



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

21 December 2019, Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria

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**FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

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1. The Fifty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held on 21 December 2019 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, under the chairmanship of **H.E. Issoufou Mahamadou**, President of the Republic of Niger and Chair of the Authority.
2. Present at the Summit were the under-listed ECOWAS Heads of State or their duly mandated representatives:
  - H.E **Patrice Talon**, President of the Republic of Benin
  - H.E **Roch Marc Christian Kabore**, President of Burkina Faso
  - H.E. **Jorge Carlos Fonseca**, President of Cabo Verde
  - H.E **Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
  - H.E. **Adama Barrow**, President of the Republic of The Gambia
  - H.E **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**, President of the Republic of Ghana
  - H.E. **Alpha Condé**, President of the Republic of Guinea
  - H.E **George Manneh Weah**, President of the Republic of Liberia
  - H.E **Issoufou Mahamadou**, President of the Republic of Niger
  - H.E **Muhammadu Buhari**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
  - H.E **Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal
  - H.E **Julius Maada Bio**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
  - H.E **Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic
  - H.E. **Henrique Adriano Da Silva**, Ambassador of the Republic of Guinea Bissau to Nigeria and Permanent Representative to the ECOWAS Commission;
  - H.E. **Moustapha Traore**, Ambassador of the Republic of Mali to Nigeria and

## Permanent Representative to the ECOWAS Commission

3. The session was also attended by:

- H.E. Yakubu Gowon, former Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- H.E. Jean Claude Kassi Brou, President of ECOWAS Commission
- H.E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)
- H.E. Dr Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank;
- H.E. Abdallah Boureima, President of the UEMOA Commission;
- H.E. Ibrahim Abani Sani, Executive Secretary of CEN-SAD;
- H.E. Amb. Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs, representing the Chairperson of the African Union Commission;

4. At the opening ceremony, statements were delivered by the host President, H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; H.E. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, President of ECOWAS Commission; and H.E. Issoufou Mahamadou, President of the Republic of Niger and Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government who delivered the opening address.

5. Goodwill messages were offered by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas and, the President of the African Development Bank, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina.

6. The Heads of State and Government take note of the 2019 Annual Report of the President of the Commission, the reports of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, and the 19<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session of ECOWAS Council of Ministers on the Forensic Audit of ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies for the 2013-2017 period. They also take note of the presentation of the Plan of Action 2020-2024 to eradicate terrorism in the region and the special report on the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme.

7. The Authority commended the quality of the reports and the relevant recommendations contained therein, which are aimed at deepening the economic and monetary integration process and consolidating political

stability, peace and security within the region.

8. With a view to consolidating the achievements recorded in the integration process and sustaining an inclusive region of peace, security and prosperity, the Authority takes the following decisions:

### **ON ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES**

9. The Authority takes note of the region's improved economic performance, with ECOWAS real GDP growing by 3.3% in 2019 against 3.0% in 2018, in a context characterised by a decline in inflationary pressures and healthy public finances.
10. It urges the Member States to continue economic reforms and ensure a sound macroeconomic environment in Member States, with a view to accelerating the structural transformation of ECOWAS economies.
11. To this end, the Authority commends the African Development Bank for the initiatives taken to ensure Africa's economic transformation and development. It encourages the Bank to strengthen its cooperation with ECOWAS in funding regional programmes and projects.
12. The Authority directs the Commission to support Cabo Verde in its agricultural policy in order to address the prolonged drought facing the country.

### **CREATION OF THE MONETARY UNION**

13. The Authority commends the Ministerial Committee for the progress made with the implementation of the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme.
14. The Authority, while welcoming the improved macroeconomic convergence outlook in 2019, urges Member States to continue efforts to comply with the convergence criteria.
15. It takes note of the implementation status of the activities contained in



the revised roadmap. It further instructs the Ministerial Committee to take the required steps to hasten the implementation of the revised roadmap and reallocate, as a matter of priority, the financial resources of the Special Fund, which finances activities essential to the establishment of the ECOWAS Monetary Union in 2020. The Authority directs the Ministerial Monitoring Committee to submit a report to its next ordinary session.

16. The Heads of State and Government take note of the proposed symbols of the ECOWAS single currency and adopt the following as the ECO symbol:

**EC**

17. As regards the name of the ECOWAS Central Bank, the Authority adopts the following: **Central Bank of West Africa (CBWA)**.
18. Regarding the ECOWAS Single Currency, after having listened to **H.E. Alassane Ouattara**, Chair of the UEMOA Authority of Heads of State and Government, the Authority takes note of the major developments in the UMOA monetary zone. The reform of the UMOA monetary zone will facilitate its integration into the future ECOWAS monetary zone (ECO). The Heads of State and Government commended those developments in the UMOA monetary zone.

### **ON FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS AND GOODS**

19. The Authority reiterates the need for all Member States to fully implement the Protocol on Free Movement as it relates to the rights of entry, residence and establishment. It calls upon Member States that are yet to issue the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card accelerate arrangements which will facilitate the mobility of Community Citizens in the region. To this end, it expresses its gratitude to the Member States that have commenced issuance of the card.

20. As regards the free movement of goods within the region, the Authority takes note of the continuing challenges in the implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods, arising from border closure to goods.

21. The Authority takes note of the low level of intra-regional trade and urges all Member States to remove both tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade.

22. The Authority commends the efforts of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) Presidential Task Force on the matter and



requests the Tripartite Ministerial Committee comprising Benin, Niger and Nigeria, to quickly conclude its work in order to resolve all the existing border issues.

23. Concerning the Customs Union, the Authority notes the progress made in the implementation of the Common External Tariff (CET) and urges Member States to quickly complete the process of convergence towards the CET. To this end, it endorses the three-year extension period of the Supplementary Protection Measures.

24. The Authority further lauds the efforts of the Community on the ECOWAS Common Schedule of Tariff Concession for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and enjoins quick resolution of the outstanding issues. This is with a view to ensuring that all Member States submit a single common offer to the African Union Commission.

25. The Summit takes note of the progress made in the trade in services and the ECOWAS Services Policy Review (SPR) and directs the ECOWAS Commission to assist Member States in arriving at a common position on the schedule of specific commitments in this area.

## **ON ENERGY AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

26. The Heads of State and Government note the inadequate energy supply in the Community and welcome the measures taken by regional institutions to increase supply, while focusing on renewable sources of energy.

27. The Authority welcomes the Commission's efforts to provide the region with a coherent legislative framework for the development of the mining sector. It commends the Council of Ministers for adopting the Regulation on the Regional Programme to Facilitate the Supply of Petroleum Products in the ECOWAS Region and adopts the Supplementary Act on the ECOWAS Hydrocarbon Development Policy and its Implementation Matrix.

28. The Authority takes note of the significant progress made in project implementation, particularly the construction of ECOWAS Joint Border Posts (JBPs), as well as the corridor and transport development.

29. It encourages the ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with Member States, to step up efforts for the implementation of regional infrastructure

projects, with a view to opening up some countries, ensuring seamless intra-Community trade and improving security.

## **ON PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY**

30. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the sub region, as a prerequisite for the economic integration and development of the region.

### **Political situation in the region**

31. On the upcoming run-off election in Guinea Bissau, scheduled to hold on 29 December 2019, the Authority recalls the decisions handed down by the Extraordinary Summit of 8 November 2019, which insisted on the needed continuation of the ongoing democratic process in Guinea Bissau.

32. In furtherance to the Summit decision, the Authority notes that the ECOWAS Commission assisted and supported the government of Guinea Bissau in conducting the Presidential election on 24 November 2019.

33. The Authority congratulates the two candidates with the highest number of votes in the first round of the presidential election; Mr. Domingos Simoes Pereira of the PAIGC (40.13%) and Mr. Umaru Sissoco Embaló of the MADEM-G15 (27.65%). It urges both candidates to remain committed to the peaceful, transparent and credible conduct of the run-off election.

34. The Authority further notes that the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB) had been reinforced as instructed by the Heads of State and Government with 140 elements of the Formed Police Unit (FPU) provided by the Togolese Republic, in order to ensure security before, during and after the presidential election. The Authority commends the crucial role of ECOMIB in the stabilisation and security of Guinea Bissau.

35. While calling on the political stakeholders in Bissau to remain committed to peaceful, transparent and credible conduct of the run-off election, the Authority directs the ECOWAS Commission to immediately provide technical support after the presidential election. This is to accelerate the implementation of the constitutional reforms contained in the Conakry Agreement towards the conduct of the Referendum on the Constitutional Reforms in 2020.

36. The Authority congratulates President Patrice Talon for initiating the



political dialogue and expresses satisfaction with the consensus reached by the Benin authorities and the political stakeholders and the appeasement measures, which resulted from the political dialogue.

37. The Authority urges the Benin authorities and political actors to continue the dialogue and build on the results of the Political Dialogue in order to foster national unity and stability in the country.

38. The Authority notes the launch of the nation-wide inclusive national dialogue in Bamako on 14 December 2019. The Heads of State and Government commend the President, H.E. Ibrahim Boubacar Kéita for the initiative intended to deepen the democratic process in Mali, enhance governance and strengthen national unity.

39. While commending the participation of almost all segments of the Malian society in this historic event, the Authority invites all stakeholders, without exception, to take ownership of the conclusions of this restorative dialogue, to enhance the stabilisation process in the country.

40. The Authority welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the Algiers' Peace and Reconciliation process, particularly in the areas of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), reconciliation and transitional justice, as well as the political measures to end the crisis in Central Mali. It encourages the government to continue its efforts in spite of the difficult environment.

41. The Authority reaffirms its support for the territorial integrity of Mali and the restoration of government control throughout the country, including respect for State symbols. To that end, it calls on the international community to support the government's initiatives to achieve this.

### **Elections in the region**

42. The Authority notes that Presidential/General elections are scheduled to hold in the region in 2020 in six Member States; in Togo, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Niger. The Authority notes with satisfaction that most of the member states with elections in 2020, would be in their fifth or sixth electoral cycle. This would constitute an important test of our region's commitment to democratic consolidation.

43. In that regard, the Authority commends the democratic progress achieved in the region and urges Member States conducting elections in



2020, to sustain the enabling environment for peaceful, transparent and credible elections, to further entrench democracy and good governance. Consequently, the Authority calls on the ECOWAS Commission to continue to support the electoral processes in Member States, by providing technical assistance in a timely manner to ensure the conduct of successful elections in 2020.

### **Security situation in the region**

44. The Authority expresses grave concern at the resurgence of terrorist attacks, targeted at the defence and security forces, civilians, and the social and economic structures and places of worship.

45. The Authority condemns in strong terms the attacks and reaffirms its determination to leave no stone unturned in eradicating terrorism in the region. It expresses solidarity with the people and governments of the affected member states.

46. The Authority commends the considerable efforts by Member States to fight against terrorism and all other forms of transnational organised crime in the region.

47. The Authority reiterates its call to the United Nations Security Council, to bring the G5 Sahel Joint Force under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, it calls on the United Nations Security Council to grant MINUSMA a mandate for offensive operations, to enable it more effectively address the challenges of terrorism in Mali. The Authority reiterates its request to the United Nations Security Council for the nomination of a Joint United Nations-African Union Special Envoy for Libya.

48. The Authority adopts the 2020 – 2024 Action Plan to eradicate terrorism in the region, its implementation timetable and estimated budget of Two Billion, Three Hundred Million US dollars (US\$2.300.000.000). One billion US dollars (US\$1.000.000.000) of the entire budget will be financed from internal funds. The money is intended for the provision of equipment to support the defence forces of Member States, training of the relevant bodies and effective intelligence sharing.

49. The Authority instructs the Commission to propose a strategy to mobilise the outstanding amount for the 2021-2024 period at its next ordinary session.

50. The Authority also instructs the President of the Commission to



immediately set up an inclusive and transparent mechanism to manage funds mobilised for the implementation of the Action Plan. The Authority further instructs the President of the Commission to ensure the speedy disbursement of the resources mobilised in order to respond efficiently to the urgent situation.

51. The Authority decides to focus effort, in 2020 and 2021, on the implementation of activities expected to quickly contribute in checking the increase and spread of terrorist attacks.

52. The Authority urges international partners to provide substantial support for the implementation of the Action Plan. To this end, it instructs the President of the Commission to organise, as soon as possible, a donor conference to mobilise funds, in addition to the internal resources identified by the Authority.

53. The Authority instructs the President to build strong partnerships with all stakeholders in counter-terrorism in the region. The partnerships should be built on the complementarity of initiatives and activities such as to avoid, as much as possible, the duplication of efforts. They should also be based on the principle of comparative advantage, in order to benefit from the value added of the different stakeholders, to better optimise their role.

#### **ON HARMONISATION OF ECOWAS MEMBER STATES' POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

54. The Heads of State and Government take note of the request for support by Member States applying for positions in international and regional organisations, and of the vacancies reserved for ECOWAS Member States at the United Nations in 2020.

55. The Authority calls for urgent arbitration and harmonisation of the positions requested by several Member States, in order to come up with consensus candidacies, which should be fully supported by the Community.

56. To this end, the Authority shall support the candidacy of **Dr Akinwumi Adesina** for a second term as President of the African Development Bank Group.

#### **ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

57. The Authority expresses deep and sincere gratitude to all financial and technical partners of ECOWAS, for their contribution to the consolidation of regional peace and security, and implementation of the ECOWAS integration agenda.



58. The Authority calls on the financial and technical partners to support the financing of the ECOWAS' five-year action plan for the eradication of terrorism in the region (2020-2024).

### **ON INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

59. The Authority takes note of the report of the 19<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers on the Forensic Audit of ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies for the period of 2013-2017. The Authority calls on ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies to continue to promote a credible system of corporate good governance within the Community

60. In this regard, the Authority directs the Commission to strengthen the oversight functions within the ECOWAS institutions and welcomes the initiative to establish a cashless policy, an ethics and compliance system, and calls for the application of sanctions.

### **DATE OF NEXT SUMMIT**

61. The date of the Fifty-seventh Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government will be communicated at a later date, after consultations with the Heads of State and Government.

62. The Authority conveys its sincere congratulations to **H.E. Issoufou Mahamadou**, President of the Republic of Niger and Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for his outstanding commitment to regional and continental integration and exemplary leadership in steering the affairs of the Community.

**DONE IN ABUJA THIS 21<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER 2019  
THE AUTHORITY**

