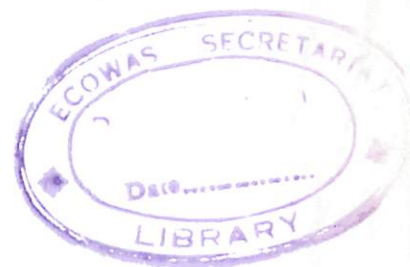




TWENTY SIXTH SESSION OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

Dakar, 31 January 2003



FINAL COMMUNIQUE



1. The twenty sixth ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), was held in Dakar on 31 January 2003, under the Chairmanship of His Excellency Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, and current Chairman of ECOWAS.

2. The following Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives were present at the session:

- His Excellency Mathieu Kerekou
President of the Republic of Benin
- His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor
President of the Republic of Ghana
- His Excellency Koumba Yalla
President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau
- His Excellency Charles Gankay Taylor
President of the Republic of Liberia
- His Excellency Amadou Toumani Touré
President of the Republic of Mali
- His Excellency Mamadou Tandja
President of the Republic of Niger
- His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade
President of the Republic of Senegal
- His Excellency General Gnassingbe Eyadema
President of the Togolese Republic
- Her Excellency. Isatou Njie-Saidy
Vice-President of the Republic of The Gambia
Representing the President of the Republic
- His Excellency Ernest Paramanga Yonli
Prime Minister
Representing the President of Faso

- His Excellency Lamine Sidimé
Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea
Representing the President of the Republic
- Mrs Fatima Veiga
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
Representing the President of Cabo Verde
- Mr. Leon Emmanuel Monnet
Minister of Mines and Energy
Representing the President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- Mr. Momodou Koroma
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
Representing the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

3. The following eminent persons were also present at the twenty sixth session as observers:

- the Representative of the United Nations Secretary General
- the Deputy Secretary General, Special representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict
- the Representative of the Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity, Interim President of the African Union Commission (OAU/African Union)
- the Secretary General of the CEN-SAD
- the Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
- the President of the UEMOA (West African Monetary and Economic Union) Commission
- the President of the Committee of Governors of West African Central Banks, Governor of the Central Bank of Sierra Leone
- the Representative of the African Development Bank (ADB)
- the Representative of the European Union
- the Executive President of the African Business Round Table (ABR)

4. A list of participants is attached to this report.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening address was delivered by His Excellency Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, and current Chairman of ECOWAS and UEMOA. A response was made by His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on behalf of the other Heads of State and Government. The Authority decided that these addresses should be retained as working documents. The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening regional peace and security, and to make ECOWAS a powerful medium for the promotion of integration and the development of the economies of the West African economies within the framework of NEPAD.

Messages of support and encouragement were addressed to the 26th summit of Heads of State and Government by the Deputy Secretary General, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict. Messages were also received from the Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, the Representative of the OAU and interim President of the African Union Commission.

ACCELERATING THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS

ECOWAS Programmes

The Authority adopted the reports of the Executive Secretary, the 6th extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers, the 49th ordinary session of the Council of Ministers, the ad hoc Ministerial Committee on the Enhancement of the Resources of the ECOWAS Fund, and the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The thrust of these reports may be listed as follows:

- creation of the ECOWAS Common Market
- creation of the single monetary zone
- trade negotiations with the European Union within the framework of the EPAs
- creation of a West African representation within the framework of its dialogue with the European Union
- sectoral production programmes and infrastructure

- human development programmes
- administrative and financial matters
- enhancement of the financial resources of the ECOWAS Fund
- regional peace and security.

During the deliberations of the Authority the focus of attention was on economic and institutional matters, peace and security.

ECONOMIC MATTERS

Implementation of NEPAD

The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to the objectives, orientations and priorities of NEPAD, which is the most appropriate instrument for the integration and development of the economies of the African continent, and for the release of the African peoples from the grip of poverty.

The Authority decided to take appropriate measures to enable the West African sub-region to derive the utmost benefit from the NEPAD continental initiative. Referring to the Declaration and Plan of Action for NEPAD implementation in West Africa which were adopted at the extraordinary meeting of the Authority in Yamoussoukro on 17 May 2002, when ECOWAS was designated the coordinator and monitoring agency for the implementation of NEPAD programmes in West Africa, the Authority called on the Executive Secretariat and the Member States to take appropriate action to ensure the creation of NEPAD focal points in all the Member States.

The Authority thanked its development partners for their assistance to the Executive Secretariat in setting up the regional NEPAD implementation unit at the offices of the Secretariat, and rendering it functional.

The Authority expressed satisfaction at the fact that NEPAD has been well received by the G8. It appealed to the members of the G8 group to make good on the promises made at their summits in Genoa in 2001, and Kananaskis in 2002.

The Monetary Cooperation Programme

In addressing the issue of a single ECOWAS monetary zone, the Authority reaffirmed the relevance of the initiative taken by the ECOWAS Member States

outside the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) to create a second monetary zone as part of the fast-track approach to the creation of a single ECOWAS monetary zone. The Heads of State and Government commended the determination of the countries of the second monetary zone to create their own common currency.

However, the Authority took note of the progress report on the macroeconomic convergence programme which reveals that the achievement of a monetary union by 2004 is not possible in view of the macroeconomic and political instability of some of the countries. The Authority also emphasised the fact that the decision of the summit of Heads of State of the second monetary zone held in Conakry on 6 November 2002, to defer the launch date for their monetary zone till 2005, makes it impossible to meet the 2004 deadline for the realisation of the single currency.

Consequently, the Authority decided to push the launching of the single monetary zone beyond the target date of 2004. It was decided that a firm date will be fixed at the meeting of the Authority in 2005, after a detailed appraisal of the performance of the countries of the second monetary zone, and the level of convergence of the economies of the sub-region as a whole.

The Heads of State and Government emphasised the need to enhance the convergence of the macroeconomic policies and performances of the Member States in order to build up the credibility of the proposed ECOWAS single currency zone. In this regard, they called on all Member States to redouble their efforts to meet the macroeconomic convergence criteria, guided by the principles of good governance, through public finance reforms and the introduction of the appropriate structural reforms needed for the expansion of their production base.

The ECOWAS Common Market

The Authority expressed its satisfaction at the harmonisation of the trade liberalisation schemes of ECOWAS and UEMOA, as attested to by the adoption of common rules of origin, the new certificate of origin, and new approval and compensation procedure for loss of Customs revenue. This opens up new perspectives for the creation of a single regional market in West Africa. The Heads of State and Government called on the ECOWAS Executive Secretary and the President of the UEMOA Commission to build upon the cooperation thus initiated.

The Authority strongly urged the Member States to take concrete measures towards the creation of the single regional market in West Africa, through the implementation of the ECOWAS trade liberalisation scheme, and the alignment of the national customs tariffs with the UEMOA tariff, which is the basis of the

ECOWAS common external tariff (CET).

Free Movement of Persons

The Authority noted with regret the repeated violations of the provisions of the protocol on free movement of persons, right of residence and establishment by some Member States. The Authority particularly deplored the presence of numerous check-points along the West African highways. The Heads of State urged Member States to take necessary measures to have these check-points removed and ensure the faithful application of the provisions of the protocol without further delay. The Authority directed the Executive Secretariat to monitor proper implementation of these protocols, and report accordingly to the next session of the Council of Ministers.

The ECOWAS Passport

The Heads of State and Government commended the Republic of Benin and the Republic of Senegal for putting into circulation the ECOWAS passport, which confers ECOWAS citizenship. The Heads of State and Government urged the other Member States to take necessary action to put the passport into use in the shortest possible time.

The Community Levy

The Authority took note of the importance of implementing the Protocol on the Community levy as a means of providing a definitive solution to the problem of irregular payments of financial contributions to the budgets of the Community institutions. The Authority urged all Member States to promptly implement and remove all obstacles to the proper application of the provisions of the protocol on the Community Levy, in order to speed up the transition to the substantive regime of the levy and create a solidarity fund for the use of all Member States.

The Heads of State and Government decided that the substantive regime of the Community shall come into force with effect from 1st July 2003. Consequently, they called on all Member States to take all the necessary measures to apply this decision.

Preparations for the Negotiation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the European Union

The Authority acknowledged the importance of the negotiation, between West Africa and the European Union, of an economic partnership agreement (EPA) designed to accelerate development and the regional integration process. In order to facilitate the preparations for these negotiations, the Authority adopted:

- areas of priority actions for the West African region:

- a plan of action for the negotiations;
- a negotiating structure;
- terms of the negotiating mandate;
- development funding

Definition of a single structure to speak for West Africa in the dialogue with the European Union

In order to ensure a balanced dialogue between the two parties and manifest the unity and cohesion of West Africa, the Authority stressed the fact that ECOWAS should, like the European Union, have a single representation which would speak for the whole Community. The Authority adopted the structure of this representation as follows:

- the country which is current Chairman
- the country which is the out-going Chairman, and
- the Executive Secretariat, as a permanent member.

Establishment of an ECOWAS liaison office in Brussels

The Authority expressed its appreciation to the European Union for its unwavering support to the sub-region in the acceleration of the regional integration process. It appealed to the European Union to show its support by providing substantial financial assistance for the establishment and operation of an ECOWAS office in Brussels.

SECTORAL PRODUCTION PROGRAMMES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Livestock Development and Transhumance

The Heads of State and Government, addressing the implications of cross-border transhumance which can pose a threat to peace, creates social conflicts between livestock breeders and farmers and provokes the degradation of natural resources, stressed the need to introduce a transhumance surveillance and monitoring mechanism. The Heads invited the Executive Secretariat and the Member States to take necessary measures to implement the plans of action agreed by the Ministers responsible for livestock development, taking due account of the recommendations of the Council of Ministers.

Energy

The Authority, expressing concern over the persistent energy crises in the sub-region, reaffirmed its decision to boost the West African Power Pool by exploiting the energy resources of Member States, in order to enable them to meet their development needs. It was decided to launch the system by signing a Protocol on Energy, and also establish an ECOWAS Energy Observatory.

The Authority commended the determination of Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo to realise the construction of the West African Gas Pipeline project within the framework of the ECOWAS energy programme. It also commended the signing of the Gas Pipeline Treaty by the Heads of State of the four (4) countries. The Heads of State and Government called on the Executive Secretariat and the private sector to take necessary measures to commence construction in January 2004, and ensure the delivery of the first consignment of gas in June 2005. They also requested the Executive secretariat to prepare an operational plan to extend the gas pipeline to all ECOWAS Member States.

Water Resource Management

Referring to the regional plan of action for integrated water resource management in West Africa, the Authority decided to establish an ECOWAS Regional Coordinating Unit with its headquarters in Ouagadougou.

Human Development

The Authority expressed much concern at the low level of human development in the region, and acknowledged the importance of adopting and implementing regional human development programmes in order to bolster national programmes. To this end, the Authority adopted the following:

- In the education sector, a Protocol on Education and Vocational Training and a Convention on the Equivalence and Recognition of Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other Qualifications;
- In the health sector, the West African Health Organisation's 5-year strategic plan (2003 -2007) and appropriate measures for the implementation of the anti-HIV/AIDS strategy.

Cultural Affairs

The Authority, recognising culture as an essential dimension of human development, reaffirmed the political will of Member States to work together to promote a dynamic and productive cooperation in cultural affairs. To this end, the Authority endorsed the Plan of Action and the Dakar Declaration on Culture, and directed the Executive Secretariat to use them to initiate programmes for stimulating the cultural development of West Africa within the NEPAD framework.

ENHANCEMENT OF THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF ECOWAS FOR INVESTMENT FINANCING

The Authority welcomed the ratification by twelve Member States of the supplementary protocol amending the ECOWAS Treaty, and the Protocol establishing the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) which launched the regional bank and its subsidiaries, as a desirable means of enhancing the financial resources of ECOWAS earmarked for investment financing. The Authority also

- i) urged the Member States which are yet to do so, to ratify Protocols A/P1/12/01 amending articles 1,3,6 and 21 of the revised Treaty, and A/P2/12/02 on EBID, and transmit the instruments of ratification to the Executive Secretariat;
- ii) urged Member States to pay up the first tranche of 35% of the called up capital of EBID, bearing in mind the fact that Member States have the possibility of using the Community levy instituted by article 11 Protocol A/P 1/7/96, to settle their share of the capital;
- iii) endorsed the Resolution of the Council of Ministers calling on Member States to negotiate with EBID the conditions for the placement of part or all of the balance of proceeds from the Community levy with the bank.

II. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

i) Reinforcement of the Institutions of the Community

In order to guarantee the coordination of the activities and programmes of the institutions of the Community, the Authority endorsed the recommendation of the Council of Ministers to set up an ad hoc Ministerial Committee to harmonise the provisions of the Treaty and the protocols regulating the institutions of the Community

ii) The West African Women's Association

Taking due account the role of women in development and regional integration, the Authority endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers to revive the West African Women's Association (WAWA), which is a specialised ECOWAS institution, by extending the scope of its operations. The association has been renamed the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre. A Division will be created

at the Executive Secretariat for gender issues and a technical commission set up to look into problems relating to gender inequality.

REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

The Authority of Heads of State and Government examined the report of the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the security situation in the region, especially in Côte d'Ivoire and the Mano River Union countries. After deliberations on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and in the countries of the Mano River Union, the following observations and recommendations were made:

Cote d'Ivoire

The Authority received the report on the work of the high level Contact Group of Heads of State and Government from His excellency President Gnassingbe Eyadema, coordinator of the Contact Group. He briefed his colleagues about the mediation of the Contact Group which led to the signing of ceasefire agreements with the three Ivorian armed movements.

The Authority expressed gratitude to President Eyadema for the efforts deployed by him in the search for peace in Cote d'Ivoire.

The Authority listened to the accounts of the evolution of the Ivorian situation from Mr. Seydou Diarra, Prime Minister-designate under the Marcoussis Accord, Mr. Pascal Affi Nguessan, Prime Minister and also Mr. Guillaume Soro, Secretary General of the Patriotic Movement of Cote d'Ivoire, who spoke on behalf of the MPCI, MPIGO and MJP.

Heads of State and Government expressed their deep concern over the persistence of the Ivorian crisis. They reaffirmed their decision taken on 29 September 2002 at Accra, concerning their preference for a peaceful settlement of the crisis. They therefore, resolved to give every support to the outcome of the Round-table on Cote d'Ivoire which was held at Linas Marcoussis from 15 to 24 January 2003. They invited all the parties concerned to work together to ensure the scrupulous application of the Marcoussis Accord.

The Authority decided that ECOWAS would play the role that it was assigned within the framework of the Marcoussis Accord. The Heads of State and Government made a strong appeal to His Excellency President Laurent Gbagbo to be fully involved, to bring the peace process to a satisfactory end.

They expressed their preparedness to continue to offer their good offices to facilitate the early return of peace to Cote d'Ivoire.

The Authority affirmed its support for the legitimate President of Cote d'Ivoire, His Excellency Laurent Gbagbo. It was decided that the ECOWAS Contact Group, which is made up of Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo would continue to monitor and facilitate the application of the Marcoussis Accord. It was decided to enlarge the Contact Group to include Senegal.

The members of the Contact Group are to proceed to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on Saturday, February 1, 2003, to meet with President Gbagbo to discuss the current situation in the country.

The Authority invites all Ivorians to embark on a true national reconciliation so as to keep their country united, strong and prosperous. They are requested, in this regard, to show a spirit of forgiveness, tolerance and solidarity.

The Authority expressed profound gratitude to the President of the French Republic, His Excellency Jacques Chirac and his Government for the assistance extended to the region within the context of the resolution of the Ivorian crisis.

The Heads of State and Government acknowledged the assistance of the international community.

The Authority paid glowing homage to His Excellency Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, His Excellency Gnassingbe Eyadema, coordinator of the ECOWAS Contact Group and His Excellency President Amadou Toumani Toure for all the contribution they have made and continue to make with dedication and competence to ensure the return of peace to Cote d'Ivoire.

The Mano River Union

The Heads of State and Government noted with satisfaction that significant progress had been made in Sierra Leone in terms of the restoration of peace and security. The Heads of State and Government appealed to the international community to continue to provide assistance needed for the economic development of Sierra Leone.

The Heads of State and Government renewed their appeal to the UN Security Council to ensure the continued presence of UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone to maintain security in accordance with the proposals of the Secretary General in his 15th Report of 5th September 2002.

The Heads of State and Government welcomed recent initiatives, especially by His Majesty Mohamed VI, King of Morocco and the Mano River Union Women's Network, which have facilitated the restoration of dialogue between the Presidents of the Mano River Union. The Heads of State and Government urged

the Executive Secretariat to continue monitoring the situation along the border between Guinea and Liberia.

The Heads of State and Government noted with regret, the continuing hostilities between the government troops and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). They welcomed the various actions initiated by the current Chairman of Authority and the Executive Secretariat at encouraging dialogue between the parties to the conflict.

The Heads of State and Government also welcomed the wish expressed by the government of Liberia to hold a national reconciliation forum to which the LURD would be invited. In this regard, the Authority undertook to facilitate the organisation of a round table meeting of all the Liberian parties involved, including the LURD, with a view to bringing a peaceful end to the present conflict in Liberia.

In view of the forthcoming national elections scheduled for October 2003, the Authority of Heads of State and Government urged the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL) to assist the government of Liberia to create a conducive environment for free, transparent and democratic elections, as a matter of extreme urgency.

The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security

The Authority requested the Executive Secretariat to take necessary action to speed up implementation of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security. In this regard, the Authority renewed its appeal to Member States to ratify the Protocol without delay.

The Authority expressed its profound gratitude to the partners of ECOWAS namely, the European Union, Canada, the United States of America and the USAID, and Germany for the assistance they have given to the Community in setting up the ECOWAS peace and security mechanism.

The Authority requested all Ambassadors of Member States who have not yet presented their letters of accreditation to the Executive Secretary to do so without further delay. It welcomed the accreditation of the Ambassadors of Russia, France and Germany to the Executive Secretariat.

Evaluation of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms

The Authority acknowledged the relevance of the provisions of the Moratorium as a regional strategy designed to resolve the problem of the unregulated movement of small arms and low calibre weapons. It appealed to all Member States to comply fully with the provisions of the Moratorium and the Code of Conduct.

Monitoring of Elections in Member States Holding National Elections in 2003

The Authority exhorted all Member States to pursue with diligence the principles of democracy, transparency and good governance, and appealed to all the States that are yet to do so, to ratify the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

The Authority instructed the Executive Secretariat to conduct fact-finding missions to the Member States concerned to ascertain the state of preparedness for the 2003 elections

Trafficking in Persons

The Authority called on the Executive Secretariat and Member States to ensure a stricter implementation of the Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons by the appropriate national bodies.

The Authority expressed appreciation to ECOWAS partners, and especially to the governments of Japan, the United States and Sweden, to the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime and all other development partners that have provided financial and technical assistance for the fight against human trafficking.

Protection of the Rights of the West African Child

The Heads of State and Government expressed particular concern for the violence perpetrated against children, especially in zones of conflict, and for the suffering of handicapped children. They declared their commitment to the respect of the inalienable principles contained in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Authority called on all Member States to adopt and implement the United Nations plan of action for children affected by war. This plan covers conflict prevention, ratification and implementation of the principle instruments for the protection of the rights of the child, and the inclusion of child protection in ECOWAS negotiations and peace-keeping activities. The plan also covers the

creation of a network of civil society organisations for child protection and advocacy, the concept of ECOWAS as a zone free of child soldiers, investment in the child in post-conflict situations, African traditional values and norms, transborder initiatives and the enhancement of the ECOWAS Child Protection Unit.

The Authority appealed to the international community, and particularly to the United Nations to urgently give all necessary assistance for the implementation of the plan of action.

The Council of Elders

The Authority expressed deep sadness at the loss of two eminent members of the ECOWAS Council of Elders, their Excellencies Ide Oumarou of Niger, former OAU Secretary General and Simeon Ake of Côte d'Ivoire, former Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Authority paid glowing tribute to the memory of the late illustrious sons of the Community.

The Authority of Heads of State and Government appealed to Member States that have not submitted the names of their representatives on the Council for 2003 to do so urgently to enable their appointment to be approved by the Authority.

Nomination of West African Candidates to the positions of Commissioner of the African Union

The Authority strongly urged Member States to forward the names of their candidates to the Executive Secretariat not later than 10 February 2003 and requested the Executive Secretariat to convene a meeting of the screening Committee by 12th February 2003.

Establishment of ECOWAS Logistics Depots

The Authority directed the Executive Secretariat to study and submit a report on the proposal of the United States on the establishment of ECOWAS logistics depots.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT SUMMIT

His Excellency President John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana, was elected Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government by his peers. The next ordinary summit of the Authority will be held in December 2003, at a venue to be determined after consultation.

VOTE OF THANKS

The Authority of Heads of State and Government expressed its profound gratitude to His Excellency Abdoulaye WADE, President of the Republic of Senegal for the exemplary leadership in promoting the African Union, NEPAD, and regional peace and security. The Heads of State and Government are deeply appreciative of the warm reception accorded them and the excellent facilities placed at their disposal during their stay in Dakar. The Heads of State wish to pay tribute to President Abdoulaye Wade for his defence of the integration of the African continent in general and the West African sub-region in particular.

The Authority expresses its best wishes for happiness to His Excellency Maitre Abdoulaye WADE, and to the people of Senegal, its best wishes for peace, happiness and prosperity.

THE AUTHORITY



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- ② Door-Bedroom
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- ③ Dining Pole
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