Peace Studies and Practice
Journal of the Society of Peace Studies and Practice

2024 Edition, Vol. 13, No. 3
Pp 150 - 161

Strengthening National Peace Architectures: The Nigerian Model of Decentralized ECOWAS Early Warning and Response with CONCORD Initiative

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Being Paper Presented at the
Society For Peace Studies And Practice
18th International Conference

Abstract
This paper analyzes ECOWAS Early Warning System (EWS), in the context of conflict prevention, human security, and the identification of emerging threats in the ECOWAS region. The objective of this paper is to expound on the contributions of ECOWAS Commission's strategy of decentralizing the regional early warning and response system through assistance to Nigeria's Office for Strategic Preparedness and Resilience (OSPRE) by GIZ ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture and Operations (EPSAO) Project in operationalizing the CONCORD Initiative.
OSPRE is engaging with a diverse range of actors, including state and non-state organizations across various sectors, to promote robust dialogue on human security issues and to develop more resilient and prepared institutional and community structures. This approach recognizes that security threats in Nigeria often extend beyond state borders and are highly complex, necessitating a more sophisticated understanding of the regional context.
The growing need for non-kinetic strategies in early warning and response has given rise to the CONCORD initiative, which aims to address the fragmented approach that has characterized Nigeria's early warning and response sector.
By unifying the various existing structures into a single, collaborative network, the CONCORD Initiative aims at promoting collaboration, coordination, and sharing of resources and information, these sub-national clusters seek to enhance early warning and response actions at a more agile and granular level, thereby improving the nation's capacity to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to emerging threats to human security.

Keywords: Peace Infrastructures, Early Warning and Early Response, and Human Security

INTRODUCTION

Community conflicts in Nigeria have become a recurring feature of the nation's socio-political landscape, driven by a combination of historical, ethnic, religious, economic, and environmental factors. These conflicts vary in scope and intensity, but their implications for human security and national development are profound. Understanding the broader context of community conflicts in Nigeria provides a foundation for analyzing the specific dynamics in Adamawa State, a region situated in the northeastern part of the country, which has witnessed a disproportionate share of

communal violence.

Nigeria is a country characterized by immense diversity, comprising over 250 ethnic groups and multiple religions. This diversity, while enriching, often leads to tensions over political representation, access to resources, and cultural dominance. According to Falola (1998), the seeds of Nigeria's community conflicts were planted during the colonial era, when arbitrary borders amalgamated disparate groups under a single administration without regard for their preexisting tensions.

Post-independence, these conflicts evolved into ethnic rivalries, land disputes, religious tensions, and clashes between farmers and herders. For example, Osaghae (1998) highlights the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) as a manifestation of ethnic and regional inequalities, which left lingering scars on national unity. Similarly, Albert (2001) identifies resource-based conflicts, particularly in the oilrich Niger Delta, where host communities demand greater control over local resources and compensation for environmental degradation.

Farmer-herder clashes have become particularly intense in recent years, especially in the Middle Belt region, driven by desertification, population growth, and competition over arable land. Blench (2010) notes that these conflicts are often framed along ethnic and religious lines, further complicating resolution efforts. Meanwhile, the rise of violent extremism, most notably Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria, has added another layer of insecurity, with direct implications for community cohesion and human security.

Conflict management has become a critical area of focus in contemporary security and development discourse, particularly in fragile and conflict-prone regions. Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) systems have emerged as vital tools for mitigating conflict, reducing violence, and enhancing human security. These systems involve identifying potential triggers of conflict, analyzing data, and taking proactive measures to prevent escalation. This essay explores the importance of EWER systems in conflict management, particularly in the context of community-level conflicts, and highlights their relevance to human security.

Early Warning Systems (EWS) are mechanisms designed to detect and assess indicators of potential conflict. According to Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez (2002), EWS involve systematic data collection and analysis to predict the likelihood of violent conflict, enabling stakeholders to take preventive measures. Complementing EWS, Early Response (ER) involves timely and coordinated actions to address identified risks before they escalate into full-blown crises (Nyheim, 2015).

These systems rely on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data sources, including community reports, satellite imagery, and socio-economic indicators. Their effectiveness depends on robust communication channels, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and adequate political will to implement preventive actions (van der Goor, 1996).

EWER systems are critical for preventing conflicts by addressing root causes before they become triggers for violence. For example, the African Union's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) monitors political, social, and economic indicators to anticipate and avert conflicts across the continent (Aning & Salihu, 2018). In community contexts, such systems can prevent local disputes from escalating into larger-scale violence.

EWER systems contribute to human security by safeguarding lives, livelihoods, and

community cohesion. Human security, as defined by the UNDP (1994), encompasses economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. By identifying and addressing potential threats, EWER systems minimize disruptions to these dimensions. For instance, early interventions in farmer-herder disputes can protect livelihoods and ensure food security (Blench, 2010).

At the grassroots level, EWER systems empower communities to manage conflicts through locally-driven solutions. Conflict-sensitive approaches, such as mediation and dialogue, are often implemented as early responses to identified risks. As Lederach (1997) argues, involving local actors in conflict management fosters ownership and sustainability of peace processes.

The financial, social, and environmental costs of conflict are immense. Collier et al. (2003) estimate that civil wars cost developing countries an average of 30 years of GDP growth. By preventing the escalation of conflicts, EWER systems save resources that would otherwise be spent on post-conflict reconstruction and humanitarian aid.

EWER systems, when effectively implemented, can build trust between communities and governing institutions. Transparent communication of risks and proactive responses demonstrate the state's commitment to protecting its citizens. This is particularly crucial in fragile states, where mistrust in institutions often exacerbates conflicts (Osaghae, 1998).

Despite their potential, EWER systems face significant challenges, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. Nyheim (2015) highlights the lack of reliable data, inadequate funding, and weak institutional frameworks as major obstacles. Furthermore, political interference and competing interests among stakeholders often undermine the effectiveness of these systems.

In Nigeria, the absence of a coordinated national EWER framework has led to fragmented and reactive conflict management efforts. This is evident in the recurrent farmer-herder clashes and the Boko Haram insurgency, where delayed responses have resulted in significant human and economic losses (Adekunle & Adisa, 2010). Addressing these challenges requires investment in infrastructure, capacity building, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

The ECOWAS Early Warning System (EWS) is a mechanism designed to identify potential conflicts in the region and facilitate timely responses to prevent escalation. It was established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2001 and is composed of a network of national, regional, and international stakeholders, including civil society organizations, government institutions, and international organizations amongst others. The EWS operates through a four-stage process: monitoring, analysis, forecasting, and response. The first stage involves monitoring information on potential conflicts from a wide range of sources, including opens source and media reports, field monitors and local informants, and official documents.

In the second stage, the gathered information is analyzed using specialized tools and techniques by thematic experts at the Early Warning Directorate (EWD) to identify potential conflict triggers, such as political tensions, economic instability, ethnic tensions, and environmental degradation. This analysis is then used to develop early warning indicators, which help to monitor the situation on the ground and identify potential hotspots.

In the third stage, the EWS uses the information and analysis gathered in the previous stages to

forecast possible scenarios and develop contingency plans for addressing potential conflicts through scenario building workshops etc. This helps the EWS to identify potential interventions and strategies for preventing and mitigating conflicts.

In the final stage, the EWS disseminates the analysis, warnings, and recommendations generated by the previous stages through the Vice President and EWD to other ECOWAS response directorates, relevant stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, and international actors, to facilitate timely and effective responses to potential conflicts.

This dissemination process is crucial for ensuring that the information and recommendations generated by the EWS reach the right actors and are used to inform decision-making and policymaking. It also helps to raise awareness about potential conflicts and promote cooperation and coordination among stakeholders in addressing them.

The ECOWAS Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) is evolving to better address human security threats in the region. This includes decentralizing the system and integrating national peace mechanisms etc. to improve early action.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this paper lies in its contribution to the body of knowledge and practice on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. By highlighting the Nigerian model of decentralized early warning and response through the CONCORD Initiative, this paper adds to the understanding of how national peace architectures can be strengthened through a more collaborative and integrated approach.

The Nigerian experience offers valuable lessons for other countries in West Africa and beyond, demonstrating how decentralization can enhance the effectiveness of early warning and response systems by engaging sub-national actors and integrating local knowledge and expertise.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions guiding this study include:

1.What is the evolution of the ECOWAS EWS?
2.Does the ECOWAS EWS have any linkages with other Early Warning Systems?
3. What is the unique paradigm shift of the ECOWAS EWS?
4.Why decentralize the ECOWAS EWS to subnational and community levels?
5. What recommendations and policy thrusts can be pursued from here?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study includes:

1.To expound the evolution of the ECOWAS EWS.
2.To assess the linkages ECOWAS EWS, have with other Early Warning Systems.
3.To analyze the unique paradigm shift of the ECOWAS EWS.
4.To provide an in-depth understanding of decentralizing the ECOWAS EWS to sub-national and community levels.
5.To provide recommendations for policy formulation, reformulation or thrusts that can further refine and improve the EWS.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of this paper, it is essential to define and describe the key concepts that underpin the discussion. Therefore, in this section, efforts will be made to explain the concepts of Infrastructures for Peace, Early Warning and Response and Human Security. These concepts are critical to understanding the dynamics of conflict and the strategies employed to address and mitigate the threats posed by diverse forms of violence.

Infrastructure for Peace

In Albert Isaac Olawale's 2021 report (unpublished) on Scoping Workshop of National Peace Infrastructures (NPIs) in ECOWAS Member States from a Human Security Perspective, defined infrastructure for peace as a "conception of the aggregation of all institutions, mechanisms, resources, and skills that create resilience, address root causes of conflict and support peaceful resolution of conflicts" drawing from a Roundtable discussion on "Building Peace Infrastructures in Africa" held on July 6, 2020, convened by the United Nations (UN), the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the Centre for Conflict Resolution, WAA Cameroun, GPPAC, Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and State building, and the TAP Network. The Roundtable established that Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) comprise "all institutions, mechanisms, resources, and skills that create resilience, address root causes of conflict and support peaceful resolution of conflicts.

However, for the purpose of this paper, we would define infrastructure for peace as the totality of institutions, mechanisms, resources, and skills that are directed towards enhancing resilience, addressing the underlying root causes of conflict, and promoting non-violent means of resolving conflicts. This proposed conception of the NPI envisions a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to peacebuilding, recognizing the need for multiple actors and institutions to work together to address the various drivers of conflict.

Conflict Early Warning and Early Response

Ledrach J. P. (1995), defined conflict early warning and response as the "gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information on conflicts within states and between states for the purpose of enabling informed preventive policy responses", whilst E. Hutchful (2005) defined conflict early warning as "a system to detect early signs and trends which might trigger or threaten the eruption of armed violence" (p. 22). Another definition of conflict early response is provided by Galtung and Ruge (1989), "Conflict early response refers to the measures and strategies deployed to address the concerns and issues that underlie a potential conflict, before the conflict erupts or escalates. Early response includes preventative, de-escalation, and conflict transformation measures, as well as reconstruction and post-conflict reconciliation efforts. It aims to minimize harm and loss of life and establish sustainable peace."

For the purpose of this discussion, we will consider integrating the definitions of Lederach (1995), Hutchful (2005), and Galtung and Ruge (1989), to say conflict early warning and response is a process that involves gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information on potential conflicts and their underlying causes, in order to detect early signs and trends of conflicts and to enable informed preventive policy responses and strategies, with the aim of minimizing harm and loss of life, establishing sustainable peace, and addressing the concerns and issues that underlie potential conflicts.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of conflict management strategies on enhancing national security in Nigeria: its policy, challenges, and implications. The qualitative research allowed for the exploration of complex multiple phenomena, multiple perspectives, and context-specific factors. An extant analysis of relevant documents such as reputable scholarly work of different authors, government reports, NGO publications, peace agreements, and policy documents related to border management on enhancing national security in Nigeria were conducted.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human Security Theory: According to Amartya

Sen (1999), human security involves ensuring freedom from a variety of threats and deprivations that undermine human lives, such as poverty, famine, disease, illiteracy, unemployment, and endemic violence.

He proposes that human security should be considered not only in terms of freedom from chronic threats, but also freedom of economic opportunities and freedom of social opportunities. Sen (1999) argues that a focus on human security requires not only material well-being, but also democratic political participation, the strengthening of human rights, and the cultivation of social norms that enhance human dignity and self-respect.

The human security framework proposed by Amartya Sen (1999) is applicable the Nigerian context in several ways such as:

· Chronic threats: The pervasive insecurity in Nigeria, including incidents of terrorism, communal violence, kidnapping, and other forms of crime, represents a significant threat to human security and the freedoms it entails.

· Economic opportunities: The lack of economic opportunities for many Nigerians, particularly in the north, contributes to the climate of insecurity, as young people become vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The ECOWAS Early Warning System (EWS) has been the subject of a range of scholarly literature, which highlights its strengths, limitations, and areas for improvement.

Studies have noted that the EWS has made significant progress in institutionalizing early warning and response mechanisms at the regional level and has contributed to a better understanding of conflict dynamics in the region. However, the system has also faced challenges, including limited funding, institutional fragmentation, and difficulties in effectively engaging local communities and civil society.

Several studies have examined the ECOWAS EWS in greater detail, highlighting the following findings:

·A 2020 article by Gilbert Chagoury and Ferdinand Guichard found that the ECOWAS EWS has been effective in identifying potential conflict situations but has faced challenges in terms of implementing early response measures, particularly in areas with weak governance.

· A 2019 paper by Aderanti Adepoju and Alaba Moshood argued that the EWS has been successful in building regional capacities for early warning and response, but has struggled to integrate local and community-level perspectives into its analysis and response strategies.

· The Evolution of ECOWAS EWS

Chapter IV of the 1999 ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security mandated the establishment of a subregional peace and security observation system known as the Early Warning System. The EWS is established for the purposes of conflict prevention and in accordance with article 58 of the Revised Treaty where The System shall consist of: (a) Observation and Monitoring Centre located at the Secretariat; (b) Observation and Monitoring Zones within the subregion. The functional scope of the ECOWAS EWS covers human security in the region, and embraces operational and structural issues, with a focus on identifying new/emerging threats to the citizens of the ECOWAS region. The legal basis, the focus on human security, and the regional and transnational scope of the EWS are embedded in a.) The Revised Treaty (1993); b.) The Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001); c.) The

Declaration on a Regional Approach to Peace and Security, issued in 2003 at the Summit of Heads of State and Governments, and d.) The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (2008) among other official and legal instruments of ECOWAS. As part of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture (EPSA), the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) has evolved significantly out of lessons, best practices and technological innovations. The Early Warning Directorate (EWD), which coordinates the System, has several roles, including the collection of open-source information largely based on pre-determined human security indicators, the analysis of the data and the generation of timely reports with recommendations for the Office of the President of ECOWAS Commission, as stipulated in the Protocol, for the purpose of early action. The EWD data collection tool is the ECOWARN Field Reporter, a web-based field monitoring, interactive analysis, and visualization tool, customized for the ECOWAS region that functions by a network of field monitors collecting early warning data and feeding it to the ECOWARN Situation Room in Abuja, the headquarters of the System.

·The Linkages with Other EWS

The African Union Early Warning System (AU-EWS): The AU-EWS is a continent-wide early warning mechanism that provides the AU Peace and Security Council with regular analysis and updates on political and security trends in Africa. The ECOWAS EWS shares information and analysis with the AU-EWS, which helps to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and management across Africa. The ECOWAS EWRS is part of the broader African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), made up of the early warning mechanisms of eight Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) of Africa. As part of APSA, the RECs/RMs are mandated to contribute to the African Standby Force (ASF) and the CEWS. In addition to this, the ECOWAS EWRS and the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) - previously known as ECOMOG - like the Mechanisms of the other RECs/RMs, collaborate with the United Nations (UN) early warning and peacekeeping systems.

·The Paradigm Shift of the ECOWAS

a) Human Security Focus

A key characteristic of the ECOWAS EWS is its focus on human security, a notion which expands the definition of insecurity from the traditional notion of conflict related insecurity to encompass broader issues that affect the wellbeing and human security of a society. In line with this paradigm shift, the ECOWAS EWS has identified the following five thematic areas as its human security focus areas:

Crime and Criminality	Drug/human trafficking; organized crime; cyber criminality; migration
Security	Terrorism; violent extremism; maritime insecurity
Governance and Human Rights	Democratic governance; elections; human rights; youth bulge; gender
Health	Pandemics and epidemics
Environment	Food security; transhumance; land tenure; climate change

b) Establishment and Integration of National Early Warning and Response Mechanisms

Another key development of the ECOWAS EWS is the establishment and integration of National Early Warning and Response Mechanisms (NEWRMs) in Member States. A 10-year evaluation of the ECOWAS EWS identified a significant gap between alerts and response. Hitherto, the response component of the ECOWAS EWRS was centralized, and mostly made up of a.) The Authority of Heads of State and Government; b.) The Mediation and Security Council, with its three arms (Committee of Chiefs of Defense, Council of the Wise, and ECOWAS Standby Force); and c.) The ECOWAS Commission. This brought to the fore the apparent gap between the regional mechanism and response structures at the national and local levels. To address this identified gap, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government took the decision in July 2014 to establish, in each Member State, a NEWRM through the Supplementary Act A1SA.6/07/14 related to the adoption of the strategic framework for the establishment of Early Warning and Response Mechanisms in ECOWAS Member States. To this effect, a regulation of the Council of Ministers (C/Reg. 12/12/15) specifying the mandate of the NEWRMs was adopted in 2015. Presently, the Mechanism has been established in Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia, Guinea, Benin, Niger, and Sierra Leone and the EWD is in the process of establishing NEWRMs in the remaining Member States of Togo, Senegal and Cabo Verde.

c) Collaboration with Civil Society and Training Centers of Excellence

The West Africa Network for Peace building (WANEP) is the implementing Civil Society Organization (CSO) partner in the operationalization of the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) and has a standing MoU with ECOWAS in this regard. WANEP collaborates with EWD in several areas including data collection, the production of strategic reports on human security in the region, capacity and resilience building at MS levels and the conduct of other joint activities that could contribute to the achievement of their common goals of conflict prevention and peace building. EWD further collaborates with the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) and other CSO groups to include Civil Society perspectives that would enhance the understanding of peace and conflict trends in West Africa for the purposes of conflict prevention and peace building.

On another breadth, the EWS is partnering with several training centers of excellence in West Africa to promote capacity-building and knowledge-sharing in the field of early warning and response. Some examples of these partnerships include the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). KAIPTC is a Ghanaian-based center that provides training and capacity-building support in the areas of peace and security, including early warning and response. The ECOWAS EWS collaborates with KAIPTC to develop and deliver training programs for security professionals and policymakers in the region. Other training centers are the Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping Training School (EMPABB) in Bamako - Republic of Mali and the National Defense College, Nigeria.

· **Decentralizing the ECOWAS EWS to subnational and community levels**

This ECOWAS Commission's strategic agenda to decentralize and integrate the regional early warning and response system to strengthen National Peace Architectures in ECOWAS Member States is made possible through the generous support of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture and Operations (EPSAO) Project, co-funded by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation

(BMZ), and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It is against this background that the EPSAO project extended its support to OSPRE in the operationalization of the CONCORD Initiative. Located within the Office of the Vice President of Nigeria, the Office for Strategic Preparedness and Resilience (OSPRE), Nigeria's Early Warning System which serves as the country's central coordinating hub for early warning and response mechanisms, acting in accordance with the provisions outlined in the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the 1999 Protocol on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. OSPRE is working with all levels of government, civil society, the private and non-profit sectors and individual citizens to make Nigeria's institutions and communities more prepared for and resilient to threats to human security giving rise to the Consortium for Conflict Resolution and Development (CONCORD).

· The CONCORD Initiative

At the CONCORD Initiative's: Inaugural and Technical Summit, a two-day summit held at Envoy hotel Abuja, between 8-9 December 2022, the summit brought together both state and non-state actors operating in the early warning and early response sector, to have conversations around ways to make institutions and communities more prepared for and resilient to threats to human security as Nigeria continues to navigate an increasingly complex landscape of converging human security threats and fragility risks. Participants at the summit were all aligned on a growing realization that more emphasis must be placed on non-kinetic strategies and enhanced early warning and response capabilities. While the early warning and response sector in Nigeria is still in its infancy, with several actors operating in isolation and with limited coordination and impact, this fragmented approach has led to a sense of disillusionment and missed opportunities for effective early warning and response. Moreover, existing early warning and response capacities are either dormant or under-utilized, hampered by capacity deficits and disparities in operational competencies.

This gap in Nigeria's early warning and response sector has necessitated the introduction of sub-national clusters, aimed at bringing together various actors and stakeholders at the regional and local levels. By promoting collaboration, coordination, and sharing of resources and information, these sub-national clusters seek to enhance early warning and response actions at a more agile and granular level, thereby improving the nation's capacity to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to emerging threats to human security.

Geographies of Conflict of Subnational Clusters as part of ECOWAS' Decentralization Agenda

While we recognize Nigeria's geopolitical zoning formular, the grouping of participant states into clusters is in fact driven by their shared security environment and common conflict challenges, rather than strict adherence to the traditional zones. This approach acknowledges that conflicts and security threats often transcend state boundaries, and therefore requires a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the region. By bringing together neighboring states that face similar security challenges, the clusters will facilitate a more effective and context-specific dialogue on conflict prevention, early warning, and peacebuilding. This categorization of target states emanates from OSPRE's national scoping study, which identified and classified congruent conflicts into sub-national geographies/clusters across Nigeria. These conflict geographies were further refined at the Inaugural Strategic Workshop of CONCORD initiative that held at Abuja in December 2022.

Consequently, as part the decentralization agenda, CONCORD seeks to establish within

these designated subnational clusters, local networks of resident early warning, early response, development, and peacebuilding actors. In so doing, this approach is not to reinvent the wheel but to utilize, reactivate and optimize already existing early warning and peace structures.

· **CONCORD Initiative Operational and Strategic Approaches**

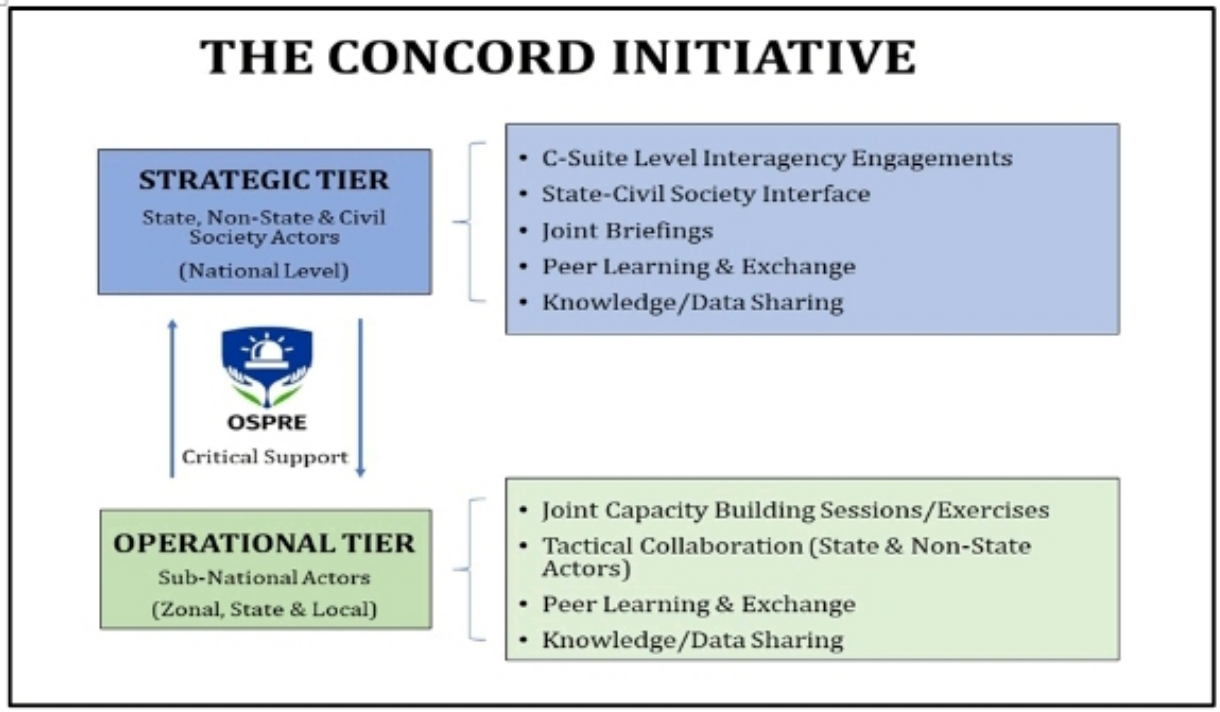


Figure 1: Operational and Strategic Approaches of the CONCORD Initiative, source OSPRE

· **Operational Approach**

With support of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture and Operations (EPSAO) project, co-funded by European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), implemented through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ GmbH) CONCORD Initiative can contribute to bridging the gap between early warning and early response, as well as serve as a community of practice and the fulcrum of a national peace architecture with OSPRE as its coordinating secretariat. OSPRE through the CONCORD Initiative is actively reaching out to existing early warning, early response, and peacebuilding structures across various regions of the country. By aligning these structures into a single, unified network OSPRE with support of the EPSAO project aims to facilitate cooperation and information sharing, thereby enhancing Nigeria's capacity to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to emerging threats to human security.

Through the EPSAO support, OSPRE has already established four (4) subnational clusters in the as presented in the table below with nine (9) more left to go based off the geographies of conflict study. The ongoing Country Resilience, Human Security Assessment in Nigeria study is a precursor to the next phase of the EPSAO project, where OSPRE plans to undertake context-specific capacity-building workshops across the clusters aimed at strengthening the competencies of local actors and linking these actors in a local early warning, early response and peace building network. For your reference, the table below provides an overview

of the clustering within the CONCORD Initiative. The clusters that have already been established are highlighted in green, while those yet to be established are highlighted in yellow, signifying the work that remains to be done.

CLUSTERS	STATES
North-East I	Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States
North-East II	Bauchi and Gombe States
North-Central	Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba States
South I	Akwa-Ibom & Cross River States
South II	Bayelsa, Delta, Edo & Rivers States
North-West	Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Kebbi & Niger States
South-East	Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu & Imo States
Kano	Kano & Jigawa
Kaduna	Kaduna
Plateau	Plateau
Lagos	Lagos
South-West	Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ekiti & Ondo States

· Data Sharing Hub

OSPRE's Multidimensional Trends Analysis Centre (MTAC) will serve as a hub for collecting and synthesizing data provided by partners within the Concord Initiative in the next phase of the GIZ support to be provided.

Conclusion

The CONCORD Initiative presents a promising model for addressing the challenges of early warning and response in Nigeria. By promoting a decentralized, integrated approach, it has the potential to enhance the country's capacity to anticipate, mitigate and respond to emerging threats. While much remains to be done, the progress made thus far suggests that this approach can serve as a valuable blueprint for other countries in the region and beyond. Continued support for the Initiative's work, through collaboration with stakeholders and provision of necessary resources, will be crucial in further realizing the potential benefits of this approach.

Contribution of CONCORD Initiative to Peace and Security in Nigeria

1. Decentralizing Early Warning to Subnational and Community Levels for Sustainable Peace and Security: It highlights the importance of decentralizing EWRS to ensure effective coordination between diverse actors, particularly non-state actors, at the sub-national and community levels.

2. Early Detection of Conflict Triggers: Positions community actors to serve as the real custodians, advocates and facilitators of social cohesion, facilitating sustainable local, national and by implication, regional stability.

3. Bridging the Gap Between Early Warning & Response: Contribution to bridging the gap between early warning and early response, as well as serving as a community of practice and the fulcrum of a national peace architecture.

4. Enhancing Networking and Cooperation: By aligning these structures into a single, unified network, OSPRE with support of the EPSAO project is facilitating cooperation and information sharing, thereby enhancing Nigeria's capacity to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to emerging threats to human security.

5. Sharing Best Practices and Cross-Learning: By sharing best practices and

lessons learned from sub-national clusters, the Initiative promotes knowledge exchange and cross-learning between diverse actors in the development, early warning and response sector.

6.Development and Dissemination of Guidance Materials and Research: Through its network of actors, the Initiative facilitates the development and dissemination of guidance materials and research, further contributing to the development of a shared understanding of early warning and response challenges and opportunities

7. An Agenda for Developing a National Peace Architecture: A valuable resource for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to contemplate creating a National Peace Architecture akin to the National Security Architecture.

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