COMISSÂO DA CEDEAO

ECOWAS COMMISSION

COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO

Ref. : ECW/CEG/ABJ/36

THIRTY SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE

AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

Abuja, 22nd June 2009

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

JUNE 2009

1. The Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held its thirty sixth ordinary session in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, on 22nd June 2009 under the chairmanship of **His Excellency President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua**, President, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, current Chairman of The Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS.

2. Present at the meeting were the following Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives:

- His Excellency **Dr Thomas Yayi BONI**
  President of the Republic of Benin
- His Excellency **Mr Blaise COMPAORE**
  President of Burkina Faso
- His Excellency **Laurent GBAGBO**
  President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
- His Excellency **Prof. John Evans ATTA MILLS**
  President of the Republic of Ghana
- Her Excellency Mrs **Ellen JOHNSON-SIRLEAF**
  President of the Republic of Liberia
- His Excellency Mr **Amadou Toumani TOURE**
  President of the Republic of Mali
- His Excellency Mr **Umaru Musa YAR'ADUA**
  President, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- His Excellency Maître **Abdoulaye WADE**
  President of the Republic of Senegal
- His Excellency Mr **Ernest Bai KOROMA**
  President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
- His Excellency Mr **Faure Essozimna GNASSINGBE**
  President of the Togolese Republic
- His Excellency Mr **José Maria NEVES**
  Prime Ministers of the Republic of Cape Verde

- His Excellency **Aja Dr. Isatou NJIE-SAIDY**
  Vice-President of the Republic of The Gambia

- His Excellency **Dr. Raimundo PEREIRA**
  Interim President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau

- His Excellency Mr **Seini OUMAROU**
  Prime Minister of the Republic of Niger

3. His Excellency, Mr **Saïd DJINNIT** Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organisation for West Africa also participated in the 36th Session, as an observer.

4. During their Summit, the Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to the consolidation of the regional integration process, through the speeding up of reforms and the pooling of efforts towards enhancing the economic and social development of West Africa in a regional environment of peace, security and democratic good governance.

5. In this regard, the Heads of State and Government took note of the 2009 Interim Report of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, the 62nd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and the 26th Report of the Mediation and Security Council.

6. While recognising the quality of the various reports and the relevance of the issues raised, the Authority enshrined the main recommendations contained therein.

7. In particular, the Summit gave close consideration to the following specific issues :

On the International Crisis and the Economic Performance of West Africa

8. The Heads of State and Government recognized the need to deepen the regional integration process so as to not only counter the negative effects of the crisis but to also provide increased opportunities for regional growth.

9. The Authority encouraged the ECOWAS Commission to continue with its efforts to establish a regional strategy and pursue the reforms that have been undertaken to put in place macroeconomic convergence instruments and speed up the establishment of a single monetary zone within the ECOWAS area. It therefore, specifically urged Member States to consolidate structural reforms and economic and financial stabilisation measures.

10. The Heads of State and Government took note of the conclusions of the regional seminar on the effects of the financial crisis on West African economies. Consequently, the Authority welcomed the establishment of a Strategic Monitoring Committee to advise it on the sector-level implications of the financial crisis at its next session.

On the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

11. The Authority welcomed the progress made with the negotiations in the areas of trade in goods and development cooperation related to the EPA. It recalled its commitment to the conclusion of a balanced agreement, focused on development and emphasised the need to continue with the regional approach to the negotiations.

12. So as to ensure that both parties benefit from the EPA trade regime and the implementation of the EPA Development Programme, the Heads of State and Government directed the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions to step up the negotiation process so as to ensure the signature, in line with the agreed timetable, of a regional agreement that would in the initial phase, cover trade in goods and development cooperation within the scope of the EPA.

13. In this regard, they urged the Chief Negotiators to finalise discussions on outstanding issues in particular, the improvement of the development-oriented market access offer. They called on the European Union and its Member States to demonstrate clear commitment to the financing of the EPA Development Programme.

On the Common Market

14. The Heads of State and Government enshrined the adoption of the 5th band of 35% in relation to the ECOWAS Common External Tariff. To guarantee the consolidation of the common market, the Authority urged the Commission to speed up discussions on the regional methodology to determine what products would fall within the 5th band and their re-classification. Specifically, the Heads of State and Government called on Member States to ensure the effective application of the ECOWAS Protocols on the Free Movement of Persons and Right of Residence and to put an end to all forms of harassment along corridors and borders.

15. The Authority also acknowledged the efforts made in harmonising indirect taxation in particular as regards Valued Added Tax (VAT) and excise duties, within the ECOWAS area.

16. It also welcomed the mobilisation of business entrepreneurs of the region, with a view to constituting them into a true community of economic entrepreneurs capable of harnessing the enormous potential of the region. The Authority noted in particular, their overwhelming participation in the various investment fora and the establishment of strategic business partnerships with their counterparts from China and the European Union. It urged them to move forward with these initiatives. The Authority also approved the

simultaneous organisation by Cote d'Ivoire, of the 3rd Business Forum and the 6th ECOWAS Trade Fair, in November 2010. The Heads of State and Government directed that these should constitute landmark events for business enterprises, Community entrepreneurs and international investors.

On the Energy and Transport Programmes

17. The Heads of State and Government listened to the presentation by **His Excellency Laurent Gbagbo,** President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, on progress accomplished with regard to the mission entrusted to him by his peers at their 34th ordinary session, held in Abuja, on 23rd June 2008. The Heads of State and Government took note of the substantial advances made, and congratulated His Excellency on the coordination of efforts to develop transport infrastructure, and improve services within the region.

18. The Authority endorsed the idea of the creation of a Transport and Energy Development Fund which would be financed from the proceeds of a levy on income generated by trade in the major products of the region. In this regard, the Heads of State and Government directed the ECOWAS Commission working closely with the EBID and PPDU to present modalities for the establishment of the Regional Infrastructure Fund.

19. With a view to improving air transport services in the region, particularly between State capitals, the Heads of State and Government undertook to accelerate implementation of the Yamoussoukro Agreement on the Liberalisation of Air Transport. To this end, they instructed that an annual meeting of Directors-General of Civil Aviation, and Managing Directors of airlines serving the ECOWAS region, should be institutionalised. They called on the airport authorities to issue the technical certificates needed for the establishment of airline companies in the region, without delay, while however, ensuring compliance with the standards and practices of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

20. The ECOWAS Commission was directed to take necessary action to ensure implementation of these decisions and recommendations.

On the Agricultural Policy

21. The Heads of State and Government renewed their commitment to the development of the agricultural sector, specifically through the implementation of the ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and the regional offensive for the production of food and the fight against hunger.

22. So as to ensure the success of the donor round table on the financing of ECOWAP, which will be organised late 2009, the Authority urged the Commission and Member States to conclude the process for the preparation of national and regional agricultural investment programmes. It also called on the International Community to provide its support to the high level dialogue whereby ECOWAP would become a partnership model.

On Human Development Policies

23. The Authority of Heads of State and Government adopted the Action Plan on the Fight Against Drug Trafficking, Organised Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa. While calling on development partners for financial support, the Authority directed the Commission and Member States each in its own capacity to ensure implementation of the essential components of strategy of the Action Plan.

24. Furthermore, the Summit approved, respectively, the ECOWAS Labour Policy and the Regional Policy on Protection and Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking.

On Institutional Issues

25. The Summit enshrined the decision of the Community to support the candidacy of **Mr Chile Eboe-Osuji**, of Nigerian nationality, for the position of Judge at the International Criminal Court.

26. Taking note of the position of ACP Secretary-General allocated to West Africa for the period running from 1st March 2010 to end of February 2015, the Heads of State and Government directed the ECOWAS Commission to convene a meeting of the Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee responsible for the Selection and Evaluation of Statutory Appointees, with Mauritania in attendance, to undertake the selection and validation of three candidates from West Africa, following which the list of selected candidates would be submitted to the ACP Secretariat before the stipulated deadline of 30 October 2009. The Summit took note of the fact that the Gambia and Ghana have already presented candidates.

27. The Heads of State and Government reiterated their acceptance of the principle of rotation of the non permanent seat amongst West African countries. They took note of the compromise reached among Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo to the effect that Sierra Leone and Togo withdraw their candidature respectively in favour of Nigeria on the understanding that next rotation will be the turn of Togo.

On Peace and Regional Security

28. The Heads of State and Government welcomed the efforts made by the Commission and Member States to consolidate peace and preserve the rule of law and regional stability. Nevertheless, the Authority expressed concern over the political situation in Guinea Bissau, Guinea and Niger.

29. **On Guinea Bissau,** the Heads of State and Government strongly condemned the assassinations in March 2009 of President Joao Bernardo Viera and General Tagne Na Waie, former President of Guinea Bissau and Chief of Defence Staff respectively, as well as those that took place in the country in early June, particularly the assassination of Basiro Dabo, a candidate to the presidential elections, and Helder Proença, former Minister of Defence. The

Heads of State and Government observed a minute's silence in honour of their illustrious late colleague.

30. The Heads of State reaffirmed their commitment to fighting against impunity in Guinea Bissau. They also, in this regard, encouraged the ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with the African Union and with the support of the United Nations, to continue with and speed up the investigation into the assassinations, for justice to be served and to allow the national reconciliation effort to take off.

31. With regard to the presidential elections scheduled to take place on 28th June 2009, they urged all stakeholders, especially the military and security forces, to take all necessary measures to guarantee a climate of peace for the conduct of free, transparent and credible elections. The Authority made an appeal to the international community, calling not only for support for the elections but for the implementation of the reforms of the defence and security sector and the restoration of the financial system in Guinea Bissau. The Heads of State and Government commended the gesture made by **His Excellency, President Musa Yar'Adua**, President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in paying the three months of arrears of salaries owed to the armed forces, and contributing to the budget for the preparation of the elections, as well as donating vehicles and communications equipment. The Authority agreed to take up the issue of the payment of salary arrears of civil servants. They also agreed to organise in Abuja, an international conference of Donors on Guinea Bissau, after the presidential elections. To that effect, the Authority emphasised the need to send a joint-team of ECOWAS and UEMOA experts to assess the needs in terms of the defense and security sector reforms, as well as the economic and financial stability.

32. Concluding, the Heads of State and Government directed the Commission, in collaboration with the African Union, and in consultation with the Guinea Bissau authorities, to look into the feasibility of setting up a group of experts to monitor implementation of the reform measures for the defence and security sectors.

33. **On the situation in Guinea,** the Heads of State and Government expressed their concern with the lack of progress that has been noticed in the implementation of the agreed-upon time table for a return to constitutional order. In this regard, the Heads of State urged the CNDD to respect its commitment to restoring constitutional order in 2009 by allowing the political parties to carry out their activities and by organising legislative and presidential elections. In particular, the Summit invited the CNDD to honour its financial commitments for the preparation of the said elections and the conclusion of the process of preparing electoral rolls and to immediately put in place the National Transition Council. Furthermore, The Authority called on the members of the CNDD and the Transition Government to respect their commitment not to stand for elections. It urged the authorities to take all necessary steps to intensify the fight against economic crime and to guarantee respect of the rule of law and order. The Heads of State and Government called

for an enhanced presence in Guinea by ECOWAS and the International Contact Group on Guinea, their regular and sustained engagement with the CNDD and other Guinean stakeholders so as to assure the implementation of the chronogram for the holding of credible elections in 2009.

34. **On the situation in Cote d'Ivoire,** the Authority noted with satisfaction the positive developments in the political situation in the country since the Ougadougou Agreements. The Heads of State and Government invited the various stakeholders in the peace process to re-double their joint efforts in dealing with outstanding issues related to the electoral process and the peace agreements.

35. In particular, the Authority took note of the date for the proposed presidential elections slated for 29 November 2009 and then invited all stakeholders to show political will to ensure that on that day, the elections in Côte d'Ivoire will be free, fair and transparent.

36. The Heads of State and Government congratulated **His Excellency Blaise Compaoré**, President of Faso on his unrelenting contribution in restoring order to the political situation in Côte d'Ivoire. He was then invited to continue his mediation efforts for the total resolution of the Ivoirian crisis.

37. **On the situation in Niger**, the Heads of State and Government expressed their concerns about the possible consequences of recent developments on the constitution of the country. Reaffirming their commitment to the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which was ratified by Niger, the Heads of State and Government appealed to the authorities in Niger to respect the constitution and rule of law which have been the basis for the consolidation of peace and security during the last ten years of consensual democracy in the country. The Heads of State and Government were reassured by the Prime Minister of Niger that all political stakeholders will continue to operate within the ambit of respect for the constitutional legality and the rule of law and that no actions would be taken in violation of the constitution of Niger.

38. **On the situation in Togo**, the Heads of State and Government expressed concern with the slow pace of the Inter-Togolese Dialogue. The Heads of State commended the important role played by **His Excellency Blaise Compaoré** which led to the success of the parliamentary elections in October 2007. Consequently, they invited **President Blaise Compaoré** to resume his role of facilitator in the inter-Togolese dialogue in view of the impending presidential elections in 2010.

39. **On the situation in the Sahel region**, the Heads of State and Government took note of the positive development in the situation in the North of Mali and Niger. They condemned the latest heinous assassinations and commended the determination of the President of Mali to rid the country of all terrorists with the support of neighbouring countries and partners. They reaffirmed their support for the initiatives of His Excellency

Amadou Toumani Toure, in particular the organisation of a conference on the stability and development of the Sahel-Saharan belt as a major contribution to sustainable peace and development of the region.

40. The Authority directed the Commission to establish a high level panel of eminent West African citizens to make proposals for the reinforcement of integration in the region in the economic and political spheres.

41. Finally, the Heads of State and Government paid tribute to **His Excellency Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua,** President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and current ECOWAS Chairman for his positive contribution to the consolidation of the regional integration process and his dedication to the entrenchment of democracy and promotion of good governance in West Africa.

42. They also expressed their gratitude to all ECOWAS development partners for their constant support in the attainment of ECOWAS objectives and the interest they have shown in the development of West Africa as well as the strengthening of regional peace and security.

43. The next ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government will take place at a date to be determined, in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority.

Done at Abuja, this day 22nd of 2009

THE AUTHORITY

VOTE OF THANKS

The Heads of State and Government expressed their heartfelt gratitude to **His Excellency Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua** *GCFR*, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the warm and African hospitality extended to them during their stay in Abuja. The Authority wished the people of Nigeria happiness and prosperity.

DONE AT ABUJA, THIS 22ND DAY OF JUNE 2008

THE AUTHORITY