



FORTY-SEVENTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AUTHORITY OF ECOWAS HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

19th May 2015, Accra, Ghana

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Forty-seventh Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held on 19th May 2015 in Accra, Republic of Ghana, under the Chairmanship of H.E. **John Dramani Mahama**, President of the Republic of Ghana and Chairman of the Authority.

2. Present at the Summit were the following Heads of State and Government or their duly-mandated representatives:

- H. E **Michel KAFANDO**, President of the Transition of Burkina Faso
- H.E **José Maria Pereira NEVES**, Prime Minister of the Republic du Cape Verde
- H. E **Alassane OUATTARA**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- H.E Dr **Ajaratou Isatou NJIE-SAIDY**, Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia
- H. E **John Dramani MAHAMA**, President of the Republic of Ghana
- H.E **Ellen JOHNSON-SIRLEAF**, President of the Republic of Liberia
- H.E **Ibrahim Boubacar KEITA**, President of the Republic of Mali
- H.E **Mahamadou ISSOUFOU**, President of the Republic of Niger
- H.E **Goodluck Ebele JONATHAN**, President of Federal Republic of Nigeria
- H.E **Macky SALL**, President of the Republic of Senegal
- H.E **Ernest Bai KOROMA**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
- H.E **Faure Essozimna GNASSINGBE**, President of the Togolese Republic
- H.E **Nassirou Arifari BAKO**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Beninois Abroad, of the Republic of Benin
- H.E **Louncy FALL**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad, of the Republic of Guinea
- H.E **Dr Cadi SEIDI**, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

3. The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for West Africa, the President of the West African Economic and Monetary Union Commission (UEMOA) and the Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission also attended the Summit as observers.

4. The Heads of State and Government took note of the 2015 Interim Report of the President of the Commission, the Reports of the 74th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, and the 34th Meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council presented by the Chairperson of Council.

5. The Authority expressed satisfaction at the quality of the reports presented and the relevance of the recommendations made therein, which will facilitate the consolidation of the achievements of integration obtained in the past four decades.

6. While building on the 40th ECOWAS anniversary to be celebrated in 2015, the Authority is determined to spare no effort to realise the wise vision of the founding fathers.

7. The Heads of State and Government express their renewed and unconditional belief in the values and founding principles of ECOWAS and their total commitment to achieving the free movement of persons and goods, establishing a common market, consolidating peace, security and good governance, as well as greater efficiency in the operations of Community institutions through the implementation of adequate reforms.

8. In the light of the current challenges to the regional integration process, the Heads of State and Government arrived at the following specific conclusions and decisions

REGIONAL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE COMMON MARKET

9. The Authority reiterates its determination to strengthen the foundations for resilient growth in West Africa. It welcomes the efforts to launch and successfully complete the post-Ebola reconstruction of the economies of the affected Member States. It also welcomes the regional approach adopted to that effect.

10. Furthermore, the Authority reaffirms its support for the different economic recovery plans prepared by Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. It welcomes the relevance of these plans which focus primarily on the resumption of essential services, welfare services, economic infrastructure, resilience and food security.

11. The Authority calls on the international community and all ECOWAS development partners to massively support the economic recovery efforts of the above-mentioned countries.

12. The Authority decides to write off the debt of twenty millions US dollars of the Republic of Guinea arising from a loan to this Member State for the development of its energy sector.

13. The Summit welcomes the declaration on the end of the Ebola epidemic in Liberia and commends H.E. **Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf** for the exemplary way she led her country throughout this challenging period. It also commends the determined steps taken by Guinea and Sierra

Leone to significantly contain the spread of the epidemic. It expresses the hope that these Member States will ultimately eradicate the disease.

14. This positive trend notwithstanding, the Authority underscored the need to maintain a high level of vigilance. It urges the concerned countries to pursue efforts to combat the disease and directs the Commission to pursue its role of coordinating regional efforts in that regard.

15. The Authority approves the creation of the Regional Disease Control and Monitoring Centre with headquarters in Nigeria. It requests the President of the Commission, in collaboration with WAHO, to take the necessary measures to ensure its prompt establishment and operationalization, and calls on all partners to support this process.

16. Furthermore, the Authority renews its earlier call on the need to lift the international ban on air travel to the affected countries.

17. The Summit renews its gratitude to **H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé**, President of the Togolese Republic and urges him to continue in his supervisory and coordination role during the post-Ebola reconstruction phase.

18. The Heads of State and Government reiterate the importance of the free movement of persons and goods and the Common External Tariff (ECOWAS CET) in the consolidation of the common market. It appeals to all Member States to keep constant watch to ensure that all obstacles to free movement are removed.

19. In particular, the Summit urges the Member States yet to do so, to take appropriate measures to implement the CET before the end of 2015. The Authority directs the President of the Commission to expedite measures for the entry into force of the ECOWAS biometric identity card.

20. In order to promote regional trade and guarantee a competitive environment for investment development, the Authority instructs the Commission to speed up actions for the finalisation and adoption of the common investment code and the investment policy. It further requests that the Commission accelerate the process of finalising the trade policy document. The Authority encourages the Commission in its efforts to foster the establishment of public-private partnerships for financing development in West Africa.

21. The Authority urges Member States yet to sign the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to do so as soon as possible with a view to facilitating its implementation.

22. The Summit approves the new roadmap proposed by the Presidential Task Force on the monetary cooperation programme as well as the new convergence criteria. It applauds and encourages their Excellencies, **Mahamadou Issoufou**, President of Niger and **John Dramani**

Mahama President of Ghana to continue in their supervisory roles. The Summit decides to expand the Presidential Task Force to include the Heads of State of Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

SECTORAL POLICIES

23. The Heads of State and Government reiterate the importance of the effective implementation of the different sectoral strategies and policies adopted at the national and regional levels to deepen the integration process.

24. To mark the year 2015 devoted to women empowerment, the Authority agrees on the need to strengthen laws on women's rights and boost their participation in this process.

25. In that regard, the Authority approves the Supplementary Act relating to equal rights between women and men for sustainable development in West Africa and the ECOWAS Action Plan on gender and migration, as well as the Action Plan on gender and trade.

26. Furthermore, the Summit expresses its support for the global campaign on the eradication of statelessness and approves the Abidjan Declaration adopted on 25th February 2015 in that respect. The Summit calls on Member States to decisively join this campaign, in particular through the review of the relevant normative frameworks, adherence to, and compliance with, international conventions adopted to prevent and reduce statelessness.

27. As a prelude to the Summit between Europe and Africa on migration issues to be held in Malta, the Authority directs the President of the Commission to take necessary steps with a view to preparing for this important meeting with concrete proposals.

DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

28. The Authority expresses satisfaction at the peaceful conduct of presidential elections in Nigeria and Togo, adjudged by ECOWAS and local and international observers as free, credible and transparent.

29. The Authority warmly congratulates **General Muhammadu Buhari** on his brilliant election as the President of his country and **H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé**, President of the Togolese Republic on his re-election.

30. The Summit equally commends **H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for his dignified and democratic conduct deserving of a statesman, which contributed in large measure to the peace that prevailed after the declaration of the results.

31. In addition, the Summit pays special tribute to **President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan** for the commitment he consistently demonstrated throughout his tenure, in undertaking reforms

and ensuring the development of his country. It also hails his significant contribution to the integration process in West Africa and the management of the Mali and Guinea Bissau crises among others.

32. The Authority applauds H.E. **John Dramani Mahama**, President of Ghana and Chairman of the Authority, for his crucial role and active diplomacy in Nigeria and Togo which contributed to creating an enabling environment for peaceful elections in the two countries. It also applauds the contribution of H.E. **Alassane Ouattara** President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire who visited these two countries with the Chairman of Authority.

33. The Authority expresses the hope that the elections scheduled in the course of the year in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Cote-d'Ivoire will also be peaceful, democratic, inclusive and credible.

34. The Summit directs the Commission to continue election support to these three countries and appeals to Member States and the International Community to provide financial assistance for the organisation of these different elections.

35. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to deepening the democratic culture and promoting good governance in West Africa. In particular, the Authority agrees to strengthen constitutional convergence principles.

36. After considering the draft Supplementary Acts modifying the 1999 Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace Keeping and Security as well as the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, Authority instructs the Council of Ministers to effect the amendments as decided and submit them for signature during its next Session.

POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION

Mali

37. The Authority commends the efforts of the international Mediation which led to the signing, in Bamako on 15 May, of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

38. The Authority expresses total support for the Agreement thus concluded which offers good prospects for the country's peace, reconciliation and development. The Authority congratulates H.E. **Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta**, President of Mali and his government, as well as the Algiers platform movements and the groups in the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) which signed the Agreement, for their commitment to these values and to the well-being of the Malian people.

39. The Summit urges the other CMA groups, to take a decisive stand for peace and reconciliation and sign the Agreement without delay, following the initial on 14 May 2015 in Algiers.

40. The Authority calls for the concrete and complete implementation of the Agreement and intends, using appropriate means, to apply targeted sanctions against all who may obstruct the implementation or attempt to obstruct the peace process.

41. The Authority declares that only the security and defence forces of Mali have the right and legitimacy to occupy any part of the national territory in the conduct of their responsibility to protect their borders, peoples and their properties and that any occupation by irregular and non-state forces is illegal and therefore should end;

42. The Authority calls on the international community to shore up its support to the Malian Government and people in the implementation process, urging it to also continue support efforts in respect of refugees and displaced persons and the reintegration of people into their home communities.

43. In order to meet all financial obligations to AFISMA, the Authority urges Member States to pay up the pledges made for the Mission. In addition, the Authority directs the Chairperson of the Council of Ministers, in collaboration with the President of the Commission, to engage the United Nations and the African Union for funds to be made available to ECOWAS from the special AFISMA Fund, for the settlement of outstanding payments to troop contributing Member States.

Burkina Faso

44. The Authority reaffirms the importance of the principle of inclusiveness which should govern the transition process and election planning. In that regard, it renews the different calls made in the past to all the Burkinabe stakeholders.

45. The Authority urges all stakeholders to strictly adhere to the electoral timetable for the Presidential election on 11 October 2015.

46. The Authority calls on Member States and the international community to provide financial support to Burkina Faso for the organisation of credible, fair transparent and inclusive elections.

47. The Summit lauds the role of **H.E. President Macky Sall** of Senegal, in providing support to the transition in Burkina Faso and encourages him to pursue his efforts till the end of the process. The Summit expresses its appreciation once again for the coordination efforts by ECOWAS, African Union and United Nations to ensure the success of the transition. It encourages the three organizations to pursue their efforts in that regard.

Guinea

48. The Authority underscores the need for dialogue among the political stakeholders in Guinea, with a view to creating conditions for the success of the ongoing electoral process.

49. The Authority commends the initiative taken in that regard by **H.E. Alpha Condé**, President of Guinea and urges the different political stakeholders to systematically use dialogue to achieve the consensus necessary for the electoral process.

50. The Summit directs the Commission to facilitate the dialogue between the Government and the Opposition. It welcomes actions taken by the President of the Commission to dispatch a high-level mission to Guinea to aid the achievement of consensus among stakeholders on the conduct of elections and the preservation of peace in the country.

Guinea Bissau

51. The Authority welcomes the efforts initiated by **H.E. José Maria Vaz** President of Guinea Bissau and his Government for a new dynamic focused on comprehensive structural reforms for consolidating peace and stability and guaranteeing sustainable development in the country.

52. The Authority strongly encourages the Guinea Bissau authorities in this process and expresses satisfaction at the success of the International Donor Conference on Guinea Bissau. It encourages the international community and all the country's partners to fulfil their pledges in order to guarantee the conduct of reforms.

53. In that respect, the Authority directs the Commission to continue providing support for the implementation of the Defence and Security Sector Reform Programme (DSSRP).

54. The Summit decides to extend the ECOMIB mandate from 1st July to 31 December 2015, with a gradual exit process. It directs the President of the Commission to continue his active policy of seeking funds from development partners to support ECOMIB in its work.

Security Threats

55. The Authority reaffirms its determination to stem, by all means, every threat to regional security. In that regard, it welcomes the joint efforts underway by Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad, to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group.

56. The Authority highlights the need for a United Nations Security Council Resolution in support of these efforts and to aid the concerned countries in addressing decisively the recurrent attacks by Boko Haram. The Authority underscores the leading role that the Africa Union should play in that regard.

57. The Authority directs the President of the Commission to resume consultations for the organisation of a joint ECOWAS/ECCAS Summit on the fight against Boko Haram.

58. The Heads of State and Government renew their appeal to the international community to assist Nigeria, Niger and other neighbouring countries in dealing with the effects of the massive flow of refugees and internally displaced persons.

59. With regard to maritime security, Authority welcomes the operationalization of the pilot maritime Zone E and decides that the Regional Maritime Coordination Center (RMCC) will be based in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

60. The Authority reiterates its previous decisions on the strict implementation of the Community Levy (CL) by all Member States.

61. The Authority directs the Commission to consider the introduction of innovative and binding mechanisms to improve the implementation of the said Protocol and ensure more effective collection and payment of Community Levy proceeds. It also directs the Commission to take necessary measures to render the Regional Solidarity Fund operational with a view to guaranteeing the balanced development of the region.

62. In order to finalise the institutional reform process and prepare for the imminent end of tenure of some statutory appointees, the Authority approves the setting up of an ad hoc Ministerial committee comprising Cabo Verde, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Senegal with the purpose of carefully considering the various issues and making a proposal to the Authority at one of its future extraordinary sessions.

63. The Authority urges the Community Institutions to pursue their thoughts on the enhancement of the prerogatives of the ECOWAS Parliament and to report to the Authority.

64. The Authority welcomes the take-off of activities in Member States to commemorate the 40th ECOWAS anniversary. The Authority decides that the event at regional level will feature special anniversary-specific festivities to take place in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria on a date to be communicated later.

65. The Authority expresses its immense gratitude to **H.E. John Dramani Mahama**, President of Ghana and Chairman of the Authority for his untiring efforts in the promotion and deepening of the integration process in West Africa. The Authority wishes to thank him for his readiness and especially for his remarkable leadership in steering the region's affairs.

66. The Summit decides to elect **H.E. Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal, as Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for a one-year **term**.

67. The Heads of State and Government decide that their next ordinary session will be held at a time and venue to be agreed upon following consultations.

DONE AT ACCRA THIS 19TH DAY OF MAY 2015

THE AUTHORITY



FORTY-SEVENTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

Accra, Ghana, 19th May 2015

VOTE OF THANKS

We, Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, meeting on 19th May 2015 in our 47th Ordinary Session in Accra, express our deep appreciation to **H.E. John Dramani Mahama**, President of Ghana and the Government and people of Ghana for the warm hospitality extended to us in a truly African fashion and for the excellent facilities placed at our disposal to ensure the success of our Summit.

We equally wish to thank him for his commitment to peace, security and good governance and for his remarkable leadership in steering the affairs of our Community. We pay him a well-deserved tribute for his contribution, as Chairman of the Authority, to deepening the integration process in West Africa.

In that regard, we, Heads of State and Government, express our highest regard to President **John Dramani Mahama** for the skill and effectiveness with which he presided over our proceedings, which significantly contributed to the formulation of relevant decisions for the deepening of the integration process.

We are also grateful to him for the relaxed atmosphere in which we held our meeting.

DONE AT ACCRA THIS 19TH DAY OF MAY 2015

THE AUTHORITY