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25TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION AND
PARTNERS' FORUM OF THE WEST AFRICA
NETWORK PEACEBUILDING (WANEP)
ACCRA, GHANA
13-15 MARCH 2024

**GOODWILL MESSAGE OF DR. ALHAJI SARJOH BAH, DIRECTOR OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
DIRECTORATE, IN THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY DEPARTMENT**

- **Executive Director of WANEP, Dr. Chukwuemeka B. Eze, and Senior Management;**
- **Special Guest of Honor, H.E. Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns and Chair of the AU High-Level Panel on Sudan;**
- **Mme Florence Iheme, WANEP Regional Board Chair;**
- **Dr. Emmanuel Bombande, co-Founder of WANEP;**
- **Excellencies;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. Good morning!

2. On behalf of the African Union Commission, I extend warm greetings and heartfelt congratulations as you commemorate the remarkable milestone of your 25th anniversary. This auspicious occasion marks a quarter-century of dedicated efforts towards promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development across the West African region by WANEP.

3. Despite the challenges faced within the subregion over the past two decades, WANEP has consistently served as a beacon of hope and a driving force for positive change in the pursuit of conflict management and peacebuilding. Your steadfast dedication to promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and collaboration has played a pivotal role in transforming conflicts and establishing resilient communities across West Africa.

4. As we celebrate this milestone, it is imperative to reflect on the progress made and lessons learned. WANEP's successes serve as a testament to the power of grassroots initiatives, inclusive approaches, and regional cooperation in advancing the cause of peace. They also underscore the critical importance of sustained investment in conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding.

5. With Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCG's) threatening our shared norms and values, strengthening ECOWAS is also an imperative to safeguard the community, as it enhances collective security, fosters economic integration, and promotes adherence to democratic principles among member states. WANEP's exceptional role in supporting the regional organisation must therefore be sustained.

6. Looking ahead, the Conflict Management Directorate of the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department in the African Union Commission reaffirms its commitment to deepen its engagement with WANEP and other regional peacebuilding actors in shaping and refining our responses to threats to our collective security. Together, we must redouble our efforts to address the root causes of Unconstitutional Changes of Government and conflicts, promote social cohesion, and strengthen the resilience of communities against violence and extremism.

7. In conclusion, let us seize this moment to celebrate WANEP's achievements in the past 25 years and renew our collective resolve to build a more peaceful and prosperous future for all the people of West Africa.

8. Congratulations again, and may the next 25 years be even more fruitful and impactful in advancing the cause of peace and stability in West Africa, as we collectively strive to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063, 'the Africa We Want'.

9. I thank you.