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FINAL COMMUNIQUE OF THE THIRTY-NINTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

1. The Thirty-ninth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States was held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria on 23 and 24 March 2011 under the chairmanship of His Excellency Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairman of ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government.

2. The Heads of State and Government of the following Member States were present at this session: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Ghana and the Gambia were represented by the Countries Vice Presidents while Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Niger were invited as observers.

3. The President of the UEMOA Commission, the representative of the President of the African Union Commission, and the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations Organisation for West Africa also participated in this 39th Session as Observers.

4. The Heads of State and Government also took note of the 2010 Annual Report of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Report of the 65th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and Report of the 28th Ordinary Session of the Mediation and Security Council.

5. The Heads of State adopted the major recommendations of the various reports presented and subsequently undertook a detailed analysis of the following specific issues:

West African Economic Performance

6. The Authority commended the various measures taken by Member States to attenuate the negative effects of the 2009 global economic and financial meltdown. While commending the economic recovery of the region, the Summit urged Member States to continue with structural reforms for economic recovery, notably through private sector promotion, diversification of the economic fabric based on regional complementarity and increased investments in social sectors in order to achieve the 7% growth rate required for the attainment of the Millennium Development Objectives (MDGs).

7. In addition, the Authority urged the Commission to build on the achievements made in deepening integration, particularly in priority areas such as the promotion of the private sector, enhancement of macro-economic convergence, and sectoral programmes including agriculture, infrastructure and energy.

8. With regard to the low resource absorptive capacity of the Commission, Authority directed Council to deepen discussions with the aim of finding a sustainable solution to ensure the effective implementation of Community programmes.

9. In the effort to assist Member States emerging from crisis, Summit approved an emergency allocation of 30 million dollars in support of the electrification project for Conakry. Authority also directed the ECOWAS Commission to seek additional technical and financial support from partners to meet the full financial cost of this important project.

Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

10. The Authority expressed deep concern about the deadlock in the EPA negotiations due to persistent divergences between the European Union and West Africa parties. In that regard, the Heads of State and Government affirm their common position as follow:

- Preserve the independent resources of regional organizations by excluding ECOWAS Community Levy and the UEMOA Community Solidarity Levy from the scope of the tariff liberalization;
- Ensure a sustainable and gradual liberalization that safeguards the region's tax revenue, its development capacity and avoid a reversal of the recent regional integration achievements, therefore, West Africa is ready to offer to the EU a maximum of 70% market opening over a period of 20 – 25 years
- Ensure additional financial resources from the EU for the financing of the EPA Development Programme (EPADP). This additionality and availability of resources should be taken into account in the text of the agreement.
- Maintain the policy space required to promote trade with other trading partners such as South-South countries/blocs within the framework of Most favoured nation clause in the EPA,
- Resolve the divergences in order to ensure a simple and development friendly Rules of Origin which takes into consideration the different levels of development of the two parties. Furthermore, defer extension of rules of origin preferences to cover Ceuta and Melilla till such time that the potential impact of such a move on West Africa could be ascertained, and
- Avoid mechanisms that would affect regional trading relations based on unilateral political sanctions within the framework of the non execution clause.

11. The Authority requested the negotiators from both regions to continue consultations in order to reach agreement on the outstanding divergences, including EU agricultural subsidies and the relationship with Turkey.

Regional Peace and Security

12. After considering the recent developments in the peace and security situation in the region, the Heads of State and Government decided as follows:

13. On Guinea Bissau, the Authority reaffirmed its determination to support the implementation of the Defence and Security Sector Reform Programme (SSRP), as a crucial factor in the process of socio-political stabilisation in Guinea Bissau.

14. In this regard, the Heads of State and Government adopted the recommendations of the 28th Session of the Mediation and Security Council and validated the joint roadmap for the implementation of the SSR. The Authority decided to allocate Community funds to the tune of 63 million dollars, to cover the priority activities of the programme particularly in the areas of: (i) take-off of the pension fund and initial demobilisation, reconversion and socio-economic re-integration operations (ii) deployment of a technical assistance team to strengthen and train national units in charge of protecting institutions and VIPs, contribute to protecting the National Inquiry Commission and setting up of a witness protection programme.

15. While directing the ECOWAS Commission to take all necessary steps to ensure the prompt implementation of this decision, the Heads of State and Government called on the International Community to continue providing support for the socio-economic development of the country, as well as the stabilisation process aimed at pacifying Guinea Bissau. Summit reiterates its commitment to assist Guinea Bissau in consultation with all the development partners particularly the EU.

16. On Guinea, the Authority hailed the successful completion of the transitional process to restore constitutional order through the conduct of credible presidential elections, culminating in the victory of Prof. Alpha Conde on 7th November 2010. While congratulating H.E. Alpha Conde on his victory, the Heads of State and Government also paid tribute to Mr. Cellou Dalein Diallo for demonstrating exemplary statesmanship by gracefully accepting the verdict of the ballot box.

17. In view of the restoration of democracy the Authority decided to lift the sanctions imposed on the Republic of Guinea, particularly with regard to its participation in all ECOWAS decision-making bodies and the arms embargo.

18. The Authority also lauded the political maturity of the Guinean people and commended General Sekouba Konate, the Transitional President, for his commitment and exemplary leadership which contributed to the successful completion of Transition.

19. Furthermore, the Heads of State and Government paid glowing tribute to H.E Blaise Compaore, President of the Faso and ECOWAS Mediator in Guinea, for his mediation efforts in Guinea. The Authority expressed appreciation for the role played by development partners under the umbrella of the International Contact Group in the process.

20. On the situation in Niger, the Heads of State and Government noted with satisfaction the successful completion of the transitional process to restore constitutional legality through the conduct of credible, transparent and peaceful presidential election. The Summit congratulated H.E Mahamadou

Issoufou, the president elect and also paid homage to Mr. Seini Oumarou for his show of political maturity in accepting the result.

21. In view of this development, the Heads of State and Government decided to lift all sanctions imposed on the Republic of Niger in conformity with Article 45 of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

22. The Summit commended the political maturity of the people and all the political stakeholders of Niger for their determination and commitment to the ideals of democracy. In particular, it expressed its appreciation for the role played in the process by all the institutions of the Transition including the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CRSD), the National Consultative Council and the organs responsible for the Electoral process. It singled out General Salou Djibo, President of the CSRD, for special praise for faithfully fulfilling his engagement in the process with firmness and determination.

23. The Heads of State and Government expressed their gratitude to General Abdulsalami A. Abubakar, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and ECOWAS Mediator in Niger, for his untiring efforts throughout the mediation process.

24. Finally, Summit highly commended the ECOWAS Commission for its exceptional role in facilitating the restoration of constitutional order in Niger.

25. Deeply concerned by the cycle of violence and the fast deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Cote d'Ivoire, and considering the situation as a major threat to peace and security in the region, the Heads of State and Government decided to adopt urgent measures aimed at preserving life and ensuring the speedy transfer of power from the outgoing President, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo to the President elect H.E. Alassane Ouattara and pacifying the security environment.

26. To this end, Summit adopted a Special Resolution A/RES.1/03/11 which is attached to the present Communiqué.

Consolidation of Democracy

27. The Heads of State and Government noted with satisfaction the efforts by the Region in the entrenchment of democracy. In this regard, the Authority commended Member States, especially Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger and Benin which, in recent months, held free and transparent elections. Summit urged all the candidates in the Presidential election of 13 March 2011 in Benin to accept the verdict of the ballot box, and to resort only to constitutional and legal means for the resolution of any possible disputes emanating from the election. It called on the candidates to respect the final results to be announced by the Constitutional Court. It urged Member States which will be holding elections in the future, notably Nigeria, The Gambia, Cape Verde and Liberia, to take all necessary measures to create optimal conditions for the conduct of peaceful, credible, free and transparent polls, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

On the situation in Libya

28. The Heads of State and Government affirmed their concern over the

situation and commended the African Union and the United Nations Security Council for the measures so far taken to address the precarious situation. The Heads of State further urged the AU and the UN to continue their engagement until the situation is resolved definitively to ensure lasting peace and stability in the country.

Institutional Matters

29. With regard to the allocation of Statutory positions within the ECOWAS Institutions, Summit decided to set up a five-member committee at the level of Heads of State and Government, made up of Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone and Togo, to review the modalities on the basis of alphabetical order, transparency, equity and predictability and submit their findings to the next Summit for consideration.

30. The Heads of State and Government renewed the tenure of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government till 31 December 2011.

31. The Heads of State and Government commended the pioneering role and steadfast dedication of the late General Gnassingbe Eyadema, former President of the Togolese Republic and General Yakubu Gowon, former Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in creating and consolidating the gains of ECOWAS. The Authority also underscored the remarkable involvement of Professor Adebayo Adedeji, former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and Mr Edem Kodjo, former Prime Minister of Togo and erstwhile Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity, in the formulation of the ECOWAS Treaty.

32. In order to officially recognise the invaluable contribution of these eminent persons in the realisation of Community ideals, the Summit decided to present a posthumous award to the late General Gnassingbe Eyadema, former President of the Togolese Republic. The Authority also decided to award the title of "ECOWAS Roving Ambassador" to General Yakubu Gowon, former Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Professor Adebayo Adedeji of Nigeria, and Mr. Edem Kodjo of Togo. This title confers on the awardees the right to participate fully in all sessions of the Authority.

33. The Heads of State and Government paid a glowing tribute to H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the constant availability demonstrated throughout his mandate and his positive contribution to the regional integration process and the strengthening of the democratic culture in West Africa.

34. The Authority equally expressed its gratitude to all ECOWAS development partners for their constant support in the realisation of ECOWAS objectives and continued interest in the development of the West Africa region, as well as the consolidation of regional peace and security.

35. Within the framework of experience sharing, the Authority directed that the Government of Chad be invited to send its representative to the ECOWAS Commission for accreditation as permanent Representative of the Republic of Chad to ECOWAS in order to strengthen cooperation with this country in some areas relating to economic integration.

36. The Heads of State and Government expressed sincere thanks to H.E.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and through him the people of Nigeria, for the generous hospitality accorded them in the finest African tradition, during their stay in Abuja.

37. The next Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government will be held at a date to be determined in consultation with the serving Chairman of the Authority.

VOTE OF THANKS

The Authority of Heads of State and Government expressed their profound gratitude to His Excellency Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for the generous African hospitality accorded them during their stay in Abuja. The Authority expressed its best wishes for happiness and prosperity to the Nigerian people.

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