

# FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT ON THE PROJECT

## EVIDENCE-BASED CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ECOWAS MEMBER STATES ON MILITARY EXPENDITURE REPORTING

The project is  
Implemented by:



### GLOBAL DEFENSE SPENDING COMPARISON 2024 (in billions)



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for Disarmament Affairs

### UNSCAR

Regulate weaponry - develop community



AFRICANA



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# List of Acronyms

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>AU</b>     | African Union   |
| <b>ATT</b>    | Arms Trade Treaty   |
| <b>UN</b>     | United Nations  |
| <b>UNODA</b>  | United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs                           |
| <b>UNSCAR</b> | United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation |
| <b>CSOs</b>   | Civil Society Organizations   |
| <b>CEYWI</b>  | 21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth and Women Initiative       |
| <b>SIPRI</b>  | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute                        |
| <b>ECOWAS</b> | Economic Community of West African States                               |
| <b>CSBM</b>   | Confidence and Security Building Measure                                |
| <b>Milex</b>  | Military Expenditure  |
| <b>GGE</b>    | Group of Governmental Experts   |
| <b>SDGs</b>   | Sustainable Development Goals   |
| <b>SALW</b>   | Small Arms and Light Weapons  |
| <b>ToR</b>    | Terms of Reference  |



# Acknowledgment

21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth and Women Initiative (CEYWI) wishes to appreciate the efforts of stakeholders and everyone who contributed to the research process and preparation of this report.

We are thankful to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) for the generous support and funding for the implementation of **Evidence-Based Capacity Building for Ecowas Member States on Military Expenditure Reporting**.

We also acknowledged the leadership and staff of 21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth and Women Initiative (CEYWI) lead by the Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Adekunle Lukman Adefolahan the Lead Researcher Mr. Wuyi Omitoogun, Ms. Akpana Ufana, Prof. Boubakar N'Diaye, Dr Nan Tian of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Solna, Sweden, Dr Elisabeth Skoens Senior Research Associate Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Solna, Sweden, Dr. Prosper Nii Ado for their invaluable contributions throughout the process of the research.

Finally, we appreciate the various stakeholders who created time especially the permanent representative of Nigeria to ECOWAS in Ghana for providing feedback and make key recommendations to the report validation meeting. We hope that the findings and recommendations express in this report will contribute immensely to the development and effective implementation of ECOWAS member states military expenditure reporting



# Executive Summary

The project is a UNODA/UNSCAR-sponsored project that seeks to enhance transparency in military expenditure reporting to the UN. Transparency in military expenditure reporting is a Confidence and Security Building Measure (CSBM) among states in the same region that goes a long way in allaying fears of hidden military strength. However, in recent reporting cycle to the UN military expenditure reporting instrument, only one country from Africa reported and that was Senegal. This is very poor.

This UNSCAR supported project is examining the reason why this is so through a 3-country study of Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. Why do countries in West Africa fail to report their military expenditure to the UN Reporting instrument? There is evidence that they produce the data annually and this is available in some of their

ministries' websites. However, this is never reported to the UN instrument; why? This is the focus of the study.

The outcome of the study will be used in a capacity building workshop involving ECOWAS member states' officials dealing with military (security) expenditure or expenditure of the security sector broadly.

To be effective, the project leveraged the convening power of ECOWAS to address its Chiefs of Defence Staff in 2024 in order to present the outcome of the study. It is hoped that the engagement with defence chiefs in the sub-region would result in a better understanding of the UN objective for seeking military expenditure data and soliciting the support of states in achieving that goal. This understanding by those directly responsible for the data would lead to increased reporting to the UN.



ECOWAS has already agreed to this arrangement and would further avail the available project information on its member states' no-objection requests to purchase weapons in line with the intra-regional agreement on information sharing on such issues for security and confidence building purposes.

Research has shown that while West African countries publish data on military expenditure at the national level, the countries in the region do not report to the UN through its reporting system. Omitoogun (2003, 2006) and (Tian et. al 2018) confirm this in their separate studies. Given the objective of the UN Report on Military Expenditure to serve as Confidence and Security Building Measure (CSBM) between states to enhance international transparency on military matters, increase predictability of military activities reduce the risk of military conflict, investigating why these countries produce data but fail to report to the UN system should be a serious research focus. This is in view of the significance of information on military matters

in a region as fragile as West Africa (due to its history of armed conflict, regional (subregional) security complexes and the current instability in the Sahel). The task becomes even more appealing in view of the fact that the regional organisation, ECOWAS, does not have its own system of reporting on military matters, which could have been argued was the reason for the countries not to report to the UN. Yet, information sharing on military matters at the sub-regional level would go a long way in strengthening the robust peace and security architecture of ECOWAS and reduce, to the barest minimum, any mutual suspicion among its member states that could lead to military conflict.



Studies such as SIPRI's A Practical Guide to State Participation in the UN Report on Military Expenditure (2022) represent good and useful practical guidance to reporting, using the simplified reporting instrument. However, there are good reasons to think that there are also other factors responsible for the low reporting. The fact that the level of reporting has declined over time (e.g. from 81 countries in 2002 to 47 countries in 2020) suggests that there are other reasons that have not been investigated, making this project important and timely.

The outcome of the investigation into the reasons for low reporting in West Africa would form the basis of a capacity building workshop that would ensure the development of specific solutions to address the identified challenges and ensure improved reporting to the UN. It could also serve as a basis to start a regional

reporting instrument at the ECOWAS headquarters.

## Objective



*To understand the reasons why ECOWAS member states do not report to the UN Report on Military Expenditure through a 3-country study;*



*To use the outcome of the 3-country study in a capacity building workshop to increase the capacity of ECOWAS member states to report to the UN;*



*Through the efforts above, increase the number of African States reporting on their military expenditure to the UN.*



The project on evidence based capacity-building for ECOWAS states is in two, locked steps, involving three countries in West Africa, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal.

The first step is to conduct the study on why these countries do not report their military expenditure to the UN Report on Military Expenditure. In the case of Senegal what is the country doing right and what reasons account for its 'consistency' in reporting to the UN Report on Milex.

The outcome of the 3-country study would be used for a capacity building workshop for ECOWAS member states in order to improve their understanding of the process and their reporting to the UN.

To aid the process of the research, 21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth and Women Initiative organized an online (virtual) half a day workshop to enlighten the researchers on the issues involved in military transparency broadly and UN reporting instrument in particular. SIPRI research staff would be engaged to make

presentations on their study on UN reporting instrument and transparency in military expenditure broadly. UNODA would also make a presentation on the status of reporting by African countries and the channel through which the UN requests for military expenditure data from countries. It is expected that these presentations would prepare the researchers for the field research and identify the appropriate questions to investigate in the field. focus on non-reporting Member States, to establish the causes of the decline in participation.

This project fits that bill as it is an empirical investigation into why ECOWAS member states are not actively participating in the reporting of military expenditure to the UN. In the analysis of the outcome that follows, the ideas and suggestions in this section guide the analysis of the outcome of the study.

- 1** An understanding of why countries, generally, but specifically West African Countries, have not been reporting their military expenditure to the UN Report on Military Expenditure. This could provide a basis for better knowledge of why other regions of the world similar to the countries in the study are responding in much the same way to the reporting system.
- 2** The findings of the three-country study would form the basis of an evidenced-based capacity building workshop for all ECOWAS Member states where identified factors militating against reporting of military expenditure by states to the UN would be addressed to enhance or develop the capacities of states to report their military expenditure.
- 3** The project could also serve to encourage ECOWAS, through its political Affairs, Peace and Security Directorate, to embark on developing a reporting instrument on military expenditure to suit its member states' preferences.

# Introduction

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FOR ECOWAS MEMBER STATES ON  
MILITARY EXPENDITURE REPORTING



The project, Evidence-based Capacity-building for ECOWAS Member-States on Military Expenditure Reporting set out with the assumption that African countries do not report their military expenditures to the UN Report on Military Expenditure (UNMILEX) due to lack of capacity to do so.

This assumption has also been responsible for the approach adopted by the UN over the years to achieve an improved rate of reporting. The most recent effort/activity in this regard was the commissioning of a study by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in 2022 to support government officials of UN Member States in preparing their submissions to the UNMILEX through a step-by-step explanation of the processes and issues involved in reporting to the UN.

The outcome of the SIPRI

exercise was the publication of A Practical Guide to State Participation in the UN Report on Military Expenditure (2022) which is a good and useful practical guidance to reporting, using any of the four online forms available for submitting information to the UNMILEX.

However, that did not stem the tide of decline in the number of countries reporting their military expenditure to the UN not just from Africa, but globally.

This project therefore set out to examine, empirically, the reasons for African countries' failure to respond to the UN invitation to report their military expenditures to UNMILEX, using the ECOWAS region as a case study. To demonstrate the underlying assumption that lack of capacity was the problem, the project was entitled: Evidence-Based Capacity-building for ECOWAS Member States on Military Expenditure Reporting.

# The Objective and focus of the project



# The Objective and focus of the project



This project was prompted by the need to find, through empirical study, the reasons for the poor or low level participation of African states in the UN report on military expenditures. The underlying assumption over the years had been that these countries lacked the capacity to complete the standardized or simplified instrument through which they were supposed to provide the data on military spending.

The standardized instrument and its step-down version, the simplified form, were believed to be too complex to complete for their submission of information on military expenditure. Two other categories, the single figure form and the nil form were also introduced to make the process even more simple.

However, all the efforts of the UN to improve the situation did not yield the desired result. Two

reviews in 2011 and 2017 respectively were conducted by Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) of the UN Report on Military Expenditures. The 2017 report specifically stated that empirical study was needed to unveil the main reasons countries do not report to the UN.

## As a result this project set out to achieve three objectives:



To understand the reasons why countries do not provide information to the UN Report on Military Expenditure, using three ECOWAS Member States as case studies;



To organize a capacity-building workshop to increase the capacity of ECOWAS Member States to report to the UN based on the outcome of the study;



To contribute to the efforts to increase the number of African States reporting on their military expenditures to the UN.

# Framework of Analysis (Framework of Research)



# Framework of Analysis (Framework of Research)



2012–2016  
Regional basis

*in*  
2019 **47**

countries submitted  
information on their  
military expenditures



*in*  
2020 **43**

countries submitted  
information on their  
military expenditures



*Between*  
2010 and **13**  
2024

states submitted  
reports



# Framework of Analysis (Framework of Research)



This study takes as its departure point, the history of the UN system for military expenditure reporting and its framework of analysis is based on the two previous GGE findings about the reasons for non-reporting to the UN and its recommendations for increasing the rate of reporting.

The standardized instrument for reporting military expenditure (as it was then called) was started in 1980 and became functional in 1981. In 2002 it was renamed UN Report on Military Expenditures (UNMILEX). Since its commencement, UNMILEX had had to contend with several issues including its definition of military expenditure, the objective of the instrument and, the most challenging, the issue of low-level participation by UN member states. While over time other issues have been relatively settled or have become less contentious, the challenge of low-level

participation by Member States of the UN has persisted and become worse, especially among developing countries and Africa countries in particular. To understand the issue and proffer solutions, two Groups of Governmental Experts were constituted to investigate the issue and suggest ways of improving the situation. Their reports were presented in 2011 and 2017 respectively.



**1980s**  
Reporting  
Average

**25** Reports  
Per year

from Western Europe,



**1991 - 2000**

**33** Reports  
Per year

(with increased reporting by countries in Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean),



**2001**

**74** Reports  
Per year

# Framework of Analysis (Framework of Research)



However, the report noted a lack of consistency in reporting by States in all regions. Even at that, the 74 reporting states per year accounted for only 39 per cent of the total number of 192 UN Member States and was thus far away from the goal of universal participation.

From 2012, participation in the report decreased significantly with participation averaging 54 Member States per year. On a regional basis, the number of reports during the period 2012–2016 was 6 from African States, 19 from Asia-Pacific States; 22 from Eastern European States, 13 from Latin American and the Caribbean States and 19 from Western European and Other States. In 2019, 47 countries in total submitted information on their military expenditures, while only 43 submitted in 2020. In Africa, between 2010 and 2024 only 13 states submitted reports, the lowest of any region.

The GGE reports identified possible reasons for the low-level of participation in the reporting system. Some of the reasons advanced include, incompatibility of national accounting systems with the reporting matrix/forms; the complexity of the standardized reporting form; the lack of political commitment, interest or capacity; the sensitivity of reporting military expenditures; a lack of awareness at a sufficiently high political level; reporting fatigue and different priorities towards other reporting obligations; lack of confidence in the information in national reports owing to concerns about comparability, accountability and credibility, lack of perceived benefit or added value, perceptions of the relevance of the reporting when official military expenditure information is already available in the public domain.



From 2012  
articipation in  
the report  
decreased

# 54

Member States  
per year

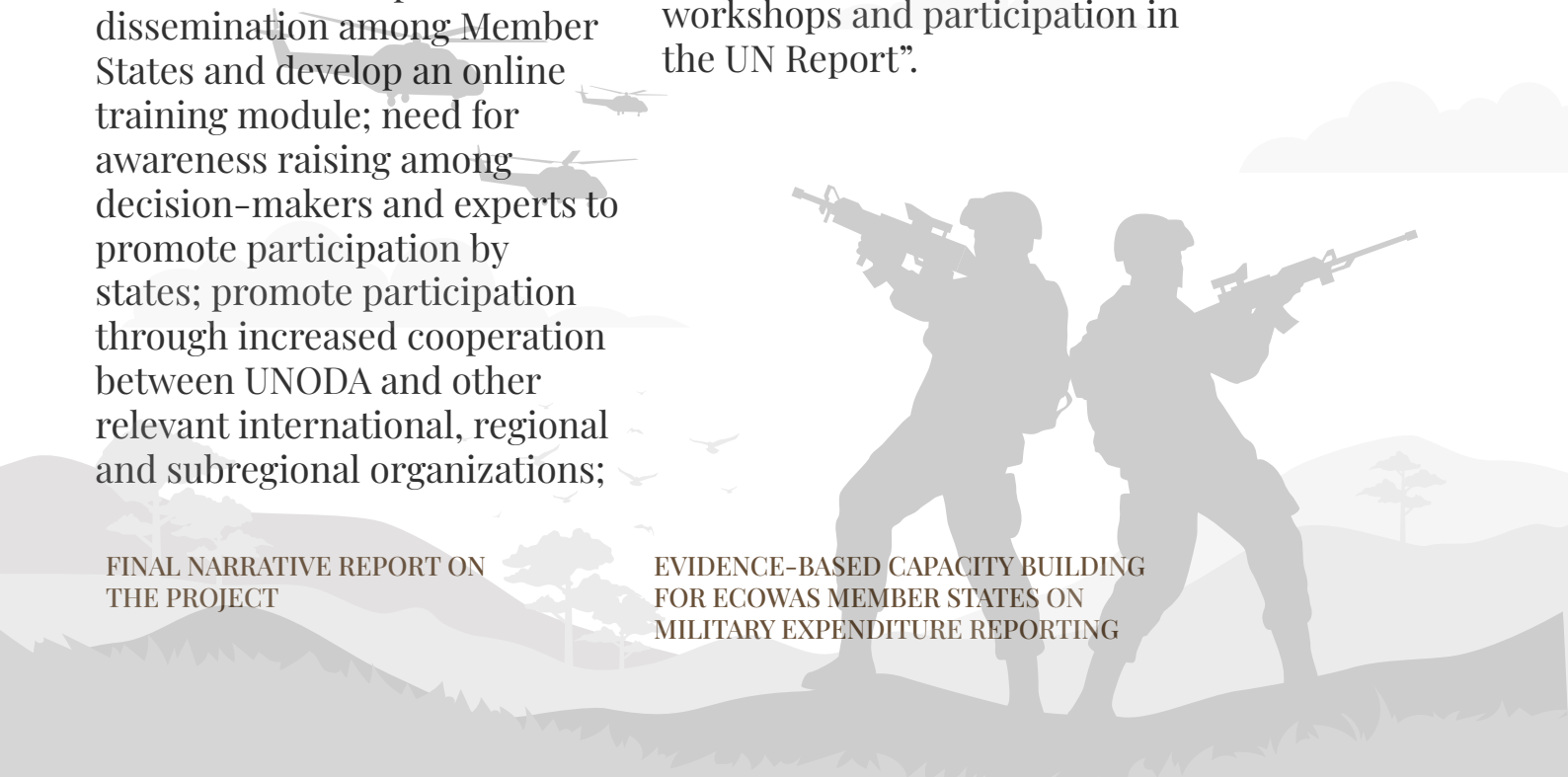
# Framework of Analysis (Framework of Research)



The recommended remedial actions include, leverage existing resources of the UN disarmament machinery; use high-level officials of the UNODA Secretariat to actively disseminate information on UNMILEX by highlighting its role and importance; modify the standardized reporting form to better accommodate particularities in national accounting systems for military spending; Member States should provide details of official national points of contact at the same time as reports are submitted. UNODA Secretariat update its information booklet on the United Nations Report for dissemination among Member States and develop an online training module; need for awareness raising among decision-makers and experts to promote participation by states; promote participation through increased cooperation between UNODA and other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations;

capacity-building for Member States participation, such as "offering assistance to Member States, upon request, in order to remove technical impediments for countries lacking the capacity to report data, including online training packages and on-site support.

The UN responded positively to most of the recommendations by implementing them, including awareness raising, simplification of standardized instrument and organization of regular regional workshops. However, the GGE of 2017 concluded "that there is no firmly established causal relationship between regional workshops and participation in the UN Report".



# Framework of Analysis (Framework of Research)



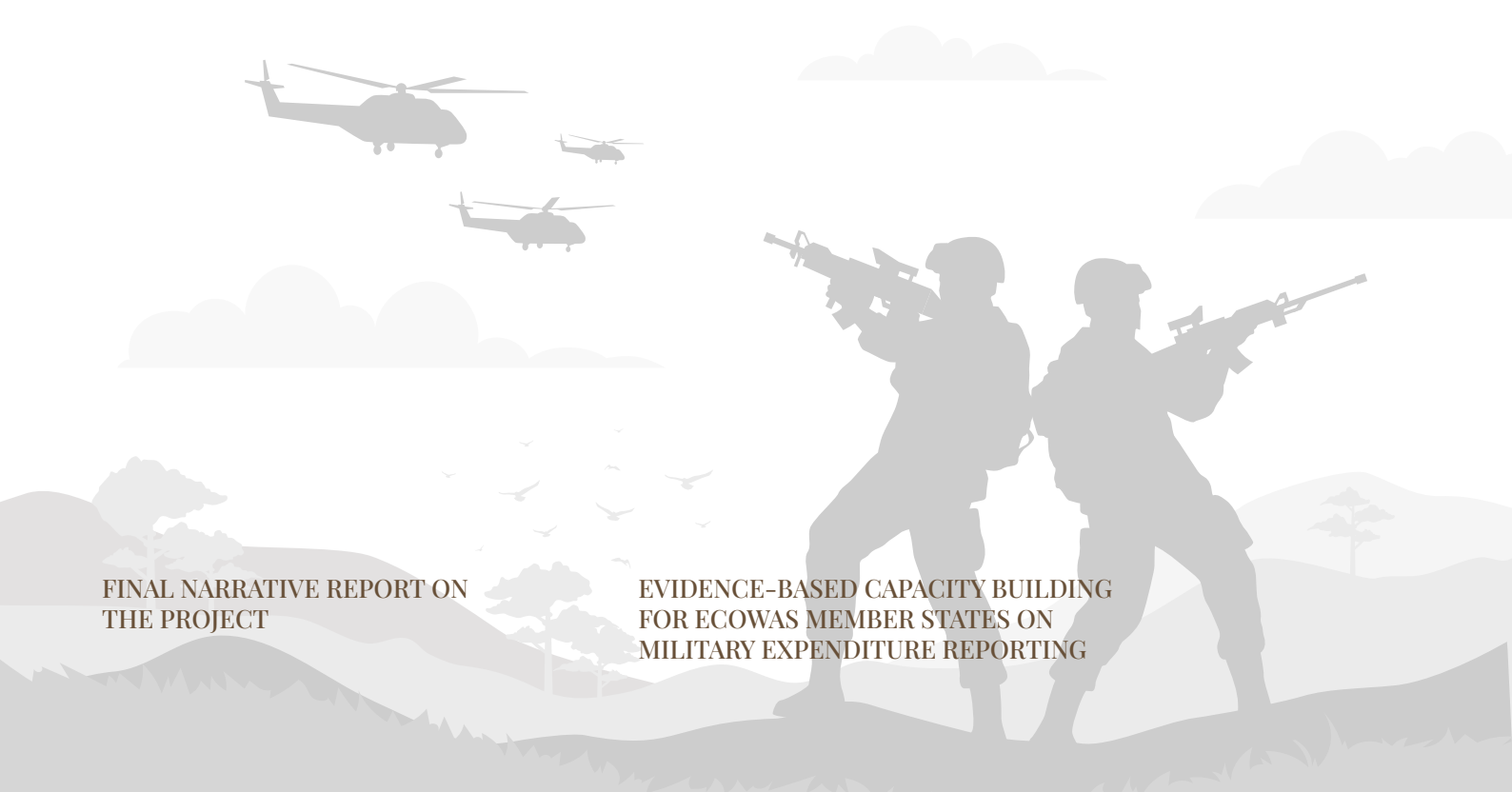
In which case, that approach did not yield the desired result. The Group concluded that on the decreasing number of participations by UN Member States, the actual causes for this, and in particular, how these may differ between countries and regions “have not been established on the basis of a thorough empirical study”.

Therefore, it suggested that a survey among Member States be conducted, with a special focus on non-reporting Member States, to establish the causes of the decline in participation.

This project fits that bill as it is

an empirical investigation into why ECOWAS member states are not actively participating in the reporting of military expenditure to the UN.

In the analysis of the outcome that follows, the ideas and suggestions in this section guide the analysis of the outcome of the study.



# Methodology

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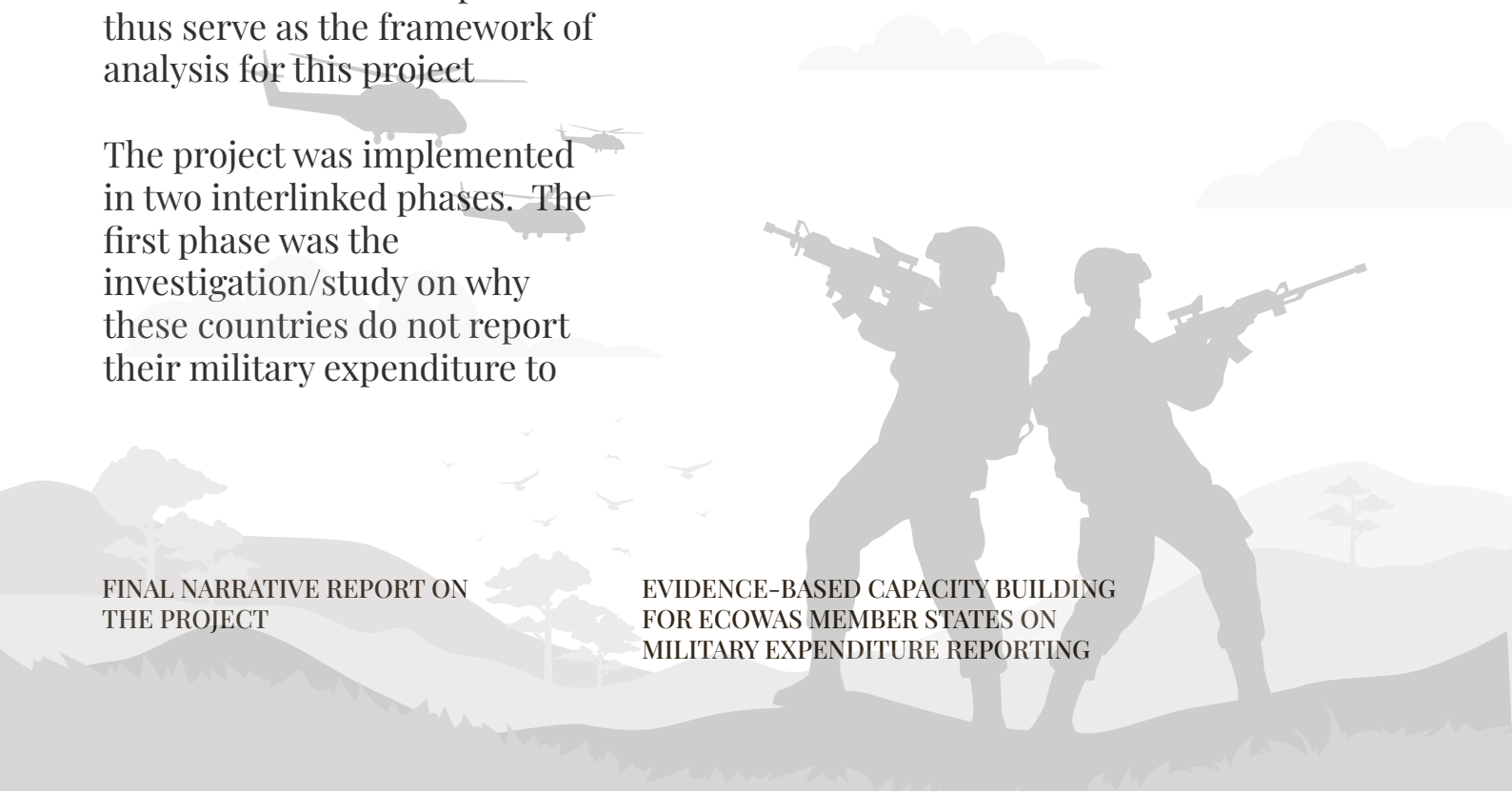


In order to ensure that the study is well grounded in the efforts of UNODA to improve participation by UN Member States over the years, the project reviewed the two GGE reports of 2011 and 2017 and utilized the issues identified by the reports, in terms of challenges and suggested solutions as bases for assessing the outcome of the study.

How well do the results address some of the challenges identified by the reports? As a result, the final outcomes of the project are situated within the context of these two reports to assess the extent to which they addressed some of the challenges the reports identified. The GGE reports thus serve as the framework of analysis for this project

The project was implemented in two interlinked phases. The first phase was the investigation/study on why these countries do not report their military expenditure to

the UN. The second phase was to validate the outcome of the study through sharing of the results of the investigation with experts and stakeholders at relevant meetings and through a workshop that involved the representatives of the governments of the three countries in the study, ECOWAS, UN regional centre, experts, civil society organisations and the AU.





## The three-country case study

ECOWAS is a 15-member regional organization (until recently when three of its members broke ranks to form the Association of Sahelian States leavin the regional body with 13 members) with its Member States coming from diverse backgrounds defined largely by their different colonial history.

Picking three representative countries for a study that purpots to generalize about the region was a tough task. However, since the objective of the study was to investigate the reasons West African countries did not submit report to UNMILEX, history of reporting to UNMILEX was the main criterion, colonial background, access to information and regional status were the other considerations for selecting the countries in the study.

Going by the criteria, Burkina Faso should be one of the states to be studied having submitted information on its military expenditure on more occassions (10 in all) than any other country in Africa, not just in West Africa. However, the last year it submitted a report was 2014 and it has since 2022 been ruled by a military junta that has taken the country out of ECOWAS making the country potentially a dangerous place to conduct a study on military expenditure.

Senegal was next to Burkina Faso having most recently submitted data in 2022 (and 2012) making its inclusion in the study almost assured as an outlier in a region notorious for not reporting. It is also a major francophone country. Ghana's most 'recent' report to UNMILEX was in 2002 .





The country was also chosen for presumed relatively easy access to policy makers that would provide insights on the topic of investigation instead of selecting a Lusophone state where access to information might be restricted by language and political culture.

For the third country we selected Nigeria for its regional significance although it has not

reported at all, like most other countries in the region.

It was not a perfect set of criteria but sufficient to provide us the minimum level of diversity that enabled us to proceed on the investigation. Consequently, the project selected Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria as the representative countries in the study.



### *Research questions*

*1 Describe the process of responding to the UN note verbale requesting Member States to submit data on military expenditure? From the time of receipt at the Permanent Mission in New York to the time decision is taken on request in the capital.*

*2 Is there a contact person for the process? What is his/her role within the decision-making process? 3) Which office or department gives the final approval for the release of the data?*



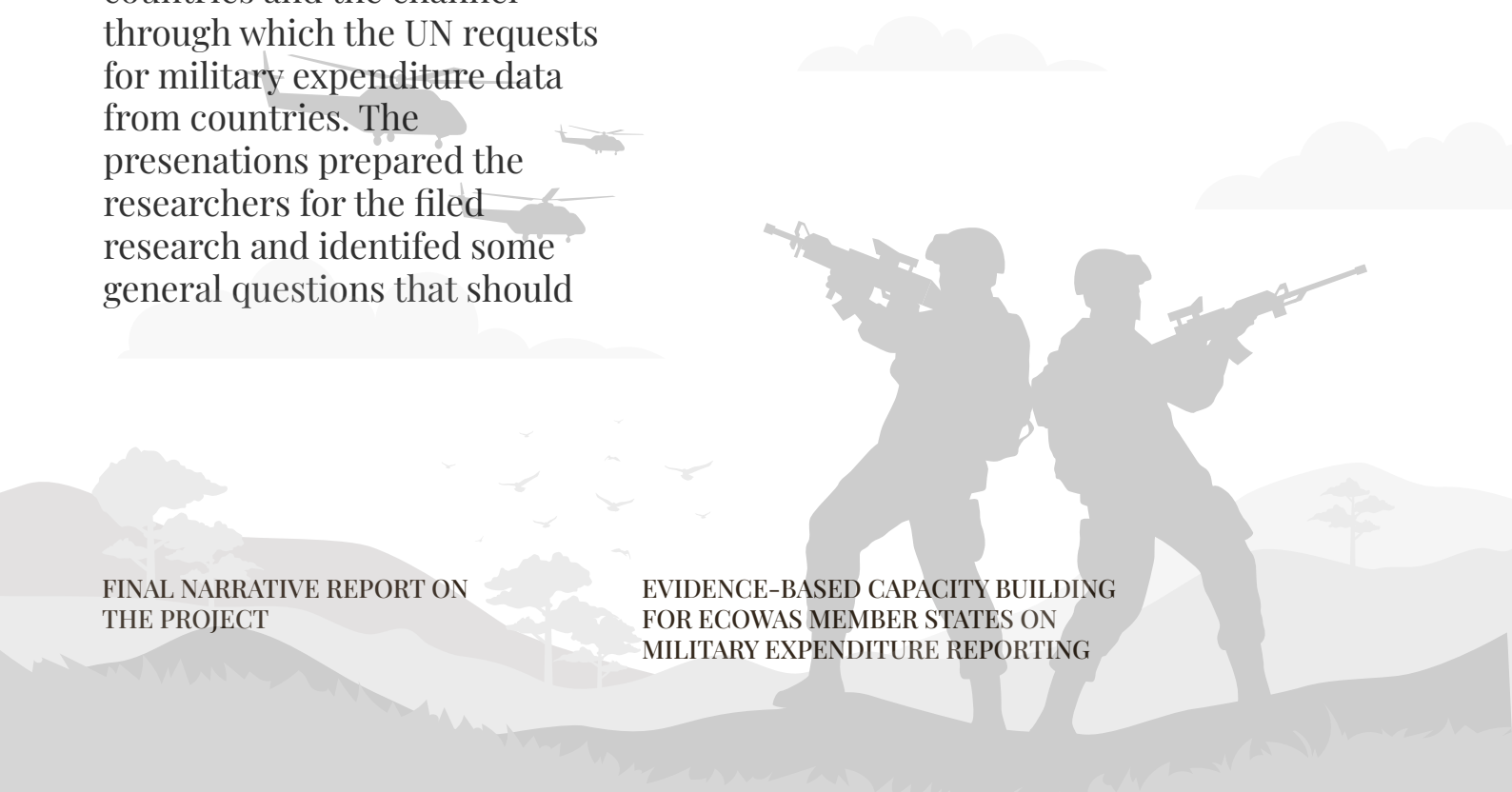
## *The Process of Investigation*

To kickstart the process of research, the project organised a workshop to enlighten the researchers on the issues involved in military expenditure transparency broadly and UN report on Military Expenditure in particular. SIPRI research staff were engaged to make presentations on their study on UN reporting instrument and transparency in military expenditure.

UNODA also presented the status of reporting by African countries and the channel through which the UN requests for military expenditure data from countries. The presentations prepared the researchers for the field research and identified some general questions that should

guide the research although by and large the research was not structured. This was to allow for flexibility taking into consideration differences in bureaucratic practices in the countries in the region.

For a study seeking to generalize its outcome, the number of sample countries was rather small; a larger number would have been ideal. Nonetheless, the fact that no such empirical study had been done in the region previously on the subject, its findings hold significant implication for the understanding and solution the UN is seeking for improved participation in its report on military expenditures





## The validation Process

The process of validation also went through two phases. First the preliminary findings were presented to ECOWAS Member States' national institutions in charge of small arms and light weapons. Representatives of 11 Member States were at the meeting organized by ECOWAS as part of information sharing among its members on proliferation of SALW.

The paper received critical input from that meeting on different aspects of the presentation, but Member States also expressed their fears about projects like this which appear to make Africa a scapegoat for a general problem.

The second phase of the validation process was at the completion of the study when final results were shared with stakeholders, including the representatives of the governments of the three

countries in the study, ECOWAS, UN regional centre, experts, civil society organisations, researchers and the office of the AU special representative for silencing the Guns. Inputs were received from participants on how the UN could possibly improve participation in the reporting system.

Suggestions ranged from including it as part of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) process so that it would become mandatory for countries to report, high-level contact with decision-makers to ensure that reports are submitted annually and awareness campaigning to constantly remind countries of the need to submit data. And lastly a good working relationship be developed with national and regional bodies working on armaments and disarmament issues such as the national institutions on SALW, regional organizations like ECOWAS and regular participation in their meetings. They stressed the fact that it is easier for ECOWAS to convince its members to submit information than for an extra African organization to do so.



# Study findings within the context of framework of Analysis

The study identified three main reasons why countries in West Africa do not report their military expenditure to the UN. These are: sensitivity attached to military expenditure, the existence of Transparency and Confidence and Security

Building Mechanism in the sub-region through ECOWAS and the non-obligatory (voluntary) nature of the request for data.



## Sensitivity to reporting military expenditures

The study found that one of the main reasons countries do not submit reports on their military expenditures to UNMILEX is the sensitivity of the information to these countries. While most of them publish their budget figure for the military as part of their annual budget process, they are particularly sensitive when an official request is made for the data, or the issue is being publicly discussed. Sensitivity to the issue of military expenditure cuts across the three countries and was observed by each of the researchers in the countries. It was also confirmed as an important reason for other ECOWAS member states at the two meetings at which the results of the investigations were presented.

Most countries in the region still perceive a release of their

military expenditure officially as opening their security for scrutiny. When such requests come from the UN that is believed to be controlled by the permanent members of the Security Council or the international financial institutions that could use the data in their discussions for support, they tend to see such requests as threats to national security and would rather not send such data.

Some of our respondents in the case studies made this point strongly. This was particularly the case in Ghana where our project researcher was not received officially by anyone at the Ministry of Defence. We attempted to allay the fears of those we interacted with by reiterating that the purpose of the exercise was transparency and confidence building among countries of the world, but they insisted there was more to it than just transparency. All the three researchers experienced this kind of reaction during the field research.

For a country like Senegal which reports occasionally, it has a lengthy bureaucratic procedure to follow to get the approval for the data to be submitted, hence the occasional reporting from that country. The



The request to speak with the responsible officer at the Ministry of Armed Forces in Senegal had to be directed to the Minister of Defence for approval. Even at that it took nearly 8 weeks before the permission could be granted for the officer to write back to the researcher to request written questions on the topic he wanted to speak about.

The researchers in Nigeria and Ghana had similar experiences. As a matter of fact, in Ghana the researcher met a stonewall in his attempts to meet with contacts at the Ministry of Defence. Those who volunteered support requested anonymity in view of the sensitivity associated with military expenditure. The information he received on the process was from the Permanent mission in New York and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. In Nigeria they wanted to know at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs why the UN wanted the data before directing the researcher to the ministry of defence for the final

response. The UNMILEX is not a new process, it has been on since the 1980s. For officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who receive the note verbale from the Permanent Mission in New York annually to be asking such a question in 2024 shows a complete lack of interest. When the researcher informed the officials at the Ministry that this has been going on since the 1980s and that the Permanent Mission sends the note verbale to the Ministry every year, they pointedly informed the researcher that submission of data to the UN report on Military expenditure is voluntary. Officials at the Ministry were categorical that if the request was not mandatory, the possibility of it being responded to was zero. They devote their time to requests they are bound by their commitment to honour: treaties and conventions.



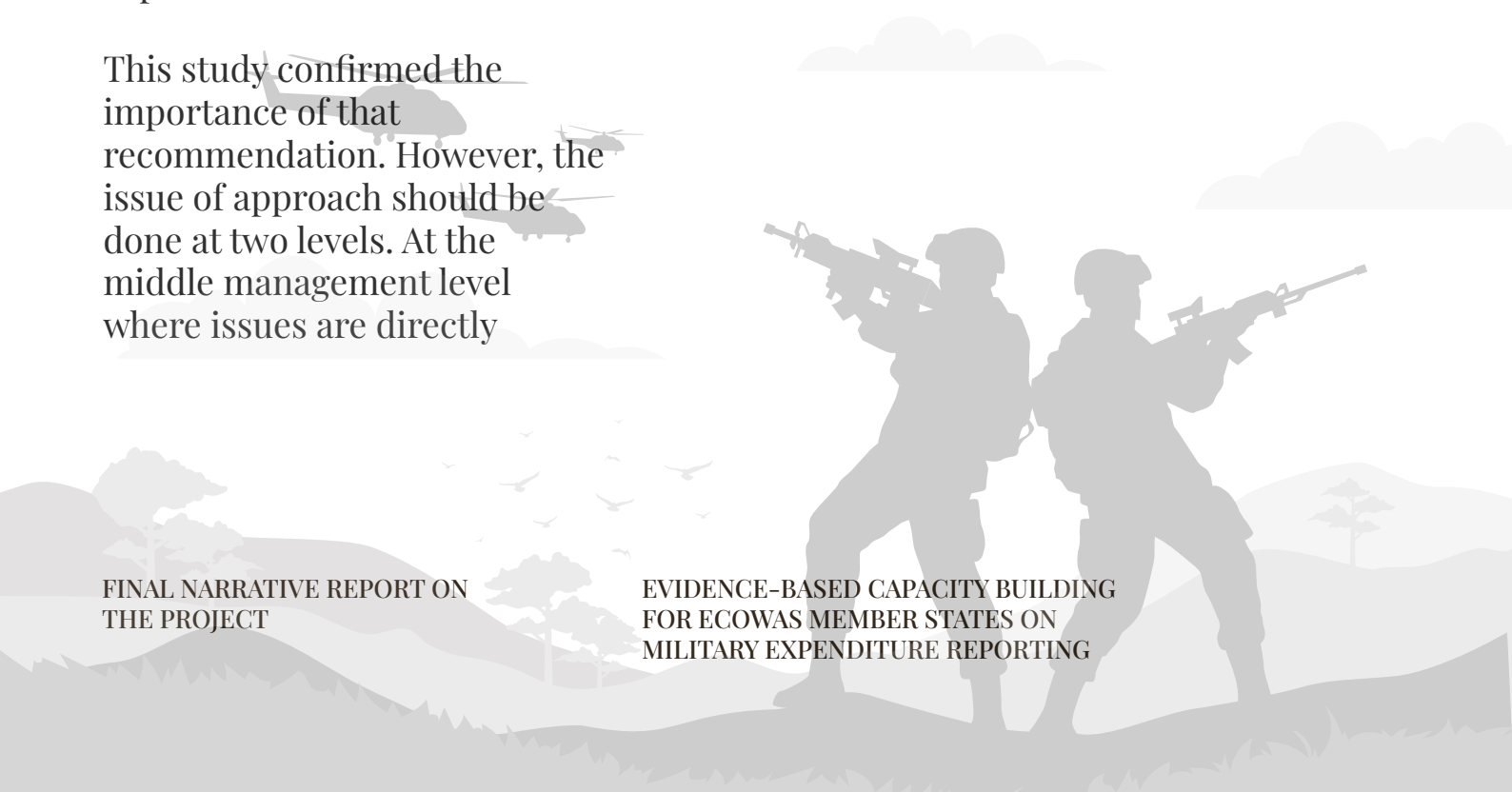


The fear in all these countries is that beyond transparency and confidence building they do not for the other purposes the data are used for. The general belief is that the secret of the country is being leaked, and that the data could be used to embarrass the government in the future, especially by donors who could claim the country supplied the data by itself to the UN.

Both the 2011 and 2017 GGE reviews mentioned the issue of sensitivity to countries of reporting their military expenditure and advised that countries should be approached at the appropriate levels to allay fears associated with releasing their military expenditures to the UN.

This study confirmed the importance of that recommendation. However, the issue of approach should be done at two levels. At the middle management level where issues are directly

treated before recommendations are made to the leadership or management and at the leadership level. The enlightenment campaigns or sensitization on the importance of the reporting to UNMILEX should be targeted at these two levels using as suggested high-level officials of UNODA for the leadership of the concerned ministries, particularly defense in the countries and senior officials for the middle management level in the ministries.





## 2 Existing mechanism for Transparency and CSBM in ECOWAS

The second reason why most states in West Africa fail to report their military expenditure to the UN is because of the existence of a regional mechanism for transparency and confidence and security building in West Africa. It is a mechanism for information sharing on weapons acquisition through the ECOWAS secretariat. Any Member state intending to acquire weapons has to seek the no-objection of other member-states through the ECOWAS secretariat before purchasing.

While this is for small arms and light weapons, some member-states are taking this a step further by including 'major weapons' and have made information available to other member countries through ECOWAS. The sub-regional body, through its incremental system of ensuring transparency, is extending this to all

Member-States through their National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Consequently, ECOWAS Member States argue that they already have this level of transparency in the region and do not require another layer of transparency at the global level hence the reluctance to report to the UN on military expenditure for CSBM and transparency.

Senegal again argues that her commitment under the Arms Trade Treaty is sufficient to ensure she reports her military expenditure data to the UN, although commitments under ATT are obligatory while submission of information to the UN report on Military expenditure is voluntary.

While the 2017 GGE report notes the importance of cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations, it did not consider the possibility of other transparency mechanisms creating a fatigue for additional participation in transparency activities. However, it did report that "reporting fatigue and different priorities towards other reporting obligations" as a possible reason for the low participation in the UN Report.

It is therefore important for the UN to collaborate with regional mechanisms to ensure further participation of the countries within the region in the UNMILEX.



### 3 **Non-obligatory nature of the request for data**

The third finding of the study is that submission of information on military expenditure by states is voluntary. Since the states are under no obligation to report coupled with the issue of sensitivity and existence of a regional transparency mechanism, they often ignore the request to submit their official data on military expenditure.

This is in contrast to UN treaties and conventions which upon ratification make it obligatory on Member States to report. As a result, upon receiving the United Nations note verbale from the Permanent Mission in New York by the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the relevant department in the Ministry recommends to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to use discretion in responding to the note verbale since it is not obligatory on the country to report. The MoD

usually chooses not to respond given the sensitivity attached to military expenditure by African countries especially when it involves sending the data to non-African organizations.

This finding runs against a key assumption underlying effort by the UNODA to increase participation of Member States in UNMILEX. One of the assumptions guiding the activities of the UNODA in its attempts to improve the reporting by developing countries generally, and African countries in particular, is that the countries lack the capacity to complete the standardized instrument in its original format that was based largely on Western (developed) countries' categorization of military budgets. The various categories in the standardized instrument were not applicable to many non-Western developing countries, especially in Africa. Therefore, due to lack of capacity to complete the form, they just ignore the request for data.





Over the years, the process evolved and the standardized instrument was simplified to take on board the considerations of developing countries. However, this did not improve the level of participation in the UNMILEX. Following reviews by governmental experts, the reporting format was further simplified to a single figure reporting and nil reporting if the country does not have a military force. But these modifications to the reporting format did not improve participation.

The UN made further efforts to increase participation by focusing on increasing the capacity of states to complete these forms. Both the GGE 2011 and 2017 also focused on the issue of capacity building for developing countries, especially Africa as a means of increasing their participation.

***This study found that lack of capacity is not the issue,***

especially in light of the fact that the UN has simplified the reporting format. The simplified format and single figure reporting are quite straightforward and do not require special skills to complete online. In addition, the UN no longer insists on Member States' providing their definition of military expenditure or that UN definition be applied to the data provided. A simple explanatory note would suffice to accompany the data supplied about what it contains. However, this has not improved the participation of African countries. This is not about lack of capacity,

***it is lack of willingness***

to submit information due, primarily, to the voluntary nature of the UNMILEX and, as mentioned above, to the sensitivity of the information in the countries.





The participants at the meeting of national institutions in charge of SALW in West Africa asked when the preliminary findings were presented: is Africa being used as a scapegoat for lack of participation in the UN report?

According to them, the issue of transparency and confidence building in the region is already being handled by ECOWAS and the main reason they were gathered in Abuja (at that meeting) was to share information on disarmament issues concerning the region.

Why should there be another layer of transparency at the global level?

That, according to them, was not necessary! These are state officials that would be consulted in the process of responding to the UN request for data on military expenditure. If they do not believe it is important, the minister can not override their 'expert advice'.

# WAY FORWARD



FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT ON  
THE PROJECT

EVIDENCE-BASED CAPACITY BUILDING  
FOR ECOWAS MEMBER STATES ON  
MILITARY EXPENDITURE REPORTING



On the basis of the findings of this study, we have identified some measures that could help in raising the number of ECOWAS Member States and possibly also all African countries reporting their military expenditure to UNMILEX:



A targeted enlightenment (sensitization) campaign by UNODA directed at key officials in the most relevant ministries on the significance of transparency in military expenditure would be one of the most effective ways enabling countries in the ECOWAS sub-region (and perhaps Africa at large) to report to UNMILEX. This should be an outreach targeted at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence in the capitals rather than at the personnel at the Permanent Missions in New York, although as the purveyors of the note verbale they are also important and could play a crucial role in mobilizing colleagues at their headquarters in the capital for the campaign. Those who are responsible for making decisions on whether to respond to the note verbale or not are principally based in the two ministries identified. However, there could be differences across the continent based on bureaucratic practices. The UN should be realistic and open in the discussion of the purposes of the exercise. Several of our respondents in the countries and during the meetings by ECOWAS



were doubtful that transparency and CSBM were the only reasons UN was requesting the data. It is therefore important to reiterate the objectives of requesting the data. The campaign should be done in all the sub-regions of Africa, if possible.

To emphasise that in addition to the transparency issue and confidence and security building measure goal of the military expenditure data reporting, there is need for countries to measure up to international best practices in information provision (sharing), especially for countries aspiring to hold Security Council seat or leadership of critical international agencies.



To strengthen relationships with regional organizations such as ECOWAS on issues related to disarmament by participating (either through the UN regional centre in Lome or directly from New York depending on the level of the meeting) in related regional activities such as the meeting of national institutions in charge of small arms and light weapons and the Chiefs of Defence Staff meetings where key officials could be sensitized to the significance of the reporting system. This could help develop a groundswell of support for the process through such closely associated national institutions with a sub-regional reach.

# About the Organization





21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth & Women Initiative is a humanitarian, not for profit, and non-governmental organization founded in 2012, with the mission to serve as a platform for good governance and societal development, through policy advocacy for inclusive participation and people-centered research towards sustainable peace and development.

It was incorporated as a corporate body with Corporate Affairs Commission on 7th November 2014 (CAC/IT/NO73348), National Planning Commission (12th August 2015), NPC/NGO/IC/S.638, Special Control Unit Against Money Laundering (24th November 2014) RN: SC 151401085, Federal Inland Revenue Services (11th February 2015) MTOABJ/NGO/73348/0000814.

Our target groups cut across Youths, Women, People with Disability with a special interest in political and economic empowerment for the

For more information contact: Suite 21/22, Abba Plaza, Opposite Women Center, Zuba FCT, Nigeria.

**Mobile:** +2348027942603 +2347060602706.

**Website:** <https://ceywi.org.ng/>

**Email:** [century4development@yahoo.com](mailto:century4development@yahoo.com)

betterment of the society through popular participation in governance. CEYWI is a member of various networks and coalitions, including at:

**NATIONAL LEVEL:** Civil Society Scaling-up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN), Nigerian Network of NGOs, Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Tax Justice and Governance Platform (TJGP), Zero Corruption Coalition (ZCC), State of the Union Nigeria Campaign Platform (SOTU-N-CAMP).

**REGIONAL LEVEL:** CEYWI is a member of the West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOFF),

**CONTINENTAL LEVEL:** we belong to the African Caucus NGOs on Social Development

**GLOBALLY:** We belong to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption Coalition (UNCAC), and United Nations NGO Committee on Social Development. CEYWI has UN Special ECOSOC Consultative Status.

### Social media Platforms:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/century-community-empowerment-655b98240/>

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586577784114#>

<https://x.com/21ceywi>



## Our Objectives:

Towards Sustainable Community and Human Development, 21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth & Women Initiatives specific objectives are: To build human and institutional capacity for sustainable development and poverty reduction, particularly among youths and women.

To promote and enhance the agency of youth, sensitize and engage them to be active informed participants in political, economic and development process. To deepen and promote good governance, rule of law, human

rights, environmental rights, equity and social justice.

To collaborate and share relevant information with all stakeholders including appropriate government agencies at all levels on conceptualization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects.





## Democratic Governance



Election Cycle Activities



Gender & Women Participation in Decision Making Processes  
Access to Justice



Youth and Women Political Economic Campaign.



## Promotion of Health, Human Development and Social Inclusion



Youth & Women Economic Empowerment



Food Security Campaign



SDGs Attainment Campaign



Health Sector Advocacy and Accountability



Volunteerism and Internship Scheme



## Transparency, Accountability, Good Governance and Promotion of Public Finance and Management:



Budget Transparency and tracking,



Procurement Processes Monitoring



Open Government



Environmental security, wildlife crime, corruption and illicit finance.



Tax Justice Campaign



## Research and Consultancy Services:



Training and Capacity Building Facilitation



Social Analysis & Pro-Poor Policy Advocacy



Strengthening of Institutional & Technical Capacity



Gender Analysis of Policies & Programmes



Advisory Services for NGO Development and Management



## Institutional Governance

There is a Board of Trustees who give legal expression to the organization. The Board makes policies and approves finances concerning the running of the organization. There is also the Project Management Committee consisting of the staff of the organization and a member of the Board. The Project Management is led by the Chief Operating Officer who is answerable to the Board and who oversees the secretariat.

CEYWI work with a team of dedicated, skilled and experienced staff drawn from various background charged with bringing innovation, integrity, energy and independence using expertise where necessary to bring experience to bear with a particular interest in social enterprises and development sectors.



