

HD CONFLICT EARLY WARNING AND RESPONSE MECHANISM (HD CEWERS)

Introduction

On the 19th of December, 2018, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) launched its Early Warning and Early Response Situation Room in Jos, Plateau State. Covering Plateau and Kaduna States, the epochal event was attended by His Excellency Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, the Executive Governor of Plateau State, who launched the Situation Room. Also at the launch were H.E Dr. Bernard Schaleck and H.E Robert Petrie, the Ambassadors of Germany and The Netherlands to Nigeria, Maj.-Gen. Augustine Agundu (Commander, Operation Safe Haven), Traditional authorities and community monitors. In his opening remarks, Dr. Babatunde Afolabi (Senior Programme Manager, HD Nigeria,) observed that “Early Warning and Early Response systems remain one of the reliable safeguards against the outbreak of violent conflict in the world today and it is for this reason that intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, the African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission have committed enormous financial and human resources into establishing mechanisms for the early detection of conflicts, the analysis of conflict trends, as well as the creation of mechanisms for preventing and responding to the outbreak of conflicts.” On his part, the Governor, Plateau State, commended HD’s work in Nigeria, noting that the HD led peace-process provided the road-map for the relative peaceful coexistence after a protracted period of violent conflicts in Plateau State. The German Ambassador, in his remarks, acknowledged HD’s world renowned mediation efforts across the globe. He reiterated that he “will continue to provide all the necessary support required to support HD’s peace efforts in Nigeria”

Early Warning and Early Response has gained credence in the field of peacebuilding and conflict management. World over, different state and non-state actors have adopted various forms of conflict early warning, all with the intention of ensuring conflicts are predicted and addressed in a timely manner. It is widely believed that some of the violent conflicts experienced in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria over the past decade and a half could have been forestalled had there been timely detection and had timely interventions been initiated. Violent conflicts are preceded by various early warning signs and it is these signs that if addressed then such conflicts can be prevented. It has been proven empirically that Regional and National Early Warning and Response Mechanisms oftentimes prevent the occurrence or escalation of violent conflicts. It is in the light of these realities that HD has developed and recently officially launched its Conflict Early Warning and Early Response system in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, covering Kaduna, Plateau and Benue States, with the Situation Room housed in Jos, Plateau State.



Figure 1: His Excellency Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, the Executive Governor of Plateau State, making his official remarks at the launch



Figure 2: The Germany Ambassador, His Excellency H.E Schlageck and the Dutch Ambassador, H.E Robert Petrie, arriving for the official launch of the HD CEWERS

Project Aim:

Currently, the Peace Management Network comprises 300 peace monitors from Plateau and Kaduna States, and later Benue State, uses a Situation Room in Jos to co-ordinate early warnings of, and early responses to conflict, which consequently prevents violence within, and between, communities. As part of the elaborate Early Warning and Early Response system, mobile handsets have also been purchased, programmed and distributed to 169 conflict monitors within the communities in Kaduna and Plateau States.

Strategic Model and Intervention

HD has fostered and nurtured strategic partnerships with various agencies like the Directorate of State Security (DSS), “Operation Rainbow”, Nigeria Police and the Military in these states to ensure timely response to early warning signs reported on the system. In addition, HD has facilitated the establishment of community peace monitors and committees that are the first line of response in addressing and mitigating conflicts within the communities.



Figure 3: The Governor, Plateau State, Germany and Dutch Ambassadors following the demonstration HD CEWERS functionality

Additional pictures from the official launch of the HD CEWERS



Figure 4: A cordial chat among the dignitaries at the launch



Figure 5: HD CEWERS Analysts in the Situation Room



Figure 6: The Commander, Operation Safe Haven, making his remarks as a key response partner for CEWER



Figure 7: Dignitaries following proceedings during the official launch of the system

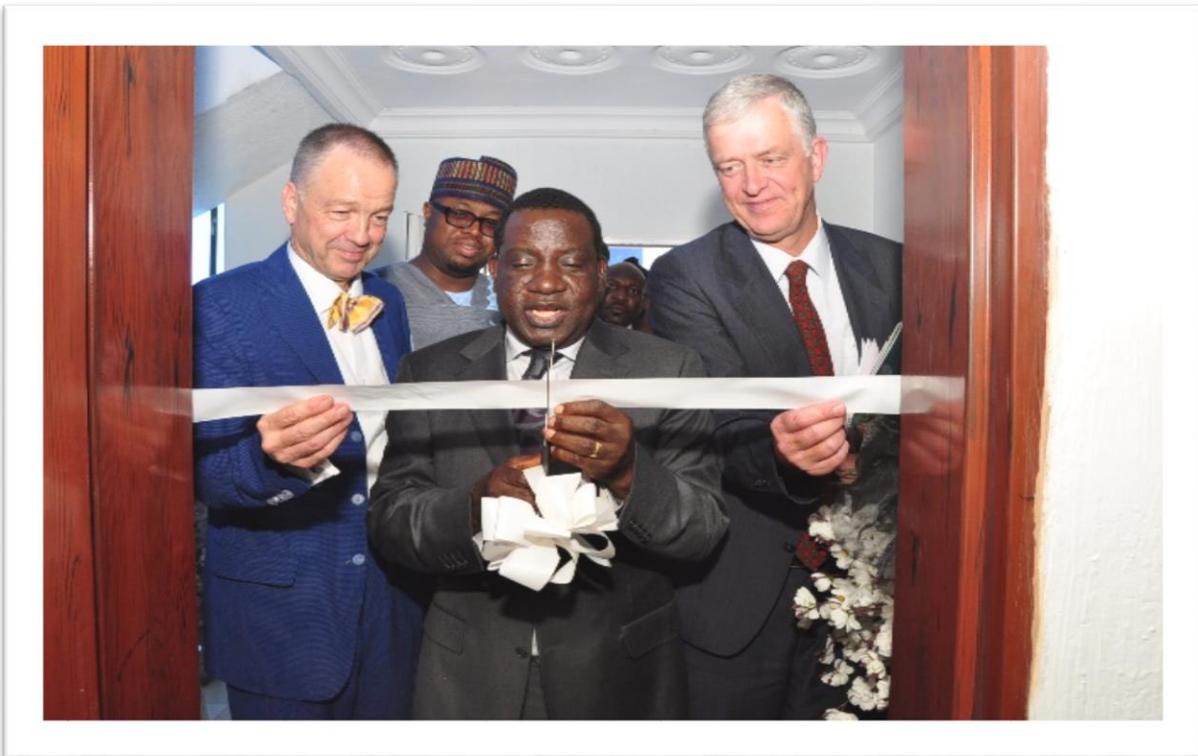


Figure 8: The governor officially commissions the HD Situation room in Jos, Plateau State.