



# CEWARN Monthly

The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

*"Empowering stakeholders to prevent violent conflict"*

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## *CEWARN holds regional forum on the Mid-Term Review of CEWARN's Five-Year Strategy Plan (2007 – 2011)*



*Country delegations review and present comments on the mid term review draft report*

CEWARN held a regional forum in relation to the Mid-Term Review of the CEWARN Five-Year Strategy (2007 - 2011) from 26-27 August in Addis Ababa.

Since its establishment in 2002, CEWARN has been undertaking its conflict early warning and response work in the cross-border areas of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda with a special focus on pastoral and related conflicts.

CEWARN developed a Five-Year Strategy Plan to guide its activities from 2007-2011 with a special focus six strategic objectives in relation to expanding areas of operation; strengthening the response aspect of the mechanism; widening sources of information; enhancing CEWARN's visibility and awareness raising activities as well as developing and implementing sustainable long-term funding strategy.

Accordingly, the objective of the mid-term review forum was to review CEWARN's successes and

challenges since 2007 in order to inform efforts in the remaining period of the strategy.

In his opening statement, Special Advisor of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia and Guest of Honour Amb. Fisseha Yimer, commended CEWARN for its effectiveness as a sub-regional early warning system as well as its success in bringing together state and non-state actors to collaborate in peace and security efforts in the region. He also lauded CEWARN for playing an active role in the development the African Union Continental Early Warning system (CEWS) by serving as a model for emulation by other Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The Executive Secretary of IGAD Secretariat Eng. Mahboub Maalim on his part stated the vital role of CEWARN in the fulfillment of the envisaged IGAD Peace and Security strategy and hinted at possibilities in terms of future expansion of its operation to embrace other mandates contained therein.

The forum listened to a presentation by Dr. Kithure Kindiki, the Mid Term Review consultant who presented a draft report of the CEWARN's mid-term review of the Five-Year Strategy Plan (2007 -2011). The presentation covered assessment of the key objectives of the strategy as well as recommendations on a way forward.

Some of the major areas of discussions that followed include increased involvement of high-level policy makers in each Member State to support activities of the national Conflict Early Warning and Response Units (CEWERUs); empowering CEWERUs to mobilize funds and expand their activities as well as strengthening cross-border cooperation and linkages ...*Contd. On p. 2*

**Contd. (CEWARN regional forum on mid term review)** ...among CEWARN's various national structures. The mid-term review also called for strengthening of CEWARN's communications and outreach efforts in terms of enhanced visibility as well as documenting success stories of the mechanism.

Heads of CEWERUs and representatives of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders; heads of diplomatic missions of IGAD Member States in Addis Ababa, provincial administration officials, representatives of local peace committees, CEWARN Country and Assistant Country Coordinators from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda; CEWARN Field Monitors; as well as representatives of IGAD Secretariat, development partners and civil society organizations were in attendance of the meeting. ♦

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**Ethiopian Conflict Early Warning and Response Unit (CEWERU) holds national stakeholders' Sensitization Workshop**



*Mr. Bizusew Mersha, CEWARN Country Coordinator of Ethiopia briefs the forum on the activities of the Ethiopian national CEWERU*

The Ethiopian national Conflict Early Warning and Response Unit (CEWERU) held a Steering Committee and Stakeholders sensitization workshop from 20-21 August in Hawassa Town, Ethiopia.

The objective of the workshop was to review the conflict prevention and mitigation activities of the national CEWERU in the Karamoja and Somali Cluster sides of Ethiopia and consult on a way forward in terms of improved effectiveness in mitigation of cross-border pastoralist and related conflicts in Ethiopia.

The national CEWERU of Ethiopia conducts its early warning and response activities in ten woredas (districts) in Ethiopia that are found in the Oromia, Somali and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples' regions along the Ethio-kenya, Ethio-Somalia and Ethio-Sudan borders.

Through its conflict prevention and peace building activities in these areas, the national CEWERU has so far managed to promote peaceful co-existence among pastoralist communities of Ethiopia and neighboring countries. It has also played an instrumental role in strengthening capacities both at the local and national levels for early intervention to prevent violent conflicts.

The workshop consulted on measures that need to be taken to strengthen the national CEWERU steering Committee and local structures as well as on how to create synergy with other federal and regional level government-led early warning systems and peace building initiatives.

The workshop was attended by Steering Committee members of the national CEWERU; local administration officials including from woreda, zonal and regional levels; Members of Parliament; CEWARN field monitors and representatives of civil society organizations that are active in CEWARN's areas of reporting in Ethiopia. ♦

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**CEWARN Participates at 6th Quarterly AU-RECs technical meeting in Gaborone**

CEWARN participated and contributed to the sixth quarterly technical meeting between the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the development and operationalisation of the AU Continental Early warning System (CEWS) in Gaborone, Botswana from 2-4 August 2010.

The regular meetings serve as forums for these Institutions and facilitate their harmonization efforts towards having a continental early warning system.

They also provide an opportunity for experience sharing particularly for the RECs whose early warning systems are at earlier stages of development and operationalization. ♦

## Use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) for Conflict Prevention and CEWARN's ICT 4 Peace Project



*Mr. Muriuki Mureithi is founder of Summit Strategies Ltd based in Nairobi, Kenya and CEWARN consultant on ICT 4 Peace project. He has extensive experience of consulting in policy, regulatory and strategy evolution of ICTs in Africa with special focus on empowerment of communities in rural and disadvantaged communities through ICTs.*

*Below are excerpts from an interview he gave to the CEWARN Public Relations and communications Officer on use of information communication technology for conflict prevention and the CEWARN ICT 4 Peace project. Some answers have been summarized to fit in the bulletin.*

### **What is the ICT 4 Peace project? What is its relevance for CEWARN?**

The ICT 4 Peace project is an innovative project conceived by CEWARN with the support of USAID/EA to exploit ICTs for timely transmission of early warning information on violent conflicts to decision makers of IGAD Member States for timely response.

Research commissioned by CEWARN and USAID/EA in early 2000's noted that the conflict-prone areas in the Karamoja cluster and other CEWARN areas of operation had very poor communications infrastructure. In all the four countries in the Karamoja Cluster in particular, there was no telecommunications coverage including Turkana areas in Kenya, Karamoja areas in Uganda, Southern regions of Sudan and Ethiopia.

Without telecommunications, the only means available to CEWARN's Field Monitors to report on situations of potential or actual conflicts was to walk or hike a ride to areas with communications coverage in order to transmit the information. The research also showed that some hotspots were up to 400 km away from telecommunication coverage. Thus, early warning information would take days or even months before assistance was available. When the assistance came, it would be too late – lives were needlessly lost, property destroyed and communities and families

dislocated. It was then noted that ICTs could help by instantly delivering information from the hotspot to the relevant offices for intervention. This is how ICT4Peace was born.

Although a number of ICT options were considered for use by CEWARN, HF radios were chosen as the most sustainable solution for reasons including mobility and sustainability. Accordingly, through this project, CEWARN provides HF radios and high gain antennae phones to local peace structures in 'hot spots' (conflict-prone areas).

The project is currently at a pilot phase and being rolled out in the Karamoja Cluster that covers the cross-border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda.

### **To what extent, in your view is the significance of ICT in conflict Prevention/ mitigation efforts?**

In all CEWARN areas of operation in the sub-region, the road infrastructure is very poor. Other telecommunications infrastructures are also weak or non-existent which makes timely reporting of impending conflict nearly impossible. ICTs thus present a great potential for timely communication of early warning information.

That being said, it is also very important to address the root causes or motivations for these conflicts. In this regard, another form of ICT i.e use of community radios has been conceived by CEWARN. In the context of CEWARN's current focus on cross-border pastoral and related conflicts, community radios are considered as practical solutions in order to engage communities in long term dialogue with the aim of changing deep-rooted cultural beliefs and attitudes that contribute to the current cycle of conflict. These dialogues could also help communities in exploring alternative ways for economic gain and prestige other than cattle rustling.

### **What is the status of the project? What are the future plans?**

ICT4Peace project is a combination of technology and community empowerment. Thus, its full implementation is an evolutionary process. At present, the HF radios are operational in Kenya and Uganda. CEWARN expects to launch the HF radio component in Ethiopia and Sudan before the end ... *(contd. on p. 4)*

*(Contd from P. 3 – Information communication Technology for Conflict Prevention)*... of September 2010. Like I mentioned earlier, In addition to the HF radios, a study on the opportunity of community radio for long-term peace building will be completed shortly. Once the project is fully functional in the Karamoja Cluster, there is a plan to expand to other CEWARN's areas of operations.

**Have there been any success stories in countries where the project was launched? What are the challenges?**

In the short time that the ICT4Peace project is operational, it has clearly demonstrated that rapid information is the cornerstone for success in conflict prevention and mitigation, which is the mission of CEWARN. With the system, Field Monitors are empowered to move information faster while the national Conflict Early Warning and Response Units (CEWERU's) and District Peace Committees are able to respond rapidly.

Numerous success stories of effective response interventions based on timely information received through the radios to mitigate potential conflict in Uganda have been reported. In Kenya, the radios have been used to transmit early warning information on an impending health crisis.

The main challenge so far in implementing the project has been delay – in some instances - of securing licenses and frequencies for operation of the HF radios.

**How can the effort be sustained and expanded to support wider conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts in the IGAD Sub-region?**

Expanding it to the wider IGAD Sub-region is critical and urgent. The ICT 4 peace has demonstrated its value in conflict prevention in parts of Karamoja cluster where it is operational. The lessons from this pilot phase should be used to expand the system to other conflict prone areas in the sub-region. In my view, governments can speed up the process of utilization of ICTs for conflict prevention and peacebuilding through a variety of measures including encouraging cellular operators to cover hotspot areas and provide frequencies to communities for HF operation free of charge.

CEWARN, on its part, can facilitate the development of a regional framework on use of ICTs for conflict prevention and peace building that would address

regulatory issues of use of HF radios in cross-border areas. ♦

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### **CEWARN/VRA conduct refresher training on CEWARN Reporter**

CEWARN in collaboration with Virtual Research Associates (VRA) based in USA conducted a two-day training on the CEWARN Reporter to CEWARN staff and CEWARN Country and Assistant Country Coordinators from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda from 30 -31 August at the CEWARN Office in Addis Ababa. The CEWARN reporter is a software tool that serves in the systematic storage and analysis of CEWARN's early warning data.

The training involved reviewing the settings of the CEWARN Reporter in line with the current dynamics of pastoral and related conflicts in the sub-region. The training also touched on quality assurance of early warning data as well as utilization of the software's new visual features including maps and graphs. According to Mr. Doug Bond and Mr. Sean Yeo from Virtual Research Associates (VRA), these tools enable conflict analysts to make compelling presentation of conflict and peace trends in CEWARN's areas of reporting to decision makers. ♦

### **Upcoming events:**

- ❖ **Ethio-Kenya Community Peace Meeting for the Somali Cluster, Yabelo Town, Ethiopia, 15 - 17 September 2010**

*The meeting is aimed at expanding community-led peace initiatives such as the Maikona and Dukana peace accords to cover wider areas in the Somali Cluster.*

- ❖ **Launch of ICT 4 Peace Project in Ethiopia, Jinka Town, Ethiopia, 20 -21 September 2010**

*The event involves the launch of the ICT 4 Peace Project on the Ethiopian-side of the Karamoja Cluster followed by training of representatives of local peace structures on use of HF radios that were provided under the project.*

- ❖ **Follow up Training of Trainers on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (CPMR), 27 - 30 September 2010, Kampala, Uganda**

- ❖ **ICT 4 Peace Dissemination Workshop, 01 - 02 October 2010, Kampala, Uganda**

## July/ August in Pictures



Amb. Fisseha Yimer Advisor of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Centre) delivers an official statement at the regional forum of the mid-term review of the CEWARN Five year Strategy. With him are IGAD Executive Secretary Eng. Mahboub Maalim (left) and The CEWARN Ag. Director Mr. Raymond Kitevu.



Isiolo District of Kenya which is one of CEWARN's areas of operation in the Somali Cluster (an area covering cross-border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia) has set up a district task force.

The task force is a government-community alliance for peace building and control of illicit small arms and light weapons. The Isiolo District Commissioner is the chairman of the task force while the Officer Commanding Police Division of the district serves as a vice- chairman. The CEWARN Field Monitor for Isiolo District Ms. Abdia Mohamud is a Community Contact person.

Other Members include Heads of District Security Committee, ALMRP/UNDP's Armed Violence Reduction Program, Local District Peace Committee (DPC), Women Peace Forum, Community-Based Peace Policing, Peace Net Regional office, Interfaith Society Organization, Pastoralists Women for Health and Education, Waso Peace Caravan and a special group of Reformed warriors and former Armed Dealers-MECAP (Men against Conflict and Poaching.)

Above left: CEWARN Field Monitor for Isiolo District, Ms. Abdia Mohamud Introduces the CEWARN Mechanism during the Launch of the Alliance and facilitates the development of a framework to guide conflict early warning and response activities at the district level.



The IGAD Executive Secretary Eng. Mahboub Maalim (far right) poses for a photo with the CEWERU Head of Djibouti Mr. Abdi Houssein (far left) and other members of the Djiboutian Delegation



Delegates of the Republic of Djibouti discuss recommendations on the mid-term draft report



Delegates of the Republic of Kenya discuss recommendations on the mid-term draft report and CEWARN's activities for 2011