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ECOWAS COMMISSION



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**EIGHTY-SECOND ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE ECOWAS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

Abuja, 25 – 27 June, 2019

DRAFT REPORT

ECOWAS Commission
Abuja, June 2019

COMUNIDADE DOS ESTADOS
DA AFRICA DO OESTE

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
OF WEST AFRICAN STATES



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

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FINAL REPORT

ECOWAS Commission
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INTRODUCTION

1. The Eighty-Second Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers was held at the ECOWAS Commission Headquarters, Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, from 25th - 27th June, 2019.

2. The following Member States were represented:

- Republic of Benin;
- Burkina Faso;
- Republic of Cabo Verde;
- Republic of Cote d'Ivoire;
- The Gambia Republic;
- 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 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 Auditor General;
- West African Monetary Agency (WAMA);
- West African Monetary Institute (WAMI);
- West African Power Pool (WAPP); (Système D'Echanges D'Energie Electrique Ouest Africain)

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

ITEM A: OPENING SESSION

5. In his opening address, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mustapha L. Sulaiman, on behalf of the Chair of the Authority welcomed all participants.

6. He urged the Council Members to focus on the emerging challenges facing the region in terms of Peace and Security, Climate Change and Youth Unemployment, aside from the normal issues of economic and social development affecting the Community.

7. Furthermore, he highlighted the various items on the agenda for discussion and urged the participants to carefully consider them. He paid tribute to the President of the Commission and Management of ECOWAS Institutions for their tireless efforts in implementing the decisions of the Authority and Council.

8. He urged them to continue efforts to improve the effectiveness of the Institutions and ensure the prudent management of the Community's resources in order to achieve the fundamental goals of regional integration.

9. He concluded by wishing the participants a successful meeting and declared open the 82nd Ordinary Session of Council of Ministers.

10. In his welcome address, the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, on behalf of the Community, expressed gratitude to the Chair of Authority, His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, and the people and Government of Nigeria for his leadership and unflagging commitment to regional integration as well as the extended hospitality and excellent facilities provided for the smooth running of ECOWAS institutions.

11. He underscored the significance of the meeting being convened a few weeks after the 44th Anniversary of the signing of the Lagos Treaty establishing the Economic Community of West African States, whilst recalling the original objective being essentially economic, the revised Treaty of 24th July, 1993 has enhanced the role of the Community particularly with regard to political sphere and peace and security cooperation in our region.

12. The date was also evidence of the recognition by the Authority of the need to jointly tackle the challenges facing Member States in order to achieve stability in the region, ensure rapid growth and raise the living standards of the people.

13. He thereafter called on all participants to bring to bear the aspirations of the Founding Fathers of the Community during the course of the meeting and wished all participants fruitful deliberations.

Election of Bureau

14. The following Bureau was elected:

- | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------------------|
| ▪ Chair | - | Federal Republic of Nigeria |
| ▪ Rapporteurs | - | The Gambia |
| | - | Republic of Guinea Bissau |
| | - | Togolese Republic |

15. The following agenda was adopted after amendments:

I. **OPENING CEREMONY**

- Welcome remarks by the Chair of Council, **H.E. Ambassador Mustapha L. Sulaiman**, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- Statement by the President of the ECOWAS Commission, **H.E. Mr Jean-Claude Kassi Brou**;
 - a. Opening of session by the Chair of Council;
 - b. Election of Bureau;
 - c. Adoption of draft Agenda and Work Programme;
 - d. Swearing-in of three members of the Regulatory Council of ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA);

ITEMS FOR DECISION

- II. Presentation and consideration of the 2019 Interim Report of ECOWAS;
- III. Presentation and Consideration of a Report on the Financial Situation of the Community;
- IV. Presentation and consideration of the Auditor General's 2018 Annual Report;
- V. Presentation and consideration of Report of the 35th Audit Committee Meeting;
- VI. Presentation and consideration of the Final Report of the 25th Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee;
- VII. Presentation and Consideration of a Report on the preparation of the Coordination Meeting on the Division of Labour amongst the African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States;
- VIII. Memorandum relating to the revision of Regulation C/ REG.17/11/08 increasing the sitting allowance of Members of the ECOWAS Parliament and the responsibility allowance of Members occupying positions of responsibility at the Parliament;
- IX. Presentation and Consideration of the Memorandum on the ECOWAS 2018 Prize for Excellence Award;
- X. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the opening of New Representational Offices in ECOWAS Member States;
- XI. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the ECOWAS Regional Human Capital Development Strategy and the High-level dialogue on Human Capital Development in West Africa;

- XII. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum relating to the Secondment of Community Officials to Governments of Member States;
- XIII. Presentation and Consideration of the Status of Tasks Assigned by the 80th and 81st Ordinary Sessions of the Council of Ministers;
- XIV. Presentation and Consideration of the Draft Agenda of the 55th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government

ITEMS FOR ENDORSEMENT

- XV. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Report of Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Mines on the Regional Mining Code;
- XVI. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Report of Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Women Affairs and Child Protection on the ECOWAS Child Policy, Strategic Action Plan and Roadmap on Prevention and Response to Child Marriage;
- XVII. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Report of Meeting of Ministers responsible for Drug Control of ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania;
- XVIII. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Report of Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Tourism on ECOWAS Regional Policy and ECOTOUR Action Plan;
- XIX. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum relating to Hosting of the Headquarters of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Authority;
- XX. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Harmonisation of ECOWAS Position in International Organisations;

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- XXI. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Status of Implementation of the Regulation on Roaming on Public Mobile Telecommunications Networks in the ECOWAS Region;
- XXII. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum providing an Update on the Institutional Reform Process;
- XXIII. Memorandum of the ECOWAS Parliament on Adoption of the Dakar Declaration on ECOWAS Single Currency;
- XXIV. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Report of the Ad-hoc Ministerial Meeting on the design of the new Headquarters of the ECOWAS Commission;

- XXV. Presentation and Consideration of the Preliminary Report of the Forensic Audit of ECOWAS Institution and Agencies;
- XXVI. Any Other Business;
- XXVII. Adoption of Report;
- XXVIII. Closing Ceremony;
 - Closing Remarks by the Chair of Council;
 - ECOWAS Anthem.
- **Swearing-in of three members of the Regulatory Council of ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA)**

16. Following the introduction of the new members of the Regulatory Council of ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA) by the President of the Commission, the President of the Community Court of Justice Honourable Justice Edward Asante administered the oath of office to the members. They are as follows:

Council Member	Position on Council
Professor Honoré Bogler Djama Segui,	Chairman of Council
Dr Haliru Dikko	Member of Council
Mr Aly Mar Ndiaye	Member of Council

17. Council received the oath of office sworn to by the members and enjoined the members to discharge their duties to the best of their ability.

OUTCOME OF DELIBERATIONS

Item II: Presentation and Consideration of the 2019 Interim Report of ECOWAS

18. In his presentation, the President of the Commission outlined the state of the Community as at the end of May 2019. The main points raised were as follows:

19. Concerning the economic performance of Member States, efforts were made towards the consolidation of economic growth in the region which rose to 3.1% in 2018, from 2.4% in 2017. It should be noted that nine Member States recorded economic growth rates higher than 3%.

20. However, challenges were encountered regarding compliance with convergence criteria in 2018: only 2 countries met all the primary criteria in 2018, compared to four (4) in 2017. Improvement in this area is essential to achieve the needed objective.

21. With respect to the ECOWAS Single Currency programme, efforts were focused on the implementation of the Roadmap activities. Main achievements in

this regard were the finalisation of work on the exchange rate regime, monetary policy framework, model of the future ECOWAS Central Bank, name and symbol of the ECOWAS single currency. Efforts will continue to be made to fast-track implementation of the Roadmap activities for the creation of the single currency.

22. In the area of peace and security, there was an increase in terrorist attacks and inter-communal clashes, particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and northern Nigeria. The situation is characterised by an increase of (i) 65% in the attacks during the first five months of the year, (ii) 57% increase in the number of victims and (iii) 14.6% rise in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons between December 2018 and the end of March 2019.

23. Furthermore, the phenomenon has spread to coastal countries and the terrorists have changed their modus operandi by (i) manipulating inter-communal clashes and (ii) increasing attacks against religious targets.

24. Against this backdrop, it is proposed that a Summit of Heads of State be convened in 2019 in Burkina Faso to discuss security and counter-terrorism issues in the region. It will reconsider the different initiatives and define the priorities.

25. In the area of trade, it was noted that intra-community trade grew by 4.5% in 2018. However, the share of intra-community trade in 2018 was 10%, compared to 11% in 2017. Some challenges were encountered in the implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation System (ETLS) involving both tariff and non-tariff barriers. To address these, efforts have been made to improve the ETLS management through the adoption, in December 2018, of the Supplementary Act establishing the Community rules of origin and procedures applicable to goods originating in ECOWAS. It is important that Member States make efforts to accelerated implementation of the ETLS.

26. Considerable progress was made in the free movement of persons and goods, including the biometric passport, visa-free travel and introduction of the biometric ID card by for Member States. However, there remain several obstacles. To address these, it is necessary to (i) remove the obstacles along the corridors and (ii) fast-track the introduction of the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card.

27. Regarding agriculture, the 2018-2019 crop year was generally satisfactory with (i) the production of 73.2 million tonnes of cereal, representing an increase of 6.6%; (ii) ample supply of foodstuff; and (iii) falling cereal prices. The food and nutritional situation, however, is difficult, with 4.8 million people in need of food and nutritional aid in the region at the end of April 2019. It is in this context, and under the ECOWAS Regional Reserve, that 18,581 tonnes of local cereal (millet, sorghum, maize and rice) were donated to Member States.

28. In the area of energy, the goal is to increase regional electricity generation from 15.3GW to 21.3GW by 2022. In that respect, priority projects are being implemented by the West African Power Pool (WAPP). Thus, one project has been

completed, one is on course to be completed in 2019 and four projects will be completed in 2020.

29. Under infrastructure development, major projects are being undertaken. Thus, (i) engineering studies are underway for the Abidjan-Lagos highway corridor development programme (Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire), (ii) funding requests for studies on the Praia-Dakar-Abidjan highway development programme are being prepared (iii) two Joint Border Posts (JBP) have been completed, four are under construction and funding is being sought for one.

30. In the health sector, implementation of key activities have continued and are being strengthened to improve the state of health in the region. These consist of: (i) boosting the capacity of 47 laboratories and training of 322 laboratory technicians; (ii) technical and financial support to Burkina Faso for the meningitis and Lassa fever outbreaks; (iii) treatment for 6 million children (3 to 59 months) along the borders of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger; (iv) enhanced training of medical personnel with the establishment of 3 centres of excellence for midwives.

31. Regarding international cooperation, ECOWAS actively participated in the preparations for the first African Union – Regional Economic Communities Summit expected to take place in Niamey from 7 to 8 July 2019. To that end, it participated in meetings on the distribution of tasks to the African Union Commission, RECs and Member States.

32. The President of the ECOWAS Commission concluded by stating that in a relatively difficult environment, Member States' economies have demonstrated resilience. However, the region is faced with major security challenges (terrorist attacks and inter-communal clashes). Given these challenges, it is necessary, in addition to fast-tracking programme implementation, to:

- Improve strategies to fight insecurity,
- Strengthen solidarity among countries in order to pool the means for the prevention and fight against insecurity;
- Boost cooperation and synergy among all countries – a collective effort necessary to advance the integration agenda.

33. Council congratulated the President of the Commission on the quality of the report and sought clarifications on a number of issues namely, the ECOWAS Regional Stabilisation and Solidarity Fund, ECOWAS Single Currency Programme and the Payment and Settlement Systems.

34. Following clarifications, Council made the following recommendations:

- The Commission should extend the implementation of the Stabilisation Fund to the Sahel Countries;
- The Commission should engage with Africa Export and Import Bank (AFREXIM Bank) in order to learn from their experience in developing the payment system for the African Union;

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Item III: Presentation and consideration of a Report on the Financial Situation of the Community

35. The Commission reported that the 81st Ordinary Session of Council held in Abuja on 14-15 December 2018 considered and approved a Community budget of UA313,036,965 for fiscal year 2019, as recommended by the Administration and Finance Committee. The approved budget, which is balanced in Income and Expenditure is as follows:

Table 1: INCOME

CHAPTER	AMOUNT (UA)	%
Community Levy	240,274,589	76.76%
Arrears of Community Levy Proceeds	29,803,403	9.52%
Arrears of Contribution	1,768,710	0.57%
Other Income	198,773	0.06%
External Funding	40,991,490	13.09%
TOTAL	313,036,965	100.00%

36. The Community Levy continues to be the largest source of revenue, comprising 76.76% of the approved Income for 2019. In addition, Institutions continue to attract the highest allocation of community funds constituting 82.7% of the Community's expenditure. In addition Peace & Security continues to utilize a significant portion of the Community Resources with an allocation of about 10% of the Community's approved budget.

37. Out of the approved budget of UA313,036,965, UA42,680,564 or 13.6% had been utilized as at 31st May 2019. As at 31st May 2019, a total of UA28,317,890 had been recorded as Community Levy proceeds from Member States, representing 20.3% of the approved budget under this income category. The Commission continues to embark on high level and technical reconciliation missions to Member States to address strategic issues concerning the implementation of the protocol, and ratify proceeds received into the Levy accounts.

38. The Community continues to enjoy the support of Development Partners in the various sectors it is involved in in fostering regional integration. To this effect, a total of UA8, 284,575 was received during the period under review.

39. The Community Institutions reported the following achievements:

- Development of Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the adaptation of Member States postal services;
- Preparation of the donor roundtable for the financing of Community priority projects;
- Formulation of National Bioenergy policies;

- Development of Solar and Hydro;
- Access to reliable electricity supply in Mali, Guinea Bissau, and the Gambia;
- Participation and representation of the population in decision making;
- Sensitization & outreach missions to Liberia, Sierra Leone & Cape Verde;
- 46 Sessions of the Court of Justice, 19 Judgements and 4 Rulings;
- Training of Emergency Medical Teams and field epidemiologists;
- Organization of surgical camps;
- Adoption of roadmap and capacity building for drug registration harmonization;
- Providing family planning products to Member States;
- Finalization and adoption of the typologies report on money laundering and terrorist financing related to the extractive industries sector and the mining sector in West Africa;
- Build capabilities of GIABA Member States in the fight against the financing of terrorism.

40. During the period under review, reforms pertaining to the financial management of the Community's resources continue to be implemented through:

- Preparation for the EU 9 Pillars Assessment;
- Completion of Governance, Risk & Compliance;
- Strengthening of the Internal Control Environment with the newly approved Financial Regulation;
- Conclusion of the implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS);
- ECOLink Implementation: all modules to be completed.

41. Following the presentation, Council expressed concerns at the weak level of Community Levy receipts for the period under review and urged Member States to faithfully implement the provisions of the Community Levy Protocol. It further urged the Commission to engage with Member States with a view to have complete reconciliation to ensure accuracy of records relating to levy assessments and receipts.

Item IV: Presentation and Consideration of the Auditor General's 2018 Annual Report

42. The Auditor General of ECOWAS Institutions presented the first full-year Annual Report to the Council of Ministers, since the Office was accorded the status of an independent Institution with Operational, Administrative and Functional Autonomy.

43. The report was in two parts. Part A outlined issues of the core Assurance and Oversight Mandate of the office. It gave detailed accomplishments of Audits, Inspections, Investigations and other such engagements in its assigned duty to provide Council with the sufficient scope and quality of assurances on all facets of Community operations. Management and key staff of all Institutions other than the

Commission have been equipped with risk awareness skills and methodologies, in preparation for Management to rightfully take-over first line Control responsibility in their respective institutions.

44. Part B of the report detailed performance against the 2018 Council-approved budget. It also outlined the low Community Levy mobilization on programme implementation. Staff composition and their geographic spread were also presented, highlighting the skewness of Male staff population to females, which currently stands at 72% Male and only 28% Females.

45. The report also highlighted the significant accomplishment of the new office within the 2019 financial year. In line with regulations, will be reported on in greater detail in the 2019 mid-year report:

- a) Risk Assessment and Risk Management Trainings carried out for Managements and key staff of Parliament, GIABA, WAHO, ECREEE, EGDC, WRCC, EYSDC, Early Warning Centre and Permanent Representative Office in Burkina Faso
- b) Human Resource and Procurement Audits of Parliament, ECREEE, GIABA and EGDC completed.
- c) Inspection of Offices in Liberia, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Addis Ababa, Brussels and New York completed.
- d) Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC) training for Staff completed and the module has gone-live
- e) The Association of Supreme Audit Institutions of West Africa (ECASAI) inaugurated; and a platform is currently operational for Auditors General and analogous designations in other ECOWAS Member States activated.
- f) Audit Programme for Information Systems Audit developed.
- g) A dedicated Electronic Platform to host all Office of the Auditor General (OAG) documents and Reports, to guarantee confidentiality and afford restricted access to authorized staff and Audit Committee Members operationalized.

46. Council commended the superior quality of report and appreciated the depth, scope and substance reported on. After extensive deliberations, Council adopted the report and endorsed the following recommendations:

- a. Council directed Management of the Commission to expedite staff recruitment for the Office of the Auditor General and to conclude same before the 83rd Ordinary Session of Council. Management is further required to make a specific report on this directive at its 83rd Session.
- b. Council directed Management of the Commission to take urgent steps to develop the Schedule of Authorities, by granting a special dispensation to recruit a Consultant to assist in the preparation of this "Authority Schedule".

- c. Council directed Management to complete all processes for the handing over of the Control function by the 31st of December 2019. Council requested Management of the Commission to expedite the recruitment of key staff required for the handing over of the Control function, especially Finance and General Administration and Conference by the end of September, 2019
- d. Council directed Management to ensure full compliance with the Staff Regulations on notification of Contract staff whose tenures are due to expire to avoid obligatory extensions, which default compulsory extension is stipulated by the staff Regulations.
- e. Council directed Management to enforce the Term Limit of ECOWAS Representatives of the President of the Commission for two-years renewable only once upon satisfactory performance.
- f. Council granted approval for the establishment of a Compliance Division as a post-compliance function with a maximum staff strength of four (4) to assist the President and the Commissioner of Finance in the discharge of their duties as the key supervisors of ECOWAS Institutions and their Offices, Agencies, Bureaux and Centres.
- g. Council directed the Commission to notify Member States with outstanding Community Levy obligations, concurrently designating such outstandings in Units of Account (UA) and US dollars (\$) with effect from 1st January 2019. Member States should be required to pay off these obligations in US dollars as per notifications, or its equivalence of the date of the invoice notice.
- h. Council encouraged Member States to pay Community Levy on time in line with requirements of the Protocol to avoid an accumulation of Arrears on account of exchange rate movements.
- i. Council granted approval to source staff from ECOWAS Institutions and secondment of competent human resources from ECASAI pool to the OAG.

Item V: Presentation and consideration of Report of the 35th Audit Committee Meeting

47. During his presentation, the Chairman of the Audit Committee presented the implementation status of the Work plan of the Office of the Auditor General. He noted that the plan was implemented up to the rate of 77% of activities planned for the first half of 2019. He also encouraged the Auditor General and his team to continue in this manner in order to consolidate the good results thus far achieved.

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48. He also provided an update on the work of the External Auditor, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) on the Audit of the Financial Statements of the Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies for 2016 and 2017.

49. He noted that in accordance with directives of the 81st Session of Council, the accounts for the 2016 and 2017 budget years have been prepared and certified by the external auditor, PwC, with the exception of the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) and the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA).

50. Furthermore, the Audit Committee recommended that Council, in line with Article 68 paragraph 5 of the 2009 Financial Regulations, approve the accounts for the 2016 and 2017 budget years as certified by the External Auditor PWC, for the following institutions and agencies:

1. ECOWAS Commission;
2. ECOWAS Community Parliament;
3. Community Court of Justice;
4. West African Health Organisation (WAHO);
5. Inter-governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA);
6. ECOWAS Project Preparation and Development Unit;
7. ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC)
8. ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre (EYSDC);
9. Water Resources Coordination Centre (WRCC);

51. He also asked Council to direct the Commissioner of Finance, to take all measures in order to accelerate the process and get the outstanding accounts, i.e. those of ERERA and ECREEE. The Audit Committee urged Council to recommend to the Authority of Heads of State and Government, to extend the tenure of the external auditor PWC for a two year period, 2018 and 2019, in line with Article 75 paragraph 1 of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty.

52. Following deliberations, the Council adopted the Report of the Audit Committee and approved the 2016 and 2017 audited financial statements of Community Institutions and Specialised Agencies as certified by the External Auditors.

Item VI: Presentation and Consideration of the Final Report of the 25th Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee

53. The final report of the 25th meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee was presented by the Chair of the Committee, Mr. Musa Nuhu. The report covered the following;

- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of Status of Tasks Assigned to Community Institutions by the 24th Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee as well as Outstanding Tasks from the 22nd and 23rd AFC;
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of a Report on the financial situation of the Community;
- ❖ Consideration of Memorandum and Draft Regulation on Special Funds and Accounts;
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum on the Remuneration of the Speaker and Members of the ECOWAS Parliament;
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum requesting Supplementary Budget for the Commission (ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority, Human Capital Development, First Ladies Event on Girl Early Marriage;
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of a Report on implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Stabilisation Fund;
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of a Report on Recruitment into the approved sixty-eight (68) Vacant Positions;
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of an Activity Report on Funding of NGOs;
- ❖ Presentation of the Auditor General's 2018 Annual Report.

54. Council approved and recommended the report and the recommendations contained therein to Authority and directed to:

Align the recommendation contained in paragraph 63 (d) of the AFC Report with the provisions of Article 12 of the current ECOWAS Staff Regulations.

Item VII: Presentation and Consideration of a Report on the preparation of the Coordination Meeting on the Division of Labour amongst the African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States

55. The objectives of the institutional reform of the African Union (AU), initiated in January 2017 by the 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, were twofold. It intends to redefine the position of the AU Commission with regard to the needs of Member States and the continent while focusing on their priorities; and replace the regular June-July Summit with a coordination meeting between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). This forum is expected to ensure better working relations among the AU, RECs and Member States through the establishment of an effective division of

labour, in consonance with the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity enshrined in the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC).

56. In this respect, the first half-yearly coordination meeting to be held in Niamey (following the meeting of AU and REC Executives) will focus on the division of labour between the AU and RECs. It will define the powers exclusively delegated to the African Union and RECs by Member States, as well as the powers shared between the AU and RECs. This segregation of duties will ensure efficiency and effectiveness in policy planning and development, policy adoption and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, partnership and joint resource mobilisation.

57. The following issues will be considered:

- i. restructuring of the AU's institutional architecture to ensure that it reflects current needs, and ensure that RECs are an integral part thereof;
- ii. multiple membership of Member States in RECs, which is a contentious issue for these Member States and requires finding quick solutions as it may be an obstacle to regional integration;
- iii. solution to operational issues that impede infrastructure development due to the absence of a banking system with continental scope to guarantee Member States' borrowing to finance their infrastructure projects;
- iv. systematic review of previous protocols in order to identify and correct weaknesses contained therein;
- v. institutionalisation of the AU-REC meeting as a platform for interaction and exchange;
- vi. effective involvement of RECs in strategic thinking at continental level;
- vii. alignment and linkage between REC and AUC departments to ensure optimum coordination;
- viii. statutory representation of the African Union to RECs and vice versa;
- ix. strengthening cooperation between the AU and RECs through specific legal instruments.

58. Council approved and recommended the report presented to Authority.

Item VIII: Memorandum relating to the revision of Regulation C/REG.17/11/08 increasing the sitting allowance of Members of the ECOWAS Parliament and the responsibility allowance of Members occupying positions of responsibility at the Parliament

59. The memorandum presented by the ECOWAS Parliament recalled that current allowances being paid to the Parliamentarians were approved more than eleven years ago. Over time the increased cost of living particularly in Abuja where the most of the activities of the Parliament take place has made the current allowances inadequate. Parliament further recalled that the adoption of the Supplementary Act enhancing its powers has led to an increase in its activities covering amongst others:

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- Involvement in the adoption of the Community Budget;
- Oversight of ECOWAS programmes and agencies;
- Parliamentary Mediation;
- Elections Observation;
- Participation in ECOWAS statutory meetings, etc.

60. It therefore concluded the presentation by requesting for an upward review of the current allowances as represented in the table below pending the finalisation of the modalities for payment of Parliamentary allowances as provided in Supplementary Act A/SA.1/12/16, enhancing the powers of the ECOWAS Parliament.

<u>Allowance</u>	<u>Current Rates (\$)</u>	<u>Requested Rates (\$)</u>
Attendance Allowance (All Parliamentarians)	150 (per sitting)	250 (per sitting)
Responsibility Allowance		
Speaker	2,760 (monthly)	3,760 (monthly)
Deputy Speakers	2,070 (monthly)	3,070 (monthly)
Chairmen of Committees	1,380 (monthly)	2,380 (monthly)
Deputy Chairmen and Rapporteurs	1,035 (monthly)	2,035 (monthly)

61. Following discussions of the memorandum, Council decided that the matter relating to increase in allowances be deferred for a period of two (2) years until the financial situation of the Community improves.

Item IX: Presentation and Consideration of the Memorandum on the Award of the 2018 ECOWAS Prize for Excellence

62. At the 51st session of the Authority held in June 2017, the Heads of State and Government adopted the ECOWAS Prize for Excellence, by virtue of Decision A/DEC.2/06/17 establishing the criteria and procedures for the award of the ECOWAS Prize for Excellence.

63. The "ECOWAS PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE" seeks to recognise excellence and honour individuals or legal entities who through their activities, creativity and service have immensely contributed to promoting regional integration, peace and socio-economic development in the ECOWAS region.

64. The Prize for Excellence comprises 3 categories:

- Category 1: Award for Science and Technology, Arts and Literature (Award for Science and Technology: USD 25,000; USD 25,000; Award for Arts: USD 15,000; Award for Literature: USD 10,000).
- Category 2: Honorary Award for Distinguished Personalities (USD 20,000);

- Category 3: Award for Deserving Citizens of the Community (USD 10,000).

65. Every award winner shall receive, in addition to the cash award, a plaque and/or a certificate of acknowledgement or honour.

1. The ECOWAS Prize for Excellence shall be presented to the winners by the current Chair of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, during an official ceremony.
2. A jury appointed by the President of the Commission met from 22 to 25 January 2019 to review nominations. At the end of its deliberations, the Jury awarded the Prize for Excellence to the following three winners:
 - Dr Kofi Annan of Ghana as the posthumous winner of the **Honorary Award for Distinguished Personalities**, for his immense contribution to the objectives of ECOWAS in the area of Security, Peace and Socio-Economic Development;
 - Dr Ameyo Adadevoh of Nigeria as the posthumous winner of the **Award for Deserving Citizens of the Community**, for her sacrifice and selflessness to the Community, during the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease;
 - Mrs Germaine Acogny of Senegal as the winner of the **Arts and Literature Award**, for the quality and richness of her artistic production recognised in several ECOWAS countries, contribution to the training of West African youth in choreography and the wide dissemination of her work in her country, the region and the world.

66. Council approved and recommended the memorandum and recommended the nominated awardees to the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

Item X: Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Opening of Representational Offices in ECOWAS Member States

67. In order to ensure greater visibility for ECOWAS, more effective follow-up of the implementation of Community texts and to promote its activities which go beyond peace and security matters, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government at its 44th ordinary session of 29 March 2014, decided to establish representations in Member States (A/DEC.9/03/14). These offices should also serve as diplomatic missions.

68. The representations are to contribute to: (i) strengthening ECOWAS' presence and boosting its visibility in Member States, (ii) promoting relations between Member States and ECOWAS institutions and other development partners, (iii) serving as an interface among different national stakeholders and ECOWAS institutions and agencies for the promotion, appropriation and implementation of the regional integration programme, (iv) improving and facilitating the coordination and implementation of regional programmes of the diplomatic missions accredited to ECOWAS and relations with Member States and

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other partners by providing the necessary follow-up, and (v) supporting the efforts of Member States in the achievement of ECOWAS objectives.

69. In order to ensure greater visibility for ECOWAS in Member States and to actualise the will of the Heads of State to move from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of People, and taking into account the scheduling arising from the decision of the 44th Ordinary Session of the Authority (A/DEC.9/03/14), it is expected that in the course of the year, 3 new representations will be opened respectively in Niger, Sierra Leone and Ghana (or Benin). Ghana had expressed reservations regarding hosting an ECOWAS representation at the 24th Ordinary Session of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) of November 2018.

70. The funds for the opening of the three offices were included in the 2019 Budget of the Commission adopted by the 24th Ordinary Session of AFC in December 2018, amounting to One Hundred Thousand Units of Account (UA 100 000) per representation. Given the importance of opening the ECOWAS representations, the Commission requests the approval of Council for the establishment of ECOWAS representations in Niger, Sierra Leone and Benin for which the relevant funding is available.

71. Following presentation and clarifications provided, Council approved and recommended the memorandum to the Authority

Item XI: Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum on the ECOWAS Regional Human Capital Development Strategy and the High-level dialogue on human capital development in West Africa

72. The memorandum presented by the Commission stated that human capital being the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal and social and economic well-being, is of critical importance to the realization of the ECOWAS vision.

73. It was reported that most international organisation such as the World Bank and the UNDP and other development partners are supporting Human Capital Development Strategies around the world. Some ECOWAS member-states have now included the development of Human Capital in their national plans and Nigeria have their human development strategy already prepared and is being implemented.

74. The memorandum using Nigeria as a proxy, the ECOWAS Commission, in close collaboration with the West African Health Organisation are developing a Human Capital Strategy for the West African region, with the financial support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The ECOWAS Commission has defined the following 3 priority thematic areas for the advancement of the human capital agenda in the region:

- Health and Nutrition

- Education, Skills and Labour participation
- Entrepreneurship, Financial inclusion and Digital payments.

75. The Commission informed Council that a High Level Dialogue to promote the ECOWAS Human Capital Strategy, will be held in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly meeting in September 2019 which will bring together, the ECOWAS Heads of State, the UN Secretary General, the President of the African Development Bank and other development partners as well as the Private Sector. Mr Bill Gates, President of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will be invited to attend.

76. Council of Ministers endorsed the memorandum of the Human Capital Strategy that was recommended for their approval by the Administration and Finance Committee. It further recommended for approval by the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, the participation of ECOWAS at a High Level Dialogue on Human Capital Strategy in the West African region on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2019; the establishment of an ECOWAS Heads of State and First Ladies Platform on Nutrition that will be aligned with the AfDB's African Leaders for Nutrition initiative and other global and regional initiatives on nutrition; and the preparation of a Declaration on Human Capital in the West African region of the Authority in June/July 2020.

Item XII: Presentation and Consideration of the Memorandum relating to the Secondment of Community Officials to Governments of Member States

77. The Commission presented a memorandum on the issue of modalities of secondment of Community officials to Governments of Member States upon request, and seek Council's approval to authorise such secondment. It stated that Community officials are sometimes invited by ECOWAS Member States, with the support of the Commission, to take on specific roles at national level for a given period of time or fill senior administrative positions.

78. The practical arrangements for secondment are laid down in accordance with the regulations governing each institution for the benefit of the Institution and the requesting State. However, the current ECOWAS Staff Regulations did not specify the practical arrangements.

79. In the light of this lack of practical arrangements for secondment, the ECOWAS Commission proposes to grant a two (2) year period, renewable once. Furthermore, the secondment should be in the interest of the Community and the requesting Member State. In any event, the secondment should come at no cost to ECOWAS.

80. The Commission concluded its memorandum by proposing to the Council of Ministers to authorise the implementation of practical arrangements above for the secondment of Community officials to Member States upon request, pending the

adoption of the ECOWAS Staff Regulations at the end of 2019. The new Staff Regulations will take due account of these arrangements.

81. After presentation, Council members sought and received clarifications relating to the staff regulations and the upcoming staff skills audit. It then recommended that the Commission deepen the memorandum to provide more technical details and resubmit the memo at the next Ordinary Session of Council.

Item XIII: Presentation and Consideration of the Status of Tasks Assigned by the 80th and 81st Ordinary Sessions of the Council of Ministers

82. The Vice-President presented the status report on the tasks assigned by the 81st Council of Ministers held in Abuja in November 2018. In her report, the Vice-President gave implementation status on the following:

- Operationalization of the Regional Radio;
- The organisation of the high level conference on Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Services;
- The organisation of a high level meeting on migration;
- Increase in the visibility of the work of ECOWAS institutions and agencies;
- The Staff Skills Audit;
- Efforts made to achieve gender parity and equitable geographic distributions in staffing;
- The Forensic Audit of the ECOWAS Community Institutions and Specialised Agencies;
- The submission of a detailed report by the Auditor General.

83. After presentation, Council adopted the report.

Item XIV: Presentation and Consideration and Adoption of Draft Agenda of the 55th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government

84. The Commission presented the Draft Agenda of the Fifty-fifth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government and the agenda was adopted after consideration and amendments.

Item XV: Presentation and consideration of a Memorandum on the Report of Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Mines on the Regional Mining Code

85. The Chairperson of the Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Mines, presented the report of the fourth meeting of Ministers of Mines held in Accra, Ghana, on 30th May, 2019. The main objective of the meeting was the adoption of the draft Supplementary Act on the Mining Code and its Implementation Strategy. Two other items were also discussed, namely artisanal and small-scale mining and ratification of the Statutes of the African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC) of the African Union.

86. The Mining Code sets out rules on institutional structures, permits and licences, tax system, sector governance, local content, environmental protection, gender among other issues. The Code also aims above all to ensure that affected populations and communities benefit from revenues accrued from mining operations.

87. After clarifications were provided on the criminal sanctions on the mining code, Council approved and recommended the Report and recommendations contained therein. Council further agreed to recommend the Draft Supplementary Act on the ECOWAS Mining Code and its Implementation Strategy for the approval of the Authority of Heads of State and Government at its next session.

Item XVI: Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Report of Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Women Affairs and Child Protection on the ECOWAS Child Policy, Strategic Action Plan and Roadmap on Prevention and Response to Child Marriage

88. The Report of the Meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Women Affairs and Child Protection which held on the 25th of January 2019 and adopted the ECOWAS Child Policy and Strategic Plan of Action (2019 to 2030), ECOWAS Roadmap on Prevention and Response to Child Marriage (2019 to 2030) and Political Declaration and Common Position against Child Marriage, was presented to Council by the Honourable Minister of Family and Social Affairs of the Republic of Guinea.

89. In her presentation, she indicated that the key documents adopted during the Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Women Affairs and Child Protection include:

- i. ECOWAS Child Policy and Strategic Plan of Action (2019 to 2030);
- ii. ECOWAS Roadmap on Prevention and Response to Child Marriage;
- iii. ECOWAS Political Declaration and Common Position Against Child Marriage.

90. The Council of Ministers approved the Report of the Meeting of the Ministers in Charge of Women Affairs and Child Protection and formally recommended the aforementioned texts to the Authority of Heads of State for approval.

Item XVII: Presentation and consideration of a Memorandum on the Report of Meeting of Ministers responsible for Drug Control of ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania

91. The Honourable Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Hon. Amin Edward Solokou presented the key findings of the regional report on illicit drug seizures and drug treatment data (2014-2017) to Council. The data in the report showed cannabis accounting for the largest quantity of drug seized and more than half (56.9%) of the people who presented for substance use treatment in health/rehabilitation services indicated cannabis as the principal substance of use.

Cocaine and Heroin are the second and third most commonly reported drug seized in West Africa from 2014 to 2017.

92. Alcohol was the second most commonly reported principal substance of use while cocaine remains the most commonly used illicit drug stimulant in West Africa. A significant increase in trend of cocaine use was observed from 2014 to 2017.

93. Furthermore, the most commonly used illicit opioid is heroin, which is often smoked, snorted or injected. Although heroin and other opioid use are relatively rare, they are most commonly associated with more harmful effects of drug use and this calls for greater surveillance for synthetic opioid use in West Africa.

94. The non-medical use of pharmaceutical opioids including tramadol is becoming an alarming phenomenon in West Africa. Similarly, increase in seizures of codeine containing cough mixtures in some countries in West Africa promotes non-medical use of prescription opiates.

95. The Ministers in charge of Drug Control of ECOWAS and Mauritania adopted the recommendations contained in the two reports, and in addition, made the following two specific recommendations:

- a. Advocated for increased funding and capacity building for structures for law enforcement, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social re-integration, as well as harm reduction for people who use drugs.
- b. Strongly urged Member States to promote "Zero Tolerance" on drug trafficking and to encourage medical treatment and to seek alternative measures for people who use drugs.

96. The Council of Ministers, approved and recommended the Report and the recommendations contained therein to the Authority.

Item XVIII: Presentation and consideration of a Memorandum on the Report of Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Tourism on ECOWAS Regional Policy and ECOTOUR Action Plan

97. The Commission in its presentation, stated that the Regional Tourism Policy aims at positioning ECOWAS as an attractive and competitive tourist destination. It is a vital link in the Vision 2020 which promotes the "transformation of an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of people".

98. In conformity with the Revised Treaty, the general objective of the regional tourism policy is to ensure the harmonious and viable development of tourism, in order to generate employment for young people, increase private sector participation through the development of prosperous and sustainable companies, thereby contributing to the economic development of ECOWAS.

99. The implementation of the 2019 – 2029 ECOTOUR Action Plan is envisaged for the ECOWAS region to annually, earn over 20 billion dollars as well as provide 8 million direct jobs by receiving an estimated record number of 20 million visitors.

100. The strategy is based on 5 programmes and 9 specific objectives which are: - 1) Protect the tourism offer; 2) Develop the tourism offer; 3) Enhance local and regional products; 4) Build the capacity of stakeholders; 5) Strengthen the destination's brand in the outbound tourism markets; 6) Pool together resources for the promotion of the market; 7) Promote intra-regional tourism; 8) Harmonise the sector's legal and institutional environment, and; 9) Establish a regional tourism statistics system.

101. The report of the meeting of Ministers which took place in Bamako on 30 November 2018, contained recommendations to Member States, the ECOWAS Commission and the private sector. The meeting then adopted the documents and recommended same for the approval of Council.

102. Council approved and recommended the ECOWAS Regional Tourism Policy (ECOTOUR) as well as its accompanying 2019 – 2029 Action Plan to the Authority.

Item XIX: Presentation and consideration of a Memorandum relating to Hosting of the Headquarters of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Authority

103. The Acting Minister of Power, Works and Housing of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Mr. Mohammed Bukar, presented an Information Memorandum on the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Project. He recalled that the project is being implemented in line with the Corridor Treaty signed by the Heads of State and Government of Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo, in March 2014, on the margins of the 43rd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government.

104. The objective is to transform the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor into a 6-Lane Dual-Carriage Multinational Highway to boost Economic Development. The project is supervised by a Steering Committee comprising of the Ministers in-charge of Infrastructure and chaired by the Sector Minister of Nigeria.

105. Council was informed that Article two (2) and Article nine (9) of the Treaty for the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor provides for the creation of an **Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Management Authority** (ALCoMA) with the responsibility to construct, manage and operate the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor on behalf of the five (5) Corridor Member States.

106. In accordance with ECOWAS Regulation C/REC/15/11/9 dated November 21st, 2009, establishing the Criteria for selecting the Countries to host ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies Headquarters, four (4) of the Corridor Countries (Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo) submitted bids to host the Headquarters of ALCoMA.

107. After the presentation, Council took note of the report and recommended to the Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, to initiate Consultations with Heads of State and Government of the other Corridor Member States (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo) to consider and select the host country for the headquarters of ALCoMA.

Item XX: Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the harmonization of ECOWAS position in International Organizations

108. The Commission in its presentation stated that, to harmonize and give more chances to ECOWAS Member States applications to vacant positions in regional and international organisations, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government requested Member States applying for these positions to submit their candidatures to the Chair of the Council of Ministers for arbitration. This submissions are to enable the Chairperson of Council to come up with single candidatures for different positions, and subsequently set up in 2016 a 5-member Ministerial Committee, made up of Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal, which agreed on criteria for selecting candidates and emphasized on the importance for all countries of the Community to give full support to successful candidates.

109. As of 20th June 2019, request for support for 23 positions have been recorded. After due consultation some countries have withdrawn their candidacy for positions they were interested in, in order to give more chance to ECOWAS region to be selected Consequently, only the position for the Chairperson of the African Union for the 2022 – 2023 period, for which two (2) countries (Togo and Senegal) have requested support from ECOWAS member states will be subject to harmonization after consultation with the applicants.

110. To facilitate its work, the Committee pleads with the Member States to (i) systematically notify to the ECOWAS Commission their applications to international and regional positions, as well as their requests for the Community support; and to (ii) provide accurate and complete information regarding the positions (i.e. CV, election dates, etc.).

111. Council took note of the memorandum.

Item XXI: Memorandum on the Status of implementation of the Regulation on Roaming on Public Mobile Telecommunications Networks in the ECOWAS Region

112. The ECOWAS Commission presented the status of the implementation of the Regulation ECOWAS regulation on mobile roaming.

113. The Regulation No C/REG.21/12/17 on Roaming on Public Mobile Communications Networks in the ECOWAS Region was approved by the Council

of Ministers in December 2017. The obligations of the various stakeholders in the implementation of the regulation are spelt out in Articles 14, 15, 16 and 17 of the Regulation.

114. The harmonized tariff regime for roaming was expected to take off in June 2019 as per the Action plan adopted in February 2018 but was not implemented as end of 2018.

115. To speed up the implementation, the ECOWAS Commission in March 2019 sensitized countries who are not applying any roaming protocol and organized a follow-up meeting with regulators and representatives of all ICT ministries who commit themselves on a new action plan with new dates to effectively Implementation of the ECOWAS Regulation on Roaming.

116. As of 30 May 2019, eleven countries including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote D'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger and Togo, have submitted their tariffs celling to the ECOWAS Commission.

117. By 28 May 2019 (ECOWAS Day) all Member States were requested to undertake an official launch of the Regulation on Roaming as officially adopted by the Follow Up meeting. Unfortunately only one country organized the official launching at the fixed date.

118. Considering that one year after the deadline adopted by the Member States, the ECOWAS Regulation on mobile roaming was not implemented yet, the Council of Ministers:

- Congratulates the countries that have started the implementation of the activities leading to the implementation of the ECOWAS Roaming Regulation on Mobile Communications and invites them to continue the full implementation of the Action Plan.
- Urges countries that have not started the implementation of the action plan to take the necessary steps to accelerate the operationalization of the regulation, so the roaming on mobile communications be applied by all ECOWAS states before the next Council meeting
- Requests the ECOWAS Commission to continue monitoring and facilitating the operationalization of the ECOWAS Roaming Regulation.

119. Council took note of the memorandum.

Item XXII: Memorandum providing an Update on the Institutional Reform Process

120. Council was informed that the inter-institutional Committee at the management level chaired by the Vice-President continues to ensure that assignments on the road-map to guide the implementation of the reforms from December 2018 to December 2021 are executed. The new organizational chart took effect from January 2019, leading to readjustments in positions. The Commission has had to deal with the placement of 39 permanent staff who had been dislodged by the new organisational chart into vacant positions (death, resignation and dismissals as well as some new positions).

121. Additionally, all contractual staff who entered through a recruitment process following a publication of a vacant position have been placed on the organisational chart. Those contractual staff who did not enter through an interview process will be interviewed as follows – General Service staff will be interviewed by a Special Panel headed by the Vice President whilst Professional staff will have to compete through a recruitment process following a publication of vacant positions.

122. The Commission is in process of finalising the recruitment of the firm that will conduct the Staff Skills Audit as directed by Council.

123. The finalization of the Ethics Code is expected to be driven by the Secretary General once he has been appointed.

124. The New Financial Regulations and the Tenders' Code are now being implemented.

125. The legislative review of all community Acts affected by the institutional reform and the study on the admission of third countries to the Community as well as the study on establishing an efficient decision-making process for ECOWAS are ongoing. The Commission has scheduled a meeting of the Ministerial Committee of five (5) Member States to review and adopt the report of the Consultants in July/August 2019.

126. Full implementation of ECOLink will start 1st July 2019 in all Institutions, except EBID, who are expected to launch ECOLink during the second half of 2019.

127. Council took note of information provided in the memorandum and directed that the Commission should update the Organogramme. In particular, Council directed that its decision taken at its 80th Ordinary Session in Lome, Togolese Republic in 2018 for the Chief of Staff of the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) to report directly to the Commissioner Political Affairs, Peace and Security be implemented. Furthermore, the Mediation and Facilitation Division of the Directorate of Political Affairs be reinforced. On the issue of Contract Staff, Council referred to the recommendations on the matter contained in the Final Report of the 25th Meeting of the AFC which they had earlier adopted.

Item XXIII: Memorandum of the ECOWAS Parliament on adoption of the Dakar Declaration on ECOWAS Single Currency

128. The ECOWAS Parliament presented to Council a declaration emanating from its seminar on the ECOWAS Single currency which took place from 5 to 7 March, 2019 in Dakar, Republic of Senegal.

129. Council took note of the declaration.

Item XXIV: Presentation of Report of the Ad-hoc Ministerial Meeting on the design of the new Headquarters of the ECOWAS Commission

130. The Chairman of the Meeting of the Ad-hoc Ministerial Committee Mr. Musa Nuhu presented the report of the meeting held on 7th May 2019 at the Commissions headquarters in Abuja. The main highlight of the report was the approval of the preliminary architectural plans for the new ECOWAS headquarters. The Committee equally made the following recommendations to the Commission which are being submitted for the adoption of Council:

- a) Sign the implementation agreement between ECOWAS and the People's Republic of China on the construction of the ECOWAS Headquarters building;
- b) Implement the recommendation made earlier that the Commission should pay a working visit to the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa to benefit from the experience of the African Union Commission given that its headquarters had been financed and constructed by the Government of the People's Republic of China;
- c) Complete the process of selecting a consulting firm to monitor project implementation on behalf of ECOWAS in order to ensure the quality control and security during the design phase and the subsequent construction of the new headquarters building;
- d) Complete the process of selecting the consultant to conduct the environmental impact study of the project;
- e) Compensate owners of plantations that are on the project site, in conjunction with the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA);
- f) Take the necessary measures before and during construction, in collaboration with FCDA, to complete:
 - the possible relocation of networks located on the site's right-of-way (water, electricity, telephone);
 - The construction of access roads and other utilities networks (water, electricity etc.);
 - Security on the site to avoid new illegal occupation.

131. The Ministerial Committee also urges the ECOWAS Commission to take the necessary steps to ensure the construction of the ECOWAS Commission headquarters is done according to specifications and to schedule

132. The Ministerial Committee further recommends that the ECOWAS Commission approach the ECOWAS Parliament for a dialogue on the construction of their respective headquarters in order to have a clearer picture of the development of the new ECOWAS headquarters to avoid duplication. The Nigerian delegation informed the meeting that the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria had allocated a parcel of land to the ECOWAS Parliament for the construction of its headquarters and resources had been provided towards that purpose.

133. Finally, the Ministerial Committee seeks the support of the Nigerian Government to develop access roads and other networks and utilities (water, electricity, etc.) that are vital for the future headquarters of the ECOWAS Commission to function properly.

134. Council took note of the Report presented.

Item XXV: Presentation and consideration of the preliminary report of the Forensic Audit of ECOWAS Institution and Agencies

135. Ernst & Young, the Auditing Firm recruited to conduct a forensic audit covering the period 2013 to 2017 on all ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies, presented a summary report. It highlighted instances of major concerns in some ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies.

136. The Auditing Firm indicated that the full report (more than 300 pages) was currently available in English and that the French and Portuguese versions would be made available very soon.

137. After the presentation by Ernst & Young, Member States thanked the Commission's leadership for its determination to improve governance. They also thanked Ernst & Young for the report presented. After asking and receiving answers to a number of clarifying questions following the presentation, Council decided that:

- the Commission reviews the recommendations provided in the report of the Forensic audit and immediately plug leakages highlighted in the report;
- the full report be made available in the three (3) ECOWAS official languages to all Member States as soon as possible, to allow Member States to internalize the full report; and
- An Extraordinary Session of Council be organized to allow Council to decide on next steps vis-à-vis the presented forensic audit report;

- The Commission should start implementing measures recommended in the Report.

Item XXVI: Any Other Business

138. No issues were discussed under this item.

Item XXVII: Adoption of Report

139. The report was adopted after amendments.

Item XXVIII: Closing Ceremony

140. The Chairman of Council, Ambassador Mustapha Sulaiman, in his closing remarks congratulated all the participants for their frank contributions and the friendly spirit that persisted throughout the deliberation. He thanked members of the Council as well as the Commission and other Community Institutions for the cooperation received throughout the Session. He also stressed the need to embark upon collective action in order that the sub-region might be able to meet the challenges of development.

141. The Chairman therefore enjoined all Member States to honour their commitment to our institutions so as to give the community the means with which to carry out its mission. He ended his closing remarks by inviting all stakeholders to ensure strict implementation of decisions reached in the course of the Session.

142. He thereafter declared the 82nd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers closed and wished all participants safe trip back to their various destinations.

DONE AT ABUJA, THIS 27TH DAY OF JUNE 2019



**AMBASSADOR MUSTAPHA L. SULAIMAN
CHAIRMAN
FOR COUNCIL**

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COMUNIDADE DOS ESTADOS
DA AFRICA DO OESTE

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
OF WEST AFRICAN STATES



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

EIGHTY- SECOND ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Abuja, 25TH – 27 JUNE 2019

VOTE OF THANKS

Members of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers meeting in Abuja, from 25th to 27th June 2019, express their profound gratitude to His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, President of Federal Republic of Nigeria and to the Government and people of Nigeria 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 ABUJA, THIS 27TH DAY OF JUNE 2019

COUNCIL

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