



## WARA/WARC Peace Initiative in West Africa



### Peace Making in West Africa: Historical Methods and Modern Applications

This major international conference on conflict resolution and peace building in West Africa took place in Dakar, Senegal from December 12-15, 2009. Organized and hosted by The West African Research Association (WARA) and its executive branch the West African Research Center (WARC), this was the first of three regional conferences that are part of the US State Department-funded **Peace Initiative in West Africa**.



*Ambassador Ould Abdallah (UN)  
during his presentation at the conference*

The opening ceremony was attended by the Secretary General of the Senegalese Ministry of Justice, the US ambassador in Senegal, Rectors of Senegalese universities. It was a great honor, as well, to have the presence of Dr. Mary Ellen Lane, executive director of CAORC present at the podium. The conference featured both an opening and closing keynote, both by outstanding international figures. The opening keynote was delivered by His Excellency



*Conference welcome reception with left to right:  
Dr Mary Ellen Lane (CAORC), Mrs Robin Diallo (PAO, US Embassy),  
Dr Jennifer Yanco (WARA), Dr Ousmane Sene (WARC)*

Ould Abdallah, UN Special Representative for Somalia, and the closing session featured an insightful keynote address from an outstanding peace broker in West Africa and in Africa in general, the former Senegalese senior minister of foreign affairs, Dr Cheikh Tidiane Gadio. A special message was also prepared by Ibrahim Gambari, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General; his remarks were read during the closing session.

The conference welcomed participants from 14 West African nations, representing more than 23 different institutions in the region. Presentations focused on a variety of topics, all addressing the range of endogenous methods in the region for preserving the peace and resolving conflicts.

The academic proceedings of the conference were spearheaded by two distinguished scholars of conflict resolution and peace keeping, Professor I. William Zartman, Jacob Blaustein Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Organization and Conflict Resolution at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University; and Professor Edmond Kwam Kouassi, Assistant Dean of the University of Benin Law School and prominent Togolese academic who serves as a consultant with several international organizations, including the United Nations.

One of the high watermarks of the conference was the active participation and contribution of traditional leaders, including the representatives of the King of Oussouye (Casamance, south of Senegal) and the Grand Serigne de Dakar of the Lebu community. The conference also featured a special panel discussion on the current situation in Guinea-Conakry and its negative impacts on peace in the sub-region.



*Left Right: US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, PAO Robin Diallo and PIWA Planning Committee member Prof. Villalon*

Based on participants' written evaluations and comments, this first Peace Initiative conference was a very successful event on all counts.



*One of the local voices, a traditional lebu leader.*

The next conferences of the WARA/WARC **Peace Initiative in West Africa** project are slated to take place in Sierra Leone in 2010 and in Cape Verde in 2011.

Proceedings of the conference can be found on the Project website [www.initiativepepaix.org](http://www.initiativepepaix.org)



*View of the Conference room*