



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

4 June 2017, Monrovia, Republic of Liberia

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Fifty-First Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) convened on 4 June 2017 in Monrovia, Republic of Liberia, under the chairmanship of **H. E. Mrs Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**, President of the Republic of Liberia and current Chair of the Authority.
2. The Session was attended by the following Heads of State and Government or their duly mandated representatives:
 - H. E. Mr **Rock Marc Christian Kabore**, President of Burkina Faso
 - H. E. Mr **Jorge Carlos de Almeida Fonseca**, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde
 - H. E. Mr **Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
 - H. E. Mr **Adama Barrow**, President of the Republic of The Gambia
 - H. E. Mr **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**, President of the Republic of Ghana
 - H. E. Prof. **Alpha Conde**, President of the Republic of Guinea
 - H. E. Mr **José Mário Vaz**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau
 - H. E. Mrs **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**, President of the Republic of Liberia
 - H. E. Mr **Ibrahim Boubacar Keita**, President of the Republic of Mali
 - H. E. Mr **Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal
 - H. E. Mr **Ernest Bai Koroma**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
 - H. E. Mr **Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic
 - H.E. **Pascal Irene KOUPAKI**, Senior Minister, Secretary General of the

Presidence of the Republic of Benin

H.E. **Mansour Maman Hadj Daddo**, Ambassador of Niger to the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Mr. **Mohammed Tahir**, *Chargé d’Affaires*, Embassy of Federal Republic of Nigeria in Liberia

3. His Excellency **Mr Benjamin Netanyahu**, Prime Minister of Israel, special guest of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, attended the Summit.
4. H.E, Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was also in attendance.
5. The Summit was also attended by the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for West Africa and Sahel, Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Vice President of the European Commission, Mrs Federica Mogherini, and representatives of the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union as observers. .
6. The Authority recalled the many achievements of the State of Israel, particularly in the fields of agriculture, water resources management, technological innovations, energy and security and welcomed the willingness of the Government of Israel to assist with the development of the region.
7. The Heads of State and Government conveyed once again, their congratulations to Presidents **Adama Barrow** and **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**, on their election as Presidents of the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Ghana respectively, and reaffirmed their willingness to support them during their tenures as President.
8. The Heads of State and Government took note of the 2017 Interim Report of the President of the Commission and Reports of the 78th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and 38th Meeting of the Mediation and Security Council.
9. They expressed appreciation at the quality of the Reports submitted by the Council of Ministers, the Mediation and Security Council and the President of the Commission as well as the relevant recommendations contained therein, which were focused on regional integration programmes, peace and security and institutional matters.

10. The Authority also commended the excellent work accomplished by Community Institutions and their commitment towards driving the West African Regional integration agenda. It reaffirms their firm commitment to the attainment of the ECOWAS Founding Fathers' goals of building a prosperous region, in an environment of peace, security and good democratic governance.
11. 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

12. The Authority notes that West Africa was severely affected by the slowdown in the continent's overall economic activity in 2016 with ECOWAS real GDP growth rate put at 0.2 percent in 2016, compared with an increase of 3.3 percent in 2015 and 6.1 percent in 2014. The considerable drop in activity of the West African region is linked primarily to the sharp fall in the growth rate (-1.5 percent) of real GDP of Nigeria, the region's largest economy.
13. It welcomes the favourable economic growth prospects in Member States and commends the efforts undertaken by the Nigerian Authorities that have helped to stem the adverse impacts of recession and revive the Nigerian economy, which is expected to return to positive growth in 2017.
14. In that respect, the Authority urges Member States to initiate the necessary structural reforms in order to be more resilient to exogenous shocks arising from commodity price fluctuations.
15. The Authority also encouraged Member States to undertake the necessary measures that would enable them to attain the Sustainable Development Goals particularly in the area of poverty reduction and job creation.

Concerning the Free Movement of Persons and Goods

16. The Authority takes note of the country reports of the Task Force on Free Movement, which highlight the continued impediment to the free movement of persons and goods within the ECOWAS region.
17. The Heads of State and Government reaffirm their strong commitment to the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment. In that regard, they agree to speed up the

introduction of the biometric identity card and removal of non-tariff barriers, in order to facilitate intra-Community trade and enhance security in the region.

18. With respect to the Customs Union, the Heads of State and Government welcome the progress made in the implementation of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) by Member States and the development process of the Community Customs Code. They reaffirm their commitment to the smooth and timely implementation of the ECOWAS CET, and therefore urge Member States yet to implement the CET to fast-track the process.

On Agricultural Development and Infrastructure

19. The Heads of State and Government welcome the results achieved in the implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP), in particular, its 2025 strategic orientations through regional and national agricultural investment plans, as well as food and nutrition security. They equally welcome the strengthening of cooperation with various technical and financial partners.
20. Convinced of the need to accelerate the implementation of regional interconnection projects, the Authority welcomes the progress made in infrastructure development, notably road and maritime and commends the signing of the Dakar – Abidjan Corridor Supplementary Act, which provides a legal framework for the construction of the Lagos – Dakar Highway. In this regard, the Authority designates His Excellency Mr Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, as the President to champion the supervision of the implementation of the Dakar-Abidjan Corridor Highway Development Project and His Excellency Mr Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, as the President to champion the supervision of the implementation of the Abidjan-Dakar Corridor Highway Development Project. It further reiterates its commitment for the infrastructural development, particularly the Sealink project which achievement will bring positive impact on regional integration.
21. Furthermore, the Authority reiterates its commitment to continue coordination and advocacy actions in order to resolve the energy deficit in the region.

ON PEACE, SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY

22. The Authority reaffirms the importance of peace, security and stability in ECOWAS for the economic development of the region.
23. The Authority expresses its concern regarding the expansion of terrorist acts in the region and reiterates its total solidarity with the countries affected by terrorism.
24. It reaffirms its determination to relentlessly pursue the fight against terrorism and lauds the efforts by Member States at addressing and preventing this scourge.

25. In that regard, the Authority applauds the constitution of a joint G5 Sahel multi-national force to combat terrorism in the Sahel and welcomes the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council adopted at its 679th Session of 13th April 2013, which relates to the Concept of Operations of the joint G5 Sahel Force
26. The Authority urges the United Nations Security Council to authorise the deployment of the Force and requests for financial support of the United Nations and international community for its operationalization.
27. The Authority commends the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace in Liberia and takes note of the draw-down of UNMIL and its eventual closure in March 2018.
28. To this end, the Authority directs the Commission to finalize the on-going discussions with the United Nations for the transfer of logistics equipment and other residual assets as well as UNMIL Radio to ECOWAS in order to sustain peace, stability and development in the region.
29. The Authority further calls on the international community to continue its robust engagement in Liberia beyond UNMIL's departure, the establishment of a stand-alone peace-building/political office in Liberia to support the in-coming administration and facilitate a smooth transfer of the facilities to ECOWAS.

ON THE SITUATION IN THE GAMBIA

30. The Authority commends the mediation efforts of H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and Chair of Authority; H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; H.E. John Dramani Mahama, former President of the Republic of Ghana, and H.E. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal for the peaceful and successful resolution of The Gambian political impasse. The Authority equally expresses sincere gratitude to H.E. Professor Alpha Conde, President of the Republic of Guinea and to H.E. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, for supporting the mediation efforts.
31. The Authority commends H.E. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia, for all the initiatives taken, since his assumption of duty, towards ensuring the stability, security and economic recovery of The Gambia. It urges him to establish the required framework and mechanism that will promote national dialogue and reconciliation and render justice to the victims in strict respect of international norms and principles
32. The Authority commends the crucial role played by the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) towards the stabilization and security of that Country. Taking

note of the fragile security situation in The Gambia, the Authority extends the ECOMIG mission for an additional twelve (12) months and expands the mandate of the ECOMIG to include support to training and reorientation of relevant components of The Gambian armed forces. It therefore calls on Member States to contribute additional troops.

33. The Authority encourages the Government of The Gambia in its determination to carry out a comprehensive reform of the defence and security sector and ensure efficient management of arms and ammunition. In that regard, the Authority directs the Commission to mobilize and coordinate technical and financial partnership to support government efforts.

34. The Authority launches an appeal to the International Community to support efforts being undertaken by the Government of The Gambia towards the economic recovery and stabilization of the country. It directs the Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations and the African Union, to establish and operationalise the International Contact Group on The Gambia to monitor the situation and coordinate partners' support to the country

ON THE SITUATION IN GUINEA BISSAU

35. The Authority expresses its deep concern over the persistence of the political and institutional impasse in Guinea Bissau despite the signing, on 14 October 2016 in Conakry, of the Conakry Accord, aimed at finding a lasting solution to the protracted political stalemate in the country.

36. The Authority commends H.E. Professor Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea and Mediator of ECOWAS in Guinea Bissau, for his sustained mediation efforts.

37. The Authority takes note of the assessment of the situation made by the High Level Ministerial Committee further to its visit to Bissau on the 23rd to 24th April 2017. It also takes note of the readiness of all stakeholders to hold direct talks, in order to ensure implementation of the Conakry Agreement.

38. The Authority urges all stakeholders to comply with the provisions of the Conakry Accord and calls on all parties to strictly respect and comply with the tenets of the Accord. In this regard, the Authority extends the mandate of the ECOMIB for three (3) months, to allow for the full implementation of the Conakry Accord by the political stakeholders in Guinea Bissau.

39. The Authority calls on all political stakeholders to take all appropriate and immediate measures to ensure the functioning of State Institutions and, consequently, urges the international community and development partners to fulfill

their pledges and commitments to the country in order to ensure the smooth functioning of these Institutions in the interest of the people.

40. The Authority affirms its determination to institute, if needed, targeted sanctions against all those who obstruct the smooth implementation of the Conakry Accord.
41. The Authority once again commends the non-interference of the Army in the political impasse and strongly urges it to continue in like manner.
42. The Authority directs the Commission to continue regular assessment, through the high-level ministerial committee, of the progress made towards the respect of and strict implementation of the Conakry Accord.

ON THE SITUATION IN MALI

43. The Authority commends the Government of Mali for the significant steps taken to ensure the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement including the installation of Interim Authorities in all regions in the north of the country, the commencement of the joint patrols by the Malian army and the armed groups and the successful holding of the National Dialogue Conference.
44. The Authority expresses concern over the recurrence of terrorist attacks in the north and centre of the country and in that respect, reaffirms its condemnation of these attacks on civilian populations, MINUSMA, Barkhane as well as Malian Defence and Security Forces.
45. The Authority reiterates its strong commitment to the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali, reaffirms its support to the peace process and urges all stakeholders to comply with it.
46. The Authority supports the call by the Chair of the Monitoring Committee for the immediate release of Kidal Camp 1 intended to house the Coordination Operational Mechanism (COM), but currently occupied by CMA troops. It urgently calls on the signatory movements to avoid actions or behaviour which continue to obstruct the prompt implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement ensuing from the Algiers process.
47. The Authority urges the ECOWAS Commission to take the necessary measures to organise, in collaboration with the African Union and the United Nations, an international conference on the security situation in Mali, aimed at assessing the most appropriate means of intervention likely to enhance the efficiency of the actions underway with a view to preserving Mali's territorial integrity.

48. The Authority requests the United Nations Security Council, in view of the renewal of the MINUSMA mandate in June 2017, to provide the mission with the necessary operational capacity for the fulfilment of its role.
49. The Authority urges the Government of Mali to sustain actions being undertaken to ensure full implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and promote dialogue among the communities living at the centre of the country in order to eradicate the inter-community clashes.
50. The Authority also urges the Malian government to enhance the capacity of the Malian defence and security forces to enable them execute their mandate all over the national territory and fast-track their redeployment throughout the country's territory with a view to ensuring that they fulfil their fundamental role of securing lives and property.

ON THE SITUATION IN BURKINA FASO

51. The Authority commends the important security measures taken by President Roch Marc Christian KABORE, including the deployment of the defence and security forces throughout the Northern border area with Mali. It strongly calls for concerted military actions between the Burkinabe, Malian and Barkhane armed forces, and the need to strengthen and increase security patrols along the border between Burkina Faso and Mali.
52. The Authority welcomes the effective implementation of the institutional and security sector reforms, as well as the establishment of the High Council for National Reconciliation. It invites the Government to sustain the gains made and expedite the process.

ON THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN LIBERIA

53. The Authority urges the Liberian Authorities to provide adequate support for the National Electoral Commission, ensure a level playing field for all actors as well as capacity building and support for the Liberian security forces.
54. The Authority commends the political parties in Liberia for their decision towards ensuring violence free presidential election in the country and urges them to be fully committed to their Resolution of September 21 -23, 2016 in Ganta, Nimba County, as well as the Political Declaration signed on 4th June 2017 in Monrovia in the margins of the 51st Summit.

ON INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Regarding institutional reform

55. The Authority commends the Council of Ministers for its in-depth consideration of all the relevant reports and analysis provided in relation to the ECOWAS Institutional Reform project. The Authority further underscores the core objectives of the reforms which are directed at achieving cost efficiency, organizational effectiveness and most importantly, successful implementation of regional integration goals. In that regard, the Authority approves the recommendation for a reduction in the size of the Commission from fifteen (15) Commissioners to nine (9) and for a reduction of the number of Statutory Appointees to seventeen (17) in all Community Institutions, as proposed by the Council. The Authority calls on the Ad hoc Ministerial Committee responsible for proposing the allocation of statutory positions to ensure that each Member State gets at least one statutory position. The Authority instructs the President of the Commission to extend the reform to other Community institutions and take necessary measures to finalise the process.
56. The Authority commends the President of the Commission for the steps taken to streamline institutional processes and procedures in order to guarantee optimal performance of the Commission and all other Institutions and restore the confidence of the different partners who are committed to working with the Organization, and encourages him to continue in that direction.
57. The Authority endorses the seven (7) member Ministerial committee established by Council that will, with guidance from the Commission, propose modalities for the allocation of Statutory positions to Member States on the basis of a credible, equitable and rotational system as well as on existing Community Rules.

Regarding cooperation with Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia

58. Pursuant to the directives of the Yamoussoukro Summit held on 29 March 2014, the President of the Commission provided an update on the initialing of the Association Agreement between ECOWAS and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in Nouakchott on 5 May 2017. Taking note of the initialing, the Summit calls on Member States to sign the Association Agreement and directs that Mauritania, being a former member of ECOWAS, should speed up the process for full membership in order to be able to enjoy all the rights and benefits of a Member State.
59. The Authority takes note of the request for membership to ECOWAS from the Kingdom of Morocco, and the application for observer status by the Republic of Tunisia.

60. The Authority further requests that the Republic of Tunisia should be granted an observer status to ECOWAS, and directs the Commission to ensure that all the necessary rules and procedures governing the granting of observer status to Community Institutions are in place. In this regard, it directs the Commission to present this matter at its next Summit.
61. The Authority supports in principle the granting of membership to the Kingdom of Morocco having noted the strong and multidimensional ties it has with Member States. The Authority directs the Commission to further reflect on the implications of the request from the Kingdom of Morocco in the light of the provisions of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty and to submit the conclusions at the next ordinary session of the Authority.
62. The Authority decides to invite the King of Morocco, the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and the President of the Republic of Tunisia to the next Ordinary Session of the Authority.
63. The Authority congratulates two West African researchers Dr Valentin AGON (Benin) and Dr Eddy AGBO (Nigerian) who emerged winners of the 2016 first Innovation Prize for Africa organised by the African Innovation Foundation (AIF). Dr Valentin AGON was awarded the 1st Prize for his innovation on malaria treatment, whilst Dr Eddy AGBO was awarded the Prize on Strong Social Impact for his innovative research on the test for malaria using urine.
64. The Authority sincerely applauds H.E. Mrs Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, Chair of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, for her exemplary leadership and unrelenting commitment to the regional integration, peace and security of West Africa.
65. The Heads of State and Government elect H.E. Mr Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, President of the Togolese Republic as the Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for a one-year tenure.
66. The Heads of State and Government decide to convene the next Ordinary Session in Lome, Togolese Republic, in December 2017.

DONE AT MONROVIA, THIS 4TH DAY OF JUNE 2017

THE AUTHORITY