

Two Steps Forward One Step Back Democracy and Governance in West Africa

**Tuesday, April 12th
9:30 – 11:00am**

Johns Hopkins SAIS
Nitze Building, Kenny Auditorium
1740 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Forum Details:

Guinea held its first democratic elections in late 2010. Next door, Cote D'Ivoire is descending into a possible civil war as a result of a post- elections standoff. It seems that the region is taking steps forward, only to take a step back. What can be done to ensure successful elections in Liberia this year and Sierra Leone next year and what can be done in the short term in Cote d'Ivoire? What are the roles of election commissions and civil society in ensuring successful transition from one administration to another? The Conflict Prevention Forum will explore the current situation in West Africa and make policy suggestions for this region in transition.

Following this event, the Alliance for Peacebuilding will offer participants an opportunity to continue the discussion 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Speakers:

Ambrose James

Sierra Leone Country Director, Search for Common Ground

Oge Okoye Onubogu

West Africa Program Officer, National Endowment for Democracy

Moderator:

Ambassador William Milam

Senior Policy Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center

Speaker Bios:

Ambrose James

Ambrose James has more than nine years of experience developing project management strategies in conflict-sensitive and conflict transformation programming with international non-profit organizations in Sierra Leone. He has been working for Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in Sierra Leone since 2000 and has spearheaded the program's country operations, new initiatives, and partnership ventures. From 2000 until 2006 Ambrose was the head of programming, leading SFCG initiatives in community radio development, production of new radio programming and connecting radio programming with community level outreach work. In 2006 Ambrose was made the director of the Sierra Leone program where he notably developed and managed SFCG's successful elections strategy during the 2007 general and 2008 local council elections. Ambrose has undertaken a strategic assessment in Nigeria as well as conducted an internal evaluation of SFCG's Liberia program. His particular area of expertise centers on youth engagement in conflict transformation and peacebuilding work. A graduate of the University of Sierra Leone, Mr. James previously worked for Action Aid and

Conciliation Resources.

Oge Okoye Onubogu

Oge Okoye Onubogu is a Program Officer for West Africa at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) where she manages the grants and strategy programs for Nigeria, Cameroon and Sierra Leone. Before joining the NED, she was a democracy fellow at the National Democratic Institute (NDI) field office in Abuja, Nigeria working on elections and legislative strengthening programs, as well as providing M&E assistance to NDI programs in Anglophone West Africa. She also worked on the Central and West Africa team at the NDI office in Washington, DC, where among several projects in the region; she provided programmatic support for the Institute's election observer mission to Nigeria in 2007. Oge has worked as a consultant with the World Bank Institute conducting research on the oversight functions of African legislatures and as a refugee youth education coordinator and advocate with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) assisting in the resettlement of refugee youth from The Sudan, Somalia, DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. She was also a member of the Carter Center international election observer delegation to the Ghana elections in 2008. She has a BA in International and Area Studies, and an MA. in International Development.

Moderator Bio:

William B. Milam

William B. Milam is a Senior Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington DC where he works on both South Asia and West Africa. His current research focuses on Liberia and the efforts of this former failed state to balance political and economic reconstruction with justice and reconciliation. Before joining the Wilson Center, he was a career diplomat. He retired from the U.S. Foreign Service at the end of July 2001, but continues to take on temporary assignments for the State Department; the most recent was as temporary Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, Libya from August 2007 to February 2008.

He was Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan from August 1998 to July 2001. Ambassador Milam served as U.S. Chief of Mission in Liberia from November 1995 to August 1998 when the U.S. Government did not recognize the interim government in Liberia. He has also served as U.S. Special Negotiator for Environmental and Scientific Affairs at the Department of State, U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Finance and Development. For his service to the State Department, Ambassador Milam received the James Clement Dunn Award, as the outstanding Class I officer, a Superior Honor Award, a Presidential Meritorious Service Award, and a Presidential Award for Outstanding Service. He holds a A.B. from Stanford University and a M.A. in Economics from the University of Michigan.

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