



FIFTY-SECOND ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

16 December 2017, Abuja, Nigeria

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Fifty-Second Ordinary Session of Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) convened on 16 December 2017 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, under the chairmanship of **H. E. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic and Chairman of Authority.

2. The session was attended by the under-listed Heads of State and Government or their duly mandated representatives:

H.E. Mr. **Patrice Talon**, President of the Republic of Benin

H. E. Mr. **Roch Marc Christian Kabore**, President of Burkina Faso

H. E. Mr. **Jorge Carlos de Almeida Fonseca**, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde

H. E. Mr. **Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire

H. E. Mr. **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**, President of the Republic of Ghana

H. E. Prof. **Alpha Conde**, President of the Republic of Guinea

H. E. Mr. **José Mário Vaz**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau

H. E. Mrs. **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**, President of the Republic of Liberia

H. E. Mr. **Ibrahim Boubacar Keita**, President of the Republic of Mali

H. E. Mr. **Mahamadou Issoufou**, President of the Republic of Niger ;

H.E. Mr. **Muhammadu Buhari**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

H. E. Mr. **Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal

H. E. Mr. **Ernest Bai Koroma**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

H. E. Mr. **Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic

H. E. Mrs. **Fatumatta Jallow –Tambajang**, Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia

Special Guests in attendance at the Summit include the following persons:

- H.E. Mr. **Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz**, **President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania**
- H.E. Mr. **Jalel Trabelsi**, Ambassador of the Republic of Tunisia to the Federal Republic of Nigeria and ECOWAS, representing H.E. Mr **Beji Caid Essebsi**, President of the Republic of Tunisia
- H.E Mr. **Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Chairperson of the African Union Commission
- **Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas** UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel,
- The Summit was also attended by **Mrs. Vera Songwe**, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and **Mr. Abdallah Boureima** President of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), as observers.

3. Present also, was H.E. **Abubakar Abdulsalami**, former Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

4. The Heads of State and Government took note of the 2017 Annual Report of the President of the Commission, and reports of the 79th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and 39th Meeting of the Mediation and Security Council.

5. They expressed satisfaction at the quality of the reports submitted by the Council of Ministers, the Mediation and Security Council and the President of the Commission, as well as the relevant recommendations contained therein. The recommendations will contribute to the consolidation of regional integration, peace and security.

6. Authority also commended the excellent work accomplished in 2017 by Community Institutions in a difficult regional context. It reaffirmed its commitment to the attainment of ECOWAS' goals to build a prosperous region, in an environment of peace, security and good democratic governance.

7. Regretting the low level of integration, 40 years after the establishment of ECOWAS, the Summit urged the Commission, in conjunction with Member States, to expedite the implementation of integration projects and programmes in the area of infrastructure, as well as improved business environment and competitiveness.

8. Authority, after deliberations, endorsed the main recommendations contained in the different reports, and then considered the following specific issues:

ON ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

9. Authority expressed satisfaction at the favourable economic growth prospects of the region, with real GDP growth rate projected at 2.1% in 2017 compared to 3.1% in 2018, against 0.2% in 2016, due largely to the expected recovery in the prices of major exports by ECOWAS Member States, as well as improved security in oil producing regions.

10. In order to sustain the gains made, Authority urges Member States to continue the ongoing structural reforms so as to be less vulnerable to commodity price fluctuations and improve their economies' resilience to exogenous shocks.

Creation of a monetary union

11. Authority welcomes the conclusions of the 4th session of the Presidential Task Force on the ECOWAS Single Currency. It lauds the progress made by all ECOWAS Institutions involved in the implementation of the roadmap for the ECOWAS single currency and reaffirms its commitment to continue and fast-track the ECOWAS economic and monetary programme.

12. The Heads of State and Government reiterate their firm commitment to work towards attaining the objectives of the ECOWAS founding fathers to make the region a monetary union in order to accelerate the building of a region of prosperity and solidarity. In that regard, they urge Member States to take necessary measures to comply with the main convergence criteria set out for the creation of a viable and credible union.

Free movement of persons and goods

13. Authority takes note of the report of the advocacy mission fielded by the Chairman of the Task Force on the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme, which highlights the persistence of tariff and non-tariff barriers, as well as irregular practices along corridors and at the borders of Member States. Authority welcomes the commitments made by the visited Member States regarding the sustainable elimination of the identified barriers.

14. In view of the persisting irregular practices, Authority grants the request of the Chairman of the Task Force for the enhancement of its powers, to allow it conduct unannounced visits to flush out unscrupulous officials and submit a report to the political authorities of the visited Member State.

15. Concerning the Customs Union, the Heads of State and Government commend the progress made in the introduction of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff in Member States. Authority instructs the Commission to provide the necessary support

to Cabo Verde and Sierra Leone for the implementation of this instrument that will deepen the integration process of regional economies.

16. Authority also welcomes the finalisation of the ECOWAS Customs Code. It notes that the Community Customs Code is an important instrument providing a common legal framework for customs procedures in all ECOWAS Member States. It will thereby contribute to enhancing the business environment and facilitating trade in ECOWAS. Authority hereby adopts the Code and directs the Commission to assist Member States in implementation.

Economic Partnership Agreement between West Africa and the European Union,

17. With respect to the Economic Partnership Agreement between West Africa and the European Union, Authority underscores the need to review the situation in the light of recent developments.

Human development

18. **Regarding education,** Authority welcomes the steps taken in terms of human capital development, through the harmonisation of national policies and strategies aimed at encouraging youth mobility and the sharing of scientific experiences, as well as promotion of the culture of peace and the fight against violent extremism.

19. **In the area of humanitarian and social affairs,** the Heads of State and Government commend the Commission for the development of the Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Child Protection System to prevent and curb Violence, Abuse and Exploitation against Children in West Africa. The framework will promote accountability and provide direction and guidance to Member States on Child Protection. They call on Member States to take prompt steps for its operationalisation.

Agricultural development and food security

20. The Heads of State and Government welcome the results from the implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) consistent with the 2014 Malabo Declaration made at the African Union. They commend the strengthening of cooperation with different technical and financial partners for the implementation of national and regional projects in the agricultural and food security sector.

21. Authority expresses concern at the mixed results of the agricultural-pastoral season and the food and nutrition situation of millions of people within ECOWAS in need of assistance. In that regard, it commits to mobilise all necessary effort in Member States and the region, to assist vulnerable persons. In order to make the agricultural sector more resilient, the Summit calls on Member States to implement proactive policies to develop and enhance agri-food value chains.

ON PEACE, SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY

22. Authority reaffirms its commitment to the peace, security and stability of the ECOWAS region as prerequisites for the region's sustainable economic development.

23. Authority is concerned at the increasing number of terrorist attacks in the region and expresses full solidarity with the affected countries. It reaffirms its determination to relentlessly continue the fight against terrorism and lauds the efforts in Member States and the region, to prevent and address the scourge.

24. In that respect, Authority applauds the success recorded by the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force in the war against Boko Haram and the significant progress in the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force to fight terrorism in the Sahel.

25. It welcomes the adoption of Resolutions 2359 and 2391, by which the United Nations Security Council lends political support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force and requests the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to support the Force with logistics and equipment. It calls upon the international community to provide the necessary financial support for the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

26. Authority strongly urges ECOWAS Member States to increase mutual intelligence and information sharing, as a means to combatting terrorism in the region. In that regard, it supports the operationalisation of the West African Police Information System (WAPIS) designed to increase the capacity of security services to combat cross-border crime and terrorism, through a well-established information sharing mechanism. It instructs the Commission to monitor the effective implementation of WAPIS, in collaboration with the Ministers responsible for Security, and keep Authority regularly apprised.

27. The Summit endorses the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Bamako Declaration issued at the end of the Regional Conference on the Security Situation in West Africa and the Sahel, held in Bamako, Mali from 12 to 14 October 2017, at the instance of Authority. It instructs the Commission to ensure speedy implementation of the recommendations and hold necessary consultations to convene, in the first half of 2018, a Joint Summit of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) on terrorism and organised cross-border crime.

ON THE SITUATION OF AFRICAN MIGRANTS IN LIBYA

28. Authority expresses profound indignation at the inhuman treatment of African migrants and refugees in Libya as reported in the media. It condemns in very strong

terms the modern day slavery and is committed to working with partner international organisations to rapidly put an end to these barbaric activities.

29. Authority praises the efforts of some Member States and partner organisations and countries to repatriate ECOWAS nationals and calls for concerted efforts to ensure greater efficiency in that regard. It supports the African Union's request for an immediate international investigation, to identify and punish the perpetrators of the criminal and barbaric acts.

ON THE SITUATION IN GUINEA BISSAU

30. Authority notes the situation assessment submitted by the High-level Ministerial Committee responsible for the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, subsequent to its visit to Bissau on 2 and 3 December 2017. It deeply regrets the political impasse in Guinea Bissau despite the decisions taken at the 51st Ordinary Session of Authority of Heads of State and Government held on 4 June 2017 in Monrovia, Liberia.

31. Authority took note of the roadmap presented by **H.E. Mario Vaz**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau on the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement, in particular the appointment of a consensus Prime Minister.

32. To ensure consensual implementation of the proposed roadmap, Authority entrusts Presidents **Alpha Conde** and **Essozimna Gnassingbe** with the responsibility of holding talks with all stakeholders within a month. Failing this, individual or collective sanctions would be imposed on all who hamper the implementation of the agreement. It calls on the international community, particularly the United Nations, African Union and all sub-regional organisations, to support ECOWAS in the application of the sanctions.

33. Authority congratulates **H.E. Prof. Alpha Conde**, President of the Republic of Guinea and ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea Bissau, for his sustained mediation efforts.

ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN TOGO

34. Authority expresses its concern over the persisting political tension in the Togolese Republic, following public protests by political parties demanding constitutional and institutional reforms.

35. Authority strongly condemns all forms of violence and excesses resulting in the loss of human life, injury and material damage.

36. Authority welcomes the measures adopted by the Togolese government to appease and improve the situation through the creation of an environment conducive to national dialogue, aimed at implementing, in a consensual manner, the desired political reforms.

37. In this perspective, Authority commends the initiatives taken by ECOWAS, in particular the laudable efforts by their Excellencies, Prof Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea and Chairman of the African Union, Nana Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana and Patrice Talon, President of the Republic of Benin, with a view to bringing together the Togolese political parties and finding a peaceful solution to the crisis through dialogue.

38. Authority of Heads of State and Government calls on the Togolese political stakeholders to, promptly, with full commitment to inclusive dialogue and in a spirit of compromise, adopt a common approach in the implementation of the political reforms, while respecting constitutional order and democratic institutions.

39. Authority reaffirms its readiness to continue to support the government and Togolese political stakeholders in the dialogue, as well as the constitutional reform process initiated by the Togolese government.

ON THE SITUATION IN MALI

40. Authority commends the Malian Government for its continuous efforts to ensure implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and welcomes the truce between the warring factions signed on 23 August 2017.

41. Authority remains deeply concerned at the increasing terrorist attacks in the northern and central parts of the country, and consequently reiterates its strong condemnation of the attacks on civilians, Malian defence and security forces, MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane Forces.

42. Authority salutes the efforts of the Government to strengthen the capacity of the Malian defence and security forces and ensure their deployment throughout the national territory, to enable them carry out their constitutional duty of securing people and property.

ON THE SITUATION IN THE GAMBIA

43. Authority welcomes efforts by the Government to rebuild and consolidate the democratic process and promote national reconciliation. It also welcomes the establishment of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TRRC) and calls on the Government to ensure that the intention to render justice to the victims of the regime of Yahya Jammeh, the former President, is in strict compliance with international standards and principles.

44. Authority reiterates its call to the International Community to support, in a coordinated manner, the efforts by the Gambian Government to ensure the economic recovery and stability of the country. It instructs the Commission to work in collaboration with the United Nations and the African Union to set up and operationalise an

International Contact Group on The Gambia, with the aim of monitoring the situation and coordinating partners' support for the country.

45. Authority welcomes the crucial role played by the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) in the stabilisation and security of the country. It instructs the President of the Commission to take all necessary measures for the effective implementation of the decisions of the 51st Ordinary Session held on 4 June 2017 in Monrovia, Liberia, with regard to the Force mandate and capacity building.

ON ELECTIONS IN THE REGION

46. Authority commends the successful conduct of the general elections in Liberia on 10 October 2017 and the professionalism with which the National Elections Commission (NEC) and the Supreme Court managed the dispute which followed the announcement of the results of the first round of the presidential election.

47. Authority takes note of the run-off presidential election scheduled for 26 December 2017, and urges the National Election Commission to implement the recommendations of the Supreme Court to ensure a peaceful and transparent election.

48. Authority encourages the two candidates in the run-off presidential election, Mr George Weah of the Coalition for Democratic Change and Mr Joseph Boakai of the Unity Party to conduct peaceful election campaigns and petition the Court over any electoral dispute.

49. Authority instructs the President of the Commission to closely monitor the electoral process, deploy an election observation mission to the country and provide all necessary assistance to the National Elections Commission.

50. Authority takes note of the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for 7 March 2018 in the Republic of Sierra Leone, as well as in the Republic of Mali in the same year.

ON TRANSHUMANCE

51. Authority reiterates its grave concern at the increased number of conflicts related to transhumance in several Member States, which constitutes a new threat to regional security. It directs the Commission to work closely with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel to conduct a comprehensive study on the matter and recommend an action plan to address the problem.

ON INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

New membership applications received by ECOWAS

52. Regarding the applications received by ECOWAS from Morocco for membership, Tunisia for observer status and Mauritania for associate membership, Authority decides to set up a Committee of Heads of State and Government comprising the Togolese Republic, Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Guinea and the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to adopt the terms of reference and supervise a comprehensive study on the implications of the membership.

53. Authority notes that matters of accession to the ECOWAS Treaty and the granting of observer status to third countries should be preceded by the appropriate institutional framework which constitutes the legal basis for such a decision.

54. In that respect, Authority instructs the President of the Commission to immediately commence the preparation of the appropriate Community Act which will set out the decision-making process within the Community, in accordance with Article 9 paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty.

Ongoing Institutional Reforms within Community Institutions

55. Authority once again underscores the need to effect structural and institutional reforms that would help reposition ECOWAS Institutions for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

56. It directs the Commission to expedite the Institutional Reform project and ensure that the necessary change management processes are put in place to facilitate the smooth running of all the restructured Community Institutions and Agencies.

57. **With respect to the ECOWAS Court of Justice**, Authority takes note of the outcome of the recruitment process for a Liberian Judge at the Court. In that regard, it congratulates Mr Yusuf Kabba on his appointment as Judge at the Community Court of Justice in replacement of Judge Micah Wilkins Wright, to complete the tenure of the Republic of Liberia.

58. In conformity with the decision taken at the 48th Ordinary Session of Authority of Heads of State and Government which took place in Abuja on 16 and 17 December 2015, Authority confirms that the tenures of office of current statutory appointees will end on 28 February 2018.

59. To that end, Authority allocates the position of President of the ECOWAS Commission to the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire.

60. The President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire submitted the Curriculum Vitae of **Mr. Jean Claude Brou**, current Minister for Industry and Mines of the country.
61. Authority approves the appointment of **Mr. Jean Claude Brou** as President of the ECOWAS Commission for a four-year term with effect from 1st March 2018.
62. Regarding the allocation of the other statutory positions to Member States, Authority directs the outgoing President of the Commission to immediately start work with the incoming President, to facilitate the assumption of duty of the new statutory officers.
63. Authority pays tribute to H.E. Mrs Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, for her exemplary leadership and for the progress made in the sub-region by virtue of her commitment to regional integration, peace and security in West Africa.
64. Authority pays tribute to **H.E. Ernest Bai Koroma**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone for his immense contribution to the regional integration process.
65. Authority conveys its sincere congratulations to **H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic, for his unrelenting commitment to regional integration and exemplary leadership in steering the affairs of the Community.
66. The Heads of State and Government congratulate H.E Marcel A. de Souza, President of the ECOWAS Commission, for the steps taken to rationalise the operations of Community institutions, in the interest of good corporate governance, which restored the confidence of several partners. Authority expresses its gratitude for the excellent work done during his tenure at the helm of the Commission.
67. The Heads of State and Government express deep appreciation to **H.E Muhammadu Buhari**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Government and people of Nigeria, for the authentic African hospitality accorded them during their stay in Abuja, and for the quality of organisation of the session.
68. The Heads of State and Government decide to convene the next Ordinary Session in Lome, Togolese Republic, in June 2018.

Done at Abuja, this 16th day of December 2017

AUTHORITY