



Original: French

FIFTY-FOURTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

22 December 2018, Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Fifty-fourth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) convened on 22nd December 2018 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, under the chairmanship of **H. E. Mr Muhammadu Buhari** (GCFR), President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chair of the Authority.

2. The session was attended by the under-listed Heads of State and Government or their duly mandated representatives:

H. E. **Roch Marc Christian Kabore**, President of Faso

H. E. **Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire

H. E. **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**, President of the Republic of Ghana

H. E. **Alpha Conde**, President of the Republic of Guinea

H. E. **José Mário Vaz**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau

H. E. **Issoufou Mahamadou**, President of the Republic of Niger;

H. E. **Muhammadu Buhari** (GCFR), President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

H. E. **Julius Maada Bio**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

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

H.E. **Yakubu Gowon** (GCFR), Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

H.E. **Salou Djibo**, Former President of the Republic of Niger

H. E. Mahammed Boun Abdallah Dionne, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal

H.E. Mamadou Tangara, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians abroad of the Republic of The Gambia

H. E. Yaya Sangaré, Minister of Malians Abroad and African Integration of the Republic of Mali

H. E. Gbehzohngar M. Findley, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia

H.E. Paulette Adjovi Yekpe, Ambassador of the Republic of Benin to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, representing the President of the Republic of Benin

3. The session was also attended by:

- H. E. Jean Claude Kassi Brou, President of the ECOWAS Commission, and other ECOWAS Heads of Institution and Statutory Appointees;
- Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS);
- Mr Abdallah Boureima, President of the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA);
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to ECOWAS.

4. The opening ceremony featured statements by their Excellencies Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), and Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, President of the ECOWAS Commission as well as the welcome address by His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR), President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chair of the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

5. The Heads of State and Government took note of the 2018 Annual Report of the President of the Commission and the reports of the 81st Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, as well as the 41st meeting of the Mediation and Security Council.

6. They commended the quality of the reports and the relevant recommendations contained therein, which would deepen the economic and monetary integration process and consolidate regional peace and security.

7. In order to bolster the results achieved in the implementation of regional integration projects and build a region of peace and prosperity, the Authority arrived at the following specific decisions:

ON ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

8. The Authority takes note of the outlook for the region in the area of economic growth, with a projected rate of 3.0%, compared to 2017 (2.3%). The improved growth follows an accelerated economic growth in several countries of the Community and consolidated economic recovery in Nigeria. However, poor economic diversification and inadequate processing of raw material exports are among factors causing economic fragility in Member States hard-hit by exogenous shocks.

9. To this end, the Authority urges Member States to continue efforts to diversify their economies and implement specific policies to support growth-oriented sectors.

CREATION OF THE MONETARY UNION

10. The Authority takes note of progress made in the implementation of the ECOWAS single currency programme. It takes note of the report of the President of the Commission on the status of implementation of the directives issued at its 53rd session held on 31st July 2018 in Lomé and the relevant recommendations made to provide the region with a stable monetary union.

11. It welcomes the results achieved by the Ministerial Committee on the single currency programme and the Committee of Governors of ECOWAS Central Banks and provides the following specific guidelines:

- a. **Regarding the exchange rate regime, harmonisation of the monetary policy framework and the future central bank model**, the Authority instructs the Ministerial Committee made up of Finance Ministers, the President of the ECOWAS Commission and Governors of ECOWAS Central Banks to finalise the impact assessment studies, and submit proposals at its next ordinary session in 2019.
- b. **Regarding the name and symbol of the future common currency**, the Summit instructs the President of the ECOWAS Commission to set up a working group to include representatives of Central Banks and persons with



knowledge in the following areas: design, graphics, economics, history, anthropology, sociology, political science, currency symbols or law. The Working Group will be tasked with proposing names and symbols for the future single currency to the Ministerial Committee.

- c. The Authority urges the Central Banks to speed up allocations for special funds for activities under the roadmap.

FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS AND GOODS

12. The Heads of State recall the importance of the effective implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods, Services and Capital signed in Dakar on 29th May 1979, which is the cornerstone of regional integration. Forty years later, there is a need to conduct an overall assessment of the implementation of the Protocol and propose measures for smooth implementation.

13. In this regard, they instruct the President of the Commission to organise a high-level conference on free movement in the first half of 2019. The Authority also urges Member States to further open up their markets to avoid possible reciprocity measures from other Member States.

14. The Authority also invites Member States to speed up the implementation of the biometric identity card and instructs the ECOWAS Commission to ensure its acceptance by all Member States to allow holders of the card to travel freely in the region.

15. The Authority takes note of the state of execution of the mission of the Task Force on the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme and reaffirms its support for the Task Force and of proposals for innovative and vigorous actions in order to sustainably eliminate barriers to intra-regional trade.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE WEST AFRICAN REGION AND EUROPEAN UNION

16. The Authority takes note of the steps taken by the President of the ECOWAS Commission following the appeal to European partners for greater flexibility on the issue of EPAs, in particular the commencement of the implementation schedule of the Interim EPAs.



INDUSTRY AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROMOTION

17. The Summit endorses the ECOWAS Regional Investment Policy and Code. The ECOWAS Investment Code provides the legal framework for the treatment and operation of investment in the ECOWAS Common Investment Market (ECIM) and the implementation of the policy.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

18. The Summit takes note of the Hazardous Waste Management Strategy, which highlights the problems faced by our region in dealing with the issue, its challenges as well as inadequacies relating to illegal dumping of hazardous waste, oil pollution and exposure of children to lead. It instructs the ECOWAS Commission to establish a regional coordination mechanism for the management of chemicals and hazardous waste as recommended by the Ministers of Environment.

ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

19. On energy, the Authority welcomes the launch of the regional electricity market in West Africa and the adoption of subsequent texts on sanctions and security of cross-border power trade to improve the solvency and efficiency of market operators. It endorses the Master Plan for the Development of Regional Power Generation and Transmission Infrastructure 2019 – 2033, an essential tool to address the challenges of energy deficit in the region.

20. The Authority instructs the ECOWAS Commission to take all necessary measures to expedite the implementation of selected projects and calls on technical and financial partners to provide funding for the projects.

21. The Summit welcomes the commissioning of the Joint Border Posts at Semè/Krake along the Nigeria-Benin border and Noépé between Ghana and Togo, which are expected to contribute to intra-Community trade flows. In this respect, it invites the different stakeholders to make good use of the facilities.

22. It also commends the progress made in the development of the Abidjan - Lagos and Praia - Dakar - Abidjan Corridors and invites the Member States concerned to continue their collaborative efforts for the effective implementation of the integration projects.

23. The Summit particularly welcomes the accession of the Republic of Cabo Verde to the Dakar-Abidjan Corridor programme, transformed into the Praia-Dakar-Abidjan Corridor with the introduction of a maritime component.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF CULTURE

24. The Authority adopts a Political Declaration on the return of African cultural artefacts to their countries of origin in order to restore, preserve and enhance the regional cultural heritage. It commends and supports the efforts already made by ECOWAS countries for the return of their cultural artefacts and instructs the Commission to submit a regional action plan on the return of African cultural artefacts, at its next session.

25. The Authority invites countries in possession of African cultural artefacts to facilitate their return and pledges to strengthen cooperation, synergy and joint efforts for the return of cultural artefacts to their countries of origin.

ON PEACE, SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY

26. The Authority reaffirms the importance of peace, security and stability in ECOWAS for the economic development of the region. It reiterates its condemnation of terrorist attacks in the region and expresses solidarity with the affected countries.

27. The Authority welcomes the initiatives on operational cooperation between certain Member States intended to effectively combat the scourge of terrorism and instructs the Commission to support and extend the cooperation to other Member States. To this end, it urges Member States to expedite the simplification of information and intelligence sharing mechanisms and the harmonisation of their legal systems to respond to terrorist attacks.

28. The Authority reaffirms support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force and reiterates its call to all Member States, in a spirit of inter-community solidarity, to provide material, financial and technical support and also intelligence to the armed forces of the countries involved in the fight against terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel.

29. Regarding the peace support missions mandated by ECOWAS, particularly the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB) and The Gambia (ECOMIG), the Authority welcomes the important contribution to the stabilisation of the two countries and expresses the sincere gratitude of the Community to Troops and

Police Contributing Countries to the missions. The Authority notes the high cost of these missions. It calls on African Union and United Nations to contribute funds to the missions for the maintenance of international peace and security in line with the United Nations Charter.

ON THE SITUATION IN GUINEA BISSAU

30. The Authority takes note of the report of the Ministerial Monitoring Committee and is very concerned about the delay in the conduct of parliamentary elections in the Republic of Guinea Bissau. It notes the technical issues related to the unavailability of election materials and difficulties created by some political stakeholders which caused delays in the voters' registration process.

31. The Authority takes note of the new date for the parliamentary elections and encourages all stakeholders in the electoral process to work towards the conduct of the Guinea Bissau parliamentary election on the 10th March 2019. It reaffirms the need to maintain the consensus government in its current form and composition until the parliamentary elections of 10th March 2019.

32. The Authority expresses its appreciation to the countries and organisations which provided technical and financial support for the organisation of the parliamentary election in Guinea Bissau and urges the Commission to intensify technical support for a smooth electoral process. It calls on Guinea Bissau political stakeholders to remain faithful to their commitment to implement the roadmap adopted on 14th April 2018 in Lomé.

33. The Authority mandates the Chairman to impose sanctions, on the basis of proposals from the President of the Commission, against political stakeholders and others who obstruct the smooth conduct of the electoral process.

ON THE SITUATION IN TOGO

34. The Authority considered the report submitted by the Facilitators of the Inter-Togolese Political Dialogue, their Excellencies Mr Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana and Professor Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea, pursuant to the mandate entrusted to them and the roadmap adopted by the Authority at its 53rd ordinary session held in Lomé on 31st July 2018.

35. It commends the efforts of the two Facilitators aimed at ensuring that the stakeholders in the inter-Togolese dialogue respect and implement the roadmap,



in a spirit of openness and responsibility and notes with satisfaction the progress and achievements made.

36. Following discussions and deliberations, the Authority agrees as follows:

- a. It welcomes the effective conduct of free and transparent legislative elections on 20th December 2018, amidst peace and security, in line with the roadmap adopted on 31st July 2018;
- b. It deeply regrets the decision of the Coalition of Fourteen Opposition Political Parties (C14) not to take part in the legislative elections despite the considerable efforts by the Facilitators to promote inclusive elections with equal participation of all stakeholders in the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI).
- c. The Authority takes note of the information provided by the Togolese Government on the constitutional reforms and welcomes the firm commitment to ensure the swift adoption of constitutional reforms, through Parliament for the speedy implementation of these reforms.

37. The Authority encourages the Togolese Government to intensify the peace- and confidence-building measures between all political stakeholders with a view to easing the socio-political situation.

38. Furthermore, the Authority notes the readiness of the Togolese Government to organise local elections in 2019. It encourages the active involvement of all stakeholders to ensure that the elections are open, peaceful and inclusive, in keeping with democratic principles.

39. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to upholding constitutional order and strengthening democracy and the rule of law in Togo and the sub-region, in conformity with the values and standards enshrined in the relevant ECOWAS instruments, in particular, the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

40. It urges all Togolese political parties and stakeholders to work towards the maintenance of peace, stability and cohesion among all segments of the Togolese society, particularly by refraining from any act or conduct that may pose a threat to the achievement of full and lasting political normalcy, the peace and stability of Togo and the region.

41. The Authority urges the security forces to continue to demonstrate professionalism in their mission of maintaining order and ensuring the security of people and property.

42. It states its determination to continue to closely monitor developments in Togo to ensure that these decisions and recommendations are properly implemented.

43. The Authority calls on the ECOWAS Commission to continue to provide support and assistance to the Togolese Government and political stakeholders for the maintenance of security and consolidation of peace and stability in the country.

ON THE SITUATION IN THE GAMBIA

44. The Authority welcomes the positive developments in the political and security situation in the country and notes the inauguration of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission.

45. It calls on the Gambian Government to swiftly implement the security sector reform programme.

ON THE SITUATION IN MALI

46. The Authority lauds the smooth conduct of the presidential elections in Mali and congratulates H.E. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita on his re-election. It reiterates its full support and wishes him success in his efforts to stabilise the country.

47. The Authority notes with satisfaction the significant progress in the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali arising from the Algiers process and invites the Government to continue in this direction. To that end, it urges all political stakeholders to support the institutional reforms and respect the timetable for the elections and referendum to take place in 2019.

48. It instructs the Commission to take suitable measures to support the democratic process in Mali, as well as implementation of the Agreement and the roadmap of 22nd March 2018.

ON ELECTIONS IN THE REGION

49. The Authority notes with satisfaction the status of preparations for the general election in Nigeria on 16th February 2019 and the presidential election in Senegal on 24th February 2019. It urges the governments and relevant electoral



bodies to leave no stone unturned in ensuring that the elections are peaceful, free and transparent.

50. The Authority directs the Commission to provide the necessary support to the two Member States.

ON INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

51. The Authority welcomes the progress made in the implementation of measures envisaged by the institutional reform in conformity with the roadmap.

52. The Authority notes the efforts by the Commission to mobilise resources from the Community and urges Member States to comply with the Community Levy Protocol in order to avoid sanctions. In addition, the Authority invites ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies to redouble efforts to improve performance.

HARMONISATION OF ECOWAS POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

53. The Authority takes note of recommendations on the harmonisation of ECOWAS position in international organisations. It welcomes the proposals made by the Ministerial Committee. It also reiterates the importance for all Member States of the Community to give full support to candidates for regional and international statutory positions, with a view to boosting their chances.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

54. The Authority expresses gratitude to all its partners, for their contributions to the consolidation of peace and regional security and their support for the implementation of ECOWAS programmes.

55. It takes note of the proposed establishment of a Regional Stabilisation Fund to address stabilisation needs arising from pre-existing or newly emerging crises, conflicts and fragility in a timely manner. The Fund will also serve to strengthen ECOWAS' role as a regional organisation in the fields of stability and development, as well as to tackle migration related challenges including the reintegration of returnees. The Summit calls on development partners to provide financial support to the Fund.



56. The Summit welcomes the progress made in the construction of the new ECOWAS Commission headquarters with support from the Chinese Government.

57. The Heads of States took part in a high-level roundtable on electricity interconnection for sustainable development in Africa. The Authority underscores the benefits the region could derive from a fully interconnected electricity grid in West Africa, particularly in terms of reliable supply, lower electricity costs and the establishment of industrial, economic and social development hubs. The Authority notes the measures adopted under the African Energy Interconnection and Sustainable Development Alliance (AEISDA) launched by Professor Alpha Condé and urges ECOWAS Commission and Member States to consider the possibility of joining the initiative.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT SUMMIT

58. The date and venue of the next Summit will be communicated at a later date after consultation with the Heads of State and Government.

59. The Authority conveys its sincere congratulations to **H.E. Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR)**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for his unrelenting commitment to regional integration and exemplary leadership in steering the affairs of the Community

DONE AT ABUJA, THIS 22ND DAY OF DECEMBER 2018

THE AUTHORITY

