

**ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
OF WEST AFRICAN STATES**

**COMUNIDADE ECONÓMICA DOS
ESTADOS DA ÁFRICA OCIDENTAL**



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

**33rd ORDINARY MEETING OF THE ECOWAS MEDIATION
AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

Abuja, 12 December 2014

**MEMORANDUM ON THE POLITICAL AND
SECURITY SITUATION IN THE REGION**

I. Background

1. Your Excellencies may recall that at the 32nd meeting of the Mediation and Security Council, discussions were held on the situation in Guinea Bissau and Mali. With respect to Guinea Bissau, the Council reiterated its support for the planned roundtable conference to facilitate the implementation of reforms, and restated its commitment to continue the region's support to democratic consolidation and economic recovery in the country. With regards to Mali, the meeting particularly expressed concerns on the worsening of the humanitarian situation, marked by targeted attacks on MINUSMA officials and humanitarian workers. The meeting recommended for the non-state armed groups to cease all acts of hostility, including violent attacks, on Government forces, MINUSMA and civilians, and for the groups to explore peaceful means of addressing the issues in the crisis. The recommendations of the meeting were approved by the 45th Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government.

2. In line with the directives of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, measures were taken by the ECOWAS Commission in close collaboration with the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), the International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF), and the United Nations to reactivate the International Contact Group on Guinea Bissau (ICG-GB) as a veritable platform for coordinating development assistance to Guinea Bissau's reform process. In Mali, the Government and the non-state armed groups have been meeting within the framework of the inter-malian dialogue to work towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis. The armed groups who have been part of the Algiers' Talks have also demonstrated rectitude and fidelity to their recent ceasefire agreements with the Government. Below is a detailed analysis of the situation during the period under review:

II. Update on the Political and Security Situation in Guinea Bissau

3. Guinea Bissau is currently deeply engaged in the reconstruction phase of the on-going reforms that will strengthen the stabilization process in the country. On the political front, the government has prioritized an inclusive approach to governance as a way of forging national consensus and mobilizing the citizens for the reforms. It has also aggregated a three-phase

reform programme encompassing the Emergency, Contingency, and Development Plans, and has in this regard, commenced the mobilization of development partners' assistance.

4. On the security front, the country has consolidated its stability since the advent of the current democratic government. The ECOWAS Military Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB) has also complemented the efforts of the security forces in the maintenance of peace and security. In addition, the implementation of the ECOWAS Defence and Security Sector Reform Programme (DSSRP) has proceeded smoothly, with the barracks rehabilitation phase nearing completion. As part of efforts to strengthen the defence and security sector reforms, President Jose Mario Vaz relieved the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General António Indjai of his appointment, and replaced him with General Biague Na Ntan. He has an onerous task of right-sizing and professionalizing the armed forces.

5. On the socio-economic front, a renewed international support aimed at reviving the economy was strongly expected after a two-year transition in Guinea Bissau. A high rate of poverty still prevails in the country. However, the African Development Bank projects a growth of 2.8% in 2014 compared to 0.3% in 2013. The ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development has also expressed its readiness to fund private sector projects in Guinea-Bissau starting from US\$1 million. President Vaz has promised to closely review all contracts for the exploration of natural resources including fishing agreements. This has resulted in the signing of a three-year fishing partnership agreement with the European Union. The continued support from the International Community will surely impact the political will within Guinea Bissau to sustain peace and stability.

6. ECOWAS has stepped up its support in the country through its frontline role in multilateral diplomacy. From 9th -13th September 2014, it participated in a joint assessment mission to the country which led to the enhancement of coordination on development assistance among partners. It also co-hosted a high-level meeting on Guinea Bissau at the margin of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2014. In November 2014, it co-facilitated the reactivation of the International Contact Group on Guinea Bissau (ICG-GB) to coordinate partner assistance for the country's reform and in particular to assist the government in organizing a donor round-table in March 2015.

7. Given these prevailing circumstances and in light of the recent prospects of economic recovery and political stability in the country, it is imperative for the current tempo of enthusiasm by development partners to be sustained. In this regard, coordination and harmonization by partners would be key to sustenance of the reforms.

III. Update on the Political and Security Situation in Mali

8. Since the last Ordinary Summit in July 2014, the negotiations in Algeria have been characterized by a renascent expression of enthusiasm by the majority of stakeholders to utilize the Peace Talks as a vehicle towards articulating and aggregating their interests and needs, with the aim of committing to an Agreement which will be owned and implemented by the people of the country. On its part, the Malian Government has demonstrated the much-needed leadership by undertaking to “spare no effort to breath the glimmer of peace, security and national reconciliation” according to Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation during the 4th stage of the inclusive inter-Malian dialogue between the Government and the non-state armed groups in Algiers on 20 November. Similar pledges were also made by the various groups in the north.

9. On the security-front, a rash of attacks allegedly sponsored by terrorists said to be unhappy with the progress of the Algiers talks occurred from the months of August to October. Two of the deadliest attacks were targeted at peacekeeping contingents from African countries. On 8 September 2014, five Chadian personnel of MINUSMA were killed when their vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb at Aguel'hoc, near the city of Kidal. In the same vein, there was a terrorist attack on the Nigerien contingent in October, during which nine personnel were killed. These incidents have however not derailed the course of the peace talks.

10. The Ministerial meeting of the African Troops Contributing Countries to MINUSMA held in Niamey on 5 November 2014 focused on the security situation in northern Mali and the challenges that the MINUSMA forces are facing due to terrorists attacks. It also discussed the status for deployment of MINUSMA troops, the coordination of forces deployed in Northern Mali (MINUSMA, Malian Forces and French Forces) as well the operational capabilities of MINUSMA to effectively face the current security challenges in northern Mali. There are concerns over the non-refund of the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) in respect of

AFISMA by the United Nations (UN). It would be recalled that states and Development Partners that contributed to the UN-domiciled AFISMA Trust Fund did so to ensure the funding of the Mission, particularly the reimbursement to the TCCs. In this regard, it is essential for the funds to be made available to the AU and ECOWAS, to enable us offset the pre-financed activities of AFISMA.

IV. Update on Upcoming Elections in 2015

11. In the course of the year 2015, five (5) Presidential elections will be held in Nigeria, Togo, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. In fact, these elections represent another critical test for peace and political stability, and consequently for economic growth and social progress.

12. In Nigeria, the ECOWAS pre-election fact-finding mission in Nigeria was held from 27 October to 11 November, 2014. Led by H.E John A. Kufuor, former President of Ghana, the mission held extensive discussions and meetings with key stakeholders involved in the electoral process. The Mission identified the following major issues as the critical factors in the elections: capacity of electoral institutions, the issue of internal party democracy and democratic culture by the political class, and lingering security challenges in the North-Eastern part of the country.

13. In Togo, the ECOWAS Pre-Election Fact Finding Mission was led by H.E Leopold A. J. Ouedraogo, Member of the ECOWAS Council of Wise, from 6 to 16 October 2014. The Mission met with all the stakeholders and agencies involved in the electoral process. The actual social and political climate is not very different from that of the 2010 election and similar to the climate that prevailed during the pre-election crisis that preceded the 2013 legislative elections.

14. Significant progress has been recorded in the efforts being made to improve the general election process in Togo. However, the effort to enhance the security and integrity of the electoral process remain insufficient when the essential political issues and reforms are yet to be addressed. The reluctance of the political class to ensure consensus to enable the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement is due to the position of the ruling party and the opposition. Controversial issues in this regard remain the limitation of mandates and the two-round voting system.

15. In Burkina Faso, following the resignation of former President Blaise Compaoré due to mass demonstrations after attempting to revise the constitution, an interim government was elected. The Charter of the Transition in line with the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance will last for a period of 12 months at the end of which Presidential and legislative elections will be held. Article 16 of the Charter stipulates that the members of the transitional government are not eligible to participate in both Presidential and legislative elections.

16. Article 22 of the Charter emphasizes on the need to consider the participation of Burkinabès abroad for the upcoming Presidential election in conformity with the disposition of the Constitution and electoral act. Considering the large number of Burkinabès abroad, there is an urgent need for the INEC to update the biometric voter registration so as to meet the November 2015 deadline for the Presidential election with regards to the transitional roadmap and also embark on massive sensitization campaign. A detailed Memorandum on this will be presented in the course of this Meeting.

17. In Guinea, the 2015 presidential election will be keenly contested and exciting. As each political coalition believes they will win in 2015, it is imperative to ensure that the elections are carried out in a transparent and credible way. This means creating an environment of trust in the political system by ensuring consensus of all stakeholders before any reform is implemented; ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders at all stages in the preparation for the elections; early update of the voter registration; securing the entire electoral process; and addressing the issue of the effective functioning of the CENI and its composition.

18. In Cote d'Ivoire, the reconstituted Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was inaugurated on 5 September 2014, composed of 17 members, including a representative of the President of the Republic, four from the administration, four from the civil society, four from the ruling party and four from the opposition. Initially, this newly constituted IEC was not recognized by the opposition Ivoirian Popular Front (FPI) and the Alliance for Democratic Forces (AFD), who alleged that the new Head of IEC would not guarantee a credible election. However, following reassurances from the Government, the opposition parties returned to the Commission to work together with other stakeholders towards ensuring a free and fair Presidential Poll in 2015.

19. Based on the Commission's analysis, the Electoral Commissions in the concerned five Member States are on course in their preparations for the elections in 2015. ECOWAS remains engaged with the monitoring of their preparations to ensure that all the stages of the electoral processes are credible and transparent.

V. Update on Regional Programmes on Maritime Security

20. Your Excellencies may recall that at the 44th Summit of the Heads of State and Government in Yamoussoukro, the Authority approved the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategies (EIMS) and urged its expeditious implementation. In activating this decision, a meeting of the Chiefs of Naval Staff (CNS), Zone E, comprising Benin, Nigeria, Togo and Chief of Gendarmerie of Niger held on the margin of the Meeting of the Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff (CCDS) from 9 to 11 September 2014. The meeting discussed the operationalisation of the ECOWAS Pilot Zone E, and endorsed the secondment of officers from Member States comprising of naval officers and civilians and the pledging of Navy Patrol Boats and Air Surveillance for the operationalisation of Pilot Zone E by January 2015. The modalities for establishing and operationalizing the Zones F and G are in progress. The requirements for the hosting of the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre (MMCC) for each zone as well as the Regional Maritime Coordination Centre (RMCC) have been forwarded to Member States. ECOWAS Inspection Team will conduct an Assessment Visit in 2015 to ascertain the most appropriate country to host the RMCC in line with its existing rules and regulations.

21. The collective synergy among institutions of ECOWAS, ECCAS, and the GGC culminated in the Summit of the Heads of State and Government held in Yaounde, Republic of Cameroon from 24 to 25 June 2013. The Summit endorsed Cameroon to host the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre (ICC) and adopted its strategic documents. Accordingly, the ICC was inaugurated on 11 September 2014. The inauguration was preceded by the meeting of Heads of Institutions where documents aimed at operationalizing the ICC were adopted. The seconded interim functionaries of the ICC have assumed duty and they are expected to be on secondment for a period of six months (i.e. September 2014 to February 2015). Col. Abdulrahman Dieng was seconded by ECOWAS to serve as the Interim Executive Director, to be supported by a Deputy from Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and an Administrative Officer from the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC).

VI. Analysis and Conclusion

22. On the situation in Guinea Bissau, although the government is financially handicapped in solely financing the country's reform programmes, it has nonetheless demonstrated a high degree of ownership and leadership in formulating the reforms. Development partners have also shown enthusiasm in supporting the implementation of the reform. However, the critical issue is to ensure that partners' support is in line with the priorities of the government and people of Guinea Bissau. In addition, there is need to sustain the current coordination and complementarity in donors assistance. On the security situation, there is a need for ECOWAS to facilitate enhanced support for the Defence and Security Sector Reform Programme by other international partners. On ECOMIB, it is essential for other partners to complement ECOWAS's efforts in supporting the mission to enable it continue its stabilizing role in the country.

23. On the situation in Mali, despite attempts to sabotage the constructive approach to resolving the crisis in northern Mali, the Government and the armed groups in the north have demonstrated unparalleled commitment and tenacity to the talks. This is a welcomed development. Perhaps the major indicators of the rapprochement between the Government and the groups in the North have been their commitment to confidence building measures, including prisoners' swap and a more fastidious observance of the ceasefire by the government and the armed groups since July as well as their full participation in the Algiers' talks. Disagreements during the meetings have also been addressed constructively and even when parties did not agree on procedural issues, they have learned to tolerate and accommodate each other. Indeed, the peaceful approach being adopted by the parties is more sustainable as the on-going talks in Algiers are expected to address some of the root causes of the fighting, particularly resolution of the issue of cantonment and presence of the Malian armed forces in all parts of the north, demobilization and reintegration of elements of the non-state armed groups, resolution of the question of inclusiveness and participation in governance by ethnic groups in the north and the reform of the Malian Defence and Security Forces.

24. On the upcoming elections in 2015, ECOWAS, in compliance with the provision of the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and that of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention

Framework (ECPF) which states that ECOWAS shall facilitate the provision of assistance to Member States and local constituencies in the preparation for credible elections, will continue to monitor the situation to ensure adherence to the Constitutional Convergence and Democratic Election Principles in the Supplementary Protocol. It will also deploy: Pre-election fact-finding missions, Long Term Observation/Situation Room and Election Observation missions in order to cover all aspects of the electoral process in these countries. The Commission will as well continue its support for strengthening the electoral institutions and contribute to sensitizing the citizens to enable them perform their civic responsibilities.

25. In the light of the above analysis, I wish to make the following recommendations:

VII. Recommendations

Recommendations on the Situation in Guinea Bissau

- i. The Council should endorse the decisions of the ICG-GB relating to the comprehensive post-transition reforms, Defence and Security Sector Reform (DSSRP) and ECOMIB, as outlined below:
 - a. That the ICG-GB should constitute a coordination mechanism, which allows its participants to align its support programs with the priorities set by Guinea-Bissau and to avoid overlaps.
 - b. That all international partners should actively participate in the Guinea-Bissau International Donor Conference, which will be organized in February or March 2015 in Brussels. In this regard, it stressed the need for international partners to adopt a medium-to-long term perspective when designing its support programs to Guinea-Bissau.
 - c. That national efforts on the DSSRP should be supported by the international community in an inclusive and coordinated way, with a division of tasks and responsibilities in accordance with the methods and objectives set by the authorities of Guinea-Bissau, which should be translated into a consolidated Roadmap.
 - d. That ECOMIB should enjoy a formal invitation by Guinea-Bissau, setting-out a clear mandate and timeframe for its activities. It also invited the UN Security

Council to consider this Force's mission and coordinate it with UNIOGBIS' mandate.

- ii. ECOWAS should work in collaboration with development partners for resource mobilization for implementation of the reforms, and facilitation of an international donor conference to be held in Brussels in early 2015;
- iii. That the ECOMIB mandate should be renewed for a period of six months. In this regard, international partners should support with financing of the Mission, particularly in the area of troop and equipment deployment.

Recommendations on the Situation in Mali

- i. Council should reiterate its earlier call to the terrorist groups in northern Mali to cease all acts of hostilities, including violent attacks on Government forces positions, MINUSMA and civilians;
- ii. There is need for the UN to urgently reimburse ECOWAS from the AFISMA Trust Fund to enable the payment of TCCs for the deployment of personnel in respect of the Mission ;
- iii. Council should express the need for all the parties to sustain their commitment to the Inter-Malian Dialogue currently taking place in Algiers, in line with the principles of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement. To this end, the parties should take diligent measures to ensure that the Agreement is inclusive and owned by the people of the country;
- iv. Council should reiterate its earlier call for the urgent intensification of the Inter-Malian Dialogue in line with the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement as well as the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission as complements to on-going processes;
- v. Council should renew its expression of solidarity to the Government of Mali and in this regard, express the readiness of the Council to continue its support to the on-going peace process aimed at ensuring the implementation of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement.

Recommendations on Up-coming Elections in 2015

- i. There is an urgent need for all electoral commissions to expedite actions to include new eligible voters to avoid disenfranchisement and to update the voter register;
- ii. Initiate early high diplomatic missions to Togo with a selection of accepted Mediators to the parties, if deemed necessary, to accompany the process as the Togolese opposition regroup under a new organization called "Combat pour l'Alternance Politique en 2015 (CAP 2015)" which has threatened to launch mass demonstrations;
- iii. The ECOWAS Commission to continue with planned electoral assistance packages to support the electoral process in these countries in the preparation of free, fair and transparent elections;
- iv. The ECOWAS Commission is invited to closely monitor the electoral processes in the region and design appropriate and adequate missions to support countries organizing elections.

Abuja, 12 December 2014