



ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES

TWENTIETH YEAR OF ECOWAS:

***ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM
OF IMPLEMENTATION***

1994/95

**ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE ECOWAS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
MR. EDOUARD BENJAMIN**

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
LAGOS
JUNE 1995**

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. It is my privilege and pleasure to present my second annual report on the activities of the Community since I assumed office as the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS. Dealing with the challenges facing regional cooperation in West Africa has been a very revealing experience. Much of the enlightenment this experience has brought I owe to the interaction I have been having with all those involved in the integration process.

2. In this regard, I should like to express my humble and sincerest gratitude to His Excellency Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John RAWLINGS, President of the Republic of Ghana and the current Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government. In his capacity as the Chairman of the Authority, President Rawlings convened a number of meetings, both in Ghana and in Nigeria, in the continuing search for lasting peace in Liberia. The organisation of these meetings and my participation in them provided ample opportunity to appreciate the genuine concern that the Chairman has for the success of regional cooperation and integration in West Africa. There were other occasions where President Rawlings granted me audience when I went to seek his advice on other ECOWAS matters. Each visit was a fulfilling experience and I am most indebted to His Excellency.

3. During the course of the year, I had the honour of visiting other Heads of State and Government to consult them on various regional issues. Their Excellencies were always gracious enough to receive me in audience and give me the needed counsel. This has been a great source of encouragement and I owe our leaders a big debt of gratitude.

4. In a similar manner, I have come to appreciate the involvement of senior cabinet Ministers, who have ECOWAS affairs under their portfolios, in the running of the Community. A good deal of the success of the regional integration process depends on Honourable Ministers and the interest these Ministers showed during the year in Community matters came to be very much appreciated. I should like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all Honourable Ministers directly responsible for ECOWAS affairs as well as those who were involved in the various sectoral programmes of the Community. It is fitting to single out for special mention, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, **Honourable Dr. Kwesi BOTCHWEY**, the Ghana Minister of Finance and Economic Planning. Through his advice and display of personal interest in ECOWAS issues, Dr Botchwey has been one source of inspiration to me throughout this rather difficult year in the life of the Community. I should also like to make a special acknowledgement of the positive contribution made during the review period by the Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine towards the peaceful resolution of the Liberian crisis.

5. The impression I formed in the first few months of assuming office was that the pace of the regional integration process was too slow. Therefore, as I indicated last year in my first annual report, I undertook a critical review of the functioning of the Community in order to determine ways and means of accelerating the regional integration process. I found the basic problem of the Community to be the lack of commitment of Member States to regional integration. This manifested in the slow rate of ratification of protocols and conventions, very poor record of implementation of ECOWAS decisions and programmes, and inadequate financial support to the institution of the Community. A number of measures were proposed for adoption by Member States, aimed at reversing these negative tendencies. In addition, the programmes of implementation for key Community decisions were also revised to facilitate their application. Notable among these were the adoption of the second Minimum Agenda for Action, and the Community

Information Programme. These and other initiatives were introduced in a bid to increase the pace and impact of regional integration.

6. Three examples of these changes might be cited. The second Minimum Agenda for Action was adopted to focus attention on the implementation of some simple and basic measures under the programme for the free movement of persons. A Community Priority Programme of Action on Information was introduced for the effective dissemination of information on ECOWAS throughout the region, and to promote the active participation of West African journalists in the integration process. The Community institutions were eagerly looking forward to the entry into force of the revised ECOWAS Treaty in order to give backing to the implementation of some of its novel features such as the mobilisation of the different segments of the West African population, and the promotion of private sector participation.

7. The 1994 annual statutory meetings ended in Abuja on an optimistic note, based on the considerable number of positive decisions taken at both the Council and Authority levels. One year later, very little improvement has been recorded. The revised ECOWAS Treaty which was originally expected to be ratified by all the sixteen Member States by 31 December 1993 has still not entered into force for lack of the minimum required number of ratifications. There has been no significant improvement in the rate of application by Member States of Community Acts and Decisions; and the Community institutions have not been able to implement the approved Work Programme for lack of resources. Indeed, there has been near total paralysis of operations of the Community institutions these past months because financial contributions from Member States have been a mere trickle during these first six months of the year. The lethargy that has descended on the Community is in sharp contrast to the enthusiastic support world-wide that regional cooperation continues to enjoy - the latest initiative being the proposed formation of the Free Trade Organisation of the Americas, stretching from Alaska to Argentina.

8. Having established in the 1975 Treaty a 15-year programme for the creation of a customs union in West Africa, it is reasonable to assume that the Founding Fathers of the Community expected the 20th ECOWAS Anniversary to be celebrated in a vibrant and functional common market setting. The Community is indeed twenty years old now, but it is very far from achieving the status of even a free trade area.

9. The need for regional cooperation and integration in West Africa cannot be gainsaid. The interactions I have had with the Heads of State and their advisers during the year confirmed clearly the desire of the West African political leadership for close cooperation. That desire needs to be backed by strong commitment. This point has been made on several occasions in the past, but to little effect.

10. It is my duty to bring up once more before the Council and the Authority the matter of commitment and, specifically, the effective participation of Member States in the regional integration process. I therefore invite the policy-makers of the Community to use the occasion of its 20th Anniversary celebration to reflect deeply on the factors underlying the low level of implementation of the integration programmes adopted over the years. These Community programmes cover key sectors of West African economy and their effective implementation would contribute substantially to the development of all Member States.

11. The theme and focus of this annual report is "**Addressing the Problem of Implementation**". I have endeavoured to raise in the report a number of issues which should form part of the reflection that the Community is invited to undertake at this year's statutory meetings.

12. The substantive part of the annual report begins, in Chapter II, with a review of the economic environment of West African countries; an attempt is made to comment on some key factors which influence the economic performance in Member States. The report continues in Chapter III with an account of the

functioning of the Community institutions and the impediments to the execution of the Community Work Programme. In the next section of the report (Chapter IV), attention is focussed on the problems associated with the implementation of the integration programmes adopted by the Community; various approaches to dealing with these problems are suggested for further reflection. Some concluding remarks are made in Chapter V as an ending to this report.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

13. The economic performance of West African countries was generally poor in 1994. There was notable reduction in economic activity within the region as whole, despite the relatively favourable condition in the UEMOA countries. The considerable fall in production in Nigeria (which accounts for 55% of the region's GDP) due to its domestic political tension and the economic regulatory measures adopted in 1994, and the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone are some of the factors responsible for the region's declining economic growth.

14. Other growth-inhibiting factors in West Africa included the inadequate reforms undertaken in some countries, the difficulty in mobilising external resources in an increasingly competitive world environment and the inability of the region to strengthen its competitive position on the goods and services markets. Moreover, West Africa is handicapped by structural deficiencies and relatively low productivity of human and physical capital.

15. Growth prospects in the region remain dependent on internal political factors as well as extraneous factors such as climate, prices of raw materials and the demand for goods exported by Member States.

II. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT: THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

16. The world economy grew by 3% in 1994 as against 2.3% in 1993, mainly as a result of the performance of Asian and Latin American countries. Sustained

growth was, however, also recorded in the United States and Canada and the recession has been halted in the developed countries, although unemployment continued to rise.

17. Inflation was reduced in developed countries in 1994 (2.5% in 1994 as against 3% in 1993) while commodity prices continued their upward trend (an average increase of 6% in the price of non-petroleum primary products in 1994 as against 3.8% in 1993).

18. Among the outstanding developments in the world in 1994 was the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) set up to regulate international trade. Other notable events were the ratification of the GATT agreements and the increase in the membership of the European Union from 12 to 15. The "Summit of the Americas" which was held in Miami in December 1994 also marked a turning point in the history of the western hemisphere, 34 nations in North and South America having decided to work towards the creation of a regional free trade zone by the year 2005.

19. On the international financial market, the most remarkable feature in 1994 was the significant increase in the volume of private capital invested in the emerging capital markets of Asia and Latin America. The excessive volatility of capital resulted in the financial crisis that shook Mexico towards the end of 1994 and which almost caused a major global monetary crisis. The intervention by the members of G-7 however made it possible to contain that crisis. The European Monetary System (EMS), on the other hand, remained stable in 1994, after a difficult year in 1993. The increase in the fluctuation band within which currencies in the EMS could manoeuvre ensured greater stability of exchange rates within the mechanism in 1994.

III. REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT: ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF ECOWAS COUNTRIES

III.1 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

20. Estimates for real, average, median, maximum and minimum growth rates within ECOWAS in 1994 are as follows:

ECOWAS	AVERAGE	MINIMUM	MEDIAN	MAXIMUM
	1.8%	-0.4% (Liberia)	3 %	6 % (Benin)

Source: Calculations based on data supplied by the ADB and BCEAO.

21. The average real growth in GDP within ECOWAS dropped from 2.3% in 1993 to 1.8% in 1994. The median growth rate was 3%, with Benin having recorded the highest growth of 6% and Liberia the biggest decline in production (-0.4%).

22. Guinea (4.7%), Mauritania (4.1%) and Ghana (3.8%) also achieved sustained growth due to the economic policy reforms embarked upon in these countries to stimulate production and exports. The economies of Mali, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire once again showed positive growth in 1994, attaining growth rates of 4%, 1.8% and 1.3% respectively. These countries benefitted from the increased competitiveness of their exports brought about by the devaluation of the CFA franc, the increase in commodity prices and greater inflow of foreign capital.

23. The Nigerian economy recorded a net growth decline, with a rate of only 1.3% for 1994 compared to 2.3% in 1993. Several factors accounted for this poor performance. The positive result in the agricultural sector was counter-balanced by the slow-down of activities in the petroleum sector, a direct result of the two-

month strike. The industrial sector also suffered from the scarcity of raw materials and spare parts caused by lack of foreign exchange. Growth in Sierra Leone and Liberia was adversely affected by civil war in the two countries.

III.2 Sectoral performance

(i) Agriculture

24. For the 1994/1995 season, the partial results available indicate some annual variations in the production and marketing of the major export crops.

25. Cocoa and coffee production in Cote d'Ivoire seems to have benefitted from improved maintenance of the plantations, encouraged by the increase in producer prices. Cocoa sales in Cote d'Ivoire increased by 8.6% while, despite favourable prices, production in Ghana was below expectations, largely because of a prolonged drought. Cocoa production in Nigeria stagnated in 1994.

26. Marketing of coffee in Cote d'Ivoire increased by 45.5% in relation to the preceding year, but in Togo, the amount harvested fell by 34.5%.

27. Cotton seed production increased by 6.5% in Cote d'Ivoire. In Benin, the amount harvested fell by 37% while in Senegal sales plummeted by 69%.

28. The food situation was affected by floods in Burkina and Senegal where grain production dropped by 13% and 14% respectively in 1994/1995 compared to the preceding year. In Mali, on the other hand, grain production, particularly rice production, went up by 23% while the production of paddy rice in Cote d'Ivoire increased by 4%.

Mining

29. Gold mining increased by 23.5% in Mali, following the exploitation of the second phase of the SYAMA mine. In Ghana, the year was marked by the offer for sale to the public of a part of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation (AGC). Another Ghanaian company, the Teberebie Gold Fields (TGF) announced plans to increase production from 170,000 ounces of gold to 250,000 ounces of fine gold in 1995.

30. Diamond production in Sierra Leone and Guinea continued to suffer from the activities of illegal miners. The South African conglomerate, DE BEERS, decided to invest in the mining sector in the two countries and to help in its reorganisation.

31. Phosphate production rose by 22% in Togo due to normal conditions being returned in the mines while there was a 5% fall in production in Senegal.

32. A combination of strikes, outdated equipment and low prices negatively affected petroleum production in Nigeria in 1994. The domestic price of petrol was increased by about 200%, in an attempt to modernise the sector and to reduce the level of subsidy on petroleum products.

(iii) Manufacturing industries

33. There were marked contrasts in the evolution of the manufacturing in West Africa in 1994. In UMEOA countries, there was an upsurge of activity by industries that transform local products for export, particularly those dealing with textile, palm oil, groundnut, wood and fishery products. Conversely, most of the industries that depend largely on imported raw materials and whose products are meant for domestic consumption generally saw a decline in their activities due to the combined effects of higher prices of imported raw materials and lower domestic demand.

34. In Nigeria, the manufacturing sector which depends on imported raw materials, once again suffered from the lack of foreign exchange. Despite the constraints, however, the situation improved in 1994 in the sense that there was increased utilisation of local raw materials in the production of textiles, sugar, beer and detergents.

35. In order to attract foreign capital that would enable them develop the manufacturing sector, several ECOWAS Member States made attempts to improve the procedures for granting approval to investors, such as the institution of a single "multiservice" window to centralise and provide information on investment opportunities.

(iv) External sector

36. According to estimates, there was an improvement in the balance of payments deficit of West African countries in 1994 (\$1.5 billion against \$2 billion in 1993). This favourable development was due to the narrowing of the current account deficit and a high net inflow of non-monetary capital into UEMOA countries, Ghana and Guinea. Such capital was essentially from public or multilateral sources. As in the past, countries in the region found it difficult to attract large inflows of private capital to boost domestic production.

37. Despite the reduction in the current account deficit, West Africa's external debt stock rose from US\$78 billion to US\$79 billion. This was due, in part, to the insufficient relief provided by the current debt-reduction measures.

38. The debt burden remains an obstacle to growth in West Africa. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in other developing countries, particularly in Latin America, where the debt burden appears to be getting lighter. For there to be sustainable growth in West Africa, more successful efforts must be made to reduce the debt stock in the coming years.

(v) Social sector

39. In spite of the different situations in Member States, the weak position of the region in the area of human resource development is revealed by the classification of West African countries in to the UN human development indicator (HDI). These countries are classified as having "low level of human development". A number of countries, however, continue to lay emphasis on educational and primary health care expansion programmes, which indicates that it is possible to extend the investment base to cover the human development sector, even under difficult economic conditions. Cape Verde and Ghana are examples. Some other ECOWAS countries, battling with budgetary difficulties, have not even been able to preserve the gains made in previous years in the educational and health sectors.

40. The employment situation continued its downward trend in 1994 as a result of poor economic performance and high population growth in the region. The dearth of reliable data makes it difficult to have a clear appraisal of the situation. In almost all the ECOWAS Member States, however, the employment situation has been on the downward trend for some years now. Even in the informal sector, usually considered as a safe haven by the majority of the citizens, there was very little improvement. This unfavourable employment situation has led to increased delinquency and criminality in the big urban centres of West Africa.

IV. ECONOMIC POLICY MEASURES AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

41. In 1994, the majority of ECOWAS Member States intensified their structural adjustment and economic reform efforts in order to achieve a more balanced budget through policies designed to widen their income base and rationalise their expenditure. With regard to the monetary sector, many countries adopted realistic interest rates for the purpose of mobilising domestic savings.

IV. 1 Budgetary measures

42. For the 1993/1994 fiscal year, The Gambia achieved its objective in the area of income and expenditure. The budget deficit was narrowed to 2.5% of GDP, excluding donations, as against 3.7% as originally envisaged. In Sierra Leone, this deficit was scaled down to 5.2%, with emphasis placed on social reforms and more direct support to the productive sector. The civil strife in the country has not obstructed the implementation of the budgetary reform measures essential to economic recovery. In Ghana, a budget surplus of 68 billion cedis was expected during the 1994 fiscal year. The health and educational sectors received the highest budgetary allocation for the improvement of services. Provisional data on the implementation of the 1994 budget of UEMOA countries show that the budget deficit fell from 8.2% in 1993 to 5.7% in 1994. Tax revenue accounted for 91.7% of the budget estimates. This relatively satisfactory performance was due to tax reform measures implemented in UEMOA member countries. However, revenue accruing from taxes, particularly Customs duties and VAT, were low due to the decline in the volume of imports and to the tardy implementation of some reform measures. Grants increased by 94.6% with the resumption of funding activities by the international community.

43. In general terms, despite the reform measures undertaken in a number of ECOWAS Member States, public finances remain uncertain as a result of inadequate tax collection, heavy domestic debts and bilateral and multilateral debt service burdens, all of which exerted heavy pressure on public finances and eroded the saving capacity of Member States.

IV.2 Price and exchange rate policies

44. Exchange rate policies in ECOWAS Member States have evolved in different ways. A number of non-franc zone countries have adopted exchange rate reform measures such as allowing the nominal value of their currency to depreciate

through market forces. For instance, in Guinea, the nominal exchange rate of the Guinean franc in relation to the US dollar depreciated slightly by 2%. The nominal exchange rate index of the Cape Verdian escudo fell by 5%. The Bissau-Guinean peso dropped by 23%.

45. The 50% devaluation of the CFA franc was one of the main exchange rate reform policies adopted in West Africa in 1994. The external position of UEMOA improved at the end of 1994 as a result of this change in the exchange rate parity.

46. Unlike the other ECOWAS Member States, Nigeria in 1994 decided to modify its exchange rate policy by regulating the foreign exchange market. The naira was pegged at 22 to the dollar while the parallel market was declared illegal. This policy seriously affected both the Nigerian and regional economies.

47. Inflation within ECOWAS in 1994 was estimated at an average of 22% although this varied from country to country. By the end of 1994, inflation in The Gambia and Mauritania stood at an average of 5%, as against 70% for Nigeria. In UEMOA countries, inflation, though high at 30% on account of the devaluation, was lower than the target set by the Bretton Woods institutions in their programmes. Prices are expected to be on the downturn in 1995 which should enhance further the recovery efforts within the Union.

DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK

48. Growth in West Africa in 1995 and the ensuing years will remain contingent upon a number of factors, such as the world economic growth rate, the increase in the volume of world trade, the evolution of commodity prices and financial flows. Endogenous factors which will influence the regional environment and particularly the growth prospects of the West African economy will include the adoption and continuation of economic reforms, increase in the rate and viability

of investments, alleviation of domestic political crises and consolidation of the regional integration process.

49. Difficult access to resources in an increasingly more competitive world constitutes a major obstacle to more vigorous economic growth in West Africa. Other impediments to growth are the inability of the region to gain access easily to the world's commodity market, and obtain savings and capital; mention may also be made of domestic political and economic instability.

50. Climate continues to be the main determinant factor in agricultural development in most ECOWAS countries while debt servicing remains a heavy burden on their economies. Difficulties relating to imports, exports and improper manpower utilisation present a sombre outlook for an improvement in living standards in the short term, particularly in view of the present high population growth rate.

51. These difficulties notwithstanding, the expected rise in world commodity prices and the prospects for greater demand by industrialised countries are positive indicators for a brighter future for West Africa. Efforts being made by ECOWAS countries to adjust their economies should lead to sustained growth. The devaluation of the CFA franc, for example, has resulted in greater competitiveness of UEMOA States and an economic environment that is conducive to growth. Other ECOWAS countries outside the CFA zone, particularly Gambia, Ghana and Guinea, have also intensified their adjustment efforts. Nigeria, the region's most industrialised country, has also effected more recently significant changes in economic policy, in a bid to deregulate the economy. All these internal economic policies augur positively for the future prospects of West Africa. The countries within the region must however consolidate their regional integration process in order to derive maximum benefit from the favourable external environment and internal factors.

CHAPTER III

FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMUNITY

52. The Authority of Heads of State and Government concluded the deliberations at its seventeenth session, held in Abuja from 5 to 7 August 1994, with the "determination to accelerate the regional integration process and enhance its contribution to the development of the region"¹. The Authority decided that the short-term strategy for achieving this was to focus on improving the level of implementation of Community Acts and Decisions. The Community Work Programme for the 1994/95 period, consequently, concentrated on the practical modalities for enhancing the implementation of selected existing priority programmes.

53. It is unfortunate that that desire to enhance the integration process has not been in evidence in the ensuing months. Once more, the Community has witnessed considerable lack of commitment and determination to implement ECOWAS integration programmes.

54. The performance of the institutions of the Community during the period under review has been seriously affected by a persistent low cash-flow situation. The Community ended 1994 with a substantial portion of that year's Work Programme unimplemented; these uncompleted segments were incorporated into the 1995 Work Programme with the hope that the financial situation would improve sufficiently to enable the institutions meet the implementation targets set for the current year. The hope for an improvement in the financial situation was based on the Authority decision that each Member State would negotiate a schedule of

¹ Final Communiqué of the Seventeenth Session of the Authority, paragraph 14.

payment with the Community institutions in order to liquidate the outstanding arrears of contribution.

55. It is a matter of regret that Member States have not responded positively to that collective appeal made by the Authority in August 1994. The Secretariat toured all the Member States and drew up with the national authorities concerned, the schedule of payment. Only three Member States have so far written to confirm the re-schedule of payment, and only one country, Côte d'Ivoire, has honoured the agreement. The ECOWAS Fund on its part sent letters to all Member States, but only Côte d'Ivoire has submitted an agreement and cleared the arrears. It should be added that only Benin and Nigeria have no arrears of contribution to the Secretariat budget. In the case of the Fund, Burkina Faso and Guinea have also honoured all their financial obligations.

56. * Total contributions received by the Secretariat during the first half of 1995 was less than 19% of the year's budget revenue. Without much reserves to fall back on, operations have had to be curtailed substantially. The situation was made worse by the about \$200,000 financial obligation that the Secretariat had to fulfil concerning its part of the budget of the First ECOWAS Trade Fair (the European Union provided the remaining 80% as grant).

57. The focus of this chapter is on the implementation of the work programme of the Community covering the period from the meeting of the Authority in August 1994. The chapter has three main sections, namely:

- (i) Socio-economic cooperation programmes;
- (ii) Administrative and institutional issues;
- (iii) Regional peace and security.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC COOPERATION PROGRAMMES

58. As indicated above, the thrust of the work programme of the Community institutions involved the adoption of a strategy for tackling the factors impeding the regional integration process and to ensure that the efforts of Member States resulted in favourable results. The objective was to be achieved through commitment to sound economic development policies, priority attention and support for regional integration and improving the operational procedures of ECOWAS.

Harmonisation of macro-economic policies

59. The Secretariat has encouraged in the past the adoption and implementation of reform policies by Member States in order to achieve sound economic management and improved performance of the national economies. To achieve this objective, it was decided to organise discussions among policy-makers of Member States responsible for the formulation and monitoring of the implementation of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and other economic reform programmes. The Consultative Forum that was established by the Authority for this purpose has already met twice and engaged in a fruitful dialogue on economic issues, reviewing the macro-economic policies being implemented and exchanging experiences gained.

60. The harmonisation of economic and financial policies which was recommended by the second Consultative Forum as necessary to provide a sound basis for regional integration was adopted by the Council of Ministers at its thirty-sixth session as a Community objective to be vigorously pursued. As a follow-up measure, it was decided that subsequent deliberations on the matter should define the modalities for the harmonisation, including the possibility of establishing a regional machinery for multilateral surveillance of macro-economic policies. A

session of the Consultative Forum will be held during the statutory meetings to discuss proposals on the subject being submitted by the Executive Secretariat.

External debt burden of Member States

61. The success of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and regional integration in West Africa will depend largely on an appropriate solution being found to the problem of the external debt burden of the countries of the region. The Secretariat presented this important issue to the last session of Council. During the discussions, there was emphasis on the need to explore a political approach to resolve the problem of the external debt burden. To this end, the Authority made an appeal to the creditors of ECOWAS Member States to grant substantial reductions of the debt stock of West Africa.

62. This important economic management issue formed part of the discussions that were held with officials of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the course of the 1994 Annual Meetings in Madrid, Spain. During further discussions held in Washington DC in March 1995, officials of the World Bank pointed out that new concessions for debt relief had been introduced under the Naples Terms. Eligible nations may have up to two-thirds of their debts written off if such debts are the subject of rescheduling. A debtor country becomes eligible if it is implementing economic adjustment programmes approved by the Bretton Woods institutions and is involved in rescheduling its debts.

63. So far, only two Member States (Guinea and Guinea Bissau) have been granted debt relief (50% and 67% respectively) under the Naples Terms. Although the Naples Terms mark a positive development in the quest for alleviation of the debt burden, the problem of the debt stock and related issues are left unaddressed. The Secretariat will continue to follow developments in the debt-relief initiatives and assess their implications for the West African region.

Implementation of the Minimum Agenda for Action (MAFA)

64. The Authority adopted the first Minimum Agenda for Action at its meeting in July 1992 as a way of enhancing the achievement of the ECOWAS integration objectives. This programme has been conceived as a package of priority activities to be undertaken by all Member States in the fields of trade, customs, immigration and monetary cooperation. The effective implementation of these policies is an issue that deserves the attention of the Community because they are a set of easily implementable activities leading to the desired objectives of integration.

65. In view of the limited success recorded on the first set of MAFA measures, the Authority directed in August 1994 that a new MAFA be adopted, exclusively devoted to the creation of an enabling environment for the free movement of persons. The Council of Ministers duly adopted MAFA 1995, which was formulated by the Executive Secretariat with the active participation of national monitoring committees established by Member States.

66. The focus of MAFA 1995 - free movement of persons - is central to the regional integration process and the Chairman of Authority put much emphasis on this matter, right from the beginning of his tenure of office. It is planned that during the second half of 1995, there will be a systematic assessment of the degree of compliance with the provisions of MAFA 1995 (preparation of enabling texts, printing and issuance of documents, computerisation of vehicle registration, application of the ECOWAS Brown Card scheme, information and enlightenment, elimination of travel-related non-tariff barriers of a monetary nature, reduction of road check-points, etc).

67. It should be asserted here, however, that six months already into the programme, there is very little visible sign of the application of MAFA 1995, and particular attention would have to be given by all Member States, if successful implementation of this programme is to be recorded by the end of the year.

First ECOWAS Trade Fair

68. The First ECOWAS Trade Fair was held in Dakar, Senegal from 25 May to 4 June 1995, with the official opening ceremony performed by His Excellency President Abdou DIOUF of Senegal. Among the major highlights was the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of ECOWAS on 28 May 1995 presided over by the Chairman of the Authority who also delivered the keynote address at the regional conference organised on the occasion. The programmes of the fair were successfully executed, and benefitted from funding provided by the European Union.

69. Two regional workshops were also organised on "Strengthening intra-regional Trade" and on "the role of the Transport sector in the development of intra-regional Trade". It is worth recalling some of the recommendations made at these meetings. The vision of West Africa projected by the participants at the regional conference, as a region of sustained growth and development in the 21st century, was based on the successful pursuit of political and economic liberalisation and regional integration. Indeed, the point was made that Member States needed to stabilise and strengthen the national socio-economic and political base before any meaningful regional integration could be achieved. Some of the specific suggestions made were:

- national peace and stability through the practice of democratic principles and harmonious integration of the people in the social and cultural fields;
- strengthening of the domestic economy through continued application of reform measures;
- promotion of private sector participation (effective domestic resource mobilisation, and an enabling investment climate);
- development of social and economic infrastructures;

- pursuit of regional peace and security;
- rationalisation of the regional integration arrangements;
- development of regional physical infrastructures;
- liberalisation of the West African market to ensure free movement of goods, persons and services;
- harmonisation of macro-economic policies;
- achievement of regional monetary integration.

70. There was also an Investors Forum which provided the opportunity for dialogue among economic operators and financial institutions. The discussions were related to investment opportunities, the channels for financing and the facilities available in the region for the promotion of private investments. Representatives of the ECOWAS Fund and other financial institutions operating in the region also held bilateral talks with prospective investors on project financing. These contacts were designed to provide a basis for follow-up activities for developing intra-regional business transactions.

71. The developments following the Fair should be of particular interest to the Community and its Member States. The necessary contacts between buyers and sellers have been made through the Fair. There should be continuing efforts to sustain the momentum of production and trade in the region. The establishment of the Commodity Information Exchange System will assist in making available up-to-date information concerning regional markets and producers. As a follow-up, the policies to improve on transport facilities should be implemented. The Community is drawing attention to the need to maintain and rehabilitate the international road network in the region.

Monetary cooperation programme

72. The main activity undertaken under this programme is the organisation in collaboration with the West African Clearing House (WACH) of the annual meeting

of the Directors of Research and Governors of Central Banks in Banjul, The Gambia from 18 to 19 May 1995.

73. The specific issues that were dealt with included the recommendation of May 1996 as a deadline for the resolution of problems involving arrears of payments for transactions through the clearing system and the ratification of the protocol of the West African Monetary Agency.

74. The non-ratification of the WAMA protocol has held back the activities expected in line with the transformation of WACH into WAMA. The advice above given by the Governors need to be heeded so that the monetary management systems in the region can be improved and facilitate better coordination of transactions between the currencies.

75. The impact of the current economic reform measures has resulted in the opening-up of the foreign exchange markets in Member States. The issue of market-determined rates is generally accepted thus indicating a new direction from the previous periods when exchange controls and pegged rates dominated the financial scene.

76. The exchange rate reforms and related developments should sustain the rates that emerge through the market so that exchange transactions with regard to trade, production and payments, would flourish. The Member States need to identify the actions that would be taken to safeguard exchange rates and to advance towards a more sustainable rate that indicates relative stability and free market operations. These are important conditions that would sustain the process of establishing the monetary zone. A start needs to be made with the regional currencies being exchanged and accepted in transactions.

Regional Food Security System

77. The undue dependence of the food production system of the region on nature, and the real threat that drought and soil degradation pose to agriculture, necessitate the introduction of adequate measures to ensure food security in West Africa. The Community commissioned FAO in 1992 to assist in formulating a regional food security system. The draft report of the study was submitted to a meeting of officials of Member States and relevant West African intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) at Akosombo (Ghana) in June 1995.

78. The report reviewed existing food security programmes in the region and proposed ways of integrating these initiatives into a coherent regional system which would ensure adequate accessible and reliable supplies of food items. The proposals include the identification of specific roles to be played by the different actors - ECOWAS institutions, other West African IGOs, agencies of Member States, and international agencies concerned with food aid. Much emphasis is put in the report on close cooperation and coordination at the regional level to ensure the effective functioning of the system being proposed. The report is to be finalised by FAO on the basis of the recommendations of the Akosombo meeting; it will be presented for adoption at the next statutory meetings.

Floating Weeds Control Programme

79. The proliferation of floating weeds in some of the coastal areas of the region has caused much environmental concern and has led to the adoption of a programme for finding a practical solution. The African Development Bank (ADB) has allocated UA2,2 million to finance a study on the subject. The consultant started work in June 1994 and already, two of the three phases of the study have been carried out. This involved field missions to all Member States and information was gathered on the presence of floating weeds in lagoons, lakes, rivers, reservoirs and other standing water bodies. The missions also ascertained what control

measures have been introduced by Member States. On the basis of the data collected, project documents are now being prepared as part of a regional plan, to be implemented according to the priority nature of the problem posed by floating weeds in the project area. This phase of the study is expected to be completed in October 1995.

Trans-border Investment Scheme

80. A number of border zones possess resources and facilities which encourage industrial and commercial activities among the respective neighbouring countries. The Secretariat has initiated a study aimed at identifying some of these areas which could be promoted to become the basis for trans-border investments and act as growth poles, effectively linking adjoining Member States in some essential modern sector activities.

81. The report of the consultants has been submitted to the Secretariat and it will be presented at the next meeting of the relevant Commission.

Global Environmental Facility- West African Representation

82. Two seats have been allocated to the West African region on the Executive Council of the Global Environmental Facility. Three Member States (Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania and Nigeria) have expressed interest in the positions on offer and at the December 1994 session of Council, it was agreed that a meeting would be convened in Accra by the Chairman of Council to resolve the matter. In preparation for the proposed meeting, the Executive Secretariat wrote to the three Member States concerned, requesting for all available information on the matter.

83. Unfortunately, only Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria responded to the above request and the Executive Secretariat was obliged to notify the Chairman of Council about the incompleteness of the information required. It has, therefore, been

proposed to hold the meeting between the Chairman and the three Member States during the annual statutory meetings.

Regional Gas Pipe-line Project

84. The Community energy cooperation programme includes the project on the supply and distribution of petrol, petroleum products and gas. The first phase of this project involves the installation of a regional gas pipe-line for the supply of Nigerian liquefied gas to Bénin, Togo and Ghana. An agreement is still being negotiated between the four governments involved.

Regional Telecommunications Network

85. The developments taking place in the field of telecommunications have been so rapid that the international community has been reflecting on an effective means of coordinating and maximising the use of the available facilities. It has been suggested that the most cost-effective way to establish and operate the global network of the future is by adopting a three-tier structure for such a network. Under this strategy, one tier is reserved for connection within each country (national network); the second is for connecting all the countries in the region (regional network) and the third for the global trans-oceanic connection among the regions (global network). In the case of Africa, it has been suggested that it is possible to merge the network tiers into a single entity for lowest cost and at the same time maintain the flexibility of a multi-tier set up. This will provide the entire region with the telecommunications infrastructure needed to attract multinational investments. However, the network must evolve in sub-regions to be integrated subsequently into the regional network.

86. The Executive Secretariat is now preparing the second Telecommunications programme (INTELCOM II) in line with this approach. The overall objective of this programme will be to equip the present PANAFTEL network with large

enough capacity, and a high degree of system availability to handle intra-community and continental traffic without transiting in third countries outside Africa. It will accommodate the business communications sector which has hitherto been neglected. Also, the management of such a network will have to be under one agency in order to allow for private sector participation.

Improvement of Aeronautical Navigation

87. The Secretariat is collaborating with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in the Community project on the improvement of air safety and aeronautical navigation. The study for updating an earlier report is being undertaken by an American firm, Louis Berger, with financial support from the US Trade and Development Agency. After a review of the draft report recently presented by the consultants, the Secretariat has requested for a more detailed study of the main airports in the region.

Inter-state telecommunications links

88. Concerning the physical completion of the regional infrastructural network, the process was advanced during the period by the construction of the Guinea-Guinea Bissau link. There was also progress on the inter-state coordination meetings. One of such meetings was held in Praia where discussions centered on the establishment of an information data bank for better management of the sector, opening up of enough circuits for regional traffic, traffic and transit problems. The ECOWAS Fund also participated in the maintenance programme through the financing of two inter-state telecommunication links, namely, the Lagos-Cotonou-Lomé and the Conakry-Tambacounda-Dakar links.

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Rationalisation of West African IGOs

90. In 1991, the Authority mandated the ECOWAS Secretariat to commission an independent study to propose a pragmatic and flexible rationalisation plan for West African IGOs. The study was undertaken by IDEP a draft report was submitted in June 1994. A meeting of national officials and chief executives of IGOs was held in Accra from 19 to 22 September 1994 to consider the recommendations presented. The outcome of the meeting was submitted to Council during its session of December 1994 and a time-table of implementation was adopted.

91. It was proposed under that implementation schedule that after the ECOWAS authorities had adopted a decision on the rationalisation strategy and programme, the policy organs of all other West African IGOs should take a decision affirming their acceptance of the rationalisation programme that had been adopted.

92. A project unit is being established within ECOWAS Secretariat for the purpose of implementing the rationalisation programme. The immediate tasks of the project unit would include the translation of the above decision into an operational programme in the form of a "Project Document" monitoring the completion of the merger of the West African Health Community and the OCCGE, and the transformation of West African Clearing House into the West African Monetary Agency.

93. The Secretariat had expected the consultants to submit by the end of March 1995 the final report of the study, reflecting the directives of the Accra meeting of officials. On the basis of proposals made in the final report, the Secretariat would convene a meeting of IGOs to discuss modalities for implementing the rationalisation programme. When finalised, the Project Document would be presented to external donors for purposes of mobilising resources to finance the rationalisation scheme.

Merger of WAHC and OCCGE

94. The second meeting of Ministers of Health of the Community was held in Cotonou on 6 and 7 July 1995. The meeting considered the progress report of the implementation committee set up for coordinating the merger of the OCCGE and the West African Health Community (WAHC) into one regional health organisation - the West African Health Organisation (WAHO). The Ministers also considered the report of the ECOWAS Health Experts meeting also held in Cotonou from 3 to 5 July 1995 were presented to the ministerial meeting. After discussions, the following observations were made:

- the Implementation Committee needs to be enlarged to enable it carry out the expanded terms of reference aimed at achieving quick results. The membership of the Committee is now composed of Benin, Mali and Niger;
- adequate funding of merger programme needs to be addressed by ECOWAS, OCCGE and WAHC to enable the rest of the activities under Phase II be carried out;
- a monitoring sub-committee of the Ministers of Health is necessary to ensure that the momentum for the merger process is sustained;
- Member States must be urged to increase awareness at the national level of the merger of OCCGE and WAHC. In this regard, the Ministers made a commitment to brief and sensitise their

ministerial colleagues and make appropriate provisions in their respective national budgets to support the merger process.

Information Programme

95. The role of information in the Community-building process has been recognised as crucial by the statutory organs. Council has proposed the granting of observer status to the West African Journalists Association. Also, the Executive Secretariat has promoted the establishment of a network of West African journalists for the promotion of ECOWAS activities.

96. During the 36th Session of Council in December 1994, a Community Priority Programme of Action on Information was adopted. Council invited Member States and various concerned groups, especially media practitioners to mobilise the necessary resources in order to implement the series of activities and measures contained in the programme.

97. Since the adoption of the Priority Programme, the Executive Secretariat has written to request Member States to devote air-time for the regular broadcast of an ECOWAS programme on radio/and or television. Only two countries have so far introduced such programmes which are being sponsored by the Executive Secretariat.

98. The Secretariat called on Member States to draw up an elaborate programme for the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the founding of ECOWAS. As recommended in the Priority Programme of Action, a message of the Executive Secretary on the "State of the Community", was sent for transmission over national radio and television stations of Member States.

99. The Secretariat organised a quiz competition among students on the goals and objectives of the Community as part of the celebration of its 20th anniversary. Member States have also been urged to print commemorative postage stamps.

100. In collaboration with media organisations in West Africa, the Executive Secretariat is planning to hold a workshop which will prepare guidelines for the practise of journalism in West Africa. Proposals emanating from the proposed regional workshop will be presented for consideration and adoption by the decision-making organs of the Community.

Organisation of FEBAAC '96

101. The Council of Ministers authorised the Executive Secretary in 1994 to sign a cooperation agreement between ECOWAS and the company CLAIR RESOURCE LTD. for the organisation of the Festival of Black African Arts in 1996 (FEBAAC '96) in the United States of America.

102. The festival has the following objectives:

- to promote the image of Africa through culture;
- to stimulate the creativity of artistes in various fields;
- to open a new outlet for artistic production;
- to develop cultural cooperation based on the respect for mutual differences.

103. The Secretariat has communicated the information on the cooperation agreement between ECOWAS and Clair Resource Ltd. to all Member States and has also requested the Member States to give their active support and cooperation. Member States were also asked to submit to the Secretariat the name and address of the national official designated to be responsible for the coordination and follow-up activities related to the festival.

104. All the necessary information to facilitate the promotion and the organisation of the festival has been made available to the promoter. ECOWAS has also introduced the promoter to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which has agreed to give official support to the festival's organisation. As a follow-up, the OAU has sent letters on the festival to selected personalities proposed by the promoter. Five Member States have so far responded to the information sent to them and their representatives have been named.

105. In March 1995, the first preparatory meeting which constituted the official launching of FEBAAC '96 was held in Lagos for representatives of the participating countries. Another meeting was held in May 1995 to inform OAU Ambassadors in Lagos about the festival. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Atlanta, where the Festival will be held.

FESPACO

106. The Pan African Film Festival (FESPACO) is held in Ouagadougou every two years. During this year's festival, ECOWAS offered a special prize for a film that dealt with the subject of integration, highlighted the creativity of the citizens of the Community. The Special Prize was awarded to the Malian film maker Mr. Cheick O. Sissoko for the film "GUIMBA".

ECOWAS Fund activities

107. In view of the limited resources available in the budgets of the ECOWAS Fund for 1994 and 1995, the work programme has focused on appraisal and monitoring of the rural development and industrial projects currently being financed under the lines of credit of the African Development Bank (ADB) and the African Development Fund (ADF). The ECOWAS Fund undertook appraisal missions to four Member States and at the end of the missions decided to cancel some parts of the credit lines allocated to beneficiaries owing to difficulties encountered in the

implementation of the projects and also in satisfying the conditions for disbursement of the credit line.

108. In the process, cancelled lines of credit amounted to UA5,475,000 for ADB and UA4,909,000 for ADF. The ECOWAS Fund therefore had available unutilised resources amounting to UA8,231,000 for ADB and UA5,286,000 for ADF.

109. With regard to the unutilised resources, the options available to the ECOWAS Fund were to cancel the credit or to search for viable projects to utilise the resources quickly.

110. The Fund management decided to seek new beneficiaries who could benefit from the funds available. The search has so far identified the Madina Diassa Livestock Project in Mali and a private sector industrial institution in Côte d'Ivoire, SIMGAZ as possible beneficiaries. Negotiations are going on with the ADB for the necessary approval for the allocation of the lines of credit.

111. The Fund has also agreed with the ADB to utilise part of the credit line to finance the study on the restructuring of the ECOWAS Fund to the value of UA320,000. After these negotiations, the amounts not allocated will be cancelled.

FINANCIAL POSITION OF COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

112. The limited activity of the Community institutions may be explained by the tight financial position that prevailed throughout the period under review.

(i) ECOWAS Secretariat

113. The approved budget for 1995 was \$9.389 million. Contributions during the period January - June 1995 amounted to \$0.447 million representing 4.76%

of the budget. The unpaid balance of the 1995 budget is \$8.942 million. Payments of arrears on the budgets of previous years amounted to \$1.331 million. Thus for the first six months of the year, total resources available to the Secretariat to execute the work programme amounted to \$1.778 million equivalent to 18.93% of the approved budget for 1995. This situation calls for prompt action on the payments required in order to enable the Secretariat have an improved financial position to execute the programme of activities for 1995. The arrears of contributions to the budget of the Secretariat from 1980 to the present amount to \$41.643 million.

(ii) ECOWAS Fund

114. The financial position of the ECOWAS Fund is extremely critical. Between end of 1993 and end of 1994, the liquid resources of the Fund registered an overall decline of 15% from UA 6.770 million to UA 5.756 million. The deterioration has continued during the current year and at the end of March 1995, the liquid resources amounted to UA 5.189 million, a decline of 9.9%.

115. This poor financial position has resulted from:

- the continuing non-payment of loans granted Member States;
- the outstanding contributions to the second tranche of capital, an amount of UA23.64 million, expected from 13 Member States;
- the non-reimbursement of resources devoted to the construction of the two headquarters buildings; a total of UA4.328 million expected from 10 Member States;
- resources of the Fund being locked-up in the liquidation process of two banks - BCCI and the Meridien International Bank Ltd. This development makes the financial situation very bleak. The amounts involved are as follows:

BCCI - US dollar 6,376,071

Pounds sterling 2,330,735

Meridian Bank - US dollar 3,600,000

non-implementation of the directive of the Community in Abuja in August 1994 for Member States with outstanding contributions to the ECOWAS institutions to conclude a rescheduling agreement for repayment.

116. The above precarious financial situation has seriously eroded the credit worthiness of the ECOWAS Fund and affected its capacity to act as an efficient financial institution. The substantial amount of arrears and the very fact that many Member States do not pay regularly their contributions to the budget of the institutions can be interpreted by potential donors as an indication of the commitment of Member States to the Community and the priority they accord projects submitted to donors for funding. This low performance may lead donors to question the political will of the leaders of ECOWAS and conclude that there is little support for the institutions.

117. Indeed, this financial crisis has come at a very embarrassing moment in the life of the Community when ECOWAS must demonstrate that it is a credible organisation capable of leading and coordinating the regional integration process in West Africa. Another indication of the lack of interest is the fact that two years after the signing of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty, a majority of Member States (nine at the end of June 1995) had still not ratified it. The implementation of the important novel measures, such as the introduction of the Community levy is contingent upon the entry into force definitively of the revised Treaty.

Institution of Community levy

118. The Community levy will form the basis of autonomous financing arrangements for the Community institutions. A special meeting of national customs and financial experts, convened to discuss the modalities for the

introduction of the Community levy, has recommended for approval by the competent authorities of ECOWAS the rate of 0.5% for the levy on the value of imports of the Community from third countries.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Ratification of Revised ECOWAS Treaty

119. The revised ECOWAS Treaty was signed in July 1993. It was agreed that ratification should be completed by December 1993 so that the provisions could become operational by January 1994. This deadline was not adhered to and the revised Treaty is still not in force. As indicated above, the Community had adopted provisions under the Revised Treaty for strengthening and accelerating the regional integration process. The delayed completion of the ratification process is holding back the establishment of such vital institutions as the Community Parliament and the Economic and Social Council which are to be instruments for the mobilisation and effective participation of wide segments of the West African population in the integration process.

120. This problem of ratification needs to be addressed by Council and Authority, and a very strong appeal should be made to the Member States that have not as yet completed the ratification process to do so.

Staff accommodation in Abuja

121. Since the commissioning of the headquarters building of the Secretariat in Abuja, in July 1991, much emphasis has been placed on the provision of accommodation for staff to make possible the movement of the Secretariat from Lagos. In 1993, the Secretariat commenced negotiations with the Federal Government of Nigeria for a loan of 13.2 million dollars for the construction of staff housing units in Abuja. The negotiations could however not be concluded in 1994.

122. Council decided at its meeting in December 1994, that the Secretariat should be moved to Abuja and that movement must be effected at the same time. The Secretariat was requested to seek the assistance of the Federal Government of Nigeria in this exercise. The Nigerian delegation at that Council session undertook to provide the ECOWAS Secretariat with up to 100 housing units at Abuja. Consultations with the Nigerian authorities since then have indicated that the houses are not available yet, and provision will be made for their acquisition in the 1996 government budget. Meanwhile, the Secretariat has been advised by the Nigerian Government to consider the possibility of moving to Abuja in stages and to scale down the request made earlier in the year for 296 housing units or phase it over a number of years. These proposals are being studied by the Secretariat.

123. Meanwhile, the Secretariat has pursued the initial negotiations for the loan from the Federal Government to construct the houses for staff. Plans are far advanced with regard to the finalisation of the loan agreement. Further progress on this matter will be reported to the decision-making bodies.

Restructuring of the ECOWAS Fund

124. The Council of Ministers at the December 1994 session approved a programme for the enhancement of the financial resources of the ECOWAS Fund. Council also indicated that a study should be undertaken on the operational, financial, institutional and accounting aspects of the Fund in order to provide the necessary guidelines for the proposals on the restructuring.

125. The management of the Fund approached the African Development Bank (ADB) with a request to use part of the credit line from the ADB to the ECOWAS Fund to finance the cost of the study. In March 1995, the ADB approved the request of the Fund. Preparations have commenced for the study: interested consulting firms were invited to submit bids for the study, and the selection of the successful firm was completed in June 1995; the study will soon be under way.

126. The time frame recommended by Council has been delayed by three months, but given the importance the Community attaches to the restructuring, the study will be followed very closely to avoid further delays.

127. When completed, the proposals of the study will be presented to the decision-making bodies of ECOWAS for the adoption of appropriate policies that will make the restructuring a success.

REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

128. The signing of the Cotonou Accord in July 1993 was expected to mark the return of lasting peace to war-ravaged Liberia. Many problems have, unfortunately, hindered the implementation of the agreement, thereby hampering the peace process. War broke out once again and even increased in intensity. New factions were established while there was dissidence in the midst of those already in existence.

129. By the time the mandate of the Liberian National Transitional Government expired on 7 September 1994, very little progress had been made in the disarmament, demobilisation and encampment of the fighting forces. The six months provided for in the Cotonou accord during which to carry out the whole process, from encampment to the organisation of elections, proved unrealistic. The representatives of the different factions were opposed to all attempts by their leaders to call them back. Divisions and dissensions paralysed the activities of the LNTG.

130. In an attempt to remove the obstacles hindering the implementation of the Cotonou accord and to give new impetus to the peace process, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), the United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO) and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) signed the Akosombo accord on 12 September 1994.

131. By the end of November 1994, it became clear that the implementation of the Akosombo Agreement like all other agreements signed by the warring factions in the past, had suffered the same fate and had no chance of being implemented.

132. This gave the Chairman of Authority no other choice but to once again engage in consultations with the Member States of the Committee of Nine as well as a wide spectrum of armed and non-armed Liberians, with the aim of fashioning out a compromise solution that could bring durable peace to Liberia.

133. Following those consultations, a meeting of the Committee of Nine at Ministerial level was held in Accra, Ghana from 21 to 24 November 1994, with the participation of the United Nations. It was preceded by an all All-Liberia round table meeting on 21 November 1994, also in Accra.

134. The ministerial meeting endorsed the proposal presented by the Government of Ghana to the Liberians as well as the initiatives and efforts made by Chairman Rawlings to bring lasting peace to Liberia. A strong appeal was made to the factions to make the concessions necessary to end the suffering of the Liberian people.

135. The same warring factions then signed an Accord on the Clarification of the Akosombo Accord and adopted a time-table for its implementation in Accra on 21 December 1994. On their part, the factions that were not present in Accra, particularly ULIMO (J), the Lofa Defence Force (LDF), the Liberia Peace Council (LPC), the Central Revolutionary Council (CRC) and the Liberia National Conference (LNC) signed an agreement in Accra on 21 December 1994 by which they agreed to adhere to the Akosombo Accord.

136. There are, however, still problems hindering the establishment of the Council of State while some important issues are yet to be resolved, particularly the

equitable distribution of ministerial posts between the factions which had increased in number and all of which wanted to be represented in the executive, the other thorny issues are security zones, the imposition of a ceasefire, the control of the establishment of flow of arms, the distribution of posts amongst the different factions within ULIMO, etc.

137. In an attempt to find solutions to all these problems and to restore peace to the country, the ECOWAS Chairman, Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, convened a summit meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the Committee of Nine on Liberia which was held in Abuja from 17 to 21 May. This meeting was preceded by that of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Committee held also in Abuja from 5 to 6 May 1995.

138. The Liberian warring factions met with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Nine in Abuja on 19 May to look for ways of resolving issues over which there is still no agreement. These include membership of the Council of State, the choice of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, the choice of the successor to the Chairman and the length of time he would be in office. With regard to the choice of Chairman, the meeting noted that seven of the eight factions present supported the appointment of Chief Tamba Tailor. Only the LPC was of the opinion that the Chairman of the Council of State should be elected by the Council itself, as provided for in the Akosombo Accord. As for the post of Vice-Chairman, two factions were of the view that the other five members of the Council should be of the same rank and be given specific duties. Two other factions were in favour of the election of three acting Vice-Chairmen. Five of the factions supported the idea that the acting Chairman should be chosen among the five members of the Council of State. One of the factions was of the view that it would be better to elect or appoint the acting Chairman from among the three Vice-Chairmen, while another faction declared that the issue would be resolved by appointing a First and Second Vice-Chairman. As for the term of office of an acting Chairman one of the factions is yet to take a position while four of them suggested

that the mandate be limited to one month. On the issue of succession, five factions insisted that the decision should be left to the Council which would consult with the Committee of Nine. One faction wanted the issue to be resolved in accordance with the provisions of the Liberian constitution while two did not express any opinion on the issue. Finally, all the factions appealed to the Committee of Nine to help resolve the problem of ULIMO.

139. Although considerable progress has been made due to the spirit of compromise manifested by the representatives of the various factions, the parties are yet to arrive at an agreement. The third summit meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the Committee of Nine thus expressed the need for the Liberians to persevere and to consolidate their achievements. The meeting also called on the factions to consult their supporters on this preliminary phase in the final resolution of the outstanding issues. Finally, the meeting requested the Liberian factions to be ready to meet soon thereafter in order to sign a supplementary accord on all the outstanding issues.

140. Meanwhile, fighting has been going on in various parts of Liberia among the warring factions. It is a matter of great regret that the unfortunate situation in Liberia continues to prevail, and the Community can only express the hope that the Liberian leaders will soon seek the path of true peace. The Member States contributing troops to the ECOWAS Force (ECOMOG) have made a lot of material and financial sacrifices since the peace-keeping operations started. The regional authorities have called on the international community to support the efforts being made to bring peace to Liberia.

141. The continuing unrest, however, has not been well received by the United Nations. In a recent statement, the UN indicated that the mandate of the observer mission in Liberia would be reduced or withdrawn if hostilities continue after 15 September 1995. This statement should make the Liberian leaders seek lasting peace that they have avoided for so long.

142. The proposed UN action could give the impression that Liberia was being abandoned by the international community. It will be a tragic development if the policy is implemented. The presence of the UN observer mission in Liberia is a symbolic and psychological gesture that sustains the peace process.

143. Withdrawal of UNOMIL will mean a return to the table to draw up new peace accords. Presently, the responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the various Accords, Cotonou, Akosombo and Accra rests on the shoulders of both ECOMOG and UNOMIL. There should be no thought of one leaving the stage before the other and certainly not before total peace and stability is restored in Liberia. They must continue to exist together and work in constant harmony with one another. Although there had been a few instances of friction between them, their working relationship, especially between the top levels of their command structure, had been excellent. The few instances of friction may be with ECOMOG soldiers at check-points within Monrovia metropolis. The ECOMOG soldiers who are at check-points through rain or shine might feel insulted by their better-paid and better-equipped colleagues of UNOMIL personnel, if not properly addressed.

144. Harmonious working relationship however exists outside Monrovia. UNOMIL observers in various parts of Liberia openly assert their reliance on ECOMOG units in their locations for the performance of their functions. Also, despite its logistics problems, ECOMOG had always strived to provide escorts for UNOMIL and humanitarian convoys.

145. I must assert categorically that, it is not only desirable, but a condition of the peace process that cooperation between UNOMIL and ECOMOG at every level be enhanced and sustained. Modalities for cooperation down the line should be worked out so that the irritants to amicable interactions are eliminated.

146. The Community, therefore, appeals to Liberians to end the continuing outbreaks of attacks and possible full-scale warfare. Peace should return to Liberia

with the ending of the current leadership struggle among the warring factions. What the region needs is to see Liberia declaring and observing a ceasefire, demobilisation, installation of an interim government and the commencement of the election procedures. It is only such peace and stability that will bring back the process of nation building and regional integration to the country. No doubt, the instability in Liberia is constraining the harmonious functioning of the regional economy.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOWAS DECLARATION ON POLITICAL PRINCIPLES

147. In the last few years, elections have provided the opportunity for the expression of political pluralism all over Africa. The elections should, however, promote the establishment of really representative institutions which are the sole guarantors of a stable and peaceful political environment. In order to adhere to these principles which were endorsed by the Heads of State and Government in the ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles adopted in Abuja on 6 July 1991, several countries in the sub-region have organised or are planning to organise presidential, legislative, municipal and local elections. To this end, they have requested foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) to assist them by serving as observers during the elections.

148. In this connection, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guinea, on behalf of the government of his country, sent an invitation to the Executive Secretariat, requesting ECOWAS to send a representative to act as an observer during the legislative elections held on 11 June 1995.

149. The ECOWAS observer, just like OAU and other international observers, was able to accomplish his mission freely and make a report on what he saw in the voting centres he had visited.

CHAPTER IV

FACING THE PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTATION

150. The signing of the ECOWAS Treaty, twenty years ago, was an important turning-point in the history of the West African region. The signing of the treaty by all the Heads of State and Government was indeed an epoch-making event: casting aside their linguistic, political, historical and other major differences, the West African leaders agreed to form an all-embracing regional community.

151. This fact was achieved due to a number of fortunate circumstances of the period among which were: the declaration of the New International Economic Order, with its emphasis on collective self-reliance as a strategy for the development of third world countries; the shining example of the European Economic Community - its achievement of free trade status ahead of schedule, and the expansion of its membership to nine; the enthusiastic promotion of the idea of West African integration by two Heads of State (from the two main linguistic blocs); the technical and moral support of this idea by the United Nations through the ECA; etc.

152. The euphoria that greeted the establishment of ECOWAS, and the high expectations that it engendered in the ordinary West African citizen sustained the Community through its initial years and the inevitable teething problems. Indeed, the fact of the coming into existence of ECOWAS was directly responsible for settling some long running political differences among some Member States.

153. Another manifestation of the pervading goodwill and optimism of the initial years was the enactment of a number of Community decisions which effectively extended the scope and depth of regional cooperation beyond what had been envisaged under the Treaty. For instance, instead of the timid bilateral approach

to the sensitive issue of immigration, a protocol was adopted in 1979, only two years into the active life of the Community, which ensured the creation of true Community citizenship region-wide. Although the Treaty itself was silent on cooperation in political and defence matters, the Authority adopted in 1978 and 1981 respectively protocols on non-aggression and on mutual assistance in defence matters. Again, while cooperation in the agricultural and industrial sectors received perfunctory treatment in the Treaty, the Authority recognised soon afterwards the need for regional development policies and programmes in these two key sectors as a vital complement to the market integration strategy enshrined in the Treaty. In 1983, the Authority boldly proclaimed the creation of a single monetary zone as the Community objective in monetary cooperation.

154. It is indeed pertinent to observe that by 1983, only seven years after the Community became operational, the full range of Community programmes had already been adopted. Although at the time it was labelled Community Priority Programmes, consisting of trade liberalisation and related development support measures, that base has subsequently been expanded to ensure the achievement of all the possible forms of integration: monetary, market, physical and production integration. More than this, the Community cooperation programme with its complementary financial package administered by the ECOWAS Fund, is designed to facilitate the development of the national economies.

WHAT INTEGRATION ACHIEVEMENTS?

155. The question that naturally arises, as the Community pauses in its twentieth year of existence to reflect on its performance, is "what concrete progress has been made, in terms of assisting with the development of its Member States and in terms of achieving the integration of the sixteen national economies?" The more direct question, of course, is "what degree of implementation has been achieved since the full complement of integration programmes was adopted some twelve years ago?"

156. Since the focus of the integration strategy has been on market integration, there is a tendency to evaluate the achievements and impact of ECOWAS primarily in terms of the progress made on the trade liberalisation scheme. On that particular score, there is very little evidence of any progress made, not just in terms of official trade recorded under the three categories of intra-regional trade², but also in terms of printing of ECOWAS customs documents and putting them into use.

157. More visible progress has been recorded on other Community programmes, though. In the field of regional infrastructural development, the West African highways network is nearing completion. Similar success has been recorded in respect of the development of a regional telecommunications network. The first two phases of the programme for the free movement of persons have been largely completed by most Member States. The monetary cooperation programme has also advanced fairly satisfactorily, even if its implementation is basically attributable to the application of the various national structural adjustment measures. Less visible, but equally significant an achievement is the commitment of Member States to the harmonisation of their economic and financial policies - since this will enhance substantially the success of national SAPs and also advance the process of regional integration by evolving common macro-economic and sectoral policies.

IDENTIFYING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS

158. Almost invariably, commentators have asserted that ECOWAS should have made much more progress than has been observed. Past reports of the Executive Secretary to both the Council and the Authority have dwelt extensively on factors inhibiting the integration process generally, and some specific programmes in particular. It has been pointed out, for instance, that the poor economic performance which has dogged Member States since ECOWAS became operational

² Unprocessed goods, traditional handicrafts and industrial products.

shifted attention away from integration and long-term development issues to short-term macro-economic stability considerations. This also decreased the financial ability of Member States to support ECOWAS and other regional cooperation bodies. The enforced austerity measures within ECOWAS have hampered a more normal growth of the Community. The very existence of so many IGOs in West Africa hinders the integration process, etc.

159. Some solutions have been proposed in the past to these general problems and certain remedial measures of the Community have indeed been put into place³. In what follows, I should like to focus attention on those factors which could be said to be responsible for the low level of implementation of programmes already adopted.

Technical difficulties

160. The application of certain Community programmes and decisions could be difficult or impossible for various technical reasons. Where parallel or rival schemes co-exist (in the case of the common customs documents, the trade liberalisation scheme itself, and the ECOWAS Brown Card scheme, for example), it may prove difficult to apply these simultaneously. There may also be the problem of improperly formulated schemes or where additional instruments are required to make implementation possible (again, the trade liberalisation scheme is an example - between 1983 and 1990, the Community had to wait for the development of a technically more complete implementation package.) It is quite possible that the

³ such as the rationalisation of IGOs, replacement of direct contributions from Member States with a Community levy, improved economic management of national economies through the harmonisation of macro-economic policies, adoption of the Minimum Agenda for Action to enhance implementation of programmes.

technical negative aspects of the compensation mechanism⁴ have discouraged an enthusiastic participation in the trade liberalisation scheme.

Participation in decision-making

161. Some of these technical difficulties could be traced to poor conception of the programmes and insufficient consideration of the nature and impact of such programmes. This raises the issue of the technical competence of both the Community institutions and the technical commissions. The technical capacity of the Community institutions will be commented upon later. Concerning the technical commissions, there has been a problem of representation at meetings. It has been noted that, there is a serious problem of absenteeism: Member States failing to turn up for meetings, thus creating the problem of quorum. The quality of representation is also an issue; delegates are often found to possess the wrong qualification or to be too junior to have the ability to understand and contribute effectively to the debate.

162. This problem of representation and attendance persists at the higher echelons of the decision-making apparatus. The Managing Director has drawn attention of the Community to the discouragingly limited number of Ministers present at Board meetings of the Fund. At the Council level, rarely has any Member State sent two Ministers to a meeting, as required. Technically, this failure invalidates any decision taken by such a Council meeting. The record is better at the summit level but could be improved upon. There is also the general problem of continuity which is created by frequent cabinet changes - newcomers are less effective as briefs do not always cover exhaustively all issues concerned.

⁴ The mode of generating its resources and the dampening effect of this on participating governments, the expanding size of the annual budget and the indefinite nature of the scheme, the collapse of the identical CEAO scheme, etc.

Inadequate preparation for country participation

163. The poor level of representation stems in part from inadequate preparation at the national level for these statutory meetings. Where the background papers have been circulated and thoroughly reviewed at departmental levels and then in inter-ministerial committee meetings, it is quite possible that a sound country position would have been developed and a competent official designated to present and defend such a position at the ECOWAS meeting in question.

164. It is not certain that an efficient national machinery has been established in each Member State, and that such a machinery operates smoothly and on a regular basis. This internal mechanism is needed for inter-ministerial consultations and coordination, and also for the promotion of an effective involvement of the private sector in the integration process. During the review period, the signing ceremony of an important inter-state project cooperation agreement had to be postponed at the eleventh hour because a Member State submitted a request for significant modifications to the provisions of the agreement. How widely had the earlier draft texts been circulated and reviewed within the Member States concerned before the final draft was agreed upon at an international meeting? It may be recalled that the Community requested all Member States to circulate and have discussed internally the draft text of the Revised Treaty prior to its final consideration by the ECOWAS statutory organs. The response to that request was poor and one wonders how much the current problem of slow pace of ratification of the Treaty might be due to that failure.

Weak Domestic Base for Implementation

165. The involvement of all government agencies and private economic operators in the negotiation and adoption of Community policies and decisions has the added advantage of facilitating their eventual application. Where such prior knowledge is lacking, the difficult task of selling these regional programmes and

winning local support is created. Questions asked by West African businessmen during sensitisation missions to Member States and at the First ECOWAS Trade Fair in Dakar betrayed very inadequate preparation of the private sector for participation in the ECOWAS trade liberalisation scheme. If basic information on such a key Community programme is lacking, it is only a matter of conjecture how well the stage is set for the implementation of other regional programmes.

166. Community Acts and Decisions need to be internalised in Member States. Adequate information has to be prepared and disseminated in order to introduce these novel decisions and policies to all those affected by them or involved in their implementation. In many cases, some domestic enabling legislative and administrative measures need to be enacted before these Community decisions could be applied in Member States. There is very little evidence of adherence to the simple act of publishing Community decisions in National Gazettes, as stipulated at the end of every Council or Authority decision. Beyond these basic requirements, every new Community decision or obligation needs to be given careful study, and preparation to ensure proper compliance and application. This should normally call for the establishment of internal implementation and monitoring mechanisms. The quality of reports submitted, most often orally, by most Member States during statutory meetings on the status of implementation of Community Acts and Decisions points to inadequate monitoring arrangements. There does not also appear to be a sufficient internal capacity created for implementing decisions. Requests for basic information and participation in regional studies usually receive very poor response.

Resource Allocation for Regional Integration

167. In these times of economic reforms and austerity measures, the amount of resources allocated by a government to any of its programmes is a good indication of the priority assigned to that programme. By that yardstick, ECOWAS is in poor standing in the eyes of most Member States, and for a good number of

occasions, attention has been drawn to the need for creating a viable administrative structure responsible for ECOWAS affairs in each Member State.

168. The Community institutions are becoming aware, in their interaction with Member States, of the difference between an internal arrangement as elaborate as in Senegal (where a whole ministry is created for regional integration matters) and other cases where a middle-level senior official heads a small ECOWAS unit. There is an urgent need to enhance the internal arrangements in terms of its ministerial importance, manpower endowment, material resources and other budgetary allocation, capacity for co-ordination and monitoring, and participation of relevant organs (both public and private). To achieve this, the importance of ECOWAS and its activities must be felt.

169. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the programmes of the Community are geared towards finding solutions to the basic development problems of its Member State and these Community programmes could be the basis for national development plans and strategies. In other words, ECOWAS matters could and should take the centre-stage of national life in general and the economic management considerations of national governments in particular. If ECOWAS and its various initiatives are still at the periphery of national pre-occupations, it is mainly because the Community programmes have not been publicised enough, either within the government machinery itself or among the business community and the general public.

170. It is quite an exhilarating experience observing the change in tempo and importance a Community programme undergoes when the appropriate technical and political attention is accorded that programme. The Community monetary cooperation programme assumed great importance once the Heads of State and Government gave the matter their personal attention in 1983, and since then the ECOWAS governors of central banks have been piloting that programme towards the establishment of a monetary union. In a similar manner, the earlier exchange

of views and experiences on structural adjustment has now evolved into a formalised Consultative Forum of Ministers of Finance and Planning and Governors of Central Bank, with the harmonisation of the key macro-economic policies being pursued by Member States as the main point of discussion.

171. It is essential that the scope and content of other Community cooperation programmes are improved and their importance duly acknowledged by Member States.

Operational capacity of Community institutions

172. Since I assumed office, I have insisted on strict economy by the institutions and the observance of "zero growth" in the annual budgets - the slogan coined and pursued by my predecessor. It has not been easy adhering to this principle of zero growth, against the background of the potentials of the Community and what it should be doing to facilitate the development and integration of Member States. I have come to learn, in fact, that the Executive Secretariat has not evolved beyond the first phase of its organisational structure, which called for the recruitment of senior level professional staff to define the basic sectoral integration policies and programmes. With the rare exception of one division of a technical department, no concrete effort has been made all these years to meeting the personnel requirements of the Secretariat.

173. The observance of strict economy extends to all other areas and wherever there has been the possibility to mobilise supplementary resources from external sources, those avenues have been explored vigorously. There is, however, a limit to parsimony, and the efficiency of operations is being affected in many ways. The situation is aggravated by the level of contributions received from Member States. There has been no period, since my assumption of office, that the Community institutions have not been facing cash-flow problems. The trickle of less than 19% of the equivalent of the 1995 budget being received by mid-year can only mean

severe compromises on programme execution, if not a complete halt to most of them. Matters have not been helped by the very low response rate recorded concerning requests for information from Member States to supplement the desk studies that, for lack of resources, Community officials have been obliged to convert many important study programmes into.

174. It should be recalled that, in compliance with the Authority resolution in August 1994 on the liquidation of arrears of payment, a tour of Member States was made to negotiate a schedule of payment. Contrary to undertakings received during the tour, only three Member States wrote to confirm the agreement reached. Indeed, only Côte d'Ivoire has set out to honour the schedule agreed upon. Special mention should also be made of Nigeria and Benin, that have no payment arrears due to the Secretariat.

REMOVAL OF THE BOTTLENECKS

175. The above presentation does not exhaust the number of problems relating to the implementation of Community Acts and Decisions, and the impediments to the regional integration process in general. It may also be stated that this is not the first time that these issues are being brought to the attention of the ECOWAS policy-makers. But this fact does not in any way reflect the difficult nature of the problems identified. It would appear, indeed, that all that is required to remove most of these problems is a little good-will and the necessary attention to the implementation requirements of Community programmes.

176. It is unfortunate to remark that, twenty years after the creation of the Community, and in spite of the regular statutory meetings organised, ECOWAS matters do not permeate the governmental apparatus but remain the business of only a few officials. The necessary follow-up action expected after meetings and the adoption of decisions or programmes is sadly lacking in many instances. The involvement of all functionaries at the different echelons of government must be

encouraged. The sector ministries need a greater exposure to ECOWAS matters in order to elicit their effective participation. As the ECOWAS Trade Fair in Dakar amply portrayed, the private sector can be an invaluable partner in the West African integration process and a determined effort must be made to harness that potential.

177. It is suggested that during the sessions of both the Council and the Authority, some considerable time should be devoted to a discussion of ways and means of raising regional integration to the top of the national agenda, and revitalising the integration process.

178. The discussions during the statutory meetings should revolve around such issues as:

- priority attention to regional integration;
- elimination of duplications in the regional integration arrangements;
- effective participation of Member States in the Community decision-making process;
- ratification of protocols and conventions;
- commitment to the effective implementation of Community policies and programmes;
- strengthening the national capacity for implementing and monitoring Community acts and decisions;
- settlement of outstanding contributions to the institutions of the Community.

179. Unless these and related issues are seriously debated upon and a firm undertaking made by all Member States to eliminate the impediments to the implementation of regional policies and programmes, the Community should expect very little progress.

180. Regional integration holds the key to a prosperous future for West Africans and I trust that by addressing the implementation problems identified in this chapter, the statutory meetings marking the 20th anniversary of the Community will turn out to be an important watershed in the history of West African regional integration.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

181. West Africa is celebrating this year the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Community. In an address given by the Chairman of the Authority in Dakar on 28 May 1995 to mark the occasion, it was stated that, in many ways, ECOWAS has made positive contributions to the regional economy and West Africans have to be thankful for its existence. The Community has endeavoured, for instance, to preserve and enhance the many ties that, in spite of the political boundaries drawn up by colonialists, link the different peoples of the region. The Community has also fostered the free movement of persons and developed regional infrastructures. The Chairman paid tribute to the Founding Fathers for their vision and he also expressed gratitude to all those who, over the years, had contributed to keep the Community alive. This called to mind the many international organisations, within this region and elsewhere in the world, which had folded up or are moribund for lack of interest and support of their respective member countries.

182. Everyone commenting on the performance of ECOWAS believes that the Community should have achieved much more than the modest contributions attributed to it. Questions that immediately crop up during any such assessment include whether ECOWAS has had the means to enable it perform efficiently, in terms of resource endowment, conducive atmosphere, requisite back-stopping support in Member States, etc. Another pertinent question revolves round the effective participation of the different actors involved in the regional integration process (community institutions, government ministries, economic operators, non-governmental organisations and the general public) - a clear identification of roles, sensitisation of the actors, and necessary conditions to ensure their full involve-

ment. These and other relevant issues were critically examined at the regional conference on "Facing the 21st Century" and the workshops organised during the First ECOWAS Trade Fair to commemorate the 20th Anniversary.

183. Participants at the above meetings proffered many suggestions, but the main message from the Chairman of the Authority and from the President of Senegal, His Excellency Abdou DIOUF and other eminent persons was that the future prosperity of West African countries depended on the success of regional cooperation. However, the point was strongly emphasised that regional integration was not a substitute for the development efforts of Member States, but rather could only be a catalytic factor in the development process.

184. Several other important gatherings such as the Paris summit held under the auspices of UNESCO, the Asian-African Group, and the Global Coalition for Africa came to similar thought-provoking conclusions.

185. None of these may be an entirely new idea that has not been tried within the region. They are all being tried in one form or another already, either at the national or regional level. As some critics put it: "the solutions to Africa's development problems are well know. The question is how to apply them."

186. The application of these solutions depends on a number of factors such as how to work the different components into a comprehensive programme, the institutional and administrative capacity to execute the programme, the availability of the required human, material and financial resources, and above all the will to carry through such a programme.

187. This annual report has dwelt at some length on the issue of implementation of Community programmes and policies. The factors enumerated above as responsible for determining the success of national development are also applicable

to the West African integration effort. The programmes to make a success of ECOWAS and contribute to West African development have all been in place for a decade or more already. But for a number of reasons, none of them has been completely executed.

188. A few of the factors to be taken into account in an analysis of the difficulty of implementing Community acts and decisions have been identified for consideration at the 1995 statutory meetings. None of the solutions is beyond the capacity of Member States to implement. The problem we face is the will to make ECOWAS, or regional integration for that matter, to succeed.

189. Twenty years into the establishment of the Community, the will and strong desire for ECOWAS to succeed have not been evident because neither a true assessment of the regional integration option has been made at the national level, nor a serious attempt made to exploit the potential on a sustained basis. Out of such an assessment would emerge the true worth of regional integration and the urge to give it a serious try. It is only when the relevance of the Community has been determined would Member State develop the will to support it.

190. It would appear that, hitherto, ECOWAS and the regional integration ideal have been given mainly token support, on the basis of an intuitive belief that the Community is capable of contributing to the development of the countries of the region. It will, however, need more than token support from Member States for the realisation of the vision of an economically strong and united West Africa. As can be seen from the ideas advanced in this report, a more structured approach to regional integration must be adopted by the Community and its Member States.

191. A careful analysis must be made on the manner to proceed with the three current programmes of democratisation, economic liberalisation and regional integration. Each of these three processes is quite demanding, but if they are properly organised and executed, would prove to be mutually re-inforcing. We

must devise the right mix to ensure the survival and development of our region. West Africans suffer the indignities of increasing poverty and the growing irrelevance of their region in the international community, and they must be wishing for a firm reversal of these bad trends. West Africans look at the increasing success and growing popularity of regional cooperation around the globe, and they must be wishing for a similar success in their region.

192. It lies in our power to reverse the bad economic trends and make a success of regional integration in West Africa. The means to achieve both objectives and make of West Africa a zone of peace, stability and prosperity is well within our reach. What appears to be lacking is sufficient will and commitment. A dispassionate assessment of the Community and what it can contribute to regional development, will prove the wisdom in giving it all the support required. That support to regional integration must be manifested as much at the national level, as well as at the regional level.