



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

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**SIXTY-FOURTH (64TH) ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

10th December 2023, Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Sixty-Fourth (64TH) Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held on 10th December 2023 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, under the Chairmanship of **H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu (GCFR), President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**, and Chairperson of the Authority.

2. The following Heads of State or their duly mandated representatives participated in the Summit:

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. **General Umaro Sissoco Embaló**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau

H.E. **George Manneh Weah**, President of the Republic of Liberia

H.E. **Bola Ahmed Tinubu**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

H.E. **Julius Maada Bio**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

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

H.E. **Tiémoko Meyliet Koné**, Vice-President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire

H.E. **Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Niger

H.E. **Olushegun Adjadi Bakari**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Benin

H.E. **Rui Alberto de Figueiredo Soares**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration of the Republic of Cabo Verde

H.E. **Ismāïla Madior Fall**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal

3. The Session was also attended by:

H.E. **Omar Alieu Touray**, President of ECOWAS Commission;

H.E. **Abdoulaye Diop**, President of the UEMOA Commission;

H.E. **Goodluck Ebele Jonathan**, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and ECOWAS Mediator for Mali;

H.E. **Leonardo Santos Simão**, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

H.E. **Bankole Adeoye**, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security.

4. At the opening ceremony, **H.E. Omar Alieu Touray**, President of the ECOWAS Commission delivered a welcome statement followed by an opening address by **H. E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government. Thereafter, **H.E. Leonardo Santos Simão**, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and **H.E. Amb. Bankole Adeoye**, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security delivered goodwill messages.

5. The Heads of State and Government take note of the 2023 Report of the President of the ECOWAS Commission on the state of the Community, the Reports of the 51st Ordinary Meeting of ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council and the 91st Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers.

6. The Authority commends 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.

7. 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:

A. ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION PRIORITY PROGRAMMES

On the Economic Performance

8. The Authority takes note of the performance of the **ECOWAS economies** in 2023 affected by the global economy and inflation. Notably the regional growth rate slowed to 3.7 percent in 2023, compared to 3.9 percent in 2022, annual average inflation peaked at 20.0 percent, compared to 17.3 percent in 2022 and public debt deteriorated further to 48.8 percent of GDP, compared to 36.8 percent of GDP in 2022.

9. The Authority commends the various measures taken by Member States to attenuate the adverse effects of the global economic downturn, urging Member States to pursue structural reforms for economic development, notably through private sector promotion, diversification of their economies as well as increasing investments in social sectors.

On the ECOWAS Single Currency

10. The Authority takes note of the interim report of the High-Level Committee on Practical Arrangements for the Launch of the ECO and instructed the Committee to continue its work and report back at the 65th Session of the Authority.

11. The Authority directs WAMI and WAMA to take part in the work of the High-Level Committee on Practical Arrangements for the Launch of the ECO.

On obstacles to the Free Movement of Goods on the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor

12. The Authority instructs the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) Task Force with the support of the Commission to accelerate the implementation of measures to facilitate the free movement of persons and goods in the region in general and on the Abidjan-Lagos corridor in particular.

B. ON PEACE, SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY

On Peace, Security and Governance in the region

13. The Authority commends the efforts being made by Member States and the ECOWAS Commission towards the consolidation of democracy, peace, security, and stability in the region. The Authority notes, in particular, the peaceful elections that took place during the year in Nigeria, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The Authority welcomes the peaceful resolution of the electoral dispute in the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the peaceful outcome of the dialogue between the Opposition and the Government in the Republic of Sierra Leone.

14. The Authority notes continued challenges of insecurity and instability in the region that have been engendered by terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organised crime, as well as Unconstitutional Changes of Government.

15. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to the promotion of peace, democracy and good governance in the region and urges Member States to uphold the tenets of the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security as well as the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. In this regard, the Authority took the following decisions:

On Democracy and Good Governance

16. The Authority directs the Commission to undertake deep reflection with stakeholders on the

relationships between electoral processes, democracy and development and to make actionable recommendations on increasing the transparency and credibility of elections and the promotion of inclusive development and accountable governance.

17. The Authority further instructs the Commission to intensify consultations with Member States in order to finalise and present for adoption the draft Revised Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

18. The Authority directs the Commission to embark on deep reflection, explore the possibility of an extraordinary Summit on Unconstitutional Changes of Government.

19. On **The Gambia**, the Authority urges the Government and stakeholders to expedite the adoption of a new Constitution, ahead of the 2026 general elections, as well as the implementation of the White Paper on the recommendations of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission.

20. The Authority decides to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) for one year and instructs the Mission to continue to support The Gambia in the implementation of the White Paper and needed Defence and Security Sector Reforms.

21. On **Guinea Bissau**, the Authority strongly condemns the violence that erupted in Bissau on 1st December 2023 that sought to disrupt the constitutional order and rule of law in Guinea Bissau.

22. The Authority commends the action of the loyal members of the security forces of Guinea Bissau and expresses its full solidarity with the people and the constitutional authority of Guinea Bissau.

23. The authority expresses its deep preoccupation with the recent developments in Guinea-Bissau and the threats they pose to constitutional order. The Authority therefore calls for the full respect of the national constitution and a transparent investigation into the various events in accordance with the law and, with a view to ensuring the quick restoration of all national institutions.

24. The Authority directs the Commission to support Guinea Bissau in the consolidation of democracy, peace and stability, including through the completion of the on-going review of the Constitution and urgent Defence and Security Sector Reform.

25. The Authority calls on all actors to refrain from any act susceptible to disrupt the peace of Guinea Bissau and calls on all institutions of the Republic to promote dialogue and to adhere to democratic norms.

26. The Authority further decides to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Stabilisation Support Mission in Guinea Bissau (SSMGB) for one year. It instructs the Commission to take steps to review the mandate of the mission.

27. **On Liberia**, the Authority congratulates the Government and people of Liberia on the peaceful conduct of the general elections. The Authority congratulates Ambassador Joseph Boakai on his election as President of Liberia and commends President George Weah for his statesmanship and gracious acceptance of the elections results.

28. The Authority encourages the leaders and citizens of Liberia to continue to promote social cohesion. It urges the Commission to accompany Liberia in these efforts.

29. **On Sierra Leone**, the Authority strongly condemns the attempted coup d'état on 26th November 2023, that has led to loss of life and destruction of property and urges the judicial instances to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the events, with a view to identifying and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

30. The Authority commends the signing of the “Agreement for National Unity” that emanated from the mediated dialogue between the Government and the opposition All People’s Congress (APC) party and urges all parties and other stakeholders to implement the Agreement in good faith within the stipulated timeframe.

31. The Authority instructs the Commission to continue to support Sierra Leone in these efforts. It further directs the Commission to facilitate the deployment of an ECOWAS Security Mission to Sierra Leone to help stabilize the country.

32. **On Senegal**, the Authority takes note of preparations towards the 25th February 2024 presidential election and urges the Government and stakeholders in the electoral process to continue to prioritize inclusivity and transparency towards the conduct of the poll. The Authority urges all stakeholders to ensure strict adherence to constitutional norms, ECOWAS protocols and the rule of law in the management of the electoral process and other related matters to further strengthen the country’s democratic culture.

On the fight against terrorism and other related security issues

33. The Authority reasserts its commitment to the eradication of terrorism and other threats to the peace, security and stability of the region. To this end, the Authority:

- i. instructs the Commission to urgently resume efforts to activate the ECOWAS Standby Force in its kinetic mode for counter-terrorism operations in zones infested by terrorist armed groups (TAGs);
- ii. recalling its decisions at the 9th July 2023 Summit in Bissau, instructs the Commission to expedite the convening of the meeting of Ministers of Finance and Defence of Member States to agree on the modalities for the mobilization of internal financial, human and material resources on a mandatory basis to support the deployment of the regional counter-terrorism force;
- iii. takes note of the commencement of assignment by the Special Envoy on counterterrorism, Ambassador Baba Kamara, and directs the Commission to facilitate his missions;

- iv. directs the Commission to intensify collaboration with sub-regional counterterrorism initiatives, such as the *Accra Initiative*, and *MNJTF*.
- v. urges Member States to increase funding for Joint Maritime Operations and Exercises in the region and to improve coordination and collaboration among various Ministries, Departments and Agencies responsible for Maritime Security.

On the political situation in the Republic of Niger

34. The Authority recalled its decisions at its Extraordinary Summits of 30th July 2023 and 10th August 2023 on the political situation in the Republic of Niger. The Authority commends the efforts of the Chair of Authority, His Excellency Bola Ahmed Tinubu, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, towards the peaceful resolution of the political crisis. The Authority deeply deplores the continued detention of President Mohamed Bazoum, his family and associates by the *Conseil national pour le sauvetage de la patrie* - CNSP) and the lack of commitment on the part of the CNSP to restore constitutional order. Consequently,

- i. The Authority calls on CNSP to release President Mohamed Bazoum and his family and associates immediately and without condition;
- ii. The Authority decides to set up a Committee of Heads of State composed of **H.E. Faure Gnassingbé**, President of the Togolese Republic, **H.E. Julius Maada Bio**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and **Representatives** of the President of the Federal Republic of **Nigeria** and the President of the Republic of **Benin** to engage with the CNSP and other stakeholders, with a view to agreeing on a short transition roadmap, establishing transition organs, as well as facilitating the setting up of a transition monitoring and evaluation mechanism towards the speedy restoration of constitutional order;
- iii. based on the outcomes of the engagement by the Committee of Heads of State with the CNSP, the Authority will progressively ease the sanctions imposed on Niger;
- iv. failure by the CNSP to comply with the outcomes of the engagements with the Committee, ECOWAS to maintain all sanctions, and to request the African Union and partners to enforce the targeted sanctions on members of the CNSP and their associates.

On transition processes in the region

35. The Authority takes note of the meeting of the Presidential Troika +1 (Niger) in Abuja, Nigeria, on 18th July 2023, to reflect on the political and security situation in the region, including on the transition processes in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali.

36. The Authority welcomes the successful national referendum in Mali and commends the transition authorities for the efforts they have deployed.

37. The Authority notes with concern the transition authorities' recent reluctance to cooperate with ECOWAS in the implementation of transition programmes and other activities of interest to the region.

38. The Authority deplores the unilateral decisions taken on the implementation of the transitional programme agreed with ECOWAS.

39. The Authority requests the Troika, to urgently undertake visits to Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali, with a view to re-engaging the three countries in inclusive implementation of the transition programme.

40. The Authority directs the Commission to continue to support Member States in transition in addressing security challenges and provide them with humanitarian assistance.

41. The Authority directs Member States to exempt the Transition Presidents, Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of the Member States in Transition from the travel ban and other targeted individual sanctions imposed on the three Member States.

42. The Authority urges Mali to cooperate with MINUSMA troops Contributing countries for the safe removal of Contingents own equipment from Mali before the deadline.

43. The Authority rejects all forms of alliances that seek to divide the region and promote foreign interest in the region.

44. The Authority exhorts Member States to ensure regional unity of actions by strictly adhering to collective decisions taken at the level of the Authority.

On humanitarian situation in the region

45. The Heads of State and Government express deep concerns over the dire humanitarian situation in the region which continues to affect the education, livelihood and wellbeing of the affected population, especially children and women. To this end, the Authority instructs the ECOWAS Commission to provide resources and support to the population in serious humanitarian situations in the region.

C. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

46. The Authority endorses the conclusions of the 91st Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers.

On the Institutional Reforms

47. The Authority instructs the Community Institutions to continue their efforts in improving their institutional performance and to consequently speed up their recruitment processes.

On the Community Levy performance

48. To continue providing the Community with the required resources to carry out its programmes and operations, the Authority urges Member States to settle, without delay, their

contribution and payment of arrears. It further urges Member States to strictly apply the provisions of the Community Levy Protocol.

On ECOWAS Golden Jubilee in 2025

49. The Authority decides to launch a year long activities in Ghana, while celebration be held in Togo in 2025.

On the International cooperation

50. The Authority expresses its appreciation to the ECOWAS development partners for their constant support toward the attainment of ECOWAS objectives and the keen interest shown in the development of the West African region as well as the consolidation of regional peace and security.

51. **On the COP28**, The Authority calls on the Parties to consider the development aspiration of developing countries in general and Africa in particular.

D. OTHER MATTERS

Tributes and Acknowledgements

52. The Heads of State and Government pay homage to **H.E. Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal and **H.E. George Manneh Weah**, President of the Republic of Liberia for their strong leadership in the regional integration process and contribution to the entrenchment of the values of peace, democracy and solidarity in West Africa.

53. The Heads of State and Government express their deep gratitude to the President and Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for their hospitality and the facilities placed at their disposal for the successful holding of the Session

Date and venue of next summit

54. The Sixty-fifth ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government will take place at a date to be determined, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Authority.

Done in Abuja, this of 10th day of December 2023

THE AUTHORITY