



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

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31 July 2018, Lomé, Togolese Republic

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Fifty-third Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) convened on 31 July 2018 in Lomé, Togo, under the chairmanship of **H. E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic and Chair of the Authority.
2. The session was attended by the under-listed Heads of State and Government or their duly mandated representatives:
 - H. E. **Roch Marc Christian Kabore**, President of Burkina Faso
 - H. E. **Jorge Carlos de Almeida Fonseca**, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde
 - H. E. **Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
 - H. E. **Adama Barrow**, President of The Gambia
 - H. E. **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**, President of the Republic of Ghana
 - H. E. **Alpha Conde**, President of the Republic of Guinea
 - H. E. **Jose Mário Vaz**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau
 - 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 Aurelien A. Agbenonci, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Benin

H. E. Abdramane Sylla, Minister of Malians Abroad and African Integration of the Republic of Mali

H. E. Gbehzohngar M. Findley, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia

3. The session was also attended by:

- H.E. Jean Claude Kassi Brou, President of the ECOWAS Commission,
- Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS),
- Mr Abdallah Boureima, President of the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA),
- Mr El-Ghassim Wane, Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission

4. The Heads of State and Government took note of the 2018 Interim Report of the President of the Commission and the reports of the 80th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers as well as the 40th Meeting of the Mediation and Security Council.

5. They commended the quality of the reports as well as the relevant recommendations contained therein, which would advance the attainment of ECOWAS objectives for regional growth and stability.

6. The Authority, after deliberations, endorsed the main recommendations contained in the different reports, and then considered the following specific issues:

ON ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

7. The Authority welcomes the positive outlook for the region in the area of economic growth, with a projected rate of 3.2% in 2018 compared to 2.3% and 0.2%, achieved in 2017 and 2016 respectively. The positive development is due,

among others, to the rise in prices of commodities, particularly crude oil and mineral ores (gold, bauxite and iron), cocoa, cotton, as well as economic reforms and infrastructural investment.

8. In order to improve the resilience of Member States, stabilise, and strengthen regional growth sources, the Authority encourages countries to continue efforts aimed at diversifying their economies and developing specific policies targeting the vulnerable, in order to ensure more inclusive growth.

Regarding the creation of a monetary union

9. The Authority takes note of the reports of the Presidential Task Force meetings for the ECOWAS single currency. The conclusions and recommendations arising from the meetings demonstrate the significant progress recorded in achieving a monetary union in the region.

10. It commends the Heads of State and members of the Task Force for progress made in the implementation of the activities on the roadmap for the ECOWAS single currency and for the results achieved.

11. **Regarding macroeconomic convergence** for 2017, the Authority takes note of the progress made by countries on all the criteria, especially on the key criterion of budget deficit for 2016. It urges Member States to continue the implementation of sound economic policies in order to comply with convergence criteria

12. **Regarding the exchange rate regime**, the Authority instructs the President of the ECOWAS Commission to hold discussions and meetings with the working group comprising BCEAO, Central Bank of Nigeria and WAMA, in order to submit proposals before the end of 2018. At that meeting, **the harmonisation of the monetary policy framework and the model for the future central bank** would also be considered.

13. The Authority also instructs the ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with WAMA and Central Banks of the Community to submit, for the next meeting, **proposals for the name of the future common currency**.

14. The Authority instructs the Commission to take all necessary measures for involvement of all Central Bank Governors in the process to create the ECOWAS single currency.

15. The Authority also takes note of the revised Roadmap for the single currency programme, as well as the establishment of a special Fund to cover its funding

requirements. In this regard, it requests the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) and Bank of Ghana, to take all necessary measures to pay their contributions.

16. It notes the conclusions of the study on 'The ECOWAS Single Currency' carried out by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which indicates the best conditions for the establishment of a single ECOWAS currency.

17. The Summit expresses its wish for the greater involvement of Member States in the study process and instructs the Commission to ensure that all Member States are informed of the progress.

Regarding the free movement of persons and goods

18. The Heads of State welcome the continued efforts for the implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, through the development of a monitoring mechanism aimed at facilitating regular assessment of the status of implementation of the Protocol. They direct the Commission to take necessary initiative to reduce the obstacles to free movement and present a report to the political authorities of the relevant Member States.

19. Concerning the Customs Union, the Authority commends the Commission for the steps taken to disseminate and implement the Customs Code following its adoption in December 2017, particularly the training of customs officials in Member States, as well as the continued support to the two Member States yet to implement the Common External Tariff.

Economic Partnership Agreement between the West African region and European Union

20. The Authority notes that the failure of some Member States to sign the EPA and the implementation of interim EPAs, pose significant challenges to the regional integration process. In order to enhance the coordination of regional policies and cooperation with the European Union, the Summit calls for greater flexibility on the issue of the EPA, in particular the implementation schedule of the interim EPAs.

African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA)

21. The Authority welcomes the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA), at the Extraordinary AU Summit, which took place in Kigali, Rwanda on 21 March 2018. It takes note of the signing of the Agreement by

several African countries and calls on Member States yet to do so, to fast track their signing processes.

22. The Authority instructs the Commission to provide assistance to Member States, in order to arrive at a regional stance on pending matters such as tariff concessions, list of specific commitments in the area of services and rules of origin.

Regarding Human Development

23. **In the area of education**, the Authority commends the Commission for setting up mechanisms to promote regional ideals in schools. It directs the Commission to include regional integration modules in school curricula.

24. **On social and humanitarian affairs**, the Authority once again expresses concern over the situation of African migrants in detention centres. It calls for the greater involvement of the Commission in coordinating the positions of Member States, within the framework of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Regarding agricultural development and food security

25. The Authority is concerned about the worsening food security situation in some Member States, arising from significant decline in production compared to the 2016/2017 crop year.

26. It welcomes the emergency mobilisation measures of the Regional Food Security Reserve, which are a fulfilment of the wishes of the Extraordinary Summit of 14 April 2018 in Lomé, Togolese Republic. It urges beneficiary Member States to confirm and honour their commitment to replenish the stock, in order to ensure the sustainability of this regional instrument of solidarity to vulnerable people. The Authority instructs the ECOWAS Commission, to take the necessary steps to immediately provide food to the Member States affected by the food crises.

ON PEACE, SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY

27. The Authority reaffirms the importance of peace, security and stability in the ECOWAS region. It reiterates its condemnation of terrorist attacks in the region and expresses solidarity with the affected countries.

28. It reaffirms its determination to relentlessly counter terrorism and violent extremism. To this end, the Authority welcomes the impressive results recorded in the fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram.

29. The Authority commends the commitment of member countries of Multinational Joint Taskforce of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the G5 Sahel Joint Force in the fight against terrorism. In this regard, it appeals to all ECOWAS Member States, in the spirit of Community solidarity, to provide material, financial and technical support to the armed forces of member countries engaged in the fight against terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel. The Authority also requests the United Nations Security Council to list the G5 Sahel Force under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter, in order to ensure its sustainable and multilateral funding.

30. The Authority urges Member States to implement holistic measures to prevent radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism. It reiterates its call to Member States for enhanced information and intelligence sharing.

31. The Authority welcomes the conduct of the Joint Summit of ECOWAS and ECCAS Heads of State and Government in Lomé, Togolese Republic on 30 July 2018. It urges Member States and the Commission to promptly implement the decisions contained in the Lome Declaration on peace, security, stability and the fight against violent extremism adopted by the Joint Summit.

ON THE SITUATION IN GUINEA BISSAU

32. The Authority welcomes the significant progress in resolving the political impasse in Guinea Bissau, following the measures adopted at its Extraordinary Session on Guinea Bissau held in Lomé, Togolese Republic on 14 April 2018. It urges all political stakeholders and civil society in Guinea Bissau, to continue to demonstrate their commitment to the roadmap, particularly the conduct of the legislative election of 18 November 2018.

33. The Authority expresses its concern over the slow pace of implementation of the timetable for legislative elections. To this end, it appeals to Member States and the international community to support Guinea Bissau. It notes with satisfaction the financial contribution of 1 million US Dollars by UEMOA for the preparation of the legislative election and decides to contribute 2 million US Dollars.

34. Welcoming the progress made since the Summit of 14 April 2018, the Authority decides to lift the sanctions imposed on some Guinea Bissau political stakeholders.

ON THE SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION IN TOGO

35. The Authority considered the report submitted by the two Facilitators, their Excellencies Mr Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana and Professor Alpha Conde, President of the Republic of Guinea pursuant to the mandate entrusted to them by the Authority on 14 April 2018.

36. The Summit congratulates the two Facilitators and notes with satisfaction the progress and achievements made. The Authority welcomes the commitment by stakeholders to maintain a spirit of consultation and dialogue for a lasting solution to the crisis.

37. Following discussions, the Authority of Heads of State and Government agree as follows:

- a. it encourages the Togolese Government to continue the peace- and confidence-building measures by accelerating the judicial procedures for the people arrested during political demonstrations and exploring the possibility of additional measures for them,
- b. the Authority of Heads of State condemns any use of violence, particularly the use of weapons meant for the security forces, and calls on all citizens who stole weapons during demonstrations to return them to the competent authorities,
- c. it further calls on political and civil society stakeholders to refrain, in all circumstances, from acts and comments likely to fuel new tensions and undermine ongoing efforts. It urges the security forces to demonstrate professionalism in their mission of maintaining order and ensuring the security of people and property,
- d. the Authority of Heads of State urges the government to carry out a comprehensive revision of the voters' register, with a view to holding legislative elections on 20 December 2018.

38. It invites the government and political stakeholders to pursue efforts to adopt constitutional reforms, taking into consideration the following issues:

- a. two-round voting system for the election of the President,
- b. a two-term limit for the President,
- c. reconstitution of the Constitutional Court, in particular to review its composition and limit the term of office of its members,
- d. consolidation of the electoral process, its smooth implementation and the full involvement of stakeholders in the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI).

39. The Authority of Heads of State recommends the adoption of these reforms through the Parliament, in order to speed up the implementation process. Where necessary, the reforms will be submitted for electoral consultations.

40. The Authority welcomes the measures proposed by the Togolese Government for the preparation and conduct of transparent, credible and inclusive elections, in particular through:

- a. fast-tracking and finalisation of the electoral census to establish a credible voters' list,
- b. the possibility for Togolese abroad to vote in their places of residence during the national election,
- c. deployment of election observers

41. The Authority commends the opposition for its openness and sense of responsibility and for pursuing dialogue as a means of addressing its demands.

42. It calls on all parties to comply strictly with the Togolese Constitution.

43. The Authority of Heads of State welcomes the determination for openness and constant dialogue, of the President of the Togolese Republic, and notes with interest his willingness to work with all stakeholders.

44. It also calls on the ECOWAS Commission to provide technical support and expertise, for the organisation and conduct of the upcoming elections.

45. The Authority renews its support to the two Facilitators of the inter-Togolese dialogue and calls on them to continue their efforts for a speedy and lasting solution to the socio-political situation in Togo, and present an update at its next session.

46. The Authority of Heads of State decides to put in place a monitoring committee comprising the representatives of the Facilitators, the ruling majority,

the coalition of 14 opposition parties and the ECOWAS Commission, to monitor implementation of these decisions.

47. It instructs the ECOWAS Commission to continue its support to the Facilitators.

ON THE SITUATION IN THE GAMBIA

48. The Authority welcomes the positive political developments in the country, characterised by the successful conduct of local elections on 12 May 2018. It also welcomes the launch of the 2018 – 2021 National Development Plan, and calls on development partners to redeem the pledges made at the Donors' Conference held in Brussels on 22 May 2018.

49. The Authority urges the government to fast track the effective and coordinated implementation of the Defence and Security Sector Reform Programme.

ON ELECTIONS IN THE REGION

Elections in Mali

50. The Authority congratulates the political parties on the peaceful conduct of the 29 July 2018 elections. It urges the political stakeholders to maintain a spirit of patriotism and respect the outcome of the elections.

ON TRANSHUMANCE

51. The Authority expresses grave concern over the upsurge in violent conflicts between herders and farmers due to transhumance, and strongly condemns the significant loss of human life caused by these conflicts and the stigmatisation of targeted segments of the population. It instructs the different stakeholders to implement the measures identified at the Abuja meeting, which took place on 26 April 2018 for the prevention and peaceful management of these conflicts.

ON INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Swearing-in of the President of the ECOWAS Commission and other Statutory Appointees in Community Institutions

52. The Authority takes note of the swearing-in of the new President of the ECOWAS Commission, Mr Jean-Claude Kassi Brou and congratulates him on his appointment.

53. The Authority also takes note of the swearing-in of five (5) new Judges of the Community Court of Justice at its opening ceremony.

54. It equally congratulates all other Statutory Appointees and encourages them to continue to drive the cause of regional integration and development in their respective Institutions.

55. The Authority directs the President of the Commission to fast-track the implementation of regional integration programmes and projects.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

56. The Authority expresses its gratitude to all development partners of ECOWAS, for their support to the consolidation of peace, security and regional integration in West Africa.

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

57. The Authority takes note of the progress made within the framework of the ECOWAS institutional reforms, particularly with regard to the re-structuring of all Community Institutions and Agencies, for greater efficiency and the measures taken to strengthen the internal control mechanisms within all institutions.

58. The Authority directs the President of the Commission to expedite implementation of institutional reform measures, laying particular emphasis on improved performance and the modernisation of Community Institutions.

ELECTION OF THE NEW CHAIR OF AUTHORITY

59. The Heads of State and Government elect His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, as Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for a one-year term. They congratulate President Buhari and wish him every success in the new role.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT SUMMIT

60. The next ordinary session of the Authority will convene in 22 December 2018 in Abuja, Nigeria.

61. The Authority conveys its sincere congratulations to **H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic, for his unrelenting commitment to regional integration and exemplary leadership in steering the affairs of the Community.

Done at Lomé, this 31st day of July 2018

THE AUTHORITY