



**ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO**

**ECW/CM/XCI
Original: English
Date: 7 December 2023**

**NINETY-FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
7 - 8 December 2023**

FINAL REPORT

**ECOWAS Commission
Abuja, December 2023**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Ninety-First Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers was held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, on 7th and 8th December 2023.

2. The following Member States were represented:

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

3. Burkina Faso, the Republics of Guinea, Mali and Niger did not take part because of the suspension imposed on the Member States by the Authority of Heads of State and Government from participating in all ECOWAS activities until further notice.

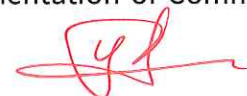
4. The following ECOWAS Institutions and Specialised Agencies were also represented:

- ECOWAS Commission
- ECOWAS Parliament
- Community Court of Justice
- ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development
- Office of the Auditor General
- Inter-governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA)
- West African Health Organisation (WAHO)
- West Africa Monetary Agency

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

II. OPENING SESSION

6. In his welcome address the President of the Commission, Dr Alieu Omar Touray on the behalf of the management and staff of ECOWAS welcomed members of Council and other participants to the 91st Ordinary Session of ECOWAS Council of Ministers and expressed gratitude of the management for Council's guidance and support in the implementation of Community decisions and integration programmes.



7. He also expressed appreciation to H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu (GCFR) President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government as well as H.E. Yusuf Maitama Tuggar (OON), the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, and Chair of Council and to the Government and People of Nigeria for the warm reception extended to all the participants to the meeting and for the facilities made available for the effective conduct of the meeting.

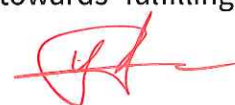
8. Whilst highlighting some of the agenda items for the meeting, he drew attention to the challenges being faced in the collection of the Community Levy which is the lifeline of the community integration programmes and projects during a time of increasing security challenges, humanitarian crises, political instability as well as the demands of socio-economic development that require huge resources to tackle and address. He therefore exhorted Council to give support to effective mobilization of the Community Levy to confront the myriad of issues confronting the Community.

9. Continuing his address, he informed Council that there had been largely peaceful elections in some of the Member States recalling the most recent election in Liberia and commended President George Weah for accepting the outcome of the elections. He underscored that more work needs to be done to enhance electoral process in Member States. On this note ECOWAS will continue to work on deepening democracy by promoting fair and transparent elections, good governance, and rule of law, so that the citizens can enjoy the dividends of democracy. He thereafter concluded his address by wishing the participants fruitful deliberations.

10. Taking his turn, the Chairperson of Council, H.E. Amb. Yusuf Maitama Tuggar (OON), Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on behalf of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, H.E. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, the Government and the people of Nigeria, welcomed all participants to Abuja for the Ninety First Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers. He emphasised the presence of members of Council at the session once more epitomizes our commitment to regional cooperation and the pursuit of a shared vision for the betterment of the Community.

11. He noted that the meeting is being held at a period when the region is being confronted with numerous challenges, which include unconstitutional changes of government, insecurity, and violent extremism, as well as global economic downturn which has hampered the value of national currencies and rising cost of essential commodities. In view of the foregoing, Council as an integral part of the of ECOWAS decision making process have a collective responsibility to assiduously review the Community's activities and proffer constructive recommendations to improve the quality of life of community citizens.

12. Ambassador Tuggar, during his speech gave a synoptic overview of some of the items on the agenda of Council which reflects the commitment of ECOWAS towards fulfilling the integration and developmental goals of the region.



13. Continuing his address, he applauded the ECOWAS Institutions for their dedication towards fulfilling the mandate of the community, despite the prevailing difficulties in the region.
14. He concluded his address by urging members of Council, to engage in constructive deliberations on the various agenda items bearing in mind, the weight of their collective responsibility and the aspirations of community citizens.
15. He then declared the Ninety-First Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers opened and wished participants successful deliberations.
16. The full texts of speeches are annexed to this report.

Symbolic Presentation of Cheques to Eight Beneficiary Member States under the 2023 Fistula Programme

17. The Commission briefed Council on the Fistula Programme and awarded the following 8 countries that are Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo, the sum of USD 245,000 each for the implementation of the said programme.
18. The total of this ECOWAS support amounting to USD 1.96 million seeks to improve care for women and girls suffering from obstetric fistula.

IV. ELECTION OF BUREAU

19. The following Bureau was elected:

- Chairperson - Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Rapporteurs - Republic of Cabo Verde
- Republic of Cote d'Ivoire

V. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME

20. The following agenda was adopted:

I. OPENING CEREMONY

- Address by President of the ECOWAS Commission, **H.E. Dr. Omar Alieu Touray**
- Welcome and opening statement by the Chair of the Council, **H.E. Amb. Yusuf Maitama Tuggar (OON)**, Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- Symbolic Presentation of Cheques to Eight Beneficiary Member States under the 2023 Fistula Programme

II. CLOSED DOOR SESSION

- Meeting called to order by the Chair of the Council
- Election of Bureau
- Adoption of Agenda and Work Programme



ITEMS FOR DECISION

- 1) Presentation and Consideration of the President's 2023 Annual Report on the State of the Community
- 2) Presentation and Consideration of the Report on the Financial Situation of the Community as of 30th September 2023
- 3) Presentation and Consideration of the Status of Tasks Assigned by the 90th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers to Community Institutions
- 4) Presentation and Consideration of the Final Report of the 34th Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee
- 5) Presentation and Consideration of the Report of the Auditor General's 2023 Annual Report
- 6) Presentation and Consideration of the Report of the 52nd and 53rd Meetings of the Audit Committee
- 7) Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum presenting Regulation on the Mechanism to Combat the Exploitation and Illegal Trade of Wild Species in West Africa
- 8) Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum presenting Draft Regulation relating to Environmental and Social Assessment in ECOWAS as considered by the Specialised Technical Committee of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of the Environment
- 9) Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum presenting Draft Regulation on Harmonisation of the Regulation of Plastic Products and the Environmentally Sound Management of Plastic Waste within ECOWAS Member States, as considered by the Specialised Technical Committee of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of the Environment
- 10) Presentation and Consideration of the Memorandum presenting the Final Report of the 15th Meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Energy
- 11) Presentation and Consideration of the Outcome of the 27th GIABA Ministerial Committee meeting and engagement with Member States under ECOWAS sanctions, on Counterterrorism, Counter-Terrorism Financing, other Security and Law Enforcement matters
- 12) Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum presenting an Update on the implementation of the ECOWAS Fund for Regional Stabilisation and Development (FRSD) and request for its absorption in the systems of the ECOWAS Commission.
- 13) Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum on the ECOWAS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and Memorandum on the Adoption of the Regulation on the ECOWAS Code of Conduct and Ethics
- 14) Presentation and consideration of Draft Agenda of the 64th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government.



ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 15) Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum providing Progress Report on the Single Currency Programme
- 16) Presentation and Consideration of Meeting Report of the Specialised Technical Committee of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of the Environment
- 17) Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum on the Status of Implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS)
- 18) Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme Task Force on the Implementation of Intra-Community Trade Regulations by Member States
- 19) Any Other Business
- 20) Report Adoption
- 21) Vote of Thanks
- 22) Closing Remarks

VI. OUTCOME OF DELIBERATIONS

ITEMS FOR DECISION

Item 1: Presentation and Consideration of the 2023 ECOWAS Annual Report on the State of the Community

21. The ECOWAS President's presentation of the Annual Report on the State of the Community highlights the macro-economic situation of the region and performance of the ECOWAS Institutions with regard to their 2023 work programmes and the regional integration and development agenda.

22. The **global economy** was characterised by the slowdown in economic activities due to the continuation of geopolitical conflicts, persistence inflationary pressures, high and rising public debt as well as tightening of monetary policies in most regions. In this context, the global economic output growth slowed to 3.0 percent in 2023, compared to 3.5 percent in 2022. However, global inflation remains moderate at 6.9 percent in 2023, compared to 8.7 percent in 2022.

23. According to the President, the performance of the **ECOWAS economies** in 2023 mimicked that of the global economy due to the strong linkages, especially through trade, investment, and financial services. Thus, the regional growth rate slowed to 3.7 percent in 2023, compared to 3.9 percent in 2022, annual average inflation peaked at 20.0 percent, compared to 17.3 percent in 2022 and public debt deteriorated further to 48.8 percent of GDP, compared to 36.8 percent of GDP in 2022. However, the region's budget deficit decreased slightly to 5.2 percent of GDP, compared to 5.4 percent of GDP in 2022.



24. Regarding the status of implementation of community work programs, some notable results have been achieved. **On political stability, peace and security**, progress was made on electoral process especially in Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. However limited progress was made on the fight against terrorism in the Sahel and in the political transitions in the three Member States affected by coup d'état, namely Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso, as well as on addressing the attempted coup in Niger Republic. The ECOWAS Authority took far reaching decisions during their Extra-ordinary Summit on 18th February 2023 in Addis Ababa, the ordinary session of 9th July 2023 in Bissau and the Extra-ordinary Summits on Niger which held in Abuja on 10th August 2023 and 30th September 2023.

25. Concerning **deepening regional economic integration**, the Commission continued to consolidate on the free movement of persons and goods protocol. Progress has been made, in the establishment of the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card (ENBIC) and the introduction of ECOVISA. So far, (6) Member States namely Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Benin, The Gambia, and Sierra Leone have deployed ENBIC. Equally, ECOWAS provided support towards institutional strengthening to Trade Facilitation Committees and over 350 participants from the ECOWAS Member States were trained **on trade facilitation measures** to strengthen their capacity to address obstacles to trade and promote the efficient movement of goods across borders in the region. **With regard to African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**, the Commission continued to support Member States in the formulation of common regional positions in the negotiations, as well as strengthening Business Support Organizations to promote trade in West African products and take to advantage of market opportunities in line with the ECOWAS Implementation Strategy for the AfCFTA.

26. On **consolidation of the ECOWAS Customs Union**, the Commission has continued to promote the participation of Member States in ETLS. The CET regime was enhanced with the completion of the Harmonised System 2022 (HS 2022) and its transmission to the Member States for incorporation into their customs computer systems to standardise the CET for the region.

27. On the **promotion of Common Market and private sector development** in the region, the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA) is strengthening competition in the region. In particular, it has carried out cross-border investigations, market studies, and formulated recommendations to combat anti-competitive practices. On the **regional payment system and settlement system**, the Supplementary Act for Cross-Border Payments and Settlement System, and the Directive for Harmonization of Payments Regulation were adopted by the Authority of Heads of States and Government in July 2023.

28. **On industrial development**, the Commission has adoption of a set of 96 ECOWAS standards (ECOSTANDS) covering various sectors, such as solar energy, agriculture, agro-food, information technology, chemicals, and health. Also noteworthy is the development of a regional policy framework to promote the manufacture of automotive components in the region.

29. Towards **the ECOWAS Monetary Union**, the Summit in July 2023, has adopted the amended Decision A/DEC.3/7/18 of 31 July 2018, establishing the Special Fund for financing the

activities of the Revised Roadmap and setup a High-Level Committee to propose a practical arrangement for the launch of the ECOWAS Single Currency. The Commission is set to launch the maiden edition of the ECOWAS Regional Economic Outlook (EREO) in 2024.

30. Within the framework of **inclusive and sustainable development**, the Commission continued to implement programmes and initiatives in favour of **vulnerable populations** in the region. These include support for voluntary returns of 299 stranded migrants, delivery of 230 metric tons of food for vulnerable children, support for internally displaced persons with material, funds and establishment of centres, and the adoption of the Regional Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor and Forced Labor in West Africa (2021-2030).

31. Concerning **education**, the main activities have focused on the harmonization and recognition of certificates, the ECOWAS Nnamdi Azikiwe Academic Mobility Scheme (ENAAMS) with Immersion Programme support to two hundred and sixty-six (266) young graduates. Towards promotion of the culture of peace, a total of 150 preachers and faith-based teachers were trained on peace-building and harmonious co-existence. On the **volunteer programme**, in 2023, the ECOWAS Volunteers Programme (EVP) recruited and deployed 35 national and international volunteers to support the national development efforts of some Member States.

32. The ECOWAS Commission has made significant progress in the implementation of its **energy and infrastructure projects** these included the completion of the 330 kV Volta (Ghana) – Lomé “C” (Togo) – Sakété (Benin) interconnection project and the 225 kV Ivory Coast – Liberia – Sierra Leone – Guinea (CLSG) interconnection project, among others. In addition, the Prie-Dakar-Abidjan Corridor development project has commenced in 2023.

33. The ECOWAS Commission has made significant progress in the implementation of its **environmental policy** during the period under review, particularly regarding waste management, with the validation of a draft regulation relating to environmental and social assessments, as well as the preparation of a report on the Cocoa and Forests Initiative in West Africa.

34. Concerning **Agriculture**, the main achievements were in the areas of promoting the governance of **regional agricultural policy** and strengthening resilience and food security in the region. ECOWAS in collaboration with partners has set up a steering committee responsible for coordinating some forty projects and programmes in nine different thematic areas. In the **Livestock sector**, the Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC) has built the capacity of veterinary services in the ECOWAS Member States, through initiatives such as training in spatial analysis and data visualization.

35. Towards **institutional reform and building capable institutions**, the Manpower Planning and Recruitment continued to receive the attention of Management as critical vacant positions are being filled. A total of seventy (70) positions at various grade level from D to G were advertised in 2023. Three (3) directors and thirty-three (33) P5 positions were recruited.

36. On the **construction of ECOWAS Commission headquarters**, the foundation of all the key structure has been completed and one of the buildings fully completed. All parties were fully

engaged to ensure completion by February 2025. Similarly, the construction works on the ECOWAS **Logistics Depot in Lungi** have been completed at 97%.

37. The **ECOWAS Language Policy**, first of its kind is being developed in-house and is in its final phase of completion.

38. **In terms of consolidation & Expansion of Partnership**, discussions are underway with the ECOWAS key and strategic partners for provision of support on the security challenges as well as in implementing the regional integration agenda.

39. With regard to strengthening **the Strategic Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation System**, the Commission has aligned the ECOWAS Vision 2050, the Community Strategic Framework (CSF) and the current management's 4X4 Strategic Objectives. The ECOWAS Vision 2050 was printed and distributed to members of the management team, staff members, key stakeholders including the ECOWAS Parliamentarians, and Development Partners.

40. Regarding **the work of other Community Institutions**, the **ECOWAS Parliament**, held its ordinary sessions as well as several committee meetings, to review and adopt its 2024 work Programme as well as draft texts to be submitted to the Council of Ministers and the Conference of Heads of State and Government for adoption.

41. At the level of the **Community Courts of Justice**, the Court continued with investments in Information Communication Technology (ICT) geared towards ensuring optimal management of the workflow. The Court has also taken steps to ensure the enforcement of her judgement by the Member States.

42. With regard to **GIABA**, the agency has continued to provide technical assistance to Member States, which has enabled them to make significant progress in their efforts to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

43. **On health, WAHO** reported that the situation in the region was characterized by a relative lull in COVID-19, however, fourteen (14) new events relating to diseases with epidemic potential were reported. Maternal and infant mortality remains high (347 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births), as does the prevalence of malaria (between 18 and 375 per 1,000 inhabitants) depending on the country.

44. After the presentation, Council commended the President of the Commission for the quality of the report. While welcoming the resilience of West African economies and fiscal consolidation in the Community, Council expressed concern over persistent inflationary pressures in the region. It also commended the Commission's efforts to support Member States in the implementation of the AfCFTA.

45. Following deliberations, Council made the following recommendations:

- i. Member States should take measures to boost domestic production with a view to supplying local markets with food products, in addition to the efforts of Central Banks to contain the high cost of living;



- ii. The Commission, in collaboration with stakeholders, should accelerate the implementation of the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme, considering its potential impact on increasing intra-Community trade and saving foreign exchange reserves;
- iii. The Commission should step up support for the regional private sector to enable it to benefit fully from the African domestic market under the AfCFTA.

46. Council endorsed the 2023 Annual Report on the State of the Community.

Item 2: Presentation and Consideration of the Report on the Financial Situation of the Community as of 30th September 2023

47. The 89th Ordinary Session of Council held in Abuja on 1-2 December 2022 considered and approved a Community budget of **UA 418,072,409** for fiscal year 2023, as recommended by the Administration and Finance Committee. The approved budget, which is balanced in Income and Expenditure is comprised of the following:

TABLE 1: 2023 APPROVED BUDGET - INCOME

CHAPTER	AMOUNT (UA)	AMOUNT (USD \$) equivalent	AMOUNT (FCFA) equivalent	%
Community Levy	155,131,584	207,814,270	126,610,487,150	37.1%
Year-End Bank Balances	72,700,598	97,389,721	59,334,520,357	17.4%
Arrears of Community Levy Proceeds	61,332,944	82,161,612	50,056,820,913	14.7%
Arrears of Contribution	0	0	0	0.0%
Other Income	523,186	700,860	426,997,731	0.1%
External Funding	128,384,097	171,983,336	104,780,552,382	30.7%
TOTAL	418,072,409	560,049,799	341,209,378,533	100.0%

TABLE 2: 2023 APPROVED BUDGET EXPENDITURE

CHAPTER	AMOUNT (UA)	AMOUNT (USD \$) equivalent	AMOUNT (FCFA) equivalent	%
Institutions	366,254,681	490,634,771	298,918,391,643	87.6%
Statutory Obligations	11,257,750	15,080,882	9,188,001,405	2.7%
Special Programmes & Interventions in Member States	18,720,190	25,077,567	15,278,464,348	4.5%
Peace & Security	21,839,788	29,256,580	17,824,521,136	5.2%
TOTAL	418,072,409	560,049,799	341,209,378,533	100.0%

48. The preceding tables show that the **Community Levy** continues to be the largest source of revenue, accounting for **51.8%** of the approved Income for 2023. This is an indicator of its

utmost importance and highlights the significant role Member States are playing in funding Community Programmes and the need for all Member States to ensure strict compliance to the Levy Protocol. The levy provides the Community with the necessary financial resources to ably implement all projects and programmes derived from its Strategic Plans as directed by the Authority.

49. With regards to expenditure, **Institutions** continue to receive the highest allocation of community funds, up to **87.6%** of the Community's expenditure. In addition, **Peace & Security** obtained an important portion of the Community Resources with an allocation of about **5.2%** of the Community's approved budget. This was primarily due to the ongoing peacekeeping missions in The Gambia (ECOMIG) and Guinea Bissau and the arrears of payment to be made to Troops Contributing Countries (TCCs) for AFISMA, ECOMIB and ECOMIG, and for Peace fund allocation. **Statutory Obligations and Special Programmes & Interventions** in Member States comprised respectively **2.7%** and **4.5%** of the Community's budget.

50. The Community Levy protocol stipulates that Member States should remit Levy proceeds into the designated account at the various Central Banks of Member States on a monthly basis. Furthermore, Customs Authorities of Member States are required to submit monthly assessment reports for reconciliation purposes.

51. To this effect, there continued to be varying degrees of compliance and non-compliance to these requirements by Member States. The Commission continued to embark on technical reconciliation and high-level missions to Member States to reconcile and confirm the proceeds received into the Levy accounts.

52. As of 30th September 2023, a total of **UA 123,744,937** had been recorded as Community Levy proceeds from Member States. This figure is based on available bank statements so far received by the Commission. Details of the Levy proceeds deposit in the Central Bank accounts are as follows:

TABLE 3: COMMUNITY LEVY PROCEEDS AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023

MEMBER STATES	CURRENT YEAR LEVY DEPOSIT (UA)	LEVY ARREARS (UA)	TOTAL LEVY DEPOSIT (UA)	TOTAL LEVY DEPOSIT (FCFA)	TOTAL LEVY DEPOSIT (USD \$)
BENIN	0	297,402	297,402	242,724,726	398,400
BURKINA FASO	0	3,010	3,010	2,456,432	4,032
CAPE VERDE	0		0	0	0
COTE D'IVOIRE	24,546,054	2,216,745	26,762,799	21,842,431,701	35,851,446
GAMBIA	1,165,233		1,165,233	951,003,514	1,560,946
GHANA	21,895,518	1,656,804	23,552,322	19,222,203,673	31,550,690
GUINEA	0		0	0	0
GUINEA BISSAU	491,731		491,731	401,326,115	658,723
LIBERIA	0	1,983,212	1,983,212	1,618,596,394	2,656,711
MALI	0	446,417	446,417	364,342,935	598,020

NIGER	659,291	4,446,984	5,106,275	4,167,481,443	6,840,366
NIGERIA	0	37,228,192	37,228,192	30,383,752,045	49,870,887
SENEGAL	8,509,830	8,082,677	16,592,507	13,541,958,342	22,227,323
SIERRA LEONE	3,143,827	342,437	3,486,264	2,845,311,023	4,670,199
TOGO	6,068,184	561,388	6,629,572	5,410,718,405	8,880,974
TOTAL	66,479,669	57,265,268	123,744,937	100,994,306,748	165,768,718

53. As can be seen from the table, there are seven member states that did not remit fund into the Community Levy this year, despite the technical and high-level missions to member states. To date **eleven (11)** Member States have been visited, namely: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Niger, Benin, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, and Cape Verde.

54. The Community also continued to receive the support of Development Partners in the various sectors of its integration programmes. To this effect, a total of **UA6,430,584**, which represents only **5%** of the total income expected from **Partners**, was received during the period under review by the following Institutions:

TABLE 4: EXTERNAL FUNDS RECEIPT AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023

INSTITUTION	AMOUNT (UA)	AMOUNT (FCFA)	AMOUNT (USD \$)
Commission	2,500,045	2,040,409,227	3,349,060
Parliament	0	0	0
Court	0	0	0
WAHO	3,454,300	2,819,223,491	4,627,380
GIABA	476,239	388,681,984	637,970
Auditor General	0	0	0
Total	6,430,584	5,248,314,701	8,614,410

55. Council approved a budget of **UA 418,072,049** for the Community in FY 2023. As of 30th September 2023, the Community recorded a total revenue from all sources of **UA 203,293,027** or **48.6%** of the 2023 approved **income budget** (see Table 5 below). Out of this total receipt, **UA 66,479,669** was from **Community Levy**, representing **42.9%** of the allocation under this income category. **Year-End Bank Balances** recorded **UA 72,700,598** utilization, **Arrears of Community Levy** recorded **UA 57,265,268**, and **Other Income** recorded **UA 416,908**. Finally, **External Funds** receipts of **UA 6,430,584** was recorded, representing 3.2% of revenue mobilized within the period.

TABLE 5: 2023 COMMUNITY INCOME IMPLEMENTATION - AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023

Chapters	Approved Budget	Actual Income (UA)	Actual Income (FCFA) equivalent	Actual Income (USD \$) equivalent	Actual Income (%)
Community Levy	155,131,584	66,479,669	54,257,315,375	89,056,165	42.9%
Year-End Bank Balances	72,700,598	72,700,598	59,334,520,357	97,389,721	100.0%
Arrears of Community Levy	61,332,944	57,265,268	46,736,991,213	76,712,553	93.4%
Arrears of Contribution	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Other Income	523,186	416,908	340,259,047	558,490	79.7%
Income from External Sources	128,384,097	6,430,584	5,248,314,701	8,614,410	5.0%
Total Income	418,072,409	203,293,027	165,917,400,693	272,331,339	48.6%

56. Out of the total approved budget, **UA 186,664,676** or **44.6%** had been utilized as of 30th September 2023. A synopsis of the budget implementation of the Community is depicted in Table 6 below:

TABLE 6: 2023 COMMUNITY EXPENDITURE IMPLEMENTATION - AS AT 30TH SEPT. 2023

Chapters	Approved Budget	Actual Expenditure (UA)	Actual Expenditure (FCFA) equivalent	Actual Expenditure (USD \$) equivalent	Actual Expenditure (%)
Institutions	366,254,681	173,683,862	141,751,910,287	232,666,902	47.4%
Statutory Obligations	11,257,750	4,592,002	3,747,757,840	6,151,446	40.8%
Special Programmes & Interventions	18,720,190	2,710,311	2,212,017,612	3,630,733	14.5%
Peace & Security	21,839,788	5,678,501	4,634,502,913	7,606,920	26.0%
TOTAL	418,072,409	186,664,676	152,346,188,653	250,056,000	44.6%

57. A comparison of **Tables 5 and 6** show that the total income and expenditure represents **48.6** and **44.6%** of the total approved budget, respectively.

58. Another comparison of the percentage of annual budget expenditure versus annual budget income, depicts implementation rates ranging from 44.7% to 65.3% (see Table 7). Furthermore, a detailed of the institutional budget implementation against the total approved budget as of 30th September 2023 reveals levels of implementation ranging from 59.6% to 87.0% (see Table 8). However, a comparison of actual expenditure vis-à-vis actual income depicts implementation rates ranging from 77.9% to 100% (see Table 9).

**TABLE 7: DETAILED BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION RATES OF INSTITUTIONS
VS APPROVED ANNUAL BUDGET**

INSTITUTION	INCOME (ANNUAL)	EXPENDITURE (ANNUAL)
Commission	44.7%	44.7%
Parliament	56.9%	56.4%
Court	69.0%	65.3%
WAHO	51.2%	50.2%
GIABA	49.9%	45.9%
Auditor General	61.0%	47.6%

**TABLE 8: DETAILED BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION RATES OF INSTITUTIONS
BASED ON YEAR-TO-DATE ACTUAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

INSTITUTION	INCOME (YEAR-TO-DATE)	EXPENDITURE (YEAR-TO-DATE)
Commission	59.6%	59.6%
Parliament	75.9%	75.2%
Court	91.9%	87.0%
WAHO	68.3%	67.0%
GIABA	66.5%	61.2%
Auditor General	81.3%	63.4%

**TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET EXPENDITURE RATES OF INSTITUTIONS
BASED ON ACTUAL INCOME RECEIVED**

INSTITUTION	EXPENDITURE
Commission	100.00%
Parliament	99.04%
Court	94.67%
WAHO	98.04%
GIABA	92.00%
Auditor General**	77.99%



59. The Community budget implementation for this year has improved, compared to previous years 2021 & 2020. This can be explained by the economic recovery from the Covid -19 pandemic and the Management's introduction of Quarterly Work Plan approvals.

60. Community Institutions sustained their engagement with development partners in funding critical and high-impact Community programmes.

61. Financial management of Community resources continues to be strengthened with progress in the implementation of the ECOLink project, sensitization on Financial Regulation Procurement and Grant codes, implementation of recommendations of the Auditor General and External Auditors, preparation for the EU pillar assessment, exercise of internal control functions by Management (with exception of procurement and recruitment which the Office of the Auditor General continues to vet), and timely and prompt annual external audit.

62. Management in conjunction with the Parliament, shall continue their efforts in the mobilization of Community Levy at both the technical and management levels. High level missions to some Member States shall be fielded with a view to resolving lingering issues affecting remittance of Levy proceeds, as well as reconciliation of assessments and deposits.

63. After an exhaustive deliberation on the report, Council adopted the report presented and exhorted Member States to ensure full implementation of the Community Levy Protocol.

64. Council reminded ECOWAS Institutions of its decision to allocate 65% of their expenditure to programme funding. Furthermore, the Commission should outline ongoing programmes and highlight their impact on populations in Member States, to justify the use of Community Levy resources.

Item 3: Presentation and Consideration of the Status of Tasks Assigned by the 90th Ordinary Session of Council of Ministers to Community Institutions

65. The Commission presented the status of implementation of the 23 tasks that were assigned by the 90th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers to the ECOWAS Commission, Institutions and Specialised Agencies.

66. Following clarifications sought, Council took note of the presentation and directed the Commission to provide detailed information that are lacking in some areas.

Item 4: Presentation and Consideration of the Final Report of 34th Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee

67. The final report of the 34th Meeting of the AFC was presented by Amb. Yakubu. A. Dadu who chaired the meeting. The report covered the following:

- i. Presentation and Consideration of Implementation Status of Tasks Assigned to Community Institutions by the 33rd Meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee.



- ii. Presentation and Consideration of the Financial Situation Report of the Community, as of 30th September 2023.
- iii. Presentation and Consideration Report on the Status of Implementation of Provisions of the Community Levy Protocol by Member States.
- iv. Presentation and Consideration of the 2024-2026 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and Consolidated Budget of ECOWAS Institutions
- v. Special Memorandum on the Immersion Programme for Young Graduates in ECOWAS institutions
- vi. Memorandum on the Revision of Decision A/Dec.2/06/17 Laying Down the Criteria and Procedures for the Award of the ECOWAS Prize for Excellence
- vii. Memorandum on the Implementation Status of the ECOWAS Fund for Regional Stabilization and Development
- viii. Memorandum providing Justification on the Request for Payment of Lump Sum for Shipment of Personal and Household Effect
- ix. Memorandum providing an update on the Status of Staff Recruitment
- x. Memorandum providing the Operational Costs of the ECOWAS Commission
- xi. Memorandum providing an update on the Status of Staff Conversion

68. After the presentation and the deliberations that ensued, Council commended the AFC for the quality of its report and adopted it including all the recommendations contained therein. In particular, the Council approved the 2024 budget of the **ECOWAS Community balanced in income and expenditure in the amount of UA 397,215,748** as presented. The approved budget shall be funded as follows:

Table 10: Income

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (UA)	% OF BUDGET
Community Levy	187,820,000	47.30%
Year-End Bank Balances	65,509,332	16.50%
Arrears of Community Levy	74,987,116	18.90%
Arrears of Contribution	0	0.00%
Other Income	550,000	0.14%
External Funding	68,349,300	17.20%
TOTAL	397,215,748	100.00%

69. Furthermore, the approved budget shall be utilized as follows:



Table 11: Expenditure

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (UA)	% OF BUDGET
Chapter I – Institutions	346,485,654	87.20%
Chapter II – Statutory Obligations	11,650,002	2.90%
Chapter III – Special Projects	18,754,528	4.70%
Chapter IV – Peace and Security	20,325,563	5.10%
TOTAL	397,215,747	100.00%

70. With regards to Institutions, the following amounts were approved:

Table 12: Breakdown of expenditure by Institution

INSTITUTIONS	AMOUNT (UA)
Commission	224,898,775
Parliament	23,215,994
Court of Justice	16,417,019
WAHO	62,689,949
GIABA	12,017,701
Office of the Auditor General	7,246,216
Total - Institutions	346,485,654

Item 5: Presentation and Consideration of the Auditor General's 2023 Annual Report

71. The Auditor General (AG), Dr. João Alage Mamadú Fadiá presented his 2023 Report to the 89th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers in accordance with Regulations C/REG/17/2018 establishing the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). He provided a quick overview of the Office of the Auditor General, reminding of its assurance mandate to the Council through the Audit Committee. He noted that the detailed Audit reports are presented to the Audit Committee every quarter.

72. Audits conducted by the OAG were in two categories namely Operations and Programme Performance Audits. Operations Audits comprise Financial, Missions & Travels, Procurement and Human Resources. Performance Audit focuses on the efficient and effective execution of community programs. Inspections were also carried out, mainly on Offices of the Resident representatives in Member States.

73. Aside of the Financial and Operations audits carried in various Institutions and Agencies, including the CCJ, Parliament, the Commission, WAHO, and ECREEE, among others, the OAG Audited the ECOWAS Joint Staff Pensions Fund and the Life Assurance and Group Personal

Accident Insurance Schemes. Performance audits were carried out on Water Resources Coordination Centre, ERERA, GIABA, the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy, among others.

74. On the whole the acute human Resources shortage poses high risks to in the segregation of functions and affecting efficiency and operation effectiveness.

75. Council commended the Auditor General for the quality his report and adopted it including the recommendations contained therein.

Item 6: Presentation and Consideration of the Report of the 52nd and 53rd Meetings of the Audit Committee

76. The chairperson of the Audit Committee, Mrs Diane Holo-Sacramento presented the summary of 52nd and 53rd meetings of the Audit Committee to Council. The items discussed include following:

- i. Presentation and discussion of the external Auditors Report on the 2022 consolidated and separate financial statements of ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies
- ii. Presentation of the External Auditor's opinion on the 2022 financial statements
- iii. Presentation of the Auditor General's Annual Report for 2023
- iv. Presentation Auditor General Office 2024 Budget

77. At the end of the presentation, the Audit Committee made the following recommendations to the Council of Ministers for onwards submission to the Authority of Heads of State and Government, for adoption:

- i. Approve the 2022 consolidated financial statement of ECOWAS and its Institutions,
- ii. Approve the audited 2022 financial statements of the Community levy
- iii. Approve the audited 2022 financial statements of the under-listed ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies:
 - a. ECOWAS Commission
 - b. ECOWAS Parliament
 - c. Community Court of Justice
 - d. West African Health Organisation (WAHO)
 - e. Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA)
 - f. Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF)
 - g. Project Preparation and Development Unit (PPDU)
 - h. ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE)
 - i. ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA)
 - j. ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC)
 - k. ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre (EYSDC)
 - l. Water Resources Management Centre (WRMC)
 - m. ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA)
 - n. Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC)



- iv. Approve the 2024 Budget and Work Plan of the Office of the Auditor General, as well as the Auditor General's Report for 2023.
- v. Approve the following recommendations of the Audit Committee and direct Management to:
- a. Expedite action on the recruitment of staff for critical areas of operations by 31st March 2024.
 - b. Ensure the recruitment process aligns knowledge and skills with the job description for each position within ECOWAS.
 - c. Develop the ICT governance structure and formulate policies to regulate the ICT functions within ECOWAS by 30th June 2024.
 - d. Ensure that all relevant modules within ECOLink are fully operationalised to reap its full benefits as well as improve the control environment of ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies.
 - e. Diagnose the challenges of procurement delays and take steps to accelerate the process to minimise delays in the implementation of projects and programs.
 - f. Ensure that the projects and programs are designed to benefit the citizens of the Community and that they are properly monitored.
 - g. Consider pooling certain services in human resources, finance and procurement for operational efficiency and effectiveness.
 - h. Invigorate the high-level missions to ensure the timely collection of Community Levy and payment of arrears.
 - i. Enter into service-level agreements with the banks implementing the cashless policy by the end of 31st March 2024.
 - j. Prepare annual financial statements in time to allow the Chief Finance Officer to submit to the External Auditors on or before 31st March each year in accordance with Article 149(1) of the Financial Regulations.
 - k. Instruct the fund managers to maintain a proper set of accounts using a standard accounting package or in ECOLink.
 - l. Initiate an audit to ascertain the actual maturity periods of investments held by the Fund Managers and to justify the recorded income of **\$13,653,631.33**.
 - m. Apply relevant sanctions on staff who fail to comply with ECOWAS financial and other regulations and directives.
- vi. Request the Office of the Auditor General to periodically audit the community resources allocated to the National offices (4.5%) to ensure that the funds are used efficiently and in accordance with the appropriate Financial Regulations and Procedures. This recommendation is in line with Article 26.3 of the Operational Manual of ECOWAS National Offices.
- vii. Request the President of the Commission to provide the Audit Committee with status reports of the implementation of its recommendation prior to the Audit Committee meetings that precede the ordinary sessions of the Council of Ministers.

78. Council commended the Audit Committee for the quality of the report and thereafter endorsed it and all recommendations contained therein.



Item 7: Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum presenting Regulation on the Mechanism to Combat the Exploitation and Illegal Trade of Wild Species in West Africa

79. The draft regulation provides a harmonised legal and institutional framework to reduce and prevent the illegal or excessive exploitation, possession, and trade of wildlife in West Africa, through ownership and implementation of the West African strategy to combat wildlife crime at regional level and in Member States.

80. The implementation of the strategy would ensure a sustainable conservation of emblematic species (elephants, pangolins, and African primates) and biodiversity in general, in order to reduce the negative consequences of the devastating effects of illegal exploitation and trade on the livelihoods and socio-economic development of communities.

81. Council took note of and adopted the draft Regulation.

Item 8: Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum presenting Draft Regulation relating to Environmental and Social Assessment in ECOWAS as considered by the Specialised Technical Committee of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of the Environment

82. The draft regulation provides a response to challenges, particularly the different rules and procedures for Environmental and Social Assessments (ESA) and the consequent lack of standards, sector-specific guides, resettlement plans, etc., which lead to considerable delays in timely appraisal of environmental and social assessments conducted for regional projects.

83. The regulation sets out to harmonise the principles and rules applicable to environmental and social assessments in ECOWAS Member States. It establishes a Regional Environmental and Social Assessment Committee to assist the ECOWAS Commission in conducting environmental and social assessment processes and reviews of community or national policies, plans, programmes and projects with cross-border impact.

84. Council took note of and adopted the draft Regulation subject to proofreading by ECOWAS Legal Services

Item 9: Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum presenting Draft Regulation on Harmonisation of the Regulation of Plastic Products and the Environmentally Sound Management of Plastic Waste within ECOWAS Member States, as considered by the Specialised Technical Committee of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of the Environment

85. The draft text harmonises the regulations already adopted by Member States to address the worsening poor sanitation caused by plastic products and abandoned waste, which have a negative impact on fishing and aquaculture, maritime tourism, livestock farming, the value of waterfront properties, biodiversity, and ecosystems, and which also affect communities in our region.



86. The text takes into consideration the inadequate testing capacity of national laboratories and gaps in the management of plastics and related waste. The text authorises one category of plastic, namely biodegradable plastics, and bans single-use bags and packaging with low density and very thin thickness, except for those used in the human health, national security, and scientific research sectors. It also proposes sound management based on the key principles of the circular economy, as well as the application of extended producer responsibility by national bodies and regional coordination.

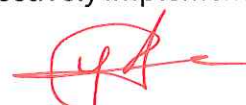
87. Council took note of and adopted the draft Regulation subject to proofreading by ECOWAS Legal Services

Item 10: Presentation and Consideration of the Memorandum presenting the Final Report of the 15th Meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Energy

88. In the presentation, the Commission stated that during the 15th meeting of ECOWAS Energy Ministers held on 7 October 2023 in Cotonou, Benin, the Ministers considered and adopted three Community texts relating to the Regional Electricity Market, namely: (i) the Directive on the Harmonisation of Criteria for the Granting of Licences and Authorisation to Participate in the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market; (ii) the Regulation on the Surveillance of ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market; and (iii) the Regulation on the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market Levy.

89. The Directive on the Harmonisation of the Criteria for the Granting of Licences and Authorisation to Participate in the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market aims to harmonise the framework and procedures for issuing Import and Export Licences and Authorisations to Participate in the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market (REM). The Regulation on the Surveillance of ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market establishes a regulatory framework for the operation of the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market (REM), with specific provisions for the collection, validation, analysis, and conservation of data, as well as for investigations and sanctions in the event of violations of market rules. The Regulation on the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market Levy introduces a levy intended to fund the operation of the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market and to ensure the financial autonomy of ERERA as the regulator of the said market and that of the Market System Operator.

90. The Commission further pointed out that the Ministers were also informed of other subjects of regional interest in the energy sector. The Ministers endorsed the ECOWAS Regional Strategy on Green Hydrogen and its 2023-2030 and 2031-2050 action plans and reaffirmed their support for the development of a single gas pipeline project in the region, resulting from the merger of the West Africa Gas Pipeline Extension Project (WAGPEP) and the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline (NMGP) Project, as well as their readiness to provide all necessary support for the success of the project. The Energy Ministers urged the ECOWAS Commission and WAPP to continue discussions on the adoption of supplementary rules and mechanisms for securing bill payments on cross-border power trade. The Ministers also undertook to effectively implement the Directive on securitisation of cross-border power trade adopted in 2018.



91. The Council of Ministers took note of the report and adopted the three Community Acts relating to the Regional Electricity Market: (i) the Directive on the Harmonisation of the Criteria for the Granting of Licences and Authorisation to Participate in the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market; (ii) the Regulation on the Surveillance of the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market; and (iii) the Regulation on the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market Levy. They also endorsed all the other recommendations made by the Energy Ministers.

Item 11: Presentation and Consideration of the Outcome of the 27th GIABA Ministerial Committee meeting and engagement with Member States under ECOWAS sanctions, on Counterterrorism, Counter-Terrorism Financing, other Security and Law Enforcement matters

92. The Chairman of the GIABA Ministerial Committee (GMC) and the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Justice of Nigeria, briefed the Council on the outcome of the meeting of the 27th meeting of the Committee where he highlighted the following issues:

- i. There are 4 ECOWAS Member States under active monitoring by the FATF (grey list) due to the significant deficiencies identified in their Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of terrorism and Proliferation (AML/CFT/P) regimes following the conduct of their mutual Evaluations and the development of an Action Plan for them to implement (Burkina Faso - February 2021; Mali - October 2021; Nigeria - February 2023; and Senegal - February 2021). The countries are making significant efforts to address the deficiencies to enable them to exit the monitoring process. In October 2023, the FATF placed Cote D'Ivoire under Observation for a period of one year, in line with the established process and procedures.
- ii. The mutual evaluation report of Guinea was considered and approved by the Committee and the country was found to have low effectiveness on all the eleven intermediate outcomes of the FATF effectiveness assessment standard, in addition to the significant deficiencies identified in its technical compliance.
- iii. All ECOWAS member states have now been evaluated under the 2nd round of mutual evaluations, which comes to end in November 2024 the 3rd round of mutual evaluations is to commence early in 2026.
- iv. The need for the Authority to consider and decide on the need for GIABA Secretariat and other institutions of the Community to engage with the four member States under ECOWAS sanctions (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Niger) on matters related to terrorism, terrorist financing, security and law enforcement matters at technical level was considered.

93. The council took note of the presentation and decided to recommend to the Authority for its decision a sanction waiver for ECOWAS institutions to engage the four countries under sanctions, at the technical level, on matters related to terrorism, terrorism financing, regional security and cross-border law enforcement. This is in addition to the existing provision that allows for delivery of humanitarian aid to people in countries under sanctions.



94. Furthermore, ECOWAS Institutions may request the President of the Commission to consider on a case-by-case basis engagement with sanctioned Member States after consultations with the Chair of Authority.

Item 12: Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum presenting an Update on the implementation of the ECOWAS Fund for Regional Stabilisation and Development (FRSD) and request for its absorption in the systems of the ECOWAS Commission.

95. The ECOWAS Commission with support from the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), established the Fund for Regional Stabilization and Development (FRSD) to enhance resilience building in fragile communities. The Fund operates within the context of post-crisis stabilization and crisis prevention. This entails investments in socio-economic development measures with special attention to youth and women.

96. The Stabilization Fund is currently present in The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Benin, and Togo. In The Gambia, since inception in 2019, significant results have been achieved in creating sustainable opportunities for women and youth. Project activities have been launched in Guinea Bissau. Preparatory processes have been initiated in Togo and Benin.

97. In view of the development context of the region, there is a long-term relevance of the Stabilization Fund in the operations of the ECOWAS Commission, due to its ability to serve as a flexible instrument that can be used to tackle existing and emerging fragilities in the region.

98. Council is therefore being requested to give approval for the Stabilization Fund to be absorbed within the systems of the ECOWAS Commission, to serve as a long-term instrument for resilience building in fragile communities. This action would ensure the following:

- a. Create enabling environment for long-term planning of incremental activities on resilience building in the region;
- b. Ensure that the capacities, learnings, and experiences gained in implementation are retained within the ECOWAS Commission;
- c. Make the Stabilization Fund a flexible instrument with capacity to design interventions for emerging fragilities in the region, with a long-term sustainable development approach;
- d. Give impetus for mobilization of resources from multiple external sources.

99. After presentation, Council approved the proposal.

Item 13: Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum on the ECOWAS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and Memorandum on the Adoption of the Regulation on the ECOWAS Code of Conduct and Ethics

100. The Council of Ministers, within the framework of the Institutional Reforms, adopted the creation of an Ethics Division in the Office of the Secretary General. The mission of this Ethics Division is to develop a Code of Ethics and Conduct for ECOWAS Institutions.

101. The Management of the ECOWAS Commission with the approval of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, initiated the process of developing an “*ECOWAS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*” to establish a mechanism for ensuring compliance with ethical and professional rules regarding management and financial control, procurement, staff recruitment and promotion, and any other activity of the Community, with a view to combating corruption and related offences.

102. The draft document was developed with cognizance to the following existing Policies, Regulations and Protocols of the ECOWAS Community, and other partners:

- a. ECOWAS Staff Regulations
- b. Articles 10, 11 and 12 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty
- c. Protocol A/P3/12/01 on the fight against corruption
- d. Financial Regulation of ECOWAS Institutions and its Manual of Procedures
- e. ECOWAS Procurement Code and its Manual of Procedures;
- f. Protocol of the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice and related texts;
- g. Article 6 of Protocol A/P3/12/01 for the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice AfDB Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct
- h. African Union Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

103. The draft document entails 17 Articles with measures developed to enhance the promotion of ethics and professional conduct within ECOWAS Institutions. It is envisaged that the adoption and full implementation shall to the following benefits :

- a. Promote ECOWAS' core values of integrity, honesty, transparency, loyalty, accountability, and professionalism;
- b. Improve the image, reputation, and credibility of ECOWAS;
- c. Support human dignity among staff members and improving their productivity; and
- d. Ensure cordial working relations among ECOWAS staff.

104. After presentation and clarification sought, Council deferred the Memo to the next AFC for consideration.

Item 14: Presentation and Consideration of the Draft Agenda of 64th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government

105. The President of the Commission presented the draft agenda of the 64th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

106. After presentation, Council adopted the draft agenda which is annexed to this report.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Item 15: Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum providing Progress Report on the Single Currency Programme

107. The Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture presented a memorandum for Council's information on progress made in the implementation of the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme since July 2023.



108. She noted that as instructed by the 63rd Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government held on 9 July 2023 in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, the Commission set up the High-Level Committee on practical arrangements for the launch of the ECO. The Committee held its inaugural meeting virtually on 27 and 28 November 2023, at the end of which the participants adopted the Terms of Reference of the High-Level Committee and made the following recommendations:

- i. Invite WAMA and WAMI to the meetings of the High-Level Committee, considering the important role they play in the implementation of the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme.
- ii. Urge the ECOWAS Commission to take the appropriate steps to forward working documents to participants at least two weeks before the meetings, to ensure better preparation and more fruitful contributions;
- iii. Invite the ECOWAS Commission to take steps to convene the next meeting of the High-Level Committee in May 2024.

Item 16: Presentation and Consideration of Meeting Report of the Specialised Technical Committee of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of the Environment

109. Council took note of the report of the meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee of Ministers in charge of the Environment of ECOWAS Member States held on May 18, 2023 in Bissau, Guinea Bissau to examine two regional regulations on i) environmental and social assessments and ii) rules governing the environmentally sound management of plastic waste in ECOWAS Member States.

Item 17: Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum on the Status of Implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS)

110. The Commission made a presentation to Council on activities undertaken and the practical steps taken to implement the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme in order to reduce the obstacles to the smooth flow of intra-Community trade.

111. Council took note of the activities carried out by the Commission and urged it to continue its efforts to create awareness of the new ECOWAS rules of origin, and to provide training for private-sector operators and public administrations. It also called on the Commission to speed up work on the paperless and digital procedures for issuing approvals and ECOWAS certificates of origin.

Item 18: Presentation and Consideration of Memorandum of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme Task Force on the Implementation of Intra-Community Trade Regulations by Member States

112. Council took note of the report of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme Task Force on measures to facilitate the free movement of persons and goods in the region in general and on

the Abidjan-Lagos corridor in particular. The report also provided an update on the high-level ministerial meeting held in Cotonou, Republic of Benin from 3 to 5 October 2023, which produced a declaration, called the Cotonou Declaration.

Item 19: Any other business

113. There was no items discussed

Item 20: Adoption of Report

114. The report was adopted after amendments.

Item 21: Closing Session

115. The Chairperson of Council, H.E. Amb. Yusuf Maitama Tuggar (OON), Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in his closing remarks, thanked Council Members for their active participation and constructive contributions during the session. Thereafter, he declared the Ninety First Ordinary Session of Council closed.

DONE IN ABUJA, THIS 8TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2023



**AMB. YUSUF MAITAMA TUGGAR (OON)
CHAIRPERSON
FOR COUNCIL**