



FORTY-SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AUTHORITY OF ECOWAS HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

15 December 2014, Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Forty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, on 15 December 2014, under the Chairmanship of H.E. **John Dramani Mahama**, President of the Republic of Ghana, and current Chairman of the Authority.

2. Present at the Summit were the following Heads of State and Government or their duly-mandated representatives, namely:

- H. E. **Thomas Boni YAYI**, President of the Benin Republic
- H. E. **Michel KAFANDO**, Interim President of Burkina Faso
- H. E. **Alassane OUATTARA**, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
- H. E. **John Dramani MAHAMA**, President of the Republic of Ghana
- H. E. **José Mario VAZ**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau
- H. E. **Ibrahim Boubacar KEITA**, President of the Republic of Mali
- H. E. **Mahamadou ISSOUFOU**, President of the Republic of Niger
- H. E. **Goodluck Ebele JONATHAN**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- H. E. **Faure Essozimna GNASSINGBE**, President of the Togolese Republic
- H. E. **Jorge Tolentino ARAUJO**, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Cabo Verde
- H. E. **Abdoulie JOBE**, Minister of Trade, Industry and Employment of the Republic of The Gambia
- H.E. **Louncy FALL**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Guineans abroad of the Republic of Guinea
- H. E. **Augustine KPEHE NGAFUAN**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia
- H. E. **Mankeur NDIAYE**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese abroad of the Republic of Senegal
- H. E. **Ebun STRASSER-KING**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone

3. The Special Representative of United Nations Secretary General for West Africa, the Representative of Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Representative of the President of the West African Economic and Monetary Union Commission (UEMOA), also attended the Summit as observers.

4. The Heads of State and Government took note of the 2014 Annual Report of the President of the Commission, the Reports of the 73rd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and of the 33rd Meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council presented by the Chair of the Council.

5. The Authority welcomed the quality of the reports presented and the relevance of the recommendations made therein with a view to deepening the West African integration process. The Authority reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the values of solidarity and the sacred principles of democracy, peace and good governance for a stable and highly integrated region. The Heads of State and Government reiterated their firm determination to continue, collectively through strengthened actions, their efforts to ensure human security and sustainable development in West Africa.

6. After thorough consideration of the current challenges in the deepening of the integration process, the Heads of State and Government arrived at the following specific conclusions and decisions.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE COMMON MARKET

7. The Authority takes note of the region's improved growth prospects for 2015 despite the impact of the Ebola Virus Disease on the region's economy. With a view to consolidating the performance recorded for over a decade and containing the adverse impacts of the Ebola Virus Disease, the Heads of State and Government reaffirm their strong commitment to remain mobilised in the coordinated fight against this scourge.

8. The Authority reiterates the urgent need to strengthen national health systems and improve their efficiency. It urges all Member States to take the necessary measures in that regard.

9. The Authority welcomes the development of the roadmap for steering response efforts at regional and national levels in line with the decisions of its Accra Extraordinary Session.

10. The Summit reiterates its gratitude to **H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic, and urges him to sustain his efforts in the advocacy, supervision and monitoring of the implementation of the actions under the roadmap that has been developed.

11. Furthermore, the Authority urges the Member States to sustain their budgetary discipline efforts to control public deficits and accelerate macroeconomic convergence. It particularly emphasizes the need to boost the countries' resilience capacities, including through the provision of basic services, improving their quality and sustained structural reforms with a view to promoting adaptation to exogenous shocks and supporting job-creating growth. In that regard, the Authority directs the Commission to sustain its coordination action in supporting the Member States.

12. The Heads of State and Government welcome the progress accomplished in the implementation of the various economic and monetary integration projects. They particularly welcome the launching of Common External Tariff (CET) on 1st January 2015.

13. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of this incontrovertible instrument for the consolidation of the Common Market. It instructs the President of the Commission to take all necessary measures to not only support the Member States in the uniform implementation of the CET and the supplementary safeguard measures, but equally to create appropriate arbitration channels. The Authority instructs him also to expedite the process for the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and the finalization of the ECOWAS Community Customs Code.

14. The Summit urges all Member States to fully adhere to the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme. While renewing its commitment to the free movement of persons and goods, the Summit further urges them to continue ensuring the implementation of the protocols developed in that respect. The Authority instructs the Commission to expedite the measures, within its mandate, for the effective circulation of the ECOWAS Biometric National Identity Card.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (EPA)

15. The Authority takes note of the ongoing preparation for the signing and implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) by West Africa. Welcoming the signing of the text of the Agreement on 12 December 2014 by the European Council of Ministers, the Authority instructs the West African Chief Negotiators to expedite actions to organize, as soon as possible, the signing of the Agreement and its ratification by all Member States.

16. In that regard, the Heads of State and Government urge the Member States to take the appropriate measures for all to be involved, at an appropriate level, in the process of the signing and ratification of the text of the Agreement.

17. Reiterating the importance of ownership in the implementation of the Agreement, the Authority calls on the West African Chief Negotiators to pursue the awareness campaigns and expedite the setting up of the EPA institutional mechanism and related texts. It also encourages them to finalize the negotiation process on the Association Agreement between ECOWAS and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

18. The Authority reiterates its gratitude to **H.E. Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal, for his involvement in the process of concluding the Agreement and requests him to continue his role of overseeing the signing and ratification process.

SECTORAL POLICIES

19. The Authority reiterates its commitment to make West Africa a region with an enabling environment for investments. It endorses the regional strategic framework for private sector development, thereby devoting importance to this sector's expected role in promoting integration. The Authority instructs the Commission to take all necessary measures to ensure effective implementation of all the components under the regional strategic framework.

20. Furthermore, the Authority welcomes the progress made in the implementation of joint border posts. It is of the view that this positive development will supplement the transport network densification efforts and trade flows. The Authority instructs the Commission to pursue its action of promoting the transport sector, including energy. It particularly instructs the Commission to pursue its efforts at mobilizing the necessary resources to support the implementation of the various projects underway in the different sectors.

21. The Authority welcomes the involvement of **H.E. Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, in infrastructure sector promotion and encourages him to pursue his action.

22. The Summit stresses the important role education plays in building the society, building democracy, promoting human rights and achieving regional integration. It urges the Member States to resolutely commit themselves to improving the education systems, particularly in the field of higher education and scientific research. The Summit encourages the Commission in its efforts to revive this important sector for sustainable development, particularly through the promotion of appropriate policies and support to the countries.

23. The Summit reaffirms its determination to continue the fight against the adverse effects of climate change. As a prelude to the region's participation in the Paris Conference on Climate scheduled to hold in 2015, it urges the Commission to ensure that Member States present a common position on the issue.

PEACE AND SECURITY

24. The Heads of State and Government reaffirm the intrinsic link between peace building and security and achieving harmonious development. They reiterate their commitment to promoting and upholding the principles of democracy, good governance, peace and security as enshrined in the relevant ECOWAS texts.

25. In that regard, the Authority underpins the relevance of the programmes and strategies already adopted. In particular, it reaffirms its determination to resolutely combat all security threats, especially terrorism, maritime piracy, and all forms of illicit trafficking and organized trans-border crime. The Authority expresses deep concern over the continuing terrorist attacks of the Boko Haram group in Nigeria, and expresses its sympathy with the Government and people of Nigeria as well as to the families of victims of the recent terrorist attacks in the North of the country

26. The Authority appeals to the International Community to support Niger in order to enable this country to deal with the effects of refugees inflow due to Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria.

27. Concerned by the prevailing situation in south Libya, the Heads of State and Government stress the need to resolve such a situation in order to preserve the stability of Sahel.

Burkina Faso

28. The Summit welcomes the consensus reached in Burkina Faso by all the stakeholders and the establishment of transitional organs. It commends the political parties, civil society and the armed forces for their contribution to resolving the crisis.

29. The Authority congratulates **H.E. Michel Kafando** on his appointment as Interim President and assures him of its support.

30. The Authority urges the transitional authorities to comply with the provisions of the Transitional Charter, particularly the provisions relating to the duration of the transition and to the ineligibility rules contained in the Charter. More importantly, it urges them to strictly comply with the deadline for holding democratic elections by November 2015. In that regard, the Authority invites them to adopt, as soon as possible, a consensual chronogram of the Transition and to implement it.

31. In this critical transitional phase for the consolidation of democracy, the Summit urges the Transitional Authorities to ensure, at all times, inclusiveness in the process and consensus-building in the implementation of the transition programmes. It invite them to respect the Constitution, adhere to the rule of law and to guarantee individual freedom and the safety of all political leaders.

32. The Authority welcomes the establishment of the International Monitoring and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso (GISAT-BF). It encourages the ECOWAS Commission, African Union, and the United Nations to continue their coordination efforts with a view to ensuring the success of the transition. The Authority strongly encourage the holding, in January 2015, of the first meeting of the International Monitoring and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso.

33. While inviting the International Community to join the initiative of the International Group and support it, the Authority reiterates its calls on all the partners to support Burkina Faso's efforts towards holding free, credible and transparent elections in November 2015.

34. The Authority expresses appreciation to the African Union as well as the United Nations for their various assistance to the region's efforts towards a peaceful solution. It commends, in particular, the personal involvement of **H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz**, current Chairman of the African Union and the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council to defer sanctions against Burkina Faso, thus enabling a solution to the crisis.

35. The Heads of State and Government express gratitude to Their Excellencies Presidents **Macky Sall** of Senegal, Chairman of the Contact Group and **Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe** of the Togolese Republic for their contribution to the consensus reached, which resulted in the adoption of the Transitional Charter.

36. The Heads of State and Government also express appreciation to **H.E. John Dramani Mahama**, President of the Republic of Ghana and current ECOWAS Chairman, for his personal involvement, through proactive diplomacy, in the resolution of the crisis.

37. The Authority commends the members of ECOWAS-AU-UN joint mission to Ouagadougou for the excellent work in bringing all Burkinabe stakeholders in finding a consensual solution towards a rapid return to normal constitutional order.

38. At the dawn of a year, which underpins the Community's political maturity through the celebration of its 40th anniversary, the Heads of State and Government reaffirm their total commitment to the consolidation of democracy in West Africa and respect for the Principles of Constitutional Convergence, as enshrined in the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

39. To this end, the Heads of State and Government agree on the need to review the legal texts in force, particularly the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in order to reflect best practices in respect of presidential terms of office.

40. In that regard, the Heads of State and Government instruct the Commission to set up a special committee responsible for reviewing the aforementioned legal texts and submit a report to them on the matter at their next Ordinary Session.

Mali

41. The Heads of State and Government express deep concern over the security situation in Northern Mali and strongly condemn the continued terrorist attacks on the civilian populations and international troops.

42. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty of the Republic of Mali, its territorial integrity, and the unitary, republican and secular form of the Malian State.

43. In that regard, it reiterates its call on all the armed groups in Northern Mali signatories to the Ouagadougou Agreement of 18 June 2013 to distance themselves from the terrorist groups.

44. Furthermore, the Summit commends the progress recorded in the Algiers Talks and invites all the parties, in particular the general secretaries of the armed groups, to be personally involved in the process with a view to reaching an Agreement as soon as possible on the basis of the Draft submitted to the Parties by the Mediation, as a solid ground for negotiation.

45. The Authority expresses gratitude to **H.E. Abdelaziz Bouteflika**, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, for the critical facilitation role his country is playing in the quest for peaceful and lasting solution to the situation in Mali.

46. The Authority requests the Commission to continue its involvement in the process initiated in Mali

Guinea Bissau

47. The Heads of State and Government reaffirm their firm commitment to support Guinea Bissau in the pursuit of reforms aimed at consolidating peace, stability and security in the country, and promoting sustainable development. In that regard, they encourage the Government of Guinea Bissau to be fully involved in the conduct of the reforms and the implementation of defined programmes.

48. The Authority underscores the need to mobilize sufficient financial resources to support Guinea Bissau in its post-transition consolidation efforts. In that regard, and in view of the Donors' Roundtable scheduled for March 2015, the Authority appeals to all ECOWAS bilateral and multilateral partners to participate in the roundtable and take due account of Guinea Bissau's medium and long term development prospects in designing their support to the country.

49. The Authority takes note of the reactivation of the International Contact Group on Guinea Bissau (ICG-GB). It urges the latter to ensure the coordination of interventions with a view to guaranteeing the success of the roundtable and to align the support of partners with the priorities of the Guinea Bissau authorities.

50. The Authority directs the Commission to take all the necessary steps to ensure that ECOWAS continues to fully play its role in supporting Guinea Bissau.

51. The Heads of State and Government decide to extend ECOMIB mandate beyond 31 December 2014 for another six months with the retention of the existing force strength. To that end, they underscore the need to expedite the implementation of the Defence and Security Sector Reform Programme.

52. The Heads of State and Government appeal to the International Community to support the continued mandate of ECOMIB mission.

2015 Elections

53. The Heads of State and Government underpin the importance of upcoming presidential elections in 2015 in Nigeria, Togo, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso for the consolidation of democracy in West Africa.

54. The Heads of State and Government reiterate their call on all the Member States concerned for these elections to be conducted in a peaceful, free, fair and credible manner. The Authority urges them to take all the necessary measures to reach consensus between all the political stakeholders on key issues related to the preparation, organization and conduct of the elections.

55. The Authority instructs the Commission to support these various electoral processes notably through electoral assistance and dispatch of adequate observation missions

INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

56. The Authority reiterates its earlier decisions on the need to pursue institutional reforms in order to ensure an effective implementation of programmes.

57. The Authority directs the Commission to take the necessary measures for the conclusion of the institutional reforms, and equally instructs Council to monitor the exercise and present a progress report at its next session.

58. To enhance the solidarity of Members State in supporting the regional candidacy, the Authority request the Council to undertake a reflexion aimed at putting in place a consultation mechanism for the selection of ECOWAS candidate to International positions. The Heads of State and Government express their support to the candidature of Senegal to a non permanent seat on UN Security Council during elections schedule for October 2015.

59. The Summit underscores the vital importance of Community resources for the implementation of ECOWAS Vision 2020. It reaffirms that these resources are needed not only

for the effective implementation of the various Community programmes, but also for deepening the West African integration process.

60. The Authority, in that regard, reiterates its previous appeals to Member States to honour their obligations by ensuring full compliance with the provisions of the Community levy Protocol. It instructs the Commission to undertake a reflexion on the funding of community activities with the view of ensuring that adequate resources are made available to the Institutions.

61. The Summit urges all Member States to take necessary steps to expeditiously pay-up their arrears of called-up capital of ECOWAS Bank of Investment and Development (EBID).

62. The Authority takes note of the programme of activities for 2015 both in Member States and the headquarters of the Commission, for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of ECOWAS. It welcomes, in particular, the cultural and sporting events planned to that effect as well as the publication of a book on the achievements and the stakes in the deepening of integration process in West Africa.

63. The Authority urges all Member States to fully get involved in the celebration of this anniversary. It requests the Commission to work closely with Nigerian authorities in the preparation of this important event in Abuja.

64. The Authority expresses gratitude to ECOWAS partners for their support and diverse assistance to regional programmes.

65. The Authority pays glowing tribute to **H.E. John Dramani Mahama**, President of the Republic of Ghana, Chairman of the Authority for his unwavering efforts in the integration process. In particular, the Authority expresses gratitude for his personal commitment in preserving and consolidating the gains of peace and democracy in West Africa.

66. The Summit decides to renew the mandate of **H.E. John Dramani Mahama** President of the Republic of Ghana as Chairman of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government till its next Ordinary Session.

67. The Heads of State and Government express their deep gratitude to **H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the generous and authentic African hospitality accorded them, as well as the excellent arrangements made to ensure a successful summit.

68. The Authority expresses solidarity with the Government and people of Cabo Verde, following the volcanic eruption on Fogo Island since 23 November 2014. It appeals to Member States and the International Community to support this country in its efforts to deal with the consequences of this natural disaster.

69. The Heads of State and Government decide to hold their next Ordinary Session on 28 May 2015, in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

DONE AT ABUJA, THIS 15TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2014

THE AUTHORITY



FORTY-SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AUTHORITY OF ECOWAS HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 15 December 2014

VOTE OF THANKS

We, Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, meeting on 15 December 2014 in our 46th Ordinary Session in Abuja, express our deep appreciation to **H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Government and People of Nigeria for the warm hospitality extended to us, as well as for the excellent facilities placed at our disposal to ensure the success of our Summit.

We also wish to pay a special and well-deserved tribute to **H.E. John Dramani Mahama**, President of the Republic of Ghana, and current Chairman of our Authority, for his commitment to shared values and principles as well as for his contribution to deepening the West African integration process in an environment of lasting peace, security and good democratic governance.

In that regard, We, Heads of State and Government, express our highest regard to President **John Dramani Mahama** for the skills and effectiveness with which he presided over proceedings, which greatly facilitated deliberations and ensured the successful formulation of relevant decisions for the deepening of the integration process.

We are also grateful to him for the relaxed atmosphere in which we held our meetings.

DONE AT ABUJA, THIS 15TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2014

THE AUTHORITY