INTRODUCTION

The formation of ECOWAS in 1975 should be seen as the culmination of several attempts over a period of one and half decades to form a sub-regional organisation embracing the whole of West Africa. Initial attempts had floundered first, as a result of the rivalry between Ghana (under Kwame Nkrumah) and Nigeria (under Tafawa Balewa) in the early 1960s and later, the struggle for supremacy in the sub-region between Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire along Anglophone-Francophone lines. The events that delayed the formation have been well documented by O. Aluko, AKD Frempong, O.A. Obasanjo and O.J.B. Ojo.[1]

Against this background it seemed reasonable that none of the sixty-five articles of the original ECOWAS Treaty alluded to sub-regional security and/or defence. The founding fathers were not in a hurry to include any political issues that might be interpreted as a violation of member-states' sovereignty or a threat to their national security (Frempong 1999:124).[2] But the implications of peace as a prerequisite for regional economic development would soon dawn on ECOWAS leaders and force them to take the first step towards a conflict management system in 1978. More significantly, the demons of intra-community rivalries along the Anglo-Francophone cleavage will rear their ugly heads from time to time to frustrate ECOWAS' efforts at conflict management in the post-Cold War era.[3]

ECOWAS was founded on 28th May 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria with the signing of the ECOWAS Treaty. Established as an economic union, ECOWAS was designed to integrate the economies of its 15 member states of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo in order to promote

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[1] Aluko. Ghana and Nigeria: A Study in Inter African Discord , 1976; Frempong ,"A Sub-Regional Approach to Conflict resolution in Africa: The Case of Ecowas and the Liberian Peace Process, 1999", p121;. Obasanjo, My Command: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War, 1980, p155 : Ojo, "Nigerian and the Formation of ECOWAS," 1980, pp571-604.

[2] Frempong, p124

[3] Frempong, p136

economic growth and development within the West African sub region. The idea was influenced by the trends in globalization and international economic relations of the twentieth century.

The organization has made notable achievements towards the attainment of its objectives. However, the realization that the goal of regional economic cooperation cannot be fully achieved without peace and stability led to the adoption of the Protocol on Non-Aggression (PNA) and the Protocol Relating to the Mutual Assistance on Defence (MAD).

EVOLUTION AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS OF ECOWAS MEMBERS

Convinced that economic progress could not be achieved unless the conditions for security were assured in all member states of the Community, the ECOWAS member states signed the Protocol of Non-Aggression (PNA) in Lagos on 22 April 1978. [4] The adoption of the PNA was intended to create a friendly atmosphere, free from any fear of attack or aggression of one state by another. In its preamble, ECOWAS leaders admitted that the Community "cannot attain its objective except in an atmosphere of peace and harmonious understanding."[5]

While the PNA had the advantage of creating a friendly atmosphere and generating trust among members, the Protocol, however, overlooked the issues of the incidence of aggression from non-member States and externally supported domestic insurrection within the region. To cater for this inadequacy, the Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence (PMAD) came into being in 1981.[6] Articles 2 and 3 of PMAD adopted the principles of collective security and collective defence, respectively. In Article 2, any armed threat or aggression against any member-state was to be considered as one against the entire community; and Article 3 required member-states to give mutual aid and assistance to members so affected.

Furthermore, the PMAD provided that units from the armies of ECOWAS countries would constitute Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC) only when needed in an emergency. It, therefore, did not create a permanent

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[4] ECOWAS Secretariat "Protocol on Non-Aggression, (PNA)" 1978; M.Ayoob "Sqarring the Circles: Collective Security Systens of State," in TG Weiss(ed) Security in a Changing World, 1993, p48
[5] ECOWAS Secretariat "Protocol on Non-Aggression, (PNA)" 1978; M.Ayoob "Sqarring the Circles: Collective Security Systens of State," in TG Weiss(ed) Security in a Changing World, 1993, p48
[6] ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, PMAD Article 13, Abuja, 1999, pp 7-17.

ECOWAS standing army. This would mean that when the time came for ECOWAS to enter Liberia for example, unlike NATO, there would be no stand-by units and ECOMOG would have to rely on personnel contributed on a voluntary basis by some member-states.[7]

The AAFC, which could carry out joint military exercises, was to be under the command of a Force Commander appointed by the ECOWAS Authority and together with the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the affected state; he was to implement the decisions of the Authority. The actions of the Force Commander were to be subject to the competent authority of member–state(s) concerned.[8]

This last provision could be easily applied in situations of external threat against a member-state. But in the case of an internal conflict in a failed state (as was the case in Liberia) the provision would create problems, since there would be no competent political authority - a dilemma that was confronted by the first ECOMOG command in Liberia.[9]

On paper, the PMAD made a giant leap in ECOWAS' preparedness for conflict management, but that protocol was allowed to be infested by the virus of non-implementation; but for Liberia, it surely would have remained a dead letter. By 1990, the deputy executive secretary had not been appointed, member states had not earmarked units to the AAFC for joint operations to take place and none of the institutions created was fully operational.

However, the very existence of the PNA and PMAD provided some legal basis for ECOWAS' intervention in Liberia. At least, the two protocols together were a testimony to the fact that ECOWAS was not a purely economic integration outfit which could not assume responsibility for sub-regional conflict management.

The 1981 PMAD provided the outlines for dealing with internal armed conflicts if they were engineered and actively supported by other actors in the region. The Protocol, however, did not make provision for any intervention in case of a purely internal conflict. Fifteen years after the formation of ECOWAS, the Community was confronted with its major security challenge: the 1989 Liberian Civil War. ECOWAS established ECOMOG to control the conflict, and justified its intervention on the basis of four interrelated factors, namely:

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[7] Frempong op cit, p 125
[8] Frempong Ibid
[9] Frempong Ibid

humanitarian; the provisions of the PMAD; regional security; and response to the request of the then government in Liberia.

The failure to implement the provisions of the PMAD meant that when Liberia and subsequently, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau were flung upon ECOWAS, it had to improvise in many respects, resorting to ad hoc institutions whose activities would be characterised by disjointed actions. ECOWAS at its 13th Summit held late May 1990 in Banjul, Gambia, formed a five-member Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) to mediate in conflicts within the sub-region which could have a disruptive impact on the normal life within member states and the smooth functioning of the Community (ECOWAS Decision A/Dec/9/90). The initial members were Gambia (chair), Ghana, Nigeria, Mali and Togo.

The creation of the SMC had some interesting dimensions; coming as it were almost a decade after the adoption of the comprehensive PMAD indicated that the 1981 pact had become moribund. The SMC was not created specifically as a curative measure for the Liberian crisis but there is no doubt that its formation was influenced by the then six-month old war in that country. In fact, Liberia became the SMC's first and only patient. The SMC was charged apparently with purely mediatory role and this was why its decision to intervene in Liberia would prove quite controversial.[10] Lastly, and of more relevance to the later dynamics of the ECOWAS conflict management system was that the SMC was initiated by the then Nigerian head of state, Ibrahim Babaginda, the closest associate of the Doe regime in Liberia' who later became the chief advocate of the ECOMOG intervention; while the decision was signed on behalf of ECOWAS by the Burkinabe president, Blaise Campaore, then out-going ECOWAS chairman, a known supporter of Taylor's NPFL and [11]perhaps the staunchest critic of the ECOMOG idea.

ECOMOG the Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group is a non-standing military force consisting of land, sea, and air components that were set up by ECOWAS member states to deal with the insecurity that followed the collapse of the state structure in the Republic of Liberia in 1990.[12] The force restored security that permitted the reinstatement

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[10] Report of ECOWAS Workshop. Koffi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, Accra, Ghana, 2005

[11] Vogt, SMC crafted the ECOWAS Peace Plan (EPP), which became the bases for its intervention. It called for the formation of ECOMOG which was heavily criticized by especially the Francophone block,CoteDivoire and Burkina Fasso who were the stauch supporters of NPFL; 1992.

[12] Frempong op. cit pp 140, 268.

of a functional state structure in Liberia.[13] ECOMOG has since controlled conflicts in West Africa, notably in Sierra Leone (1997), Guinea-Bissau (1999), Guinea-Liberia border (2001), and for a second time in Liberia (2003).

However, the fact that ECOMOG operation were set up largely by military governments, and were run almost entirely by the military led to some major difficulties for the force's operations.[14] In the first Liberian conflict, for instance, there was little public understanding of the ECOMOG's mandate; the force received much bad press while the rebels effectively utilized international media to undermine ECOMOG's achievements. The forces also faced the problem of command and control, and inter-contingent differences in terms of language, training, capability, and equipment. Above all, the lack of clear consensus among the region's political leaders about the role and mandate of the force was the main problem of ECOMOG. Some Member States have allegedly supported rebel groups against ECOMOG, as was the case in Liberia. This severely undermined the force's effectiveness, and splintered ECOWAS itself.

Important lessons were drawn from these early ECOMOG experiences. West African leaders became more conscious of the fact that good governance and sustainable development are essential for peace and conflict prevention. Member-states therefore "undertake to cooperate with the Community in establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intra- and inter-state conflicts and the need to establish a regional peace and security system and peacekeeping forces where appropriate".[15] This formed the basis for the adoption of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security (ECOWAS Mechanism for short) in December 1999, following a series of ECOWAS meetings beginning with the extra-ordinary summit in December 1997. Its preamble not only affirms the desire of the leaders to consolidate the achievements in the resolution of conflicts through ECOMOG, but also to establish an operational structure for its implementation.[16]

As the long name indicates, the twelve-point objectives of the Mechanism include preventing, managing and resolving internal and inter-state conflicts; strengthening cooperation in early warning, peace-keeping, the control of cross-

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[13] M Khobe, "The Evolution and Conduct of ECOWAS Operations in West Africa" in Monograph 44

[14] The democratic credentials of the SMC came under critic. Babangida (Nigeria(),Rawlings (Ghana) and lansanaConteh (Gambia) assumed power through coups. Momohs (Sierra Leones) and Jawara (Gambia) were presidents of one party states. See West Africa, August-September, 2002,p10.

[15] ECOWAS Protocol, op cit p2-4.; Freempong "Crisis of Post Conflict Building: The Liberian Experience, 2003.

[16] ECOWAS Protocol, Ibid.

border crime, international terrorism and proliferation of small arms, etc. They also include maintaining and consolidating peace, security and stability within the Community, the organisation and coordination of humanitarian relief and constituting and deploying a civilian and military force whenever the need arises.[17]

At least on paper, this represents a very comprehensive attempt to overcome the sub-region's security problems in the broadest of terms as it takes into consideration all aspects of the security challenges expected within West Africa. The seventh mechanism, Task-sharing provided that In the pursuit of its objectives, ECOWAS shall cooperate with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations Organisation (UN) and other relevant international organisations.[18] Lastly, the new modes of funding ECOWAS PSO will apparently relieve civilian and troop-contributors from bearing the full financial burden of their involvement which in the past had been a serious disincentive for personnel contribution.

THE ECOWAS STANDBY FORCE (ESF)

Even though the Protocol establishing the ECOWAS Standby Force had been signed by ECOWAS member states in 1999, the force was yet to be assembled by the time the 2003 Liberian conflict broke out. ECOWAS still relied on the ad hoc assembly of troops from member states, placed under ECOMOG, to control both the Guinea-Liberian border conflict, and the second Liberian conflict in 2001 and 2003 respectively. Apart from the ECOMOG operation in Guinea-Bissau, ECOMOG's exit strategy has been to transition its troops to a subsequent UN peacekeeping force. Its modus operandi has involved an initial emergency response, followed by the deployment of a multifunctional UN mission. ECOMOG operations have usually been stop-gap measures predicated on the UN eventually taking over the lead.[19]

It was in this context that the idea of the ESF which would be an integrated force undergoing joint training, with quotas set for each member state was born. ECOWAS member states signed a protocol in 1999 that called for the establishment of a military force known as the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF).

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[17] ECOWAS Protocol, Ibid.
[18] ECOWAS Protocol, Ibid.
[19] W. Durch (ed), The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping (New York: St Martins Press, 1993) p9.

The ESF is to correct some of the problems ECOMOG had in both its organisation and operations.

The ESF is designed to meet the security needs of the sub-region and relates to a broader ECOWAS mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping, and security. ESF is to be employed when there are breaches of the peace due to conflict between two or more member states, violations of human rights and rule of law, and the overthrow or attempted overthrow of elected governments. Motivation for the adoption of the agreement to establish the ESF was based on ECOWAS's success in Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1990s.

The Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, adopted by ECOWAS in 1999, can be regarded as the Organization's constitution on collective security in the West African sub-region. The document provides the legal foundation for ECOWAS to deal with security issues affecting the sub region. The new Protocol signed in 1999, in many regards marks a departure from the traditional principle of non-intervention as the Protocol empowers ECOWAS to intervene in the internal conflicts of member states. It is noteworthy that the Protocol emerged in the aftermath of ECOWAS intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This is the first time that an international organization has formerly codified the doctrine of humanitarian intervention as well as legalizing the use of force to restore or prevent the overthrow of a democratically elected government.[20]

The difficulty of force mobilization and the need for prompt action in dealing with conflicts and emergencies were some of the lessons learnt from past ECOWAS missions. The Organization therefore adopted a standby collective security arrangement for rapid deployment in trouble spots around the sub region. The ECOWAS military vision, anchored on the need to build and maintain a standby regional military capability, provides a clear direction for ECOWAS senior military commanders to develop a multi-national force capable of meeting the security needs of the sub-region. "The ECOWAS military component will be comprised of pre-determined regional standby formations that are highly trained, equipped, and prepared to deploy as directed in response to a crises or threat to peace and security." To meet the force structure, as laid out in the

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[20] Report of ECOWAS Workshop, op cit.

ECOWAS Standby Units: Proposed Concept and Structure, ESF is to be composed of a Task Force (TF) and a Main Brigade (MB). [21]

The TF will comprise of 1,646 soldiers within pre-determined units located within member states, and upon order, deploy into any mission within 30 days and be fully self-sustaining for 90 days. Should the situation warrant an increase in the size of the peacekeeping force, the TF will be reinforced by the MB. The MB will comprise of 5,028, additional peacekeepers, which will be located within predetermined units and upon order be prepared to deploy within 90 days and be fully self-sustaining for 90 days. This brings the total strength of the ESF to 6,674 troops.[22] The MB force structure is based on the operational concept that the initial ECOWAS TF has been rapidly deployed and that a more robust, long- term force is required. The overarching assumption is that when needed, the MB will have advance warning, be able to review the actual conditions of the battlefield as experienced by the TF, and then prepare, assemble, and deploy.

It is important to note that the MB is not a completely separate, stand-alone unit as contrasted to the TF. Instead, the MB is an objective, mission-oriented means of expanding the previously deployed TF into a more robust military organization based on actual needs. During actual employment in the field, the MB will have significant capability to conduct peace-building and humanitarian assistance operations in accordance with the mission mandate. The task force will comprise command, staff, operational units and logistics elements, which will provide all the supplies and materials required by the TF.[23]

The TF is headed by the Force Commander (FC) who has Operational Command (OPCOM) of the ESF. He is assisted by a Deputy Force Commander (DFC) who also doubles as the Chief Military Observer (CMO). The CMO commands all Military Observers (MO) deployed in the mission. The Chief of Staff (COS) heads the team of TF Staff organized into seven cells (JI, J2, J3/J5, J4, J6, J8, and J9). The main task force is made up of a Mechanized Infantry Battalion (762 Men), Helicopter Squadron (45 Men), Logistics Battalion (648 Men) and a Civilian Police Unit (81 Police Men). The FC also has a team of advisers, which provide planning advice.[24]

[21] ECOWAS Protocol, op cit.
[22] ECOWAS Protocol, Ibid.
[23] ECOWAS Protocol, Ibid.
[24] ECOWAS Protocol, Ibid.

Conceptually, the ECOWAS Task Force is based on the operational requirement to mobilize units in order to rapidly deploy into operations with the objective of enforcing peace. Based on this assumption, there are limited consideration and provision in the TF for peace-building or humanitarian assistance mission. If the need arises, the TF will be expanded into the MB, which is capable of performing humanitarian operations. The FC is assisted by a team of specialist advisers covering Legal Affairs, Media, Civilian Police, Medical, Aviation Safety and a Provost Marshall. A TF Headquarters Camp Management Unit is incorporated in order to provide security for the Headquarters.

The line elements comprise the main operational elements of the TF. A motorized Battalion consisting of five Motorized Companies with 128 personnel each provides the main peacekeeping force. The Battalion has a Combat Service Support (CSS) Company that provides all the needed supplies for the Battalion.[25]

Civilian Police (CIVPOL) are a crucial element in modern Peace keeping operations. They are often required for the maintenance of law and order especially in a collapsed state scenario, when local state police are unable to perform their duties. Accordingly, a CIVPOL Company comprising three Police platoons (20 personnel each), a Body Guard and Support Platoon make up the CIVPOL elements of the TF. A Squadron of helicopters, with a maintenance unit is provided for the TF. This will be utilized for reconnaissance, firepower, logistics lift, and medical evacuation (MEDVAC) during operations.[26]

It is important to note that the sub-organization of the logistics element have as a primary task to provide almost all levels of supplies, services and direct support to the combat element. In general, the logistics unit is self-sustainable; however, the line elements do provide the logistics element some security and aviation support. As the Figure indicates, the logistics elements include Engineer Squadron (108 troops), Medical (50 personnel), Signal Squadron (96 operators), Maintenance Squadron (135 personnel), Transport Company (110 Personnel), and a Supply and Services Unit staffed with 23 Personnel.[27]

The advantage of the structure of the TF is that it is designed as a baseline structure, which allows for rapid mobilization and deployment and makes it flexible for expansion. The TF is mobilized and deployed to conduct peacekeeping/enforcement operations. Should the need arise, the force is

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[25] ECOWAS Protocol, Ibid.
[26] ECOWAS Protocol, Ibid.
[27] ECOWAS Protocol, Ibid.

progressively and systematically expanded into a fully-fledged Brigade capable of conducting peace-building and humanitarian mission and sustained operations for a longer duration.

Compared with the structure of the TF, the MB with a proposed strength of 5,102 troops is a more robust and larger force. The Brigade is developed by expanding the TF with additional troops. This would include staff officers, combat units (line elements) and logistics units. As the TF gradually expands into the MB, there is a requirement for a larger staff to manage the operations. The headquarters is therefore expanded to cater for this requirement. The inclusion of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other Agencies under J9 is required in order to coordinate the activities of humanitarian agencies and NGOs.[28]

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING ECOWAS STANDBY FORCE (ESF)

A number of challenges ranging from operational, logistical, financial, legal and institutional as well as lack of political will of member states have been identified to be militating against the effectiveness and responsiveness of the ESF. These challenges have ensured that the concept of the ESF have remained on the drawing board.

1   **OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES**

The ESF is critically handicapped in its intervention efforts by the lack of standardization in doctrine, staff procedures and training of troops. This is because individual Armed Forces within the sub region adopted doctrines and staff procedures from their colonial master (English and French) whilst other have adopted doctrines from the East (Russia and China). This lack of standardization has affected interoperability within the Force thereby undermining its cohesion and effectiveness.

ECOWAS is limited in its ability to mobilize adequate personnel to respond timely to emerging conflict situations, though the Defence and Security Commission envisaged raising 6500 troops since 2005. For the ESF to function effectively, ECOWAS should take steps to improve and harmonize the training of

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[28] A Toure, The Role of Civil Society in National Reconciliation and Peace Building in Liberia, International Peace Academy, 2002.

member states' troops meant for the ESF. The 3 centres in the sub-region meant to serve as training institutes for military staff, the Koulikoro Peacekeeping Training Centre in Mali, the Kofi Annan International Peace Centre (KAIPTC) in Ghana and the Nigerian War College should develop curricula to harmonise doctrine, staff procedure and training for the ESF.

ECOWAS should create a department for Validation, standardisation and evaluation to monitor and cater for training standardization and evaluation of all troops serving in the ESF. Additionally, efforts should be made at mobilizing personnel at the required levels to meet operational demands.

In April 2008, China and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish Markets in China and the ECOWAS Region that will enable their citizens to exploit trade and investment opportunities in their two areas.[29] West African governments are regular buyers of Chinese weapons and military equipment. China recently reaffirmed its intention to strengthen military collaboration and exchanges with Nigeria, Liberia, and other African countries. In a bid to further its escalating influence in Africa, it is highly probable that China will provide ECOWAS with the much needed assistance by providing equipment, logistics support, and funding for ESF operations. Some African leaders oppose the establishment of U.S. African Command (AFRICOM) in Africa, on the basis that it negates Africa's collective security arrangements, and rather request for direct funding of such existing security initiatives.[30] In the wake of China's continued challenges to America's interests in Africa, there is the need for a further study on China's role and influence on Africa's collective security arrangements.

2   LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES

ECOWAS member states are limited in their ability to mobilize logistics resources to sustain a high level operational readiness required of a multinational force. There is generally poor Sea and Air-lift capabilities and lack of vital air-to-ground support asset. In cases where some logistics support is provided, the Force still suffers from the lack of standardization of equipment,

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[29] Press Release, ECOWAS Bank and China to Establish Markets to Boost Trade and Investment, (http://news.ecowas.int/presseshow.php?nb=032&lang=en&annee=2008) 24 April 2008.

[30] S.A. Salim, "Preventive Diplomacy among African States," Disarmament, Vol. XIII, No. 3, 1990, pp 175- 190.
S.G.Amoo " Role of OAU: Past, Present and Future," in DR Smock, Making War and Waging Peace: Foreign Intervention in Africa, Washington DC: USIP, 1993.

arms and ammunitions, thereby affecting interoperability. The lean resource base and low capacity of member states to provide the needed logistical support and in good timeframe, has resulted in delays in deployments or interventions. ECOWAS should adopt the wet lease system where countries provide equipment's that meet a standardised minimum requirement in order to be reimbursed for the equipment.

ECOWAS should have a standardised list of equipment that troop contributing countries should supply to their Units and troops serving with the ESF in order to receive reimbursement.   ECOWAS should also, provide guarantee for member states to purchase equipment for their Units and troops meant for the ESF and channel the reimbursement for these equipments to pay for the cost of the equipment.[31]

3   FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Inadequate funding remains one of the major setbacks to the operational success of the ESF. ECOWAS has always been running into difficulties in funding its programmes without significant outside assistance. Most of the operational and training activities of ESF are heavily dependent on donor support from members of G8 and this could undermine the Force's effectiveness.

Member states even fail to pay the community levy which imposes 0.5% tax on non-ECOWAS imports as a means of generating funds internally. It is evident that ECOWAS need to develop new funding sources and member states should show more commitment to funding the ESF.

4   LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

The ECOWAS Protocol on regional collective security, which authorizes the use of force in dealing with Sub-regional conflicts, is at variance with provision of collective security by regional organization as contained in the UN Charter. The Charter provides that "no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the UN Security Council."[32] Thus any departure from a peacekeeping to peace enforcement operations without UN authorization raises issues and the

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[31] S.A. Salim, Ibid.
[32] UN Charter, chapter VII and VIII, New York: UN Press, 1992, pp 228-231.

possibility of a conflict with the UN, thus casting doubt over the legality of some ECOWAS operations.

Institutionally also, there is no distinction between actions which the Authority of Heads of States and Governments of ECOWAS may take and those that the Mediation and Security Council (MSC) could take under the Mechanism. The MSC can initiate and take actions on all policies for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping, and security. Furthermore, the MSC is empowered to authorize all forms of intervention and decisions on employment of political and military solutions to threats to peace and security. It is also empowered to approve mandates for peacekeeping operations, and appoint the principal mission leadership. In all these, the MSC is only required to keep the Authority of Heads of States and Governments of ECOWAS informed of its actions and decisions. The Protocol however has no provision for the Authority of Heads of States and Governments of ECOWAS to override the decisions of the MSC, should there be disagreement between the two.

The MSC seems to have more powers than the Authority of Heads of States and Government the highest decision making body within ECOWAS. This is a major shortcoming of the ECOWAS Collective Security Mechanism. The beneficiary of a delegated power should be accountable to the benefactor. The overall effect of these legal and institutional dimensions could undermine intervention efforts of the ESF. There is therefore the need to effectively coordinate partnership with all stakeholders and make the MSC accountable to the Authority of Heads of States and Governments of ECOWAS.

5   LACK OF POLITICAL WILL OF MEMBER STATES

The advent of democracy and its high demands for accountability, have limited the freedom of action by Governments in committing troops and logistics resources to intervention operations. The requirement to justify one's involvement in such operation in the face of other competing social demands at home discourages most Governments in getting involved easily in the ESF. Also the lean resource base and low capacity of member states has resulted in their selectivity in their response to conflicts in the Sub-region.

The Anglophone-Francophone dichotomy arising from neo-colonialism has greatly affected the political will of member states in committing resources into the activities of the ESF. The need for the entire membership of ECOWAS to

champion a common supreme objective in the interest of peace and security of the sub region should be made paramount. Additionally, ECOWAS should find innovative ways of making the ESF attractive to member states to enable them buy into it for the benefits they will derive from it.

CONCLUSION

Since the early 1990s till date, disputes and civil wars, with the attendant breakdown of law and order, and dire consequences for peace, security, and development, continue to plague the West Africa. The crises in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and most recently Cote D' Ivore are vivid examples of such conflicts in the West African sub-region. Some of the root causes of these conflicts have usually been traced to economic, social, environmental, religious and ethnic related factors.

ECOWAS adopted the PNA and the PMAD as a basis for sub-regional conflict management. The PMAD was to cater for the inadequacies of the PNA. The PMAD did not create a permanent ECOWAS standing Armed Force hence. ECOMOG had to rely on personnel contributed on a voluntary basis by some member-states. The existence of the PNA and PMAD was a testimony that ECOWAS was not a purely economic integration outfit which could not assume responsibility for sub-regional conflict management. Even though ECOWAS conflict management could best be describes as ad hoc and disjointed it transitioned well from an economic integration body to a conflict management body.

ECOWAS in an attempt to deal with conflicts in the sub region used methods that could be termed unconventional which brought condemnation and criticism to the body. It also created credibility issues and doubt about the ability of ECOMOG to handle sub regional conflicts.

The ESF is to correct some of the problems ECOMOG had in both its organisation and operations. The ESF is to solve some of the organisational and operational problems of ECOMOG. Since ECOWAS military vision, is anchored on the need to build and maintain a standby regional military capability, provides a clear direction for ECOWAS senior military commanders to develop a multi-national force capable of meeting the security needs of the sub-region.

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