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FIFTY-SEVENTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

7 September 2020, Niamey, Republic of Niger

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Fifty-seventh Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held on 7 September 2020 in Niamey, Republic of Niger, under the chairmanship of **H.E. Issoufou Mahamadou**, President of the Republic of Niger and Chair of the Authority.
2. Present at the Summit were the under-listed ECOWAS Heads of State or their duly mandated representatives:
H.E **Roch Marc Christian Kabore**, President of Burkina Faso
H.E **Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire;
H.E. **Adama Barrow**, President of the Republic of The Gambia;
H.E **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**, President of the Republic of Ghana;
H.E. **Umaro Sissoco Embaló**, President of Guinea Bissau;
H.E **Issoufou Mahamadou**, President of the Republic of Niger;
H.E **Muhammadu Buhari**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
H.E **Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal;

H.E **Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic;

Hon. Aurelien Agbenonci, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Republic of Benin;

Hon. Rui Alberto Figueireo Soares Minister of Regional Integration of Republic of Cabo Verde;

Hon. Mamadi Toure, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad of the Republic of Guinea;

Hon. Nabeela Tunis, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone;

Hon. Henry B. Fahnbulleh, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Liberia.

3. The session was also attended by:

- H.E. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, President of ECOWAS Commission;
- H.E. Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS);
- H.E. Abdallah Boureima, President of the UEMOA Commission;
- H.E. Ibrahim Abani Sani, Executive Secretary of CEN-SAD;
- H.E. Amb. Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs, representing the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

4. At the opening ceremony, H.E. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, President of ECOWAS Commission delivered a welcome statement. Thereafter, H.E. Issoufou Mahamadou, President of the Republic of Niger and Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of

State and Government delivered the opening address.

5. A goodwill message was delivered by Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).
6. In the course of their work, the Heads of State and Government took note of the 2020 Interim Report of the President of the Commission, the Reports of the 44th Ordinary Session of ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, the 84th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers. They also took note of the presentation of the Special Report on the COVID-19 Situation in the region presented by H.E. Mohammed Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the ECOWAS Champion on the Fight against COVID-19, and Special Report on the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme.
7. The Authority commended the quality of the Reports and the relevant recommendations contained therein, which are aimed at deepening the economic and monetary integration process and consolidating political stability, peace and security within the region. The Authority shows concern about the weak resource mobilisation on the Community Levy. It urges particularly the Member States to regularize their Levy contributions.
8. With a view to consolidating the achievements recorded in the integration process and sustaining an inclusive region of peace, security and prosperity, the Authority takes the following decisions:

I - ON THE COVID-19 SITUATION

9. The Authority notes the improvement recorded on the containment of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region as a result of the strong measures taken by member States. Authority appreciates the activities implemented by H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, the three Ministerial Coordination Committees on Health, Finance, and Transport & Trade, as well as ECOWAS Commission and WAHO. Authority further expresses its gratitude to the Champion for providing leadership in the coordinated strategic response and particularly for the logistic support for the transport of medical supply to ECOWAS Member States. The Authority urges Member States to continue implementing measures against Covid-19 in order to guard against a second wave of the pandemic.

10. The Authority further takes note of the need for joint and coordinated efforts in the reopening of international borders to ensure an effective regional response to the fight against COVID-19 and revive the economies. In this regard, the Heads of State and Government endorse immediate application of the ECOWAS harmonised Guidelines on Cross-Border Transport, Trade and Health Protocols in the COVID-19 Pandemic and Post Recovery within the ECOWAS Region recommended by the Ministerial Coordination Committees on Health and Transport & Trade.

11. The Authority urges Member States, the Commission, WAHO to propose urgently a strategy for the availability of anti COVID-19 vaccines in the ECOWAS Region and support for the creation of pharmaceutical industries. In this regard, the Heads of State and Government direct the President of the Commission to constitute a team of experts to conduct a feasibility study on production of

vaccines within the region.

II- ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PERFORMANCE

12. The Authority takes note of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the humanitarian situation in the region which has impacted negatively the economies of Member States. The Authority notes that this situation will lead to recession and financial difficulties in the region. Authority directs the Commission to support the Member States in their quest for debt service suspension in 2021. Authority further directs the Commission to negotiate reduction of cost of funds transfer from the Diaspora to the region.

13. The Authority urges Member States to continue to pursue strong economic reforms and to mobilise the financial resources necessary for the implementation of their economic recovery plan in order to minimise the social impact of COVID-19, in particular on vulnerable groups. The Authority urges Member States and the Commission to prepare a post COVID-19 economic recovery plan to support activities in the region.

III- ON PEACE, SECURITY AND POLITICAL STABILITY

14. The Authority takes note of the Report of the Mediation and Security Council meeting at the ministerial level, on the political and security situation in the region and the recommendations contained therein.

15. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region, the prerequisite for the economic

integration and development of the region.

III.1- ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE REGION

16. Regarding the situation in Mali, the Authority reaffirms its determination to ensure that constitutional order is quickly restored in Mali, with a political transition led by a civilian President and Prime Minister for twelve months. The Authority maintains all the decisions taken at its extraordinary Summit of 28 August 2020 and notes the ongoing consultations between the Malian stakeholders initiated by the National Council for the People's Salvation (CNSP). Authority directs that the Head of Transition and Prime Minister, both civilians, be appointed no later than 15 September. Authority welcomes the departure of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita for medical treatment abroad and wishes him a speedy recovery.
17. The Summit commends the ECOWAS Mediator, H.E. Mr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, for all the efforts to find a sustainable political solution in Mali.
18. Regarding Guinea Bissau, the Authority expresses satisfaction at the progress made in the functioning of institutions, particularly the National Assembly and the Government. As a result, the Authority decides to withdraw the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau and expresses its gratitude to troop and police contributing countries for their efforts in the stabilisation of Guinea Bissau. It also thanks the European Union for the various forms of support to ECOMIB since it was deployed in April 2012. Authority reaffirms its commitment to accompany the government of Guinea Bissau on the ongoing constitutional reform as well as security sector reform in the country.

19. With respect to The Gambia, the Authority welcomes the political reforms undertaken to stabilise the country. It decides to extend for 6 months, the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG), to enable the Mission to provide support particularly for the ongoing security sector reform in the country. It also decides that ECOMIG will be gradually changed into a police mission.

III.2- ON ELECTIONS IN THE REGION

20. With respect to the upcoming presidential elections in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Niger, the Authority notes with satisfaction that most of the Member States with elections in 2020, would be in their fifth or sixth electoral cycle. This would constitute an important test of our region's commitment to democratic consolidation. The Authority calls on Member States to create an enabling environment for peaceful, inclusive and transparent elections. Authority calls on all political actors to respect the institutions and laws governing the electoral processes in their respective countries.

21. The Authority directs ECOWAS Commission, in line with tradition, to accompany the countries in their electoral processes. Particularly, the Authority instructs the Commission to continue to provide technical assistance that will contribute to enhancing the integrity and the thrust of the electoral process in the region.

III.3- ON THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE REGION

22. The Authority expresses serious concern at the increasing incidence of terrorist attacks in the region targeted primarily at civilian populations, defence and security forces, humanitarian

personnel, locally-elected officials, religious and community leaders resulting into deaths, injuries and internal displacement.

23. The Authority strongly condemns those terrorist attacks and reiterates its determination to eradicate terrorism in the region. It expresses solidarity with the people and governments of the affected countries.

24. The Authority commends the considerable efforts by Member States to fight against terrorism and all other forms of transnational organised crime in the region. The Authority also commends UEMOA for contributing voluntarily to the Fight against terrorism and also commend the recent decision of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to contribute to the implementation of the 2020 – 2024 Action Plan. The Summit calls on Member States that are yet to pay their voluntary contributions to do so. In this regard, two Heads of State will be appointed to lead the resource mobilisation process for the implementation of the 2020-2024 Action Plan for the eradication of terrorism in the region. The Authority directs the Commission to accelerate the implementation of the plan of action against terrorism taking into consideration activation of the Standby Force.

25. The Authority urges international partners to continue to provide substantial technical and financial support for the implementation of the Action Plan. To this end, it instructs the Commission to work on mobilising financial contribution from those partners and to build strong partnerships with all stakeholders in counter-terrorism in the region.

IV- ON FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS AND GOODS

26. The Authority takes note of the continuing challenges in the implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods, arising from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Heads of State and Government also take note of the gradual and phased easing of the cross-border lockdown measures in the region.
27. The Authority lauds the efforts of the Community on the ECOWAS Common Schedule of Tariff Concession for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). It instructs the Commission to complete with Member States all outstanding work on Tariff Concession, Rules of Origin and Specific Commitment on Trade in Services.
28. Furthermore, the Authority calls on the remaining five (5) Member States that are yet to ratify the AfCFTA Agreement to take urgent steps necessary to do so and deposit their instruments of ratification of the AfCFTA Agreement before the start of trading under the AfCFTA. Furthermore, the Authority calls on Member States that have not signed or ratified the African Union Protocol on Free Movement to do so.
29. The Authority congratulates the Republic of Ghana for commissioning and handing over the AfCFTA Secretariat Building in Accra to the African Union on 17 August 2020.

V- CREATION OF THE MONETARY UNION

V.1- Statements on the ECOWAS Single Currency

30. The Heads of State took note of two statements made by H.E. Alassane

Ouattara, Chairperson of UEMOA and by Honourable Nabeela Tunis, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone representing H.E. Maada Bio, Chairperson of WAMZ.

31. They thanked both speakers for valuable information provided and following discussions on the issue, they:

- Take note of the significant transformations made in the UMOA monetary zone;
- Reaffirm their commitment to the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme;
- Note that the reform in the UMOA monetary zone forms part of measures to be taken to convert the CFAF, as well as other currencies, into ECO, in accordance with the revised ECOWAS roadmap;
- Underscore their commitment to respect the convergence criteria before the creation of the single currency;
- Acknowledge the economic and financial difficulties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic during the year 2020;
- Reaffirm their commitment to undertake the necessary economic reforms to revive their economies;
- Call on all partners to increase support to ECOWAS Member States;
- Agree to adhere to the conclusions as laid out in the Report of the last ministerial committee on the single currency held on 13 July 2020;
- Request the ECOWAS Commission to continue to work with Central Banks, Ministries of Finance, WAMI and WAMA for the implementation of the revised roadmap of the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme.

32. The Authority welcomes the developments in the UMOA monetary zone.

V.2- The Ministerial Committee on Single Currency

33. The Authority congratulates the Ministerial Committee on the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme, on the progress in the implementation of the revised roadmap in 2019.

34. The Authority expresses satisfaction at the improved status of macroeconomic convergence in ECOWAS in 2019, compared to 2018. Nevertheless, it notes that while the convergence phase ended on 31 December 2019, the necessary conditions for ECOWAS to move into the stability and performance consolidation phase have not been met, as set out in the Macroeconomic Convergence and Stability Pact among ECOWAS Member States. It also notes the negative impact of COVID-19 on Member States' compliance with ECOWAS macroeconomic convergence in 2020.

35. In order to consolidate the achievements the Authority decides to:

- i. Develop a new Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme;
- ii. Postpone the launch of the ECOWAS Single Currency to a later date;
- iii. Exempt Member States from compliance with the convergence criteria in 2020;
- iv. Develop a new macroeconomic convergence and stability pact among the ECOWAS Member States;
- v. Maintain the gradual approach for the launching of ECO.

VI- ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

36. The Heads of State and Government note the effort of ECOWAS in regulating, popularizing and promoting alternative sources of energy, including fuel economy for the Community, which is based on the Global Fuel Economy Initiative (GFEI) that aims to improve fuel economy and ensure greater vehicle efficiency by achieving a 50 percent reduction in fuel consumption of light-duty vehicles by 2050. The Authority welcomes the adoption of the Regional Roadmap Strategy and the accompanying Draft Regulation
37. There is also consideration for environmental safety. In this regard, the Authority welcomes adoption of the Biosafety regulation by Council and the regional environmental action plan for the 2020-2026 period, which identifies actions to protect, preserve and improve the environment of the ECOWAS region.
38. The Authority welcomes the adoption of the draft regulation relating to ECOWAS Regional Strategy for the Popularisation of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as Domestic Cooking Energy. In addition, the Authority welcomes the adoption of two (2) directives on:
- i. harmonised fuel (petrol and diesel) specifications in the ECOWAS region;
 - ii. harmonisation of limits for exhaust and particulate matter emission from light-duty, heavy-duty, two-wheel vehicles, tricycles and quadricycles, and the age limit for the importation of vehicles.

VII- ON INDUSTRY

39. The Authority also adopts harmonized Regional Standard on Barrier Masks & Hydro-alcoholic Gel Hand Sanitizers and Solutions developed for containment of spread of COVID-19 pandemic in the region.

VIII- ON EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

40. The Authority reaffirms the importance of education and science in the economic and social development of the region.
41. In this regard, it welcomes the establishment of the ECOWAS Research and Innovation Support Programme (PARI) which aims to promote the implementation of research projects in Member States' priority development areas.
42. Furthermore, the Authority directs the Commission to expedite the implementation of the degree recognition and equivalence project with a view to promoting talent mobility in the region.

IX- ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

43. The Authority expresses sincere gratitude to the African Union and the United Nations as well as all financial and technical partners of ECOWAS, for their contribution to the consolidation of regional peace and security, implementation of the ECOWAS integration agenda and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and terrorism in the ECOWAS region.

X- ON INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

44. The Authority takes note of the evaluation of Vision 2020 and preparation of Vision 2050 for the Community, as well as other reforms aimed at consolidating the gains made in the region in spite of the exogenous shocks of COVID-19 and terrorism.
45. The Authority calls on Member States to ensure payment of their Community Levy contributions for the effective functioning of Community Institutions and effective implementation of Community programmes.

XI- ON HARMONISATION OF ECOWAS POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

46. The Heads of State and Government take note of the request for support by Member States applying for statutory positions in international and regional organisations, as well as current vacancies at the African Union Commission for the 2021-2025 period.

47. The Authority calls for urgent arbitration and harmonisation of the positions requested by several Member States, in order to come up with consensus candidatures, which should be fully supported by the Community.

XII- ON THE RE-ELECTION OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK PRESIDENT

48. The Authority congratulates Dr Akinwumi Adesina on his re-election for a second term of office as President of the African Development Bank.

XIII – CANDIDATURES AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

49. The Authority decides to support the candidacies of:

- Madam **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** for the position of Director General of World Trade Organisation (WTO);
- Mr. **Moussa Faki Mahamat** for the position of Chairperson of African Union Commission;
- Mr. **Mohamed Moussa** for the position of Director General of ASECNA.

XIV- ELECTION OF THE NEW CHAIR OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

50. The Heads of State and Government elect H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, as the new Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for a one-year term.

XV- DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT SUMMIT

51. The date and venue of the Fifty-eighth Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government will be communicated at a later date, after consultations with the Heads of State and Government.

52. The Authority conveys its sincere gratitude to H.E. Issoufou Mahamadou, President of the Republic of Niger and Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, for his outstanding commitment to regional and continental integration and exemplary leadership in steering the affairs of the Community. It thanks the Government and people of Niger for the warm and fraternal welcome extended to all the delegations, as well as the facilities put at their disposal for the holding of these meetings.

DONE IN NIAMEY THIS 7TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2020

THE AUTHORITY