PRIORITISING DEMOCRACY AND PEACEBUILDING IN ECOWAS FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the transformation and expansion of the functions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) from an organization for the promotion of cooperation and economic development to issues of peace, security and democracy. This is because the incidences of violent armed conflicts have swayed the direction of the august body of the futility in achieving its integration objectives in the absence of peace and security. The instability scenarios opened up a new vista of thinking that the realization and consolidation of development, peace and security in the sub-region is contingent on the pursuit of good governance. The period also coincided with the third wave of democratization and peacebuilding blowing across countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America, with the catchy argument that democracy promotes economic growth and development, good governance, and peace and security. The paper employs analytical methodology to review authoritative secondary literature to interpret primary sources on the engagements of ECOWAS in the promotion of democracy and peace in West Africa. The paper argues that ECOWAS has recorded successes in the peacebuilding and democratic promotion in the sub-region, but it seems not to have machinated an effective mechanism for democracy alongside peacebuilding. The paper relies on the recent Malian crisis to instantiate the attitude of ECOWAS in failing to balance and prioritize both democracy and peace, and recommends that ECOWAS's future engagements should place premium on both democracy and peace.

1. Introduction

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) witnessed a gradual transformation and expansion of its core mandate from the promotion of regional cooperation and economic development and growth, to broader issues of peace, security and democracy (Zounmenou and Lous, 2011: 2). Particularly, that the violent armed conflicts across the sub-region have continued to stretch the limited resources and capacities of member states and swayed the direction of the organization of the futility of pursuing regional cooperation and economic development in the absence of peace and security (Nwoke, 2005: 127). Indeed, the violent conflict and insecurity situations in the sub-region opened up a new vista resulting in new policy thinking on the pursuit of good governance as basis for regional cooperation, development, democracy, peace and security. Coincidentally, the third wave of democratization that was wafting across countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America (Omotola, 2008) promised not only economic growth and development, but also good governance, peace and security. Without a doubt, the unique features of the constitutions of these West African States points to the adoption of liberal democracy which is mainly a response to the eagerness of their former colonial masters from the Western countries "to share their ideas and experiences …by giving overwhelming support for the installation of western liberal social values, expressed overtly as respect for rule of law and individual freedom and civil liberty, electoral competition, etc (Adetula, 2011: 10-11).

Certainly, the currency of liberal democratic movement corresponds with and also rubs on the global hype for peacebuilding (Call and Cook, 2003: 1) that gained prominence more particularly in the 1992 *Agenda for Peace* by the then UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992). This was put to good use in most of West African conflicts such as in Liberia and Sierra Leone where the Nigeria led ECOMOG trail-blazed a robust peacebuilding initiative that culminated in the institution of electoral democracy in these countries. Undeniably, these successes provided the impetus for ECOWAS to extend the wave of its transnational synergy to include conflict management, security, democratic governance, human rights and so on (Ovramah, 1993). While these issues were initially handled on an emergency basis and allegedly driven by the geo-strategic interests of member states such as

Nigeria, ECOWAS has gradually institutionalized its democracy and peacebuilding framework into one of the healthiest in the world.

The paper employs the analytical methodology to review authoritative secondary literature to interpret primary sources on the engagements of ECOWAS in the promotion of democracy and peace in West Africa. The paper argues that ECOWAS has recorded successes in the peacebuilding and democratic promotion in the sub-region, but it seems not to have machinated an effective mechanism for democracy alongside peacebuilding notably because ECOWAS facilitated the restoration and promotion of democracy and peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Equatorial Guinea, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Guinea-Bissau. According to Mustapha (2013), ECOWAS achievements include,

i.   The restoration of peace to Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire;
ii.   Aversion of war through effective preventive diplomacy in Togo and Guinea Bissau;
iii. The adoption and implementation of institutional and legal frameworks for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and peace-building;
iv.   The adoption and effective application of constitutional convergence principles with an accompanying sanctions regime;
v.   The institutionalization of "home-grown" strategies in preventive diplomacy and military intervention.

This is obviously not a fair assessment of achievements of ECOWAS especially that Mustapha arrived at that conclusion in 2013 when the august body had recorded remarkable successes not only in peacebuilding, but also in trade liberalization, democratic governance, especially the restoration of elected governments, establishments of Community Parliament and Court, and the integration of the civil society. In fact, the apparent omission of Liberia in the countries where ECOWAS restored peace and indeed democracy suggest that the assessment is a weak admiration of the achievements of ECOWAS. Without more, ECOWAS has in recent times been disposed towards the advancement of liberal democracy, as encapsulated in its commitment to the ideals enshrined in the Protocol of Democracy and Good Governance, more than issues of peacebuilding and regional integration, *per se*. It is

further worrisome that this constricting of achievements originally emanated from a 2010 ECOWAS publication that seeks to draw attention to its two decades of achievements (ECOWAS, 2010: 4).

To this end, the paper reviews the disposition of ECOWAS to the recent Malian political crisis to demonstrate that it prioritizes liberal democracy over peace, because ECOWAS came out to denounce undemocratic change of government and flip-flopped with burgeoning terrorism in northern Mali. Part two revisits the debate on the nexus between democracy and peace. The paper proceeds in part three to further examine the threats to democracy and peace in West Africa. Part four examines ECOWAS legal and institutional frameworks for democracy and peace. Part five examines the implication of the ECOWAS framework for democracy and peace in the Malian crisis. Part six is the lessons learnt and future agenda. Part seven is the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Democracy and Peacebuilding in West Africa: Convergence or Divergence

The former United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali is one of the many international personalities that popularized and engaged the issues of democracy and peace in two separate documents titled, *An Agenda for Democratisation* and *An Agenda for Peace, Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping.* While defining democracy as 'a system of government which embodies, in a variety of institutions and mechanisms, the ideal of political power based on the will of the people', Boutros-Ghali further defined peacebuilding as a new approach which emphasizes that in order to achieve lasting peace, the effort to prevent, control and resolve conflicts must include action to address the underlying economic, social, cultural, humanitarian and political roots of conflict and to strengthen the foundations for development.

In finding the convergence between democracy and peace, Boutros-Ghali surmises that, '…support for a culture of democracy to assistance in institution-building for democratization, may well be understood as a key component of peace-building'. This is because of the universalization of the liberal values through the proselytizing acts of both bilateral and multilateral arrangements such as in the case of the United Nations's democracy

and peacebuilding agenda has received global attention and recognition in post-Cold War international order. Indeed, the alleged exactions of the third wave of democratization are deliberate coalescing of external forces to compel the entrenchment of liberal values. Although Shola (2008) noted the coming together of both external and internal exactions in the recent democracy movement, Adetula (2011: 10) believes that they were inaugurated in response to internal pressures. The position of Jega (2005) that the focus should rather be on how external forces participated in the democratization project in Africa, under what conditions and with what consequences, provides a distinctive understanding of the agenda of the proponent of liberal democracy especially in Africa. To be sure, Jega argues that,

> although most external forces purporting to promote democracy are ***only concerned with restricted notions of western liberal democracy***, especially its formal manifestations, and not substantive popular democracy, which emphasises broad-based participation, popular sovereignty and meeting popular needs and aspirations on a self-sustaining basis" (Jega, 2005: 261).

What then is the content of western liberal democracy? How is western liberal democracy different from the notion of popular democracy? To the renowned liberal essayist, Francis Fukuyama, the end of the cold war meant the collapse of the great ideological debate on how to organize economic and political life because liberal democracy has emerged as a system of government by conquering rival political ideologies over the years (Fukuyama). He emphatically opined that liberal democracy may constitute the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution' and the 'final form of human government,' and as such constituted the 'end of history' (ibid). Unfortunately and unknown to most of the proponents of liberal democratic cultures and their funders in the international countries and corporations, the whole idea of liberal democracy in Africa what Ake technically called the 'democratization of disempowerment'. The contradiction in the application of liberal democracy in Africa is in the fact that it further alienates majority of Africans from the state by laying emphasis on 'political liberalization and pluralism or multi-partism (for the western donors and western leaders)…For the African leaders democracy meant that the African people had no right to wage further struggle, or ask further questions about their existential realities, but to simply obey and embrace the leaders – the new found democrats' (Momoh, 2006: 62).

In examining the point of convergence between democracy and peacebuilding, Call and Cook (2003) underscore the liberal presumption that these principles are both linear and inevitable basically because of the perception that they are good and 'all good things go together'. Another interesting point of convergence is that liberal democracy and peacebuilding are recently presented as open-ended processes that precede both transparent election process and peace agreements. They are also requiring of local-level legitimatization. Indeed, peacebuilding is a critical precondition for democracy.

There are however areas of divergence that relates to issues of the international actors participation, questions of centralization and decentralization of state power and the less attention being paid in peacebuilding process to issues of democratization (Call and Cook, 2003).

3. The Threats to Democracy and peace in West Africa:

Geographically, the West African sub-region consist of fifteen (15) independent countries of the African continent that still grapples with challenges associated with democracy and peacebuilding (Alli, 2010). In fact, McGowan (2003: 355) has described West Africa as the region of Coups d'état because most of Africa's military Coups d'état, about 45.2 percent happened in the region. West Africa is a highly complex region full of possibilities and difficulties. The Swedish Political Scientist, Rönnbäck (2008) essayed that most of the countries in West Africa are heavily indebted and among the poorest regions of the world with bulk of its people living in poverty. It is important to note that while countries in the sub-region share similarities in instabilities and political crises, they also share dissimilarities in their colonial heritage and external linkages, political compositions, levels of economic endowment and development. They also have continued to labour under the burden (Shola, 2008) of these instabilities and political crises since their independence from colonialism in 1950s and 1960s to the present times due largely to internal and external causes. These have affected democratic consolidation and sustainable peacebuilding in virtually all the countries, especially as experienced in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Republic of Guinea, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria

It is however critical to state that scholars have been occupied in finding explanations to threats to democracy and peace and came up with complex and divergent opinions that are both historical, internal and external. According to the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan (2004) threats to democracy and peace are embedded in West Africa's historical legacies of colonialism, internal factors, external factors, economic motives and other issues that revolve around the competition over scarce resources. On his own part, Gambari (2005) after reviewing the post-conflict Liberian society identified the unique threats facing democracy and peace in the country to include issues of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR); elections; the regional dimension of the conflict, the nexus between peace and development (natural resource management, the centre-periphery dichotomy and imbalance, youth unemployment, and economic recovery). On his own part, Gelsdorf (2010) argues that issues of climate change, food crises and financial crises, extreme poverty, urbanization, water scarcity, energy security, migration and population growth have challenged the world especially the collective efforts toward sustainable democracy and peace. In taking the debate further Spencer (2008), identifies the concerns of unbalanced development, political challenges, Islamism and the threat of terrorism, regional pressures, environmental and human pressures and flashpoints and risks. Similarly, Cyril Obi (2012) observed that they could be 'much deeper and complex, and are embedded in the interplay of historical factors, socio-economic crisis, legacies of authoritarianism and the politics of exclusion, international forces, and local struggles. While Nancy Annan (2014) attributes the challenges to issues of bad governance and corruption, human rights violations, poverty, ethnic marginalization and small arms and light weapons proliferation. In specific terms, Mustapha (2013) observes that the threats include piracy and maritime violence across the Gulf of Guinea, Islamist political violence across the Sahel, the activities of narco-traffickers from some Latin American countries, the proliferation and trafficking in small arms, and the large scale trafficking of persons, especially women and children. Thus, Anning and Bah (2010) essayed *inter alia,*

> West Africa's relative stability following a period of violent and protracted
> conflicts in the 1990s is under increasing attack from a range of existing and
> emerging threats. The emergence or in some cases the re-emergence of certain
> trends, namely armed sub-state groups, small arms flows and narcotics trade,

could erode the stability that the region currently enjoys. Despite progress in consolidating democracy over the past two decades, a series of recent military coups has raised questions about the state of the democratic structures that are currently in place. More generally, much of the region is still waiting for a 'democratic dividend': despite the return to civilian rule and holding of periodic elections, the social and economic well being of the vast majority of people in the sub-region remain dire.

This demonstrable disappointment with western liberal democratic culture is not original to Anning and Bah as several African scholars have highlighted the increasing inability of liberal democracy to respond to and provide for expectations of the African peoples. Thus, Ake (1994) argues that for democracy to make meaning in Africa it must "be recreated in the context of the given realities and in political arrangements which fit the cultural context, but without sacrificing its values and inherent principles."

Be that as it may, it is critical to underscore the fact that the insistence on the adoption of liberal democracy in Africa is itself a threat to democracy and peace to the extent that it has failed to address critical socio-economic problems of Africans that are daily 'absorbed in eking a living out of an arid mortar of subsistence' (Dakas, 2015). But this again shows the seeming aversion of the liberal tradition with issues that are outside the dominant model of democracy, namely, universal suffrage, election and representation, popular sovereignty, majority government, guarantee of basic freedom, consensus and accommodation, and free enterprise/capitalism (Jega, 2005: 14). Hence, these threats are indeed substantial in West Africa and can broadly fall within the context of the violations of basic human rights principles, which are encapsulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The application of the broad principles of the international human rights principles would not only ensure the promotion of democracy and sustainable peace, but guarantee a balanced societal harmony that is anchored on social justice. This is because while the violations of human rights would amount to an explicit invitation to instability and political crisis, respect for human rights principles would conversely usher in stability.

It is also relevant to appreciate the fact that these threats may not apply to all societies because of each society has its unique socio-economic, cultural and political dynamics. Again there is temptation of always associating the Islamic faith with terrorist because of the particular narratives of certain terrorist groups. Although terrorism is a threat to democracy, Islam and its teachings cannot constitute a threat to democracy and peace because Islam teaches peace and tolerance. Hence, Islam as a religion cannot be said to be a threat to democracy and peace because as Araoye (2012:21) noted that, '...disparate religious affiliations and contrapulling world-views which seek to consolidate their influence in society and their unrelenting expansionism in society and in the post-colonial state. *Christianity and Islam, per se, pose no problem.* The disruptive potential lies in the close juxtapositioning of the so called major religions within the same political space vying for dominance.' There is no denying the fact of the threats posed to democracy and peace by terrorism especially in Africa that has over the years nurtured an environment for the blossoming of terrorism, especially with high rate of illiteracy, poverty, destitution, injustice and mismanagement in the continent.

As these threats linger, they leave on their pathways colossal loss of thousands of lives and properties worth billions of US dollars, "brutality mostly against civilians by both conventional and unconventional forces and methods" (Agbu, 2006: 2). Apart from the above, they have also resulted in social dislocation, massive displacements, dehumanisation of women, children, the aged and disabled, disruption of communal and social lives and general and mutual distrust and suspicion (Ladan, 2013).

4. **ECOWAS Legal and Institutional Frameworks for Democracy and peace in West Africa:**

As noted earlier, ECOWAS was established for the promotion of cooperation and economic development and growth. According to one of its founding fathers, General Yakubu Gowon,

> Even more than the promotion of trade, the mobility of labour and the other factors of production was central to ECOWAS and exemplified what the community was about. The free movement of persons within the region was both a repudiation of colonial frontiers in so far as they impeded the economic

development of the new states, and an affirmation of the spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance (Gowon, 1984: 536).

With some member states increasingly being threatened by violent armed conflicts especially in the 1980s and 1990s, the organization was compelled to channel its radar to respond to this threat. In fact, the incidences of instability opened up new thinking on the utility of sustainable development, peace and security as contingent factors in the pursuit of good governance. This is owing to democratic consolidation that took in some member states such as the democratic stability in Ghana, the peaceful transition in Senegal, and the end of military dictatorship in Nigeria. For Nigeria, this turn of event affords her "sufficient moral capital to expend in order to mobilize the sub-region in a convincing manner to face the challenges of good governance and development" (Bobboyi, 2010) and peacebuilding. In fact, the former President of the ECOWAS Commission observed that,

> ECOWAS started as an inter-governmental organization with a diplomatic and economic development agenda. However, it did it take long before ECOWAS realized the missing link in the equation: Peace and Security. The obvious nexus between peace, security and development cannot be over-emphasized. Barely a decade after the creation of ECOWAS, conflicts emerged in Liberia and Sierra Leone as a phenomenon not confined to the borders of individual nation-states, but with serious regional implications both in its causes and effects (Chambas, 2005).

Therefore, at the Extraordinary Summit of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in Abuja on April 11, 2001, they emphasized the need to strengthen democracy in the sub-region as that was generally viewed as the essential key to good government and development. Further to this, ECOWAS adopted the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance on December, 2001 to make the issue of political governance central in the sub-region's agenda. This has provided the basis for ECOWAS' swift sanction against the undemocratic actions in the Republic of Niger, the Republic of Guinea and the Republic of Mali. In fact, ECOWAS had earlier moved against the undemocratic actions in Sierra Leone in May 25, 1997 of one Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who sought to topple the democratically elected government of President Tejan Kabbah. Similarly, ECOWAS moved against the Togolese coup-makers.

In the remaining part of this section, attention will be focussed on the highlights of some of the basic ECOWAS framework for democracy and peacebuilding, especially the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, the Declaration of Political Principles, ECOWAS Revised Treaty, and the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.

(i) The Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, 2001:
This protocol was signed on December 21, 2001 as a mechanism for the achievement of sub-regional peace and security through development of democracy, good governance and rule of law. The protocol covers wide range of issues that include, constitutional convergence principles that seeks to introduce uniformity in the constitutions of member states of ECOWAS. It also covers separation of powers; the empowerment and strengthening of parliaments and the guarantee of their immunity, and the independence of the judiciary. Other issues are, the recognition that every accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections; zero tolerance for power obtained through the use of force or military coup or remaining in power through undemocratic means; the call for popular participation in decision making, strict adherence to democratic principles and decentralization of power at all levels of governance; the neutrality of the state in religious matters, non-discrimination, freedom of the press, freedom to form political parties, freedom of the opposition. On election, the protocol provides for election monitoring and assistance and prohibits substantial modification to electoral laws by any government of member state six (6) months before the conduct of the election exercise except with the consent of all major political actors. In fact, the role of the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat in the formation and conduct of Electoral Observer/Supervisory Missions is provided in the Protocol. The protocol requires the Reports of Electoral Observer/Supervisory Missions are to be submitted by the Executive Secretary (President now), along with his/her observations to the Mediation and Security Council for onward recommendations on measure to be taken being made to the member state concerned, all other member states. It also recognizes the cardinal role of gender in the conduct of peaceful elections when it provides that member states must,

> Take all appropriate measure to ensure that women have equal rights with men to vote and be voted for in elections, to participate in the formulation of

government policies and the implementation thereof and to hold public offices and perform public functions at all levels of governance (Article 2 (3) ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, 2001).

Furthermore, the protocol provides for independent electoral bodies, the involvement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in election education as preventive and precursory to peaceful and violent-free election exercise. Similarly, the protocol warns "all holders of power at all levels" against "acts of intimidation or harassment against defeated candidates or their supporters" (Article 10, ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, 2001). Additionally, the protocol is mindful of the critical role of the Armed Forces, the National Police and other Security Agencies in democratic consolidation, having regards to the negative roles they play in staging coups and in the sustenance of Military juntas and sit-tight civilian regimes in Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau among others. Thus, the protocol demands loyalty of these Security Agencies to democratically elected civilian authorities.

In addition, the protocol identifies the place of freedom of press and good governance in the preservation of social justice, conflict prevention, political stability, peacebuilding and in strengthening of democracy. Equally important is the place of rule of law in guaranteeing good judicial and administrative system and in the good management of the state and its resources. Thus, the ECOWAS Secretariat and member states are required by the protocol to ensure the adoption of practical measures aimed at the enforcement of the rule of law, human rights, justice and good governance and ensure accountability, professionalism, transparency in the public and private sectors.

(ii) The ECOWAS Revised Treaty of 1993:

The challenges of governance, peace and security in the sub-region elicited the need for the revision of the 1975 Treaty of the body to reflect contemporary realities. Thus, on 23 July 1993, the ECOWAS Revised Treaty was signed in Cotonou, Republic of Benin with far-reaching implications for democracy and peacebuilding. One of the fundamental additions is with respect to its "recognition, promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights…

accountability, economic and social justice and popular participation, and the promotion and consolidation of a democratic system of governance in each member state.

The Treaty also initiated major democratic reforms by creating new institutions – the Parliament and the Court and restructured the ECOWAS Secretariat. The Treaty provides for the ECOWAS Community Parliament with a mandate to guarantee regional development, defend human rights and safeguard governmental respect for basic human rights. The ECOWAS Community Court of Justice ensures "the observance of law and justice in the interpretation of the provisions of this treaty and in settling disputes that may be referred to it by member states". Lastly, the treaty makes provision on the mobilization of the various sections of the population, consultation of the civil society groups and press freedom.

(iii)The Declaration of Political Principles 1991:

The Declaration of Political Principles was signed in Abuja, Nigeria on July 6, 1991 to set the minimum democratic standards in guiding member states in their quest for democracy. Particularly, the declaration contains the undertakings towards the establishment and smooth functioning of democratic institutions, human rights and rule of law. Thus, it again underscores the commitment of member states to the provision of basic human rights and freedom as basis for democracy and peacebuilding, especially the respect for the freedom of thought, conscience, association, relief or belief and the liberty of all individuals to participate by means of free democratic processes in the framing of the society in which they live.

(iv)The ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security:

On the peacebuilding flank, the challenge of violent armed conflicts and insecurity in West Africa as instantiated in the cases of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, and others led the ECOWAS to initiate a number of measures aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution. One of such major initiatives is the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.

The protocol was adopted in Abuja on October 31, 1999 and recognizes the enormous responsibilities of key organs such as the Authority, the Mediation and Security Council and the Executive Secretariat. They are to be assisted by the Defence and Security Commission, the Council of Elders and the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). These organs are vested with stated roles, which include:

(1) The Defence and Security Commission shall examine all technical and administrative issues and assess local requirements for peacekeeping operations. It shall assist the Mediation and Security Council in:

(i) Formulating the mandate of the peacekeeping force;

(ii) Defining the terms of reference of the force;

(iii) Appointing the force commander;

(iv) Determining the composition of the contingents.

The Commission shall examine reports from the observation and Monitoring Centers and make recommendations to the Mediation and Security Council.

(1) The Council of Elders consists of eminent personalities to be identified by the President of ECOWAS, who shall act on behalf of ECOWAS in mediation, conciliation and facilitation in conflict situations.

(2) The ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) shall compose of several stand-by multi-purpose modules (civilian and military) in their countries of origin and ready for immediate deployment. The missions of ECOMOG include,

(a) Observation and Monitoring;

(b) Peacekeeping and restoration of Peace;

(c) Humanitarian Intervention in support of humanitarian disaster;

(d) Enforcement of sanctions, including embargo;

(e) Preventive deployment;

(f) Peacebuilding, disarmament and demobilization;

(g) Policing activities, including the control of fraud and organized crime;

(h) Any other operations as may be mandated by the Mediation and Security Council.

The peacebuilding template that is being set out by the protocol ensures that peacekeeping mission by ECOMOG are planned by the *Defence and Security Commission,* while the *Council of Elders* is used for conflict mediation and electoral monitoring. To ensure adequate preparation for action, ECOWAS member states agreed to the creation of stand-by units that would be ready for quick deployment to quell the sub-region crises. The tasks of the stand-by units include military as well as observation missions in which ECOMOG will "supervise and monitor ceasefires, disarmament, demobilization, elections, respect for human rights and humanitarian activities.

It is important to note that the conditions that would trigger ECOWAS intervention include, incidents of external aggression, conflicts between two or more member states, internal conflict that may lead to humanitarian disaster or serious threaten regional peace and security, incidence of serious violations of human rights and the rule of law, removal or attempts to remove a democratically elected government (Golwa, 2009).

The ratification or endorsement of the protocol in 1999 notwithstanding, violent armed conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone coupled with the human tragedy that followed the crises conferred on ECOWAS and indeed other member states the obligation to ensure collective security and avert state collapse.

5. ECOWAS in the 2012 Malian Crisis:

Before the truncation of the Presidential elections that was billed to mark the country's 21 years of uninterrupted democratic experience, Mali enjoyed a reputation for democratic stability, good governance, impressive and steady annual economic growth outpacing other African countries (Magassa and Meyer, 2008; Kone, 2012; Rekawek, 2012; Rao, 2013). In fact, Magassa and Meyer (2008: 3) insist that Mali is a "good pupil" in liberal democracy despite its extremely impoverished population and running a donor dependent economy. The Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali has been on since 1963 with the first revolt in 1963–64, then the another one between 1990 and 1996 and then between 2006 and 2009. According to Haysom (2014) the 2012 crisis was rooted in Mali's governance institutions, decades old grievances in the north, fractious political relations between communities in the north and the

central government and the failure of the government to stop the expansion of cross-border criminal and extremist networks.

It is odious that while the Mali's liberal democratic credential stood it out as a subject of admiration, the socio-economic conditions in the north reflected a situation akin to Ake's democratization of disempowerment where there were cases of endemic poverty, pervasive sense of marginalization and lack of livelihood opportunities for young men.

That notwithstanding as the soldiers in the capital, Bamako staged a coup and deposed the democratically elected government and the government control in the north crumbled, the singsong in the lips of Regional leaders in ECOWAS was diplomacy, sanctions and a plan for military intervention, reinstate the political establishment and the overthrew President.

In fact, as northern Mali boiled with terrorist onslaughts by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), ECOWAS was worried over the reluctance of Nigeria to contribute sufficient troops and also the likelihood of troops coming from its 29% Hausa population. The deployment was viewed as having the potentials of reinventing the historical tension between the Tuareg and the Hausa and extending Nigerian influence or to facilitate the assimilation of the Tuareg into the broader Hausa culture (Rao, 2013). Beyond the deployment challenges, Rao (Ibid) notes the obvious ECOWAS inadequate capacity to conduct warfare in terrain like that of northern Mali despite a 2012 UN Security Council-backed plan to deploy 3,000 troops in 2013 must have informed its delayed intervention.

Clearly, there were couple of issues with respect to democracy and peacebuilding in Mali. Firstly, the twenty one years of democratic governance in Mali was obviously not tailored to prevent and respond to the country's social contradiction, but aimed at satisfying the yarning of the western liberal democratic agenda. Secondly, ECOWAS democracy agenda is influenced by western liberal democratic agenda which naturally informed its intervention into the 2012 Mali crisis. Thirdly, the western liberal democratic agenda places priority on democracy and peacebuilding. In fact, in interrogating the objective of ECOWAS intervention into the 2012 Malian crisis, Okeke et al (2014) observed that,

> The objective has been to restore democracy by forcing the military back to the barracks or restricting it to the constitutional role of protecting the territorial integrity from internal insurrection and external aggression. But the root causes of military intervention into politics and crisis of regime change or political succession are yet to be adequately addressed by the ECOWAS, for example, issues of legitimacy crisis, poor governance, bad leadership, political leadership failure, political corruption, electoral crisis and political violence have been largely left unattended or ignored. The political conditions in most of the countries in the sub-region and indeed Africa as a whole are not democracy friendly or unsuitable for democratization and flourishing of democracy or demilitarization.

Obviously, ECOWAS' weakness in placing priority on democracy and peacebuilding is informed by its determination to pursue the principles of liberal democracy, which according to Ake (1996:6; Adetula, 2001:15) 'is not in the least emancipatory especially in African conditions because it offers the people rights they cannot exercise, voting that never amounts to choosing, freedom which is patently spurious, and political equality which distinguishes highly equal power relations.'

The central argument in the next part of this paper is to chart a future agenda that prioritizes democracy and peacebuilding in ECOWAS engagements especially in view of the philosophy of the ECOWAS vision 2020 for the transformation of the sub-regional body into an 'ECOWAS of Peoples'.

6. Lessons Learnt and Future Agenda:

The expectations on ECOWAS to ensure sustainable democracy and peacebuilding in the sub-region are informed by the successes it recorded among its member countries that experienced violent armed conflicts and political crises. Without doubt, ECOWAS has two broad transformational adjustments to institutionalize in order to prioritized democracy and peacebuilding in its future engagements in the West Africa.

Firstly, the paper has identified that the content of ECOWAS democracy agenda is charged with western liberal culture and therefore is not emancipatory to the realities of the African socio-economic conditions. There is need for future ECOWAS democracy and peacebuilding agenda to prioritise both while taking into consideration the peculiarities of African socio-economic and cultural realities of communality. The African society is hinge of the

consciousness of 'belonging to an organic whole … to find one's station and duty in life, not to assert one's interests and claims rights over others' (Ake, 1993).

Secondly, the ECOWAS protocol on Democracy and Good Governance seeks to address issues of political marginalization and exclusion, free and fair elections, bad governance, corruption, and economic deprivation, gender and development, youth unemployment, as precondition for sustainable democracy and peacebuilding, but it must also define mechanisms for their actualization. In this regard, ECOWAS must replicate the African Peer Review Mechanism of the African Union that has worked as envisioned by strengthening the apparatus of its implementation especially by means of an effective monitoring and reporting initiative that includes the organized civil society. This will not only guarantee democratic accountability, but ensure democratic consolidation and sustainable peace in the region.

Thirdly, the ECOWAS protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security should incorporate African indigenous method of conflict management that are not repugnant to natural law, equity and good conscious. This is significant in view of the increasing relevance of indigenous methods such as the *Gacaca* in Rwanda in the resolution of serious crimes and the critical place of forgiveness in Africa.

Fourthly, there is need to mainstream peacebuilding into ECOWAS democracy agenda which would entail that completed democratic project, and anticipation of the impacts of proposed democratic projects on the society and social process. This would assist in strengthening the prospects for peaceful co-existence, decrease the probability of violent conflict and increase the likelihood of responding to conflict.

7. Conclusion

In sum, ECOWAS has come of age not only in the promotion of regional cooperation, economic development and growth, but also in the promotion and consolidation of democracy, peace and security. Superficially, the ECOWAS democracy and peacebuilding promotional agenda was regionalism, but they have been influenced by the universal western

liberal movement. Little wonder the contents of most of the constitutions of member-states and the two celebrity protocols of ECOWAS[1] project liberal democratic values than socio-economic issues that seek to address daily realities of African peoples. We argued that these have been the bane of sustainable democracy and peacebuilding in the sub-region, and insist that ECOWAS should prioritise democracy and peacebuilding by designing an effective mechanism for mainstreaming democracy in peacebuilding and *vice versa*.

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[1] Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, 2001 and The ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security

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