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# West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) 2004 ©



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# What is Civil Society?

- Exists in the 'space' between the state, the market, and the private life of families & individuals.

Manifested through different forms of association that:

- ✓ give expression and direction to social, religious and cultural needs
- ✓ enable the mobilisation, articulation and pursuit of interests and aspirations of elements within society

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# **ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICTS**

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Creates social capacities and institutions to monitor & constrain arbitrary exercise of state power and, increasingly, the behaviour of private businesses.

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- *Civil society*. Refers to the associations of citizens (outside their families, friends and businesses) entered into voluntarily to advance their interests, ideas and ideologies. The term does not include profit-making activity (the private sector) or governing (the public sector). Of particular relevance to the United Nations are mass organizations (such as organizations of peasants, women or retired people), trade unions, professional associations, social movements, indigenous people's organizations, religious and spiritual organizations, academe and public benefit non-governmental organizations.

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# Why should CSO involve themselves in conflict Prevention?

- A vibrant and diverse civil society is a key element of structural prevention. Governments that attempt to suppress independent civil society tend to provoke a struggle to meet those needs through other means, including violent resistance
- Efficacy: Within any society, diverse groupings constitute a potentially powerful force that can be mobilised either to escalate conflict or facilitate its resolution.

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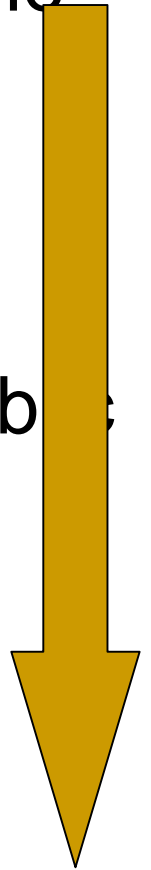
CSO's can do things that neither the state nor international organisations can do.

- Ownership and sovereignty: The state belongs to its people; mobilising CSO engagement in addressing problems that could generate conflict strengthens long-term social and political development of the country. If the diverse elements within a society feel that the 'solutions' are legitimate, they are more likely to take responsibility for implementing them

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# The Global System: changing policies and systems

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- Addressing root causes, such as economic justice, fair international trade (MDG) etc.
  - Addressing enabling factors-e.g conflict diamonds
  - Alternatives to militarism & generating public support for human security approaches



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CSO's focus on policy/structural changes from global system, regional to national levels with the specific aim of responding to specific conflict situations.

Best practice in peacebuilding on the ground on specific conflicts is better informed by our capacity for influencing policy.

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# Sectoral Responses to Conflict

- CSO's can be a factor in conflict, as well as a factor in peace
- CSO's can be powerful advocates to meet constituent's needs-and therefore address sources of conflict
- CSO's often mobilise global, regional and national networks for support and resources
- CSO's can often use its unique position and legitimacy to facilitate processes or mediate conflict

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# CSO's Roles in specific Armed Conflict Prevention

- CSO's can make a valuable contribution at every stage of the evolution of a conflict
- CSO's are not inhibited by internal bureaucracies therefore making it possible to move faster and do things on the ground.
- They have a range of different approaches and roles to secure lasting conflict transformation and sustainable peace

**Structural prevention**

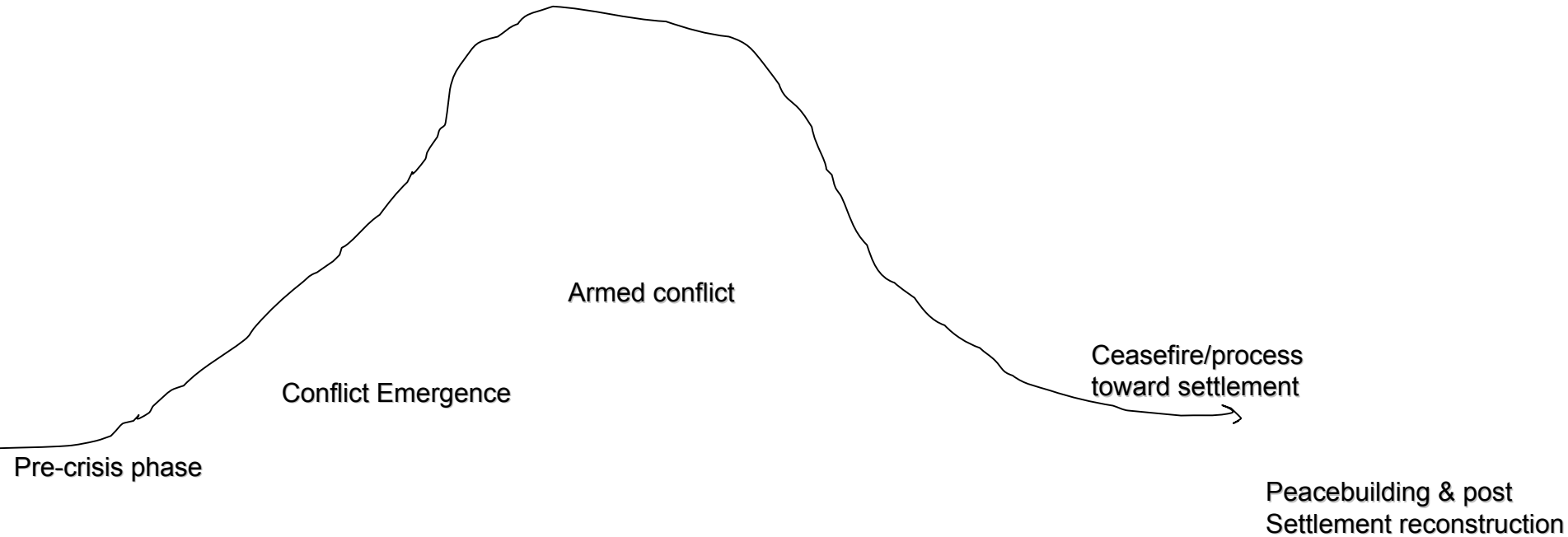
Escalation of tension & violence

**Operational Prevention**

Political Talks gain momentum

**Structural Prevention**

Final accords signed;  
Consolidate peacebuilding



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## Role of CSO's in structural prevention: addressing the root causes

- Addressing structural violence & promoting human security through development, human rights monitoring & promotion, prevention environmental degradation...
- Making governments & state structures more responsive-through participation in political processes, policy dialogue, monitoring, advocacy campaigns, protests

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- Alleviating social tensions and conflict-through challenging xenophobia & discrimination, facilitating dialogue, and promoting tolerance and a culture of peace...
  - Strengthening capacities to mediate conflict and manage differences through conflict resolution training, mediation services, education, promoting rule of law

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# Operational Prevention

## CSO roles in the early crisis phase

- Early warning of emerging crises-monitoring, analysis, and communication strategies to raise awareness and generate attention
- Developing options and strategies for response-formulating recommendations, engaging in policy dialogue
- Mobilising political will for response-lobbying and campaigning, sensitising domestic audiences
- Taking action – Unofficial ‘diplomacy’, social dialogue, public protests...

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# CSO roles during violent conflict

- Humanitarian relief & support to war-affected communities
- Facilitating communication and generating alternatives – Track II dialogue processes
- Strengthening local CSO capacities for conflict transformation & peacebuilding through public dialogue
- Developing & strengthening ‘constituencies for peace’ and public awareness work

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# CSO roles in peacemaking

- Support for political negotiators and confidence building initiatives
- Shaping the negotiating agenda to ensure it addresses root causes
- Participating in the negotiations process, directly or indirectly
- Helping 'behind the scenes': continuing to facilitate social dialogue and Track II dialogue +good offices

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# Preventing recurrence: CSO roles in post-settlement peacebuilding

- Public education & awareness-raising on the peace agreement – and consolidating support
- Facilitating the rehabilitation of war-affected relationships & communities – laying the grounded for reconciliation
- Contributing to transitional justice processes
- Resumption of initiatives contributing to structural prevention-encouraging good governance, reconstruction and development, mediating social conflict, promoting human rights..

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# Drawing key conclusions

- Because CSO's are ware of events as they are unfolding, they can make important contributions to early warning
- They can act swiftly and flexibly to respond to conditions as needed, often using innovative and non-coercive strategies and quality processes to address problems

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- CSO's can act when-for various reasons-official actors are immobilised (often related to mandates, lack of political will or the implications conveyed by their official status)
  - CSO's can improve communication and relationships by fostering interaction across conflict divides.
  - By mobilising 'peoples power', CSO's can put pressure on decision-makers to reach a peaceful settlement. They can also push for policies and practices designed to address root causes of conflict

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## Conclusion: need partnership and respect for local ownership

Partnerships are key to effective prevention.

- ❑ Need mechanisms and resources for interaction between IGO's, CSO's and governments in order to institutionalise the capacity for prevention
- ❑ Need official acknowledgement of the legitimacy of CSO's in peace and security matters; recognition of their roles in the conflict prevention partnership

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Primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national governments and other local actors. Greater ownership is likely to result in a more legitimate process & sustainable outcomes.

- ❑ The primary role of outsiders is to create spaces and support inclusive processes that enable those directly involved to make decisions about the specific arrangements for addressing the causes of conflict.
- ❑ Outsiders must avoid actions that displace and undermine home-grown initiatives or that promote short-term objectives at the expense of long-term prevention.

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# WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING (WANEP)

- **(WANEP) was established in September 1998**
- **To promote local culture of peace, strengthen the capacity of peace building practitioners and institutions, develop conflict prevention networks and mechanisms, and advocate for just socio-politico-economic structures**

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# THEMATIC AREAS

- **EARLY WARNING & EARLY RESPONSE**
- **WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING (WIPNET)**
- **PEACE EDUCATION & ACTIVE NON VIOLENCE**
- **WEST AFRICAN PEACEBUILDING INSTITUTE (WAPI)**
- **Natural Resources & Conflict Management (in partnership with FAO)**
- **Research & Documentation**

\*Thematic areas give specific professions & groups a place in the network e.g. academics, teachers, youths, women groups

\*Development of thematic areas guided by national logic

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# WANEP experience

- In 2002, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) entered into partnership with Catholic Relief Services West Africa Office (CRS-WARO) to work in collaboration with both the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Civil Society Organizations to increase the capacity and effectiveness of both formal and non-formal conflict prevention mechanisms in the West Africa region.

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- To increase the effectiveness of ECOWAS' conflict prevention capacity;
  - Strengthen the coalition of civil society organizations to promote peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and good governance; and
  - Build a functional relationship between ECOWAS and CSOs in West Africa.

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# STRUCTURE

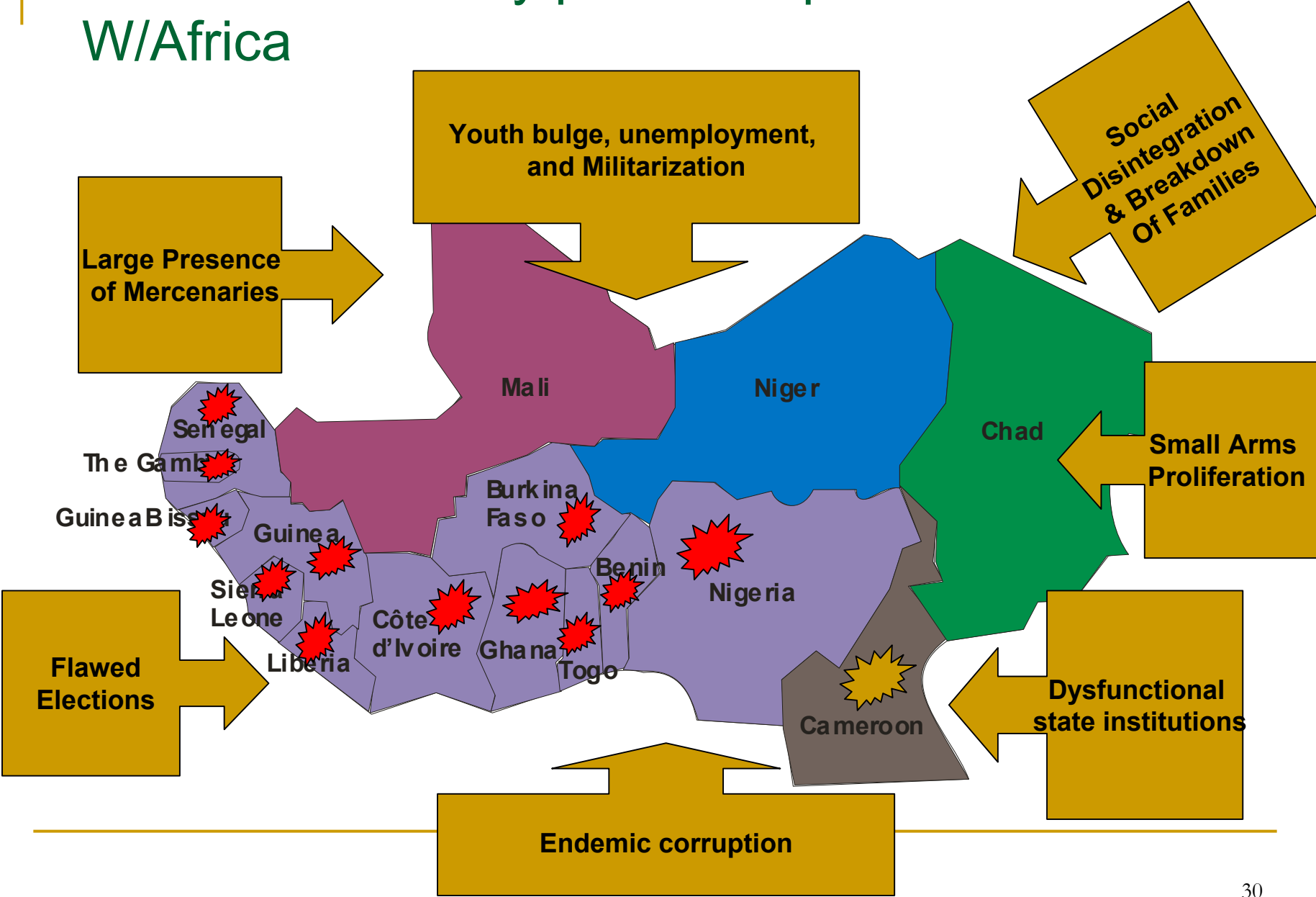
- **REGIONAL SECRETARIAT: ACCRA, GHANA. 22  
PERMANENT STAFF**
- **NATIONAL OFFICES: 10 COUNTRIES; NIGERIA,  
GHANA, SIERRA LEONE, LIBERIA, GUINEA  
CONAKRY, COTE D'IVOIRE, TOGO, SENEGAL,  
THE GAMBIA, GUINEA BISSAU**
- **300 MEMBER ORGANISATIONS IN 15  
COUNTRIES IN CENTRAL & WEST AFRICA**

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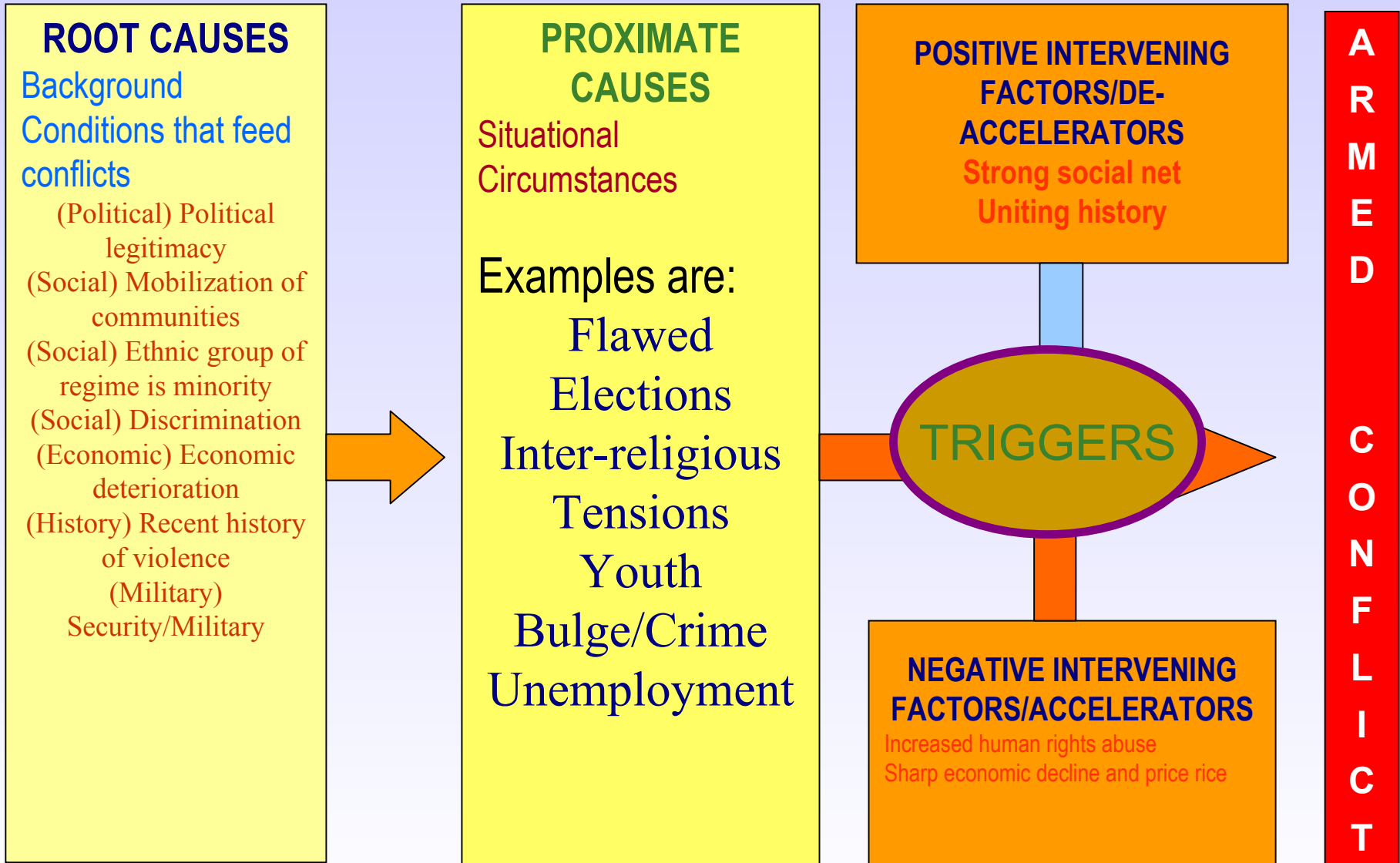
# Working with ECOWAS

- **Established a liaison office in ECOWAS secretariat**
- **Stronger linkages btw ECOWAS & civil society through sub regional consultations**
- **Strengthen the 4 ECOWAS zonal bureau heads**
- **Submit regular policy briefs to ECOWAS secretariat**

# Issues civil society partnerships address in W/Africa



# Analytical Framework for Civil society WARN



# Long term civil society role

Local Conflict Analysts

Intl. Peer Reviewers

Strategic Round Table Conference

