

COMUNIDADE ECONOMICA DOS
ESTADOS DA AFRICA OCIDENTAL

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
OF WEST AFRICAN STATES



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

ECW/CM/LXXXIII

Original: English

EIGHTY-THIRD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Abuja, 17th – 19th December, 2019

FINAL REPORT

ECOWAS Commission
Abuja, December, 2019

INTRODUCTION

1. The Eighty-Third Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers was held from 17th to 19th December, 2019 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria. The meeting, which was attended by Ministers in-charge of ECOWAS Affairs and Finance, was chaired by H.E. Kalla Ankourao, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad of the Republic of Niger.

2. The following Member States were represented:

- Republic of Benin;
- Burkina Faso;
- Republic of Cabo Verde;
- Republic of Côte 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;
- Togolese Republic.

3. The following institutions and specialized agencies of ECOWAS were also represented:

- ECOWAS Commission;
- ECOWAS Parliament;
- ECOWAS Community Court of Justice;
- West African Health Organisation (WAHO);
- Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA);
- ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID);
- Office of the Auditor General (OAG);
- ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA);
- West African Monetary Agency (WAMA);
- West African Monetary Institute (WAMI).

4. The Audit Committee of Council also participated in the meeting.

5. The list of participants is annexed to this report.

I. OPENING CEREMONY

6. In his welcome remarks, the Host Minister H.E. Ambassador Zubairu Dada, Honourable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, welcomed all participants to the 83rd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of



Ministers. He thanked all delegates for their continued support towards the actualisation of the economic integration agenda of the community.

7. He underscored the importance of the end of year Council session as the platform for the appraisal of community thematic issues as well as the Community budget for the ensuing year.

8. He therefore called on participants to examine dispassionately all the agenda items in order to arrive at recommendations that will guide the decisions of the Authority as the Community moves from ECOWAS of States to the ECOWAS of the people. He thereafter wished all participants fruitful deliberations

9. In his welcome statement, the President of ECOWAS Commission, H.E Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, expressed sincere gratitude to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to members of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, as well as for the excellent facilities put at their disposal to ensure a successful conduct of the deliberations.

10. He lauded the strong participation of Council members which indicates their commitment to the success of regional integration. He also thanked them for their constant support in carrying out the missions assigned to the ECOWAS Institutions.

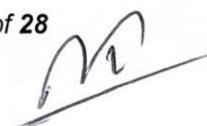
11. President Brou highlighted the salient points which would be addressed by Council, notably, the state of implementation of the work entrusted by the Summit and the Council, the draft 2020 budget of the Community adopted by the Administration and Finance Committee, the reports on the various programmes of the community, as well as those of the Audit Committee and the Auditor General and the question of financing the Action Plan to combat terrorism.

12. On this note, he expressed his ardent desire for this Council Session to be successful.

13. The Chairperson of Council, H.E. Kalla Ankourao, conveyed greetings from His Excellency Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger and Chairperson of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS to the Council. He also expressed appreciation to the Government and people of Nigeria for their warm welcome and commended the ECOWAS Commission for the excellent facilities put at their disposal to facilitate their work.

14. His Excellency Kalla Ankourao also recalled the important subjects relating to peace, security and the strengthening of democracy within ECOWAS, during the 43rd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, in particular consideration and adoption of the action plan to combat terrorism and its financing of which will be submitted to the Council of Ministers.

15. He thereafter solicited Council's cooperation in critically and selflessly scrutinizing the documents before them while also carefully examining the recommendations presented to enable them make informed decisions for the development of the Community.



16. On that note, he declared the 83rd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers open and wished all members of Council fruitful and constructive deliberations.

17. The full texts of the speeches are attached to this report.

II. ELECTION OF BUREAU

18. The following bureau was elected:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------|
| ▪ Chairman | - | Republic of Niger; |
| ▪ Vice Chairperson | - | Republic of Guinea; |
| ▪ Rapporteurs | - | Republic of Guinea Bissau; |
| | - | Republic of Sierra Leone. |

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME

19. The following agenda was adopted:

I. OPENING CEREMONY

- Welcome Remarks by Host Minister, H.E. Ambassador Zubairu Dada, Honourable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- Statement by President of ECOWAS Commission, H.E. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou;
- Opening Remarks by Chair of Council, H.E. Kalla Ankourao, Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad;
- Group Photograph;

II. CLOSE OF OPENING CEREMONY

- Housekeeping Information

III. CLOSED DOOR SESSION

- Opening of Session by the Chair of Council
- Election of Bureau
- Adoption of Draft Agenda and Work Programme

ITEMS FOR DECISION

1. Presentation and Consideration of the President's 2019 Annual Report on the State of the Community;
2. Presentation on the Financial Situation of the Community;
3. Presentation and Consideration of the Auditor General's 2019 Interim Report;
4. Presentation and consideration of a Memorandum on the closure of the borders to goods between the Federal Republic of Nigeria

and the Republic of Benin and between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Niger;

5. Presentation and Consideration of the Status of Tasks Assigned by the 82nd Ordinary Session of Council;
6. Presentation and Consideration of Report of the 37th Meeting of the Audit Committee;
7. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Financing of the ECOWAS Action Plan for Regional Security;
8. Presentation and Consideration of the Final Report of the 26th Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee;
9. Presentation and Consideration of the Draft Agenda of the 56th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government.

ITEMS FOR ENDORSEMENT

10. Presentation of the Report of the 4th Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Labour and Employment on:
 - i. ECOWAS Decent Work Regional Programme (DWRP);
 - ii. Directive on Minimum Standards towards the Harmonisation of Labour Laws in the ECOWAS region.
11. Presentation of the Report of the 16th Meeting of Ministers of Telecommunications/ICT and Post on:
 - i. ECOWAS ICT Policy for Persons with Disabilities (PWD);
 - ii. Guidelines on Market Analysis and Regulation.
12. Presentation of the Report of the 1st Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Hydrocarbons:
 - i. ECOWAS Hydrocarbons Development Policy and Its Implementation Matrix;
 - ii. Regional Programme for the Facilitation of the Supply of Petroleum Products in ECOWAS region.
13. Presentation of the Report of the 6th Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Culture on:
 - i. ECOWAS Culture Policy;
 - ii. Plan of Action on Return of Cultural Artefacts.
14. Presentation of the Report of the 5th Meeting of Ministers of Finance on the ECOWAS Common External Tariff

15. Presentation of the Report of the 10th Meeting of Ministers of Trade on the Tariff Concession of ECOWAS Market Access Offer for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA);
16. Presentation of a Resolution on the Harmonized Common Technical Documents (CTD) for the Registration of Human Medicines in the ECOWAS Region;
17. Presentation of a Resolution on the Inclusion of the Strategy for moving from Malaria Control to Pre-elimination in national development plans;
18. Presentation of the Report of the 21st GIABA Ministerial Committee (GMC) Meeting;

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

19. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Operationalisation of the ECOWAS Regional Radio;
20. Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on ECOWAS Member States' Applications for International and Regional Statutory positions;
21. Presentation of the Reports of the 19th and 20th Ordinary Meetings of the Assembly of ECOWAS Ministers of Health;
22. Any Other Business;
23. Adoption of Report;
24. Vote of Thanks;
25. Closing Ceremony.

IV. OUTCOME OF DELIBERATIONS

ITEMS FOR DECISION

Item 1: Presentation and Consideration of the President's 2019 Annual Report on the State of the Community

20. The 2019 Annual Report was presented by the President of the ECOWAS Commission, H.E. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou. The report provides a comprehensive account of the developments in the socio-economic situation at the global, African and ECOWAS levels and highlighted the activities implemented by the various ECOWAS Institutions in 2019.



21. The real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Region, for the year 2019, is estimated to increase by 0.3 point compared to 2018 at a growth rate of 3.3%. The ECOWAS average growth rate of 3.3% is higher than the African continental average of 3.0% for 2019. The major sources of growth in 2019 include improved agricultural output and investment in infrastructure.


22. However, a major challenge facing the ECOWAS region is insecurity characterised by increased terrorist attacks in some Member States and worsening inter-community conflicts, particularly conflicts between pastoralists and farmers. To address this challenge, Member States, at the end of an Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State on the fight against terrorism held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 14th September 2019, defined a common security action plan with eight key strategic areas and decided to mobilize among the ECOWAS Member States one billion dollars (US\$ 1 billion) for its funding. The report also highlights the issue of closure by Nigeria of its borders to goods with Benin and Niger and the associated difficulties relating to free movement of persons and goods.

23. In addition, the report notes that in order to support Member States to implement economic policies aimed at the diversification and structural transformation of economies and consolidation of the results achieved, ECOWAS has implemented a number of programmes and projects in different areas. At the economic level, these include acceleration of the monetary integration process and development of infrastructure facilities as well as formulation and implementation of sectoral development policies. At the political level, the Region records improvement in governance and strengthening of the rule of law with success in the organization of presidential and legislative elections in Benin, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal. At the social level, ECOWAS has intensified its actions to support the vulnerable groups of the society through implementation of programmes for women and youth.

24. The report calls on the Member States to comply fully with the provisions of all ECOWAS legal instruments including the Treaty, Protocols, Regulations, Directives and Decisions with a view to strengthening regional cooperation and integration in West Africa.

25. Following exhaustive deliberations, Council thanked and congratulated the President for the quality of his presentation and made the following observations and recommendations:-

- i. The Heads of State and Government are seized on the issue of ECOWAS Single Currency Programme and they are assisted by the Ministers of Finance and Governors of Central Banks;
- ii. Much progress has been achieved in the operationalization of the activities in the Roadmap of the Single Currency Programme including the name and symbol of the currency, the model of the central bank, monetary policy framework, and harmonization of statistical and public finance frameworks;
- iii. There is low level of intra-regional trade much of which is based on primary products or raw materials leading to low level of industrialization in the region;



- iv. Need to fast-track the implementation of the Praia-Dakar-Abidjan transport corridor including ratification of the treaty by the concerned Member States;
- v. Invitation of Member States that have not sent their comments on the Terms of Reference (TORs) on the feasibility study on re-admission of Mauritania and admission of Morocco as members of ECOWAS as well as admission of Tunisia as an observer to send them to ECOWAS Commission as soon as possible;
- vi. Concerning free movement of persons, the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card (ENBIC) is operational in only four Member States, namely, Benin, Ghana, Guinea Bissau and Senegal. The Commission is invited to present to the next ordinary session of Council guidelines for harmonizing the ENBIC and drivers licence;
- vii. On the border closure to goods between Nigeria and Benin, on one hand, and between Nigeria and Niger, on the other hand, there is need to ensure full application of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods;
- viii. There is need to accelerate the digitalization of systems and processes in all ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies with a view to enhancing their efficiency.
- ix. Implementation of the Community Development Programme (CDP) should be accelerated with a view to strengthening the economic competitiveness of the region.

Item 2: Presentation on the Financial Situation of the Community

26. The Commissioner for Finance recalled that the 81st Ordinary Session of Council, held in Abuja on 14 and 15 December 2018, considered and approved a Community budget of UA381,612,734 for fiscal year 2019, as recommended by the Administration and Finance Committee. The approved budget, which is balanced in Income and Expenditure, comprises the following:

TABLE 1: 2019 APPROVED INCOME BUDGET

| CHAPTER | AMOUNT (UA) | % |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| INCOME | | |
| Community Levy | 202,870,316 | 53.2% |
| Reserves | 4,357,366 | 1.1% |
| Arrears of Community Levy Proceeds | 60,894,454 | 16.0% |
| Arrears of Contribution | 1,768,710 | 0.5% |
| Other Income | 198,773 | 0.1% |
| External Funding | 111,523,115 | 29.2% |
| Total | 381,612,734 | 100.0% |

27. As at 30th November 2019, the Community's actual total revenue, all sources combined, was UA 163,701,806 or 43% of expected total revenue. Out of this total income, UA 84,302,304 was from the Community Levy, representing 42% of the allocation under this income category. "Reserves" was 100% utilized, Arrears of Community Levy attained 91% implementation, Arrears of Contribution achieved 33%, Other Income recorded UA 41,074 (20.7%) while UA18,906,254 was recorded under "External Funds" representing 17% of approved budget under this category. On the expenditure side, UA125,135,057 or 33% had been utilized as at 30th November 2019.

28. During the course of the year, several key activities/initiatives were put in place to ensure prudent, effective and efficient management of the Community's financial resources. The activities/initiatives include the following:

- Continued application of cost-cutting measures;
- Technical missions to Member States on Community Levy payment;
- Oversight missions to Institutions, Agencies and Offices of the Community;
- Establishment of an Inter-Institutional Heads of Finance Committee;
- Implementation of the Revised Financial Regulation and Manual of Accounting procedures.

29. Implementation of the Community 2019 budget also encountered several challenges, including:

- Delays in deposit of levy proceeds into the levy account as and when due;
- Continued non-compliance with the Community Levy protocol, in various forms;
- Difficulties in externalization of Levy proceeds from some Member States;
- Shortage of human resources within the finance function.

30. After exhaustive deliberations on the financial situation of the Community, Council expressed concern about the low results achieved in resource mobilization from the Community Levy. Consequently, Council encouraged the Commission to intensify its efforts in the collection of Community Levy from Member States. It also urged Member States to collect and remit their Community Levy in line with the provisions of the Protocol.

Item 3: Presentation and Consideration of the Auditor General's 2019 Interim Report

31. The Auditor General presented his 2019 Mid-Year report to 83rd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers in accordance with Regulations CREG/17/2017 establishing the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). Part "A" reported on the summary of Audits and Assurance engagements undertaken over the period. At close of the period all Institutions, and Presidents Representation Offices were either audited or had Inspections carried out. The overall resultant Risk Landscape

from these Audit activities portrayed a control environment requiring management's immediate remedial actions.

32. Despite the rather acute manpower constraints the OAG had to contend with, it exceeded all its performance targets, using innovative resourcing, including borrowing personnel from the Association of Supreme Audit Institutions of ECOWAS Member States, which platform the OAG spearheaded to create, as well from other ECOWAS Institutions; to build capacity of selected key staff. The report further noted that more than one year after Council directed Management to recruit personnel unconditionally and exceptionally for the OAG, no such action has been taken in that regard to this reporting date.

33. Part "B" of the report gave comprehensive details of Budgeted Revenue and Expenditure, Actual Performance in Revenue Mobilization compared to Budget expectations. The report revealed that a larger proportion of External Funds will come in if the seven Pillar Assessments demanded by the European Union are fully completed and functional.

34. As a result, such funds are currently managed by Implementing Partners with loss of management fees to the Community. Even though actual performance against Budget seemed theoretically very low, performance against actual resources received is higher with an overall absorption rate of 74%, indicating that the overall low absorption was more of scarcity of resources than the capacity of Management to execute.

35. The report further demonstrated the inverse correlation that currently obtains between Administrative Expenses and Programme Expenses, in compliance with Council Directive. Whilst Administrative expenses steadily reduced, resources devoted to Programmes increased over the period January 2014 - June 2019 the analysis covered; a trend attributed to the pragmatic cost-cutting measures introduced by Management.

36. Staff representation per Member State, Gender Balance, Staff Age Analysis and the large numbers of Contract Staff compared to Permanent Staff were also reported on. The imbalance in the Male-Female ratio of 71:29 was emphasized as requiring a Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

37. Staff analysis of ECOWAS shows that only 2.5 percent of the staff are in the age bracket of 20-29 years. This situation, the report noted, does not appear to reflect the true challenge-state of youth unemployment in the region.

38. Council considered and approved the following recommendations made by the Auditor General:-

- a. Management of all ECOWAS Institutions to ensure strict compliance with all Community Acts, Directives and Regulations;

- b. Management to ensure that all legal texts (Supplementary Acts, Decisions, Directives and Regulations) are published in the Official Journals of the Community and Member States before they are brought into force/implemented;
- c. Direct the Commission management to recruit staff for the Office of the Auditor General before the end of June 2020;
- d. Direct the Commission management to fast-track the recruitment of key staff for the Finance, General Administration and Human Resources departments, to facilitate the handing-over of the control function to management via ECOLink;
- e. Management to initiate policy frameworks to realign the youth employment imbalance;
- f. Management to set up a Project Team to work with OAG for the smooth transfer of the Control Function. It should complete Authorities Schedules for role assignment in ECOLink, and the Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC) module of ECOLink to be fully implemented in the shortest time practicable;
- g. That the payment of Responsibility Allowance to Contract Accounting Staff be restored and all arrears relating thereto be paid, from the date of such stoppage.

Item 4: Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Closure of the Borders to Goods between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Benin and between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Niger

39. The Commission presented this memorandum to update Council on the decision of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to close its land borders to movement of goods from and to its neighbouring countries with effect from 20 August 2019 and a tripartite ministerial meeting (Benin, Niger and Nigeria) held on 14 November 2019.

40. In response to the border closure to goods, the Commission President consulted the Chair of Authority of Heads of State and Government and other Heads of State on the sensitive issue. In addition, following the instructions of the Commission President, the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) Task Force visited the authorities of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Republic of Benin and Republic of Niger on 28 October 2019, 30 October 2019 and 4 November 2019 respectively. The objective of the missions was to understand the rationale for the border closure and jointly seek ways to address the concerns of Nigeria within the framework of ECOWAS integration agenda.

41. In conclusion, the Commission invited Council to consider the recommendations hereunder for onward submission to the Authority of Heads of State and Government:

- i. Urge Member States to comply strictly with the provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and Goods;
- ii. Make an appeal for the reopening of borders to local products and goods approved under the ETLIS;
- iii. Commend Benin, Niger and Nigeria for the ongoing dialogue and encourage them to continue consultations with a view to reaching quickly a lasting solution that is acceptable to all parties, in line with the relevant protocols of ECOWAS;
- iv. Instruct the ECOWAS Commission to continue the coordination, sensitisation and training of Member States' Customs Administrations for an effective implementation of the relevant trade facilitation instruments.

42. After extensive deliberations on the memorandum, Council took note of the work being done by the Tripartite Ministerial Committee which seeks to find a lasting solution to the situation. Council also proposed that H.E. Mr Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, President of Faso and Champion of the implementation of the protocol on free movement, in his facilitation role, be solicited to convene a meeting of the ETLIS Task Force comprising Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger and Nigeria by the end of January 2020 to assess the situation.

Item 5: Presentation and Consideration of the Status of Tasks Assigned by the 82nd Ordinary Session of Council

43. The Commission presented an implementation status report on the twenty six (26) tasks assigned to the ECOWAS Community Institutions by the Council of Ministers at its 82nd Ordinary Session held in Abuja from 25th to 27th June, 2019.

44. Seven (7) tasks had been fully implemented in the last six months. The tasks that were fully implemented are as follows:

- i. Organization of an Extraordinary Session of Council on the Forensic Audit Report;
- ii. Enforcement of the term limit of ECOWAS Representatives in Member States and International Organizations;
- iii. Compliance with Staff Regulations on notification of contract staff whose tenures are due to expire to avoid obligatory extensions;
- iv. Deepening the memorandum relating to the secondment of Community officials to Governments of Member States, which is addressed in the draft Revised Staff Regulations which will be presented to the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) in June 2020;



- v. Implementation of a Council Directive taken at its 80th Ordinary Session for the Chief of Staff of ECOWAS Standby Force to report directly to the Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security;
- vi. Implementation of the recommendations of the 25th Meeting of AFC; and
- vii. Alignment of the recommendation contained in paragraph 63(d) of the AFC Report with the provisions of Article 12 of the current ECOWAS Staff Regulations.

45. As regards the tasks that were not fully implemented, the remaining nineteen (19) tasks, which had varying completion rates between 45 and 88 percent, were, among others, related to human resources, Community Levy, drug control, forensic audit and the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS).

46. After presentation, Council took note of the report and urged the Community Institutions to complete the tasks that were not fully implemented.

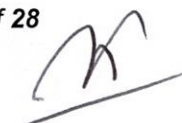
Item 6: Presentation and Consideration of Report of the 37th Meeting of the Audit Committee

47. The Chairperson of the Audit Committee, Mr. Mongo Aharh-Kpessou, presented the Report of its 37th Meeting to Council. The report focused on the following:-

- i. 2019 mid-year report of the Auditor General to the Council of Ministers;
- ii. Status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the Audits Reports of the Office of the Auditor General (OAG);
- iii. Findings of the audits and inspections of the OAG;
- iv. Status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the Management Letters for 2016/2017 Financial Statements of ECOWAS institutions and agencies;
- v. 2018 financial statements of the Commission and other Institutions.

48. The Audit Committee thereafter made the following recommendations for Council's recommendation to the Authority for adoption:-

- a) Approve the 2018 financial statements of all ECOWAS of all ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies with the exception of those of the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA), which are yet to be finalized;
- b) Take note of the Audit and Inspection Reports of the Office of the Auditor General and direct the institutions and agencies to continue implementation of the recommendations contained therein. These concern in particular, the training, deployment and the effective use of the ECOLink system and the IPSAS training of all the accountants of the institutions and agencies of ECOWAS;



- c) Direct the Commission to propose to Council policies and strategies on human resource management planning, with special focus on recruiting young men and women with a view to gradually shifting the age balance of Community Staff towards younger age bracket, and resolving the shortage of staff, in particular of women, in all ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies;
- d) Direct the Commission management to recruit staff for the Office of the Auditor General before the end of June 2020;
- e) Direct the Commission management to fast-track the recruitment of key staff for the Finance, General Administration and Human Resources departments, to facilitate the handing-over of the control function to management via ECOLink.

49. Council commended the Audit Committee for the quality of the report presented and adopted the report with all the recommendations contained therein.

Item 7: Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on the Financing of the ECOWAS Action Plan for Regional Security

50. The Commission presented a Memorandum on financing the ECOWAS five-year action plan for the eradication of terrorism in the region (2020-2024). This was one of the tasks assigned by the Authority at its Extraordinary Session on security held in Ouagadougou on 14th September 2019. The Commission proposed voluntary contribution by ECOWAS Member States of two hundred million dollars (US\$200 million) for the first year (2020). This includes the US\$100 million which had been mobilized by WAEMU.

51. The Commission also proposed a governance structure for the regional security action plan, which consists of a Steering Committee and an Implementation Committee for the Action Plan. The Committees would have representatives of the Member States, ECOWAS Commission, and observers from WAEMU Commission, Lake Chad Basin Commission and the G5 Sahel. It was proposed that the Committees would be chaired by the country that is occupying the Chair of the ECOWAS Authority. In terms of fund management, all financial resources would be mobilized and deposited in a special account opened by the ECOWAS Commission, under the supervision of the President of the Commission, with the Commissioner for Finance responsible for the operational management of the Fund.

52. Council, therefore, directed the Commission to propose a fund mobilization strategy of the balance for the period 2021 – 2024 at its next ordinary session. Council is urged to approve the governance structure for the implementation of the Action Plan and the Management of the Fund.

53. Following extensive deliberations on the presentation, Council also decided to refer the Report to the Authority of Heads of State and Government for its decision.



Item 8: Presentation and Consideration of the Final Report of the 26th Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee;

54. The final report of the 26th Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee was presented by Mr. Boubacar Seyni, Head of the ECOWAS National Office in Niger and Chair of AFC. The report covered the following:

- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of Status of Tasks Assigned to Community Institutions by the 22nd to 25th Meetings of the Administration and Finance Committee;
- ❖ Presentation on the Financial Situation of the Community;
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of the Community Levy Report;
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of Status of 2019 Work Programme Implementation as at September 2019 ending;
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of the 2020 Draft Consolidated Budget of ECOWAS Institutions;
- ❖ Presentation of a Memorandum on Contract Staff and Redundant Staff with Positions in the Organisational Chart (Permanent and Contract);
- ❖ Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum and Action Plan for Regional Security and its Financing;
- ❖ Launch of the ECOWAS Peace Fund (EPF) Website and Web portal for Civil Society Organisations Working in the Area of Peace and Security in Member States;
- ❖ Presentation of the Auditor General's 2019 Interim Report.

55. After deliberations on the report presented, Council adopted all the recommendations contained therein and decided as follows:-

- Taking into account the precarious security situation in the region as well as the upcoming elections scheduled to hold in 2020 among others, the President of the Commission should take steps to ensure the effective functioning of the Early Warning Mechanism;
- The Commission and other Community Institutions should ensure full and prompt implementation of Council directives;
- Contract staff recruited competitively by ECOWAS or through Donor-funded projects with an end of project absorption clause and have had positive performance appraisals should be offered permanent appointments in 2020 provided the positions exist on the approved organizational chart;



- The Commission should ensure that the Report of the Staff Skills Audit is presented to it at its next Ordinary Session to enable it take a decision on the lifting of the embargo on recruitment;
- Council directed the Commission to ensure strict compliance with its extant directive that meeting documents should be made available to Member States at least fifteen (15) days before the commencement of statutory meetings.

56. Finally, Council approved the 2020 budget of the Community as presented in the tables below:

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF 2020 INCOME BUDGET OF THE COMMUNITY

| | COMMUNITY PROPOSAL | AFC RECOMMENDATION | VARIANCE | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| | UA | UA | AMOUNT | % |
| Community Levy | 220,953,098 | 220,953,098 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Arrears of Community Levy | 60,894,454 | 60,894,454 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Arrears of Contribution | 1,768,710 | 1,768,710 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Other Income | 179,545 | 179,545 | 0 | 0.0% |
| External Funding | 115,703,454 | 115,703,454 | 0 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 399,499,261 | 399,499,261 | 0 | 0.0% |

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF 2020 EXPENDITURE BUDGET OF THE COMMUNITY

| | COMMUNITY PROPOSAL | AFC RECOMMENDATION | VARIANCE | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| | UA | UA | AMOUNT | % |
| Community Institutions | 344,405,537 | 344,405,537 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Statutory Obligations | 11,307,660 | 11,307,660 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Special Programmes in Member States | 12,050,322 | 12,050,322 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Peace & Security | 31,735,742 | 31,735,742 | 0 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 399,499,261 | 399,499,261 | 0 | 0.0% |

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF 2020 BUDGET OF INSTITUTIONS

| | COMMUNITY PROPOSAL | AFC RECOMMENDATION | VARIANCE | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|------|
| | UA | UA | AMOUNT | % |
| ECOWAS Commission | 239,787,813 | 239,787,813 | 0 | 0.0% |
| ECOWAS Parliament | 20,939,304 | 20,939,304 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Community Court of Justice | 16,938,263 | 16,938,263 | 0 | 0.0% |
| West African Health | 47,898,903 | 47,898,903 | 0 | 0.0% |

| | COMMUNITY PROPOSAL | AFC RECOMMENDATION | VARIANCE | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------|
| | UA | UA | AMOUNT | % |
| Organization (WAHO) | | | | |
| Inter-Governmental Action-Group Against Money Laundering (GIABA) | 11,094,910 | 11,094,910 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Office of the Auditor General | 7,746,344 | 7,746,344 | 0 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 344,405,537 | 344,405,537 | 0 | 0.0% |

TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF 2020 BUDGET OF STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

| | COMMUNITY PROPOSAL | AFC RECOMMENDATION | VARIANCE | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------|
| | UA | UA | AMOUNT | % |
| Chairman of Authority (0.5% of Member State's Community Levy) | 422,888 | 422,888 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Chairman of Authority (UA 1,200,000) | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 0 | 0.0% |
| ECOWAS National Unit (4.5% of Community Levy) | 9,684,772 | 9,684,772 | 0 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 11,307,660 | 11,307,660 | 0 | 0.0% |

**TABLE 6: SUMMARY OF 2020 BUDGET OF SPECIAL
PROGRAMMES/INTERVENTION IN MEMBER STATES**

| | COMMUNITY PROPOSAL | AFC RECOMMENDATION | VARIANCE | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|------|
| | UA | UA | AMOUNT | % |
| ECOWAS Regional Food & Agricultural Fund | 2,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 0 | 0.0% |
| ECOWAS Regional Food Reserve | 500,000 | 500,000 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Rural Electrification & LPG Initiative | 1,909,855 | 1,909,855 | 0 | 0.0% |
| ECOWAS Trade Fair | 638,832 | 638,832 | 0 | 0.0% |
| ECOWAS Regional Training Center, Lome | 179,823 | 179,823 | 0 | 0.0% |
| ECOWAS Logistics | 6,821,812 | 6,821,812 | 0 | 0.0% |

| | COMMUNITY PROPOSAL | AFC RECOMMENDATION | VARIANCE | |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| | UA | UA | AMOUNT | % |
| Depot (Lungi) | | | | |
| TOTAL | 12,050,322 | 12,050,322 | 0 | 0.0% |

TABLE 7: SUMMARY OF 2020 BUDGET OF PEACE & SECURITY

| | COMMUNITY PROPOSAL | AFC RECOMMENDATION | VARIANCE | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|----------|------------|
| | UA | UA | AMOUNT | % |
| Peace Fund | 6,700,000 | 6,700,000 | 0 | 0.0 |
| ECOMIB | 500,000 | 500,000 | 0 | 0.0 |
| ECOMIG | 14,419,309 | 14,419,309 | 0 | 0.0 |
| International Coordination Center (ICC) | 10,116,433 | 10,116,433 | 0 | 0.0 |
| TOTAL | 31,735,742 | 31,735,742 | 0 | 0.0 |

57. The ratios relating to the draft 2020 budget of Institutions of the Community are as follows:

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------|
| Administrative Cost | - | 27.4% |
| Programme Cost | - | 72.6% |

Item 9: Presentation and Consideration of the Draft Agenda of the 56th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government

58. The President of the Commission presented the draft agenda of the 56th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

59. After amendments, Council adopted the draft agenda annexed to this report.

ITEMS FOR ENDORSEMENT

Item 10: Presentation of the Report of the 4th Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Labour and Employment (Abuja, 19th July 2019)

60. On behalf of the Minister of Labour and Employment of the Republic of Niger, Mr. Mohamed BEN OMAR, the Minister of State in charge of Integration, Madame Lamido Ousseini Salamatou Bala Goga, presented to Council, the report of the 4th Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Labour and Employment held on 19th July 2019 in Abuja. The Ministerial meeting was preceded by an Experts Meeting/General Assembly of the ECOWAS Social Dialogue Forum from 16th - 18th July, 2019 which deliberated and recommended for validation the following documents:

i. ECOWAS Decent Work Regional Programme (DWRP)

61. The DWRP was formulated to promote sustained economic growth and social development in the ECOWAS region by targeting interventions in three key priority areas, namely: (a) promoting decent employment opportunities for women, youth, labour migrants, and persons living with disability; (b) extending social protection coverage with a view to complying with the General Convention on Social Security and encouraging inclusion of rural and informal sector workers; and (c) Implementing International Labour Standards through ratification of ILO legal texts, strengthening social dialogue in the region as well as adoption and implementation of regional policy on migration.

ii. Directive on Minimum Standards towards the Harmonisation of Labour Laws in the ECOWAS Region.

62. The Directive sets minimum labour standards for Member States of the region while respecting the diversity of legal traditions, systems of working relations, areas of regulation and practices existing within ECOWAS. The Directive is divided into twelve parts reflecting the core labour standards expressed in ILO's Declaration of Principles and Rights at Work, African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and the ECOWAS Treaty.

63. In conclusion, he invited Council to formally consider and adopt the Report of the 4th Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Labour and Employment and subsequently adopt the ECOWAS Decent Work Regional Programme (DWRP) and the Directive on Minimum Standards towards the Harmonization of Labour Laws in the ECOWAS region.

64. Council endorsed the Report.

Item 11: Presentation of the Report of the 16th Meeting of Ministers of Telecommunications/ICT and Post

65. The Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Digital Economy of the Republic of Niger, H.E. Sani Maigochi, presented the Report of the 16th Meeting of the Ministers of Telecommunications/ICT and Post. The report highlighted key outcomes of the meeting held on 4th October 2019 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Key outcomes of the meeting include adoption of the ECOWAS ICT Accessibility Policy for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and the guidelines on market analysis and regulation.

i. ECOWAS ICT Policy for Persons with Disabilities (PWD)

66. With regard to the ECOWAS ICT Accessibility Policy for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) over thirty five (35) million people live with disability within ECOWAS. The global objective of the ECOWAS ICT Accessibility policy for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) is to ensure inclusive access to ICT content applications and services to PwD so that they are enabled to participate fully and effectively in the society.

ii. Guidelines on Market Analysis and Regulation

67. Regarding the guidelines on market analysis and regulation, Article 19 of Supplementary Act A/SA 2/01/07 on Access and Interconnection to Networks and Services in the ICT sector envisages in items 2(b) and (c) that the ECOWAS Commission undertakes:

- (i) Publication of the guidelines on market analysis and evaluation of significant market power;
- (ii) Publication of a recommendation on relevant telecommunications markets to be submitted for an ex ante regulation.

68. After presentation, Council endorsed the report.

Item 12: Presentation of the Report of the First Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Hydrocarbons

69. On behalf of the chairperson of the Meeting, the Minister of Cultural Renaissance, Arts and Social Modernisation of the Republic of Niger, Mr. Assoumana Mallan Issa presented the Report of the 1st Meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Hydrocarbons, held in Niamey on 18th July, 2019. The meeting adopted the following texts and recommended same for submission to and adoption by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers: Draft Supplementary Act on ECOWAS Hydrocarbon Development Policy and its Implementation Matrix; and Draft Regulation on the Regional Programme to Facilitate the Supply of Petroleum Products in the ECOWAS Region.

i. ECOWAS Hydrocarbons Development Policy and its implementation matrix;

70. The policy aims to boost revenue, preserve the environment and, more importantly, ensure that affected populations and communities benefit from revenues accrued from mining operations. The policy is structured around the following issues: challenges/obstacles to the petroleum sector in the region, licensing and local content issues, tax system, governance, occupational safety and quality standards and implementation strategy.

ii. Regional Programme for the facilitation of the supply of petroleum products in ECOWAS region

71. The programme includes the following key areas: overview of the oil industry in the region, identification of main constraints and obstacles to the supply of petroleum products, analysis of future demand for petroleum products, development of a benchmark for regional integrated infrastructure projects and measures to improve the efficiency of refineries, and breakdown of a proposed regional programme and an implementation action plan including identified concrete integrated pipeline construction projects

72. After presentation, Council endorsed the report and agreed to recommend the accompanying draft supplementary act for the approval of the Authority of Heads of State and Government. Council equally adopted the regulation on the Regional Programme to Facilitate the Supply of Petroleum Products in the ECOWAS Region.

Item 13: Presentation of the Report of the 6th Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Culture

73. The Minister of Cultural Renaissance, Arts and Social Modernization of the Republic of Niger and the Chairperson of the meeting, Mr. Assoumana Mallan Issa presented the Report of the 6th Meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers of Culture, held in Cotonou, Republic of Benin, on 17th July 2019.

74. The main objective of the Meeting was to adopt the Regional Cultural Policy Document with its Action Plan, as well as the 2019-2023 Regional Action Plan for the Return of African Cultural Properties to their Countries of Origin

i. ECOWAS Culture Policy

75. The policy document has five (5) strategic axes (cultural heritage and diversity; cultural and creative industries and the regional market; culture of peace and cultural education; intellectual property; governance and information system), nine (9) strategic objectives, 23 actions and 87 activities.

ii. Plan of Action on Return of Cultural Artefacts

76. The 2019 - 2023 Regional Action Plan for the return of African cultural properties to their countries of origin includes three (3) strategic axes (Capacity building of stakeholders; deepening protection, promotion, enhancement and transmission of cultural heritage; regional and international cooperation to ensure return of cultural heritage), six (6) strategic objectives, fourteen (14) actions and thirty-three (33) activities.

77. After presentation, Council endorsed the report.

Item 14: Presentation of the Report of the 5th Meeting of Ministers of Finance on the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET)

78. The Report of the 5th Meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers of Finance on the Common External Tariff held on 22nd November, 2019 in Abuja, was presented by Mr. Mambureh Njie, Minister of Finance of The Gambia.

79. The Report noted that on the basis of the evaluations undertaken by the ECOWAS Commission in all Member States between August and October 2019, it was revealed that the Member States did not begin the implementation of the Common External Tariff (CET) at the same time and almost all Member States that had implemented the Import Adjustment Tax (IAT) had not completed the process of convergence towards the CET. In addition, no Member State had applied the Supplementary Protection Tax (SPT) in view of its complexity.

80. For the above reasons and based on the fact that fourteen (14) Member States, with the exception of Cabo Verde, already apply the CET and the IAT, the Ministers of Finance at the Abuja meeting of 22nd November 2019 approved the extension of the implementation of the Supplementary Protection measures, to be put as a Regulation.

81. The main objective of the draft regulation is to extend the period of implementation of the Supplementary Protection Measures for three (3) years to enable Member States complete the process of convergence.

82. After presentation, Council endorsed the report and the accompanying Draft Regulation.

Item 15: Presentation of the Report of the 10th Meeting of Ministers of Trade on the Tariff Concession of ECOWAS Market Access Offer for the African Continental Free Trade Area

83. On behalf of Mr. Sadou Seydou, Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion, Republic of Niger who chaired the meeting, the Report of the 10th Meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers of Trade (ECOMOT) on the Tariff Concession of ECOWAS Market Access Offer for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) held in Abuja, from 4 to 5 December, 2019, was presented by Mr. Carlos Kingsley Ahenkorah, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry of the Republic of Ghana.

84. In his presentation, he indicated that ECOMOT recommended the Draft ECOWAS Common Schedule of Tariff Concession (184 tariff lines for the Exclusions List and 429 tariff lines for the Sensitive List), including a transitional dismantling calendar, to the Council of Ministers for its consideration. ECOMOT, however, took note of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's request for the consideration of an additional 24 tariff lines to the List of Exclusions and 41 tariff lines to the List of Sensitive Products.

85. ECOMOT also recommended a number of sub-sectors to serve as basis for the drafting of Member States' Schedules of Specific Commitments on Trade in Services for onward transmission to the ECOWAS Commission for consolidation. ECOMOT also took note of the report on the development of an ECOWAS Regional Services Policy Review (SPR) and endorsed the document for publication by UNCTAD. Furthermore, he mentioned that ECOMOT took note of the report on ECOWAS' Position on the AfCFTA Secretariat Appointments and called for solidarity.

86. ECOMOT was informed of the Republic of Sierra Leone's request for support in presenting a candidate for the position of Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat. In addition, ECOMOT took note of the report on the development of an ECOWAS Trade in Services Market Blueprint 2030 and endorsed the document as a regional agenda on Trade in Services.

87. With respect to the progressive elimination of the ECOWAS Community Levy on intra-Africa trade, ECOMOT recommended that the implementation of Article 7 of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods be delayed until when alternative funding sources would have been found and also recommended a fast track approach to the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA) recruitment process.

88. After exhaustive deliberation and explanations provided, Council endorsed the report.

Item 16: Presentation of Resolution on the Harmonised Common Technical Documents (CTD) for the Registration of Human Medicines in the ECOWAS Region

89. The Minister of Health of Togo, Professor Moustafa Muiyawa presented the resolution agreed by the 19th Assembly of Health Ministers in Banjul in June 2018 regarding the harmonized Common Technical Documents (CTD) for the Registration of Human Medicines in the ECOWAS region.

90. He highlighted the incidence of fake medicines in the region and the need for a regional approach to registration of medicines in order to facilitate access to high quality medicines at low cost to all ECOWAS citizens.

91. Council considered and endorsed the Resolution.

Item 17: Presentation of a Resolution on the Inclusion of the Strategy for Moving from Malaria Control to Pre-elimination in National Development Plans

92. The Director General of WAHO presented this resolution on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Health of Nigeria, Alhaji Abdullahi Abdulaziz.

93. He explained that the 20th Assembly of Health Ministers in Cotonou in May 2019 agreed to a Resolution requesting all Member States to include in their National Development Plans the strategy for moving from control to pre-elimination of malaria.

94. He highlighted the high burden of malaria cases and deaths in the region such that West Africa contributes about 40% of malaria cases in the world, and the need for a multi-sectoral and multi-pronged approach to eliminate malaria.

95. Council considered and endorsed the resolution.

Item 18: Presentation of the Report of the 21st GIABA Ministerial Committee (GMC) Meeting

96. The Minister of State in charge of Integration and Nigeriens Abroad, Madame Lamido Ousseini Salamatou Bala Goga, on behalf of the Minister of Finance of

Niger and Chairperson of the GMC, presented the Report of the 21st GIABA Ministerial Committee Meeting held in Saly, Republic of Senegal on 16 November, 2019 to Council.

97. She highlighted the following recommendations approved by the GIABA Ministerial Committee for endorsement of Council:-

- a. Provision of adequate human resources for the GIABA Secretariat;
- b. Need for Political Authorities to provide Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) of GIABA Member States with adequate resources;
- c. Acceptance of application for Observer Status in GIABA by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI).

98. Council considered and endorsed the recommendations contained in the report.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Item 19: Presentation of the Report on the Operationalisation of the ECOWAS Regional Radio

99. The Minister for Communication of the Republic of Niger, S.E.M Habi Mahamadou Salissou, presented a progress report including, among others, a historical background and the objective for the establishment of the ECOWAS Regional Radio. In the presentation, it was pointed out that one of the main obstacles to ECOWAS integration efforts is the lack of knowledge of the programmes, activities and objectives of the Regional Organization by its citizens.

100. He further explained that it was in recognition of the versatility of broadcasting as an effective means of mass communication that the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, at their 24th Ordinary Session held on 15th and 16th December 2000, in Bamako, Mali, adopted an ECOWAS Information and Communication Policy.

101. This policy provides for the establishment of ECOWAS Radio and Television station supported by Member States. However owing to insufficiency of resources, this could not be implemented in the last decade. However, the dream for the establishment of the broadcast services received a boost when the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) transferred its Radio to the ECOWAS Commission upon the withdrawal of the Mission from Liberia in March 2018.

102. Mr. Salissou indicated that, the Commission has taken various steps towards the operationalisation of the station as ECOWAS Regional Radio, with a formal handover and signing of Headquarters Agreement as well the organisation of Experts as well ministerial meetings.

103. He concluded the presentation by informing Council that the ECOWAS Ministers of Information at their meeting which held in Abidjan on 9 December 2019 adopted all the recommendations made by experts at their meetings.

104. Council took note of the information provided.

Item 20: Presentation and Consideration of a Memorandum on ECOWAS Member States' Applications for International and Regional Statutory Positions;

105. In order to harmonize and give more chances to ECOWAS Member States' applications for vacant positions in regional and international organisations, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government at their 49th Ordinary Summit on 4 June 2016 in Dakar requested Member States applying for these positions to submit their candidatures to the Chair of the Council of Ministers for arbitration in order to come up with single candidatures for different positions, which should be fully supported by the Community.

106. Requests for support for 33 positions have been received, and as of 12th December 2018, only 8 out of them are yet to be filled. After due consultation some countries withdrew their candidatures for positions they were interested in, in order to give more chance to ECOWAS region to be selected. For the position of Non-Permanent Member of the Security Council for 2020 – 2021, Ghana and Liberia withdrew their candidatures in favour of Niger. In the same vein, Senegal withdrew its candidature in favour of Ghana regarding hosting of the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Consequently, only the position for the Chairperson of the African Union for the 2022 – 2023 period, for which two (2) ECOWAS Member States (Togo and Senegal) have requested support from ECOWAS will be subject to arbitration after consultation with the two Member States.

107. The lists of applications as well as vacancies to be filled by ECOWAS Member States in 2020 at the UN are attached to this report.

108. To facilitate its work, Council implored the Member States to (i) notify ECOWAS Commission of their interests in international and regional positions, as well as their requests for the Community support; and (ii) provide accurate and complete information regarding the positions (i.e. CV, election dates, etc.).

109. Council took note of the information provided.

Item 21: Presentation of the Reports of the 19th and 20th Ordinary Meetings of Assembly of ECOWAS Ministers of Health

110. The reports of the 19th and 20th Ordinary Meetings of the Assembly of ECOWAS Ministers of Health were presented by Professor Moustafa Muiyawa, Minister of Health of Togo, and the Director General of WAHO respectively.

111. At the 19th Ordinary Meeting which held on 8 June 2018 in Banjul, The Gambia, the Ministers received, discussed and adopted the report of the annual meeting of Health Experts of ECOWAS Member States, and endorsed Resolutions on:

- The Regional Laboratory Strategic Plan for ECOWAS Member States;
- The Regional Strategic Plan for Mental Health in West Africa;
- The Regulation Establishing and Defining Operating Procedures of the ECOWAS Regional Biobank;
- The Common Technical Documents (CTD) for the Registration of Human Medicines in the ECOWAS Region;
- The Banjul Declaration by The First Ladies on the Elimination of Obstetric Fistula from the ECOWAS region.

112. In addition, the Ministers, on the recommendation of the Health Experts, approved the Director General's plan to focus WAHO's interventions on 5 major thematic areas, namely: (i) Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (MNACH); (ii) Medicines and Vaccines; (iii) Prevention and Control of Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases (iv) Development of Quality Standards and Centres of Excellence; and (v) Health Information.

113. Moreover, the Ministers exchanged views on some excellent practices in their countries, two of which were particularly commended – Health Facilities Management using Outsourcing Model in Togo; and Digitization of Community Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses in Burkina Faso.

114. At the 20th Ordinary Meeting of the Assembly which was held in Cotonou, Republic of Benin on 3 May 2019, the Ministers adopted the Annual Health Report for 2018 following discussions which focused on weak inter-sectoral and cross-border collaboration, counterfeit medicines and weakness of national regulatory authorities for medicines and vaccines, upsurge in non-communicable diseases which deserve more attention, and the Director General's drive for financial prudence and judicious management of health resources.

115. In addition, the Ministers requested WAHO to develop a regional cross-border strategy for disease control and health promotion and also agreed that Member States should:

- i. strengthen Medicines Regulatory Agencies by making them autonomous;
- ii. promote and incentivize regional manufacture of medicines;
- iii. agree a harmonized medicines registration process in the region.

116. Moreover, the Ministers received, discussed and adopted the report of the annual meeting of Health Experts of ECOWAS Member States, and endorsed Resolutions on:

- Inclusion in national development plans of a strategy for moving from control to pre-elimination of malaria;



- Establishment of the ECOWAS Regional Agency for Pharmaceutical Regulation;
- Designation of countries to sit on the Board of Directors of the Regional Centre for Disease Control (ECOWAS-RCDC);
- Regional Plan for Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies;
- Community Guidelines on "Regulation of the Transfer of Biological Products in the ECOWAS Region";
- Regional Strategic Plan on Older Persons' Health 2020-2024.

117. After presentation, Council took note of the reports.

Any Other Business

118. No issues were discussed under this agenda item.

Adoption of the Report

119. The report was adopted after amendments.

Closing Ceremony

120. The Chairperson of Council, H.E. Mr. Kalla Ankourao, in his closing remarks, thanked Council Members for their contributions during the deliberations and for the spirit of camaraderie, which prevailed during their session. Thereafter, he declared the Eighty-Third Ordinary Session of Council closed, and wished all participants safe journey back to their respective destinations.

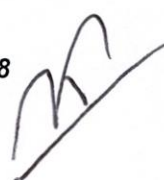
DONE AT ABUJA THIS 19th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2019



H.E. KALLA ANKOURAO

**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, COOPERATION,
AFRICAN INTEGRATION AND NIGERIENS ABROAD**

**CHAIRMAN
FOR: THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**



COMUNIDADE DOS ESTADOS DA
AFRICA DO OESTE

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
OF WEST AFRICAN STATES



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

EIGHTY-THIRD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Abuja, 17th – 19th December, 2019

VOTE OF THANKS

The participants at the Eighty-Third Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers held in Abuja, from 17th – 19th December, 2019 express their profound gratitude to His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and to the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the warm African hospitality extended to them during their stay in Abuja and for the excellent facilities placed at their disposal to ensure the success of their meeting.

DONE AT ABUJA THIS 19TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 2019

THE COUNCIL