

Goodwill Message Delivered by Paul Osei-Kuffour, WADEMOS Network Coordinator at the Regional Citizens Dialogue Program for Preventing Unconstitutional Changes of Government in West Africa Held in Nigeria from February 27-28, 2024.

Your Excellences

Esteemed Ambassadors

Consortium Partners

Development partners

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend to you greetings from the Executive Director, Steering Committee and members of the West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network and to thank you for your kind hospitality.

WADEMOS was launched in Accra in September 2022 as an initiative of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development [CDD-Ghana] in collaboration with regional CSO partners.

As a transnational civil society network, WADEMOS brings together CSOs from across the ECOWAS region, numbering about 45 organizations to build bridges of solidarity and common purpose. By so doing, WADEMOS mobilizes collective voices and resources to promote, support and defend participatory people-centered governance and democratic development in the ECOWAS region.

Through this transnational initiative, WADEMOS aims to promote cross-border solidarity among civil society on issues that require regional collective actions and purpose to address them.

To do this, WADEMOS supports regular dialogue, collaboration and engagement not only within civil society but with super-national bodies and partners such as the ECOWAS and the AU.

Your Excellences, WADEMOS last year embarked on several regional advocacy and activism around key democratic values notably the Unconstitutional Changes of Government and Term Limit.

WADEMOS held two dialogue sessions in Cote d' Ivoire and Guinea last year to deliberate and provide technical support, learning, and exchange of ideas on best practices and strategies for CSOs to interface effectively in the transition processes and mechanisms, particularly with the abuse and violations of rights and freedoms of citizens including the restriction of the civic space in these countries.

Unfortunately, the declaration by the Sahelian countries to withdraw from ECOWAS has shifted regional attention from the ongoing transitions. WADEMOS commends the repeal of the sanctions on Niger and ECOWAS reconciliatory gesture towards the Sahelian states opening up for dialogue.

Your Excellences, in a similar campaign, WADEMOS brought together traditional and non-traditional civil society actors and social movements across 15 countries in ECOWAS to push for a presidential term limit in West Africa which is a major driver of political tension and instability in the sub-region.

As a Network committed to the values and principles of democracy, we welcome the invitation from NIPSS and all the partners to participate in the launch of the **Regional Citizens Dialogue Program on Preventing Unconstitutional Changes of Government in West Africa**. This initiative is not only timely but very transformative in responding to the political situation in the sub-region.

WADEMOS commends the members of the consortium for creating the platform to promote solidarity, synergies, and resilience across institutions.

On behalf of the Executive Director, Steering Committee and members of the WADEMOS Network, we pledge our commitment to the dialogue program and the outcome of the meeting on preventing UCGs in WA.

Thank you for your attention!