



ECOWAS COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO  
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

Original: English

**SIXTY-THIRD (63<sup>RD</sup>) ORDINARY SESSION  
OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

9<sup>th</sup> July 2023, Bissau, Republic of Guinea Bissau

**FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

1. The Sixty-Third (63<sup>rd</sup>) Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held on 9 July 2023 in Bissau, Republic of Guinea Bissau, under the Chairmanship of **H. E. General Umaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau**, and Chairperson of the Authority.
2. The following Heads of State or their duly mandated representatives participated in the Summit:
  - H.E. **Patrice Talon**, President of Republic of Benin
  - H.E. **José Maria Neves**, President of Republic of Cabo Verde
  - 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. **Mohamed Bazoum**, President of the Republic of Niger;
  - H.E. **Bola Ahmed Tinubu**, 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. **Tiémoko Meyliet Koné**, Vice President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire;

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3. The Session was also attended by:

H.E. **Omar Alieu Touray**, President of ECOWAS Commission;  
H.E. **Mahamadou Issoufou**, former President of the Republic of Niger, and ECOWAS Mediator for Burkina Faso;  
H.E. **Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;  
H.E. **Abdoulaye Diop**, President of the UEMOA Commission;  
H.E. **Leonardo Santos Simão**, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

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. General Umaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau** and Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government. Thereafter, **H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and **H.E. Leonardo Santos Simão**, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, and the Sahel (UNOWAS) respectively delivered goodwill messages.

5. The Heads of State and Government took note of the 2023 Interim Report of the President of the ECOWAS Commission on the state of the Community, the Reports of the 50<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council and the 90<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers.

6. While recognising the quality of the various reports and the relevance of the issues raised, the Authority endorses the recommendations contained therein. In particular, the Authority considered to the following specific issues:

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

##### **On the Economic Performance**

7. The Authority takes note of the maintenance of the average projected economic growth rate of the Community at 3.9% in 2023 as in 2022, notwithstanding the difficult international context and the continuous increase in the consumer prices. In this regard, the Authority urges Member States to sustain efforts in building more resilient economies, in particular by pursuing structural reforms, efforts to diversify economies and increase local food supply.

##### **On the ECOWAS Single Currency**

8. The Authority notes the lack of consensus in the definition of "majority" within the framework of the Convergence and Stability Pact among ECOWAS Member States.

9. The Authority mandates the Commission to set up a High-Level Committee comprising

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the Presidents of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, the Governor of BCEAO, the Chairman of the UEMOA Council of Ministers, and representatives of Cabo Verde, Ghana and Nigeria, to propose practical arrangements for the creation of the ECO.

10. The Authority adopts the Decision amending the Decision A/DEC.3/7/18 of July 31, 2018 establishing the Special Fund for the financing of the programs of the revised Roadmap for the Single Currency.

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

11. The Authority renews its political will to comply with the regional instruments on the free movement of people and goods while intensifying efforts to address the security challenges faced in the region.

12. The Authority instructs the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) Task Force with the support of the Commission to convene the planned high-level Ministerial Meeting in Benin in the next ninety (90) days to address the challenges on the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor.

13. The Authority further instructs the Commission to present at every Ordinary Session of the Council, a comprehensive report on the status of implementation of the ETLS regulations by Members States, the initiatives undertaken by the Commission, the challenges and the proposals to address the obstacles to intra-community trade.

#### **On the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Project**

14. The Heads of State and Governments of the Republics of Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo consulted and endorsed Cote d'Ivoire to host the Headquarters of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Management Authority (ALCoMA).

15. The Authority instructs the ECOWAS Commission to fast track the completion of the Design Detailed Study, Financial and Implementation Strategy and Tender Documents to launch the construction phase.

16. In this regard, the Authority instructs the ECOWAS Commission to collaborate with the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), as well as other development partners and the Private Sector, to commence vigorous resource mobilisation efforts for investment financing to construct of the highway.

#### **On the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**

17. The Authority recalls the adoption by the African Union of the theme of the Year 2023 as the "Year of AfCFTA: Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area Implementation" and applauds the Commission on the elaboration of the ECOWAS Implementation Strategy for the AfCFTA.

18. The Authority directs the Commission to take the necessary measures to take

advantage of the continental market whilst continuing to support Members States in formulating common positions to conclude outstanding negotiations.

## **B. ON PEACE, SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY**

19. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to the promotion of democracy and accountable governance, peace and security as prerequisites for sustainable economic development and enhanced integration of the ECOWAS region.

20. The Authority deplores the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, particularly in the countries under transition and condemns the continued incidence of terrorism and human right abuses in the affected Member States.

### **On Transition processes in the Region**

21. The Authority commends the ECOWAS Mediators for their determination to help ensure compliance by the Member States in transition of their obligations towards the restoration of Constitutional order within the agreed 2024 timeframe.

22. The Authority regrets the minimal cooperation that the Mediators have received from the Transition Authorities. It calls for a re-assessment of the mediation efforts, considering the challenges that have hindered substantial progress, towards the restoration of constitutional order in these Member States.

23. The Authority takes note of the conduct of the Constitutional referendum in Mali, which is an important step towards the restoration of Constitutional order in the Member State.

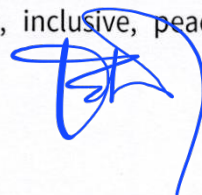
24. The Authority urges the transition Member States to remain committed to the agreed 24-month transition timetables and to ensure that the transition processes are implemented in a transparent, inclusive, and consultative manner with all the relevant stakeholders.

25. The Authority further urges the concerned Member States to expedite the operationalization of their relevant Joint Transition Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms agreed with ECOWAS.

26. The Authority instructs the ECOWAS Commission to provide the requisite political and technical support to the Mechanisms. It further directs the Commission to facilitate the requisite security and humanitarian support to the three member States to ensure the effective implementation of the transition timetables.

### **On the Electoral processes in the Region**

27. The Authority notes the steady progress made in consolidating democracy in the region through the regular conduct of transparent, inclusive, peaceful and credible electoral processes.



28. The Authority commends H.E. Macky SALL, President of Republic of Senegal, for his address to the nation on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023, which has contributed to appeasing tensions and reaffirmed his commitment to the peace, security, and stability of Senegal. The Authority urges all political stakeholders in Senegal to refrain from violence while prioritizing dialogue to ensure consensus building and a conducive environment for the peaceful conduct of the electoral process.

### **On the Fight against Terrorism**

29. The Authority reaffirms their commitment toward the eradication of terrorism and violent extremism, which remain an existential threat to the peace, security, and stability of the region. To that end, it expresses their political will and determination to provide the requisite financial and technical means for effective implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan for the Eradication of Terrorism, in particular the activation of a kinetic force under the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) to support the fight against terrorism.

30. The Authority notes with concern the contribution of some means of transportation in facilitating the movements and operations of terrorist groups in the Sahel. In this regard, the Authority urges Member States to regulate their importation and use across the Region.

31. The Authority appoints Ambassador Baba Kamara, as a High-Level Official to work in close collaboration with the President of Commission to monitor the implementation of counter-terrorism efforts and report regularly to the Authority.

32. The Authority calls for an Extra-Ordinary Session to be held in Nigeria by the end of August 2023, to discuss the concrete measures to address the regional security challenges, including the situation in the three countries in transition. This Session will be preceded by the Extra-Ordinary meeting of the Ministers of Defense and Finance.

### **On the Humanitarian situation in the Region**

33. The Heads of State and Government express serious concern over the dire humanitarian situation in the region, noting that conflict and insecurity continue to displace people in the frontline states of Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, causing an outflow of refugees to the neighbouring coastal states, especially Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.

34. The Authority instructs the ECOWAS Commission to urgently increase its humanitarian support and intervention programmes to significantly mitigate the humanitarian situation through the provision of basic education to conflict-affected children, livelihood support, and resilience building. The Authority also urges the international community, bilateral and multilateral partners to provide substantial humanitarian support to the affected countries.

35. The Authority expresses its deep concern at the inhuman treatment inflicted on West African nationals during their repatriation from some North African countries. Consequently, it



urges the Chair of the Authority to initiate diplomatic action with these countries to ensure compliance with international law on the treatment and repatriation of migrants.

#### **On the ECOWAS Peace Support Operations**

36. The Authority instructs the Commission, in its considerations regarding ECOMIG, to take into account the urgent need to enhance the on-going Defense and Security Sector Reform (DSSR) efforts and the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TRRC).

37. On the Stabilisation Support Mission in Guinea Bissau (SSMGB), the Authority instructs the ECOWAS Commission to take the necessary measures for the deployment of the Formed Police Unit pledged by the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the Stabilisation Support Mission in Guinea Bissau (SSMGB) and the relocation of the Force Headquarters.

38. The Authority extends the mandate of the mission for one year with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023, to consolidate the peace and stability in the country.

#### **On the implications of the imminent MINUSMA withdrawal from Mali and the presence of foreign private armies on peace and security in the ECOWAS region**

39. The Authority constitutes a Presidential Task Force comprising Benin, Guinea Bissau and Nigeria to deepen reflections on the withdrawal of MINUSMA and all related security matters. The Task Force will also accompany ECOWAS mediators to sustain dialogue with the transition authorities of the concerned Member States.

40. The Authority directs the President of the Commission to propose, within 90 days, a comprehensive response mechanism to the dual developments of the MINUSMA withdrawal and the presence of foreign private armies in the Region.

41. The Authority urges the United Nations and the Malian authorities to urgently facilitate the movement of the ECOWAS Member States' contingents and their assets deployed in Mali, in connection with the withdrawal of MINUSMA.

#### **On the National Early Warning Mechanisms**

42. The Authority welcomes the progressive operationalization of the National Early Warning Systems in the Member States. It encourages the Commission to expedite the completion of the process in the remaining Member States.

### **C. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

#### **On the Institutional Reforms**

43. The Authority instructs the Community Institutions to continue its effort in improving its institutional performance and efficient implementation of Community programmes in line



with its 2050 Vision for the well-being of the West African citizens.

44. Furthermore, the Authority directs the President of the Commission to intensify the Community's support and actions towards ECOWAS fragile Member States.

#### **On the Community Levy performance**

45. The Authority reiterates its appeal to all the Member States to take prompt action to adhere strictly to all the provisions of the Protocol on the Community Levy, as the Levy represent the main financial resource for the Community to effectively implement its key and priority projects/programmes.

### **D. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

#### **On the International Statutory Positions**

46. The Authority took note of the candidature of Republics of Guinea Bissau and Liberia for the position of non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council for the period 2026-2027 for which election is scheduled to hold in June 2025.

47. The Heads of State and Government endorsed the candidacy of the Republic of Liberia for 2026/27 and Republic of Guinea Bissau 2028/29.

48. The Authority expresses its heartfelt appreciation to all development partners for their constant supporting the Community in achieving its regional integration and peace and security consolidation goals.

### **E. OTHER MATTERS**

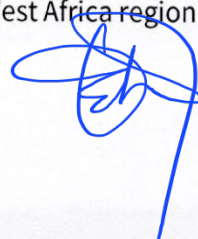
#### **Nigeria and Sierra Leone 2023 Presidential elections**

49. The Authority congratulates **H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu** for his election as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and **H.E. Julius Maada Bio** for his re-election as President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

#### **On the election of the Chair of Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS**

50. The Heads of State and Government elected **H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as President of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for a one-year term.

51. The Authority paid tribute to **H. E. General Umaro Sissoko Embaló**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau and outgoing Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for his leadership and commitment to the West Africa region during his tenure.



**Date and venue of next summit**

52. The Sixty-Fourth 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.

53. The Heads of State and Government express their deep gratitude to the President and Government of the Republic of Guinea Bissau for hosting the Sixty-Third Ordinary Session of the Authority and for their hospitality and the facilities placed at their disposal for the successful holding of the Session.

**Done at Bissau, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of July 2023**



**H. E. General Umaro Sissoko Embaló,  
President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau  
FOR THE AUTHORITY**