



## **Eight Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers**

Abuja, 23 March, 2006

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# **FINAL REPORT**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Council of Ministers held its eight extraordinary session on 23 March 2006 at Abuja, to consider the proposals on the restructuring of three Community Institutions, namely the Executive Secretariat, Community Parliament and the Court of Justice.

2. At the beginning of the session, Council observed a minute silence in memory of the late Abou YACOUBOU and Jenaba DIALLO, respectively former Director of Political Affairs at the ECOWAS Secretariat and the elder sister of the former Speaker of the Community Parliament.

3. The following Member States were represented at the session:

- Republic of Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
- Republic of The Gambia
- Republic of Ghana
- Republic of Guinea
- Republic of Liberia
- Republic of Mali
- Republic of Niger
- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Republic of Senegal
- Republic of Sierra Leone
- Togolese Republic.

4. The Republic of Guinea-Bissau, which was unable to be represented, sent a written message to Council.

5. The list of participants is attached as an annex to this report.

## **II. OPENING SESSION**

6. The Honourable Minister of Nigeria in charge of Cooperation and Integration in Africa, Honourable Lawan Guba, welcomed the Ministers to Abuja. He apologised for the inconveniences caused by the restricted movement in Nigeria imposed to facilitate the ongoing population census exercise. The Minister expressed the hope that useful proposals will be arrived at, to ensure the efficient functioning of the Community Institutions.

7. The Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas welcomed the honourable Ministers to the Executive Secretariat and to the extra-ordinary session of Council. He recalled the circumstances leading to the review of the institutional arrangements of the Community. He informed Council about the diligence with which all officials of both Member States and the Community Institutions involved in the restructuring exercise have undertaken this assignment. The officials had agreed on draft proposals and texts to satisfy the various directives issued by the ECOWAS authorities such as appropriate organisational charts for the three institutions, harmonisation of terms of office of all statutory officers, equitable rotation system of Commissioners, the

Commission's relations with the specialised agencies and Institutions of the Community, and legal and financial implications of the transformation exercise.

8. Dr. Chambas stated that the restructuring exercise has aimed at harmonising the dispositions of the different institutions into a cohesive institutional arrangement that would best serve the needs of the expanded ECOWAS mandate of deepening the integration process. Thus, while preserving the appropriate specificities and degree of autonomy each Community institution requires for carrying out its assigned statutory duties, every effort has been made to achieve uniformity in the institutional provisions that must define and guide the functioning of the Community institutions.

9. The Chairperson of Council, Honourable Aïchatou MINDAOUDOU declared open the eighth extraordinary session of Council.

### **III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

10. The Ministers decided to defer consideration of the proposals on the restructuring of the Executive Secretariat and the Court of Justice to the next Session of Council and consequently adopted the following agenda:-

- 1 - Opening Session
  - Welcome Address of the Nigeria Minister of Cooperation and Integration in Africa
  - Statement by the Executive Secretary of the ECOWAS
  - Opening Statement of the Chairperson
- 2 - Presentation and Consideration of the Report of the Ad hoc Ministerial Committee on the Restructuring of the Community Parliament
- 3 - Practical modalities for the dispatch of documents to Member States
- 4 - Any Other Business
- 5 - Closing Session
  - Vote of Thanks
  - Closing Remarks by the Chairperson of Council.

### **IV. OUTCOME OF DELIBERATIONS:**

Item 1 :        Consideration of the Report of the Meeting of the Senior Officials of Member States Constituting the Ad hoc Ministerial Committee on Restructuring of the Community Parliament

11. During his presentation, the Chairman of the Committee, Honourable Jean de Dieu SOMDA, the Burkina Faso Minister of Regional Cooperation recalled the

fact that the exercise on the restructuring of the Community Parliament is being undertaken within the framework of the restructuring of Community Institutions in particular, the Executive Secretariat and the Community Court of Justice. He also recalled the mandate of the Ministerial Committee and the objectives of the restructuring of the Community Parliament and presented to Council the conclusions and recommendations of the ad-hoc Ministerial Committee.

12. Council congratulated the Committee on the quality of its report and re-affirmed the need to re-structure the Parliament in order to improve its services and meet the challenges emanating from its mandate.

13. Council considered in detail all the proposals contained in the report.

### **Functions of The Community Parliament**

14. Council noted the provisions of article 6 of the Protocol relating to the Parliament which bestows on the Parliament an advisory and consultative role.

15. Council welcomed the Decision of the Authority of Heads of State and Government in January 2006 which defined the modalities for the implementation of the Protocol on the Parliament. The meeting viewed this development as well as the ongoing restructuring exercise as veritable tools for enhancing the powers of Parliament. Council however encouraged the Executive Secretariat to carry on with the process that would eventually assist in the creation of an enabling environment for Parliamentary elections through direct universal suffrage and the enhancement of the powers of the Parliament from advisory to co-decision making and subsequently a law-making role in areas to be defined.

16. Council recommended that the transition period before the election of Parliamentarians through direct universal suffrage should be four years.

17. Council agreed on the need to create better synergy between the administration of Parliament and the work of members of Parliament and in that regard, made recommendations as to structures and corresponding responsibilities within the Parliament as follows:

### **POLITICAL ORGANS OF PARLIAMENT**

18. Council identified the structures of the Political wing as follows:

- The Plenary
- Bureau of Parliament
- The Conference of Bureaux.

### **The Plenary**

19. The Ministers agreed that the Plenary as an assembly of all Representatives serving the people of the sub-region, is the highest body and its decisions are binding on other structures of the Parliament. As an advisory Parliament, the Plenary adopts all Resolutions of Parliament which are to be forwarded to the decision making bodies of the Community. They however

agreed that in exercising its mandate, the Plenary shall be guided by the Provisions of the Treaty, Protocols, Decisions and Regulations of the Community.

### **The Bureau of Parliament**

20. Council noted that the Bureau is the governing body of the Parliament and agreed that all provisions relating to its powers and functions as contained in all Parliament's legal texts, rules of procedure and other administrative and financial rules, should conform with the Treaty and other Community legal texts that are of general application to all Community institutions.

### **Composition of the Bureau**

21. Council recommended that the Bureau of Parliament should henceforth be made up of a minimum of five and maximum of ten members, including the Speaker, first Deputy Speaker, second Deputy Speaker, third Deputy Speaker and fourth Deputy Speaker.

22. Council felt that the restructuring of the administrative wing of the Parliament should make it possible to provide such administrative and financial services as to render it unnecessary to have Parliamentary Secretaries and Treasurers during the transition period.

23. The Bureau of Parliament should however include three (3) Parliamentary Secretaries and two (2) Treasurers as soon as the parliamentarians are elected through direct universal suffrage.

### **PRECEDENCE IN THE BUREAU**

24. Council agreed that in the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speakers will preside over the business of the House according to their order of precedence.

### **Functions of the Bureau**

25. Council recommended that the Bureau of Parliament shall discharge the following functions:

- a) Determine in consultation with the Conference of Bureaux and the Executive Secretary, the draft agenda and all programmes or business of the session, taking into account the approved Community programmes.
- b) Authorise meetings, hearings, fact finding and study tours of Committees away from the headquarters.
- c) Subject to the provisions of the Treaty regarding the mandate of the Council of Ministers, the Bureau shall:
  - i. Maintain at all times a structure that clearly enhances the synergy between the administration of Parliament and the work of members of Parliament.

- ii. Issue general guidelines and policy direction for the management and administration of the affairs and facilities of the Parliament and its organs, in accordance with Community rules.
- iii. Regulate the procedures relating to the internal organisation of the Parliament and its organs in accordance with Community rules.
- iv. Be responsible for prescribing guidelines for the annual budgets within the limits set out by the Executive Secretary.
- v. Consider the draft budget and present it to the responsible Committee.
- vi. Approve the appointment of professional staff on the recommendation of the relevant Advisory Committee on Recruitment
- vii. Undertake any other function as may be prescribed by the Plenary and consistent with Community texts.

#### **CONVENING OF SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT**

26. Council recommended that the Speaker of the Parliament in consultation with the Bureau shall convene the ordinary sessions of Parliament. The First Session of each new legislature will however be convened by the Chairman of Authority on the recommendation of the Executive Secretary. Parliament may however meet in Extra Ordinary session to discuss a given agenda either at the request of an absolute majority of its Members or on the initiative of the Chairman of Authority or the Chairman of the Bureau.

#### **COMMITTEES OF PARLIAMENT**

27. The Ministers recommended that the Parliament shall continue to have Standing Committees to deal with a number of subjects. Henceforth, the Standing Committees of the Parliament shall be established to reflect the areas of competence covered by the ECOWAS Technical Commissions established by the Treaty. This way of designation of the Committees will ease collaboration and coordination in addressing activities linked to the integration process. Other Committees to be established by Parliament may include:

- a) Committee on NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).
- b) Ad hoc Committees to address any specific subject matter.
- c) Committee of Selection which shall be constituted at the beginning of the life of any legislature by the Plenary. Each Member State will nominate one Member to the Committee. The Committee on Selection will assist the Bureau in composing Members of each of the Standing Committees. In carrying out its assignment, due regard shall be given to linguistic and gender balance and nationality.



## **CONFERENCE OF BUREAUX**

28. Council recommended that there shall be established in Parliament a Conference of Bureaux. The Speaker, as well as the Chairman or Deputy Chairman and the Rapporteur of each of the Standing Committees shall constitute this organ. The Conference shall:

- a) be the organ of Parliament that shall represent all committees collectively.
- b) Work with the Bureau of Parliament to prepare the draft annual work-plan of Parliament taking into account the priority Community programmes and work-plans of other Community Institutions.
- c) Collaborate with the Bureau to organize the work-plans of the Standing Committees in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and the Terms of Reference of the Committees.

29. The Speaker shall chair the Conference of Bureaux and shall convene all meetings of the said Conference.

## **THE SPEAKERSHIP**

30. Council took note of the current procedure for the election of the Speaker. It however agreed that there is a need to put in place a procedure for the election of the Speaker of the Parliament, which provides greater opportunities for all Member States to occupy this important position, within the shortest time possible, consistent with the present Community policy of allocating top positions to Member States.

31. Council therefore recommended allocation of the position of Speaker by the Authority to Member States in line with a rotational system based on an alphabetical order of States which would ensure that all Member States occupy the position over time. The allocation should also take into account correct application of the Community Levy by the Member States.

32. All Members of Parliament from the Member State to which the position has been allocated will be eligible to contest the position. The entire Membership of the Parliament will vote for any of those candidates that present themselves for election.

## **Tenure of the Speaker and the Deputy Speakers**

33. Council recommended one Speaker within the life of the Legislature during the transition period.

34. The tenure of all Deputy Speakers shall be the same as that of the Speaker, and they shall be elected on the basis of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament.



### **RESIDENCY OF SPEAKER AT THE SEAT OF PARLIAMENT:**

35. Council was informed about the different proposals on this issue made by Parliamentarians of the first legislature and by the ad-hoc Ministerial Committee. The Parliamentarians recommended the retention of the status quo which implies that the Speaker would reside at the seat of the Parliament, despite the Speaker's membership in a National Parliament and constituency responsibilities in the home country.

36. On its part, the ad-hoc Ministerial Committee on the Restructuring of the Parliament recommended that during the transition period and pending the election of Parliamentarians through direct universal suffrage, the Speaker should not reside at the seat of Parliament.

37. While contributing to the discussion on the matter, the delegation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria supported the recommendation of the ad-hoc Ministerial Committee and added that, as the host country of the Community Parliament, it was prepared to give up the seat of Parliament to any Member State wishing to host the Parliament.

38. Council agreed with the recommendation of the ad-hoc Ministerial Committee and recommended that for the duration of the transitional period of the Parliament and pending election of the Parliamentarians by direct universal suffrage, the Speaker shall not be resident at the Seat of Parliament. However, two (2) Member States disagreed with this majority position. Council therefore decided to refer the matter to the Authority for its decision.

### **FUNCTIONS OF THE SPEAKER:**

39. In line with the directives of the Council of Ministers as contained in Regulation C/Reg/20/01/05, which aims at enhancing the synergy between the administration and the work of members of Parliament, the meeting recommended that the Speaker shall perform the following functions:

- a) Preside over all proceedings of Plenary, Bureau and Conference of Bureaux and in his absence, a Deputy Speaker in the order of precedence takes over.
- b) Be the Chief authorizing officer of the budget of the Parliament and may designate financial management to the Secretary General in line with the financial Regulations of the Community.
- c) Open, suspend or close the sitting of Parliament.
- d) Determine the admissibility or otherwise of papers brought to the Parliament.
- e) Follow up on the implementation of the decisions of the Bureau and Parliament.
- f) Represent Parliament in relations with other ECOWAS Institutions and third parties.

- g) Appoint on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, locally-recruited personnel in conformity with the ECOWAS Staff Regulations.
- h) Perform any other duties incidental to these functions. (political, diplomatic, protocol and ceremonial).

40. At the expiration of the life of the legislature, the outgoing Speaker loses his powers as the Chief authorizing officer of the Parliament. The Speaker however continues to carry out ceremonial duties until the election of a new Speaker.

41. In order to ensure that the position of Speaker does not remain unoccupied in between the legislatures, ECOWAS Parliamentarians shall be elected by the national assemblies of Member States and their names shall be communicated to the Executive Secretary at least one month before the end of the legislature to ensure the timely installation of the next legislature.

### **Life of the Legislature**

42. Council agreed to recommend a four (4) year life span for the Legislature to shorten the period for encumbering positions within the Parliament, in conformity with the recently adopted Community policy.

### **BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

43. Council considered proposals for the streamlining of the benefits of Members of Parliament based on the need to harmonise benefits accruable to all Community personnel, as well as formalise such benefits for Members of Parliament. Council noted that hitherto, there was the absence of an approval from the Authority of Heads of State and Government concerning some remunerations and benefits for Members of Parliament. Council made the following proposals:

- i. Payment of the sum of \$2000 shall be made to the Speaker as Responsibility Allowance per month.
- ii. All other Members of the Bureau shall continue to be paid Responsibility Allowance of \$1500 per month.
- iii. Similarly Committee Chairmen shall receive monthly allowances of \$1000, while the Vice Chairmen and Rapporteurs shall receive monthly Allowances of \$750.
- iv. All Members of Parliament shall be paid a daily sitting allowance of \$100 during sessions and Committee meetings. The Bureau of Parliament shall establish mechanisms for implementation by the administration, to ensure that only Members of Parliament who attend the session/committee meetings and are registered on the attendance list are paid.

- v. The Speaker of Parliament shall continue to receive the same per diem rate as Ministers, during sessions of Parliament or while on mission. He shall travel First Class.
- vi. When Parliament is in session or Members of Parliament are on a mission, they shall be paid daily per diem at the same rate as Statutory Officers of the Community (Deputy Executive Secretaries). The said allowance shall be paid to Parliamentarians of the host country during sessions and meetings of the Parliament.
- vii. Parliamentarians shall be paid transport allowance at rate established by the Community to cover travel costs when they attend Parliamentary Sessions/Meetings. They shall travel Business Class.
- viii. Whilst attending to ECOWAS Parliamentary business in Abuja, Members of Parliament who require medical attention shall be referred to hospitals approved by the Parliament. Parliament shall bear the totality of the cost of treatment. Such payments are to be made directly to the hospitals. When Members of Parliament are on mission outside Abuja and they require medical attention, they shall be entitled to a hundred percent reimbursement.
- ix. All medical claims by Members of Parliament (as stated above), shall be claims consistent with ECOWAS Regulation.
- x. The Secretariat of Parliament shall arrange for life, accident and health insurance covers for Members of Parliament during sessions of Parliament or while on missions on behalf of Parliament.

### **RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS**

44. Council recommended that the Community Parliament shall relate closely with the National Parliaments of Member States. It is desirable therefore, that in the composition of Member States' delegations to the Community Parliament, members from the integration committees of National Parliaments should be taken into account. The composition should also reflect the diversity of political sensibilities represented in National Assemblies. It also recommended that each Country's delegation should have women constituting at least 30% of the membership of the delegation.

### **THE ADMINISTRATIVE WING**

45. Council identified the General Secretariat of Parliament to comprise the administrative and technical services. The General Secretariat shall include the following:

- The Secretary-General,
- Two Directors of Departments,
- Other Staff and functionaries.

### **Mode and Tenure of Appointment of the Secretary-General and Directors**

46. Council identified the Secretary General as the officer heading the administration of the Parliament under the authority of the Speaker.

47. It agreed that for the sake of continuity in the affairs of Parliament and since the current positions of Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General provide the institutional memory of the Parliament, the positions should be converted to career positions and be occupied by Staff in the Professional category. For this purpose and consistent with contemporary Parliamentary administrative practice around the world, there will be a Secretary-General and two Directors. Thus there will be a Director in charge of Parliamentary Affairs and another in charge of Administration and Finance. The Secretary-General will be at the level of a Director Grade 2 which is a newly established grade that is accorded to Heads of ECOWAS Specialized agencies. This is in recognition of the status and responsibilities inherent in the position of Head of the Administration of a Regional Parliament. The two Directors will be on the D1 grade.

48. The method of the appointment of the Secretary-General and the Directors shall be as follows:

(a) The Bureau of Parliament:

- i. declares vacancy on either or all the positions;
- ii. places an advertisement across Member States;
- iii. pre-selects candidates based on Community criteria.

(b) The pre-selected candidates are interviewed by the Management Succession Committee headed by the Executive Secretary.

(c) The Bureau appoints based on the results of the Interview.

49. Council invited the Executive Secretary to present at its next session a memorandum on the Administrative situation of the current Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of the Community Parliament.

### **FUNCTIONS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL:**

50. Council recommended that the following shall be the functions of the Secretary-General:

- a) Act as Chief Advisor to the Speaker and Bureau on all matters of administration and procedure.
- b) Oversee the preparation of minutes and reports of all the proceedings of Parliament, Bureau and the Committees, and ensure in collaboration with the Parliamentarians their publication and safe custody.
- c) Assist the Speaker during Plenary Sessions.



- d) Responsible for the organisation of sessions and meetings prepare all draft annual and plenary reports.
- e) Supervise the staff of the Secretariat.
- f) Manage the day-to-day running of the administrative secretariat of Parliament and be the point of contact on administrative matters between the departments and the Speaker.
- g) Prepare the annual draft Budget of the Parliament based on the general guidelines provided by the Bureau and work programme of the Parliament.
- h) Responsible for all procedures for the recruitment of professional staff of the Parliament in accordance with the ECOWAS Staff Regulations. He/she shall also chair the Advisory Committee in charge of recruitment of Professional Staff, except the appointment of Directors, P6 and P5 managerial positions.
- i) Deploy Staff from the Secretariat to service the Plenary, Bureau, Standing Committees and ad hoc Committees.
- j) Apply the scheme and conditions of service as well as remuneration of the employees of Parliament in accordance with Community Rules.
- k) Apply all Community rules relating to training, promotion, remuneration, discipline, performance, evaluation, arbitration and petition within the Parliament.
- l) Responsible for administrative relations with other institutions
- m) Carry out other duties as may from time to time be determined by the Bureau.

51. The Secretary-General may delegate any of the above responsibilities to the Directors. Similarly, in the absence of the Secretary- General, he/she shall designate one of the Directors to act in his/her position.

### **THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT**

52. Council recommended that the Secretariat of Parliament shall consist of departments. The number of departments shall be in accordance with the needs and growth of the Parliament. The Secretariat of Parliament should have two major departments headed by Directors as follows:-

- a) Department of Administration and Finance. The Department will be further broken down into divisions to take care of Human Resource Management, Communication and Media Relations, General Administration, Finance, and ICT.
- b) Department of Parliamentary Affairs and Research. This department will be further broken down into divisions such as Hansard,

### **Internal Audit**

53. Council agreed on the need for an Internal Auditor to provide assurances to management on the efficiency of the internal control system and operations of the Parliament. It is to be understood that all the duties of the Internal Auditor shall be as provided for in the ECOWAS Financial Regulations and Manual of Accounting Procedures.

54. Council was informed that the ECOWAS Audit Committee is presently deliberating on the functions and working relationships of the Internal Auditors and the Financial Controller within all Institutions. Council therefore recommended that the position of the Internal Auditor within the organogramme of the Parliament and his/her working relationships within the Parliament shall be decided by Council.

### **Organogramme**

55. An organizational chart for the Parliament was presented to Council of Ministers. The meeting carefully examined the proposed departments, divisions, and personnel requirements. They noted that various grades of professionals will be recruited in accordance with the ECOWAS Regulations to fill positions as recommended by the Bureau and approved by the Council of Ministers. Council directed a phased recruitment of personnel in line with the assessed staff requirements of the Institution as it progresses beyond its transitional period. It therefore proposed that the Parliament establish a schedule of recruitment over a four-year period. Council adopted the attached draft organogramme and recruitment plan.

### **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RELEVANT LEGAL TEXTS**

56. On the basis of the structural amendments proposed, the meeting recommended that consequential amendments be made to the legal texts of the Community Parliament and to other relevant legal texts of the Community. It further proposed that amendments be made to certain provisions of the Protocol on the Parliament as follows:-

- Article 1 (Definition)
- Article 3 (Designation)
- Article 7 (Election, Terms of Office & Vacancies)
- Article 14 (Convening of Parliament, First Meeting of Parliament and Tenure of Speaker)
- Article 15 (The Speaker)
- Article 16 (Composition of the Bureau)
- Article 19 (Rules of Procedure).

57. The amendments to the Protocol will also include new articles to take into account the establishment of the General Secretariat of the Community Parliament which will be headed by a Secretary General assisted by the Directors.

58. Council recommended the need for an urgent approval of the above restructuring proposals which should guide the operations of the legislature. Council also recommended that for the purpose of the legislature, the Executive Secretary shall ensure that draft Rules of Procedure are prepared and presented to the next legislature for its consideration and adoption.

59. Council recommended that an extra-ordinary summit of Heads of State and Government be held soon after its present extra-ordinary session. This is to ensure that all new proposals for the restructuring of the Parliament which would lead to the amendment of legal texts are approved by the Authority, so that the second Legislature is convened in time enough for its May 2006 session.

**Item 2: Practical Modalities for the Despatch of Documents to Ministers**

60. The Ministers agreed that henceforth, meetings of officials preceding sessions of Council should be held at least one week earlier to enable Ministers receive meeting reports on time. They also requested the Executive Secretariat to continue to despatch reports through the electronic medium, even if they are still in draft form, as well as letters addressed to them, in addition to the despatch of correspondence by traditional means.

**Item 3: Any Other Business**

61. Council expressed the wish that within the context of the on-going restructuring of the Parliament, the current allocation of seats in the Community Parliament would be reviewed and in this regard, in addition to the population criterion, other criteria would be taken into account.

62. The Ministers recommended that the Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee undertake a mission to Côte d'Ivoire. The delegation which should include the former Speaker of the Community Parliament, is expected to hold discussions with relevant authorities, with a view to ensuring that Côte d'Ivoire encumbers its seats at the Community Parliament.

63. The Senegalese Minister of Integration briefed Council on the AGETIP network which facilitates the development of infrastructure jointly owned by countries. He indicated that a meeting on the issue would soon be held in Dakar and he would have discussions with the Executive Secretary so that Member States could get sufficient information and be invited to attend.

**VI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

64. The Report was adopted



**VII. CLOSING CEREMONY**

65. The Chairperson of Council commended the Ministers for the quality of their contributions and for the spirit of respect and compromise that characterised proceedings at the extraordinary session of Council. She then wished them safe journey back to their respective Countries.

**DONE AT ABUJA, THIS 23<sup>rd</sup> DAY OF MARCH 2006.**

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**Hon. Aïchatou MINDAOU DOU**  
CHAIRPERSON  
FOR COUNCIL.

## **Eight Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers**

Abuja, 23 March, 2006

### **VOTE OF THANKS**

The Ministers at the extraordinary Session of Council of Ministers held in Abuja on 23 March 2006, express their profound gratitude to His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to the Government and people of Nigeria for the warm African hospitality extended to them during their stay in Abuja and for the facilities placed at their disposal to ensure the success of their meeting.

DONE AT ABUJA THIS 23<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF MARCH 2006

THE COUNCIL.