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MINISTERS**

OUAGADOUGOU 14-15 DECEMBER 2007

**NOTE OF PRESENTATION ON FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN
PERSONS IN THE ECOWAS SUB REGION**

ECOWAS Commission
Abuja, December 2007

1. Introduction

Memoranda were presented to the 13th Nov. 2007 meeting of the Mediation and Security Council by the Commission on activities relating to the fight against Trafficking in Persons in West Africa. Included in the memoranda were requests for the endorsement of a Joint Plan of Action on the fight against Trafficking in Persons between West and Central Africa which together with the Multi Lateral Cooperation Agreement to combat trafficking in persons and a Resolution on the fight against Trafficking in Persons were all signed in July 2006 by Member States of both regions at a Joint Ministerial meeting.

The main thrust of the memoranda were recommendations for (1) encumbering the positions allocated to Member States on a Joint Permanent Regional Monitoring Commission established by the Multi lateral Cooperation Agreement to combat trafficking in persons and (2) extending the ECOWAS Plan of Action on the fight against Trafficking in Persons from 2008 - 2011

ECOWAS Plan of Action on the Fight against Trafficking in Persons

The Plan of Action adopted by the Authority of Heads of States and Governments of ECOWAS seeks basically to establish criminal justice responses to the phenomenon in Members States as well as other legislative and administrative measures that would address issues of victim protection and rehabilitation.

Council may recall that the Commission's anti Trafficking in Persons initiative is being undertaken within the framework of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace Keeping and Security that obliges the Commission to adopt necessary measures to combat transnational organized crime.

The ECOWAS Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons is not only an important policy document, it is also the first of its kind by a regional organization. It has already served as a model for similar initiatives in other parts of the world. It was used as a major reference document on the occasion of the Africa-Europe follow up to the Cairo Summit in Stockholm, Sweden in September 2002, where recommendations and strategies evolved for the Africa-Europe plan were drawn from the ECOWAS Initial Plan of Action.

The Joint Plan of Action between ECOWAS and ECCAS and ECOWAS participation on the Joint Permanent Regional Monitoring Commission

The Joint POA between ECOWAS and ECCAS is fashioned along the lines of the ECOWAS Initial POA and calls for specific measures to be undertaken by Member States of ECOWAS and ECCAS, the Commission and General Secretariat of both regional bodies respectively. Seeking collaboration with ECCAS was largely informed by the need to tackle cross border aspects of Trafficking in Persons between West and Central Africa.

Furthermore, the Multi lateral Cooperation Agreement to combat Trafficking in Persons provides for the establishment of the Joint Permanent Regional Monitoring Commission (JPRMC) allocating four seats each to both ECOWAS and ECCAS.

The meeting of the Mediation and Security Council acknowledged the need to extend the life of the ECOWAS Plan of Action on the fight against Trafficking in Persons from 2008-2011.

It also endorsed the establishment of the Joint Permanent Regional Monitoring Commission (JPRMC) which is set up to coordinate and monitor Member States efforts in the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action.

The meeting also adopted the recommendation of the Commission for the following Member States to be the pioneer members of the JPRMC; Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria. The criteria for selecting these Member States were twofold: high incidence of human trafficking and the need to encourage greater involvement of Member States in the fight against the phenomenon.

The Council of Ministers is kindly requested to endorse the following decisions of the Mediation and Security Council for:

- The extension of the ECOWAS Plan of Action for another four year; 2008-2011
- Nomination of Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria as pioneer members of the Joint Permanent Regional Monitoring Commission (JPRMC)

The report of the meeting of the Mediation and Security Council is attached to this Information Note for the consideration of Council of Ministers.