



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

Original: English

**SIXTY-SIXTH (66TH) ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

15th December 2024, Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. Under the chairmanship of **H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu (GCFR), President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** and current Chair of the Authority, the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held their Sixty-Sixth Ordinary Session on 15th December 2024 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria.
2. Present at the Summit were the following Heads of State and Government and/or their duly- mandated representatives:
 - H.E. **Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
 - 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. **Joseph Boakai**, President of the Republic of Liberia
 - H.E. **Bola Ahmed Tinubu**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

H.E. **Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar Faye**, President of the Republic of Senegal

H.E. Dr. **Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh**, Vice-President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

H.E. **Romuald Wadagni**, Senior Minister of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Benin

H.E. Prof. **Robert Dussey**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Togolese Abroad of the Togolese Republic

H.E. Belarmino Monteiro Silva, Ambassador of the Republic of Cabo Verde to Nigeria and ECOWAS

3. Also attending the Session were:

H.E. Omar Alieu Touray, President of ECOWAS Commission

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)

H.E. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Chairperson of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme Taskforce

H.E. Baba Kamara, ECOWAS Special Envoy on Counterterrorism

4. The opening ceremony featured statements by **H. E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government and by **H.E. Omar Alieu Touray**, President of ECOWAS Commission

5. 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 and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) delivered goodwill messages.

6. The Heads of State and Government took note of the 2024 Annual Report of the President of the ECOWAS Commission on the state of the Community, the Reports of the 53rd Ordinary Meeting of the Mediation and Security Council and the 93rd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers.

7. The Authority commended the quality of the Reports submitted by the Chair of the Council of Ministers, the Chair of the Mediation and Security Council and the President of the Commission and took note of the respective recommendations contained therein, which are aimed at deepening the regional integration process and consolidating regional peace and security.
8. The Authority, after deliberations, endorsed the main recommendations of the respective reports, and also considered the following specific issues:

A. REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

On Economic Performance

9. The Authority took note of the economic growth rate of 3.8% by the end of 2024 compared to a growth of 3.6% recorded in 2023. The Authority also welcomed the reduction in budget and current account deficits as well as the strengthening of the gross external reserves to cover imports of goods and services. However, the Heads of State expressed concern about the persistence of inflationary pressures as well as the increase in the level of public debt of ECOWAS Member States.
10. The Authority urges Member States to accelerate economic, political and strategic reforms and pursue economic diversification through multiple revenue sources by growing the range of sectors and markets for stronger and more stable economic foundations, necessary to support the regional convergence required for the ECOWAS single currency.

On the ECOWAS Single Currency

11. The Authority commends the High-Level Committee on Practical Arrangements for the launch of the ECO for the work accomplished and the significant consensus reached in the implementation of the directives issued at its 65th Ordinary Session.
12. The Authority adopts the criteria proposed by the High-Level Committee for the selection of candidate Member States for the launch of ECO or those which would join at a later stage. It instructs the Commission, in collaboration with the West African Monetary Agency (WAMA), to ensure that these criteria are incorporated into the Protocol

establishing the ECOWAS Monetary Union Agreement.

13. The Authority also endorses the proposals of the High-Level Committee on the costs, sources and modalities for financing the implementation of the reforms and institutions needed to launch the ECO. It urges Central Banks and Member States to take the necessary measures for the payment of their financial contributions for the operationalisation of these institutions as soon as the decision on the effective date for the launch of the ECOWAS single currency is taken.
14. The Heads of State urge the High-Level Committee, in collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission, to intensify its efforts to ensure that the deadlines set for the establishment and operationalisation of the institutions needed to launch the ECO are met.

On Food Security and Nutrition

15. The Authority welcomes the results achieved in the implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) within the framework of food security and nutrition.
16. Considering the critical role of agriculture in the socio-economic development of ECOWAS Member States, the Authority directs the Commission to ensure a swift implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Development of Livestock Farming and the Security of Pastoral Systems; the Regional Rice Self-sufficiency Initiative and its road map 2025-2035; and domesticate the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Action Plan 2026-2035.
17. The Authority welcomes the strengthening of cooperation with technical and financial partners and urges Member States to work together with Community Institutions towards the achievement of these initiatives for food security and nutrition in the region.

On Regional Corridor Development

18. The Authority notes the progress made in completing the technical engineering designs and other preparatory arrangements for the construction of the 1028km Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway. The Authority further commends the progress made in completing the financial and technical studies for the Praia-Dakar Shipping and Maritime Link and the alignment definition of the Dakar-Abidjan Highway.
19. The Authority also takes note of the consultations initiated with the

African Development Bank, ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development and other partners to raise the investment finance required to construct the highway and establish the shipping line and directs the Commission to undertake extensive resource mobilization drives with the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and the African Development Bank to raise private and public financing for implementation.

On Air Transport

20. Considering the severe negative impact of the high cost of air transport on the growth of the region's air transport industry and on the wider economic and regional integration Agenda of ECOWAS, the Authority adopts the Supplementary Act relating to the regional Common Policy on Aviation Charges, Taxes and Fees, which aims to reduce the cost of air transport services in the ECOWAS region.
21. The Authority also endorses the regional strategy which includes, among others, a 25% reduction of passenger and security charges and the removal of taxes applied to air transport, in compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) principles and procedures on Taxes, Fees and Charges, which prohibits taxing of air transport services based on the non-relatedness, transparent and related pricing principles.
22. To ensure a holistic improvement of the region's air transport industry, the Authority also approves the Regulation establishing a common framework for Aviation Security and the increased rate of compensation for passengers who are denied boarding of flights through an amendment of Article 4 of the Supplementary Act on delayed boarding, flight cancellations and denied boarding.
23. The Authority directs Ministers in-charge of Air Transport and the Commission to coordinate and monitor the effective and uniform application of the Supplementary Acts and Regulations in all Member States, while ensuring that Airlines also comply with cost reduction obligations to ensure that ticket prices reflect the reductions to benefit all Community citizens and populations.

On the African Atlantic Gas Pipeline

24. The Authority endorses the title of the single West African Gas Pipeline Project (Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline Project) as African Atlantic Gas Pipeline Project (AAGP) as well as the Intergovernmental Agreement and its Annex. The Authority instructs the Commission to ensure the signing

of the Intergovernmental Agreement before June 2025.

25. In addition, the Authority urges the stakeholders in this important project to speed up the process of its effective implementation and appeals to development partners and the private sector to provide assistance for the project financial close.

On obstacles to the Free Movement of Persons and Goods

26. The Authority notes with concern the continued existence of numerous illegal roadblocks along regional road corridors, which impede free movement of persons and the growth of intra-Community trade and pose significant threats to the effective implementation of the free movement protocol, ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme, and the potential benefit of Member States' benefit from the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement.
27. To that effect, the Authority urges Member States, in collaboration with the Commission, to raise awareness and strengthen relevant institutional structures with a view to improving ownership and implementation of regional texts relating to free movement of originating goods.
28. The Authority therefore directs the Commission to establish a Regional Observatory for Free Movement of Persons, Trade and Transport to monitor and report impediments and challenges for informed decisions to be taken. The Authority calls on border control and security officials on Community corridors to embrace enhanced international trade and transport facilitation measures and project the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods for which ECOWAS is recognized internationally.
29. The Authority, moreover, welcomes the ratification of the AfCFTA by fourteen (14) ECOWAS Member States and calls for the acceleration of the process for the remaining ratification.
30. The Authority, also, urges Member States to submit outstanding Schedules of Commitments on Trade in Services to the Commission for consolidation and onwards submission to the AfCFTA Secretariat as a regional bloc and calls for the effective execution of the ECOWAS Strategy on the implementation of the AfCFTA.

B. ON PEACE, SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY

On Governance, Peace and Security in the region

31. The Authority notes with satisfaction the continued adherence of

Member States to Community values and principles on Democracy, Good Governance, and Dialogue, as demonstrated by the conduct of inclusive, peaceful and credible constitutional, electoral and dialogue processes. The Authority commends the laudable efforts being made by Member States and the Commission to consolidate democracy, peace, security, and stability in the region.

32. The Authority lauds the recent holding of successful, credible and peaceful Legislative and General Elections in Senegal and Ghana, respectively. The Authority welcomes the remarkable progress made by stakeholders in Siera Leone in the implementation of the Agreement for National Unity adopted in October 2023 and the collective efforts towards ensuring lasting peace and stability. It also welcomes the on-going consultations among political stakeholders in Guinea Bissau towards agreeing on dates and frameworks for the rescheduling of the postponed elections.
33. The Authority, however, notes with concern the continued challenges to security and stability in the region fuelled by the activities of Terrorist Armed Groups (TAGs) and Violent Extremists, Transnational Organised Crime and Criminality resulting in the loss of life and property as well as the security and stability of the region. It condemns the creeping deployment of dangerous technologies and autonomous weapons systems by TAGs and other criminal networks.
34. The Authority equally notes with increasing concern the rise and spread of misinformation and disinformation aimed at sowing distrust and undermining regional values and norms. It reiterates its concerns over the spectre of proxy wars in the region as a consequence of renewed geopolitical and geostrategic competition unfolding in the world and mirrored in the region.
35. In this regard, the Authority took the following decisions:

On Democracy and Good Governance

36. The Authority commends the Commission for its persistence in supporting Member States conducting elections within the relevant provisions of the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. It directs the Commission to continue to accompany and offer needed support to Member States preparing for elections in 2025 with a view to ensuring credible and peaceful outcomes and the maintenance of stability within the region.
37. **On Ghana**, the Authority congratulates Ghana on the successful and

peaceful outcome of the 7 December 2024 general elections and particularly lauds the remarkable statesmanship exhibited by the presidential candidate of the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP), H.E. Mahamudu Bawumia, for conceding less than 24 hours after the close of polls and congratulating the President-Elect, H.E. John Dramani Mahama of the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC). The Authority equally commends President-Elect, H.E. John Dramani Mahama, for his demonstration of magnanimity in victory. The Authority urges all stakeholders to strictly adhere to the commitments made under the Peace Pact signed before the elections and resort to the exclusive use of established legal channels to address any disputes emerging from the elections to further strengthen the country's enviable democratic traditions and stability.

38. **On Guinea**, the Authority encourages the Guinean authorities to keep to actions towards the implementation of the roadmap for the restoration of Constitutional order, in an inclusive and participatory manner. The Authority further directs the Commission to assist Guinea in the mobilization of partners to raise the requisite financial and technical resources to facilitate a rapid return to Constitutional order. In this regard, the Authority instructs the Commission to deploy a high-level mission to engage the authorities and political stakeholders to agree on the modalities for expediting the transition roadmap and raising the required resources towards this end.
39. **On Guinea Bissau**, the Authority takes note of the postponement of the scheduled 24 November 2024 legislative elections sine die and urges the political and institutional stakeholders to prioritise the on-going inclusive dialogue to agree on the date(s) for the conduct of Parliamentary and Presidential elections, as well as a consensual framework and modalities for the conduct of the elections. In this regard, the Authority directs the President of the Commission to deploy a high-level political mission to the country to support efforts by the political actors and stakeholders towards political consensus on the electoral calendar and to accompany Guinea Bissau with the requisite technical support towards a successful electoral cycle and the promotion of peace, security, and stability in the country.
40. **On Senegal**, the Authority congratulates the Government and people of Senegal for the peaceful and successful conduct of the 17 November 2024 Parliamentary elections. The Authority applauds Senegal for the achievement of gender parity in the National Assembly and urges the stakeholders to build on this momentum to further strengthen the country's enviable democratic culture and stability, as well as the

promotion of gender equity.

41. **On Sierra Leone**, the Authority urges stakeholders to commit to the continued implementation of the 'Agreement for National Unity' and the recommendations of the Tripartite Committee in good faith, and to persevere in resolving all differences by deescalating tensions through peaceful and inclusive dialogue. In this regard, the Authority directs the Commission to continue to accompany the Government and people of Sierra Leone in the implementation of commitments for the consolidation of democracy, peace, and stability, including through regular follow-up visits by the International Moral Guarantors on the status of implementation of the Agreements.
42. **Regarding the decision of the Republic of Mali, the Republic of Niger and Burkina Faso to withdraw from ECOWAS**, the Authority commends the exemplary diplomatic engagements of **H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar Faye**, President of the Republic of Senegal and **H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé**, President of the Togolese Republic (the ECOWAS Co-Facilitators) and the diplomatic efforts of the Chairman of Authority, **H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu**, and other individual Member States.
43. The Authority takes note of the notification by the Republic of Mali, the Republic of Niger and Burkina Faso of their decision to withdraw from ECOWAS and acknowledges that in accordance with the provision of Article 91 of ECOWAS Revised Treaty of 1993, the three countries will officially cease to be members of ECOWAS from 29th January 2025.
44. The Authority decides to set the period from 29th January 2025 to 29th July 2025 as a transitional period and keep ECOWAS doors open to the three countries.
45. The Authority, in this regard, extends the mandate of H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic and H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar Faye, President of the Republic of Senegal to continue their mediation role up to the end of the transition period to bring back the three countries
46. The Authority, without prejudice to the spirit of the continued diplomatic engagements, directs the President of the Commission to launch the withdrawal formalities after the deadline of 29th January 2025 and to draw up a contingency plan covering all areas.
47. The Authority directs the Council of Ministers to convene an Extraordinary Session during the second quarter of 2025 to consider and adopt both the separation modalities and the contingency plan covering political and economic relations between ECOWAS and the Republic of Mali, the Republic of Niger and Burkina Faso

48. The Authority reaffirms its unflinching adherence to the provisions of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, in particular the zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means.
49. The Authority reiterates its demand for the unconditional release of the former Nigerien President, H.E. Mohamed Bazoum, from detention.

On the fight against terrorism and other security threats

50. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to the eradication of terrorism within the ECOWAS space and commends Member States' continuous efforts in tackling the menace.
51. The Authority instructs the Commission to prioritise the implementation of the 2020-2024 Plan of Action on eradicating terrorism within the region in 2025, in particular the activation of the counterterrorism force. In this regard, the Authority directs the President of the Commission to expedite the holding of the meeting of Ministers of Finance and Defence without further delay to agree on the modalities of resourcing the Counterterrorism Force.
52. The Authority further directs the Commission to take the necessary steps to urgently review the Plan of Action, with a view to further strengthening it and extending its duration, taking into account the evolving security context of the region.
53. The Authority encourages continued collaboration with all the countries in West Africa on regional counterterrorism and humanitarian efforts, including within the framework of the ECOWAS Plan of Action for the eradication of terrorism, the Multinational Joint Task Forces of the Lake Chad Basin (MNJTF) and the Accra Initiative.
54. The Authority commends H.E. Ambassador Baba Kamara, ECOWAS Special Envoy on Counterterrorism, for his exemplary diplomatic engagements and encourages him to persist in his efforts to facilitate the fight against terrorism in the region.

On Peace Support Operations

55. The Authority notes the impactful contribution of the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) and the ECOWAS Stabilization Support Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ESSMGB) in the stabilization efforts in both Member States. The Authority expresses its appreciation to the Troops and Police Contributing Countries (TCCs/PCCs) for their continued

support to the effective conduct of the ECOWAS Peace Support Operations.

56. The Authority also notes the efforts of the two Member States in the rightsizing and standing up their defence and security forces and encourages them to intensify efforts in this direction. In this regard, the Authority reiterates its instruction to the Commission to deploy a mission to assess the financial implications of ECOMIG and ESSMGB and to evaluate the current security and political situations in The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, with regard to the status, mandates and operations of the Missions against the background of the evolving political and security contexts of both Member States.
57. The Authority commends Member States for their commitment to the stabilization of the Republic of Sierra Leone through the pledges made to the deployment of a planned ECOWAS Mission in Sierra Leone (ECOMISIL). The Authority takes note of Sierra Leone's call for the review of the mission and mandate of the proposed ECOWAS Security Mission to the Republic of Sierra Leone

On the Establishment of a Special Tribunal in The Gambia

58. The Authority decides to establish a Special Tribunal for The Gambia, to prosecute the allegations of serious human rights violations and international crimes committed in the country between 1994 and 2017.

On Humanitarian Situation

59. The Authority commends the humanitarian efforts of the Commission and directs the President of the Commission to sustain efforts to strengthen multi-hazard early warning, increase support to reduce further deepening of the humanitarian and security challenges, and enhance humanitarian assistance in the Sahel region to prevent exacerbating the existing problems.

C. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

60. The Authority endorses the conclusions of the 92nd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers.

On Community Levy performance

61. The Authority reiterates its concerns over the recurring issue of non-payment of Community Levy by Member States, and urges them to honour their obligations under the CL Supplementary Act by ensuring regular and prompt remittances of levy collections to ECOWAS.
62. The Authority, therefore, decides the setting up of a high-level Committee led by the Chair of the Council to coordinate the effort of Member states in paying their levies.

On International Cooperation

63. The Authority took note and endorsed the candidature of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the position of non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council for the period for 2030/31 for which election is scheduled to hold in June 2029.
64. The Authority expresses its heartfelt appreciation to all development partners for their continued multifaceted support to the Community within the framework of the implementation of its regional integration agenda.

D. OTHER MATTERS

65. **On the Golden Jubilee Celebrations for ECOWAS@50**, the Authority reaffirms its decision to mark the jubilee with a year-long activities in all member states that will begin in Ghana and end in Togo in 2025. The activities will take place in all ECOWAS Member States with a particular focus on Nigeria as the host of the headquarters of ECOWAS and country of the only surviving Founding Father, General Yakubu Gowon.

Tributes and Acknowledgements

66. The Authority pays glowing homage to the outgoing President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, as he comes to the end of his second and final four-year mandate. The Authority acknowledges with profound gratitude the commendable contributions of H.E. Akufo-Addo to the democratic, economic, security and development efforts of the Community and the Continent, in particular during his two-term leadership of the Authority at particularly trying times. It also recognizes his role as Community Champion of noble causes such as market integration and counterterrorism, as well as the facilities accorded to the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

67. The Authority pays special tribute to His Excellency Musa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission who was attending his last ECOWAS Summit in his capacity as Chairperson of the African Union Commission. They express their deep appreciation for Mr Faki's leadership of the AUC over the last 8 years and for his unflinching support to ECOWAS during this period
68. The Authority expresses deep gratitude to the President and Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to the good people of Nigeria for their hospitality and the facilities placed at its disposal for the successful holding of the Session.

Date and venue of next summit

69. The Sixty-Seventh 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.


Done in Abuja, this 15th day of December 2024