

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES



TO BE TAKEN AWAY

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

NOVEMBER 1982.

C O N T E N T S

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The declining world economic situation continues to exert considerable adverse influence on the course of economic and social developments in the sub-region. We have had the occasion in the past to draw attention to this unhealthy relationship that exists between developments in the industrially advanced countries and the economic performance of Member States of the Community. This shows that after several years of striving to restructure our economies, the sub-region has still not changed its economic dependence on the outside world.

A cardinal reason for the formation of our Community is to be able, collectively, to get away from this aspect of our dependency status, for we have realised that as individual countries we are helpless and weak to have any influence on the world scene. While we still have a number of teething problems to overcome, we have nonetheless achieved some notable success.

It is gratifying to recall that at the Cotonou Summit of the Authority major decisions were taken particularly in the areas of agriculture and energy to lessen the Community's reliance on the industrial nations. The decision, for instance, to act together in order to achieve self-sufficiency in food for the sub-region in five years clearly demonstrates the concern of Member States over the mounting costs of food imports from the industrial countries especially in the face of sluggish foreign exchange earnings.

The current work programme therefore reflects not only on-going projects but also new directives arising from the Cotonou Summit. The work programme reflects the importance and the concern that we attach to agriculture and energy problems. I sincerely hope that given your support the work programme that we have formulated will go a long way to set us on the right course, not only to consolidate our political independence, but also to usher us on the path of sustained economic and social development of our Community.

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I shall now go on to give an account of what our performance has been since the last session of Council and then give an indication of what we feel should be the Community's activities for the coming year.

FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

This Section outlines the performance of the different institutions of the Community during the period under review. The account covers the Executive Secretariat, the ECOWAS Fund and the Technical Commissions.

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

The activities of the Secretariat may be presented under two headings: administrative matters, and economic and social programmes. Concerning the administrative programme of the Secretariat, I would like to highlight some developments in the area of staff recruitment, resignations, top-level country visits, finances, Ministerial ad hoc Committee on institutional matters and Community programmes, ECOWAS Social and Cultural affairs programme.

Staff Recruitment

The Secretariat had to continue with its deliberate policy of not actively recruiting personnel to fill all the approved vacancies. This policy which it is hoped would only have to be very temporary has been forced on us for at least three reasons. Firstly, a fresh directive is required on the issue of the quota system. Secondly, the problem of office space has shown no improvement. Lastly, in almost all cases, no positive response has been received from those Member States which have to send in replacements for the staff members whose appointments were terminated last year. However, interviews were conducted for the recruitment of translators and interpreters to strengthen the linguistic departments of both the Secretariat and the Fund. Letters of appointment have subsequently been issued to two translators and two interpreters for the Secretariat, and a translator for the Fund.

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Resignations

The Secretariat lost the services of two staff members who had just joined the office. Both persons -one was an accountant who had been sent to replace a compatriot, and the other (an industrial economist) had finally reported after over a year of being offered the position- declared their inability to work under the existing conditions of service.

Finances

The slow rate of contribution by Member States to the Secretariat continue to impede the operations of this Secretariat and the implementation of the Community Work Programme. Arrears, some of which go back to 1978, stood at more than 10 million U.A., and, in spite of repeated efforts, only three Member States have managed to make part payments of their assessed contributions to the current year's budget. Several times this year, the Secretariat has had to obtain overdraft facilities -with the attendant additional financial burden, in terms of heavy interest payments.

While we note with relief a certain amount of positive response received in this direction, since the May 1982 meetings, the financial situation is far from healthy.

Country Visits

Since the last session of Council a programme of visits to Member States has begun. These visits are being undertaken by the top Community officials to assess the impact ECOWAS is making on the countries, find out how Member States are implementing ECOWAS programmes, encourage them on to better performances, and discuss the difficulties encountered by them in fulfilling their obligations. The visits are to reinforce routine missions undertaken by schedule officers in connection with the execution of their specific programmes. Only a few Member States could be

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visited during the period, but it is hoped that the team would be able to go to all the remaining countries as soon as possible.

Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on Institutional matters and Community Work Programme

At its last session in May, 1982, the Council set up an ad hoc Ministerial Committee to review ECOWAS Institutional arrangements and the current Community programmes. The ad hoc Committee met in Cotonou under the chairmanship of Honourable Isidore Amoussou, Chairman of Council. A number of issues were raised during this first meeting most of which were to be subjected to further analysis by the Secretariat. The next meeting of the Committee would be just before the forthcoming November session of Council and at which it is hoped specific proposals would have been agreed upon on the following:

- Implementation of Community decisions and programmes at the level of Member States;
- Revision of Structures, rules and procedures of the Executive Secretariat and the ECOWAS Fund;
- Promotion of bilateral, multilateral and regional projects;
- Multiplicity of West African inter-governmental organisations.

With respect to the economic and social programmes of the Secretariat, these were related to the execution of the various approved Community programmes in the fields of trade and customs, immigration, money and payments, transport, telecommunications, energy, industry, agriculture, and social and cultural affairs.

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A number of study teams and missions were serviced by the Secretariat -some of these missions were undertaken in relation to the data processing programme on foreign trade and customs statistics, monetary cooperation programme, agricultural and industrial projects... Similarly, meetings had to be organised in respect of the definition of customs value, monetary and financial obstacles, cooperation with CEAO and MRU and the ECOWAS Tender Board on the telecommunications projects. The Secretariat, in turn, participated in a number of meetings on issues such as cooperation among economic cooperation groupings of the Third World, (this was organised by UNCTAD for Secretariats of economic cooperation groupings) fiscal policies and the organisation of ECOWAS games. Lastly, preparatory work begun during the period on some proposed meetings and seminars concerning immigration officials, customs administration officials, central bank officials, trade promotion institutions within the sub-region, and the officials of planning ministries.

Specialised and Technical Commissions

It will be seen from the account below on the execution of the Community Work Programme that most of the activities for the period under review related to ensuring the actual implementation of approved programmes. Therefore, only two technical Commissions meetings were called during this period. The meeting of the Trade, Customs, Immigration, Money and Payments Commission and a preliminary meeting of Directors of Research Departments of Central Banks to discuss the outline of new strategies in the Community's monetary programme. Since another year is about to end, the Finance Experts Committee is being convened to examine budget proposals of both the Secretariat and the Fund for the 1983 Financial Year. The reports of these meetings are being submitted to the Council of Ministers for consideration.

ECOWAS FUND

Activities at the Fund during the review period, may be presented under two titles: Administrative and Institutional Matters, and Economic Programmes and Activities.

The account on administrative issues covers personnel matters, permanent office building and the re-structuring of the institutions of the Community.

The Fund's professional staff was strengthened by the recruitment of two officers into the loans division of the Operations Department. The Fund, however, lost the services of its Librarian/Documentalist, who resigned her post; and during the period, it was found necessary to dismiss the Procurement Officer. To improve the capability of staff members, the Fund participated in three seminars; namely, on Development Banking organised jointly by the World Bank and ADB in Abidjan, on Treasury Management organised by Citibank in Harare (Zimbabwe) and on Promotion and Financing of Small and Medium-scale Enterprises organised by the Development Bank of Mali in Bamako.

Following the Authority decision of May, 1982, on the construction of the Headquarters of Community institutions, an internal committee was set up within the Fund to plan and coordinate the construction of the permanent buildings of the Fund in Lome. Proposals being put forward by the Fund for approval envisage the preparation in December 1982, of a construction programme, and other measures leading to the commissioning of construction works in July, 1984.

As directed in the Council decision establishing the Special Ministerial Committee to review the relationship between the Executive Secretariat and the Fund, written comments were prepared by the management of the Fund on the proposals relating to the re-structuring of the Fund. The outcome of the Committee's deliberations on this and other issues is expected to be put before Council at its November, 1982 session.

The economic programmes and activities of the Fund during the review period covered such matters as the financing of the telecommunications projects, management of Fund resources, cooperation with India and with the United States of America.

During the period, two related activities were carried out by the Fund in connection with the implementation of the telecommunications programme. On the one hand, the bids received in answer to the earlier tenders were analysed by a team comprising the ECOWAS Tender Board members, officials of ITU and of both the Fund and the Secretariat. After the analysis, the team was able to recommend the award of contracts worth only some \$12.5 million out of the total \$34 million for the entire programme. This was due to the fact that there were not enough competitive bids for many lots and in some cases no bids at all. On the other hand, three of the donors: the European Development Fund, European Investment Bank and the Italian Government held discussions with the Fund over the unsatisfactory outcome of the tenders. The EDF has made a free offer of the services of a consultant to reevaluate the project documents and to help prepare the way for re-tendering.

As at October, 1982, the Fund had received over the five-year period, some \$44 million or about 89% of the called-up capital; apart from the \$6 million outstanding on the capital account there is still a little amount left of the Fund's operational budget that a Member State has to contribute. The performance is much less satisfactory with regard to contributions to the Telecommunications Special Fund -only \$725.000 or about 21% has been paid up- out of the total \$3.5 million expected from Member States (60% in convertible currency and 40% in local currency). Interest yields on placements for the first nine months of 1982 came close to 6.0 million.

Staff from the Fund honoured an invitation from the Indian Government and undertook a mission to India. During the mission, discussions were held with government officials and various institutions on issues such as energy, agriculture, industry, telecommunications, transport (rail), technical assistance and export credit. The Fund is assessing its findings on the mission with a view to putting forward a programme of cooperation between ECOWAS and India.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CURRENT PERIOD

The activity programme related exclusively to the consolidation of previous achievements and the implementation of the few new Community policies and decisions.

It should be recalled that the Community Programme relates to the following:

- trade liberalisation and promotion;
- immigration matters;
- monetary cooperation;
- transport and communications matters;
- industrial cooperation;
- agricultural cooperation;
- energy cooperation;
- mineral resources development issues;
- social and cultural cooperation; and
- institutional and administrative matters.

I shall now proceed to give a short account of progress made on the implementation of each of the above programmes since the last session of Council.

Trade Liberalisation and Promotion

Delivery had been taken of the Transcribed National Tariffs in the ECOWAS Common Nomenclature during the period under review; these documents have been forwarded to all Member States. In the same area, the Secretariat undertook the task of formulating a coding system for customs regimes; this was done with the kind assistance of the UNCTAD Secretariat. The coding system is needed for the compensation scheme especially where an automatic data processing method is contemplated. The proposed regulations to govern the coding system is being submitted to the Trade and Customs Commission for consideration.

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It should be recalled that the Community opted for the Customs Cooperation Council's definition of Value (Brussels definition) when the Common ECOWAS Statistical Standards and Definitions were being adopted. However, Member States are now being individually offered the choice of adhering to a newer concept -the GATT definition of value. To enable Member States fully understand this GATT definition, its implications and the options open to developing countries, a seminar was organised for customs officials of Member States. The seminar also provided the forum for **discussing** the possibility of West African countries adopting a harmonised position on the issue of adhesion to this new concept of value. The report of the seminar is being submitted to the appropriate Commission.

The initial phase of the automatic data processing programme has almost been completed. This phase was to assess the situation in all Member States with respect to the machinery for the collection and processing of external trade statistics and what would be required to convert to a Community system of automatic data processing. The country reports being prepared include a draft project document to be submitted to the UNDP for assistance. To ensure the success of this programme, a training programme is being prepared for national officials concerned with the gathering and processing of external trade statistics; the training programme would commence in January 1983.

A meeting of Directors of customs was organised to consider the trade liberalisation and customs programme. The monitoring so far done on the implementation of these new measures indicates that another meeting ought to be called to discuss the general problems and difficulties encountered so as to be able to work out appropriate solutions. The Secretariat is preparing this meeting which is scheduled for the early part of 1983. Similarly, action has been taken towards the holding of a seminar on trade promotion in West Africa. It is hoped that this would bring the business community, government trade promotion officials and ECOWAS officials together to discuss problems relating to trade information, development of export potentials and trade promotion generally.

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Immigration Matters

An important area where the implementation of a Community programme has not been smooth is immigration. It is deemed necessary to convene a meeting during the first quarter of 1983 of immigration and legal personnel of Member States to review the implementation of the first phase of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment. In addition to a consideration of problems encountered by Member States, a proposal would be made that is aimed at the drafting of a Manual on the application of the Protocol and the settlement of disputes.

Monetary Cooperation

The monetary programme of the Community has been conceived within the mold of the trade liberalisation programme. More specifically, some monetary obstacles to trade have been identified as part of the non-tariff barriers (NTB's) that have to be eliminated by all Member States. While adopting a time limit of four years for the removal of the other NTB's, Council directed that those relating to money and payments should be handled in the general context of the monetary cooperation programme and their elimination should be within a reasonable period. The Secretariat has consequently been working on possible means of overcoming these problems. Preliminary consultations have been held with monetary institutions of the sub-region and the meeting organised recently for the Directors of Research of West African Central Banks reviewed proposals relating to monetary policies, possible adjustment mechanism to bring about limited convertibility and balance of payments support. These ideas would be developed further along the lines of comments received on the initial proposals.

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Transport and Communications Matters

The activities of the Secretariat in this sector during the period were devoted to road, air and sea transport as well as telecommunications.

The studies on the uncompleted portions of the Trans West African Highway Network was concluded during the period. These portions may be grouped into two categories: that set of uncompleted road portions on which engineering studies have been done and the Member States concerned have prepared tender documents, and that set of roads on which engineering studies are yet to be undertaken. The Community would have to assist in the identification of sources of funds to finance the execution of the construction involved of tender documents in the latter case.

The Secretariat was involved in the preparation of the West African Road Master Scheme, as directed by the Transport sub-commission. Similarly, attention was given to system on Trans-West African Highways as a source of finance for a proposed Road Maintenance Fund. Action was started on the idea of regionalising road maintenance training centres. Work was completed on the drafting of an ECOWAS Highway Code and the draft document would be submitted to the next meeting of the Transport Commission.

The first phase of the Coastal Shipping Programme, which consisted of a preliminary study of the existing situation and the identification of possible cooperation strategies would soon be presented to the appropriate Commission. In the field of air transport, the rationalisation and development project on air transportation within the sub-region have started with the participation of Airlines.

The period under review saw a sustained effort by the ECOWAS Tender Board in analysing the bids received on the telecommunications projects. It is expected that the findings of the Tender Board would soon be presented to the relevant authorities of the Community.

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Industrial Cooperation

Efforts in this field have been specifically on the study of the existing situation in the industrial sector of Member States with a view to drawing up a broad Community industrial development strategy. The field missions being undertaken in Member States in connection with this study also include discussion of guidelines for the presentation of projects identified as being of bilateral, multilateral or regional nature by individual Member States. Work on this programme would continue into the new year. Meanwhile, a paper is being submitted to the ad hoc Ministerial Committee on Community Activity Programmes on this particular issue.

Agricultural Cooperation

At its last session, Council adopted a Community Agricultural Development Strategy which incorporated guidelines on such key issues as nutrition, rural infrastructure and crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry, agricultural inputs and credit, storage and preservation, processing, marketing and trade, and research. The adopted strategy also includes procedures for the identification and implementation of projects of common interest with the assistance of Agricultural Development Committees specially established for that purpose. The Secretariat has just begun working out the modalities for implementing this aspect of the Agricultural strategy.

Energy Cooperation

During the May, 1982 meetings, Council took a decision on a set of energy projects and programmes which would constitute a Community short-term Energy action programme and which Member States were requested to cooperate together to implement. The Secretariat has initiated the necessary measures aimed at selling these project ideas to financial institutions for their participation. It should be possible to give a favourable progress report on this at the next session of Council.

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Meanwhile, a synthesis of the proceedings of the November 1981 Freetown Energy Symposium has been prepared for publication to enable the Community disseminate as widely as possible the important findings and conclusions that were arrived at.

Social and Cultural Cooperation

The programme adopted in this field covers the facilitation of free movement of Community Citizens and public enlightenment, organisation of national ECOWAS Week, establishment of ECOWAS Clubs in Member States, award of scholarships, student exchange programmes, establishment of equivalences of qualifications, cultural exchange programmes, organisation of Community games and sports, and award of ECOWAS Prizes.

The Secretariat has been involved in the preparatory work of an ad hoc Committee on the Organisation of the ECOWAS games in the Peoples' Republic of Benin. The Secretariat was similarly involved in the initial steps taken towards the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat of the West African Ministerial Conference on Youth and Sports at Ouagadougou.

The implementation of some of the other items on the Programme, especially on Cultural Exchange, Establishment of Equivalences of certificates and Student Exchange programmes among Member States has started. It may be necessary to draw attention to the cooperation strategy adopted which relies very much on the enthusiasm and active participation of Member States; the Secretariat would be counting a great deal on this support for the successful implementation of the social and cultural cooperation programme.

RELATIONS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD

There was continued inter-action with other institutions and organisations, both within and outside the sub-region, as well as third country governments, in connection with the implementation of the current Community Work Programme.

Sub-Regional and Regional Cooperation

At the West African and continental level, a number of organisations were involved in the Secretariat programme of work. A meeting was held in July with officials of CEA0 and MRU on the request for derogation with respect to the application of Article 20 of the Treaty introduced by these two organisations; another meeting was convened in October in order to agree on final proposals to be presented to the ad hoc Ministerial Committee on Derogation. The Entente Council and the ECA have been cooperating in the implementation of our road programme. Discussions were held with the Ministerial Conference of West and Central African States on Maritime Transport in connection with the Coastal Shipping Studies being undertaken. Similarly, the African Civil Aviation Commission was contacted on air transport matters. Both the African Centre for Monetary Studies and the West African Clearing House assisted with the Community Monetary Cooperation Programme.

United Nations Agencies

Continuing support was received from the United Nations Organisation and its specialised agencies. The UNCTAD Secretariat assisted in the implementation of most of our programmes (monetary cooperation, maritime transport, customs programme, etc...). GATT and the Customs Cooperation Council (CCC) collaborated with UNCTAD in organising the West African Seminar on the new GATT definition of customs value. A joint meeting was held with the ITC and UNIDO on a proposed Supply and Demand Study on exportable products within the sub-region. Contact with both UNESCO and FAO was maintained in connection with the Community Energy and Agricultural programmes respectively.

Other International Organisations and Foreign Governments

ECOWAS attended the annual general meeting of the IMF and the World Bank and held discussions with officials of these financial institutions on the Community Monetary programme as well as the funding of some of our development projects. As a result of discussions held during the period, the Commonwealth Secretariat would be assisting in the training programme being designed for West African Customs and Statistical officials. The USAID continued its assistance to the Community in the agricultural, agro-industrial and energy fields. Contact was established with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) with a view to working out areas of cooperation. The French government's assistance to the Community continued in the field of customs cooperation programme.

Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (E C D C)

An additional dimension was given to the Community's involvement in the promotion of Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC) with our participation in the Working Party of Integration Secretariats organised by UNCTAD in July. The meeting which brought together Secretariats of economic cooperation groupings of Asia, Africa, the Caribbeans and Latin America provided an opportunity to review the success of past and current integration and cooperation strategies and to know of the different cooperation programmes being executed in the different sub-regions of the Third World. A number of bilateral contacts were established by the ECOWAS delegation with discussions centering on possible areas of cooperation, follow-up actions are now being planned. There are good indications that these contacts would be very beneficial to the evolution of ECOWAS and the establishment of an economic community within the West African sub-region.

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1983 BUDGETS OF THE INSTITUTIONS

As has become the tradition, the Annual Operational Budgets of the Executive Secretariat and the ECOWAS Fund for the next Financial Year are being submitted to the November joint session of the Council and the Board of Directors.

The request being made in respect of the 1983 Budget of the Secretariat is estimated at 7,906,593 Units of account, an increase of about 8% over the 1982 approved budget of 7,296,489 Units of account. If one excludes the three new items (construction of headquarters, renting of office accommodation and implementation of social and cultural programmes) it will be seen that we have indeed endeavoured to hold down the 1983 Secretariat Budget to its 1982 size.

The draft Budget of the ECOWAS Fund is estimated at 3,684,292 Units of account which is an increase of about 30% over the 1982 budget. The increase in expenditure may be attributed principally to the architectural designs for the headquarters of the Fund.

C O N C L U S I O N

The resources of the Community have been utilised in consolidating our achievements. These achievements may be considered to have taken the form of Member States coming together to formulate and adopt common development strategies and policies. While appreciating the importance of this, the Community has come to realise that a greater challenge lies in the implementation of the policy measures and programmes at the national level. The consolidation process has, therefore, taken the form of getting Member States properly prepared to execute these programmes and to meet their other Community obligations.

It has become clear that much more needs to be done before a smooth and well-functioning machinery is truly established within each Member State to implement Community decisions and to integrate ECOWAS activities into national programmes. From the monitoring process set in place, it has been observed that there is a general lack of a tradition of proper implementation of international economic commitments at the national level. If Member States are to benefit by ECOWAS and to have the development of their national economies enhanced through our joint Community policies, the requisite institutional machineries and administrative procedures must first be established at the national level.

DETAILED COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1983

1. TRADE LIBERALISATION AND PROMOTION PROGRAMME

- a. Harmonisation of the three sub-regional trade liberalisation regimes and systems of compensation
- b. Establishment of a Common External Tariff
- c. Harmonisation of Internal Indirect Taxation
- d. Monitoring the utilisation of ECOWAS Customs and Statistical documents
- e. Establishment of an ECOWAS Automatic Data Processing system
- f. Training of Customs and External Trade Statisticians
- g. Publication of ECOWAS Trade News Bulletin
- h. Definition of Trade Information Policy and Programme
- i. Cooperation among Trade Promotion Centres of Member States
- j. Development of Traditional Handicrafts
- k. Demand and Supply studies on exportable products
- l. Cooperation in packaging, marking, labelling and inspection of goods.

2. IMMIGRATION PROGRAMME

- a. Monitoring application of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment
- b. Harmonisation of procedures and control formalities at borders.

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3. MONEY AND PAYMENTS PROGRAMME

- a. Study on Monetary Policies and Adjustment Mechanism towards limited convertibility.
- b. Study on balance of payments situation of Member States and the institution of a balance of payments support system.

4. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

- a. Development of the Trans-West African Highway Network.
- b. Road Maintenance Programme.
- c. Harmonisation of International Road Legislation and Control System.
- d. West African Coastal Shipping
- e. Free Zones and other Port Facilities for Land-locked Member States.
- f. Utilisation of Airline Capacity and Standardisation of Equipment.
- g. Development of the West African Telecommunications' Infrastructure Network.
- h. Telephone routing and Telegraphic Plan within the sub-region.
- i. Cooperation between Telecommunications Training Institutes.
- j. Pre-feasibility studies on Telecommunications Equipment Industry.
- k. Postal Routing within the sub-region.

5. INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME

- a. Formulation of Regional Industrial Development Strategy.
- b. Studies on establishment of industrial projects.

6. AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME

- a. Implementation of the Agricultural Development Strategy
- b. Pre-feasibility and feasibility studies on the Selected Seed Production Centres
- c. Pre-feasibility and feasibility studies on the Selected Cattle Production Centres
- d. Studies on the establishment of agricultural projects

7. ENERGY COOPERATION PROGRAMME

- a. Implementation of short-term Energy Projects
- b. Creation of Energy Resources Development Fund
- c. Creation of Regional Energy Information Centre
- d. Implementation of the Afforestation Decade Programme

8. MINERAL RESOURCES PROGRAMME

- a. Evaluation of ECOWAS Mineral Resources
- b. Formulation of ECOWAS Mineral Resources Development Policy
- c. Creation of Mineral Resources Development Centre

9. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME

- a. Encouragement of Cultural Exchange Programmes among Member States
- b. Stepping up Student Exchange Programmes and Scholarship awards among Member States
- c. Cooperation among Educational Institutions on Higher level Training Programme, Diplomas and Establishment of Equivalences
- d. ECOWAS Social and Cultural Bulletin
- e. Organisation of ECOWAS Games