



**A Report of the proceedings of the
27th Annual CAPCR Conference
on
African Peace and Security Architecture:
Lessons, Challenges, and Opportunities
April 26-28, 2018**

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April 26-28, 2018**

By The Center for African Peace and Conflict Resolution (CAPCR), California State University,
Sacramento

In collaboration with the Pan African Studies/Cooper-Woodson College Enhancement Program

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Final Review by Prof. Ernest Uwazie, Conference Director

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The Center for African Peace and Conflict Resolution

MISSION

The Center for African Peace and Conflict Resolution (CAPCR) was established in 1996 at California State University, Sacramento, to provide conflict resolution and reconciliation services for agencies, governments, institutions, businesses, civil society and community organizations and other groups through training, education, research, and intervention. CAPCR develops curricular/materials and provides training on mediation, negotiation, arbitration, and other conflict resolution services for governmental and nongovernmental organizations, business and community groups, public and private agencies, educational institutions and allied professional associations (in US/Africa).

GOALS

- Develop and implement programs that educate and promote peace and conciliation among families, organizations, community groups, and governments, both in US/Africa
- Conduct research and evaluations on African conflict situations, and serve as a clearinghouse/resource center
- Establish institutional and community network of support in US/Africa on conflict resolution and assist in creation of indigenous conflict resolution institutes in Africa
- Assist in mediation/arbitration/resolution of conflicts among Africans, when possible and with consent of disputing parties.

Since CAPCR's founding in 1996, CAPCR has developed independently, and in conjunction with other agencies, numerous major initiatives on conflict resolution, alternative dispute resolution and peace education. Our partners include the U.S. State Department and Department of Education, the U.S. Institute of Peace, USAID, JAMS Foundation, World Bank, California Wellness Foundation, the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in Lagos, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, the Nigerian Human Rights Commission, the University of Ghana-Legon, the Ghana Bar Association, Judiciary and Ministry of Justice, the Ghana Association of Certified Mediators and Arbitrators, Ethiopia Dispute Resolution Association, Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)-Kenya and Ethiopia, National University of Rwanda-Butare, The Gambia Judiciary, Addis Ababa University, the University of Liberia in Monrovia, the University of Dakar in Senegal, the African Center for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Kaiser Foundation, among others.

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The Pan African Studies Program

California State University, Sacramento 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819-6013 Amador
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Pan African Studies at California State University, Sacramento is immersed in three worlds:
(1) the African experience as represented in the United States, the Diaspora, and the continent;
(2) academic excellence; (3) involvement in the Black community.

The unique synthesis of these three elements has established Pan African Studies in Sacramento as a program of distinction. Our curriculum addresses this dimension of life: What is the nature of the African world; under what conditions has it been formed; what adversities has it met in the past and what does it continue to meet; how has it been used to contribute to human civilization and well-being; and how can it be used in the effort to create a better world in memory of our ancestors, for us, and for those who come after us?

Students intellectually attracted to this synthesis can pursue a concentration in Pan African Studies as part of the major in Ethnic Studies.

Cooper Woodson College Affiliation with the Pan African Studies Program

Cooper Woodson College Enhancement Program and Pan African Studies work collaboratively. A certificate in Pan African Studies is available through the Ethnic Studies Department. Only students enrolled in the Cooper-Woodson College Enhancement Program are eligible for the certificate. The Director of Pan African Studies certifies those graduated from the Cooper-Woodson College Enhancement Program who are eligible for the certificate. Total units required for the Pan African Studies Certificate are 24.

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CSUS One World Initiative
Student Academic Success and Educational Equity Program (SASEEP)
FUEL Network
Rotary International District 5180

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Day 1, April 26

Session I: Conflict Resolution across Communities in Africa and the Diaspora

The 27th annual Africa and Diaspora conference opened with a panel focused on conflict resolution in Africa and within high school communities in the Sacramento region. First, Micaiah Palmer, an undergraduate sociology major with a minor in conflict resolution at CSUS, presented research findings from her work conducted along with Dr. Ernest Uwazie, on important dimensions of conflict resolution in Sacramento schools. Their presentation detailed various federal efforts in the United States, beginning with the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act and stretching through the No Child Left Behind period of the early 2000s to 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act. Palmer highlighted how Zero Tolerance policies have affected students of color by amplifying the school to prison pipeline. Next, she explained how peace education programs can help ameliorate conflict in school contexts by helping students productively find their voice. She compared Sacramento City Unified District, which is a large urban district, with Elk Grove, a suburban district that is the second most diverse district in the state. Both high schools included a peace education program in their campus policy. Suspension dominates school discipline in these contexts. According to Palmer, we must look at demographics, school resources, and social capital when investigating the most significant aspects of the peace program implantation.

The next presenter, Adekola Yinusa Adekunle, from the Federal College of Education in Nigeria, present work conducted with Olanrewaju Ganiyu Amoo on ways of reducing violent extremism in Nigeria. Their paper entitled “Stemming Down Violent Extremism among Youth Peacemakers in Nigeria: Role of Career Technical Education” highlighted the struggles of Nigerian youth, particularly in regards to high unemployment and more generalized hardships in Nigeria. The speaker noted that this was his eighth time to attend this conference. He noted that over the years there has been an increase in conflict and violent extremism in Nigeria, referencing Boko Haram as well as militarized youth in the Wari area. Moreover, he explained how politicians and powerful figures manipulated youth aspirations for their own political, social, and economic gain. He emphasized that Nigerian youth are full of potential and comprise almost one-third of Nigeria society. The youth are engaged in brokering peace, but lack jobs and other resources. Adekunle proposed that the remedy to youth violence is CTE or Career Technical Education, which can serve as a pathway to high wage and highly skilled jobs, turning youth attention away from violence.

The next speaker on this panel was Bonny Egwuogu who presented a paper called “Engendering Peace in Africa: A View from the Other Side.” He opened his presentation with a broad and profound question: “How do we make peace work in Africa?” From there, he suggested we look at peace at different scales such as the micro and macro levels. His talk addressed macro level, drawing on the influential writings of world-system theory. Next, he discussed globalization and resource extraction, using the Niger Delta as a case study of how resource extraction produces various forms of violence and suffering. He concluded his paper with a call for scholars, practitioners, and those concerned about Africa to look at casual factors, not symptoms. Resources have long been extracted from the continent to benefit metropolises around the world.

The final speaker of the opening panel, Miller Owologbo from the Federal College of Education Technical in Asaba, Nigeria, presented a paper entitled “Enhancing Information and Technology Skills as a Framework for Peace and Security for Nigerian Youth.” In this paper, Owologbo stressed the need to create an enabling environment for Nigerian youth to exercise and realize their potential. One of the ways to assist the youth is through providing opportunities to acquire information and technology skills. These skills may include computer programming, computer repair, parts, and accessories sales, networking, and other mechanical skills. The Nigerian education system has more secondary than technical schools, but a technical education may hold the promise for future wages and careers in Nigeria.

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Following the presentations, the audience engaged in a question and answer session with the speakers. Audience questions ranged from “What type of education are we providing in Nigeria?” to “What about migration and ‘brain drain’ in Nigeria?” The questions and responses illuminated a general theme of using education as a form of empowerment, especially for young people. Elizabeth Mukibii of the CSUS Department of Women’s Studies moderated this session.

Session II: The Politics of Peace, Social and Restorative Justice

This panel featured two speakers from Nigeria. First, Chika Dike from the University of Lagos in Lagos, Nigeria presented a paper called “The Imposter Syndrome and its Economic and Socio-Political Consequences in Nigeria.” This paper focused on socio-economic development in Nigeria. Dike used concepts and theories such as the Dunning-Kruger Effect, social capital, and the Imposter Syndrome to explore the problem of underdevelopment. He argued that rarely does the electorate receive the promises made by their leaders. The lack of results also includes the squandering of national wealth by those in positions of power. In conclusion, Dike argued for a new approach to selecting a candidate for leadership in Nigeria. These new approaches could include institutionalizing special screening procedures before the election, devising testing measures for qualification and easing the process of recall after regular performance monitoring procedures.

The next speaker, Victor Dike from the Center of Social Justice and Human Development in Sacramento, California, presented a paper called “Restorative Practices in Nigeria: A Guide for Policymakers.” Dike noted the various problems facing Nigeria for decades. He called attention to the marginalization experienced by regions of the country and the problems that can occur between these regions and state security forces. In the wake of extra-judicial killing by security agents, there has been a move to implement restorative practices a peaceful means of addressing ongoing conflicts. These practices are aimed at fostering healthy relationships, managing conflicts and tensions, and repairing the harm done to reduce the possibilities of such conflict and harm from arising in the future. Dike’s talk was especially relevant to policymakers.

Rachel Flamenbaum of the CSUS Department of Anthropology served as the moderator of this panel.

Conference Opening

The 27th annual Africa Peace and Conflict Resolution (CAPCR) was called to order by Dr. Michael Walker of CSUS, the conference organizing chair. He was followed by Dr. Ernest Uwazie, the Center's director, who welcomed the audience, participants, and new and recurring guests. Dr. Uwazie stressed the importance of inclusivity and constructive engagement and peaceful dialogue. Next, Dr. Jessie Gaston, CAPCR Board Chair, extended a warm welcome to all guests and participants. The next speaker was Dr. Paul Hofmann the Associate Vice President, International Programs and Global Engagement at CSUS. Dr. Hofmann reflected on the importance of international education and study abroad programs. He announced the university was working on memorandums of agreement with the University of Ghana and Harriett Tubman University in Liberia that would facilitate greater international exchange between CSUS and African partners.

Keynote Address

Dr. Boatamo Mosupyoe, Chair, Department of Ethnic Studies and Director of Pan African Studies/Cooper Woodson College, CSUS introduced our keynote speaker Dr. João Gomes Porto, Visiting Professor Addis Ababa University and Advisor, Department of Peace and Security, African Union. Dr. Gomes Porto's presentation, "Towards a Truly Continental African Peace and Security Architecture: Critical Reflections on the Regional Economic Communities as Pillars of APSA," examined the role of APSA in conflict resolution. As a researcher, Dr. Gomes Porto emphasized the need for regional organizations as multilateral discussions are declining. Moreover, he asked why does it take the African Union several years to accomplish its objectives? In addressing this question, he outlined the institutional structure of the AU, noting that the Executive Council and the Permanent Representatives Committee were key to supporting the highest institutional level of the AU—the Assembly. The AU's core mission is to promote peace, security, and stability on the continent, which may include intervening in the affairs of a member state in contexts genocide or crimes against humanity. The Peace and Security Architecture was created to strengthen the AU's capacity to promote peace and stability. Dr. Gomes Porto explains how the 1994 Rwandan Genocide necessitated a re-thinking of how the intervention is done, raising questions such as who or what institutions have the legitimacy, the capability, and the resources to intervene. The predecessor to the AU, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted a non-interventionist approach because of respect for national sovereignty. This led some to characterize the OAU as "club of dictators." In contrast, the AU does have the authority to intervene, but the assembly must reach a consensus. All African countries agreed to the creation of the Peace and Security Council. No country has a permanent seat of the council; countries rotate their seats. There is also no veto power on the council. There is also an outside advisory panel, a "panel of the wise," that advises independently. But, one of the ongoing questions under the new peace and security architecture is as Dr. Gomes Porto describes "what is the legal connection between the AU and the African regional economic organizations?" This relationship remains unclear. Another critical issue revolves around the resources to support the APSA. Currently, the European Union provides 94% of the funding. Dr.

Gomes Porto asks how can African leaders have more ownership over the process. He also pointed out that most of the conflict in African today is re-current conflict not, new conflicts.

Student Discussion of *Black Panther*

The final panel of the day was a student discussion of the film, *Black Panther*. The panel was organized around the theme “Bridging the Gaps Between/Among People of African Descent in America and on the Continent” and featured students Omar Eid, Oluwatoni Fakunle, Elizabeth Githinji, Antoine Jackson, Kemji Amance Obioma, Casandra Solomon, Jasmine Taylor, Simon Haile Woldai, and Hewut Woldeyes. Dr. Andrea Moore of the CSUS Department of Ethnic Studies and Dante Barksdale, a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of California, Davis moderated the panel. The moderators opened the panel by providing a context for the film by excavating the history of the Black Panther comic book character. In 1966, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created Black Panther as Marvel Comics first representation of African descent. The moderators posed a range of questions for students to answer and discuss. For example, what is Afrofuturism and why does it matter? One student noted how people of color are often missing from science fiction movies, and Afrofuturism allows black artists, actors, and consumer to take representations of Africans into their own hands. Another student suggested that people of African descent can imagine themselves in a different world. According to members of the panel, the film also allowed the audience to engage with African cosmologies. One panel member drew connects between the extraction of vibranium in the film and the extract of coltan in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Another question the moderators posed was “how is black love represented in the film?” Some students saw tensions rather than love, while others reflected on how the film shows different ways of loving someone. Other critical themes raised by the moderators included how colonization was depicted in the film as well as representations of gender and blackness. For example, students discussed how women were depicted in powerful positions in the film, such as royalty or head of security. Students expressed a range of perspectives on Wakanda as an inward-looking society versus engaging with the Pan-Black population.



Day 2, April 27

Session V: Identities, Development, and Capabilities

Day two of the conference opened with a panel devoted to development issues in Nigeria and Gabon. The first presenter, Ijeoma Ononogbu, a London-based lawyer, presented a paper entitled “The Role of Regional Communities in Peace and Security.” Her talk described the Regional Economic Communities (REC) and their role in integrating member states with the wider economic community. One of the primary responsibilities of the REC is to ensure regional peace and security on the continent. RECs also assist in the implementation, financing, monitoring, and evaluation of Agenda 20163 (the African Union’s 50-year plan), especially at regional levels. In early 2018, the AU prioritized addressing conflicts in South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Somalia. As Ononogbu states “AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, since taking office on March 2017, has focused mainly on peace and security” and signed the UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Cooperation on Peace and Security. This development will enhance peace, security, and economic success. Despite these hopeful signs, there are remaining challenges such as the lack of observation teams ahead of crucial elections and a limited consensus on institutional and financial reform. Ononogbu closed her presentation by stating “Africa is home to a large set of RECs, which differ not only in composition but also in their performance towards integration. However, with the continued resolve by the independent bodies under the Regional Economic Communities, Africa will increasingly become a continent of peace and security.”

The next speaker, Colins Imoh from the University of Toledo in Ohio, presented a paper entitled “Capability Approach as a Framework for Conflict Prevention in the Niger Delta.” Dr. Imoh’s paper explored the cycle of violence in the Niger Delta. Interestingly, despite the resources the Nigerian state and the private sector have allocated to the delta region, the area remains immersed in militancy, conflict, and violence. His talk posed the question of how to change people’s mindsets and engage multiple stakeholders for development. Dr. Imoh suggests one of the ways to think about this issue is through the “capability approach to social justice” outlined by Amartya Sen. Sen’s approach emphasizes wellbeing and equity, especially as it pertains to the life chances of all citizens. In the Niger Delta, the capability approach will empower and provide more opportunities for the region’s people to enhance their quality of life.

Daniel Mengara of Montclair State University in New Jersey was the final presenter on this panel. His paper entitled, “The Curse of Colonial Borders in Africa: From Scattered Identities to Identities in Crisis,” examined the effects of the colonial partitioning of Africa through importing the model of the nation-state. The boundaries drawn under colonial rule disrupted existing ways of life and arbitrarily divided ethnic groups and populations, placing them on different sides of newly created national borders. The divisions have also proven costly for postcolonial Africa. Dr. Mengara argues that many, if not all, of the continent’s ongoing conflicts, can be traced back to the destabilizing effects of colonial border-making. These borders have provided fertile

ground for the production of ethnic, religious, social, political, and cultural identities that have fostered conflict in some contexts. In concluding his talk, Dr. Mengara stressed the importance of critically examining the effects of borders that lead to permanent crises.

Session VI: Current Events in Africa

During the lunch hour, several presenters discussed current events in Africa. This session aimed to inform students about current social, political, economic events taking place in different regions of the continent. Dr. Boatamo Mosupyoe from the CSUS Department of Ethnic Studies spoke about South Africa's recent change in the presidency. Former president, Jacob Zuma, resigned in February 2018 amid a corruption investigation. The National Assembly elected Cyril Ramaphosa, a longtime African National Congress member and anti-apartheid activist, as the fifth president of South Africa. Dr. Mosupyoe also explained how a new political party known as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) were challenging entrenched interests in the SA Parliament. The EFF made news by recording members of parliament sleeping on the job.

The next speaker stayed with the theme of political change in southern Africa. Michael Walker, from the CSUS Department of Anthropology, reflected on the recent regime change in Zimbabwe that ended former President Robert Mugabe's 37-year reign over the country. Walker described the military coup on November 14, 2017, that ousted Mugabe and ultimately installed Emmerson Mnangagwa as the country's new president. Mnangagwa, a longtime Mugabe ally, was recently dismissed from the government and forced to flee the country in a bitter power struggle with Mugabe's wife Grace over the future of ZANU-PF, the ruling party. Mnangagwa was sworn in as president of Zimbabwe on November 24, 2018. Mnangagwa outlined a new vision for the country that includes economic growth and freedom of speech, expression, and assembly. It remains to be seen, however, if this vision constitutes a departure from decades of ZANU-PF policy and action. Thus, Walker leaves open whether this is indeed a new Zimbabwe.

Next, Dr. Data Barata, also from the CSUS Department of Anthropology discussed the ongoing political conflict in Ethiopia through a presentation entitled "Democratization, Conflict, and Peace in Ethiopia." This presentation highlighted key issues driving ongoing conflicts in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, outlined the nature of democratic desires in Ethiopia and made preliminary observations on recent interactions between the Ethiopian diaspora in the US and the US Congress. It concluded by noting that: these are hopeful times, citizen actions have made all the difference in the recent changes and there are great opportunities for more citizen action.

The final speaker of the session was Dr. George Ayittey from the Free Africa Foundation located in Washington DC. Dr. Ayittey focused on the links between economic liberalization and development, emphasizing the need for more democratic governments in Africa. He also noted that U.S. and foreign aid has not been effective in promoting economic growth and addressing the problems it purports to solve. Dr. Ayittey concluded his talk by stressing the need for African countries to create self-sustaining paths to growth that are not dependent on other continents or multilateral institutions.

Session VII: Incarceration, Security, and Grassroots Development

Nathaniel Oyinloye from the Hospital and Prison Welfare Initiative, Lagos, Nigeria opened this session with his talk “The Nigerian Prisons and the Mandela Rules: Conditions in the Prisons of Nigeria for Females, Minors, and Males.” Nigeria’s prisons are overcrowded, have inadequate medical care and food, and limited access to justice. Oyinloye states “There are 240 prison facilities in Nigeria comprising of 138 main prisons, 85 satellites, 14 Farm Centres and 3 Borstal institutions. As at June 2016, the prison population in these prison establishments was 63,143. 17,879 have been convicted and 45,626 are awaiting trial.” The general view in Nigeria is that once a person has committed a crime, the person forfeits their rights. However, the Nigerian Constitution does recognize the rights of prisoners. Also Nigeria has signed many international human rights conventions and charters that also protect the prisoner’s rights. The Mandela rules set a minimum standard for the treatment of prisoners whether they are awaiting trial or have been convicted of a crime. But, reports indicate that in Nigeria, there is widespread noncompliance with these norms. Oyinloye argues that “The right to ‘respect of the dignity inherent in a human being and freedom from’ ‘inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment’ does not exist in all prison establishment in Nigeria.” The Hospital and Prison Welfare Initiative aims to children who are born in prison while extending support the mothers who bear children while incarcerated.

The next speaker, Ingrid Goodman from the PATOIS Women’s Refuge and Homeless Shelter in Guyana, delivered a talk entitled “Understanding Community Violence from a Grassroots Perspective: Gaining Entry into the Third Sector (Guyana).” She opened the presentation by discussing the three levels of women’s socio-economic empowerment. Goodman defined locality development as “when community practitioners work for or with a group of people who are actually the ones needing or utilizing the services. They initiate the relationship, and control the process of development.” Goodman described how community development emerges from the intersections of social action, social planning, and locality development.

The final speaker on this panel, Joan Challenger-Baeta, presented on “Reparations-The Repair Job: Freight Movement on African Intercontinental Railroad.” This paper identified the lack of railroad infrastructure as an impediment to trade across Africa. Challenger-Baeta argued that the African Union and its members should collaborate to create greater incentives for private sector involvement in freight movement.

Day 3, April 28

Session VIII: The Role of Rotary International in Regional Peace Building

This session brought together residents affiliated with Rotary International who shared their experiences promoting peace through service. The first speaker, Clayton Lee of Rotary International, noted that Rotary is a service club, which works in most countries around the world. Rotary promotes peace through conflict resolution and also contributes to socio-economic development. Some of the areas where Rotary contributes to development and wellbeing include fight diseases such as polio, education, microfinance, and access to potable water. Mr. Lee recounted his experience working on a community water project in Ethiopia. He emphasized that if the project only focuses on water, then it will not be successful; the focus needs to be on long-term sustainability. In this particular case, one of the sustainable questions pertained to the maintenance of the new water infrastructure. The local community implemented a collection system whereby households contributed money to pay for repairs. Mr. Lee's experiences working in water development encapsulate the service-oriented mission of Rotary International.

The second speaker, Geri Beck of Rotary International who has worked in Ethiopia and Zambia, shared her experience working in the village of Kiyunga to repair its primary school. This project aimed to repair and renovate the local public primary school. With her Rotary grant, the project hired teachers, repaired the original school building and sponsored or offered scholarships to students. The project also supplied students provided uniforms and funding to participate in sports and music competitions. The villagers assisted in the rebuilding and construction of new classrooms within the school building, including installing or repainting blackboards. This project helped to build two buildings, 4 classrooms in each. A Folsom, California soccer team donated sports uniforms for the children to play soccer with, as well as money was donated to supply the children text books. This rotary project also provided sanitary kits for girls. Solar panels were installed which allowed lighting, so the children could come to the school and study in the evenings. Land and seed were donated for gardening. School furniture is in the process of being delivered and the new water source is being built in walking distance of the school.

The next speaker was Catherine Survillas of Rotary International who discussed her work on the slopes of Mount Kenya. She taught at an international school for 11 years before her retirement. In the next phase of her life, she decided she wanted to "give back." Her grant and project addressed Iruri Primary School in Kenya. Ms. Survillas met independently with the head of a rural school on the slopes of Mount Kenya, situated at about 6000 feet in elevation, on fertile soil in a subsistence farming area. The school is free and compulsory until 8th grade, however, the secondary school is not free. This lack of access to secondary education compels many students to abandon their studies for subsistence farming, especially girls. To address these issues, Ms. Survillas formed a non-profit in 2012 with the goals of improving access to education and improving school infrastructure. The non-profit sponsored their first student in 2012, and the student is now attending Kenyatta University, in his second year of mechanical engineering school. He returns to the school site to rebuild efforts on an annual basis. The program continues to encourage students who leave on a scholarship to return and "give back." Ms. Survilles noted how with an increased budget they have also seen increases in academic performance.

The next speaker was Dr. Gail Ervin of Mediators Beyond Borders International and also a Rotary Peace Fellow who served on a Peace Fellowship. Dr. Ervin discussed the connections between peace and development, linking this outcome with the United Nations Development Goals. Dr. Ervin drew on her experiences working in a pastoralist region of Kenya where livestock theft and violence is common. The flow of small arms across the borders has exacerbated the problem and increased the levels of interpersonal violence. Conflict over grazing land and water resources has moved into central Kenya. Mediators Without Borders worked alongside rotary clubs to foster peace and stability in this context. Especially, they developed a pastoralist-led peace program. For example, Laikipia Peace Caravan is a pastoralist peacebuilding initiative that enlists local warriors in a peace guardian program. The goal is to halt the violence and underlying conditions that perpetuate conflict. Because peace guardians are drawn from the affected communities, there is a greater likelihood of justice that will be sustainable over the long term. The program selects three women, three warrior youth, and three elders. They are brought together in a safe space to act on conflict resolution and trauma-informed meditation. The participants talk and strategize before going into their communities and promoting peace. Their current monitoring mechanism is the social network created by these efforts. “They use the power of the network; they build an expanding network of peace guardians.” Dr. Ervin concluded her presentation by stressing that peace is necessary for development, noting how today, polio mostly exists in places enduring conflict.

Session VIII: African Community Town Hall: New US Immigration Policies and Political Engagement

The opening speaker on this panel, Dr. Michael Oji a lawyer who now offers immigration council runs a non-profit organization dedicated to educating people on how to avoid deportation and other consequences of undocumented immigration. He provides clients with the necessary information on immigration so they can make informed decisions regarding their immigration status. He touched on the immigration crisis since the election of Donald Trump. Four out of the six countries affected by the new travel band are located in Africa. California has taken the stance as a sanctuary state, meaning the state will not work proactively with immigration officers to deport undocumented immigrants. Sacramento is recognized as a sanctuary city. If you are law-abiding and have not committed any crime, they are not proactively trying to turn you over to immigration. Dr. Oji wants people to be aware of their rights whether they are documented or undocumented. He also works with communities so they have an understanding of how to engage with law enforcement officials, including immigration officers. sense, Sacramento is considered a sanctuary city. He stressed that everyone has a right to remain silent and to keep your door closed. He also stressed that people have a plan in place your family in case they are taken into custody or deported. For example, find a safe place for your important documents and records. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of being informed and knowing your rights and having a realistic plan if one is detained.

Next, Professor John Wade of Plateau State, Nigeria discussed several important issues in his region of Nigeria that has perpetuated conflict and instability. He has been engaged in peacebuilding for over 15 years in Plateau State. He highlighted some of the challenges facing

people in rural areas in Nigeria, including conflicts between pastoralists and agriculturalist over rangelands. He explained that before Boko Haram, there was a conflict between farmers and herders as the population grew, placing more stress on local resources necessary to the livelihoods of both groups. As pastoralists move their herds into farming areas, farmers react, leading to a cycle of violence and conflict. Because livestock is a source of material and social wealth for pastoralists, many would rather go hungry than their animals go hungry. Thus, competition over water and grazing lands have fueled farmer and pastoralist conflicts. The new government has tried to resolve these conflicts. There needs to be an institutional and legal framework in which both parties respect and trust. Furthermore, he suggested a new grazing strategy premised on ranching could help alleviate the conflict. He concluded his presentation by stating “The state of Nigeria has begun to build what you call the road map to peace.”

To conclude this panel, the Coordinator of FUEL network Gladys Puente discussed efforts to create funding to combat deportation. She explained that the purpose of FUEL is to prepare and protect immigrants with a removal defense program. It focuses on education and outreach as well as providing a removal defense attorney, Katie Fleming. There is also a paralegal in to assist in the process. She discusses the “Know Your Rights” presentation and family emergency planning. The FUEL organization recently received a small grant to fund local community organizations. This grant was given to provide “Know Your Rights” presentations and family prevention plans to community members. With these resources, those people can go out into their community and do these same training. They work with the NAACP and the NAACP. They have translators and a rapid response hotline. She noted that African immigrants are highly educated and often have obtained a master’s degree. FUEL is doing outreach in Sacramento City schools for staff and educators so they know how to support undocumented students on their campus. They plan to expand outreach to Twin Rivers, Elk Grove, San Juan, and Natomas. FUEL intends to continue providing legal services and education for immigrant families in Sacramento, working alongside the NAACP and CAPCR to ensure their approach is culturally and linguistically sensitive.

Dr. Boatamo Mosupyoe of CSUS and Dr. Daniel Kwame Acquah of Rotary International served as chairs and moderators for this panel.

Dr. Michael Walker officially brought the conference to a close, thanking guests and participants and inviting everyone to attend the Peace Awards Dinner and Dance.

2018 CAPCR Peace Awards Dinner and Dance

The 27th annual CAPCR Peace Awards Dinner and Dance was a special event. The distinguished keynote speaker was His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President, Republic of Ghana. President Akufo-Addo was also presented with the Peace Leadership Award. Right, Honorable Simon Lalong, Governor, Plateau State, Nigeria received the Peace Building Award. The recognition for Peace Service was awarded to the Honorable Rick Jennings II, Councilmember, District 7, City of Sacramento. Mallam Yusuf Ali, Senior Advocate of Nigeria received the Peace & Humanitarian Award. Rotary International District 5180 received the Peace Education Award. Additionally, several CSUS students were recognized for their CAPCR 2018 Velji Family Peace Leadership Scholarship Recipients: Eliza Dodi (Social Work), Micaiah Palmer (Sociology), and Sabrina Harrell (Ethnic Studies).

