

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF
WEST AFRICAN STATES



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

**THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE AUTHORITY
OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

Abuja, 14 June 2006

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

Executive Secretariat
Abuja, June 2006

INTRODUCTION

The Thirtieth ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria on 14 June 2006 under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mamadou Tandja, President of the Republic of Niger.

The following Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives attended the meeting:

- His Excellency Thomas Boni Yayi
President of the Republic of Bénin
- His Excellency Blaise Compaore
President of Faso, Head of Government
- His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor
President of the Republic of Ghana
- Her Excellency, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf
President of Republic of Liberia
- His Excellency, Amadou Toumani Toure
President of the Republic of Mali
- His Excellency Mamadou Tandja
President of the Republic of Niger
Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government
- His Excellency, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- His Excellency, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe
President of the Togolese Republic
- Mr Severino Soares Almeida
Director General, External Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Representing H.E. President of Cape Verde
- Hon. Dr Albert Mabri Toikeusse
Minister of Cooperation and African Integration
Representing H.E. President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
- Hon. Alieu N. Ngum
Secretary of State for Trade, Industry & Employment
Representing H.E. the President of The Gambia

- Hon. Fatoumata Kaba Sidibé
Minister of International Cooperation
Representing H.E. the President of Guinea

- Hon. De Sousa-Rui Dia
Minister of Social Affairs and Communication
Representing H.E. the President of Guinea Bissau

- Hon. Mohamed B. Daramy
Minister of Development and Economic Planning
Representing H.E. the President of Sierra Leone

- Hon. Abdou Aziz Sow
Minister of NEPAD, African Economic Integration and Good
Governance
Representing H.E. the President of Sénégal

The summit session was witnessed by a large number of the members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of regional and international institutions.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony was marked by the welcome statement of His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the opening address of His Excellency, Mamadou Tandja, President of the Republic of Niger, and current Chairman of ECOWAS.

I) RE-STRUCTURING OF THE COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

In its review of the evolution of the Community, particularly the deepening of the integration process and the greater priority being accorded the regional approach to tackling the development challenges confronting West African countries, the Authority agreed on the need for enhancing the ECOWAS institutional arrangements. Heads of State and Government therefore decided on the modalities for the transformation of the Executive Secretariat into ECOWAS Commission, the re-structuring of the ECOWAS Parliament and the Community Court of Justice, and the re-organisation of the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID).

Transformation of the Executive Secretariat

While confirming its decision to transform the Executive Secretariat into ECOWAS Commission, the Authority agreed that citizens of each of the following Member States: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sénégal and Togo will constitute the first set of the 9-member Commission. The Commissioners shall be competent persons appointed on a

competitive basis. Heads of State and Government adopted a system of rotation to ensure that at the expiration of the four-year term of office of the Commissioners their replacement will be effected in a transparent, predictable and equitable manner. The Authority recognised the need for enhancing the institutional and legal capacity of the Community, particularly with regard to the Commission and the Council of Ministers and consequently, directed the Executive Secretary to present appropriate legal texts for adoption.

Heads of State and Government allocated the post of President of the ECOWAS Commission to the Republic of Ghana and the post of Vice-President to Burkina Faso. In recognition of the competence and high performance of Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas as the current Executive Secretary, the Authority appointed Dr Chambas, a Ghanaian as the first President of the ECOWAS Commission for a four-year term beginning from 1st January 2007.

Re-structuring of ECOWAS Parliament and Community Court of Justice.

The Authority agreed on a new organization chart for the Parliament and for the Court which will operate a system of administration that enables the ECOWAS parliamentarians and judges to concentrate on their parliamentary and legal duties respectively. Heads of State and Government directed the Executive Secretary to take all necessary measures to ensure the inauguration of the second ECOWAS legislature as soon as possible. After the second legislature, the ECOWAS Parliament will be made up of parliamentarians elected directly through universal suffrage, and will exercise legislative powers in certain areas to be specified.

Reorganisation of the EBID Group

The Authority approved the re-organisation of the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) Group. By that approval, the organisational structure of the EBID Group, which is currently a Holding Company with two subsidiaries, will become a single cohesive entity. Instead of the existing three separate organisation charts, the re-organised EBID will have a single organisation chart, headed by the President. EBID will now have two operational windows (private sector and public sector), each headed by a Vice-President.

Heads of State and Government noted that the structure reflects the initial conception and mission of this Financial institution of the Community. Furthermore, this structure corresponds to the operational structure of similar international financial institutions. The re-organisation will ensure cost effectiveness of operations and will make EBID more attractive to non-regionals and the international financial market. The Authority directed the Executive Secretary to ensure the presentation of appropriate draft legal texts at the next ECOWAS Summit relating to the amendment of the relevant provisions of the ECOWAS treaty and the EBID protocol.

II) ADOPTION OF ECOWAS CONVENTION ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

The Authority recalled its earlier measures to stem the circulation of illegal weapons within the region, particularly the 1998 declaration of a moratorium on the importation, exportation, manufacture and circulation of small arms in West Africa. After a review of the operation of the moratorium under the code of conduct adopted in 1999, Heads of State and Government agreed on the necessity to continue the regional approach to the control of small arms.

Consequently, the Authority adopted an ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons as a regional instrument that would effectively ban the transfer of small arms into and within West Africa. All Member States would have to apply to the ECOWAS Executive Secretary for exemption to enable them engage in any such transaction. The convention also bans the transfer of small and light arms to non-state actors and places a tight control on the manufacture and sale of such arms within Member States. The Executive Secretary was directed to establish a regional arms register, and initiate the formulation of an appropriate plan of action for the implementation of this new ECOWAS convention.

III) THE CURRENT WEST AFRICAN SITUATION

Heads of State and Government, took note of the continued positive growth of the West African economy, due in part to the pursuit of sounder macro-economic policies. They urged that this should be a source of encouragement to each Member State to undertake the much needed deeper reforms. They also recognised the contribution that continued improvement in the political situation could make to the enhancement of the investment climate, which is necessary for achieving the objective of a much higher growth rate and sustainable development.

The Authority expressed satisfaction at the peaceful elections being recorded in the region. In that context, it warmly congratulated Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, on her inauguration in January 2006 as the first African female president. Similarly, Heads of State and Government congratulated His Excellency Boni Yayi, the new President of the Republic of Benin on his success at the presidential elections. They also extended a warm welcome to His Excellency Charles Konan Banny as the new Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire.

Côte d'Ivoire peace process

Heads of State and Government, took note of the new momentum that the peace process had gained in Côte d'Ivoire as reflected by the political consensus on the implementation of the road map, the simultaneous commencement of the processes of citizen identification and disarmament (DDR). They invited all the

Ivorian parties to continue to cooperate with the government of Prime Minister Charles Banny.

Togo

The Authority welcomed the significant steps taken in recent months by the political class in Togo towards normalising the socio-political situation in that Member State. They called upon all the parties and stakeholders to continue to engage in the inter-Togolese dialogue.

Sierra Leone

There was similar recognition of the continued progress being made in Sierra Leone in the area of reconstruction – strengthening state institutions, improving infrastructure and restructuring the security agencies. Heads of State and Government expressed their appreciation of the valuable contribution of the international community and urged for increased assistance in support of the country's economic development programme which is geared toward reducing youth unemployment, increasing incomes and the consolidation of the security sector reforms.

Liberia

Heads of State and Government took note of the positive measures being introduced by the new administration of Her Excellency Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson to consolidate peace in Liberia and launch a veritable reconstruction programme. They expressed their appreciation of the leadership role that His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the management of the Liberian peace process. They recalled the courageous decision of President Obasanjo to provide asylum for the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who vacated the office and went into exile to facilitate the process that led eventually to the election of President Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson.

Guinea Bissau

The Authority acknowledged the continued fragility of the situation in Guinea Bissau, particularly in the border area with Senegal. It was in the light of this that the Authority welcomed the efforts of President Nino Vieira at engaging all the different parties in a dialogue, and seeking to reach a national consensus that would pave the way for lasting peace and stability. Heads of State and Government re-iterated the necessity for an injection of substantial assistance from the international community, in order to stabilise the situation and initiate the re-building of the national socio-economic fabric. It is in this regard, that they welcomed the proposal to establish an International Contact Group for Guinea Bissau that would offer political support, promote reconciliation, reinforce national institutional capacities and mobilise international financial assistance.

IV) MIGRATION

Heads of State and Government expressed concern at the increasing problem of international migration, particularly to Europe involving West African citizens. The Authority called for a coordinated regional approach to tackling this problem. In this regard, the Executive Secretary was directed to present a technical report with appropriate recommendations to a meeting of the relevant ECOWAS Ministers, for the purpose of adopting a West African common policy on migration.

V) DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT SUMMIT

The next session of the ECOWAS Authority of State and Government will be held in December 2006 at Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

VI) VOTE OF THANKS

The Heads of State and Government expressed their deep gratitude to His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for the leadership he has exercised in the promotion of regional peace and security and the strengthening of the ECOWAS integration and development process.

Their Excellencies expressed particular appreciation for the excellent hospitality extended to them during their stay in Abuja. The Heads of State lauded the contribution of President Obasanjo towards regional integration and the entrenchment of democracy.

Heads of State and Government expressed their appreciation of the able manner in which the current Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority, His Excellency Mamadou Tandja, President of the Republic of Niger has been directing the affairs of the Community.

THE AUTHORITY