

# **Strategy for Cross-border Security in the Mano River Union**

**(21 October 2013)**

**Limited distribution**

## TABLE OF CONTENT

ACRONYMS .....	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1 Background.....	5
1.2 Normative framework for peace and security in West Africa .....	8
2. CURRENT RESPONSES AND INITIATIVES .....	10
3. THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON THE MRU SECURITY STRATEGY.....	12
4. VISION AND STRATEGY .....	14
4.1. Vision statement .....	14
4.2. Strategy .....	14
4.2.1 Enhancing Security Cooperation for Peace .....	14
4.2.2 Promoting Political and Economic Governance .....	15
4.2.3 Boosting economic opportunities through infrastructural development .....	15
4.2.4 Improving management of natural resources.....	15
4.2.5 Security related interventions aimed at violence management.....	16
4.2.6 Structural measures.....	17
5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS.....	20
5.1. Results Framework.....	20
5.2. Resources and institutional requirements .....	21
5.2.1 Mano River Union Secretariat.....	21
5.2.2 Mano River Union Member States .....	22
5.2.3 Mano River Union citizens and civil society organisations .....	22
5.2.4 Economic Community of West African States .....	23
5.2.5 United Nations entities .....	23
5.3 Sequencing of activities and programmes .....	24
5.4 Management.....	25
5.6 Complementary activities.....	26
5.7 Scope and Limitations.....	26
6. CONCLUSION .....	26
ANNEXES AND TABLES .....	29
MRU Strategic Plan.....	29

MRU Peace and Security Operational Plan .....	29
ECOWAS Protocols relating to Peace and Security .....	29
Legal framework for ECOWAS/MRU programmes in Peace and Security .....	29
Ecowas Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) .....	29
Results Framework for monitoring and reporting to the MRU Peace Council .....	29

## ACRONYMS

<b>AfDB</b>	<b>African Development Bank</b>
<b>AU</b>	<b>African Union</b>
<b>DSG</b>	<b>Deputy Secretary General</b>
<b>ECA</b>	<b>Economic Commission of Africa</b>
<b>ECOWAS</b>	<b>Economic Community of West African States</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>European Union</b>
<b>JBSCBU</b>	<b>Joint Border Security and Confidence Building Unit</b>
<b>MRU</b>	<b>Mano River Union</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non Governmental Organization</b>
<b>SG</b>	<b>Secretary General</b>
<b>UMC</b>	<b>Union Ministerial Council</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>UNDP</b>	<b>United Nations Development Programme</b>
<b>UNFPA</b>	<b>United Nations Fund for Population Activities</b>
<b>UNIDO</b>	<b>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</b>
<b>UNOWA</b>	<b>United Nations Office for West Africa</b>
<b>UTC</b>	<b>Union Technical Commissions</b>
<b>WB</b>	<b>World Bank</b>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

The Mano River Union was set up in 1973 by Liberia and Sierra Leone to promote trade and foster economic cooperation. Guinea (1980) and Côte d'Ivoire (2008) later joined. All four countries have experienced internal conflict and, or, instability for varying periods over the last 25 years. However they now enjoy relative peace after holding elections in the recent past. Their economic political and social systems were significantly eroded during the periods of unrest and are still considered fragile despite the recent peaceful period.

All four countries possess significant natural resources below and above the ground including marine resources in the form of fishery resources and the possibility for oil and gas as well. The exploitation of these resources and the distribution of the gains and costs have contributed to insecurity and inequality that in turn raised tensions and led to instability and human rights violations including sexual and gender based violence. In all four MRU Member States there have been tensions along the borders especially during and immediately after internal conflict. However there is no history of unresolved border claims or of sustained military confrontation. The region has so far avoided of inter-country conflict.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless all four have experienced long periods of insecurity, instability and eventually internal conflict. Of the five UN Peace missions set up in West Africa, three are in the MRU Member States – Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire and the fourth and fifth are in Guinea Bissau and Mali, states bordering the MRU.

It is reported that the International Chamber of Commerce's Commercial Crime Services has identified the Conakry coast as piracy prone. The explanations for this is similar to the cases for terrorism and drug trafficking; poverty in the coastal border areas, exclusion, inability of the state to provide basic social services to unemployed youths, or to provide personal security in an environment where the rule of law is absent; long and porous borders without state presence; easily accessible arms, etc.

Furthermore, the porosity of their borders has in the past, facilitated the spill over of instability into the neighbouring member states. In particular the trafficking of small arms fuel instability, heighten tensions and provoke conflict. Furthermore, the isolated and impoverished conditions in the border zones created fertile conditions for other illicit activities such as smuggling; drugs, natural resources and even humans. However the same porosity of the borders presents an opportunity for innovative action. An example is where unifying border communities can be a force for preventing violence through early warning and local control.

---

<sup>1</sup>There have been tensions between Sierra Leone and Guinea over the occupation of Yenga by Guinean troops since 1998. Guinea had occupied Yenga, situated in Kailahun district near the point where the borders of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia meet, since 1998. Guinean troops moved into the village to support Sierra Leone government forces in their civil war against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement and then remained there. In January 2013 too, Guinea occupied the Ivorian village of Kpeaba but this was eventually settled peacefully.

The inter-linkages among the various threats as well as the potential trade-offs between options for tackling these threats, all point to the need for a framework within which all activities can be planned and coordinated. This framework is the Comprehensive Security Strategy<sup>2</sup>. At the core of the Strategy are right holders, especially the border communities, where conflicts originate or are often nurtured. The Strategy therefore consists of two sets of plans, measures and programmes; those relating to the prevention and management of violence; and the measures aimed at sustainable development that would neutralise – if not eliminate - the root causes of insecurity and conflict.

The consensus of opinion is that the root causes of the conflict and instability in the sub region are found in poor governance, economic development failures to improve the lives of the people, the extensive natural resources available, impunity, and the sense of marginalisation prevalent among the thousands of unemployed youths in all member states. These conditions cloaked if not encouraged, the illicit trafficking of small arms, humans, drugs, and natural resources. In turn these fuelled and sustained the instability. Under these conditions, money laundering, and human rights abuses thrived. The environment created became quite attractive for organised crime and terrorists operatives. These internal factors were also exacerbated by other external forces that contributed to instability and conflict such as: the presence of arms in neighbouring countries, of drug money to influence unemployed youth, of recruiting agents for terrorist networks, all of which require special measures beyond what the current Peace and Security plan calls for.

A number of independent studies<sup>3</sup> are now raising the alarm over the appearance or persistence of the same conditions that existed before. An example is the Security Council's Special Research report on Emerging Security Threats in West Africa<sup>4</sup>. This report pointed out the continued presence of the former conditions and identified new threats as: drug trafficking and organized crime, terrorism, challenges to democratic governance, and, piracy. General elections should also be added to the list as these are increasingly becoming a source of instability; adding tremendous strain on human security as [identity based] tensions rise prior to elections, followed by equally high tensions as almost always, the results are contested.

Another threat can be traced to the right to development<sup>5</sup> and the related natural resource exploitation. Poor governance of the sector also increased income inequality. A very small percentage of the population associated with mineral exploitation experienced high increases in incomes especially those capturing economic rents, while a large majority living in areas of exploitation were sometimes forcefully displaced, exposed to environmental hazards, and excluded from sharing the full benefits of such exploitation. Where there were high levels of income differences accompanied by widespread perceptions of corruption, localised tensions, crime, and eventual riots were inevitable. The same phenomenon is being observed in some of the member states now.

---

<sup>2</sup>See for example Kathleen Coolbaugh and Cynthia J. Hansel,(2000)

<sup>3</sup>See for example: Conciliation Resources [www.c-r.org](http://www.c-r.org) Working together for peace (2013)

<sup>4</sup>See <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/special-research-report/lookup-c-gIKWLeMTIsG-b-6740225.php> (accessed 30 September 2013)

<sup>5</sup>Article 1 of the UN Declaration on the right to development defines this right as:

“an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized”

See United Nations General Assembly Resolution 41/128 ‘Declaration on the Right to Development’ <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r128.htm> (accessed 21 September 2013).

Finally the demographic explosion experienced over the last twenty years has left the sub-region with a youth bulge and several thousand entering the job market. There was then and even more so now, the twin problem of youth unemployment and meeting the high expectations among idle young people, many of whom are now veterans of the conflict, or graduates with no clear perspectives of their future. These conditions can nurture violent radicalism, extremism and intolerance.

Cognizant of these threats and the prevailing situation, the leaders of member states have responded robustly at the MRU level, by taking measures to align all activities behind the sustenance of peace and maintaining stability and security in the Union<sup>6</sup> (See annexes) are the Implementation Plans for the other three Pillars constituting the MRU Strategic Plan). In this regard, the landmark action of the Union was the signing of the 15th Protocol in Guinea on 8 May 2000, reviewed in Nov 2011, and endorsed by Heads of State 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012. This Protocol prescribed a different approach to sub-regional cooperation in matters relating to Defence, Security, Internal and Foreign Affairs, by taking into account considerations that indirectly influence instability<sup>7</sup>. The following is an extract of the objectives of the Protocol:

- Promote goodwill, neighbourliness and cooperation among members in contributing to the maintenance of peace, security and stability within the Member States of the Union and mindful of the need for the establishment of a framework;
- Create an effective mechanism to monitor and ensure the security of common borders with the aim of preventing, controlling, discouraging, forestalling and averting security related problems in the border region.

The implementation of the Protocol commenced in 2012 and has progressed with very encouraging results so far; details are provided below.

In the MRU's Strategic Plan although Peace and Security is a Pillar by itself, the other two operational Pillars contain programmes and projects that are oriented toward dealing with the root causes of instability and conflict from a regional perspective. In particular, natural resource management, youth employment, up-holding human rights, and gender equity, and above all infrastructure development in the form of roads and energy to open up isolated areas that are vulnerable to illegal activities or that could nurture exclusion, and also to allow access to basic services for the population. Superimposed on this is the decision to adopt Growth Triangles as a model for implementing the various programmes for economic cooperation. Thus while Joint Border units open up the space for tackling instability and insecurity issues directly, the other Pillars of the Strategic Plan are expected to concentrate their respective development programmes in the same geographic areas. Key among these is roads and energy to improve access to these border zones and to the respective countries.

It is against this background that the June 2013 Summit in Monrovia assigned priority to the construction of a number of roads and energy projects within the sub-region.

---

<sup>6</sup>See Annexes H-1, -2, and -3. the Implementation Plans for the other three Pillars of the MRU Strategic Plan

<sup>7</sup> One thing the 15<sup>th</sup> Protocol does and that is not highlighted is providing the MRU with an institutional framework to address peace and security issues: Joint Security Committee, Technical Committee, and the Joint Border Security and Confidence-Building Units.

At the 21st Ordinary Session of the MRU Summit of Heads of State and Government held on 15 June 2012 in Conakry, Guinea, member-states adopted the MRU Operational Plan on Peace and Security. This followed Security Council resolutions 2000 (2011), 2062 (2012) and 2066 (2012) encouraged ECOWAS and the MRU to develop, with the support of UNOWA, a sub-regional strategy to address the threat of cross-border movements of armed groups and weapons as well as illicit trafficking, with the assistance of UNCT, UNMIL, UNIPSIL and the UNCT in Guinea. The draft strategy takes due cognizance of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Architecture and the four key ECOWAS documents in this domain, namely the Protocol related to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security; the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; the Conflict Prevention Framework; and the Protocol on Free Movement as well as the MRU 15th Protocol on Peace and Security (revised).

## **1.2 Normative framework for peace and security in West Africa**

1. The MRU already has a Strategic Plan for pursuing the multiple objectives of the organisation for the coming ten years. The Plan consists of four Pillars, one of which is for Peace and Security. The approach adopted for formulating the comprehensive strategy for trans-border peace and security in the Mano River Union (CSTPS) is to identify and examine the responses to past, current and emerging threats, and present a coherent framework for planned actions, inter-linkages among the Pillars, and for coordination among the UN, ECOWAS and MRU within their current policies and legal frameworks. To this end the different types of threats and implications for designing solutions are analysed with a view to determining the conditions for, and risks against, success as well as the respective roles of the various players. Finally the Strategy draws attention to the need for special measures to address MRU's external borders.
2. Over the years the ECOWAS has adopted a series of Protocols, decisions, (listed below) that sets the policy and legal framework for activities aimed at promoting peace through regional collaboration.
  - a. *The ECOWAS Treaty (28th May 1975)*, that set out the principles of cooperation, mutual assistance and non-aggression has provided the ethos for organizational behavior within the Community and with external partners.
  - b. *ECOWAS adopted the Protocol on Non-Aggression (1978)* and the related Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defense (1981). Building on these foundation documents, the Community has adopted groundbreaking instruments in response to the demands for conflict prevention, resolution and peace building.
  - c. *The Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment (1979)* with its associated supplements sets out the principles, definitions, criteria, obligations and codes of movement and settlement, as well as citizenship within the Community. It sets out to create a borderless region with a common community citizenship of equal rights.
  - d. *The Declaration of Political Principles (1981)* reaffirmed the commitment of ECOWAS Member States to guarantee fundamental human rights, individual freedoms, the rule of law, and responsive and responsible governance to their citizens.



- e. *The Revised Treaty of ECOWAS (24th July, 1993)* conferred the status of supra-nationality on ECOWAS. Paragraph 2 of article 58 of the Revised Treaty on Regional Security ‘commits Member States to cooperate with the Community for the purposes of reinforcing the appropriate mechanisms to ensure the timely prevention and resolution of inter and intra-state conflicts’. Concerns over security played a large role in the adoption of the Revised Treaty, and ECOMOG had demonstrated the importance of military economies of scale through regional cooperation. Hence the importance of article 58 which urges member-states to establish and strengthen collective security mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution.
- f. *The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security (10 December 1999)* constitutes the most comprehensive normative framework for confronting the threats to peace and security in the region on a more permanent basis by boosting the conflict prevention capabilities of ECOWAS to pre-empt potential outbreak of violence, resolve conflicts when they occur and to engage more effectively in post-conflict reconstruction in places, where peace has been restored. The Mechanism establishes inextricable links between the primordial raison-d’être of the Community, i.e. the economic and social development of the peoples, and the security of the peoples and Member States [Article 2(a)]; and tasks ECOWAS Member States with the responsibility to manage and resolve internal and inter-State conflicts [Article 3(a)], as well as manage humanitarian, natural and environmental crises.
- g. *The Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (21 December, 2001)* was adopted to reinforce the Declaration of Political Principles and the Mechanism. It sets out the constitutional convergence criteria to be fulfilled by Community members based on the principles of good governance – respect for the rule of law, the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, the promotion of non-partisan and responsible press and the democratic control of the armed forces. It also commits Member States to ensure poverty alleviation, uphold, defend and promote international norms regarding basic human rights, including the rights of minorities, children, youth and women. The Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance also advocates for the strict adherence to constitutional norms in electoral practices that reject unconstitutional accession to or maintenance of power and sets the parameters for the conduct of peaceful and credible elections that are free, fair and transparent.
- h. *The Directive C1 DIR 3/05/09 on the harmonization of Guiding Principles and Policies in the Mining Sector adopted at the Sixty Second Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, encouraging the harmonization of mining policies.*

3. **The ECOWAS Conflicts Prevention Framework (ECPF)**<sup>8</sup> was enacted by Regulation MSC/REG.1/01/08 of the Mediation and Security Council of ECOWAS on the 16th of January. The Protocols informing the ECPF include the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression, the 1981 Protocol on Mutual Assistance and Defence, the 1999 mechanism and its 2001 Supplementary Protocol. At the international level, the ECPF has been informed by the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security

---

<sup>8</sup>Regulation MSC/REG.1/01/08 - The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework

Council of the African Union, adopted in July 2002. The ECPF is aimed to address prevention and peace building challenges in West Africa. According to its paragraph 18, conflict prevention is defined as “activities designed to reduce tensions and prevent the outbreak, escalation, spread or recurrence of violence. Conflict prevention strategies may distinguish between operational prevention (measures applicable in the face of imminent crisis) and structural prevention (measures to ensure that crises do not arise in the first place or, if they do, that they do not re-occur)” (Section IV, article 18). The ECPF does function as an operational tool for the implementation of ECOWAS protocols and mechanisms on peace and security. It also seeks to mainstream conflict prevention into ECOWAS’ policies and programmes, using the existing resources such as the Departments of the Commission (especially the Department for Political Affairs, Peace and Security), the early warning system, the Council of the Wise.

## **2. CURRENT RESPONSES AND INITIATIVES**

Currently, the direct responses to the threats to peace (prevention and management of violence) are contained in the Peace and Security Pillar. The programmes and projects envisaged are at an advanced stage of development using a fully participative process with ownership by the key stakeholders involved. As part of the framework for cooperation between UNOWA, and the MRU meetings of the key stakeholders in the departments and institutions concerned have been organised. These relatively low-cost meetings produced projects that relate to, and are identified with national interests but that are best solved through a sub-regional cooperation. There is currently an operational plan for this Pillar, containing 12 areas of interventions. These are:

1. Joint border security
2. Free movement of goods and services
3. Anti-trafficking and elimination of proliferation of light weapons
4. Programme against narcotics and drug trafficking
5. Surveillance of maritime and air spaces
6. Organised trans-border crime
7. Fight against terrorism
8. Exchange and sharing information on intelligence
9. Programme against unauthorised settlements and activities in the Mano River Basin
10. Reinforce cooperation among security and defence forces
11. Programme against destabilisation of member states
12. Guarantee human rights for all

The process adopted for formulating the Operational Plan was participatory and empowering. The key officials responsible for the specific areas at the national level were brought together by the Secretariat with the help of the UNOWA to agree on the scope and nature of the various interventions in the Plan.

In the case of the Joint Border Security and Confidence Building units, 12 have been set up so far. The units provide a forum and opportunity for dialogue between the tribes in neighbouring areas that are otherwise divided by the artificial state boundary. At the same time regular exchanges among the local communities present monitoring, reporting and overall, an early warning system that is more personal and more detailed and accurate than usual. Similarly the impediments to trade in the form of mobile checkpoints or mandatory purchase of forms are identifiable at source, and can therefore be brought to the attention of higher level authorities. All of these together endow the authorities with greater capacity to control smuggling and trafficking.

Although they have been set up less than a year ago, the JBSCBUs seem to offer much prospects for promoting peace, ensuring security and at the same time enhancing economic development in otherwise secluded border areas. However there are some challenges to be addressed if they are to be effective and sustainable. There are also risks to be mitigated, planned for and managed as part of the Strategy.<sup>9</sup> The following are key:

- Overall responsibility for the Units. At this stage of their creation, the MRU is responsible for arranging the meetings – convocation, funding, and taking up the demands and recommendations to the national level. With just 12 units set up, all located two to three days journey away, the Secretariat will not be able to continue supervision or guidance regularly. A mechanism for the transfer to national levels must be developed as part of the Operational Plan urgently.
- Funding. Currently the running costs are low – logistics for travel from neighbouring areas to the site of the meeting, minor administrative costs etc. This is amounting to an average of \$500 per meeting. The next task is to set up a proper budget and include it on equal shares to each member state for inclusion in the normal budget of the Ministries of Local Government or Finance as appropriate.
- Advocacy and mentoring. The phenomenon of the JBSCBU is new. However there are many actors genuinely supporting community level initiatives but with different agendas. It is important that in the early stages these units are not held captive by other support initiatives to the point where the original aims become blurred or even abandoned. MRU Secretariat must therefore maintain links with them. At the same time the ECOWAS Community Development Programme, and the Directorate of Free Movement should play an active role in coordinating support from NGOs such as the West African Civil Society Forum, the AU Border Programme, or other international partners. The essential consideration apart from capacity development is to maintain the focus of the Units.

As regards the Joint Peace and Security Committee, several meetings have been held since 2011 and plans are afoot to move to the next phase of implementation of programmes.

---

<sup>9</sup> With effective arrangements or procedures set up for reporting on any relevant security, socioeconomic, etc., developments at border areas, as well as mechanisms for reporting on issues raised during JBSCBUs meetings and following up on responses to be decided and monitoring their implementation.

Finally plans are underway to set up a Unit in the Secretariat that will coordinate the P & S activities within the secretariat as mandated by the Summit and stipulated in the 15<sup>th</sup> Protocol.

As regards the other Pillars, the Secretariat is in the process of formulating projects and programmes for the areas approved by the Summit. In this regard the Growth Triangles should provide the setting and define the parameters for the other development activities that would complement the JBSCBUs. The World Bank is developing proposals on Growth Poles that could complement this initiative at the national level. What is now required is for concrete proposals and plans to be drawn up for consideration by the member states.

Finally, a number of agencies such as The African Development Bank is finalising an Initiative for supporting the Infrastructure plans of Pillar 3, in particular relating to roads, power and information technology.

### **3. THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON THE MRU SECURITY STRATEGY**

A High Level Meeting on security strategy for the Mano River Union took place in Dakar on 29 June 2013. The meeting reviewed peace and security challenges in the Mano River sub-region and the request contained in Resolutions 2000 (2011), 2062 (2012) and 2066 (2012) of the United Nations Security Council. These resolutions, adopted in the wake of the Ivorian crisis, encouraged the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union (MRU) to develop a sub-regional strategy to address the threat of cross-border movements of armed groups and weapons as well as illicit trafficking, with the support of UNOWA in close cooperation with UNOCI and UNMIL, UNIPSIL and the UNCT in Guinea.

The High Level Meeting, which took place under the co-chairmanship of Said Djinnit, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and Head of UNOWA, Kadré Ouédraogo, President of the ECOWAS Commission and Amb. Hadja Dr. KABA Saran Daraba, Secretary General of MRU; and brought together government representatives at the Ministerial level and civil society organizations from the four Member States of the Mano River Union (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). The meeting also attracted the participation of the African Union, the United Nations, further represented by UNOWA, UNIPSIL, UNMIL, UNOCI and the funds and programmes in the region, the Resident Coordinator in Guinea and the chairs of the Country-Specific Configurations of the Peace Building Commission, as well as invited development partners, including the World Bank and the European Union.

The High Level Meeting took note of on-going initiatives and measures by the countries of the MRU, including in particular restructuring and enhancing the security sector, the proper management frameworks for land and other natural resources and the promotion of trans-border cooperation. It also took note of the invaluable support and work that UN missions, offices and agencies are providing towards the consolidation of peace and stability within the MRU. It further took note of the on-going and planned peace building and infrastructure development initiatives of ECOWAS in the MRU. The High Level Meeting acknowledged the relevance of the Security Council's request in view of the persistent security challenges in the Mano River Union. The participants acknowledged that the recurring security threats at the common borders within the Mano River Union, demand recourse to all existing steps and mechanisms both bilateral and multilateral towards the development and implementation of a common strategy for collective security.

The Meeting underscored the need for member states to enhance their institutional capacity and to assume full responsibility for human security. In this regard, the meeting agreed that necessary steps should be taken to develop and adopt a comprehensive security strategy for the MRU. The Meeting acknowledged the important role of women and civil society organizations in this process at local, national and sub-regional levels, and urged that they be actively involved in the development of the MRU Security Strategy. The Meeting agreed that the strategy should be based on a comprehensive approach and should take into account the nexus between security and development. In this regard, the Meeting identified the fundamental elements for the strategy. These include:

- a. good governance, including enhancement of human rights and the rule of law; transparency and accountability; political dialogue and national reconciliation; and free and fair electoral processes;
- b. effective intelligence gathering and information-sharing and cooperation amongst member states;
- c. cross-border cooperation in the fight against arms, human and illicit drug trafficking, terrorism and money laundering;
- d. addressing issues related to poverty, youth unemployment and vulnerable groups through the creation of socio-economic opportunities including the empowerment of women and adequate education;
- e. promotion of sub regional approaches toward strengthening the security and justice sectors and the reinforcement of judicial and law enforcement cooperation in combating impunity;
- f. development of trans-regional infrastructure in energy, transportation and communication as well as effective immigration and customs control posts;
- g. strengthening and streamlining the role of the private sector and civil society organizations, including women's groups and youth, in peace building;
- h. the promotion of traditional methods of conflict resolution;
- i. effective, transparent and sustainable management and exploitation of natural resources for the benefit of the people.
- j. addressing issues related to sexual and gender-based violence, as well as health-related problems of women and youth.

The High Level Meeting agreed that the Mano River Union-led Security Strategy will aim at addressing cross-border threats to peace and stability. It will offer a common vision and directions towards shared objectives, and will incorporate corresponding areas of intervention articulated in the MRU Operational Plan for Peace and Security as adopted by the MRU Summit of Heads of State on 15 June 2012 in Conakry, Guinea. It will also take due cognizance of the AU Peace and Security Architecture and the four key ECOWAS documents in this domain, namely the Protocol related to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security; the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; the Conflict Prevention Framework; and the Protocol on Free Movement as well as the MRU 15<sup>th</sup> Protocol on Peace and Security (revised).

The High Level Meeting decided to establish a Steering Committee composed of MRU, ECOWAS and the UN to spearhead the development of the Security Strategy. The Steering Committee will meet monthly and will conclude its work by the end of 2013. A validation mechanism including international partners will be established. It will meet quarterly to review the work of the Steering Committee. International partners expressed their commitment to support the work of the Steering Committee.

## **4. VISION AND STRATEGY**

### ***4.1. Vision statement***

The vision of the Mano River Union is the same as adopted in 2007 by the Summit of Heads of States and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as follows:

“...a borderless, peaceful, prosperous and cohesive [West African] region, built on good governance and where people have the capacity to access and harness its enormous resources through the creation of opportunities for sustainable development and environmental preservation.”

This vision guides the operations of the MRU and the MRU Strategic Plan adopted by its Heads of States in 2012 for a period of 10 years.

### ***4.2. Strategy***

The MRU Security Strategy therefore sketches *how* this global vision is to be transformed to concrete plans and actions at the country and community levels, ensuring coherence and generating synergy between on the one hand short and long term plans and programmes for peace and stability, and on the other, those for sustainable development. Similarly, providing coherence among sub-regional, regional and continental initiatives. The Strategy has been developed taking into account the experience and expertise residing in ECOWAS for direct security related issues as well as the existence of the operational plan of the Peace and Security Pillar of the MRU Strategic plan. Hence the issues related to security matters have not been repeated here. Rather the Strategy focuses on the inter-linkages between the Peace Pillar and other Pillars including allowing space for improvements to ensure the completeness of the former.

The Strategy is further guided by the ‘Outcome document’ of the High Level Meeting on the MRU Security Strategy and emphasizes the nexus between security and development. As such, it includes a set of elements grouped, purely for the sake of cohesion into the following four clusters of programmes and measures that address the causes of insecurity listed above:

#### **4.2.1 Enhancing Security Cooperation for Peace**

This is primarily but not exclusively the contents of the MRU Pillar for Peace and Security such as:

- effective intelligence gathering and information-sharing and cooperation amongst member states including early warning;

- enhanced cooperation on reforms of the security sectors and on demobilization, disarmaments demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.
- cross-border cooperation in the fight against arms, human and illicit drug trafficking, terrorism and money laundering;

#### **4.2.2 Promoting Political and Economic Governance**

This entails using existing frameworks to:

- improve good governance, including enhancement of human rights and the rule of law; transparency and accountability; political dialogue and national reconciliation; and free, fair and peaceful electoral processes;
- promote sub-regional approaches toward strengthening the security and justice sectors and the reinforcement of judicial and law enforcement cooperation in combating impunity – while noting the differences in legal systems among member states;
- promote traditional methods of conflict resolution;
- address sexual and gender-based violence, as well as health-related problems of women and youth.
- addressing issues related to poverty, youth unemployment and vulnerable groups through the creation of socio-economic opportunities including the empowerment of women and adequate education;

#### **4.2.3 Boosting economic opportunities through infrastructural development**

Creating opportunities for wealth generation is at the root of achieving sustainable peace and development. In this context, two core interventions will be critical:

- the development of trans-regional infrastructure in energy, transportation and communication as well as effective immigration and customs control posts through the application of the Growth Triangles;
- strengthening and streamlining the role of the private sector and civil society organizations, including women’s groups and youth, in peace building;

#### **4.2.4 Improving management of natural resources**

The establishment of effective, transparent, sustainable management and exploitation of natural resources for the benefit of the people. Here ECOWAS has launched two key initiatives related to the extractive sector and management of natural resources. The Strategy will build on these and also promote joint management of resources and related support services.

These clusters do not represent rigid and exclusive compartments. They are inter-related, some elements are therefore present in more than one clusters. In addition, it is worth noting that the MRU will be using Growth Triangles<sup>10</sup> as a modality for promoting regional cooperation, and three areas covering geographic zones have been identified.

To facilitate implementation activities are regrouped into two main components; the first is the set of measures, programmes and activities that are mainly security related (violence prevention and management); and the second component comprises all the plans, policies and programmes targeting the root causes of conflict i.e. structural issues. The two are inextricably linked, and must be addressed in tandem, since security related interventions alone are not a panacea to conflict.

Further, the Strategy builds on existing ECOWAS and MRU programmes for security and stability. It is thus anchored in the heart of the sub-regional plans and programs for economic collaboration, tying its success and setting up linkages with what would otherwise be completely unrelated initiatives for regional cooperation and economic development.

### **4.3 Analytical Framework for the Strategy.**

For the purposes of analyses and taking into account the expertise and programmes already developed, the Strategy revolves around two sets of interventions; those related to the prevention and management of violence, and structural measures addressing the long term causes of insecurity.

#### **4.3.1 Security related interventions aimed at violence prevention and management<sup>11</sup>**

The first component; security related interventions to prevent and manage violence including attention to gender issues, comprise the entire panoply of actions aimed at enforcing peace when there is open conflict, and address both conflict avoidance and post-conflict activities. Here the UN Missions and ECOWAS play a leadership role in preventive diplomacy, in peace support operations, DDR, peace processes and reconciliation activities. In addition there are also active MRU programmes in this component of the Strategy, aimed at reducing tensions and promoting dialogue. Civil society groups such as MARWOPNET sponsored by the MRU now regularly consult with key persons from opposing political parties prior to general elections. The UN through the UN Office for West Africa, the Department of Political Affairs, and the Security Council operate in the political realm to prevent and resolve conflict<sup>12</sup>. A mapping of the known and emerging threats against the current intervention areas of the Peace and Security Pillar reveals that two areas are currently inadequately covered. These are the threats from maritime and natural resources management. After consultations with the relevant players in member states, programme proposals in these two areas should be formulated to be part of the comprehensive Strategy.

---

<sup>10</sup> Growth Triangles have worked successfully in border zones in South and East Asia and is also now being applied in Southern Africa with success. It consists of a geographically contiguous area usually straddling three countries where the private sector is encouraged to set up operations tapping the complementarity of the area. Three areas have been identified in the MRU Strategic Plan for development.

<sup>11</sup> The term 'violence management' is borrowed from ECOWAS policies in particular the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework to explain the underpinning purpose of its work/intervention in peace and security matters affecting west Africa.

<sup>12</sup>See chap 6 for details



### 4.3.2 Structural measures<sup>13</sup>

Turning to the second component comprising measures of a structural nature for sustaining peace and security, the thrust is to direct measures, plans and programmes that will neutralise if not eliminate, the reasons and conditions that eventually lead to tensions, conflict and instability in the border zones. Of course many of such measures must aim at enhancing the capacities and capabilities of the duty bearers to fulfil their obligations. They must also promote participation of the rights holders, the citizens of the Mano River Union, in decision-making and processes affecting their human security. Such measures finally require long periods for the effect to appear, and some call for action outside the border zones.

At the core of the Strategy are the Joint Border Security and Confidence Building Units (JBSCBUs) described in the preceding chapter. While it is acknowledged that the causes of conflict are diverse and complex, the JBSCBUs is the step towards rendering the environment within which conflicts have been nurtured if not created, inhospitable, while at the same time promoting the vision of a “borderless, cohesive and prosperous (West Africa) region...”

It is noted that, the challenges for peace and security identified in the MRU Strategic Plan include; the centralisation of power, ineffective economic laws in an environment of poverty, unemployment and widespread corruption. What follows are summaries of the Strategy’s response to these challenges.

- Governance challenges and centralisation. Experience elsewhere confirm that there is greater likelihood for success when these challenges are addressed in a participatory fashion at the community level where personal knowledge and acquaintances have a greater influence on behaviour than at the national level. Empowering civil society and the community at large to identify and address local problems is a step towards reducing centralisation.
- In the absence of state authority and or the delivery of basic public services such as security or the rule of law, and social amenities like water supply, health and education, the communities tend to revert to the traditional social systems with pragmatic mechanisms to maintain social order. Nevertheless the resulting hybrid systems have not been very effective in creating progressive societies, nor have they been integrated fully into one or the other of the member states straddled by these areas<sup>14</sup>. The creation of JBSCBUs and the accompanying programmes of other MRU Pillars, address these issues by introducing formality and modern structures to the zone. In turn this opens up space for enforcing legal and other systems of modern social organisation and state authority.
- The problems of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity etc. are structural and to be addressed partly through specific programmes identified in the two other Pillars listed above that reinforce and complement national programmes. It is essential that all such plans and programmes concentrate on or go through the border zones. In particular the inter-country roads planned would use labour from these Units and so improve the operation of the local economy, while facilitating the concentration of activities in specific areas in the Growth Triangles being pursued by member states.

---

<sup>13</sup> The ‘structural measures’ is also taken from ECPF for the same reason as in note 9 supra.

<sup>14</sup> Indeed, some observers have described the zones as separate states

- In the same vein, the illicit exploitation of natural resources will be relatively easy to monitor and contain when these areas become more open, and communities exchange information routinely.
- Border Security and Confidence Building Units. 12 have been set up so far. The units provide a forum and opportunity for dialogue, early warning system that is more personal, identification of impediments to trade, as well as greater capacity to control smuggling and trafficking. So far the JBSCU s offer much prospects for promoting peace, ensuring security and at the same time enhancing economic development in otherwise secluded border areas.

The current programmes and plans as shown in the MRU Strategic plan approach these problems from both the community level and national and sub-regional levels. Thus while JBSCBUs open up the space for addressing directly, local instability and insecurity issues, the other Pillars of the Strategic Plan align and concentrate development programmes in the same areas. To this end the SP will apply the Growth Triangle approach that has been successful in SE and NE Asia and is now practised in the Zambia/Mozambique and Malawi with promising signs of success<sup>15</sup>. The GT provides a unique opportunity to avoid many of the past errors listed earlier, by facilitating joint management of such resources. The results would be far-ranging: from improving negotiating positions vis-à-vis foreign investors, to more efficient mine operations benefiting from scale, and leveraging associated facilities for infrastructure to attract private investment in the sub region. Exploiting these opportunities however require careful planning and innovative programmes. The Strategy will emphasize the timing, of each measure or action in each Cluster, their linkages, and the related ancillary action required to guarantee success. In short as part of the formulation of the other Strategic Plan's Pillars, there will be a description of sequencing expected, in relation to other programmes and any required policy and other changes needed for approval at the Heads of State level.

In sum the Strategy once adopted will require a number of follow up actions as a condition precedent for the implementation of the listed programmes and projects, including identification of additional measures to ensure success.

#### **4.4 Sequencing of activities and programmes**

The Strategic Plan of the MRU lists all the programmes and actions to be implemented for all the Pillars. The Strategy will now help to design the links among the programmes, the measures to generate synergy, and the ideal timing for each activity planned. The exercise may also reveal the need for additional activities that could act as catalysts for effective operationalization of the Strategy.

The MRU is in the process of developing Operational Plans for the programmes identified in the four Pillars of the Strategic Plan<sup>16</sup>. The Plan for the Peace Pillar has already been completed.

The three objectives in the SP for Peace and Security are: develop a security architecture, formulate and implement joint border security and set up systems for peaceful elections.

---

<sup>15</sup> The 'Triangle' usually covers a geographic zone that spans two or more contiguous border areas. The private sector is then allowed to operate freely and exploit the complementarities found within the region, and that in turn enhances the competitiveness of the products from the Triangle.

<sup>16</sup> Adopted on 24 April 2012 at the Conakry Summit of Heads of States.

For the Pillar on Economic Development and Regional Integration, objectives are not listed but areas of attention given are: food security, forest and water basin management, trade promotion, energy and power, transport infrastructure and telecommunications to support development within a sub-regional framework. The Pillar for Social Development target HIV AIDS, vulnerable groups and improving communication among the Member States.

The objectives of the three Pillars are thus diverse and unless developed within a coherent framework with timelines and inter-relationships that are well defined, could lead to confusion and even contradictory action. At least it would not exploit all the opportunities for synergy and efficiency. It is important therefore that these be tied to national medium and longer-term objectives that would guide current action and guard against the risk of the exercise having little or no influence on the larger development and governance policies and programmes at the national level.

The availability of resources may alter the actual timing of implementation. Nevertheless, not specifying the sequence of actions and the appropriate timing for the various plans could result in incoherence among projects, with great loss of resources, undermining confidence in the Strategy, all of which could potentially fatally damage the exercise.<sup>17</sup> This lacuna could be addressed through a series of one- day workshops<sup>18</sup> attended by appropriate government authorities of the member states.<sup>19</sup>

It is prudent to use the current 15 units as the pilots and to ensure that all the ancillary arrangements are all in place for them to operate effectively.

In summary, the sequence of next steps should run as follows:

1. Completion and adoption of the current Strategy by the organs of the MRU.
2. Parallel to this process, the restructuring exercise, in particular the design of the peace and security unit, should take into account the anticipated volume and complexity of the responsibility of the Unit especially at this stage in the setting up of the Peace and Security architecture corresponding to the Comprehensive Strategy.<sup>20</sup>
3. Development of the staffing profile and job description as well as the activities of the peace and security unit to match the above.

---

<sup>17</sup> See study on the GT for S China... The South China Triangle lost over a decade and considerable resources because of incoherent strategy and inappropriate implementation arrangements.

<sup>18</sup> This method of operation has proven to be very effective so far for reaching quick consensus on technical issues.

<sup>19</sup> At the core of the strategy is the Joint Border Units. They are already being set up, but without the conditions for sustaining them, managing them and the plans for incorporating them into the national frameworks having been fully designed. The Peace Unit is expected to manage them together with the entire Pillar. However, this Unit is only now being set up and the initial thoughts on how it would operate do not seem to have taken into account the extent of administration and substantive supervision that would be required.

<sup>20</sup> The Secretariat may wish to revisit the roles and responsibilities of officials outside the unit but involved in the implementation of both the security plan and the operational plan.

4. Strengthening and re-profiling of the joint border security and confidence building units to reflect the strategic orientations of the security plan including specific arrangements relating to their operations (financing of activities, how they relate to the MRU Secretariat, member states and who takes the lead on different issues Etc.);
5. Development of model planning matrix and budget for border units during a series of workshop. In the interim, existing units should operate on pilot basis and further units should be structured accordingly.
6. Development of mechanisms for planning, budgeting, resource mobilisation, coordination and evaluation at the level of each MRU member state.
7. Periodic progress reports on the implementation of the Security Strategy and to the MRU Peace and Security Council using a Results Framework – sample attached as Annex 6.
8. Annual review of implementation at MRU Summits of Heads Of States

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS**

### **5.1. Results Framework (Annex 1)**

The Results Framework presents in a tabular form how the Vision – the ultimate result envisaged by the Strategy, is to be achieved through a series of subsidiary results. The subsidiary results are in turn generated by programmes, policy changes and related activities. In the case of the MRU Strategy, the Results Framework displays in tabular form the various programmes and activities that would generate the results that transforms the Vision statement adopted by the Heads of States into reality.

Thus, the ultimate goal of the Strategy is to achieve; “... a borderless, peaceful, prosperous and cohesive [West African] region, built on good governance and where people have the capacity to access and harness its enormous resources through the creation of opportunities for sustainable development and environmental preservation” as taken from the ECOWAS Vision. The following broad results areas are therefore extracted from the Vision:

- *Free movement of people and goods,*
- *Peace,*
- *Prosperity,*
- *an inter-dependent regional economy,*
- *good governance – both political and economic, and*
- *proper management of natural resources.*

The projects and activities required to generate these results cannot be isolated from each other and can therefore be grouped as follows:

1. Enhancing Security (*peace*)
2. Political and Economic Governance (*prosperity*)
3. Economic opportunities and infrastructure (*prosperity, free movement of people and goods, and an interdependent regional economy*)
4. Natural Resource Management (*prosperity*)

It should be pointed out that the Results Framework is different from the Operational plan. The latter is a detailed plan for implementing the projects and programmes that would in turn produce the results expected; while the former represents the end results (outcomes) and how they interact to achieve the Vision. Hence the Results Framework can be used as a tool to monitor the progress of the entire effort of the MRU, towards achieving the vision of the Heads of States and in particular the objective of Peace and Stability.

A task force of one representative from each member state coordinated by the MRU Secretariat should be set up to complete the Results Framework after internal consultations

## **5.2. Resources and institutional requirements for the operationalisation of the Strategy**

This section sets out the conditions, circumstances and implementation arrangements under which the Strategy is likely to succeed and proposes a simple monitoring and reporting system to be set up for reviews at the level of the Summit. The strategy is neither an end to itself, nor to be isolated from the overall purpose of repositioning the Mano River Union to exploit emerging opportunities in, and address threats to, sustainable regional development and to peace and security. The implementation of this security strategy is therefore premised on the twin requirements of adequate resourcing (human, material and finance) on the one hand, and synergy and complementarity with other pillars of the Mano River Union's current strategic plan. In this context, the roles and responsibilities of the institutions responsible must be clearly defined and agreed upon.

### **5.2.1 Mano River Union Secretariat**

Current restructuring of MRU Secretariat must include adequate capacity to implement the Strategy at both the levels of Member States and at the sub-region.

- The Secretary General of the MRU will report to the MRU Joint Security Committee on the Implementation of the Cross-border Peace and Security Strategy while the Chair of the UMC will report to the Chairman of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council (MSC). This report will be shared with the Ministers for discussion and adopted by the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government during its Summit.
- By delegation, the Deputy Secretary General for Peace and Security will assume leadership role for the implementation of the strategy. This includes ensuring facilitation, coordination and support to and reporting on implementation of the Security

Strategy. The Peace and Security Unit in the Secretariat set up, as approved in the revised 15<sup>th</sup> Protocol, will act as the coordinating unit for this strategy within the MRU Secretariat. It will coordinate and facilitate the P & S activities. In carrying out its activities, the P&S Unit will, under the supervision of the DSG for Peace and Security, liaise with other units and departments within the MRU Secretariat, MRU member states, the UN, AU, ECOWAS and relevant civil society organisations within and beyond the Union; it will also prepare regular reports for submission by the SG to the Summit.

- In view of the additional tasks generated by the Strategy, there should be a Needs Assessment for staffing and other requirements and recommendations submitted to the Council of Ministers.

### **5.2.2 Mano River Union Member states**

Ultimately, the responsibility for creating the conditions for peace and security lies with the member state: its government and its people. At the governmental level there must be continued visible political commitment evidenced by behaviour, actions and policies. Government officials must be made aware of the implications of their actions for the long term Peace and Security of the nation. Civil society should be empowered and have their capacity developed to play the critical role of advocacy, expert advice, social mobilisation and watchdogs for a population largely illiterate. Civil society organisations should also set up credible Think Tanks capable of undertaking sound research, analyse and provide alternatives to what may be official programmes that generate long term negative effects on peace and security.

While implementation of this Strategy is by nature a joint venture, each member state of the MRU will be expected to take specific steps. This includes but is not limited to:

- Providing staffing to the Peace and Security Unit of the MRU Secretariat
- Ensuring that plans and programmes of the Strategy are integrated into national coordination, monitoring and reporting mechanisms (e.g. Inter-ministerial committee, focal points within ministries, national office etc....) in line with domestic best practices
- Promoting partnerships with civil society
- Holding of nationwide activities and consultations on the strategy including the use of community radios along the borders.
- Setting up and providing material and financial support to JSBCBUs

Finally, there should be reporting of progress by the MRU Summit to the ECOWAS Summit.

### **5.2.3 Mano River Union citizens and civil society organisations**

The role of civil society organisations, in particular women and youth within towards the consolidation of peace and stability within the Mano River Union suffers no argument. The effective participation MRU citizens at large and civil society organisations in particular represent a major success factor in the implementation of the present strategy. Operating either in complementarity or as networks, civil society organisations will be critical in promoting the values and aspirations of the MRU at community and national levels as well as

across borders. They will be expected to provide expert advice, training, analysis and to undertake public awareness programs, and community-based development projects. They will also monitor and report on successes and shortcomings in the implementation of the strategy.

#### **5.2.4 Economic Community of West African States**

The present strategy is conceived to serve the purpose of enhancing implementation of policies and decisions made at the level of the ECOWAS in the areas of or related to peace and security within the MRU zone. The various plans and programmes of the ECOWAS Commission will therefore be actively engaged, through participation in the development of, and support to, the MRU projects. An example is the Departments such as Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) and the Free Movement Directorate will be directly involved in the JSBCBUs by participating more closely in their activities. Indeed, there is already agreement for the MRU to be an implementing arm of the ECOWAS. Both institutions must now define more precisely how this should be translated in operational terms for more systematic cooperation, and how the ECOWAS Framework for Peace and Security will complement and supplement the MRU Strategy. In addition specific agreements through MOUs will have to be formulated to cover particular grants and programmes, in addition desk-to-desk thematic relationship between the MRU and ECOWAS. Finally, the ECOWAS local representative should be allowed to take part of the programmes launched by the MRU.

#### **5.2.5 United Nations Agencies**

The United Nations Office for West Africa will work closely with UNMIL, UNIPSIL, UNOCI and the UNCT in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as UN entities such as UNDP, OHCHR, UNODC, UNW, UNFPA and UNICEF towards a system-wide support to the implementation of the present MRU Security Strategy. This will include joint planning and action, regular consultations as well as resource mobilisation (both within the UN and with other partners) to support the MRU in the implementation of the Security Strategy as a whole; and in the setting up and operationalization of MRU JSCBUs including through mobilising international political support for border community development projects and Growth Triangle Initiatives. In addition the three Peace Keeping missions could put at the disposal of the MRU capacity building support and technical assistance at the level of projects, and for security sector reform.

Finally the, MRU, ECOWAS and UNOWA will establish tripartite mechanism for regular consultation and review of the implementation of the present Strategy. They will also convene a broader consultative forum with MRU Member States, UN presences in the four countries, the African Union and other partners to review implementation of the present strategy<sup>21</sup>.

#### **5.2.6 Public Private Partnerships**

Promote Private Sector involvement in the implementation of the Strategy.

---

<sup>21</sup> The AU Border Programme, which has a significant expertise and experience in the area of border management, could also prove to be a relevant partner in addressing trans-border issues within the sub-region

### 5.3 Sequencing of activities and programmes

The Strategic Plan of the MRU lists all the programmes and actions to be implemented for all the Pillars. The Strategy will now help to design the links among the programmes, the measures to generate synergy, and the ideal timing for each activity planned. The exercise may also reveal the need for additional activities that could act as catalysts for effective operationalization of the Strategy.

The MRU is in the process of developing Operational Plans for the programmes identified in the four Pillars of the Strategic Plan<sup>22</sup>. The Plan for the Peace Pillar has already been completed.

The three objectives in the SP for Peace and Security are: develop a security architecture, formulate and implement joint border security and set up systems for peaceful elections.

For the second pillar on Economic Development and Regional Integration, objectives are not listed but areas of attention given are: food security, forest and water basin management, trade promotion, energy and power, transport infrastructure and telecommunications to support development within a sub-regional framework. The Pillar for Social Development target aids, vulnerable groups and improving communication among the Member States.

The objectives of the three Pillars are diverse and unless developed within a coherent framework with timelines and inter-relationships that are well defined, could lead to confusion and even contradictory action. At least it would not exploit all the opportunities for synergy and efficiency. Furthermore, these should be tied to national medium and longer term objectives that would guide current action and guard against the risk of the exercise having little or no influence on the larger development and governance policies and programmes.

The availability of resources may alter the actual timing of implementation. Nevertheless, not specifying the sequence of actions and the appropriate timing for the various plans could result in incoherence among projects, with great loss of resources, undermining confidence in the Strategy, all of which could potentially fatally damage the exercise.<sup>23</sup> This lacuna could be addressed through a series of one-day workshops<sup>24</sup> attended by appropriate government authorities of the member states.<sup>25</sup>

It may be prudent to postpone further establishment of the Units until most, if not all the ancillary arrangements are all in place. The current 15 units should be used as the pilots.

In summary, the sequence of next steps should run as follows:

#### 9. Completion and adoption of the current Strategy by the organs of the MRU.

---

<sup>22</sup> Adopted on 24 April 2012 at the Conakry Summit of Heads of States.

<sup>23</sup> See study on the GT for S China... The South China Triangle lost over a decade and considerable resources because of incoherent strategy and inappropriate implementation arrangements.

<sup>24</sup> This method of operation has proven to be very effective so far for reaching quick consensus on technical issues.

<sup>25</sup> At the core of the strategy is the Joint Border Units. They are already being set up, but without the conditions for sustaining them, managing them and the plans for incorporating them into the national frameworks having been fully designed. The Peace Unit is expected to manage them together with the entire Pillar. However, this Unit is only now being set up and the initial thoughts on how it would operate do not seem to have taken into account the extent of administration and substantive supervision that would be required.



10. Parallel to this process, the restructuring exercise, in particular the design of the peace and security unit, should take into account the anticipated volume and complexity of the responsibility of the Unit especially at this stage in the setting up of the Peace and Security architecture corresponding to the Comprehensive Strategy<sup>26</sup>.
11. Development of the staffing profile and job description as well as the activities of the peace and security unit to match the above.
12. Re-profiling of the joint border security and confidence building units to reflect the strategic orientations of the security plan including specific arrangements relating to their operations (how they relate to the MRU Secretariat, member states and who takes the lead on different issues Etc.);
13. Development of model planning matrix and budget for border units during a series of workshop. In the interim, existing units should operate on pilot basis and further units should be structured accordingly.
14. Development of mechanisms for planning, budgeting, resource mobilisation, coordination and evaluation at the level of each MRU member state.
15. Periodic progress reports on the implementation of the Security Strategy and to the MRU Peace and Security Council using a Results Framework – sample attached as Annex 6.
16. Annual review of implementation at MRU Summits of Heads Of States

#### **5.4 Management**

The management system for the programmes must be carefully studied and recommendations made after some initial pilots are tested. The recommendations will take account of the differences in the administrations of the four countries, due in turn to the heritage of different colonial histories when the administrations were first set up.

Again using the JBSCBUs as pilots different approaches could be tested; e.g. the Liberia/Côte d'Ivoire border units may require slight differences from those straddling Guinea/Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The most important consideration under Management at this initial stage is the MRU Secretariat. For the JBCBSUs, opening the space – both literally and figuratively – of these neglected but problematic areas will be management and resource intensive. National authorities will require a transition period of at least 2 – 3 years before complete integration into their respective national systems. During that time the brunt of the burden will be on the MRU Secretariat. Hence rapid reinforcement of the Secretariat including the provision of “surge” capacity will be required.

A number of studies have been undertaken to improve its staffing, organization and methods of operations. There should be a deadline set for full implementation of the recommendations as approved by the Summit.

---

<sup>26</sup> The Secretariat may wish to revisit the roles and responsibilities of officials outside the unit but involved in the implementation of both the security plan and the operational plan.

## 5.6 Complementary activities

The Strategy leaves room for unanticipated actions that may become necessary for the efficient implementation of the programmes envisaged. This is particularly important as the programmes such as the JBSCBUs break new ground and not all ramifications can be planned for at the start.

## 5.7 Scope and Limitations

This Strategy cannot be complete without evaluating how the structures and mechanisms in place can operate at its external border zones with the five non-MRU states. The problem is that although all states are part of the ECOWAS, each has bilateral arrangements with its neighbour, but the non-MRU states are not bound by the MRU Protocols that provide the legal and policy framework for the Strategy. Two options to address the situation are feasible:

- Expansion and continuation of the current Operational Plan to cover external frontiers; in this case a careful analysis of the implications - administrative, political and financial – will be required to assess feasibility. EG assess the cost for expanding the frontiers, and verify the state of readiness of the new border areas for accepting the approach.
- Design a very different and separate strategy with a different Operations Plan. The design of such a plan will have to be influenced by the known potentially destabilizing factors in the neighbouring countries<sup>27</sup>.

In both cases there will have to be extensive consultations required for each of the non-MRU states.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The optimal value of Peace and Security can only be attained when there are assurances of long term sustainable peace and development. Businesses can invest without fear, parents can formulate long term plan for their families, institutions can operate with long term horizons, and the young can be persuaded to invest in the hope for a brighter future. The Strategy must therefore provide solutions for the immediate threats, and at the same time demonstrate how peace and security will be sustained over the long term.

Poor governance and, or failure to uphold fundamental rights and to deliver services to the people inevitably result in the breakdown of the social contract between the citizenry and the rulers. The process leading to the final breakdown is often slow but cumulative until a

---

<sup>27</sup>Briefly these are:

- **Guinea Bissau:** This is on the west of Guinea and experiences problems related to drug traffic as well as the problem of the ex-combatants.
- **Senegal:** Here the problem of the Casamance wishing to secede has been on for decades.
- **Burkina Faso:** Côte d'Ivoire's northern border with Burkina has been a point of tensions for the last decade as they offer the possibility to rebel movements to use the area for launching border strikes into Cote d'Ivoire..
- **Mali:** Although Mali's internal problems are more located in the north, any instability there results in population movement south wards into Guinea accompanied by the usual human and drug-trafficking plus gold smuggling. The increase in gold smuggling also encourages money laundry and terrorist activities.
- **Ghana** lies to the East of Côte d'Ivoire: The experience there is primarily border tensions among the tribes and illegal operators.

flash point triggers the collapse. Educating citizens about their rights and obligations is an important check to reverse the decline where there is a responsive government.

Similarly full disclosure of the operations of government to the population is vital for the management of expectations, and the avoidance of low levels of insecurity. Here national governments will have to take full responsibility for conceiving actions that are consistent with the Strategy.

The MRU sub-region is endowed with extensive and varied natural resources. In addition its geography and location have turned out to be fertile grounds for various forms of illicit activities. The juxtaposition of the above with poverty and weak governance institutions, in the past resulted in the assembly of all the necessary ingredients for permanent instability, insecurity and conflict. In today's interdependent world, such a situation constitutes a threat to global stability and peace. A strategy to tackle the root causes and at the same time confront the immediate threats while redressing the effects of recent and on-going instability is timely. The institutional structures are in place, and the political commitment has put the MRU at the centre, for implementing such a strategy. The Strategy presented is a complex set of inter-related initiatives, plans and measures that would reinforce each other and open up border areas to become growth poles for the sub-region and facilitate its transformation to modern hubs of legitimate activities and sources of livelihoods. The strategy demonstrates that allowing cantankerous problems that may otherwise be insignificant by themselves, to accumulate, results in a multi-dimensional problem that is much more complicated to resolve.

No strategy is perfect, and however well designed it may be, its value is limited unless fully implemented. The likelihood of full implementation is greater because it is anchored in the MRU, possessing the strong political support evident so far, and the acknowledgement of common interests by the member states. Furthermore, the Strategy incorporates some lessons of past failures. In this regard, three lessons are instructive:

- Successful implementation is only possible where strong political resolve at the leadership level is maintained. In turn regular empowerment and sensitization of the population about the overall problem and on the need for informed participation and strategic action will oblige the leadership to maintain the commitment displayed so far and promote a culture of respect for the rule of law and human rights.
- The second is the need to proceed with caution. This suggests almost a modular approach by taking on the least/low cost activities first, while building the momentum for more intensive collaboration. To illustrate, the JBSCBUs could focus on information sharing, dealing with common community problems – information on poaching, safety issues, criminal movements, illicit mining etc.
- The third lesson is the importance of careful sequencing. The comprehensive nature of the Strategy requires that the timing of different activities be determined in advance and respected. The programmes of the Operational Plan and related violence management programmes on the one hand, and the actions from the other Pillars reinforce each other mutually but only if the sequenced correctly. Failure to do so could lead one programme to quickly collapse due to delays from what should be a

mutually supporting programme. To illustrate, top priority must be assigned to key roads linking the communities and opening up certain enclaves in the border zones in order to attract private sector activity.

Successful implementation will lie with the MRU Summit providing consistent directives; the Secretariat in terms of its capacity to lead and coordinate; the national authorities in terms of incorporating the implementation of programmes; the ECOWAS and the AU in terms of maintaining a symbiotic relationship with the Strategy's other activities; and the United Nations through UNOWA in terms of providing overall political, and strategic coverage.

A strategy must be dynamic, possessing the flexibility to incorporate emerging opportunities and revise direction if so indicated. The regular reports to the Summit will be the occasion where changes in direction can be introduced under the guidance of the Presidents

A last remark concerns the cross-border nature of the Strategy. As pointed out earlier, Member States of the MRU are individually small with limited options for rapid, sustained growth and development. Regional cooperation appears to be the option most likely to yield the results desired. However unless the threats to peace and security are contained, development will not be sustainable. The Comprehensive Strategy blends the goals of regional development with those of Peace, Stability and Security.

## **ANNEXES AND TABLES**

*MRU Strategic Plan*

*MRU Peace and Security Operational Plan*

*ECOWAS Protocols relating to Peace and Security*

*Legal framework for ECOWAS/MRU programmes in Peace and Security*

*ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF)*

*Results Framework for monitoring and reporting to the MRU Peace Council*

## REFERENCES

1. The New Deal on Effective Engagement in Fragile States. OECD (Busan 2011)
2. Unintended Consequences of Peacekeeping Operations, edited by Chiyuki Aoi Cedric de Coning Ramesh Thaku.
3. MRU Strategic Plan 2010 -2020. Mano River Union Secretariat, Freetown 2011.
4. The Subtle Micro-Effects of Peacekeeping: Evidence from Liberia. Eric Mvukiyehe and Cyrus Samii Department of Political Science Columbia University August 29, 2010.
5. ECOWAS Vision 2020. Towards a Democratic and Prosperous Community. ECOWAS Commission Abuja, June 2010
6. Myo Thant, Min Tang, and Hiroshi Kakazu (Eds), Growth Triangles in Asia: A New Approach to Regional Economic Cooperation.
7. African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) 2010 Assessment Study, [www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4).
8. Community Based Strategies for Peace and Security Mitchel, Thesis presented in partial completion of the requirements of The Certificate-of-Training in United Nations Peace Support Operations (2008).
9. Kathleen Coolbaugh and Cynthia J. Hansel, The Comprehensive Strategy: Lessons Learned From the Pilot Sites. OJJDP March 2000 - <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp>.
10. Reviewing and Improving US Security Strategy in Africa's Sahel Region." Written Testimony Submitted by Mr. Nii Akuetteh Independent Policy Analyst House Committee on Foreign Affairs Tuesday, May 21, 2013.
11. Towards A Theory of Strategy: Art Lykke and the Army War College Strategy Model By H. Richard Yarger.
12. The New Deal on Effective Engagement in Fragile States. OECD (Busan 2011).