

outside support, and the peace process would have to take into account the regional dimension of the conflict.

There is undoubtedly a francophone-anglophone dimension, and malaise, to this conflict. The francophone countries as a whole are uncomfortable with Nigeria, a regional power that they claim tends to act unilaterally. They criticize Nigeria for doing whatever it pleases, with no dialogue with the other players. They criticize it in particular for having transformed ECOMOG from a neutral response force into a partisan occupying force. Nigeria and Ghana, on the other hand, are suspicious of former sympathies that some francophone countries had for Charles Taylor at the time of the civil war in Liberia.

Politically, it would be desirable for other francophone countries in the region to supply troops for ECOMOG. Many of the people that our delegation met felt that France should be more involved in the search for a lasting peace in the sub-region. For instance, it could be asked to use its influence to convince Senegal and/or Benin to send troops to Sierra Leone. This may require that a "western" country (e.g. Canada) provides logistical support. It was suggested that France might also be convinced to use its influence with both President Taylor and Compaoré to curb Liberia and Burkina Faso's assistance to the rebels.

#### *The Mechanisms*

Supported by SRSO Okelo, ECOWAS, which already has the Group of Six (Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo) mechanism in place is probably in the best position to pilot any discussions. But it will need the continued support of the international community, of countries like U.K., USA, France and Canada, of international organizations like the UN, the Commonwealth and the francophonie, to deal with the regional dimension of this conflict, among other things. It is in fact difficult to see how ECOWAS could by itself arbitrate a resolution of the conflict in Sierra Leone. The mediation of a neutral and respected outside party will likely be necessary.

There is another *ad hoc* mechanism, the Contact Group on Sierra Leone, an initiative of the UK, which met in New York on April 19 for the second time in recent months. It is a group made up of donor countries as well as multilateral agencies (the UN family, the World Bank, the Commonwealth, the European Commission and ECOWAS). Its purpose is to sustain, widen and help co-ordinate international support for Sierra Leone and ECOMOG. Eventually, when peace and stability return to Sierra Leone, it is intended that this group will help to mobilize the necessary financial resources towards the reconstruction of the country.

The Security Council, although it spends roughly 60% of its time dealing with African issues, has come under criticism for a lack of substantive action on security issues on the continent. In this regard, the Security Council, with its mandate of maintaining international peace and security, has an important role to play in the search for a solution to the crisis in Sierra Leone. To date, this has included the establishment of a sanctions regime, in addition to the existing