



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

August 1, 2019

PR-029/2019

ECOWAS and USAID Hold Regional Conference on Electoral Security in ECOWAS Member States

Abuja, Nigeria - On July 30, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) "Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data" (REWARD) project organized a regional conference on lessons learned in electoral security in West Africa. Held at the Fraser Suites Hotel in Abuja, the conference sought to identify common trends in the ECOWAS region related to electoral conflicts and violence and to develop strategies on how different regional electoral violence prevention (EVP) stakeholders can proactively prevent the recurrence of these incidents in future elections.

The electoral security conference gathered 40 key regional EVP stakeholders from across the 15 ECOWAS member states. Among the participants were representatives from the ECOWAS Commission, election management bodies, leading regional civil society organizations (CSOs), the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions, and selected past USAID REWARD project grantees from Ghana, Mali, Niger and Sierra Leone, who implemented projects in their respective countries to promote peaceful elections. The conference facilitated regional networking and knowledge sharing among the electoral stakeholders on innovations, best practices, and lessons learned from recent elections. Participants also devised strategies to synergize and build on the positive achievements and address common obstacles to their work.

In accordance with the ECOWAS mandate under the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) that was adopted to reinforce the Declaration of Political Principles in the West Africa Region (1991), the conference leveraged ECOWAS' regional role in providing electoral assistance to its member states. The Early Warning, Political Affairs and Peacekeeping and Regional Security directorates shared case studies of ECOWAS' electoral violence monitoring, preventive diplomacy, and electoral security engagements respectively. Supporting USAID West Africa's regional development objective of strengthening systems of non-violent conflict management across the region, the conference marks a milestone in supporting local, national and regional stakeholders to mitigate electoral conflict triggers before they escalate into violence. This conference also builds on the continued work that USAID's REWARD project has conducted over the past four years to partner with dozens of local CSOs across five ECOWAS countries to promote more peaceful electorals in the region. REWARD will apply the lessons from this conference to support ECOWAS and Togolese CSOs in similar peacebuilding programming in the run-up to Togo's 2020 presidential elections.

The USAID REWARD project, which commenced in September 2015, is part of a broader U.S. government initiative supporting ECOWAS and its member states to bolster Early Warning and Response systems and promote peaceful and democratic elections.

###

***ABOUT USAID:** USAID leads international development and humanitarian efforts to save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance and help nations progress beyond assistance. In Nigeria, USAID supports health systems strengthening, transparent and accountable governance, basic education, and a more market-led, trade-friendly economy. For more information about USAID and its programs, please visit <https://www.usaid.gov/nigeria>. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

For additional information, please contact: bboateng@usaid.gov, or alimoud@crea-reward.com