



BUILDING TODAY, ECOWAS OF THE FUTURE
CONSTRUIRE AUJOURD'HUI LA CEDEAO DE DEMAIN
CONSTRUINDO HOJE, A CEDEAO DO FUTURO.

51ST ANNIVERSARY OF ECOWAS

MESSAGE BY H.E DR OMAR ALIEU TOURAY
PRESIDENT OF THE ECOWAS COMMISSION

Esteemed Citizens of our Community,

Today, as we commemorate the 51st anniversary of our Community, I address you with a profound sense of pride, responsibility, and renewed determination. For 51 years now, ECOWAS has stood as a symbol of unity, cooperation, and shared aspiration for a peaceful, prosperous, and integrated West Africa.

This year's theme, **"Build the ECOWAS of the Future, Today,"** is both a clarion call to action and a statement of intent. It reminds us that the future we envision for our region will not emerge by chance. It must be consciously and collectively built through the positive decisions we take and the commitments we uphold today.

Fellow Community Citizens,

In these 51 years, our Community has made remarkable strides: **We have facilitated free movement across borders, allowing our people to travel, trade, and connect without barriers. We have advanced intra-regional trade, implemented a Common External Tariff, and developed critical regional infrastructure, linking our capitals and markets. We have laid the groundwork for a single currency, built a regional electricity market, and extended digital connectivity across borders. We have stood together in the face of epidemics, insecurity, and natural disasters, offering humanitarian support and strengthening healthcare and food systems. We have invested in our most valuable resource (our people) by promoting gender equality, youth empowerment, and human capital development. We have upheld democracy, dispatched election observation missions, and deployed our Standby Force in defence of peace, democracy and regional stability.**

These achievements, while significant, are not conclusive chapters in our history. They are just the building blocks of a future that we must continue to shape together. The challenges we face today: terrorism, climate change, unconstitutional changes of government, poverty, and economic disparities are formidable. But so too is our collective will to surmount them.

As I have often said, **ECOWAS is better and stronger together as a Community. Our strength lies in our unity, in our shared identity, and in the spirit of solidarity that defines our Union.**

To our Member States, I commend your resilience and continued dedication to the ideals of regional integration. In the face of evolving political, economic, and security challenges, your leadership remains critical. The task before us now is to deepen solidarity, strengthen democratic governance, and accelerate the implementation of regional policies that deliver tangible benefits to our citizens.

To the people of ECOWAS, you are the true heartbeat of this Community. Our vision of integration is ultimately about improving your daily lives, creating opportunities for our youth, empowering women, facilitating trade, and ensuring peace and security across our borders. As we look to the future, we must place you at the centre of all our actions, ensuring that ECOWAS remains a people-driven Community that listens, responds, and delivers on the promise and aspirations of our founding fathers.

To the staff of ECOWAS, its institutions and agencies, I extend my sincere appreciation for your unwavering commitment and professionalism. Your work continues to give life to our mandate and credibility to our mission. Building the ECOWAS of the future will require even greater innovation, efficiency, and collaboration across our institutions.

Fellow Community Citizens,

As we embark on this new chapter, we must confront our realities with clarity and courage. The threats of insecurity, misinformation, economic vulnerability, and climate change demand bold, coordinated, and forward-looking responses. At the same time, our youthful population, rich resources, and growing regional market constitute opportunities that offer immense potential for transformation.

Building the ECOWAS of the future today means investing in peace and security, strengthening regional economic integration, advancing digital transformation, and fostering a culture of accountability and good governance. It means reinforcing trust between institutions and citizens, and ensuring that our Community remains relevant, responsive, and resilient.

Let us, therefore, renew our collective commitment to the founding ideals of ECOWAS. Let us act with unity of purpose and clarity of vision. And let us work together: governments, citizens, and institutions alike to build a Community that future generations will be proud to inherit.

Happy 51st Anniversary to our great Community,

Long live ECOWAS !!!!