



## REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN CENTRAL AFRICA



# REPORT

Organized by: CJPAC with the Support of ECCAS and UNOCA  
LA FALAISE HOTEL, DOUALA, CAMEROON  
5 - 6 DECEMBER 2023



**REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN  
CENTRAL AFRICA**

**LA FALAISE HOTEL, DOUALA, CAMEROON**

**DATE: 05 - 06 December 2023**



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<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CAR</b>	Central African Republic
<b>CJPAC</b>	Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security in Central Africa
<b>COPAX</b>	Central African Peace and Security Council
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>ECCAS</b>	Economic Community of Central African States
<b>MINJEC</b>	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Éducation
<b>MINREX</b>	Ministry of External Relations
<b>NGO</b>	Non Gouvernemental Organization
<b>UNSAC</b>	United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa
<b>UNOCA</b>	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
<b>YPS</b>	Youth, Peace and Security
<b>CNYC</b>	Cameroon National Youth Council

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the support of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security in Central Africa (CJPAC) organised a regional workshop on the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in Central Africa at the Hôtel la Falaise in Douala, Cameroon on 5 and 6 December 2023. The event was marked by the following key note statements:

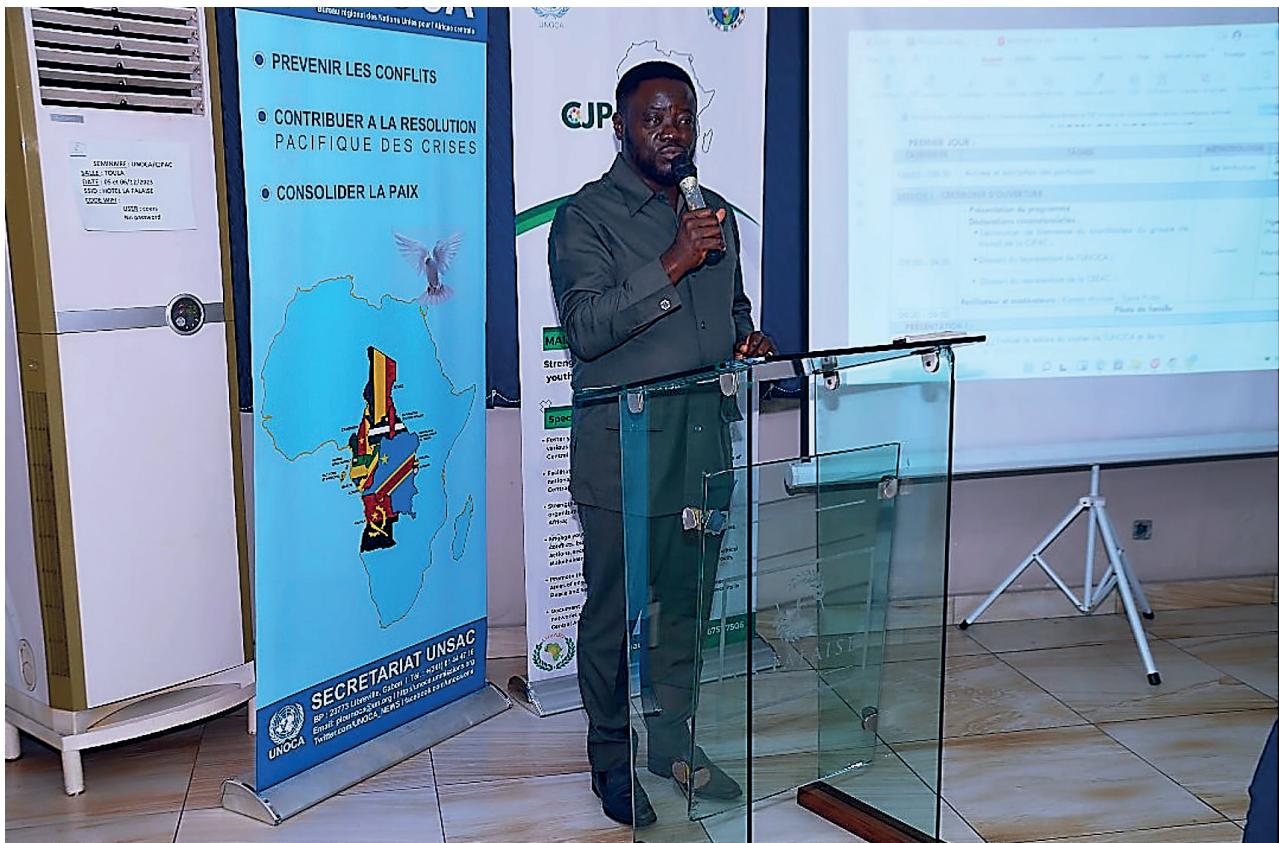


**Kouedi Jacques**

**Representative of the National President of the CNYC**

Representing and speaking on behalf of Mrs Fadimatou Iyawa Ousmanou, National President of the Cameroon National Youth Council (CNYC), welcomed all the participants to Cameroon, a land of hospitality. He recalled the importance of peace for our respective countries and the major role that young people must

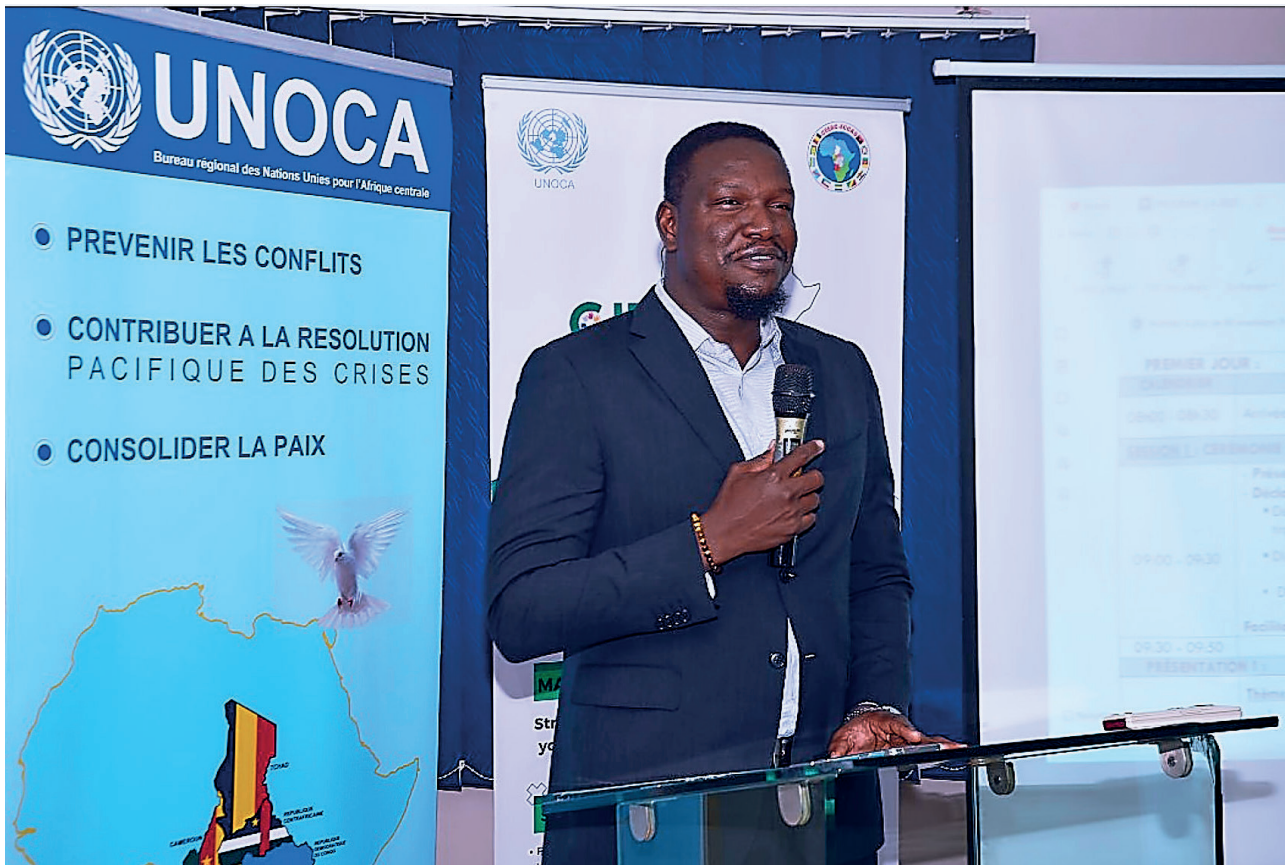
play in preserving it. He encouraged the CJPAC initiative and reiterated CNYC's willingness to work in synergy with CJPAC to foster the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in Cameroon. He closed his speech by wishing all the participants a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in advance.



## **Ngen Yves Riyuh** **Coordinator of CJPAC and President of LifeAID**

Founding chair of LifeAID and Coordinator of the Working Group of CJPAC, began his remarks by expressing his honour to receive in Cameroon, all the guests who had come from their respective countries in the ECCAS region after the first major meeting that saw the official establishment and launch of the Working Group in Kinshasa, DRC. He thanked UNOCA for its institutional, technical and financial support from the onset of this initiative and in the organisation of this regional workshop. He expressed his

gratitude to ECCAS for its institutional and technical support, an engagement he appealed, should continue even after the operationalization of CJPAC and the achievement of its legal status. He also thanked the President of the Cameroon National Youth Council for her dynamism and commitment at the helm of the structure. Finally, he wished all the participants a fruitful working time, a happy stay in Cameroon, hoping that the deliberations would be fruitful and lead to the expected objectives..



## Narcisse Dangar UNOCA

Congratulated CJPAC for organising this regional workshop and welcomed all the participants from the sub-region. He thanked the CNJ of Cameroon for its presence. He recalled the importance and place of youth in the United Nations

programme of action. He reaffirmed UNOCA's commitment to support all CJPAC initiatives and invited all participants to work in unity and freedom to strengthen CJPAC and achieve its vision.



## II. WORKING SESSIONS

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After the family photo, the working sessions were opened on two themes.

The first theme was entitled:

### **«Assessing the Nature of Support from UNOCA and ECCAS to CJPAC: Legal status, Institutional, Technical and Financial Support».**

In the absence of representative of ECCAS, Mr Narcisse Dangar of the United Nations' Regional Office for central Africa (UNOCA) began by recalling that UNOCA understood and responded very early on to the need to support the establishment of a regional Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security in Central Africa (CJPAC). He reminded the audience that UNOCA covers the 11 ECCAS countries, as well as CJPAC. He pointed out that UNOCA's mandate is essentially to promote peace and security in Central Africa. UNOCA is aware, however, of the role and place of young people in peace and security processes, and has made it its mission to work to ensure that the voice of young people are heard and captured in various conflict prevention and peace building processes through CJPAC.

**With regard to the legal status of CJPAC,** he pointed out that although UNOCA accompanies CJPAC, it is not competent to grant legal recognition to CJPAC. It is the regional communities or states that have this competence. He also made it clear that CJPAC is not in competition with national youth councils. They are not competitors. Their actions are therefore complementary. To clarify the issue of CJPAC's legal recognition, he proposed two options to be explored: obtaining recognition of CJPAC

as an NGO from a member State at national level or being officially recognised by ECCAS at regional level. He emphasized that UNOCA is in support of moves by ECCAS to play its role as a regional mechanism competent enough to ensure an institutional legality for a timely regional platform like CJPAC.

**As for institutional support,** he reiterated that UNOCA has been supporting CJPAC since 2021. On the recommendation of UNOCA, CJPAC has just been granted permanent observer status at UNSAC (United Nations Standing Committee on Peace and Security). UNOCA remains willing to recommend CJPAC to other UN agencies and development partners as their process of operationalization become effective with a clear action plan.

**With regards to technical support,** he said that UNOCA is prepared to assist CJPAC in any technical aspect that will permit it to be effective in its role including but not limited to drawing up its technical documents, action plans, programs and projects as well as in the implementation of its projects and activities. He suggested that CJPAC could join the Association of Central African Civil Society Organisations in order to benefit from broader support.





*From left to right: Myriam (DRC), Ursul (CAR), Nanette (Chad), Jean Claude (DRC), Jude (Gabon)*

**As far as financial support is concerned,** he pointed out that UNOCA does not have a budget specifically devoted to youth. It operates on the basis of projects and extra-budgetary funds available to support the work of organisations such as CJPAC. However, UNOCA can help CJPAC to seek funding from other donors.

.At the end of this, presentation and discussions were opened among to the participants.

To the question of whether there is an agreement between CJPAC and the Cameroon National Youth Council (CNYC), Mr Ngen Yves indicated that this is an on-going process not only with the CNYC but also, other national stakeholders including the Ministry of External relations, the Ministry of youth Affairs and civic Education and the National Commission on Youth, Peace and Security. Working sessions have

been held with the National President of the CNYC and discussions and on-going to engage collaboration on joint activities that facilitates country level processes. One of the projects is the organisation of capacity-building workshops on the YPS Agenda in the ten regions of Cameroon.

In response to a question about the legal recognition of CJPAC, given the difficulties encountered by the focal points in the Central African Republic and Angola, Mr Narcisse Dongar reiterated that everything depends on the option chosen by CJPAC. In his view, If CJPAC has to be given regional recognition, ECCAS stands a better place to engage that and as well as facilitate its actions with a clear mandate. He said that the admission of CJPAC as a permanent observer to UNSAC was an asset that should be exploited, as all the member states of the ECCAS region are members of UNSAC and had agreed to grant CJPAC this status.

The second theme was on:

**«Operationalization of the Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security in Central Africa (CJPAC): Context, Strategies and Priority Actions».**

As coordinator of CJPAC, Mr Ngen Yves Riyuh recalled that CJPAC was created in recognition of the fact that young people make up the largest segment of the population in Central Africa, but are excluded from representation and decision-making platforms and processes at regional and national level. That the idea of CJPAC was nursed when returning from an African Union (AU) consultation to select candidates from Central Africa for the appointment of the African Youth Ambassador for Peace (AYAP), the AYAP alone could not effectively carry the voice of young people nor foster the role and contributions of youths in their countries within a backdrop of thousands of active CSOs in these member states who are struggling to contribute to various processes with very little or no technical capacities,

visibility or support. Hence, a selection of some youth practitioners from some member states and engagement with key stakeholders (UNOCA and ECCAS) created room for conversations on this topic with a subsequent creation of a Working Group for CJPAC. This finally led to the official launch of CJPAC and the activities of the Working Group in October 2022. Worthy to note, the Working Group has since then concentrated to developing statutory documents for its operationalization while engaging preliminary actions such as conversations and sensitizations on the localization of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda; lobbying for partnerships and collaborations at national, regional and international levels as well as facilitating country level processes with focal points and national level Working



*Working group, from left to right: Jude (Gabon), Nanette (Chad), Yves (Cameroon), Jean Claude (DRC), Cynthia (Rwanda)*



Groups. In terms of achievements so far, he pointed out that all statutory documents for CJPAC were ready and simply awaiting validation. He set out five (5) priority actions that will lead to a final operationalization of CJPAC:

- ❖ Validation and adoption of CJPAC's statutory documents as well as its legal recognition;
- ❖ Finalization of the mapping process and selection of active CSOs and youth practitioners for effective membership on the CJPAC platform and their integration into CJPAC;
- ❖ The final establishment of the official leadership of CJPAC;

- ❖ The conduction of a regional baseline that will permit the development of a regional strategy for the implementation of the YPS agenda in Central Africa;
- ❖ Capacity building and consultations of youth practitioners and stakeholders at national and regional levels on the YPS agenda with tailored facilitation of country level processes.

Following this presentation, two discussion groups were set up with the task of providing answers to some of the questions formulated in the working document. At the end of the presentations, the recommendations were summarised as follows:

## 1. Which legal status for CJPAC? What management structure? What operational strategy?

**With regards to its legal status,** what came out clear as final considerations was the fact that, CJPAC must rely on diplomacy and lobbying strategy to establish its influence within the ECCAS region and beyond as well as to obtain the status of a specialised organ of ECCAS charged with the mandate to harmonize, coordinate and strengthen processes in the implementation of the YPS agenda in Central Africa.

**As far as the management structure is concerned,** the structure of a General Assembly of its members, partners and regional institutions; a Governing Council with a Permanent Secretariat and an Advisory Council, appeared appealing and adapting within the context where membership to CJPAC are active youth-led and youth-centred CSOs, respecting the principles of Representation, inclusivity and mentorship.

**With regard to the operational strategy,** It was captured that CJPAC must make good use of its relation with ECCAS, UNOCA and other regional and international institutions for the effectiveness of its objectives and the sustainability of its planned actions. Collaborating vertically with the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security, the UN, AU (Youth4peace Africa Programme) is essential. Its first and most important opportunity has been its admission to the status of permanent observer to UNSAC through which diverse lobbying with regional partners and the foreign affairs ministries of member states can be engaged. Also, at the next session of the ECCAS executive council made up of foreign affairs ministers, proposals on the legalization of CJPAC could be validated and proposed to the ECCAS heads of state and government for adoption.



## 2. How to guarantee representativeness, inclusion and mentorship in all CJPAC bodies while ensuring that the needed skills and experiences are guaranteed for concrete impact and sustainability of CJPAC?

**With regards to representativeness within CJPAC**, three criteria were taken into account:

- ❖ Representativeness of all ECCAS member states;
- ❖ Representativeness (as far as possible) of all the regions within the member states;
- ❖ Respect for gender parity and representation quotas.

**With regards to inclusion**, the following groups were deemed imperative: the disabled, albinos and others disadvantaged persons.

**With regard to mentorship**, two categories

were considered:

- ❖ People aged above 35 years with skills, experiences and track records of achievements on issues related to youth, peace and security which can effectively add value to the course of the YPS agenda in the region. Their enumerated capacities would leverage mentorship to the young leaders on-board;
- ❖ People under 35 years with extensive experience, skills, achievements and sustained commitment and a record of service in the field of youth, peace and security.

## 3. What criteria can be adopted for membership to CJPAC and its governing bodies?

- ❖ Be a CSO or NGO recognised by the States;
- ❖ Be committed to youth, peace and security issues;
- ❖ Have at least two (2) years' experience in the field of youth, peace and security with recorded and proven impact;
- ❖ Have technical or professional competence in the area of leadership or post of leadership he/she is standing for.

## 4. How to ensure institutional capacity and a solid space for CJPAC?

- ❖ CJPAC its leaders and members must be able to master international (YPS Agenda), regional and national policies frameworks relating to the YPS agenda and its processes;
- ❖ Have a recognised institutional headquarters and a dynamic leadership;
- ❖ Broaden and strengthen its partnership network;
- ❖ Ensure its technical and financial sustainability.

## 5. How can we ensure partnership and collaboration for effective localisation of the YPS Agenda in Central Africa?

- ❖ Identify (map) key partners and stakeholders at international, regional and national levels with their areas of focus and engage lobbying for their support;
- ❖ Engage with UNOCA, ECCAS and the AU to access other strategic partners.

## 6. What key strategies can we adopt to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the YPS Agenda at regional and national levels?

- ❖ Develop a strategic action plan at regional and national level from which tailored actions can be engaged, monitored and evaluated;
- ❖ Set up an online system for monitoring and evaluating activities at regional and national level;
- ❖ Establish an early warning system to overcome the difficulties inherent in implementing the YPS Agenda at regional and national level.

Mr Dikko Berlus presented a partial results of the study carried out to map CSOs in the ECCAS region. The presentation raised a conversation and it was recommended that the results of the study should be finalized in order to have a precise idea of all the CSOs that could form part of CJPAC.

After a lunch break, the panel on sharing experiences and best practices on the contribution of young people to conflict prevention and peace-building in Central Africa was opened.



*Working group, from left to right: Ursul (CAR); Myriam (DRC), Steve (Cameroon); Benjamin (Equatorial Guinea), Ma,nasia (Angola), Frida (Cameroon)*



### Dr. John Minza, UNOCA

shared the experience of the involvement of young people and women in West Africa on issues of peace and security. Peace clubs have been created with the help of the Youth Councils, which have helped to disseminate knowledge of Resolution 2250, mediation, negotiation and early warning techniques within communities. The activities organised in Benin and Côte d'Ivoire enabled young people to draw up manifestos calling for peaceful electoral processes without violence in their respective countries. They also worked to set up a working group, an entity for reflection and debate to mobilise resources and experts in the knowledge production on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. With regards to resource mobilisation, capacity-building sessions have been held to determine the best practices to attract the largest possible amount of

funding. A list of organisations was also set up, which are constantly lobbied to support CSOs and Youth Councils. Fact sheets had also been drawn up to collect all the concerns of young people and the security challenges facing Central African communities. Projects were drawn up on the basis of these sheets.

The following feedbacks on in-country situations of CSOs were received from the member states present:

#### ❖ M. Kouedi Jacques

of the CNYC suggested that a solid partnership should be established between CJPAC and Youth Councils to facilitate the identification of youth CSOs, taking into account the particularities of each country.

#### ❖ Nanette Pekou

of the Réseau des Jeunes Femmes Leaders du Tchad has succeeded in involving young boys and mothers aged over 35 in empowerment activities. She has built up a relationship of trust with the Ministry of Gender, which does not hesitate to turn to her organisation when necessary.

#### ❖ Jean Claude Muhungusa

from the Democratic Republic of Congo, a member of the CJPAC Working Group, said that the Youth for Peace DRC coalition had been approved and was recognised in all 25 provinces of the DRC. The national action plan for the YPS Agenda was adopted in October 2022. A map of 1,200 organisations working in the field of youth, peace and security was drawn up. Conferences have also been organised to promote awareness of the Agenda.



#### ❖ **Jude Mbina du Gabon**

from Gabon said that his organisation (Initiative for Peace and Security in Africa) is working on publishing articles on peace and security issues.

#### ❖ **Laudino Tavares**

from Sao Tome and Principe (former President of the Sao Tome & Principe Youth Council) said that his country does not really face conflicts, but it works with several other associations on conflict prevention before, during and after electoral processes. To him, the greatest challenge youths face in STP is Unemployment, underemployment and political exclusion and these are facilitating elements to youth radicalization or youth migration. He concluded that more than half of the youthful population of STP are migrating to the detriment of the Country's development.

#### ❖ **Manasia Futa de l'Angol**

from Angola said Global Shapers Community organises training sessions, discussions and leaders' meetings in partnership with the European Union to raise awareness on peace and security issues.

#### ❖ **Cynthia Umutoniwase du Rwanda**

from Rwanda, with her organisation «Tout Commence Par Soi», is raising awareness

among young people on the need to change their mentality and mind-sets in order to preserve lasting peace.

#### ❖ **Benjamin Esono de la Guinée Équatoriale**

from Equatorial Guinea is working with his association «Jeunesse et Développement Durable» to reduce juvenile delinquency. They have established a database of young people involved in this delinquency. They have created a platform to train young people in small income-generating projects. They have organised workshops to train young girls in social assistance for the elderly (nearly 37 people trained) and children.

#### ❖ **Myriam Kianza de la RDC et son association**

from the DRC and her association «Bana Mappinga en action» are working to include and reintegrate delinquent children of soldiers who have lost their social status.

#### ❖ **Ursul Boundja de la RCA**

from CAR and his «Jeunesse, voie de la paix» organised a capacity-building workshop on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. They are currently planning with five other local associations to engage work on the development of a national action plan on the YPS Agenda.

It was on this note that day one of the workshop ended.



*Myriam (DRC), CJPAC*

## Day 2 06<sup>th</sup> December 2023

The second day of the workshop opened with the following theme: «**Development of Regional and National Strategies for the Implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda: Context, Strategies and Priority Actions**».

Two breakout groups were formed: one responsible for revisiting the draft charter of CJPAC and its manual of procedure, and the other on the Code of Ethics and Deontology and the CJPAC's 2024 Communication Plan.

Following **Jean Claude Muhungusa** report's on the first working group, the floor was opened for discussion.

Concerns about the categorisation of CJPAC membership as permanent members, non-permanent members and associate members were further clarified. It was agreed that permanent members are those adopted by the General Assembly of CJPac at the proposal of the Governing Council while non-permanent members are those who after deemed qualified for membership as per established criteria are given the non-permanent membership status while awaiting their adoption by the General Assembly. Meanwhile, Associate

membership shall be attributed to other organisations out of the Central African region that share the same objectives as CJPAC and can be an added value to the achievement of the established objectives.

**Dr. Steve Tametong** suggested that the question of membership should be clarified in the charter and not in the manual of procedures. **Mr Kouedi Jacques** called for the position of auditor to be included in CJPAC's organisation chart. It was also clarified that





CJPAC should better have a “governing Council” and not «Regional Council”. As such, the working languages of CJPAC as had already been agreed on are: **English, French, Portuguese** and **Spanish**. The question of «founding members» was presented with proposals from **Jean Claude** and **Nanette Pekou** that it should replace the permanent membership. While awaiting further debates during the adoption of the charter, this point of view was highly contested by a majority of participants holding to the fact that CJPAC is a regional platform with mandate the champion and regional process that necessitates openness, inclusiveness. More to that, the issue of “founding members” was watered down by the fact that the platform started with a Working Group whose role was to establish means for the operationalization of CJPAC and not as an NGO that was founded. **Dr John Minza** proposed to determine the benefits and opportunities of membership of CJPAC by the associations.

**Dr. Steve Tametong** introduced the second group’s report on the code of ethics and deontology as well as the communication plan. After reviewing the formal observations, he stressed that the appearance of the term «TDRs» in the code of ethics and deontology needed to be better explained. Also, the question of the situation of members who do not attend all the meetings should be clarified in the manual of procedures and not in the code of ethics.

With regards to CJPAC’s communication plan, the following three areas of communication were approved: internal communication (between members), external communication (with other young people and organised groups) and strategic communication (aimed at partners). **Jean Claude Muhungusa** indicated that it would be interesting to define an overall communication policy that would safeguard CJPAC’s interests.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

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On behalf of UNOCA, **Mr Narcisse Dangar of UNOCA** took the floor and structured his concluding remarks around observations and suggestions.

**Regarding the observations**, he indicated that the issue relating to the legal recognition of CJPAC, its management team, the permanent and non-permanent membership, the age limit for CJPAC members and mentorship remain prevalent.

**Mr. Narcisse** further made the following suggestions:

- ❖ speeding up the process of the legal recognition of CJPAC by ECCAS;
- ❖ harmonize and conclude on the issue concerning the categorisation of permanent member/non-permanent member and carefully integrate the various organisations within CJPAC;
- ❖ With regards to the age limit of 35, transitional provisions could be included in the charter to allow the current Working Group to complete the process of setting up the organs and procedures of the CJPAC;



- ❖ Include provisions in the Charter for its revision after a specified period (e.g. 5 years).
- ❖ Strengthen unity and solidarity between the members of the working group;
- ❖ Set up a team to review the texts of the CJPAC and call on external human resources to finalise the texts within a clearly defined timeframe;
- ❖ Think about a fundraising strategy and organise joint CJPAC activities between associations in neighbouring countries (e.g. Cameroon-Gabon; Equatorial Guinea-Congo, etc.).

**Dr John Minza** of UNOCA corroborated Mr Narcisse's remarks by inviting the members of the Working Group to ask themselves

three questions: Where is CJPAC coming from? Where is it now? Where does it want to go? He pointed out that an organisation can be identified by what it aspires to be. Thus, CJPAC must speed up its legal recognition with ECCAS, but above all its operational deployment capacity. The question of **the age bracket** can be addressed by introducing a transitional period in the charter to allow the current leading members to finalise the process of setting up the organs of CJPAC. .

It will be necessary to define a **clear roadmap** within a precise timeframe, with an **activity strategic plan** and a **regularly constituted CJPAC board**. He called for CJPAC to become an organisation that stands out and inspires the establishment of similar coalitions in other regions.



### **Ibrahim Edang, UNOCA**

**M. Ibrahim Edang de l'UNOCA** of UNOCA stressed the need to work together for posterity on a voluntary basis, forgetting our egos and personal feelings. Using the image of the mouth, tongue and teeth living together, he invited participants to work like children from the same family. He pointed

out that leadership has its constraints. Again using images, he asserted that a leader must have the back of an elephant to take all the branches broken by the monkeys.

Speeches from **Nanette Pekou, Ursule Boundja and Manasia Futa** provided an opportunity for frank discussions on the current disagreements in the Working group of CJPAC and to map out ways forward.

In closing, **Mr Ngen Yves Riyuh**, coordinator of the CJPAC Working Group, expressed his gratitude to UNOCA for its technical and financial support in organising this regional workshop. He thanked all the participants, who had come from all the countries of Central Africa, and expressed the dream of a CJPAC in which no one is indispensable, a CJPAC where everyone is engaged, working effectively to foster sustainable peace in the region.



## THE FOLLOWING PERSONS TOOK PART IN THIS REGIONAL WORKSHOP

- ❖ Jacques Christian Kouedi, CNJ, Cameroun
- ❖ Benjamin Esono Ndong, Guinée Équatoriale
- ❖ Cynthia Umutoniwase, Rwanda
- ❖ Manasia Futa, Angola
- ❖ Berlus Diffo, Cameroun
- ❖ Laudino Tavares, Sao Tome et Principe
- ❖ Yves Ngen Riyuh, Cameroun
- ❖ Myriam Kianza, République Démocratique du Congo
- ❖ Dr Steve Tametong, Cameroun
- ❖ Nanette Hélène Pekou, Tchad
- ❖ Jude Chaleureux Mbina, Gabon
- ❖ Frida Ndi Eposi, Cameroun
- ❖ Jean Claude Muhunsusa, République Démocratique du Congo
- ❖ Ursul Boundja (RCA)
- ❖ Dr John Minza Piyabalo Eso, Togo (UNOCA)
- ❖ Narcisse Dangar, Tchad (UNOCA)
- ❖ Ibrahim Edang, Gabon (UNOCA)



# Photos



