

IVORIAN PEACE PROCESS

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POST YAMOOUSSOUKRO 'BIG 5' ASSESSMENT: OPPORTUNITIES & EMERGING HURDLES

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INTRODUCTION

The historic meeting of the five key political actors of the Ivorian crisis at the Felix Houphouet Boigny Foundation for Peace Research¹ on February 27-28 2006, in Yamoussoukro ushered in a new dawn and rekindled hope in the peace process in Cote d'Ivoire. Chaired by the new Prime Minister of consensus, Charles Konan Banny, the significance of the meeting resided in the fact that the belligerents² were meeting on Ivorian soil for the first time, since the outbreak of the violent conflict in September 2002. Within the framework of UN Resolution 1633 of the Security Council and the road map to peace in Cote d'Ivoire traced by President Thabo Mbeki and endorsed by the International Working Group (IWG), Charles Konan Banny has undertaken a number of initiatives in this regard. It had become clear that the Ivorian crisis needed an Ivorian of unique calibre and integrity, capable of rallying key political actors, to envision a new direction and future with peace as the cardinal focus. The top-notch banker appears to be the one. In his first public pronouncement after his appointment, Konan Banny raised what WANEP in its antecedent briefs evoked: mutual trust and confidence that had eluded the divided and polarized country. "I hope that trust will return to this country," Banny lamented.

WEST AFRICA EARLY WARNING NETWORK (WARN)

The West Africa Early Warning Network (WARN) is an integral part of the West Africa Preventive Peacebuilding Program co-ordinated by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). A member of the FEWER, WANEP through its WARN Program is setting the stage for a civil society-based early warning and response network in Africa.

WARN covers the entire Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region including Cameroon and Chad. Our main focus has been the Mano River Basin countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire. We are now expanding to cover the entire sub-region.

WANEP has entered into an agreement with ECOWAS through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the framework of capacity building in Conflict Prevention. One of the goals of this agreement is to interface WARN with the ECOWAS Early Warning Systems.

In this policy brief, WANEP examines the post Yamoussoukro phase of the peace process and attempts an assessment of the recommendations in terms of their implementation. In addition, we would highlight new opportunities and factors militating for the consolidation of the peace process as well as the critical constraints (some minor as they may seem) currently undermining and/or that may undermine the peace as the count down to October 30 2006 UN deadline draws near. Our recommendations and

¹ Fondation Felix Houphouet Boigny pour la recherche de la paix

² The protagonists are: the Head of State, President Laurent Gbagbo; Former Head of State and President of the *Parti Democratique de Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI RDA)*, Henri Konan Bedie; Former Prime Minister and *President of the Rassemblement Des Republicains (RDR)*, Alassane Dramane Outtara; and Minister of State and Secretary General of the New Forces, Guillaume Soro.

conclusion all emphasize one thing: firm commitment from the actors and the watch dog of the international community to ensure that the peace wagon is not derailed.

Recommendations/Implementation of the Yamoussoukro 'Big 5' Dialogue

We would attempt to examine the level of implementation of the Yamoussoukro dialogue. Nevertheless, it is germane to recognize the significance of the Yamoussoukro meeting. First, Yamoussoukro came at an opportune moment, when previous agreements³ have proved difficult to implement despite the fact that all parties appended their signatures to the agreements. Secondly, the meeting holding on Ivorian soil and chaired by Konan Banny was an indication that a modicum of mutual trust is gradually being restored among the protagonists. Thirdly, that major points of convergence and clarifications emerged was a welcome relief that the politicians were beginning to shove personal interests aside in favour of national interest. One cannot rule out the mobilizing role that an intervening factor like the great performance of the Ivorian National football team played⁴. The following is an attempted analysis of the Yamoussoukro agreement by WANEP.

Tabular Analysis of the February 2006 Yamoussoukro Meeting

Recommendation/Key Issue	Implementation	Observations/Analysis
<p>❑ <i>UN Resolution 1633 and the Constitution:</i> The Big 5 Yamoussoukro reaffirmed the importance of Resolution 1633 vis a vis the Constitution and asked the President and Prime Minister to quickly concert and find solutions to potential conflicts that could arise in the process of executing their respective tasks.</p>	<p>❑ The issue of struggle over the supremacy of Resolution 1633 and/or Constitution has continued to surface. The President of National Assembly has insisted Parliament must play its role and incessantly asked PM Banny and the international working group (IWG) to respect Parliament.</p>	<p>❑ The interpretation of UN Resolution 1633 vis a vis the Constitution of Cote d'Ivoire had been controversial. While pro-government adherents argued that the Constitution of the Republic and State Institutions remained supreme, their opponents insisted that Resolution 1633 superseded the Constitution.</p>
<p>❑ <i>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion (DDR):</i> The protagonists agreed to update the timetable and immediately resume dialogue between the two military forces; the Defence and Security Forces (FDS) and the Armed Forces of the New Forces (FAFN). They highlighted the necessity for the process to assume a sub-regional approach.</p>	<p>❑ On June 8, 2006, the DDR process commenced in principle but due to inherent constraints, a new date of June 16 has been set.</p> <p>❑ In fact, ex-combatants had actually established a timetable for the disarmament after several seminars and working sessions. A DDR program had been established and still exists. Regular meetings and working sessions have been organised between the Security and Defence Forces, the Armed Forces of the New</p>	<p>❑ Complaints about inadequate sensitization especially among militia groups, security of militia leaders, issues of identification of ex-combatants are still grey areas.</p> <p>❑ Actors were not concrete on issues of disarmament as communiqué rather threw the challenge back to various Military Chiefs of Staff to agree on the timetable.</p> <p>❑ A key issue that needs to be addressed is a comprehensive security sector reform package that</p>

³ Accra I, Marcoussis, Accra II and III; Pretoria I and II agreements have all sought to bring lasting peace to Cote d'Ivoire but its implementation has been hampered by

⁴ Cruising to the final of the African Nations Cup tournament in Egypt and qualifying for the World Cup in Germany rallied the Ivorian Nation under one flag and although there were attempts or accusations of undue political recuperation, the dream of uniting Cote d'Ivoire was very much rekindled.

	<p>Forces, UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire, the French Licorne Forces, ECOWAS Representation in Cote d'Ivoire and other organisations of the UN system since January 2004. Last meeting of this broad-based meeting held on first week of June 2006.</p>	<p>would not only address issues of former fighters but also the welfare and promotions of regular soldiers who now feel 'cheated' in what is seen indirectly as compensation packages for violent rebellion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ What is clearly lacking is the political will.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ <i>Identification and Electoral Registry:</i> Parties greeted the technical possibilities of simultaneously pursuing the operations of identification and electoral registration. Called on government to ensure equitable identification of the population and assure everyone's constitutional right to vote. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ A previous identification process initiated in previous agreements left a lot to be desired. Konan Banny expressed his dissatisfaction of the process and called for the process to be taken up all over. ❑ A commission created on the identification submitted its report to the Prime Minister and Head of Government on March 2nd. It made a number of proposals, amongst them, a recommendation on the issue of simultaneous identification and registration. ❑ A trial pilot test on identification already took place between May 18-24 and lessons have been drawn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ This process, though it might appear simplistic and therefore easy to carry out, would require an enormous amount of resources (human, material, financial and technical), especially if it must cover the entire national territory. ❑ According to the Ivorian constitution, the electoral register must be published three months ahead of the elections. That leaves the identification and registration process up till July. ❑ Success of the operation would also greatly depend on the pressure and engagement of international community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ <i>Independent Electoral Commission:</i> Protagonists agreed on the election of the bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission headed by Beugre Mambe and the arbitrage role of the UN Special Representative on Elections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ A position of fourth Vice President was created to make room for an equitable representation of the political forces present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Since democratic elections is a game of numbers, this process would remain the most controversial as politicians of both sides of the divide would use all means to tilt the balance to their favour. ❑ The premature departure of the UN Special Representative for Cote d'Ivoire in charge of Elections, Antonio Monteiro remained a cause for concern. Question to ask is why he decided to throw in the towel? Was he pressurized or simply disappointed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ <i>Radio-diffusion Television Ivoirienne (RTI):</i> Parties noted the need to ensure equitable access to RTI by all, with a full coverage of the national territory with programmes propagating messages of peace and reconciliation. Parties renewed a recommendation to the media, particularly the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Protagonists equally noted the first emergency plan drawn up by the Government and encouraged the Government to raise the necessary funds for its implementation. They enjoined leaders of the different political parties to engage journalists they might be close to, to refrain from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ There is the tendency to refuse to see anything good across the largely polarized media landscape in Cote d'Ivoire. This is also true of some international media, particularly French media. Inflammatory and sensational headlines to denigrate opponents are still common.

written press, to get involved in the reconciliation process and refrain from articles that could negatively affect the process.	inflammatory and sensational reporting likely to inflame polarization and hatred.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ <i>Code of Good Conduct:</i> The participants agreed on the necessity to meet frequently to exchange on the peace process and to ensure that political life goes on in a peaceful climate, respecting the values of fraternity and democracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ There have been meetings at level of Cabinet meetings that involve only those in government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Of great significance have been meetings between the Chiefs of Staff of the protagonist forces-FANCI and <i>Forces Nouvelles</i>. But also significant was the Soro-Goudé Blé meeting in Abidjan that ended with a communiqué

Emerging Issues: Factors Militating For and Against Durable Peace

A. The Peace Factors: Peace factors here refer to those factors (incidents, gestures, happenings, moves, etc) that directly or indirectly militate for peace. These are both internal (within Cote d'Ivoire) and external.

- ❑ *The Peace Maker:* The calibre of the peace maker is critical in any peace process. Steering the affairs of government in such a delicate context as in Cote d'Ivoire demands exceptional qualities but also the political support and international backing. These qualities seem to reside in Charles Konan Banny who is apparently emerging as a unifier that Cote d'Ivoire needed to advance the stalled peace process. Banny was singled out as favourite amongst 16 other top-standard Ivorian citizens proposed to pilot the 11-month transition government. One of his main attractions, according to pundits, was "his strong management experience and perceived distance from the day-to-day mudslinging of Ivorian politics"⁵. The authority of Prime Minister Banny is ascertained by UN Resolution 1633, which bestows on him the "full power over the cabinet". Banny, unlike his predecessor who was largely perceived as a stooge works closely with the International Working Group, but even more closely with President Gbagbo and heads of other state institutions, civil society organisations and the Ivorian people. Within the six months Prime Minister Banny has travelled to various parts of the country, including the Northern part, where he held meetings with the New Forces at Bouake. Economic dividends of Banny's rule can be seen in the renewed confidence of the international financial and bilateral donors on Cote d'Ivoire.
- ❑ *The Context:* The context in which the new Prime Minister is steering the governmental affairs is critical to the process. Cote d'Ivoire today is a country suffering from 'war fatigue'. Besides, Resolution 1633 relegates President Gbagbo's

⁵ "COTE D'IVOIRE: Fresh peace hopes as top banker designated interim prime minister www.irinnews.org

regime to the mercy of the international community thus reducing to the barest minimum the latter's margin of manoeuvre. By threatening that the UN would not renew President Gbagbo's mandate, the President seems to be cowed to submit to the road map that was amply traced by President Mbeki of South Africa. Meanwhile, the consistent reference to, and recognition of the President of the Republic, and his resolve to work in tandem with President Gbagbo has been an asset to peace. From the international perspective, the electioneering politics in France has, and may continue to create windows of opportunity for a Franco-Ivorian rapprochement that is very critical to the peace process.

- ❑ *Closing the Gap Between Protagonists:* Ironically, death has been a factor that has served as rallying moment for protagonists. The deaths of Ouattarra's mother, Bedie's senior brother, Affi N'Guessan's father (in addition to Gbagbo's father) presented unique opportunities for political enemies to demonstrate African solidarity by visiting and consoling one another. The presence of 'political enemies' in funeral ceremonies was an indication that reconciliation in Cote d'Ivoire was not elusive; that it was indeed feasible. This gap can even become thinner if the media polarization also follows suit.
- ❑ *Meeting between Soro and Goudé Blé:* Though not highly publicized, the meeting between Guillaume Soro and Goudé Blé after Soro returned and took office in Abidjan was significant. The face to face meeting between the former student union leaders and their resolve to settle their differences in the superior interest of the country was a major thaw in the Ivorian crisis. By engaging secondary and tertiary stakeholders like Goudé, the peace process is facing reality. Perhaps it would be proper to also engage the President of the Ivorian Parliament, Mammadou Koulibaly.
- ❑ *Football and the World Cup Frenzy:* No single intervening factor has positively affected the Ivorian peace process than football. Despite the divided country, the Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire defied all odds and united under the banner of football as they reached the finals of the African Cup of Nations tournament in Egypt early this year. Their qualification for the World Cup in Germany has continued to lower the political tension at home. The fact that players in the squad come from both the north and south downplays the artificial divide that the war has imposed on the country. A successful World Cup venture could augur well for the Ivorian peace process.
- ❑ *Re-opening of schools and examinations in rebel held zone:* The organization of examinations in the rebel held zone is a major step towards peace and stability. This move is seen as a significant move towards the restoration of government authority administration nationwide.
- ❑ *Burial of Robert Guei and Wife:* After close to four years since their assassination in the early hours of the September 2002 coup attempt, Rose Guei, wife of General Robert Guei was finally buried and preparations are far advanced for the husband to be buried though controversies still loom. With the Government footing the bill of the burial ceremonies, one area of tension would certainly be managed at least to some level.
- ❑ *Extradition of Youssouf Fofana:* The extradition to France of the fugitive Franco-Ivorian, Youssouf Fofana facing criminal charges of murder in France thanks to President Gbagbo's intervention continued to lesson the tension between France

and Cote d'Ivoire. Cooperation between France and Cote d'Ivoire is very crucial to the effective implementation of the peace process, even if the crisis has been referred to as a purely Ivorian matter.

B. Hurdles (*Real and Anticipated*) to the Peace Process: Here we are focusing on those issues that are still surrounded by controversies and or disagreements.

- ❑ *Unsettled Issues of DDR:* DDR is undoubtedly a very complex process. It can be easier done on paper but the implementation is what matters as new realities and demands are likely to crop up. With the tendency or demonstrated lack of trust reflected in the reticence of the politicians, the implementation of the DDR programme may continue to stall. The *Forces Nouvelles* still hold sway that they would not disarm when the two military units have not been integrated⁶. The pegging of pre-conditions, contrary to the spirit of Resolution 1633 may still be a major handicap.
- ❑ *Persistent Tension within the country:* While the country is already predicting the end of the tunnel, recent tension and armed attacks in the West of the country constitute a menace to the tranquillity needed to accompany this delicate phase of the peace process.
- ❑ *Politicization of Identification and Electoral Registry:* The identification of who is who and building up of a credible electoral register are critical elements that would determine the success of the elections believed to be the watershed event in the ongoing peace process. The fight for the control of structures handling these crucial processes left no one in doubt that there is risk of politicization and manipulation by politicians for personal and party gains. Being a key issue that was flagged as the bedrock of the Ivorian crisis, it is an area to give the utmost attention to. Given the stakes of elections in Cote d'Ivoire, and the fact that the 12-month extension of the President's term reduces by the day, it is still very worrying.
- ❑ In addition, the UN senior representative on elections Monteiro left when the preparations are far from taking off fully. However, when he participated in the installation ceremony of the bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission (CIE), he expressed his satisfaction. "I am very happy for Cote d'Ivoire, because now there is a very clear perspective to organise elections within the norms prescribed by the international community, but most importantly as wanted by Ivorians themselves. The engine I had been asking for is now in place, the electoral train can now take off." But it is very prudent not to be too optimistic in such fragile scenarios when it concerns the quest for power.
- ❑ *October 31 Deadline for Elections:* Scepticism over reality of October remains. In fact there are those who would wish to see the deadline elapse without elections and thus plunge the country into a political deluge. While it is expected that the elections should hold on or before October 31st, the voter registration process must be completed well ahead of time, to have the lists compiled and published before the elections. We are just three months to October. According to the Ivorian Constitution,

❑ ⁶ According to Ousmane Coulibaly of the New Forces in an interview granted *Le Front*, integrating the Armed Forces of the New Forces with the National Armed Forces of Cote d'Ivoire, is a condition *sine qua non* for disarmament. Commandant Ousmane indicated that disarmament would take no time, once there is the political will to integrate the two forces.

the electoral register must be published three months ahead of the elections.

- ❑ *Spoilers and Marginal Stakeholders*: Marginal stakeholders who have no great stake in peace but are capable of torpedoing the process abound. Already, former recruits who have to be disarmed are threatening, motivated by the Zinzins, Bahefoue and Godobé whose sack is said to have triggered the coup-cum-rebellion now undergoing formal training as part of the peace compromise. Prime Minister Banny is also facing strikes by teachers and other trade unions demanding improved pay packages and conditions of work. Many such hurdles may be anticipated.

Possible Scenarios

Best Case Scenario

Political leaders match their words with action, as mutual confidence continues to grow. Following productive working sessions, the disarmament, and demobilisation and reinsertion program takes off and fully goes operational country-wide. The identification process and review of the electoral registry move at the speed of light, with demonstrated openness and inclusiveness. With the assistance of international experts, the Independent Electoral Commission acquires all necessary resources and enjoys the confidence of the population and political parties alike. Despite fears of timing and related constraints, elections are organized (possibly by end of December 2006) and judged relatively free, fair and transparent. The results are proclaimed and Cote d'Ivoire gets a new democratically elected President, who immediately announces an inclusive Government of National Unity and a series of confidence and trust building and reconciliatory measures are initiated.

Worst Case Scenario

Political mistrust and persistent posing of pre-conditions by the protagonists make it impossible for the October 31 deadline. The UN refuses to prolong President Gbagbo's mandate and he and the FPI party as well as the Young Patriots declare the peace process dead and buried. The UN is asked to vacate and while President Gbagbo announces the forceful unification of the country, the New Forces and their opposition allies declare the Presidency vacant and anarchy ensues. Violent protests, attacks and counter attacks resume and Cote d'Ivoire glides into full scale war.

Options for Response/Action

Ivorian Political Actors

- ❑ *Ivorian Political Actors* must continue to dialogue on the outstanding issues to ensure a smooth process, placing the national interest above personal, ethnic and party interests and egos.
- ❑ *A code of conduct for political parties* should be drawn by actors themselves and strictly complied to. The winner take all mentality should be blotted out and a post-election programme for potential candidates and parties vying for the Presidency made known.
- ❑ *New breed of political leaders should be groomed* and if possible presented in forthcoming elections, while a platform of present leaders should be created to provide advice (kind of Council of State).

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- ❑ *A lot of attention must be paid to the process.* Each step, action, statement must be well thought-out before implementation. There must be room for neither speculations or misinterpretation nor any form of conditionality.
 - ❑ *Continuous support for Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny* in the important engagement of winning and building the trust and confidence of the political leaders and the Ivorian people. It is important to be very watchful of 'spoilers', either by shadow stakeholders, acts of distraction or misplaced statements.

International Community

- ❑ *ECOWAS and AU:* The African sub-regional and regional bodies have a strategic role to play. The ground work and initiatives that have resulted in the brokering of the peace processes have benefited from the immense contribution of these two bodies. It is important that these bodies continue to engage and not ostracize President Gbagbo in the quest for durable peace in Cote d'Ivoire.
- ❑ *The International working group (IWG)* should continue to impartially engage the protagonists to enhance the peace initiatives of Prime Minister Konan Banny including the effective monitoring of the Accords.
- ❑ *The UN should continue to use the 'carrots and stick' diplomacy* but do more in that direction by targeting the real spoilers with the sticks and why not reward the connectors with the carrots.
- ❑ *The UN Secretary General* has every reason to be proud after he leaves office if it were to go on record that he presided over a successful peace deal in Cote d'Ivoire. That would give him reason to have a befitting retirement in his native Ghana.
- ❑ *France,* the key Security Council member and the force behind the drafting of resolutions on Cote d'Ivoire should use its privileged position to put more pressure on warring factions to bring an end to the crisis. French economic and political interests could be guaranteed more in a stable and democratic Cote d'Ivoire.
- ❑ *Funding the DDR and Identification & Electoral Process* should be given priority. Given the sensitivity that surrounds the issue of identification and registration, for the process to be fair, transparent and inclusive as possible, the international community must fully accompany the Government of Konan Banny.

Conclusion

Peace in Cote d'Ivoire may cease to be an illusion. The February 27-28 Yamoussoukro dialogue ushered a new glimpse of hope. We are aware that this is not the first time Ivorian protagonists are meeting. We recall the Yamoussoukro meeting following the Forum of National Reconciliation, followed by a Government of National Union in April 2002. Barely a few months after, the coup d'etat-cum-rebellion took many by surprise and put to doubt the sincerity of the Ivorian politicians. The present context is different, and lessons learned from past failures may right the wrongs. While Cote d'Ivoire is united behind its national team at the World Cup in Germany, it is an opportunity for politicians to ensure the same fair play in politics, a level playing field, and even accepting defeat in honour and good spirit. The critical role of the rest of the international community led by France cannot be over-emphasized.