter leur contribution à la réalisation de l'étude de progrès et permettre l'implémentation effective de la résolution 2250.

Les objectifs ci-dessus ont pour but d'atteindre les résultats suivants :

1. Les questions plus urgentes concernant la paix et la sécurité qui affectent les jeunes au niveau local, national, et régional, sont identifiés et priorisées ;

4 United Nations social papers, <https://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/Regional%20Overview%20Youth%20in%20Africa.pdf>; African Economic outlook

<http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/statistics>

5 Sierra Léon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinée Bissau, Liberia et Mali

6 Ibidem.

7 "Reminding participants that 46 per cent of the world's population is younger than 25 years old, Mr. Eliasson said that young people are disproportionately affected by inequality, marginalization and not least by unemployment. "With these figures and facts in mind, we should understand that young people may be vulnerable to the lure of violent extremists, who offer them a salary, a sense of belonging, and a promise of glory," he said." UN urges prevention efforts to address threats of violent extremism to children and youth, Mogens Lykketoft, President of the UN General Assembly speech,

<https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54133>

2. Les opportunités et obstacles à la participation des jeunes dans la prise de décisions autour de la prévention et la résolution des conflits sont identifiés et priorisés ;
3. Les idées des jeunes ainsi que leurs solutions innovantes pour consolider la paix et la sécurité, prévenir l'extrémisme violent et la violence basées sur le genre ainsi que sur d'autres questions connexes sont partagés et répertoriés ;
4. Les activités et les initiatives pour la paix et la sécurité menés par les jeunes dans la région Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre sont cartographiés ;
5. Un network des associations de jeunesse et jeunes leaders au niveau régional (entre Afrique Centrale et de l'ouest) est établi ;
6. Les recommandations des jeunes pour l'implémentation de la résolution 2250 sont incluses dans l'étude de progrès et un premier plan d'action est réalisé.

Plan d'action : il s'agit d'un plan concret regroupant différentes activités qui assureront le suivi au niveau national sur la domestication de la RCSNU2250. Il sera réalisé par – et pour – les jeunes participants, afin de leur permettre de continuer à jouer un rôle actif et déterminé pour atteindre les engagements de leurs états sur la RCSNU2250 une fois qu'ils seront de retour dans leur pays. Ce plan d'action doit être considéré comme une feuille de route pour les jeunes participant (qui ont la responsabilité de la mettre en œuvre) qui vise à continuer de faire entendre leur voix pour qu'elle soit prise en considération. Finalement, ce plan représente aussi une initiative concrète, définie et coordonnée qui permettra de renforcer le réseau et la connexion de jeunes leaders au niveau régional.

PRINCIPES ET METHODOLOGIE

La consultation régionale a pour but d'être un espace au sein duquel les jeunes peuvent partager et échanger leurs idées sur les problèmes de paix et de sécurité qui les affectent et concernent. Pour cela, des principes directeurs doivent être choisis pour permettre aux jeunes participants de s'exprimer librement et d'être véritablement au centre de cette consultation régionale. Des lors, la consultation devrait être axée sur les principes suivants :

- **Participation :** utiliser des méthodes créatives et inclusives pour amplifier la voix des jeunes, en soulignant leur pouvoir et leur leadership.
- **Du bas vers le haut :** assurer la participation des organisations de jeunesse opérant au niveau communautaire et cerner les obstacles, les triomphes et les réalités des jeunes.
- **Inclusif et accessible :** encourager les jeunes dont les voix ne sont pas souvent entendues à participer et s'assurer que tout le monde soit entendu pendant les consultations.
- **Démonstratif :** Montrer que les jeunes contribuent de manière positive aux problèmes de paix et de sécurité à travers des témoignages en direct du terrain.
- **Leadership des jeunes :** Encourager les jeunes à diriger eux-mêmes le processus et ses résultats (leur donner les responsabilités qu'ils méritent en tant que jeunes leaders).

Méthodologie : pendant la consultation de trois jours, plusieurs sujets seront présentés et analysés. De plus, certaines sessions seront dédiées au partage d'expérience des jeunes leaders et de diverses associations de jeunesse pour renforcer la paix dans leur communauté.

Membres du Comité d'Organisation : UNDP, UNFPA, PBSO, UNV, UNESCO, UNOWAS, UNDP-Programme Sahel, CONFEJES, Searching for Common Ground.

Où : Cotonou, Benin, du 11 au 13 Septembre

Langues de travail : Anglais-Français

PARTICIPANTS :

Les participants⁸ de la consultation régionale sur la UNSCR 2250 seront sélectionnés en fonction des critères suivants :

- Avoir entre 18 et 29 ans, soit la tranche d'âge définie dans la résolution 2250
- Être de l'Afrique D'ouest ou du Centre et vivre et travailler dans n'importe laquelle des deux régions, avec priorité donnée à la cartographie mise en évidence dans la table ci-dessous ;
- Travailler sur les questions de paix et de sécurité au niveau local, national ou régional. Ceci peut inclure un engagement dans les processus de paix, la cohésion sociale, la réconciliation, la prévention ou la médiation de conflits, la réforme du secteur de sécurité, la prévention de l'extrémisme violent, le désarmement, la démobilisation, la réintégration ou les violences basées sur le genre. Les participants peuvent aussi travailler activement dans la promotion de droits de l'homme, la gouvernance local ou nationale, la promotion de l'égalité des genres, la santé sexuelle et reproductive entre autres, si le cadre de leurs activités est lié à ou contribue à la paix et la sécurité.
- Appartenir à une organisation de jeunesse, un mouvement ou un network de jeunes.

Pendant le processus de sélection, les organisateurs considéreront le genre ainsi que la diversité des participants (jeunes provenant de divers milieux socio-économiques, ethniques ou religieux, les jeunes qui vivent avec un handicap, et ceux qui vivent dans un milieu urbain et rural).

Liste des pays prioritaires des régions d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre

N°	Country
1	Mauritania
2	Mali
3	Burkina Faso
4	Niger
5	Chad
6	Senegal
7	Democratic Republic of Congo
8	Central African Republic
9	Côte d'Ivoire
10	Nigeria
11	Cameroon
12	Liberia
13	Sierra Leone
14	Guinea
15	Ghana
16	The Gambia
17	Gabon
18	Benin
19	Republic of Congo
20	Togo
21	Sao Tome Principe

⁸ Les participants prévus sont deux par pays mais le nombre pourrait changer sur la base de financements disponibles