

COMUNIDADE ECONOMICA DOS  
ESTADOS DA AFRICA OCIDENTAL

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF  
WEST AFRICAN STATES



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

## FIFTIETH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

17 December 2016, Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria

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### FINAL COMMUNIQUE

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1. The Fiftieth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was convened on 17 December 2016 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, under the chairmanship of H. E. Mrs **Ellen JOHNSON-SIRLEAF**, President of the Republic of Liberia and current Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government.

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

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

H.E. Mr **John Dramani MAHAMA**, 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. **Aurelien A. AGBENONCI**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Benin

H. E. **Alpha BARRY**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Burkinabe Abroad of Burkina Faso

H. E. **Cesar MONTEIRO**, Ambassador of Cabo Verde in Senegal

Hon. **Bala GARBA-JAHUMPA**, Minister of Works, Construction and Infrastructure of The Gambia

3. The Summit was also attended by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa, **Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas**, and the special representative of the UN Secretary General for Guinea Bissau and Head of UNIOGBIS, Mr. Brahim Modibo Touré, as well as representatives of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) as observers.

4. During their session, the Heads of State and Government took note of the 2016 Annual Report of the President of the Commission and the Reports of the 77<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and of the 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Mediation and Security Council.

5. The Heads of State and Government welcomed the quality of the reports submitted by the Council of Ministers, as well as the relevant recommendations contained therein. They also commended the excellent work accomplished by Community Institutions for the consolidation of the achievements of West Africa's integration and reaffirmed their firm commitment to the attainment of regional integration goals, in an environment of sustainable peace, security and good governance.

6. The Authority warmly congratulated His Excellency **Jorge Carlos de Almeida FONSECA**, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde on his re-election as President of the Republic of Cabo Verde and wished him success in his second term. It equally congratulated His Excellency **Nana Addo Akufo-Addo** on his election as the President-elect of the Republic of Ghana and paid glowing tributes to H.E. John Dramani Mahama for demonstrating a great spirit of statesmanship by accepting the outcome of the elections.

7. The Heads of State and Government recalled that presidential and parliamentary elections would be held in 2017 in the Republic of Liberia and directed the ECOWAS Commission to provide the necessary assistance to Liberia in conformity with the relevant provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

8. Reaffirming their commitment to deepening the integration process in West Africa, the Heads of State and Government, after deliberations, endorsed the main recommendations contained in the different reports, and then considered the following specific issues:

### **ON WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE**

9. The Authority welcomed the progress made in some Member States, nearing double-digit growth rates, but expressed concern about the region's poor performance due mainly to the combined negative effects of the fall in oil prices since 2014 on the fiscal balance of oil-exporting countries, particularly Nigeria, deteriorating prices of other commodities, especially mineral ores as well as the fragile political situation in some countries.

10. In this respect, it urged Member States to initiate the necessary structural reforms and take appropriate economic and financial stimulus measures in order to be less vulnerable to commodity price fluctuations and improve their economies' resilience to exogenous shocks.

### **ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS**

#### **Concerning free movement of persons and goods**

11. The Authority is concerned about the continuing obstacles to free movement of persons and goods in the Community.

12. The Heads of State and Government invite Member States to take all the necessary measures to strictly implement all the provisions of the Protocol on free movement of persons and goods, right of residence and establishment.

13. The Authority welcomes the setting up of the Presidential Task Force on free movement, and urges the Task Force to recommend as soon as possible innovative and effective measures to curb the scourge.

14. It directs the Commission to intensify awareness creation for the Community citizenry and regularly organise joint sensitisation meetings between border security services and the local populations.

## **CONCERNING AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES**

15. The Authority took note of two key initiatives underway, namely the finalisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the National Agricultural Investment Programmes (NAIPs) in Member States and the fostering of cooperation between the State of Israel in the areas of agriculture and rural development. The Authority approves the participation of the Prime Minister of Israel, H.E. Benjamin Netanyahu as an Observer in the next ECOWAS Summit where he would make a presentation on the experience of his country in the Agricultural sector

16. The Authority further endorsed the approval of the Council of Ministers regarding the decision of the African Union to transfer the Regional Integrated Development Support Programme for the Fouta Djallon Highlands to ECOWAS, given its importance for the Community as the watershed for most of the major rivers within the Community.

## **ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT,**

17. The Authority emphasised the need to develop road, railway, air and maritime infrastructure necessary for boosting intra-Community trade, to enhance development prospects and to assist in the fight against poverty. In this regard, it urged Member States to pursue efforts aimed at encouraging the structural transformation of the region's economies and infrastructure development.

## **CONCERNING THE HOLDING OF THE ROUNDTABLE FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CDP),**

18. The Authority took note of the high-level consultations undertaken by the Commission, culminating, on the one hand, in the Ivorian Authorities' decision to hold the CDP roundtable by the end of March 2017, and on the other hand, in the acceptance of the African Development Bank to lead and mobilise effective participation of other partners in the process.

## **ON INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

### **Concerning the ongoing institutional reforms**

19. The Authority took note of ongoing institutional reforms in the Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions. It stressed the need for the reforms to take account of the economic and financial situation within our region thus paving the way for the establishment of cost effective, efficient and sustainable structures for the Community.

20. The Authority commends the President of the Commission for the cost containment measures adopted for running the affairs of the community and encouraged him to continue in his efforts at controlling community expenses.

21. The Heads of State and Government adopted the Supplementary Act on the enhancement of powers of the ECOWAS Parliament to enable the Parliament, on a gradual basis to perform the traditional roles of a Parliament. The Supplementary Act empowers the Parliament to have mandatory referrals on a number of Community policies and programmes as well as mandatory assent or opinion on the matters referred to it.

### **AS REGARDS RESOURCE MOBILISATION FOR FUNDING COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES**

22. The Authority commends the Commission for its efforts at embarking on other innovative methods of mobilising resources for Community activities through the expansion of its partnerships.

23. Member States have been urged to quickly pay their call-up capital and support EBID in the mobilisation of concessional resources from financial partners to fund infrastructure projects.

### **ON ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (EPA) AND COMMON EXTERNAL TARIFF (CET)**

#### **CONCERNING THE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (EPA)**

24. The Authority took note of the ratification of the Interim EPAs by Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire in order to continue to preserve preferential access to the European market beyond 1 October 2016. The Authority urges Member States that have not signed the EPA yet, to do so, in order to eliminate the existence of multiple trade regimes in the region with a view to consolidating our regional integration agenda.

#### **REGARDING THE COMMON EXTERNAL TARIFF (CET)**

25. The Authority welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the CET, especially the validation of regulations aimed at facilitating its implementation. To this end, it urges Member States that are yet to do so, to fast-track the implementation of the CET, and directs the Commission to provide them with the needed support.

### **ON PEACE, SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY**

26. The Authority reaffirms the importance of peace, security and stability in ECOWAS for the economic development of the region.

27. The Authority expresses deep indignation at the terrorist attacks of Friday, 16 December 2016 against a detachment of the *Groupe des Forces Anti-terroristes*

*de l'Armée* (GFAT) which resulted in the death of twelve people whilst many others sustained injuries. The Authority strongly condemns this latest attack and expresses its sympathy and full solidarity with the people, Army and Government of Burkina Faso.

28. The Authority honours the memory of the victims of the attacks, presents its condolences to the bereaved families and wishes the wounded persons prompt recovery.

29. It reaffirms its determination to relentlessly pursue the fight against terrorism and lauds the efforts by Member States to prevent and address this scourge. It commends the activities of the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, as well as the clear results obtained by the Force in spite of the difficulties encountered.

30. The Authority recalls that the fight against terrorism is the collective responsibility of the international community and thereby calls on development partners to support Member States of the region and the Multinational Joint Force against Boko Haram in the fight against terrorism.

31. The Authority expresses concern over the serious humanitarian situation occasioned by Boko Haram attacks in North-East Nigeria, affecting 14 million people, 7 million of which require humanitarian aid, the majority being children. It regrets the high number of displaced people and refugees in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad. The Authority commends the Governments of Nigeria and Niger, as well as other countries who are taking in refugees as well as partners, for their efforts at resolving the humanitarian crisis. The Authority decides to create a special solidarity Fund for the victims of terrorism and calls on the international community to support the implementation of the 'Buhari Plan' for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of North-East Nigeria.

32. In order to promote human rights and inclusive governance mainly with regards to women and youths, the Authority decides to set aside the 16<sup>th</sup> January of every year as the ECOWAS Human Rights day. This day is symbolic in the region as it marks the ascension to power of Her Excellency Mrs Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as President of the Republic of Liberia and the first African Woman Head of State.

## **ON THE SITUATION IN THE GAMBIA**

33. The Authority has considered the worrying political situation in The Gambia arising from the decision of His Excellency President Yahya Jammeh to reject the results of the presidential election of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 which had resulted in the election of Mr Adama Barrow as the president-elect of The Gambia.

34. The Authority notes that His Excellency President Yahya Jammeh had initially accepted the results announced by the Independent Electoral Commission on 2

December 2016 and congratulated the new President-elect before changing his mind based on corrections to the initial results by the Electoral Commission which however did not alter the outcome of the election.

35. It commends H. E. **Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf**, President of Liberia and Chairperson of the Authority of Heads of State and Government for the efficiency with which she managed the situation in The Gambia and the firm position taken on behalf of the Authority.

36. The Authority lauds the initiative that fielded a high-level mission of Heads of State comprising Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia and Chairperson of the Authority, H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, President of Nigeria, H.E. Ernest Koroma, President of Sierra Leone, and H.E. John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana, to Banjul on 13 December 2016 to review the political situation with all stakeholders.

37. The Authority calls on President Yahya Jammeh to accept the result of the polls and refrain from any action likely to compromise the transition and peaceful transfer of power to the President-elect.

38. The Head of States and Government further agreed on the following:

- a) To uphold the result of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 election in the Republic of The Gambia.
- b) Guarantee the Safety and protection of the President-elect Mr. Adama Barrow.
- c) That all Head of States will attend the inauguration of the President-elect Adama Barrow who must be sworn in on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in conformity with the Gambian constitution.
- d) Call on the Government and the Coalition Parties to show restraint in order to preserve national unity.
- e) To respect the will of the Gambian people as expressed by the Presidential election results of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016;
- f) That His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari, President and Commander in chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria will serve as the Mediator in the Gambia and His Excellency, John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana as the Co-chair. The mediation process shall be conducted on the basis of terms agreed by the Authority of Heads of State and Government;

- g) Requests the endorsement of the AU and the UN on all decisions taken on the matter of The Gambia and also requests their support for the mediation efforts of ECOWAS including the provision of technical assistance where required;
- h) The Authority shall take all necessary actions to enforce the results of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 elections;

39. The Authority encourages all stakeholders, within and outside The Gambia, to exercise restraint, respect the rule of law and ensure the peaceful transfer of power. It calls on the Gambian defence and security forces to perform their role in a nationalistic manner and protect lives and property.

### **ON THE SITUATION IN GUINEA-BISSAU**

40. The Authority reaffirms its deep concern over the protracted political and institutional crisis in Guinea Bissau due to the inability of political stakeholders to reach a lasting and consensual solution. It stresses that the crisis undermines the implementation of commitments made by development partners since March 2015, to support the economic and social reconstruction of the country.

41. The Authority commends H.E. Professor Alpha Condé, President of Guinea and ECOWAS Mediator, for Guinea Bissau, H.E. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, President of Sierra Leone, H.E. Mrs Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia and Chairperson of the Authority of Heads of State and Government for their efforts which, on 6 September 2016 in Bissau, led to the adoption by the stakeholders, of a 6-point roadmap to end the current crisis in the country.

42. The Authority commends H.E. Professor Alpha Condé, for the excellent mediation efforts which led to the signing of the Conakry Accord by the political parties on 14 October 2016 in Conakry that is aimed at finding a lasting solution to the protracted political crisis in that country. The Authority reaffirmed that the Conakry Accord remains the only framework for the attainment of a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Guinea Bissau.

43. The Authority salutes the leadership demonstrated by H.E. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Chairperson of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, for her active involvement in the process to find a solution to the crisis.

44. The Authority urges the President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau to comply with the provisions of the Conakry Accord and calls on all parties to strictly respect and comply with the tenets of the Accord.

45. The Authority directs the Commission to provide the necessary technical support required for the implementation of Conakry Accord.



46. The Authority once again commends the non-interference of the Army in the political crisis and strongly urges it to continue in like manner.

47. The Authority reiterates the withdrawal of ECOMIB on 30 June 2017 and directs the Commission to commence operations for the gradual withdrawal starting in the first quarter of 2017.

## **ON THE SITUATION IN MALI**

48. The Authority notes that in spite of progress made, there are still challenges to the full and effective implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, including insecurity, lack of commitment by some armed group signatories to the Agreement and inadequate financial resources, despite pledges made by the international community.

49. The Authority strongly condemns the recent terrorist attacks on civilian populations, humanitarian workers, the Malian Defence and Security Forces, and MINUSMA. It reaffirms its strong attachment to the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali. It equally reiterates support for the peace process and urges all stakeholders to comply with it.

50. The Authority calls on group signatories to the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement to show good faith, sincerity and goodwill in the commitments with regard to the agreement following the adoption of measures by Government to facilitate their integration into the institutional arrangement.

51. It welcomes the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2295 (2016) and calls for the gradual redeployment of the Malian Defence and Security Forces to enable them play their sovereign role of protecting the Malian nation but also as first line of defence for the populations and their property.

52. The Authority urges signatory movements to desist from any attempt to undermine the restoration of State authority throughout the country.

53. It calls on partners to provide the necessary support to the Government of Mali for the effective implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and enhance the capacities of the Malian Defence and Security Forces to enable them execute their mandate all over the national territory.

54. The Authority directs the President of the Commission to take the necessary steps to organise, as soon as possible, an international conference on the security situation in Mali, in conjunction with the AU and United Nations, with a view to assessing the most

appropriate means of intervention likely to enhance the efficiency of the actions underway in order to preserve Mali's territorial integrity.

### **ON THE SITUATION IN BURKINA FASO**

55. The Authority expressed satisfaction over the return to constitutional order and restoring of political stability in Burkina, since the 2015 presidential elections, and urged the Burkinabe authorities to expedite the implementation of institutional and security sector reforms.

56. The Authority congratulated the Government of Burkina Faso for the successful organisation of the donors' conference to support the National Plan for Economic and Social Development (PNDES) held in Paris on 7 and 8 December 2016. The Authority hereby calls on development partners to honour the commitments made to support Burkina's economic rebuilding efforts by providing the funds pledged at the Paris conference as soon as possible.

### **ON THE PRESIDENTIAL AND LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN CABO VERDE AND GHANA**

57. The Authority commended the smooth conduct of the presidential elections successfully held in Cabo Verde and Ghana, an evidence of growing democracy in the region.

58. The Authority congratulated President Jorge Carlos Fonseca on his re-election and the President-elect of Ghana, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo.

59. The Authority hailed the gracious gesture by H.E. John Dramani Mahama who, in conceding defeat and congratulating the winner, demonstrated his commitment to democracy and great statesmanship. The Authority subsequently paid him glowing tribute for his significant contribution to the entrenchment of democracy in the region and the management of crises in Burkina Faso, Togo and The Gambia.

### **ON MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY**

60. The Authority congratulated the Togolese government on the success of the extraordinary summit of the African Union on maritime safety, security and development, as well as the efforts undertaken towards the Summit's adoption of an African Charter.

61. The Authority requests that the African Union Commission to finalise discussions on (the processes leading to )the drafting and adoption of the annexes to the African Charter on maritime security, safety and development, within the time-frame stipulated by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union.

62. The Authority instructs the ECOWAS Commission to actively participate in the drafting process of the annexes to the African Charter on maritime security, safety and development, so as to ensure that sub-regional concerns set out in the ECOWAS Maritime Security Strategy document are taken into account.

63. The Authority takes note of the progress achieved in the establishment of the maritime security architecture in the Gulf of Guinea and encourages the ECOWAS Commission to speed up and support the operationalisation of the Maritime Centre established in that regard.

### **OTHER ISSUES**

64. Authority endorses the candidature of H. E. Alpha CONDE, President of the Republic of Guinea, as the Chairman of the African Union

65. The Authority commends the President of the Republic of Liberia, and current Chair of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, H. E. **Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf**, for her exemplary leadership and remarkable commitment in steering the affairs of the region.

66. The Heads of State and Government express sincere appreciation to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria **H.E Muhammadu Buhari**, and the government and people of Nigeria, for the authentic African hospitality accorded them during their stay in Abuja, and the level of organisation of this session, which has greatly contributed to its success.

67. The Heads of State and Government decide to hold their next Ordinary Session in Monrovia, Republic of Liberia, in May 2017.

**Done at Abuja, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of December 2016**

**THE AUTHORITY**