

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES

FOURTH MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS
OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

FREETOWN, MAY 28 - 29, 1981

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held its fourth annual meeting in Freetown, Sierra Leone on 28th and 29th May, 1981.

The meeting was attended by the following Heads of State and Government and accredited representatives:

H.E. Colonel Mathieu KEREKOU
President of the People's Republic of Benin

H.E. Dr. Hilla LIMANN
President of the Republic of Ghana

H.E. Ahmed Sekou TOURE
President of the People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea

H.E. Commandant Joao Bernado VIEIRA
President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

H.E. Master-Sergeant Samuel K. DOE
Head of State of the Republic of Liberia

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Khouna OULD HAIDALLA
President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

H.E. Alhaji Shehu SHAGARI
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

H.E. Abdou DIOUF
President of the Republic of Senegal

H.E. Dr. Siaka STEVENS
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

H.E. General Gnassingbe EYADEMA
President of the Republic of Togo

Hon. Major Pedro PIRES
Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde

Hon. Abdoulaye KONE
Minister of Economy and Finance of the Republic of
Ivory Coast

Hon. Dr. Momodou S. K. MANNEH
Minister of Economic Planning and Industrial Development
of the Republic of The Gambia

Hon. Lt.-Colonel Felix TIENTARABOUM
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the
Republic of Upper Volta

Hon. Drissa KEITA
Minister of Finance and Commerce of the Republic of Mali

Hon. Hamid ALGABID
Minister of Trade of the Republic of Niger

The President of the African Development Bank Mr. Willa Mung-Omba, the Secretary General of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Mr. F. Mili, the Secretary General of the Mano River Union Mr. Ernest Eastman, the Executive Secretary of the West African Clearing House Mr. Adesoye Windapo, the Director of Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries at the UNCTAD Secretariat Mr. Moses Adebajo, the Honourable Life Vice President of the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce Dr. T. F. Hope, the ECA, GATT, FAO, UNIDO and CEAO attended the Summit as observers.

In His opening address, His Excellency Dr. Siaka STEVENS, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone welcomed his colleagues to Freetown. He noted with pride and satisfaction, the progress the Community has made towards the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty. He exhorted His colleagues to help build on the solid foundations already laid. As the Community has reached the stage of implementing its decisions, He hoped that Member States will demonstrate the same determination and enthusiasm that brought the Community together six years ago, to overcome the obstacles that may lie in the path towards removing the constraints to the development of a healthy and viable Community.

The outgoing Chairman of the Authority, His Excellency Army General Gnassingbe EYADEMA gave a report on the Community's Priority Work Programme and especially the activities undertaken by the Community during His tenure of office. He recalled that the last ECOWAS Summit held in Lomé, Togo on 27 and 28 May, 1980 completed the laying down of the basic institutional infrastructures and the formulation of general Community policies and programmes. President Eyadema indicated that preparatory actions were taken aimed at ensuring the coming into effect of the Trade Liberalisation Programme as from 28 May, 1981.

He underscored the importance of this Programme in the general Community objective of economic integration. He indicated that sources of finance had been identified for the Telecommunication Programme and informed His Colleagues of the initiatives taken during the year to draw up regional cooperation programmes in monetary matters and in the field of energy. He expressed His hope that the Community programmes in the agricultural and industrial sectors would lead to the evolution of a common policy on production and pricing. For this reason, He proposed that a meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture be held as early as possible.

Finally, the outgoing Chairman noted the problems that the Community continued to face during the year with respect to the fulfilment of Member States' obligations - especially as concerns the prompt ratification and correct application of Community Protocols, Decisions and Programmes. He made a solemn appeal to all Member States to endeavour to faithfully discharge their obligations towards the Community.

In their respective statements, Presidents Shehu SHAGARI, Mathieu KEREKOU and Samuel K. DOE thanked President EYADEMA for His able leadership and devotion to the Community and congratulated the incoming Chairman of the Authority, President Siaka STEVENS on His election as Head of the Community. They referred to some essential features of the integration effort being undertaken in the West African sub-region through ECOWAS. Specific reference was made to the prevailing atmosphere of good neighbourliness and the need to preserve this. It was pointed out that everything should be done by national immigration authorities and other departments concerned to make the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons to operate smoothly.

Special emphasis was placed on the necessity for well-qualified, efficient and dedicated personnel to staff the institutions of the Community. In this regard, an appeal was made to Member States to release qualified officials on secondment to serve the Community - even if on short-term basis. The shortage of indigenous expertise could be supplemented by seeking the technical assistance of the relevant international institutions such as the United Nations specialised agencies.

There was need to be vigilant and to review attitudes in order to ensure an unhampered development of the physical, social and economic cohesion of the Community and for rapid economic integration and greater collective self-reliance. There was a call for mutual respect and spirit of solidarity. While recognising the need for ECOWAS to continue to strive to secure its borders, reference was also made to the need for being mindful of developments on the African scene as a whole - particular mention was made of the situation in Chad and Namibia.

The Authority of Heads of State and Government took note of a number of Decisions of the Council of Ministers Meeting held on 24 - 27 May, 1981. These Decisions relate to:

- (i) ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme
- (ii) Common Agricultural Policy
- (iii) Rules and Regulations of the Special Fund for the Development of Telecommunications in ECOWAS Member States
- (iv) Trade Liberalisation in respect of Traditional Handicrafts
- (v) The renewal of the appointments of Statutory Officers of the Community.

Special emphasis was placed on the necessity for well-qualified, efficient and dedicated personnel to staff the institutions of the Community. In this regard, an appeal was made to Member States to release qualified individuals on secondment to serve the Community - even if on short-term basis. The shortage of indigenous expertise could be supplemented by seeking the technical assistance of the relevant international institutions such as the United Nations specialised agencies.

There was a need to visit and to review attitudes in order to ensure an unimpeded development of the physical and economic conditions of the Community and to provide economic incentives and general self-reliance. There was a call for mutual respect and spirit of solidarity. While recognising the need for ECOWAS to continue its activities to secure its borders, reference was made to the need for being mindful of developments on the African scene as a whole. Particular mention was made of the situation in Chad and Namibia.

The African, Arab, and Western and Government took note of the number of decisions of the Council of Ministers Meeting held on 24-25 May 1981. These decisions relate to:

- (i) ECOWAS Monetary Co-operation Programme
- (ii) Common Agricultural Policy
- (iii) Rules and Regulations of the Special Fund for the Development of Telecommunications in ECOWAS Member States
- (iv) Trade Liberalisation in respect of Traditional Handicrafts
- (v) The removal of the special rates of duty levied on the Community

The Authority of Heads of State and Government considered the recommendations of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and took decisions in the following areas:

A. Trade Liberalisation Programme

The Authority adopted a list of traditional Handicraft products which should benefit from the preferential treatment to be accorded under the Trade Liberalisation Scheme. By this decision, the Authority declared the coming into force of the Community Trade Liberalisation Programme on 28th May, 1981, in respect of unprocessed and traditional handicraft products as planned.

B. Transport Programme

(i) Harmonisation of Highway Legislation

The Authority adopted the recommendations relating to the harmonisation of Highway Legislation in the Community, which will regulate inter-state road transportation in the sub-region.

(ii) Energy Programme

The Authority adopted an Energy Programme for the Community. The Programme deals with short-term "survival" measures as well as a long-term development programme for the Community. The Executive Secretary was authorised to take all necessary measures for the execution of the Energy Programme.

(iii) ECOWAS Medium-Term Postal Programme

The ECOWAS Medium-Term Postal Programme was adopted by the Authority. The Programme seeks to ensure a regular and efficient routing of mails within the Community.

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A. Trade Liberalization Program

The Authority adopted a list of traditional products which should benefit from the preferential treatment to be accorded under the Trade Liberalization Scheme. By this decision, the Authority declared the coming into force of the Community Trade Liberalization Program on 28th May, 1981, in respect of agricultural and traditional products as planned.

B. Harmonization of Highway Legislation

(i) Harmonization of Highway Legislation

The Authority adopted the recommendations relating to the harmonization of highway legislation in the Community, which will promote intra-state road transportation in the sub-region.

(ii) Energy Programme

The Authority adopted an Energy Programme for the Community. The Programme deals with short-term "survival" measures as well as long-term development programme for the Community. The Executive Secretary was authorized to take all necessary measures for the execution of the Energy Programme.

(iii) ECOWAS Medium-Term Fiscal Programme

The ECOWAS Medium-Term Fiscal Programme was adopted by the Authority. The Programme seeks to ensure a regular and efficient routing of funds within the Community.

C. Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence

The Authority adopted and signed a Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence for the Community. This Protocol outlines the scope and modalities for sub-regional cooperation in matters of defence and reinforces the earlier Protocol on Non-Aggression.

D. Administrative Matters

(i) ECOWAS Tender Board

The Authority decided to establish an ECOWAS Standing Tender Board for awarding contracts in respect of Community projects.

(ii) Renewal of Appointments of the Executive Secretary and the External Auditor

The Authority decided to renew for another term, the appointments of the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, Dr. Aboubakar Diaby-Ouattara and Messrs. R. A. Dillsworth and Co. as the External Auditors for the Community.

E. Any Other Business

The Authority endorsed the suggestion of its outgoing Chairman that a Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Agriculture be held as soon as possible.

The Authority expressed grave concern over the incidents between Cameroon and Nigeria on the one hand, and Cameroon and Gabon on the other and was glad to have an assurance from the current Chairman of the OAU and ECOWAS that this matter is receiving his most urgent attention. In so far as the Nigerian - Cameroon incident is concerned, the Authority decided to let the OAU Bureau proceed with its mediation which it has already started following a complaint by Nigeria.

The President of Guinea Bissau, His Excellency Commandant Joao Bernado Vieira congratulated the outgoing Chairman for his continued dedication to the ECOWAS and the current Chairman for his election and the hospitality awarded to him and his delegation. He also expressed the unflinching support of his Government to the Community.

The Authority expressed its appreciation for the contribution made by the Executive Secretary and his colleagues during the year towards the smooth functioning of the Community and commended them for their devotion.

The Authority decided to meet in Cotonou on 28 and 29 May, 1982.

F. Vote of Thanks

The Authority expressed its profound gratitude to the outgoing Chairman for the able manner in which he directed the affairs of the Community.

The Authority of Heads of State and Government expressed its profound gratitude to His Excellency, Dr. Siaka STEVENS, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, the Government and People of Sierra Leone for the warm hospitality that has been showered on them and for the excellent facilities placed at the disposal of the Executive Secretariat of the Community in the organisation of this Summit and the meetings that preceded it.

DONE AT FREETOWN, 29th MAY 1981

THE AUTHORITY

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES

MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

FREETOWN, 28 - 29 MAY 1981

VOTE OF THANKS

The Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States holding its Fourth Ordinary Annual Session in Freetown, Sierra Leone from 28 to 29 May 1981, wishes to express its profound gratitude to the outgoing Chairman of the Community, His Excellency President Gnassingbe EYADEMA, President of the Republic of Togo, for the able manner in which he directed the affairs of the Community.

The Authority of Heads of State and Government also wishes to express its profound gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Siaka STEVENS, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, the Government and People of Sierra Leone for the typically warm African hospitality that has been showered on them and the excellent facilities placed at the disposal of the Executive Secretariat of the Community in the organisation of this Summit and the meetings that preceded it.

DONE AT FREETOWN, 29TH MAY 1981

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