

COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

ECOWAS COMMISSION



COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO

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**SEVENTY-EIGHTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS**

Monrovia, 1st – 2nd June 2017

FINAL REPORT

ECOWAS Commission
Monrovia, June 2017

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Seventy-Eighth Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers was held at Farmington Hotel, Monrovia, Republic of Liberia, from 1st to 2nd June 2017.

2. The following Member States were represented:

- Republic of Benin;
- Burkina Faso;
- Republic of Cabo Verde;
- Republic of Cote d'Ivoire;
- Republic of The Gambia;
- Republic of Ghana;
- Republic of Guinea ;
- Republic of Guinea Bissau;
- Republic of Liberia;
- Republic of Mali;
- Republic of Niger;
- Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- Republic of Senegal;
- Republic of Sierra Leone; and
- Togolese Republic.

3. The following ECOWAS Institutions and Specialised Agencies were represented:

- ECOWAS Commission;
- ECOWAS Parliament;
- Community Court of Justice;
- ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID);
- West African Health Organisation (WAHO);
- Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA);
- Office of the Financial Controller;
- ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Agency (ERERA)
- ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE);
- West African Monetary Agency (WAMA);
- West African Monetary Institute (WAMI);
- West African Power Pool (WAPP).

4. The following International Institutions also participated at the meeting as observers:

- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA);

- United Nations Office for West Africa and Sahel (UNOWAS);
- United Nations Integrated Peace Building Office in Guinea Bissau (UNIOGBIS); and
- United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

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

II. OPENING SESSION (Speeches – Chairperson of Council & President of the ECOWAS Commission)

6. In her opening address, H.E Marjon V. Kamara, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia and current Chairperson of ECOWAS Council of Ministers, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, welcomed all the participants to the 78th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers. She expressed appreciation for the honour of hosting the mid-year statutory meetings, recalling that this is the first time the Republic of Liberia will be hosting meetings of such magnitude in the last 38 years.
7. She continued her speech by underscoring that since the last Council meeting of December 2016, many sectoral meetings have been convened to examine the implementation of programs and projects aimed at achieving the Community integration agenda of transforming the Community from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of People. She emphasised that the achievement of the Community integration agenda will depend on the availability of resources and therefore called on all Member States to ensure the full implementation of the Community Levy to guarantee the financial stability of Community Institutions.
8. She concluded her speech by reiterating the commitment of the Government and people of Liberia to unflinchingly sustain the peace which the country has enjoyed in the last 13 years and wished all participants fruitful deliberations.
9. Taking his turn, the President of the Commission warmly welcomed all the participants, and expressed gratitude to H.E. Mrs Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, and Chairperson of the Authority of Heads of State and Government for her efforts in maintaining cohesion in the Community during her term of office, and wished speedy recovery to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Muhammadu Buhari.
10. He recalled the success in the resolution of the post-electoral crisis in The Gambia, leading to a peaceful transfer of power without bloodshed.

11. On economic issues, Mr de Souza noted among other things, the entry into force of the CET on 1st January 2015 and its implementation in thirteen (13) out of 15 Member States since 21 March 2017. He equally provided an update on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), and informed Council about the initialling of the Association Agreement between ECOWAS and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.
12. After pointing out that the report of the ad hoc Ministerial Committee on Institutional Reform and that of the Task Force would be submitted to Council for consideration, the President of the Commission urged Member States to stand together and speak with one voice for the gradual establishment of the monetary zone. He then reiterated the Commission's determination to streamline Community resource in order to give priority to programmes and projects. Thereafter, he wished Council members fruitful deliberations.

III. ELECTION OF BUREAU

13. The following Bureau was elected:

- Chair - Republic of Liberia
- Rapporteurs - Republic of Benin
- Republic of Guinea Bissau


IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME

14. The following agenda was adopted after amendments

1) OPENING CEREMONY

- Welcome Remarks by the Chairperson of Council, H.E. Marjon Kamara, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia
- Statement by the President of the ECOWAS Commission, H.E. Marcel Alain de Souza
- Election of Bureau
- Adoption of Draft Agenda and Work Programme

2) RESTRICTED CLOSED DOOR SESSION

Special Reports by President of ECOWAS Commission 

ITEMS FOR DECISION


- 3) Presentation and Consideration of the 2017 ECOWAS Interim Report
- 4) Presentation and Consideration of the Status of Tasks Assigned by the 77th Ordinary Session of Council
- 5) Presentation and Consideration of the Financial Controller's 2016 Final Report
- 6) Presentation and Consideration of the Report of the 21st Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee
- 7) Presentation on the Financial Situation of the Community
- 8) Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Enabling Regulation adopting the ECOWAS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
- 9) Presentation and Consideration of the Report of the Ad-Hoc Ministerial Committee on Institutional Reform
- 10) Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on End of Tenure of Statutory Appointees
- 11) Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on Restructuring the ECOWAS Brown Card
- 12) Consideration and Adoption of Draft Agenda of the 51st Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government

ITEMS FOR ADOPTION

- 13) Report of Ministers of Industry responsible for Quality on establishment of the Regional Quality Infrastructure and the Regional Association of Quality.
- 14) Report of Ministers of Industry and Agriculture on Industrial Development of Cocoa and Cashew in West Africa
- 15) Report of Periodic meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs
- 16) Report on adoption of the 2016-2024 ECOWAS Action Plan on Ending Statelessness in the region

- 17) Report of the Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Energy
- 18) Reports of the Meetings of ECOWAS Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 19) Update on the Economic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and West Africa (EU – WA EPA)
- 20) Update on the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme Task Force (ETLS)
- 21) Status of Implementation of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (ECOWAS CET)
- 22) Update on ECOWAS Biometric Identity Card
- 23) Memorandum on Government Support to Local Production of Pharmaceuticals in ECOWAS
- 24) Monrovia Declaration on Post-Ebola
- 25) Memorandum on Status of Implementation of the SeaLink Project
- 26) Reconstitution of the ECOWAS Audit Committee
- 27) Update on Audit of ECOWAS Financial Statements
- 28) Memorandum on the Roundtable for the Financing of the ECOWAS Community Development Programme (ECOWAS-CDP)
- 29) Any Other Business
- 30) Adoption of Report
- 31) Vote of Thanks
- 32) Closing Ceremony 


V. OUTCOME OF DELIBERATIONS

Item 2: Special Reports by President of the Commission

a. Information on status report of investigation of alleged falsification of organogram

15. The President of the Commission briefed the Council of Ministers on the status report of alleged falsification of organogram and the forgery of the signature of the former Chair of Council, Hon. Khadim Diop. In his briefing, the President confirmed that following the discussions that took place on the matter at the 77th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Abuja, Nigeria, in December 2016, he indeed set up an Investigation Committee to investigate the matter and submit a report.
16. The report of the Committee did show some administrative lapses within the Directorate of Legal Affairs of the ECOWAS Commission, whereas the source of the forgery could not be ascertained. He noted that as both the AFC and Council had earlier been informed, the said organogram had been withdrawn from circulation. He further informed the Council that administrative sanctions have been taken against the staff directly involved and remedial actions taken to prevent such reoccurrence in the future.
17. After deliberation, Council took note of the information and emphasised the need for procedures to be put in place to avoid such reoccurrence in the future. In the meantime, Council directed the Commission to pursue the investigation to the end by identifying the source of the forgery.

b. Special report on the financial Impropriety at the Commission


18. The President of the Commission presented to Council the report of the on-going investigations into issues of impropriety in financial operations involving two Statutory Appointees, the Financial Controller and Commissioner for Finance respectively from Nigeria and Sierra Leone at the Commission. He further informed Council about the interim report submitted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of Nigeria a specialised agency in the fight against economic crimes which has provided overwhelming evidence of culpability against the officers concerned.
19. He concluded his report by requesting Council to urge the Governments of Nigeria and Sierra Leone to take steps to replace the two Statutory Appointees involved. 

20. Council took note of the information provided in the report, congratulated the President of the Commission and expressed their support for the steps taken by him to sanitize the financial processes, systems and financial procedures at the Commission. In this regard, Council made the following recommendations for consideration of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government:


- a. Recruit an international audit firm to carry out a comprehensive forensic audit of ECOWAS financial systems and procedures, accounts, and human resource management of all ECOWAS Institutions in the past five years.
- b. Investigations into the matter should continue and those found to be culpable at the end of the investigation should face criminal sanctions.
- c. The Member States concerned should be requested to forward names of persons to replace the statutory appointees indicted.
- d. The Commission should put in place an efficient whistle blowing protection policy to guarantee the protection of whistle blowers.
- e. All actions undertaken by the President of the Commission should be guided by the extant legal texts of the Community.
- f. Take immediate steps for the audit of its accounts for all outstanding years (2013, 2014, 2015 et-2016) and report back to the next ordinary session of Council.
- g. Urged Member States to urgently respond to the Commission's request for nominees to the Audit Committee with the relevant competences to ensure that the Committee plays its role in the audit process.

Item 3: Presentation and Consideration of the 2017 Interim Report of the President of the Commission

21. The Interim Report presented by the President of the Commission gave an overview of the status of implementation of the Work Programmes of the Commission and other Community Institutions (Parliament, Court of Justice, West Africa Health Organisation, GIABA and ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development) for the first five months of 2017. The report also describes the socioeconomic environment of the region and the world in 2016 and presents the outlook for 2017. It noted that global economic growth is gradually recovering from the economic downturn of 2015 and 2016, with an increase from the 3.1% growth in 2016 to 3.5% in 2017.

22. Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to record 2.6% improvement in its growth in 2017 compared to 1.4% in 2016. This is being actuated by the gradual recovery of the continent's major economies, namely, Nigeria and South Africa. 


23. A comparative analysis of the major African regions shows that West Africa was the most severely hit by the slowdown in the continent's economic activity in 2016. Real growth rate for ECOWAS was 0.2% in 2016 compared to 3.3% in 2015 and 6.1% in 2014. The considerable drop in West Africa's economic performance is linked primarily to the sharp fall (-1.5%) in the Real GDP of Nigeria, the region's largest economy and Africa's foremost oil producer. Efforts undertaken by the Federal Government of Nigeria have begun to yield positive results with an expected GDP growth rate of 0.8% in 2017 and 1.9% in 2018 according to recent IMF projections in April 2017. For 2017, ECOWAS growth rate is put at 2.2%.
24. The activities carried out in implementation of the Community's Work Programme for the period under review focused primarily on projects on monetary integration, customs union, private sector promotion, and improvement of the business environment, agricultural and infrastructural development and finally, the promotion of democracy, peacekeeping and regional security.
25. With respect to the Customs Union, the report indicated that two countries (Cabo Verde and Sierra Leone) are yet to implement the ECOWAS Common External Tariff. In addition, there is ongoing work on the validation of the ECOWAS Community Customs Code. In the area of free movement of persons, goods and services, progress has been made in the implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS). Thus, in the first quarter of 2017, the Commission had already registered 32 enterprises and 64 products of ECOWAS origin of which notification has been sent to Member States. In January 2017, Liberia ratified the ETLS Protocol.
26. On agriculture, the Commission is continuing its provision of support for the food and nutrition security programme, regional food security reserve, capacity building for stakeholders in ECOWAP implementation, enhancing the ECOWAS zero hunger initiative and support for the regional fruit-fly control programme, including the social security net programme. On environmental matters, the report highlighted among others, the ongoing updating of the Action Plan for the ECOWAS environment policy and advanced training for thirty-seven judges (37) and prosecutors from Member States on preventing crime against species of wild flora and fauna.
27. On infrastructural development, the Commission is making progress in the implementation of the ECOWAS regional road transport facilitation and transit programme, particularly the completion of works and equipping of the Joint Border Posts at Noepe and Seme/Krake, progress works on the Abidjan-Lagos and Abidjan-Dakar Corridor construction project. Activities were also undertaken in the area of air transport and energy.

28. The report noted the persisting challenges in the area of peace and security in the region, particularly the threats of terrorism, violent extremism and transhumance. It nevertheless acknowledged and commended the positive steps taken by the Nigerian Government in the fight against Boko Haram and the encouraging results thereof, as well as the noteworthy efforts of other Member States in the fight against terrorism, countering violent extremism and the menace of transhumance. Furthermore, the report noted that the Commission has continued deploying its early warning and response mechanisms, tightened the proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons within the region, as well as stepped up initiatives on political governance and consolidation of democracy, particularly in The Gambia and Guinea Bissau.
29. With regard to other ECOWAS institutions, the report highlighted the activities carried out by each of them in the period under review, including parliamentary and judicial activities, health initiatives, efforts to check money laundering and the provision of funding for the economy of Member States.
30. The report concluded by urging Member States to remain steadfast in the consolidation of peace and good governance as well as the fight against terrorism. It equally urged Member States to be compliant with the Community Levy Protocol, the Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Services Protocol, the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), the Common External Tariff (CET) and commitment to the common currency roadmap as critical elements of the Community's regional integration agenda.
31. Council was also apprised of the financial situation of the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). The Bank's President described the cash flow situation of the institution, which is the Community's financial arm, as particularly worrisome, mainly due to accumulated arrears in the payment of its capital, pegged at UA 172 362 798, representing USD 236 205 978 or CFAF 141 653 849 844 FCFA as of 31 May 2017.
32. The Council of Ministers noted that this situation, which falls under Member States' responsibility, was likely to affect the Bank's ability to carry out its mandate of funding development through the provision of appropriate resources and ensure the continuity of its operations. Consequently, Council strongly appealed to the Member States concerned to settle their arrears regarding EBID's capital as quickly as possible.
33. After deliberation, Council congratulated the President of the Commission for the quality of the report and thereafter adopted it. 

Item 4: Consideration of the Implementation Status of Tasks Assigned to Community Institutions by the Seventy- seventh Ordinary Session of Council of Ministers

34. The Commission presented an implementation status report on the 10 tasks assigned to ECOWAS Institutions by the Seventy-Seventh Ordinary Session of Council of Ministers held in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2016. Presenting the report, the Vice President of the ECOWAS Commission informed Council of steps being taken to implement the assigned tasks, noting that significant progress has been made in the implementation of the tasks. He further informed Council that whilst some of the tasks have been implemented, others are at various stages of completion.
35. Council took note of the implementation status report of the tasks assigned as presented.

Item 5: Presentation and Consideration of the 2016 Final Report of the Financial Controller

36. The 2016 Final Report of the Financial Controller was presented to Council by the Acting Financial Controller. The report covered the budgetary, financial and staffing situation of Community Institutions for the period 1st January to 31st December 2016. The report recalled that a balanced revenue and expenditure budget of UA224.6m (\$315m) was approved by the 75th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers to fund programmes and administrative costs for 2016 in pursuit of the Community's integration efforts. Community Levy remains the principal source of funding, as donor grants and assistance continue to decline. Revenue performance at year-end amounted to UA147.2m, yielding a 66% mobilisation rate. Expenditure for the same period amounted to UA104.4m, representing a 46% execution rate.
37. It was reported that the Community staff strength increased from the December 2015 number of 1,097 to 1,131 at 2016 year end. Community staff comprise 27 Statutory Appointees, 52 Directors, 472 other Professional Staff and 583 General Service Staff. Females represents 28.5% of total staff. The Community has 5 Institutions, 6 Agencies, 3 Liaison Offices, 5 Centres, 9 Special/Resident Representations and 4 Zonal Bureaux.
38. The report also highlighted that Procurement practices in some institutions and Agencies are yet to fully comply with the ECOWAS Tender Code. The OFC reiterates the need for an independent audit of all procurement activities over the past three years, in keeping with Article 80 of the Tender Code. The outcome shall equally guide possible reforms of procurement practices across all Institutions and Agencies. 

39. The Financial Controller recommended that to reduce Community Levy payment defaults from Member States, it is expected, that aside of other efforts, visits of the High-Level Management Team, as well as the continuous engagement of the Community Levy Technical Team with the relevant agencies of Member States would be encouraged and intensified even further, as such endeavours tend to yield good revenue mobilisation outcomes.
40. He also observed that the appointment of Representatives of the President to various Member States and other Bodies continue to be done without established procedures and widely-known selection criteria. More importantly, such appointments are without tenure limits. Recommendations have been made to rectify this situation.
41. On the basis of this report and pertinent observations made by OFC in the course of its oversight functions during the reporting period, the following recommendations are presented to Council for consideration and approval.
- (i) Wilful violations of Community texts and non-adherence to due process could threaten the ECOWAS integration objective. Hence such violations should stop forthwith. And, remedial measures should be taken against all cases of proven violations.
 - (ii) The Commission is urged to implement Council resolution in respect of the non-recognition of the three (3) directorates it had created without approval and revert forthwith to status quo ante.
 - (iii) The appointment of Special/Resident Representatives has continued to be without a defined tenure limit. Council is called upon to a set tenure limit on this type of appointment.
42. After the presentation, Member States renewed their commitment to the payment of Community Levy as well as the payment of accumulated arrears. In the absence of the substantive Financial Controller who is presently on suspension, Council decided to defer the adoption of the report.

Item 6: Presentation and Consideration of the Final Report of the 21st Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee

43. The final report of the 21st meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee was presented by the Chair of the Committee, Mr Benedict Roberts. The report covered the following main areas:
- a. Presentation and Consideration of Status of Tasks Assigned to Community Institutions

- b. Presentation on the Financial situation of the Community
- c. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Establishment of a Pre-Budget Session for the Administration and Finance Committee
- d. Presentation and Consideration of the Proposed Provisional Organogram
- e. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on Reinstatement of Responsibility Allowance for Contract Accounting Staff of Community Institutions
- f. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on New Policy on the issuance of the ECOWAS Laissez-Passer
- g. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on Revision of Regulation on the ECOWAS Prize for Excellence
- h. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on Standard Operating Procedures for Death and Disability Compensation to Personnel on Peacekeeping Duties
- i. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on a Council Regulation establishing a Calendar of Procedure for Adoption of Community Budget and Work Programme by Council, the ECOWAS Parliament and the Administration and Finance Committee
- j. Presentation of the Financial Controller's 2016 Final Report
- k. Any other business

44. Council adopted the report with all the recommendations therein.

Item 7: Presentation on the Financial Situation of the Community

- 45. The Commission presented the status of receipts, expenditures and implementation of the 2016 budget. Making the presentation on behalf of the Commission, the Commissioner for General Administration and Conference and Acting Commissioner for Finance noted that Community Levy remains the main source of revenue for ECOWAS, representing more than 90% of total revenue.
- 46. In his presentation, the Commissioner highlighted that in recent years, the revenue levels have deteriorated due to late payment or non-payment of the Community Levy and the non-application of the Protocol on the Community Levy. He informed the Council that an average shortfall of approximately 37.9% of projected revenues has been recorded over the past three years. By 2016, a total of UA 139.3 million was collected from the Community Levy.
- 47. Furthermore, the Commissioner noted that implementation of the Community budget programme in 2016 suffered immensely, owing to the low level of revenue from the Community Levy and the non-payment of arrears by Member States. This was further worsened by the shortfall of funding inflows from partners and the donor Community. He noted that the Commission however implemented various measures to control costs and

rationalise expenditure in order to ensure the implementation of essential activities and programmes related to regional integration, development, peace and security in the light of the dwindling resources.

48. In conclusion, the Commissioner urged Member States to fully comply with the Protocol on the Community Levy, especially provisions relating to the tax base, recovery, deposit and payment of proceeds of the Community Levy. He equally urged Member States yet to pay up their arrears to do so in order to make resources available for the Community to implement priority projects and programmes approved by the Authorities.

49. Council commended the Commission for the presentation, and especially for the measures being implemented to cut costs and prioritise expenditures.

50. Council took note of the presentation and made the following recommendations:

- a. Appealed to Member States to remit community levy
- b. Take necessary effort to allocate at least 60% of budget to projects and programmes in Member States.

Item 8: Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Implementation of the Regulation adopting the ECOWAS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

51. The President of the Commission presented a memorandum on the Enabling the Regulation adopting the ECOWAS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. He recalled that on his assumption of duty, he observed a lack of integrity and transparency in procurement, Community financial resource management, and financial control, etc.

52. Given this situation, the President indicated that he set up a drafting committee to prepare a draft code of ethics which he submitted to all Community institutions, agencies and centres for comments. Following the participatory process, a number of comments were made with a view to improving the content of the code which he had signed through an enabling Regulation.

53. After laying down the objectives and content of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, the President of the Commission thereafter requested the Council of Ministers to endorse the code.

54. Council commended the President of the Commission for the initiative, approved the said enabling Regulation and urged him to ensure its effective implementation.

Item 9: Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on Restructuring the ECOWAS Brown Card

55. The memorandum presented by the Commission recalled that Council, at its Seventy-Seventh Ordinary Session held in Abuja from 15th to 16th December 2016 deferred the adoption of the report of the meeting of Ministers of Security of Member States held in Lome on 2nd December 2016 on the ECOWAS Brown Card and directed the Commission to organise a meeting within the first quarter of 2017 to enable Member States exchange experiences with Togo on the systematic issuance of the Brown Card for third-party motor insurance.
56. In compliance with the directives, ECOWAS Commission fielded a mission led by Commissioner for Free Movement to Togo from 2nd to 4th March 2017 to interact with the insurance system of Togo towards improving the document. The meeting had in attendance the Insurance Councils of Togo, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. The proposed new ECOWAS Brown Card was subjected to intense review, drawing from the experiences of Togo. At the end of their meeting, the experts concluded that the document submitted to Council in December 2016 was in fact consistent with the Brown Card System of Togo.
57. Accordingly, the ECOWAS Commission is recommending to Council for consideration and approval, a gradual approach to systematising the ECOWAS Brown Card with the following options:
- a) For motorists and vehicles already in circulation, the ECOWAS Brown Card can be delivered on request.
 - b) For newly registered vehicles, the ECOWAS Brown Card will be required for any automobile liability insurance coverage.
58. Council adopted the memorandum after deliberation.

Item 10: Presentation and Consideration of the Report of the Ad-Hoc Ministerial Committee on Institutional Reform

59. The Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on Institutional reform convened in Monrovia on 29 and 30 May 2017, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Marjon Kamara, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liberia and Chairperson of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers. The following Member States, which make up the Committee, were represented in the meeting. They included the Republic of Ghana, Republic of Guinea, Republic of Niger, Federal Republic of Nigeria and Republic of Senegal. The representative of the Republic of Cabo Verde was absent from the meeting.
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60. Following the presentation made by the Commission and clarifications provided by the Consultant, Maxwell Stamp, Council examined a number of pertinent issues, which in its view, would ensure that the greatest benefits are derived from the ongoing institutional reform process as far as cost efficiency and improved performance of Community institutions are concerned.
61. Council congratulated the Commission and the Consultant, Maxwell Stamp for the quality of the report, as well as the Ad hoc Committee for the relevance of the proposals. It thereafter adopted the following recommendations for the consideration and approval of the Authority:
- a. Choice of the nine (9) member structure (Model D) as the new structure for the Commission and establishment of the position of Secretary-General to be under the President of the Commission
 - b. Establishment of the office of the Auditor-General; and a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the Auditor-General;
 - c. Reduction of the total number of Statutory Appointees from 27 to 18 across all ECOWAS Institutions;
 - d. Removal of the Speaker of ECOWAS Parliament from the list of positions to be allocated, given that Parliament already has an established rotation system for nomination of the Speaker based on alphabetical order;
 - e. Allocation of the seventeen (17) statutory positions to Institutions as follows, nine (9) at the Commission, five (5) at the Court of Justice, and one (1) each at WAHO, GIABA and Office of the Auditor-General;
 - f. Inclusion of all ECOWAS institutions in the reform process and allocation of adequate resources to the process;
 - g. Implementation of cost cutting measures, which may include rationalisation of staff positions, job assessment and the conduct of a staff skills audit;
 - h. Implementation of additional measures to avoid wastage in the system
 - i. Suspension of the appointment of Resident Representatives currently ongoing in Member States, except for Member States facing crisis (Special Representatives) and undertake a periodic evaluation of the cost and performance of existing offices;
 - j. Improvement of the financial management of Community resources and ensuring regular and timely audit of expenditure;
 - k. Establishment of a strong monitoring and evaluation function for the Community

- l. Respect of the Community rules for the allocation of Statutory positions to Member States particularly that relating to Community Levy compliance, including the need to consider level of contribution as a determinant for allocating positions;
 - m. After the adoption of the Commission's structure by the Authority, finalise the Commission's organogram up to the levels of directorates, divisions and units, in collaboration with the Consultant, and then submit the organogram to an extraordinary AFC meeting; to ensure that the overall structure meets the requirements of the ECOWAS Treaty and its objective of regional integration;
 - n. Continued implementation of the Institutional Reform Action Plan as proposed by the Commission;
 - o. Compliance with the provisions of the Community Levy Protocol by Member States given that Community resources come mainly from Community Levy proceeds;
 - p. Need for the Commission to adjust the imbalance between administrative costs and programme expenditure, with a view to deriving the greatest benefits from the institutional reform;
62. The delegation of Cabo Verde expressed reservation on the reduction of the number of Statutory Appointees and allocation of positions as stated above.
63. Council was of the view that a Head of State should be appointed to monitor the Institutional Reform process.

Item 11: Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on End of Tenure of Statutory Appointees

64. The Commission presented a memorandum on the end of tenure and setting up of an ad hoc ministerial committee to make proposals to the Council of Ministers for the allocation of statutory positions. In the presentation, the Commission recalled the decision of the 48th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government held in Abuja on 15 and 16 December 2015 to maintain the current structure of the Commission and conduct an overall rotation of positions in February 2018.
65. The Commission therefore drew Council's attention to the impending end of tenure of Community statutory appointees in February and June, 2018, urging Council to initiate the rotation process with the aim of making recommendations to the Authority of Heads of State and Government for its approval. The Commission also invited Council to consider the chronology

of activities to be undertaken towards the recruitment of new Statutory Appointees and set up an Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee to consider the issue and make proposals for the allocation of statutory positions.

66. Council commended the Commission for this initiative, took note of the imminent expiration of the tenure of statutory appointees and endorsed the chronogram presented as well as established an Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee comprising seven Member States, namely, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone. The Committee is expected to present proposals for the allocation of positions and submit its recommendations no later than end of June 2017.

Item 12: Presentation and Consideration of a memorandum on the Establishment of the Dakar-Abidjan Corridor Development Programme

67. The memorandum presented by the Commission recalled that Article 32 of ECOWAS Treaty and the ECOWAS Vision 2020 placed emphasis on the development of common infrastructure facilities to accelerate Regional Integration and strengthen trade and free movement within the ECOWAS Community. It further highlighted that this mandate has been reaffirmed by the Authority of Heads of State and Government through several Protocols.

68. The memorandum underscored the importance of the Dakar-Abidjan Corridor (DAC) as having the potential of improving on the economic viability of the entire Dakar to Lagos Corridor. In addition to the very important economic and political capital cities this Corridor traverses, the area of influence of the Dakar-Abidjan Corridor covers key production centres, natural resource enclaves, vibrant coastal routes and substantial agricultural zones within the ECOWAS Community. The objectives of the development programme were enumerated as follows:

- Construct and manage, a 6-Lane Dual 2 by 3 Carriage Multinational Highway with railway consideration as well as complementary trade and transport facilitation measures linking Dakar (Senegal) to Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire) passing through the territories of The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia This is expected to be a continuation of the on-going development of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor as part of the wider African Union Trans-African Highway Network (TAH) No. 7;
- Establish a supranational Corridor Management Authority adequately empowered by the Seven (7) Corridor Countries to develop and manage the Corridor.

69. The following recommendations to Heads of State and Government of seven (7) Corridor Countries:

- (i) Setting up of a Ministerial Steering Committee & Designation of Chairperson
- (ii) Designation of a Champion President to Provide High-Level Project Promotion and Advocacy
- (iii) Establishment of a Seed Fund Contribution to Demonstrate Member States' Commitment
- (iv) Approve and Sign the Project's Supplementary Act to Provide the Requisite High-Level Legal and Institutional Framework for the Dakar-Abidjan Corridor Highway Development Project.

70. The Commission concluded its memorandum by requesting Council to:

- Monitor and support advocacy among Sector Colleagues in respective Countries and seek their support for the next stages of the Dakar-Abidjan Corridor Highway Project.
- Direct the Commission to present the key issues and recommendations made by the Ministerial Meetings to the Authority of Heads of State and Government; and
- Ultimately present the Dakar-Abidjan Corridor Highway Project Supplementary Act for approval and signature of the seven (7) Heads of State of the concerned Countries.

71. After deliberation, Council adopted the memorandum.

Item 13: Consideration and Adoption of Draft Agenda of the 51st Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government

72. The Commission presented the draft Agenda of the Fifty-First Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government and the agenda was adopted after consideration and amendments subject to reservations expressed by Niger and Nigeria on the draft declaration between the State of Israel and ECOWAS.

ITEMS FOR ADOPTION

Item 14: Report of Ministers of Industry responsible for Quality on Establishment of the Regional Quality Infrastructure and the Regional Association of Quality.

73. The Memorandum presented by the Commission sought Council's approval for the report of the meeting of sectoral ministers on the

establishment of regional quality infrastructure and the regional quality association held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on 21 April 2017.

74. The Commission recalled that the establishment of regional quality infrastructure stemmed from the ECOWAS Quality Policy adopted by the Heads of State in 2013 and Regulation C/REG./12/13 adopting the ECOWAS regional quality infrastructure scheme.
75. The aim is to enhance cooperation among Member States and improve the supply of accessible quality services through the following regional bodies created by the aforementioned Regulation:
- a. Community Quality Council
 - b. Community Technical Regulation Committee
 - c. Regional Accreditation System
 - d. Community Compliance Assessment Committee
 - e. Community Metrology Committee
 - f. Community Harmonisation Committee
 - g. Regional Quality Association
76. Council was urged to approve the report of the meeting of sectoral ministers and adopt the Regulations on the structure and functioning of the above-stated bodies as well as the project for the establishment of the regional Quality Association which will serve as the ECOWAS agency for quality and permanent Executive Secretariat of the latter.
77. Following the presentation and discussions, Council adopted the Memorandum.

Item 15: Report of Ministers of Industry and Agriculture on Industrial Development of Cocoa and Cashew in West Africa.

78. In its Memorandum, the Commission requested Council's approval for the report of the meeting of sectoral ministers on regional cooperation for industrial production of cocoa and cashew held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on 20 April 2017.
79. The Commission recalled that the regional industrial cooperation stemmed from the West Africa Common Industrial Policy WACIP adopted in 2010 by the Authority of Heads of State and Government and the revised implementation strategy, adopted by sectoral ministers and approved by Council in 2015.
80. The two Resolutions on cashew and cocoa are aimed at promoting and implementing joint policies and actions geared towards improving the

regional added value of these produce for which the region accounts for about 45% and 70% of global supply respectively. .

81. The Memorandum urged Council to approve the report of the sectoral ministers and the resolutions,
82. Following the presentation and discussions, Council adopted the Memorandum.

Item 16: Report of Periodic Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs

83. The Periodic Meeting of Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs of ECOWAS Member States was held on February 10, 2017 in Abidjan, Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, under the theme, "ECOWAS Member States' Priorities in the Implementation of the Supplementary Act on Equal Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region in Relation to the SDGs and the African Union's Agenda 2063".
84. The main objective of the meeting was to outline priority actions to be considered in the implementation of the Supplementary Act on Equal Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development of the ECOWAS region, in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's 2063 Agenda, and to adopt ECOWAS Gender Policy Documents.
85. The meeting, which was officially opened by His Excellency Daniel Kablan Duncan, Vice President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, was attended by Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs or their representatives from the 15 ECOWAS Member States, the ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Specialised Institutions, development partners, Civil Society Organisations and international organisations.
86. At the end of the meeting, the Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs unanimously adopted a Declaration in Honour of Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, in recognition of her invaluable contributions to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the ECOWAS Region and other parts of the world. The Honourable Ministers also adopted the following policy documents:
 - (i) The Roadmap for the Implementation of the Supplementary Act on Equal Rights for Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region;

- (ii) The ECOWAS Regional Action Plan for Obstetric Fistula Control in West Africa;
- (iii) The ECOWAS Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Gender and Elections; and
- (iv) The 2017-2020 Action Plan for the Women, Peace and Security Component of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework.

87. After deliberation, Council adopted the memorandum.

Item 17: Report on the adoption of the 2016-2024 ECOWAS Action Plan on Ending Statelessness in the region

88. The Commission submitted the report of the Specialised Technical Ministerial Committee on Nationality and Citizenship Affairs validated at its meeting held from 7 to 9 May 2017 in Banjul, Gambia, to Council for adoption. In keeping with the Abidjan Declaration adopted by the 47th Summit of Heads of State and Government in May 2015 in Accra, Ghana, ECOWAS Ministers for Nationality and Citizenship Affairs validated the 'Banjul Action Plan on Ending Statelessness'.

89. After deliberation, Council adopted the memorandum.

Item 18: Report of the meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Energy

90. The Minister of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Guinea presented the outcome of the 11th Meeting of ECOWAS Energy Ministers, held in Conakry on 7 December 2016. The Energy Ministers noted the ongoing actions at ECOWAS level to provide a sustainable response to the persistent energy crisis in the region and welcomed ECOWAS efforts to strengthen energy cooperation between Member States.

91. Aware of the impact of the energy crisis in the region on the socio-economic development of Member States, the Ministers of Energy expressed their commitment to improve energy security, access to energy and to support the ongoing efforts to reinforce the development of an integrated, reliable and robust energy market in the ECOWAS region.

92. In this context, the meeting of ministers commended the quality of the policy and strategy documents developed by ECOWAS and recommended their adoption. These include: ECOWAS bioenergy policy; ECOWAS Policy on Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access; Monitoring and Communication framework on the implementation of national actions plans on Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and the objectives of the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL); ECOWAS Regional Efficient Lighting Strategy; ECOWAS Directive on Energy Efficiency in Buildings; West African Clean Energy Corridor Initiative; Resolution of the challenges affecting the

West African Gas Pipeline; and improvement of the specifications of fuels used in the ECOWAS region.

93. After deliberation, Council adopted the report.

Item 19: Reports of meetings of ECOWAS Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources

94. The Commission presented three reports of the ECOWAS Specialised Ministerial Technical Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources for their consideration and adoption.
- A. The first report was on the Specialised Ministerial Technical Committee on Agriculture which validated three key documents on 12 December 2016 in Abuja, Nigeria, namely: (i) 2025 ECOWAP Strategic Orientation Framework; (ii) 2016-2020 Regional Agricultural Investment Programme for Food and Nutrition Security (RAIP-FNS) and (iii) ECOWAP/CAADP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Highlighting the report, the Commission noted that in November 2015, the Specialised Ministerial Technical Committee evaluated the implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) ten (10) years after its adoption by the Heads of State and Government using new guidelines, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, "2014 Malabo Declaration" and against the backdrop of climate change-related issues. The Ministers urged the ECOWAS Commission to diligently commence the allocation of funds to the ECOWAS Agricultural Development Fund (ECOWADF) and continue to strengthen the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) responsible for the implementation of ECOWAP projects.
 - B. The second was the report of the Specialised Ministerial Technical Committee on Environment and Meteorology which validated the ECOWAS Meteorological Programme and its implementation strategy at its session held on 5 August 2016 in Abuja, Nigeria. The overall objective of the programme is to provide a framework for the integration and coordination of Member States' national meteorological and hydrological services. This will lead to the provision of efficient services in support of activities aimed at reducing socio-economic risks and disasters in the region.
 - C. Third and last was the report of the Specialised Ministerial Technical Committee on Water Resources which validated a draft Directive on the development of water infrastructure in West Africa at the 4th Ordinary Session of the IWRM Ministerial Monitoring Committee in West Africa, held in Dakar on 27 November 2015. The draft Directive is aimed at ensuring that environmental, economic and social factors are fully taken into account in the development of water infrastructure projects, in order to ensure their sustainability.

95. After deliberation, Council adopted the 3 memoranda.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Item 20: Update on the Economic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and West Africa (EU-WA EPA)


96. Council was apprised by the Commission of progress on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the West African region and the European Union.
97. Council was informed that since the 16 December 2014 decision of the 46th ECOWAS Summit to proceed with the signing of the EPA, thirteen (13) of the sixteen (16) West African countries have signed the agreement. The persistent fears regarding the anticipated impact of the EPA on their revenue, the effect of competition on certain activities, the amount of resources allocated by the EU, and the need to establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism based on objective and verifiable criteria were concerns raised by some of the Member States.
98. Council was apprised that most of the concerns raised have been addressed in the text of the agreement and the proposed instruments for its implementation, noting that there are prospects that the EPA will be endorsed by all the States of West Africa.
99. Council was further informed that in order to continue to preserve preferential access to the European market beyond 1 October 2016, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire have had to ratify their interim EPAs, which once implemented could undermine the ECOWAS CET and consolidation of the common market, establishment of the common trade policy and free circulation. To render the interim EPAs obsolete, it is recommended that the Council of Ministers should urge Member States that are yet to sign the EPA to do so without further delay.
100. Council took note of the memorandum

Item 21: Update on the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) Task Force

101. The Chairperson of the Task Force on the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) briefed Council on the progress report of the Task Force. He recalled that the Task Force was set up on the directives of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in accordance with Regulation PC/REG 01/11/15 of 25 November 2015. He noted that the Task Force was officially inaugurated by the President of Burkina Faso, H.E. Roch Marc Christian Kabore on 20 May 2016.

102. He informed Council that the Task Force held its first meeting in Accra, Ghana on 11 and 12 August 2016, where the Roadmap and Action Plan for September 2016 to December 2017 were adopted. The meeting also adopted the status report on the free movement of persons and goods by ECOWAS Member States.
103. Council was informed that in 2016, the Task Force fielded an advocacy and observation missions to Burkina Faso and Liberia from 28 November to 3 December and 4 to 8 December 2016 respectively. In the first half of 2017, the Task Force also visited the following countries: Togo, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria as contained in the adopted Roadmap and Action Plan for 2016 to 2017.
104. The Task Force noted the obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and the right of establishment and residence. All Member States visited acknowledged the continuation of illicit practices, corruption and harassment at all entry points. Council was further informed of country specific issues and that recommendations were made by the Task Force to address them.
105. Council took note of the information.

Item 22: Status of Implementation of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (ECOWAS CET)

106. The ECOWAS Commission presented a memorandum on the status of implementation of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (ECOWAS CET). It would be recalled that in approving the ECOWAS CET and its related regulations, the Council of Ministers directed the Commission to submit periodic reports on its implementation.
107. Council was informed that as at 31 March 2017, thirteen (13) Member States were applying the CET, with Cape Verde and Sierra Leone, making necessary arrangement to implement the CET. However, in March 2017, Sierra Leone has formally notified the Commission of its intention to modify the duty rates for selected products in the ECOWAS CET in accordance with Regulation C.REG.1/09/13 on ECOWAS Supplementary Protection Measures by the application of Import Adjustment Tax (IAT). This would, in principle, make Sierra Leone to be in a position to implement the CET as soon as possible. With respect to Cape Verde, the Commission plan to embark on a political and technical mission to Praia in June 2017 to interact with the authorities on a timetable for the implementation of the CET and also discuss possible technical support to be provided to the country.
108. The Commission urged Council to appeal to Member States yet to commence the application of the regional tariff to undertake all necessary measures towards the application of the CET without further delay. 

109. Council took note of the information and urged the Commission to support Member States in addressing the challenges in the implementation of the CET.

Item 23: Update on ECOWAS Biometric Identity Card

110. Council was briefed on the status of implementation of the ECOWAS Biometric Identity Card. The Commission recalled that in compliance with the directives of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) for its members to transit from the hand written to Machine Readable Documents for international travels in November 2015, the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card (ENBIC) was conceived and subsequently adopted in Abuja by the 46th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government on 14th December 2014.
111. Council was informed that the ENBIC has been presented and accepted by ICAO as a valid international travel document and that Member States are currently at various implementation stages, with ongoing consultation and negotiation with vendors to produce the Identity Cards for their respective citizens. Council was further informed that Senegal commenced issuance of the Identity Cards in October 2016.
112. Council was equally informed that at the request of Member States, the ECOWAS Commission can assist in the recommendation of competent organisations with expertise in travel documents to assist Member States in ensuring compliance with the technical specifications.
113. Finally, the Commission reiterated to Council that the ENBIC is a sovereign document and the choice of any vendor is at the discretion of Member States.
114. Council took note of the memorandum.

Item 24: Memorandum on Government Support to Local Production of Pharmaceuticals in the ECOWAS region

115. The Director General of the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) presented a memorandum seeking Council's consideration, adoption and recommendation to the Authority, of the request for "Government Support to Local Pharmaceutical Production in ECOWAS", as well as commitment to the implementation of the 2014-2020 ECOWAS Regional Pharmaceutical Plan (ERPP), (WAHO/XVI.AHM/2015/Res-04/d).
116. The memorandum recalled the decisions of the Conference of African Ministers of Health held in Johannesburg in April 2007; Summit of African Union Heads of State and Government held in Accra in July 2007, and in Addis Ababa in July 2012, which emphasised the imperative for access to


medicines, in particular, through local production and harmonisation of regulations.

117. Furthermore, the memorandum recalled the decisions of the 14th Ordinary Meeting of the ECOWAS Health Ministers held in Cabo Verde in April 2013 and the 43rd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government held in Abuja in July 2013 adopting the ECOWAS Charter on Public-Private Partnership on Local Pharmaceutical Production of Essential Medicines. The memorandum equally recalled the 2014-2020 ECOWAS Regional Pharmaceutical Plan (ERPP) adopted by ECOWAS Health Ministers in Niamey in March 2015 and Ministers of Industry in Accra in April 2015 respectively, both emphasising the need to develop national and regional capacities for Local Pharmaceutical Production of Essential Medicines in the ECOWAS region.
118. Council welcome the content of the memorandum and strongly urged Member States to support it.

Item 25: Monrovia Declaration on Post EBOLA

119. The Director General of the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) presented a draft Declaration on Post-Ebola for the attention and consideration of Council and recommendation to the Heads of State and Government for their adoption and signature.
120. Council congratulated the Director General on the quality of the draft Declaration and recommended it for signature by the Heads of State and Government

Item 26: Memorandum on Status of Implementation of the Sealink Project

121. The Commission presented the memorandum on the status of implementation of the Sealink Project. Council was informed that the project seeks to facilitate maritime integration through the promotion of trade within and between the West and Central African Regions. It will complement the services provided by air transport companies, air transport operators and other shipping companies that are currently unable to meet requirements in West and Central African States.
122. The Commission informed Council that the Ministers responsible for Transport accorded Community enterprise status to the project given its importance for the implementation of the Protocol on the free movement of persons and goods and the right of establishment.
123. It was noted that the project's promoters, Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI), NEXIM Bank Nigeria and Transimex Cameroon have played their part by implementing the Ministers' 

recommendations. However, there are some outstanding activities to be implemented before the take-off of the project in January 2018, namely,:

- a. dissemination within Member States and potential investors, the updated reports on the feasibility studies, pilot project and business plan of the project,
- b. distribution of shares based on the allocation jointly agreed with EBID,
- c. identification of the host country for the company's headquarters,
- d. establishment of the company
- e. organisation of a Constitutive General Assembly.

124. The Council of Ministers is invited to take into account the importance of this project in strengthening the Protocol on the free movement of goods and right of establishment.

125. Council took note of the information and made the following recommendations:

- a) take into account in the Sealink project the ongoing initiative between Senegal and Cabo Verde on the maritime transport;
- b) take into account the possibilities of developing river navigation namely on River Niger and Senegal.

Item 27: Reconstitution of the ECOWAS Ministerial Audit Committee

126. The President of the Commission recalled the need for reconstituting the Ministerial Audit Committee in compliance with the directives of the Council of Ministers. He informed Council that the current members of the Committee comprises Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger and Togo. The President in particular emphasised the need for the members of the Committee to be high ranking public servants and consequently called on Guinea, Mali and Togo to nominate individuals that meet the criteria to serve on the Committee.

127. Council took note of the information.

Item 28: Update on Audit of ECOWAS Financial Statements

128. The Acting Commissioner for Finance informed Council that there are outstanding backlogs of audit of Community Institutions from 2014 to 2016. However, the Commission's 2013 audit is ongoing and yet to be completed by 20th June 2017. He further informed Council that Audits for 2014 and 2015 will commence by 18th June 2017.

129. For the Audit of the 2016 financial statement, invitation for expression of interest have been advertised but only two responses have been received.

hence, the extension of deadline to accommodate more expression of interests. In this regard, the Audit Committee has to be reconstituted to:

- a. Appoint the External Auditors for 2016 Financial Statements
- b. Receive the Audit Report and report on them to the end of year Statutory Meetings.

130. Council took note of the information.

Item 29: Memorandum on the Roundtable for the Financing of the ECOWAS Community Development Programme (ECOWAS CDP)

131. This memorandum presents progress made by ECOWAS Commission, during the period of January to April 2017, on the preparation for the donor roundtable to mobilise resources for the financing of the priority projects of the Community Development Programme (CDP).

132. As part of the technical preparation and project structuring through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mechanism, project documents have been finalised. In addition, a comparative study on the implementation of CDP priority projects using Public Project Contracting (MOP) or Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mechanisms was conducted in collaboration with the Regional PPP Unit at the headquarters of the West Africa Bank for Development (BOAD) This evaluation helped analyse the financial viability and identify the minimum financial requirements for project profitability under PPP mechanism.

133. As regards promotion and awareness among development partners and private investors, the following consultations were carried out:

- a. Mission to the Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDB);
- b. Meetings with a Group of Chinese investors, China Gezhouba Group Corporation (CGGC) and ALFASIT Group, resulting in proposed technical and financial bids.
- c. Creating awareness among the region's private sector through the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI) to take ownership of CDP priority projects and mobilise resources from regional and international business communities.

134. Council was briefed on the status of preparations for the organization of the Roundtable, namely, a finalized concept note, including a draft agenda, work programme and list of participants, as well as terms of reference for the recruitment of an audiovisual communication and event agencies.

135. Council was further informed that the Commission met with the Ivorian Authorities on 28 March 2017 to discuss the date for holding the roundtable in Abidjan.

136. Council took note of the memorandum 

Item 30: Any other Business


(i) Visit by the President of the Republic of Liberia

137. H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government paid a courtesy visit to the Council of Ministers. In her remarks, she welcomed the participants to Liberia and expressed sincere gratitude to ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for granting the Republic of Liberia the opportunity to host the mid-year Statutory meeting, noting it is a historic moment, being the first time Liberia will host a meeting of this magnitude in many years. She concluded her remarks by wishing Council fruitful deliberation and expressed the hope that the recommendations that would emanate from the session will further advance the cause of regional integration agenda of the Community.

(ii) Presentation of Winners of African Innovation Prize (AIP)

138. Two African researchers Dr Valentin AGON (Benin) and Dr Eddy AGBO (Nigerian) emerged as winners of the 2016 first Innovation Prize for Africa organised by the African Innovation Foundation (AIF). Dr Valentin AGON was awarded the 1st Prize for his innovation on malaria treatment, whilst Dr Eddy AGBO was awarded the Prize on Strong Social Impact for his innovative research on the test for malaria using urine.
139. Whilst dedicating the prizes to ECOWAS Citizens, the Awardees noted that the aims of the AIP is to support and recognise outstanding African innovators for their home-grown, local solutions and entrepreneurship that impact on Africans. They therefore invite Member States to support and facilitate the expansion of their products within the ECOWAS markets.
140. Council warmly congratulates the two winners and agreed to present the awardees to the Summit of the Heads of State and Government.

(iii) Draft Joint Declaration of Intent between the Government of the State of Israel

141. Member States expressed concerns about lack of consultation on the draft declaration of intent between the State of Israel and ECOWAS Commission. Following extensive deliberation on the draft declaration, and taking into cognisance the bilateral relationship between some of the Member States and the State of Israel, Council decided to issue a press release in lieu of a declaration. 

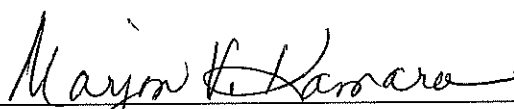
Item 31: Adoption of Report

142. This report was adopted after amendments.

Item 32: Closing Ceremony

143. The Chairperson of Council, H.E. Marjon V. Kamara, in her closing remarks congratulated all the participants for their frank contributions and the friendly spirit that persisted throughout the deliberation. Recalling that this session of the Council would be the last she would be participating as chairperson, she thanked members of the Council as well as the Commission and other Community Institutions for the cooperation that she received during her tenure.
144. She ended her closing remarks by inviting all stakeholders to ensure strict implementation of decisions reached in the course of the meeting.
145. She thereafter declared closed the 78th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and wished all participants safe trip back to their various destinations.

DONE AT MONROVIA, THIS 2ND DAY OF JUNE 2017



H.E. MARJON V. KAMARA

**CHAIRPERSON
FOR COUNCIL**

**COMUNIDADE DOS
ESTADOS DA
AFRICA DO
OESTE**

**ECONOMIC C
OMMUNITY
OF WEST AFRICAN
STATES**



**COMMUNAUTE
ECONOMIQUE DES
ETATS DE L'AFRIQUE
DE L'OUEST**

**Seventy –Eighth Ordinary Session of the
ECOWAS Council of Ministers**

Monrovia, 2nd June 2017

VOTE OF THANKS

The members of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers meeting in Monrovia, from 1st to 2nd June 2017, express their profound gratitude to Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and to the Government and people of Liberia for the warm and brotherly welcome extended them and for the excellent facilities placed at their disposal to ensure the successful conduct of their deliberations.

DONE AT MONROVIA, THIS 2ND DAY OF JUNE 2017

COUNCIL