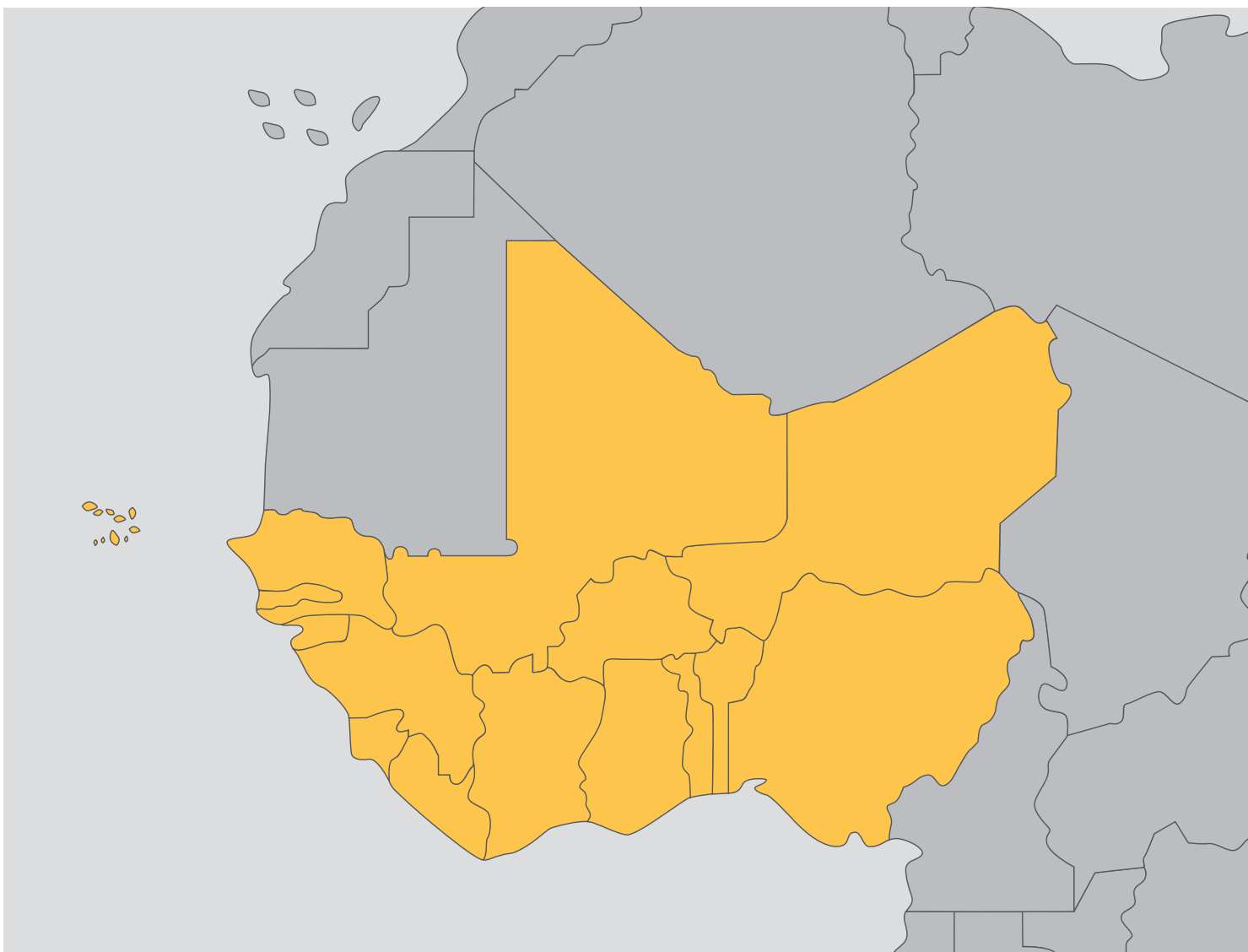


# ECOWAS

How regional integration works in West Africa  
A handbook for journalists





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# Introduction

Regional integration has been at the forefront of international political debate for a long time. Efforts to integrate economies, laws and policies are commonplace around the world, with the European Union (EU) often cited as a model for what can be achieved. The idea of regional integration arouses emotional responses, both negative and positive. Those who see the integration process as a chance to overcome nationalism and foster peace and cooperation predict a wonderful future, if only integration can be achieved. Others, more sceptical, are afraid of the loss of national identity, sovereignty and political leverage: they warn of increased bureaucracy and problems of legitimacy. Yet regional integration is becoming a fact of life, both in Africa and in the rest of the world, albeit with various degrees of integration and at varying speeds.

ECOWAS is for many observers the vanguard of regional integration in Africa. It is often cited as the most successful integration scheme on the continent. But knowledge of the history, structure and reasons for this integration drive is scarce, not only within the sub-region, but also outside it. The part played by the media in promoting – or at least critically discussing – regional integration has to be improved if closer collaboration between neighbouring countries is to have an effect at grassroots level, and be more than discourse among the political and economic elite.

This handbook is geared towards a particular target group: media practitioners and journalists who are interested in regional integration in general and ECOWAS in particular. Its aim is to provide core information about the process so far and its achievements, successes and impediments, and to also offer a glimpse of a possible future. Not every detail can be elaborated in such a short guide. But it is also concise because the author is well aware of the tight deadlines many journalists face, with multiple challenges and assignments, and often without much time to reflect and consider. This handbook is a tool to help journalists who write about issues of regional integration, both as a reference and to offer ideas about which issues might be worthwhile to report.

The aim of this publication is to improve the quality of reporting about ECOWAS and thereby, indirectly, support the development of regional integration in West Africa. By building knowledge about the regional issues at stake and promoting good reporting of regional policies, the author hopes to spur public debate of the topic, and that this will speed-up the drive for regional cooperation.

This handbook has been developed as part of the courses offered in the sub-region by the Institute for International Journalism (IIJ), an arm of InWEnt, which have now focused on ECOWAS for many years. Whilst it complements the course, the guidebook can also be used by itself, by those who haven't attended courses. The author hopes that readers will find this handbook useful and supportive for their work. Any feedback is welcome.

Finally, the author would like to pay special tribute to award-winning Nigerian journalist and public relations specialist Oluyinka Akintunde, who, over the years, has been instrumental in helping the author to stay up to date with ECOWAS developments. He is, of course, a former participant in an IIJ ECOWAS course.

Dirk van den Boom  
Saarbruecken, December 2009

# Regional integration – does it matter?

Both political science and economics have developed many theories which deal with regional integration in particular and cooperation in international politics and economies in general. There is little need to repeat all these – sometimes contradictory – theories here. In this chapter, we will rather briefly discuss the rationale for cooperation, the possible advantages and disadvantages of regional integration and issues that arise.

Ultimately, in theory, all politics and economics are geared towards one end: human welfare. Sounds simple? But how do we define what is beneficial? Where do we expect benefits? Is one person's gain a loss for someone else? Is a gain in one place not a loss somewhere else? And what costs are incurred to gain a given benefit? And most critically, are the losses worth the supposed gains?

To make a comprehensive list of possible benefits from regional integration, we have first to define what we are talking about. This handbook will define regional integration thus:

Regional integration is a process of cooperation between nation-states. Within this process, sovereign rights are gradually shifted to a supra-national level in order to develop and execute policies for the whole region.

## Dimensions of integration

Areas of integration vary. Economic theory concentrates on markets. But regional integration goes well beyond the market, even if markets have always been the starting point of any discussion. So today, to analyse regional integration, we need to look at a variety of dimensions:

1. *Political-legal* (diplomatic relationship between states, membership of international treaties)
2. *Economic* (international trade and foreign direct investment)
3. *Mobility* (transport and migration)
4. *Cultural* (regional identity)
5. *Security* (natural disasters or military security)

Theory aside, you will find all of these dimensions present in the following chapters. But while we take a short theoretical look at regional integration, we will focus on dimensions 1, 2 and 5, since they matter most within ECOWAS. That doesn't mean the other elements lack merit: we'll come to them later.

The five key dimensions show where integration takes place. What does this mean in political and economic practice?

- Product market or trade integration
- Labour market integration
- Capital market integration
- Monetary integration

- Integration of government activities and regulation
- Social and cultural integration of peoples

## Economic arguments in favour of integration

The main theoretical impetus for integration projects worldwide is to improve the welfare of populations. The main economic arguments in favour of integration are:

- Enlarged market (economies of scale, specialisation of labour)  
*What do we mean?* A bigger market with more consumers makes it more attractive for local and international investors to build factories and offer services (creating jobs and increasing returns on their product) than a series of small market with fewer consumers. Countries can also use natural advantages more effectively and can provide certain goods and services more effectively than others, allowing a regional division of labour.
- Efficiency through competition  
*What do we mean?:* With more economic players in a larger market, competition will increase, leading to improved efficiency, lower costs and hence a greater ability to compete beyond the regional market.
- Stepping stone to global integration  
*What do we mean?:* ECOWAS is envisaged as a stepping stone towards a fully-integrated African Economic Union. All regional integration is supposed to lead to more global integration.
- Stronger voice as a regional bloc in global trade talks  
*What do we mean?* Alone member states may lack the political power to persuade others in international forums. A combined group lead by a strong negotiator can achieve more leverage in the international arena and a greater chance their voice will be heard, especially in organisations like the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- Increase of credibility, because policies are “locked in”  
*What do we mean?* While single and small states, perhaps with governments lacking legitimacy, enjoy little credibility and may not be taken seriously, speaking as a big group with common policies enhances credibility and helps to persuade others to engage with the new body
- Breaking the power of selfish national interest groups preventing reforms  
*What do we mean?* If in some countries selfish national interest groups are preventing important reforms – for example democratic reforms or important economic decisions – a regional integration project can be helpful in breaking the power of these groups because of the combined influence of other member states.

## Political arguments in favour of integration

The arguments in favour of closer political cooperation are normally:

- Greater likelihood of regional peace through increased mutual understanding  
*What do we mean?* Countries which trade with each other have more to lose in a war than those which don't. Increased cooperation, especially economic cooperation, makes it less likely people will start shooting at each other.
- Common security measures increase regional security  
*What do we mean?* Since the end of the Cold War (1945–1991) between East and West, former colonial powers and the United States are less eager to intervene in conflicts around the world. Regional security mechanisms are therefore more important than ever (see also chapter 8). When regional military forces are able to co-operate and soldiers from different countries learn to trust one another, it is easier to maintain regional security.
- The possibility of shaping shared foreign policies  
*What do we mean?* As in economic policy, having a common voice in the international arena – for example in the security council of the United Nations or other international organisations – increases political leverage.
- Enhancing Africa's image abroad  
*What do we mean?* Successful political integration undermines negative perceptions that Africa is a “failed continent”.
- Facilitating cultural and educational exchanges  
*What do we mean?* Regional integration can help to bridge cultural gaps between states – for example the language-gap between Anglophone and francophone countries in West Africa.
- Cooperation in broadening the democratic process  
*What do we mean?* If democracy is made a necessary precondition to participate in and benefit from regional integration, the likelihood of coups is diminished. Once integration is underway, a peer review or review by a regional integration body can help to sustain some essential standards.
- Increased legal security for citizens of the regional community whilst travelling and working  
*What do we mean?* The fear that authorities in other states will deal more ruthlessly or arbitrarily with a foreigner will diminish if the regional integration project leads to standardised legal procedures and provisions. If citizens of the region enjoy similar rights in all member-states of the project, exchange, business, tourism and investment will thrive.

## Arguments against political and economic integration

Not everyone favours regional integration. What are the chief arguments against it?

This handbook does not seek to repeat decades of scholarship in this area. But some sentiments and challenges matter in both the economic and the political arena:

- Economically, there is a danger that the weak become more dependent on the strong  
*What do we mean?* Because ties between integrating countries will become stronger and deeper, any crisis affecting strong countries will have immediate repercussions on weaker ones.
- Some countries might benefit more from integration than others, therefore increasing the gap in levels of development  
*What do we mean?* Those who already have particular industries or a well-developed services sector will have a competitive advantage in capturing the benefits of economic integration.
- Politically, there is a danger that those with more political leverage might (deliberately or not) dominate those with less  
*What do we mean?* If consultation and decision-making processes within a regional integration project are faulty or not well-established, strong players could “use” the regional organisation to benefit themselves, whilst pretending to speak for the whole group.
- Both economically and politically there is the danger of “free-riders” – reaping the benefits without contributing to them  
*What do we mean?* If there are no sanctions which govern a regional integration project effectively, non-contribution has no penalty for governments. Yet they might still derive some benefits from remaining in the organisation, for example benefiting from increased leverage in international negotiations. They are therefore “free-riders” – enjoying without contributing. Free-riders are not a problem as long as those who contribute believe that the benefit of having the “free-riders” on-board outweighs the fact that they are members only in name, not action.
- There is a danger of weak links between the integration project and the citizens who should be benefiting from it  
*What do we mean?* Some regional schemes have been criticized as an “elite community”, providing benefits for only a small political (and sometimes also business) elite, without direct impact on women and men in the street. If the linkage between the integration project and ordinary people is weak, its legitimacy is questionable and interest is low.
- The danger of increased bureaucracy which might consume a disproportional share of public money  
*What do we mean?* Combining powers and responsibilities creates a new or enlarged bureaucracy to manage the new tasks. Though generally unavoidable, this can lead to problems of legitimacy and efficiency.

- Leaders may wrangle about who gets the most influential jobs, or posts are created merely to satisfy politicians, undermining efficiency  
*What do we mean?* An integration project brings together different interests and geographical areas. Each area naturally wants to be represented “adequately” in the institutions and activities of the integration scheme. This can lead to the creation of artificial posts and tasks merely to sustain an illusion of equality in all activities for all stake-holders. That leads to unnecessary bureaucracy and often to appointments not on merit but to satisfy a geographical caucus.

Clearly, the debate about regional integration is both wide and complex. The benefits and drawbacks must be kept in mind when we dive into the details of regional integration in Africa, and within ECOWAS in particular. Be aware that public discourse about regional integration jumps between different levels of analysis all the time. One might say that some arguments in favour weigh more heavily than some of the counter-arguments. We will always encounter someone who accepts that there might be a certain benefit in integration, but will also insist that a greater evil is lurking behind it, which has to be avoided at all costs. In reporting regional integration, the journalist will have to shoulder the same task as politicians: to weigh the options and to make an effort to quantify and qualify advantages and disadvantages. There is no objective answer to whether integration is “good” or “bad”. Even very successful integration schemes such as the European Union face severe critics and great apprehension. Regional integration is a political playing-field with many players whose interests and attitudes differ. In reporting regional politics, it is wise to take the substantial differences into account without succumbing to the temptation to take a too one-sided view. We will see that in the case of ECOWAS, judgement about the successes and failures of the community is inclined to be negative within the region (setting aside the “official” viewpoint of governments and the institution itself), and positive outside the region (especially after the 1990 ECOWAS intervention in Liberia). As always, the truth lies somewhere in between.

### More food for thought: the steps towards economic integration

The theory of economic integration, which is widely accepted, states that integration should take shape in steps, each building on the last.

*Stage 1:* Free Trade Area (where internal trade barriers are abolished but all member states retain individual trade barriers to the outside world)

*Stage 2:* Customs Union (where individual trade barriers are abolished as well and a common external tariff is introduced)

*Stage 3:* Common Market (where regulations governing economic activities are uniform throughout the region and legal security exists for everyone regardless of where business is carried out. All obstacles to the free movement of people, goods and services have been eliminated.)

*Stage 4:* Economic Union (this normally includes Monetary Union by establishment of either fixed currency exchange rates or a common currency with a common central bank. Authority over economic policy rests with the community and only to a very limited extent with the national governments. It also includes a general harmonisation of fiscal, social and infrastructure policies)

Theory says that when establishing regional integration, one step should be taken after the other. Once you have achieved a free trade area, you might consider taking the project to the next stage of a customs union. Theory says that each step has to be working effectively before the community can introduce the next step successfully.

**Leading question:** If we believe the theory seriously, what does that mean for the development of ECOWAS so far and plans for further measures that are on the table? Reconsider this after reading the handbook.

## Further reading:

If you want to know more about the theoretical background of regional integration, here is some recommended reading online:

A good presentation about the stages of regional integration on author-stream.com:  
<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/iloor-57262-2-Stages-economic-integration-of-e-Entertainment-ppt-powerpoint/>

A short and comprehensive discussion about integration is provided by the government of Canada:  
<http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/inbrief/prbo249-e.htm>

If you want to go into more detail and have some basic knowledge of social science, there is a good paper by the University of Miami:  
<http://www6.miami.edu/EUCenter/LaursenLongSymposo8RegIntegedi.pdf>

# Preconditions for regional cooperation in West Africa

Before we look at the details of regional cooperation in West Africa, we have to answer two very important questions:

1. Do the necessary preconditions for economic integration exist in the region?
2. Do the necessary preconditions for political integration exist in the region?

The importance of these questions becomes evident very fast. Let's take two simple examples: The theory of economic integration says that free trade and a bigger market will improve people's welfare. The first stage should be a free trade area, where all internal obstacles to trade are abolished. The theory says enhancing internal trade will deliver benefits. But what is actually produced and available for trade among West African countries? If all obstacles are removed, what kind of products and services will be exchanged? In deciding whether economic cooperation is worth the effort for the sub-region, we need to look more closely at the situation on the ground.

Political cooperation, on the other hand, is not possible without some basic pre-conditions. Among them are credible governments, mutual respect, equality among nations in making decisions on fundamental issues, shared principles in regard to governance, a shared vision and the capability to enact and pursue any integration-step that has been decided. Therefore we have to look more deeply at prevailing governance principles in West Africa – and the ability of West African governments to rule at all.

## The economic situation of ECOWAS member states

In this section of the handbook we aim to answer three basic questions:

1. What products are ECOWAS member states trading with the outside world?
2. What are the principles underlying economic policy in ECOWAS member-states?
3. What are the structural similarities and differences in ECOWAS member state economies?

To answer the first question, let's have a look at the following table. It lists the main exports of all current ECOWAS member states:

**Table 1: Major exports of ECOWAS member states**

Country	Commodities	Other major economic activity
Benin	Cotton	Re-export to Nigeria
Burkina Faso	Cotton	
Cape Verde	Not significant	Services, especially tourism
Côte d'Ivoire	Cocoa, cotton	Limited industrialization
Gambia	Not significant	Tourism, re-exports

<b>Ghana</b>	Gold, cocoa, oil	Tourism
<b>Guinea</b>	Bauxite	
<b>Guinea-Bissau</b>	Cashew nuts	
<b>Liberia</b>	Rubber, timber, iron, diamonds	
<b>Mali</b>	Cotton	
<b>Niger</b>	Uranium	
<b>Nigeria</b>	Oil	Limited industrialization
<b>Senegal</b>	Fish, peanuts	
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	Diamonds, rutile (titanium ore)	
<b>Togo</b>	Cocoa, cotton, coffee, phosphate	

The information in this table leads to several conclusions:

1. Nearly all ECOWAS member states are concentrating their export efforts on one or very few products.
2. Of these products, all are raw-materials, produced either through agriculture or mining<sup>1</sup>.
3. ECOWAS member states have little industrial capacity which can add value to raw materials (Nigeria's industrial capacity is focused on assembly of imported parts and not manufacture)
4. Consequently, around 80–90% of all ECOWAS member state exports go to countries which use the raw materials they produce, mostly the United States, the European Union and emerging countries including China and India.

So how can regional integration deliver trade benefits, at this point in development, when ECOWAS member states don't have a lot to sell one another? Their raw materials are either also produced by other member states – making them competitors on international markets – or do not meet consumption needs in their economies. Why should anyone import Niger's uranium, when only Nigeria has a (small, experimental) nuclear reactor? Why should anyone import cashew nuts from Guinea-Bissau, when most countries produce enough varieties of groundnut for their own needs? Who in ECOWAS needs diamonds from Sierra Leone, aside from the very rich?

While the opportunities of economic integration appear limited in terms of current ECOWAS export orientation, underlying principles of economic policy in the sub-region are broadly similar. Only 20 years ago it was a different story. But since the end of the Cold War, socialist and communist experiments have mostly vanished from African soil. Previously countries like Benin and Guinea tried their own brand of African socialism and

<sup>1</sup> Note: there is limited industrial capacity in some countries – including Cape Verde and Senegal – to add value to products. But this is relatively small-scale and does not affect the overall picture. In the case of Cape Verde, total exports are insufficient to alleviate the need of funds from overseas, mostly in the form of diaspora remittances.

had economic policies to match. That contrasted with more market-oriented economies like those of Ghana or Côte d'Ivoire, although all were part of the Economic Community of West Africa. Now all economic policies are broadly liberal, market-oriented and capitalist. This is supported by or directly influenced by the Western donor community and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund – whose policies have shaped African economic policy to various degrees, including through their structural adjustment programmes. Many ECOWAS countries depend heavily upon the goodwill of outside powers for their economic survival. There are two conclusions to draw about underlying principles:

1. All ECOWAS member states adhere in principle to the rules and laws of a market-oriented, capitalist economy
2. Most ECOWAS member states – with the possible exception of Nigeria – depend heavily upon support from developed countries for their economic well-being. Their autonomy in economic decision-making is restricted<sup>2</sup>.

Comparison of ECOWAS economies shows some major issues:

1. Although there are many poor countries within the sub-region, there are significant differences in wealth. There are a few leading and comparatively prosperous countries – Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire (at least before the war) and Nigeria. There is a very thin “middle class” of countries like Senegal, Cape Verde and Gambia; and a relatively large number of countries which are either limited in their progress by natural circumstances (Sahel-countries such as Mali and Niger) or by the consequences of civil unrest, war and related destruction (Liberia and Sierra Leone). One could argue that in case of economic integration the “better off” countries might have a more comfortable starting position than those that are very poor and underdeveloped relative to their neighbours.
2. The second, even more visible imbalance exists between Nigeria and the rest of the sub-region. Nigeria has more than half of the total population of ECOWAS and accounts for more than half of its total economic output. Any integration effort and any success of an organization like ECOWAS may depend heavily on the policies of this “big brother”. Nigeria's population and economic dominance may have both advantages and disadvantages.

Looking at the export orientation of West African economies and some of the disparities highlights shortages and problems. External perspectives of Africa are often very negative. But to analyse the preconditions for economic integration properly, we need a more balanced view. Without going into too much detail, let's look at some significant economic developments which offer opportunities and potential for economic integration.

- **Positive:** During the 1990s, West Africa was at the forefront of the tele-communications-revolution in Africa, and Ghana was a leader in use of the Internet. Today West Africa is among the fastest growing telecom markets in the world, providing employment and opportunity for thousands of citizens directly or indirectly. Mobile phones benefit the poor most, and their use has spread even to remote rural areas. Real-time

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2 One might argue that the emergence of China as an important investor and trading partner has changed the picture. While the growing influence of China should not be ignored, China's economic policy is more or less state capitalism and therefore not contrary to liberal economic policies in West Africa. The differences relate more to political pressures around issues like democracy, rather than economic policy.

communication has facilitated business within ECOWAS member states and increased the flow of remittances from the diaspora. **For ECOWAS**, the challenge is to improve the telecoms framework further, especially in regard to interconnectivity, international roaming and service reliability, so as to maximise benefits from this very positive development. Roaming stands out as a problem to be tackled: frequent travellers in the sub-region are obliged to carry a SIM card for nearly every country they are visiting because roaming is either very expensive or not available.

- **Negative and positive:** Transport is an important issue in economic integration. Land transport remains difficult and expensive throughout the sub-region. That is because there are too few roads, they are often badly maintained, and there are many official and unofficial road-blocks by security personnel, who often extract bribes from travellers. This leads to harassment and delays at borders, but also within some countries. On the positive side, for those who can afford it, the slow but steady extension of regional airline networks has led to a significant increase in regional air travel. Though they are still sometimes unreliable, it is easier to get from capital to capital. **For ECOWAS**, there are many challenges: to develop an intra-regional road-network, envisaged by the so-called ECOWAS Highways programme, is not enough. ECOWAS needs to facilitate smooth and hassle-free boarder crossing for legitimate travellers. In addition, long-neglected maritime transport can only be rejuvenated by improving coastal security, especially in troubled regions. Railway transport is another important issue: most existing railway systems are colonial remnants in bad repair. The opportunities offered by this cheap and generally-reliable means of transport in the sub-region are big, if seized.
- **Positive:** Alongside the telecommunications revolution, a revolution has taken place in the spread of banking services across the sub-region. Mainly driven by Nigerian banks, financial services, including loans and access to stock-markets, have spread rapidly beyond capital cities, as branches have opened in many places. The ECOWAS-inspired ECOBANK has been at the forefront of this very healthy development. Stock markets in the sub-region, especially in Accra and Lagos, have thrived and attracted many investors to put their faith in West African stocks. **For ECOWAS**, the challenge is to build a framework conducive to this private-sector-lead development to make the most of its potential. This doesn't necessarily mean the immediate introduction of a common currency, as we will discuss later. Making regional currencies fully convertible and managing exchange rates would be a first, important step into the right direction.
- **Negative:** Despite some very good economic progress in the last decade, pro-poor growth has been limited. Policies geared towards the economic mainstay of the majority of people – agriculture – have been implemented either in lukewarm fashion or not at all. Ecological degradation of farmland and the availability of inputs such as fertilizer to develop agriculture beyond subsistence production are ongoing challenges. Ensuring that the sub-region produces enough food for its ever-growing population is not easy. **For ECOWAS**, the challenge is to streamline agricultural policies, provide easy transport of agricultural products to facilitate a real regional market in foodstuffs and to develop export standards to target growing demand for non-traditional agricultural products.

There are many other aspects of the regional economy which could and should be considered here – including energy production, industrial policies and tourism. Clearly there are issues to ponder. Although ECOWAS economies are mostly outward oriented and trade within the sub-region is small, there is real potential for cooperation and integration with many possible benefits. In the following chapters we will see whether ECOWAS has been able to properly identify the most viable areas of cooperation, or not.

## The donor community

Let's end the review of economic policy with a very important issue: the role of the donor community. We will return to this important influence during the following chapters, especially when we talk about the European Partnership Agreement in chapter 10. But some general observations are needed to get the preconditions for regional cooperation straight.

First, let's briefly look at who or what this oft-cited "donor community" actually is. Despite efforts to coordinate development cooperation, it is clear that even within the European Union there are differences in development policies. So it is incorrect to talk of a "community" as if it were a solid bloc with clear-cut policies and dependable decision-making. There certainly is a community of nations providing development assistance with a broad set of common goals, whether the Millennium Development Goals of the UN or the targets and processes set in the Paris and Accra declarations. But many national governments continue to link self-interest with development assistance. What are donor motivations? Sometimes it's charity, a desire to solve the world's problems, to do something good for people living in appalling circumstances. Sometimes aid is a function of external economic policy, security policy or of mixed motives. To properly analyse the impact and influence of donors on the economies and policies of the West African region, we would have to go into detail regarding every major donor. The interests, motivations and the involvement of countries including Germany, the United States, China, Britain and France differ greatly and their perspective regarding specific countries – such as Nigeria – may vary. There is no space here for detailed analysis. Note though that despite many public declarations, a common-minded donor community is still in the making, and its development is often slow.

That said, it is clear that many countries in West Africa – with a few exceptions – are heavily dependent on foreign assistance. This can be seen by the contribution of development aid to West African economies.

**Tab. 2 Aid dependency of ECOWAS member states**

	Net development assistance 2004	% of Gross National Income
Benin	343 US\$m	9.3 % (2003: 8.4 %)
Burkina Faso	553 US\$m	12.6 % (2003: 18.8 %)
Côte d'Ivoire	138 US\$m	1.0 % (2003: 1.8 %)
Gambia	58 US\$m	15.7 % (2003: 15.1 %)
Ghana	1,234 US\$m	15.7 % (2003: 12.1 %)
Guinea	256 US\$m	7.4 % (2003: 6.5 %)
Guinea-Bissau	69 US\$m	28.2 % (2003: 29.2 %)
Liberia	197 US\$m	42.8 % (2003: 9.3 %)
Mali	519 US\$m	11.6 % (2003: 14.0 %)
Niger	485 US\$m	17.8 % (2003: 13.8 %)
Nigeria	525 US\$m	0.8 % (2003: 0.7 %)
Senegal	953 US\$m	13.5 % (2003: 8.8 %)
Sierra Leone	326 US\$m	33.2 % (2003: 45.1 %)
Togo	55 US\$m	3.0 % (2003: 3.5 %)

Source: World Bank: World Development Indicators 2005 and 2006

Without donor assistance, the rebuilding process in war-torn countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone would have been unthinkable. For many countries with a structural revenue problem—like the land-locked Sahel countries—external aid is the lifeline needed to keep the country running. Unfortunately, external shocks like a drought or a famine are only overcome with help of external aid. Regional integration might be a good strategy to reduce this kind of dependency. If there was a common market in food, disasters could be cushioned with help from neighbours. With a common security policy, conflicts could be avoided, reducing dependency on aid for reconstruction. But today that is not the case.

The conclusion is clear: The autonomy of decision-making of many West African states, despite all the pomp of statehood, is limited. To benefit from a stable and continuous flow of aid, governments have to keep to certain rules. Often they are connected to the goal of “good governance”. Sometimes donors require compliance in other less visible areas, especially when it comes to global security concerns. These restraints on decision-making are less apparent for those ECOWAS-countries which are big enough to wield some influence of their own, especially Nigeria. But all regional integration policies are scrutinised by donors before they have a chance of implementation. As we will see, many ECOWAS projects and programmes are not funded internally but by donors. Their influence is visible and they determine goals and implementation. It is important to keep this in mind when assessing the successes and failures of ECOWAS.

## The political situation of ECOWAS member states

In order to cooperate effectively, states need a minimum of political compatibility. This is especially important if policies give a supra-national authority say in national issues. Effective regional integration requires not only trust between all players, but the ability of players to implement common decisions. To what extent is the ECOWAS political framework of governance conducive to integration?

In the past, relationships between governments in the sub-region have not always been cordial. We will look at some examples in chapters 5, 8 and 9. The need for cordial relationships is enhanced because all West African political systems are highly centralized, focussing on a single person at the top of a hierarchy. This is true too for a country like Nigeria, which defines itself as a federal system. A prominent Nigerian political scientist once said: “Politics begins when the president arrives.” This is true for every other political system in West Africa as well. It is the president who decides major economic and foreign policy issues. It is the president who promotes or alleviates a conflict or disagreement. It is the president who sets the agenda for implementing decisions in his political realm. So the quality of decision-making and implementation depends upon the quality of the head of state – and upon the process by which he is elected. Let’s take a quick look at governance in West Africa. A first good indicator is press freedom.

**Table 3: Freedom of the Press Index 2008  
(by Reporters without borders – worst rank: 173)**

Country	Rank
Ghana	31
Mali	31
Cape Verde	36
Liberia	51
Togo	53
Burkina Faso	63
Benin	70
Guinea-Bissau	81
Senegal	86
Guinea	99
Côte d’Ivoire	109
Sierra Leone	114
Niger	130
Nigeria	131
Gambia	137

Though some might dispute this ranking, the index suggests that the sub-region includes countries which score relatively highly as well as some which score quite poorly. This gives suggests that the way governments deal with some freedoms within their countries varies greatly. One might argue that with such variation, common governance standards are unlikely. The results of this table correlate with those of another index, compiled by Germany's Bertelsmann Foundation. The Management Index takes into account the ability of governments to respond to challenges and the quality of governance in both the economic and the political realm.

**Table 4: Management Index of ECOWAS countries 2007  
(not all countries included), worst rank: 125**

Country	Rank
Ghana	14
Mali	26
Benin	28
Senegal	29
Niger	44
Nigeria	48
Sierra Leone	62
Liberia	66
Burkina Faso	85
Togo	104
Guinea	113
Côte d'Ivoire	118

The point of this table is not to assess the management ability of any of the countries included, but rather to illustrate the quality gap that exists in the sub-region. While some countries are reckoned to have achieved a measure of management capacity, others score badly. Whatever the merit of particular country rankings, the quality of policy responses to internal and external challenges varies greatly within the sub-region. This doesn't augur well for the ability of the West African community to sincerely and decisively implement shared policies which need uniform implementation. We will return to this issue in chapter 7, since monetary union is a good example of the difficulties.

Conclusions regarding the political environment:

- While all political systems either target democratic principles or have enshrined them in their constitution, the quality of governance, including guarantees of basic rights, varies widely across the sub-region
- All governments rely heavily upon the individual decision-making of a single person, usually a powerful president, with a political system which encourages micro-

management by the president. This hinders the effectiveness and efficiency of the political system.

- The ability to execute political decisions and implement programmes varies greatly within the region. Result: if ECOWAS agrees on a programme, only countries with the greatest management capacity can be expected to implement it thoroughly and according to plan. The wide variations make it a tough task for the community's institutions to properly oversee and monitor implementation.

We return to these key findings in the following chapters. Keep them in mind: they will resurface as problems and challenges in many areas of ECOWAS activities.

#### More food for thought: Presidents are human beings, too

When Master Sergeant Samuel Doe took power in Liberia, he killed Liberia's President William Tolbert. Years later, the rebel leader and warlord Charles Taylor embarked on his campaign to topple Samuel Doe. He was supported by the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who backed him throughout various rounds of peace talks and agreements – signing a treaty with one hand and delivering weapons to Charles Taylor with the other. The activities of the Ivorian government, while hosting the peace-talks, helped to prolong and worsen the crisis in Liberia and were threatening negotiations and the credibility of ECOWAS attempts at peace-keeping and peace-enforcement.

**Leading question:** Why did the Ivorian president support Taylor until the bitter end? And why does that fact illustrate perfectly the challenges of cooperation between highly personalized political systems, focussed on the will and power of a single individual?

## Further reading:

If you want to know more about the issue of aid dependence of African countries and the problems and challenges involved, this paper sheds some light on the topic:

<http://www.globaleconomicgovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/Aid%20BP%20en.pdf>

For regularly updated reports about the political and economic policies of ECOWAS member states, the country reports of the Bertelsmann Transformation Index are a good source. They are all available in English and free to download (just click on the West Africa region on the map displayed):

<http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/28.o.html>

# A history of regional integration in Africa

Regional integration in Africa did not come out of nowhere. It has certain distinct characteristics and historical lines of development that are important to understand today's situation. Though many factors were influential, historically three major developments contributed to the start of regional integration on the continent, and in West Africa.

1. **Pan-Africanism.** With Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, West Africa can boast the most prominent flag bearer of pan-Africanism on the continent. Pan-Africanism has been both a school of thought – providing ideas on how to overcome colonial rule and organize the future political and economic setup of Africa for the benefit of all – and a political movement. Developed partly in the diaspora, as well as within the anti-colonial struggle, pan-Africanism had both the features of an ideology and an action plan. The United States of Africa, Nkrumah's dream, was seen as the ultimate goal. But foremost, pan-Africanism was conceived as a tool to overcome colonial oppression. So it is little surprise that after the wave of independence in the early and late sixties, the follow-on step – unification of Africa – became less imperative. Strong interests were clearly against it, leading to a split within the pan-Africanist movement and formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as a compromise. With the removal of key figures of pan-Africanism through military coups – Nkrumah among them – the idea faded and the dynamics disappeared. Today, the pan-Africanist movement is more or less defunct. But its core ideas can be found in the projects and programmes of the African Union (AU). Decisions about an African parliament, an African court of justice and the creation of an African Economic Community (AEC), toward which ECOWAS is supposedly a stepping-stone, still embody the principles of many of the pan-Africanist thinkers. Irrespective of its current state, pan-Africanism laid the foundations of integration policy in Africa and became an historical catalyst of regional cooperation.
2. **Colonial inheritance.** It is ironic that the very notion pan-Africanism fought so relentlessly has also contributed to regional integration in Africa. By the time colonial masters left the continent, they had created institutions and frameworks which African governments subsequently used to cooperate and sometimes to integrate important activities. In some cases – for example by France – these institutions were deliberately installed as tools to exert influence after independence had been granted. That said, the most successful integration schemes in Africa today can be traced to the colonial inheritance. In West Africa, the CFA Franc zone is a direct consequence of colonial rule, and one of the few functioning monetary unions in the world. While the East African Community (EAC), initiated by the British, dissolved itself in 1977, the idea of an East African scheme lingered, and has been re-kindled since the end of the Cold War and the re-orientation of Tanzania towards a free market philosophy. Even the much-criticized South African Customs Union (SACU), already in place under Apartheid, has become a major tool for members to generate income and foreign investment. While not all schemes inherited by post-colonial governments endured, many still exist and form a building-block for regional integration on the continent.
3. **The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).** Sometimes in history, you need a facilitator – a body without power of its own, but with enough leverage to initiate ideas and organize discussion. As we will see in chapter 11, small countries like Luxembourg sometimes play this role and can be very influential despite their small size. Sometimes it is not countries, but institutions which deliver a framework for ideas to be developed and launched. For regional integration in Africa, the ECA of the United

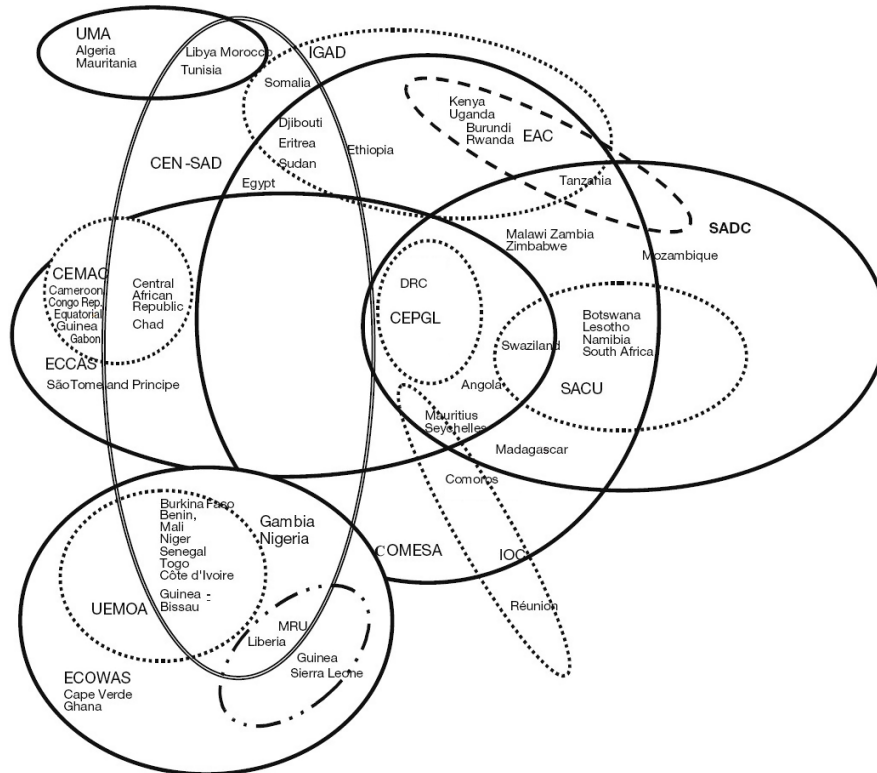
Nations (UN) has been such a tool. Though essentially a group of technocrats and experts without political power, the ECA has been instrumental, especially under the leadership of Nigeria's Adebayo Adedeji, in focussing its activities on regional integration. Its influence cannot be quantified in a traditional way. It came through meetings, papers, consultations, conferences and dialogue. Even so, the ECA has been instrumental in promoting the idea of regional integration. This influence, under a long-time chairman from Nigeria, was very visible in the formative period of ECOWAS. But the role of the ECA has diminished. Today, the dominant driving force are European Partnership Agreements (EPA, see chapter 10) – which are considerably less subtle.

## The spaghetti bowl of regional integration in Africa

Whatever the reasons for embarking on integration projects, many were either started or developed further during the 1970s. This was also when ECOWAS was founded in West Africa. Integration became fashionable, leading to today's problematic "spaghetti bowl" on the continent. What does that mean?

Links across the continent resemble a bowl of spaghetti. African countries are tangled in a multitude of regional integration and cooperation schemes. They belong not to one such organization but to many, with overlapping institutions, programmes, goals and memberships. In some cases, individual countries belong to a dozen or more of these organisations, some broad, like ECOWAS, others more specific in geographical reach or formulated goals. An ECA study (see Further Reading for source details) provides an enlightening snapshot:

*The spaghetti bowl of overlapping regional economic community memberships*



This diagram shows the major regional integration schemes in Africa and their members. You can see West Africa bottom left.

The illustration shows only the major organisations. If the mass of regional schemes were added, it would become illegible. It demonstrates that many countries participate in more than one regional organisation. Let us have a look into another region of Africa to see just how complex links have become. Southern Africa is a very good example of the spaghetti bowl problem. The following table shows membership of the four main institutions there (Common Market of East and Southern Africa – COMESA; South African Customs Union – SACU; South African Development Community – SADC; and Cross Border Initiative – CBI):

**Table 5: The Southern African spaghetti bowl**

Country	CBI	COMESA	SACU	SADC
Angola		a		a
Botswana			a	a
Comoros	a	a		
DR Congo		a		a

Lesotho		a	a	a
Madagascar	a	a		
Malawi	a	a		a
Mauritius	a	a		a
Mozambique		a		a
Namibia	a	a	a	a
Seychelles	a	a		a
South Africa			a	a
Swaziland		a	a	a
Tanzania	a	a		a
Zambia	a	a		a
Zimbabwe	a	a		a

What are the political and economic consequences of the spaghetti bowl?

- Membership of multiple regional organisations with similar goals raises questions of ownership and commitment: Where does a government want to promote integration, to which international arrangement is it ready to transfer national authority in important matters, which common external tariff should be adopted and whose programme in a given area will be prioritised?
- Membership of many regional organisations poses serious budgetary problems. While most of these organisations are part-financed by the donors, all have mechanisms to generate internal resources. Mostly they use a form of community levy, directly deducted from customs revenue. If not, they rely on financial contributions by member states. Cash-strapped African countries, especially smaller and economically weaker ones, will be hard-pressed to fulfil financial commitments to a multitude of international organisations. Many fail to pay or have vast arrears, impairing the effectiveness and efficiency of integration projects.
- Overlapping organisations with roughly the same programmes and projects – in transport, agriculture, health and so on – lead to a waste of resources even if member states are able and willing to contribute to each of them. Building a regional road network is a good idea. But if done by three organisations simultaneously, with separate planning, execution and monitoring, it is wasteful. A single common plan with one budget will be much more efficient.
- This leads to competition between overlapping integration schemes. Though competition is not of itself bad, this can lead to internal friction and animosity. Organisations will try to attract the most important members and discredit the competing organisation. This augurs badly for the ultimate goal of all regional integration, as enshrined in the AU treaty: the formation of a continent-wide African Economic Union.

## The African Union as the continent's goal

Let's conclude our review of the development of integration with a look at the world's biggest regional organisation. The African Union emerged from the OAU as a compromise between those favouring a "United States of Africa" and those opposing this vision. But the OAU has failed to become an effective organisation. Former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere once described the OAU as a "trade union of presidents", where they met and enjoyed the pomp and procedure of an international summit without producing any viable result. Hence the remodelling of the OAU to create the AU. It is unsurprising there is little progress. Keeping some 50 member states focussed on continent-wide issues is a big task.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative tried to support the AU and revitalise regional cooperation. Though NEPAD is seen as a separate body, it is intended to be an integral part of AU activity. Foremost among the NEPAD programmes is the African Peer Review Mechanism, by which African governments assess each others' performance in good governance, human rights and effective policies geared towards development. Aside from this mechanism many programmes carrying a NEPAD label – including those financed by donors – would have taken place anyway. Though the founders of NEPAD, especially South African president Thabo Mbeki, stressed the need for Africa to use its own resources to launch an "African Renaissance", nearly all NEPAD activities are now externally funded. Self-reliance still seems a very distant goal.

All regional integration schemes are seen as stepping-stones to a full African Union. In theory, once this goal is achieved, the need for sub-regional organisations will vanish and the AU will take over. Given the chequered history of the AU and most regional schemes, and the wasteful spaghetti bowl of alliances, this vision seems far-fetched.

In conclusion, it's clear that regional integration has long been very attractive on the African continent – over decades, governments have proved keen to form new and varied partnerships without discarding older ones. But if we judge regional organisations on performance in effective execution of planned programmes and projects very little is visible on the ground, aside from a few high-lights. The plethora of organisations contributes to this sober assessment. Still, there is light at the end of the tunnel: as ECOWAS has proved, the spaghetti bowl can be untangled, even if the process is slow and problematic.

### More food for thought: Motivation for participation

As we have learned, many African governments have joined multiple regional integration schemes simultaneously. We should not imagine governments were unaware of the challenges that might arise, both financially and in terms of their capacity to execute the multiple programmes and projects of those organisations. But they saw benefits in forming many partnerships rather than just one.

**Leading question:** Why accept the problems and limitations of multiple memberships? What potential benefits could come from sitting in a spaghetti bowl?

## Further reading:

The ECA has done extensive studies on the extent of regional integration in Africa. Here you can find a comprehensive study which also discusses the spaghetti bowl problem:  
<http://www.uneca.org/aria2/>

A speech by former ECA chairman Adebayo Adedeji sheds light on important issues in the history of regional integration in Africa:  
[http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_resources/Speeches/2002\\_speeches/030502adebayo.htm](http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/Speeches/2002_speeches/030502adebayo.htm)

# The history of ECOWAS

Before looking at what ECOWAS is and wants to become, how did it come about and how has it developed so far? The emergence of ECOWAS has been a long and complex process. This chapter will pick out highlights and developments since the foundation of the community in 1975, more than 30 years ago.

## Taking the initiative: Togo and Nigeria

We will come back to an important feature of West African politics again and again in this handbook: the division between Anglophone and francophone countries in the sub-region. Yet even when French foreign and economic policy weighed heavily on its former colonies, francophone countries have never been such a solid and unmoveable block as believed by outsiders. That ECOWAS was founded upon cooperation between francophone Togo, notably under President Gnassingbé Eyadema, and Anglophone Nigeria, under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon, is a demonstration. Togo had been a UN mandate and so was never fully incorporated into French West-Africa. After the end of colonial rule it tried to follow an independent foreign policy, partly because of its economic dependence upon its larger neighbour, Nigeria. After independence both countries developed quite regular high-level contacts. By 1964 they agreed to abolish visa requirements for travel between the two states. In 1966 they implemented partial trade liberalisation measures. So it is unsurprising that in 1972 their presidents came to an agreement to form a “West African Economic Community”, as it was then called. It was largely Nigerian diplomacy, shuttling around the entire sub-region, that prepared the groundwork for the project. Gowon, who later wrote a PhD thesis about his experience in the formation of ECOWAS, put it this way: “The government argued that integration would reduce francophone dependence and would increase Nigeria’s (and the sub-region’s) bargaining power against Europe.”

## Obstacles: The Anglo-francophone division

It was this endeavour to strengthen Nigeria indirectly through the foundation of ECOWAS which worried the two most powerful francophone countries, Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal. Behind that concern was a desire by the French government to continue to indirectly control its former colonies and to stop Nigeria becoming a regional power in competition with France. This competition was fuelled by the Nigerian oil boom of the 1970s, which gave the biggest country in the region the money to fund its regional ambitions. The foundation of the Communauté Economique de l’Afrique de l’Ouest” (CEAO, see also chapter 9) in 1970 was a clear indication that France wanted to close off Nigeria’s integration ambitions. Gowon himself, in retrospect, saw it this way: “From our observation, France and the Ivory Coast, starting from slightly different premises, managed, early in the seventies, to agree a joint solution to their mutual problem, namely Nigeria.”

Still, the diplomatic efforts of Nigeria and Togo finally persuaded even highly-critical Côte d’Ivoire to participate in the process that led to the formal inauguration of ECOWAS in 1975. Why did the francophone side finally agree? Three reasons were key:

1. After military coups in Benin and Niger governments came to power that were much more apprehensive about French dominance and more sympathetic towards Nigeria.
2. Governments in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire recognised that regional policy was possible only in cooperation with Nigeria, and not in opposition to it.
3. Nigeria showed strong negotiating power during the first ACP-EEC consultations (African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States – European Economic Community) which led to the first Lomé agreement on development cooperation. This persuaded its neighbours that unity in international politics not only increased solidarity, but yielded tangible results.

Because the francophone countries retained their own community as a safety net they had nothing to lose and potentially much to gain from participating in ECOWAS.

## A difficult start

Following signing of the ECOWAS treaty, the official birth date of the community is the 27th of May 1975. But its activities really started much later, for various reasons. First, ratification of all relevant protocols took two years, so the community did not come into effect until 1977. And after the treaty was enacted, another problem occurred: A conflict over seniority in the community's hierarchy broke out between the Director of the ECOWAS development funds (head-quartered in Lomé, Togo) and the Secretary-General of ECOWAS (with its secretariat in Lagos, Nigeria). Each claimed to be the leading figure in the community's institutions. The dispute over the correct interpretation of the treaty lasted for two years and stalled all activities. It was resolved by making the Secretary General the head. So, in reality, ECOWAS did not begin any meaningful work until 1979.

## Crisis: Nigeria expels illegal migrants

It took only four years for the next crisis to occur. The community tried to implement its integration policies progressively. The Protocol of free movement of persons of 1979 allowed visa-free travel for all citizens within the community for stays of up to three months. But the drastic slump in oil prices following the 1979 price spike triggered budgetary and social problems for Nigeria, prompting the Nigerian government to forcefully expel illegal migrants. This classic policy of making migrants scapegoats was intended to alleviate public unrest about rising unemployment and enhance the popularity of the regime of military dictator General Muhammadu Buhari, who had seized power. Most migrant workers affected were from Ghana, which also faced a very serious economic crisis. The expulsion of more than a million Ghanaian citizens at a time of hardship raised questions over Nigeria's willingness to honour the spirit of the ECOWAS treaty at times of distress and whether it would put national interest first even if it cost the regional community dear.

Francophone countries, with Côte d'Ivoire at the fore, cited Nigeria's lack of sincerity to justify a very cautious and slow policy toward regional integration under ECOWAS. Though the expulsion of migrants was brief (and has never been repeated by any subsequent Nigerian government), it triggered a serious and lasting crisis of confidence, especially between Ghana and Nigeria.

## Hobbling forward: Attempts at consolidation

Despite all these obstacles, the community tried hard to implement at least some policies geared toward integration. The first plan to remove all barriers to trade within ECOWAS was called the Trade Liberalization Scheme and was to be finalized in 1990. Because of disputes over the "rule of origin" – the definition of a product as locally-produced and therefore eligible for exemption from customs duties – implementation has been slow and many obstacles still exist today. The initial range of products to be exempted was limited. A list of only 25 products was agreed, including plastic bags, matches, leather shoes and kitchen tools. More successful has been the programme to build an integrated road network, focussing on a trans-coastal highway and a trans-Saharan highway. There has been considerable progress on the coastal highway. The most prominent success in the early stages of ECOWAS development was the foundation of Ecobank, a private sector bank with 10% of its shares held by ECOWAS. Initially intended to be a bank focussing on investment, Ecobank transformed itself during the following decades into a full-grown retail bank serving businesses and consumers, with branches not only in the sub-region but in other parts of Africa as well. Today Ecobank is one of the biggest banks on the African continent and has indeed contributed significantly to the integration of banking services in West Africa and to the accessibility of financial services for ECOWAS citizens.

Other plans for the financial sector were less successful. The first plan to establish a monetary union was conceived in 1992 and has, since then, faced a multitude of changes and setbacks (see chapter 7). Dismayed by the community's lack of progress, the heads of state came together to decide on a "minimum agenda for action". This agenda, intended as a tool to achieve progress where it could best be achieved, came into force in 1992, centred on the following issues:

- Printing and distribution of standardised ECOWAS customs and immigration forms (today, immigration forms still vary greatly)
- Abolition of check-points and road-blocks on international highways (today, these road-blocks still constitute a serious impediment to free movement from country to country)
- Simplification of immigration procedures, especially at airports, (ECOWAS citizens in some countries have separate treatment, especially at airports, although their treatment is not necessarily favourable)
- Establishment of transit points to accelerate customs formalities (today, customs formalities are still burdensome and lengthy, with significant levels of corruption)

- Abolition of all non-tariff impediments to internal trade (today, many of these impediments and barriers still exist)
- Support for the use of national currencies in intra-regional transactions (today only a few currencies, notably the CFA Franc and the Nigerian Naira, can be used relatively easily in ECOWAS countries)
- Printing of an ECOWAS passport and an ECOWAS residence permit (today at least some ECOWAS countries are using the ECOWAS passport)

As this short overview shows, progress on even relatively modest goals has been persistently poor.

## Reforming the community: A new treaty and new institutions

The slow progress and the lack of commitment shown by many partners within the community helped prompt reform of the institutional framework of ECOWAS. But the major impetus, and an historical breakthrough, lay elsewhere: in the hastily-organized intervention by the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia's civil war (see chapter 8), which focussed the attention of decision-makers. After the end of the Cold War, security policy suddenly became an important feature of community policy. Consequently, the heads of state launched an Eminent Persons Group under the chairmanship of one of the founding fathers of ECOWAS, Yakubu Gowon. Its task was to propose a new treaty and institutional framework for a rejuvenated and more active ECOWAS. As a direct outcome of the group's work, the new ECOWAS treaty was designed and later signed. We will discuss the new institutions and the progress of implementation in chapter 6. But it is worth saying now that both the new treaty and changes in world politics have helped re-energise ECOWAS.

During the late 1990s, but especially since the year 2000, a new dedication to and a visible acceleration of community policy became apparent. New projects such as the West African Power Pool, the West African Gas pipeline and the joint telecommunications policy were launched. A common security policy took shape, with increased intervention in and attention to regional conflicts. And, lately, both the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations and changes in the international trade regime through the growing role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have made a lasting impression on decision-makers.

In the following chapter, we will discuss the current situation. As we will see, while new challenges emerged, some of the old ones persist.

### More food for thought: Drink ECObeer!

One of the concerns repeatedly voiced during the annual heads-of-state meetings was the fact that ECOWAS has never been particularly popular among citizens of the sub-region. Many didn't even know of the existence of the community, or care. So the secretariat developed a variety of initiatives intended to endear the community to women and men in the street. While the idea of an ECOWAS beer was soon dropped, other initiatives, including a Miss ECOWAS beauty contest were followed up with greater dedication. But ECOWAS remains "far away" for ordinary citizens of the sub-region.

**Leading question:** If you agree that knowledge about and popularity of ECOWAS are still lacking in the sub-region, why is that, and what kind of action, apart from launching a beer and celebrating beautiful women, could put that right?

## Further reading:

Sadly, there are no good resources with a comprehensive, detailed history of ECOWAS on the internet. The ECOWAS website – [www.ecowas.int](http://www.ecowas.int) – is still not fully operational and information is poor or difficult to access. The relevant Wikipedia article is short and lacks depth. Keep searching!

# ECOWAS institutions and programmes

The reform of the ECOWAS treaty in 1996 set the framework for the current ECOWAS institutions. Their predecessors were widely regarded as ineffective and defunct, especially the Fund for Development and Compensation, which was abolished by the reforming treaty. The current structure is more or less identical to those of the European Union and the African Union: indeed most international integration schemes draw inspiration from the European model. But using the same terms to identify a particular institution doesn't necessarily mean that its role and function are identical. While both the EU and ECOWAS now have officers called Commissioners, an EU commissioner is a powerful and influential politician with significant means to steer EU-wide policies even when member-states have doubts. This is far cry from the influence an ECOWAS commissioner wields.

## The institutional setup: an overview

**Table 6: Major ECOWAS institutions and their key responsibilities**

Institution	Responsibility
<b>ECOWAS Commission</b>	Consisting of the President, the Vice President and seven Commissioners, the ECOWAS Commission is responsible for the execution and monitoring of ECOWAS policies and programmes. The Commission is in charge of the annual budget, represents ECOWAS in the international arena and prepares studies and papers regarding regional policies. It publishes the annual (and since 2009 a half-yearly) report of the community. The Commission is charged with the day-to-day work of the organisation. It is located in Abuja, Nigeria.
<b>Authority of Heads of States</b>	The major decision-making body of ECOWAS meets regularly (at least once a year) to make the final decision on any major ECOWAS activity.
<b>Council of Ministers</b>	Mostly meeting twice a year, the Council of Ministers comprises responsible ministers from member states, according to the issue at stake (finance ministers, ministers for agriculture, etc). The Council of Foreign Ministers normally monitors the day-to-day activities of ECOWAS, prepares Authority meetings, and deals with matters arising between these meetings.
<b>ECOWAS Parliament</b>	The ECOWAS Parliament is made up of deputies from all national parliaments in the sub-region. They are not elected directly – like those of the European Parliament – but sent proportionally by national parliaments. The ECOWAS parliament has only an advisory role.
<b>ECOWAS Court of Justice</b>	The Court of Justice deals with all matters between member states relating to the ECOWAS treaty (such as interpretation of the treaty). Individual citizens of ECOWAS member states can appeal to the Court if an action by a member state infringes the rights of a citizen under the ECOWAS treaty. The Court sits in Abuja, Nigeria.
<b>ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID)</b>	Previously a Fund, the EBID is modelled upon the African Development Bank and other similar institutions. Its task is to provide and facilitate funds for investment in the sub-region, either generated by itself from interest received, or by passing on contributions from member states or funds from donors. The EBID headquarters are in Lomé, Togo.

<b>West African Monetary Institute (WAMI)</b>	The WAMI is intended to be the forerunner of a West African Central Bank for the West African Monetary Zone, consisting of ECOWAS member states that are not members of the CFA Franc monetary union. See chapter 7 for more details. The WAMI is located in Accra, Ghana.
<b>West African Monetary Agency (WAMA)</b>	The WAMA – the former West African Clearing House – is the common monetary institution for the whole of ECOWAS, including the CFA Franc zone. Its task is to support convertibility and currency stability and to pave the way for a region-wide monetary union once the Eco currency is adopted. The WAMA is located in Freetown, Sierra Leone.
<b>Mediation and Security Council</b>	When there is a security crisis in the sub-region, the Security Council meets either at ministerial or heads-of-state level. It has the final say in the deployment of the ECOWAS standby force (formerly known as ECOMOG) if intervention in a regional conflict seems necessary.

Alongside these major institutions, there is a multitude of additional, affiliate, autonomous or semi-autonomous institutions and organisations which take their legitimacy from ECOWAS. At the administrative level, there are many technical commissions, comprising experts in various fields, who meet and prepare the ground for ECOWAS meetings. They do or summarize research and make recommendations for policy decisions. ECOWAS also has a Council of the Wise, an institution without an equivalent in the European Union, whose respected elder statesmen or well-regarded individuals may take part in “quiet diplomacy” to help resolve disputes. They have a role as mediators or arbitrators, but no formal power.

Among the affiliated organisations, several merit mention. The West African Health Organisation (WAHO) does not provide practical medical assistance but provides advice and counsel on health policy issues in the sub-region. Many civil society organisations of various kinds belong to the Forum of associations recognized by ECOWAS (FARE) which is very roughly similar to the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with observer-status at the United Nations or to the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOFF).

## Implementation through financial commitment

One of the major reasons for the new ECOWAS treaty was the failure of previous ECOWAS institutions to match expectations. Though there were various reasons for that, all boil down to two key weaknesses: lack of political commitment to the goals of the organisation and/or lack of funds.

While the issue of political commitment is still to the fore – we will discuss some indicators later in this chapter – one of the major problems of ECOWAS has always been lack of staff, a direct result of the funding shortage. Though the community has tried to establish a dedicated staff drawn from all member states, the expansion of activities and responsibilities under the new treaty has put a heavy burden on the shoulders of those employed.

Though it is not appropriate to draw too many comparisons between the European Union and ECOWAS, since their scope is quite different, it is worth noting that in 2009, the EU employed roughly 25,000 permanent and temporary staff, whilst ECOWAS had no

more than 750, of whom more than two-thirds come from Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Senegal.

With a growing set of tasks, it is donor cooperation which provides the necessary funding and staff to execute programmes. The financial situation of ECOWAS has always been precarious. Before the introduction of the community levy, arrears of member state contributions have been substantial. In 1996, the “best” year for contributions in the history of ECOWAS, only 45 % of contributions due were actually paid to the community. Member states owe a total of US\$46m to the community. Liberia has not paid dues for 20 years and in 2001 Mauretania was 16 years in arrears. Only a few countries were up to date with their contributions.

The situation improved considerably with the introduction of the Community Levy. The idea is simple. Instead of transferring funds from governments to ECOWAS, the community has the right to deduct a percentage of customs income directly at the source. To do so, ECOWAS holds bank accounts in all member states where this customs levy is automatically deposited. This measure has improved internally-generated income significantly, but a severe funding shortage remains.

The organisation’s total budget for 2008 was supposed to be 140,943,395 ECOWAS Units of Account (UA). The UA is an artificial currency used to calculate the ECOWAS budget, with roughly 1.5 UA to US\$1. The budget was based upon an expected contribution from the Community Levy of 109,824,342 UA, payment of outstanding arrears of 2,723,749 UA and a surplus from 2007 of 4,548,968 UA. Added to that were donor grants totalling 23,271,416 UA and miscellaneous income of 574,919 UA.

At the end of budget year 2008, only 56% of the expected income has been received. Of this, 81% was provided by the Community Levy. But only 60% of the levy contribution expected in 2008 was received. Poor information about how much the Levy is likely to raise, and inadequate control over the Levy bank accounts are the major impediments. In addition Nigeria, a major contributor to the ECOWAS budget, did not pay anything in 2008. So 26% of the ECOWAS budget was provided by donors. About half of all expenditure was consumed by administrative expenses. As a result, only 68% of planned expenditure was actually paid out.

Because of this financial situation, the survival of ECOWAS programmes depended heavily on donor assistance. Donor grants went either into specific projects or into the Pool Fund, a special fund set up under the Institutional Capacity Building Programme supported by the donor community. In 2008, the activities of the Pool Fund were financed by Canada, France and the United Kingdom which gave a total of US\$3,975,245. Other partners – Germany, Sweden, Spain and the EU – have expressed interest in using this mechanism.

In many other areas of activity, donor funds are tied to specific programmes. Spain signed an agreement with ECOWAS to establish a Fund on Migration and Development, with an initial commitment of US\$10m. Under the contribution agreement signed with the European Union, the EU is providing €44.8m to support the customs union and the creation of a common market. An initial tranche of €11.65m was provided in 2007. Individual countries have contributed smaller sums, especially toward elements of security policies. One of the tools used is the ECOWAS Small Arms Trust Fund, which finances programmes to combat trafficking of small arms in the sub-region. EBID, the region’s investment bank, has received numerous credit-lines from countries including India and China for development and other projects.

## Commitment at the political level

While financial commitment is always a very good indicator of political commitment, another telling indicator is the level of ratification of community decisions. In international law, the signing of a treaty by a head of state is not sufficient to set it into action. The signature has to be ratified by the proper decision-making body, normally a parliament. Even in barely-disguised dictatorships, rubber-stamp parliaments exist to ensure due process, though the outcome may be certain. Since a majority of ECOWAS member states are more or less democratic, ratification is an important step. The level of ratification therefore indicates how seriously a member state takes the decisions made during summits among heads of state.

**Table 7: Non-Ratification of ECOWAS protocols and conventions (as of December 2008)<sup>3</sup>**

Country	Number not ratified
Cape Verde	29
Liberia	28
Guinea-Bissau	28
Côte d'Ivoire	24
Benin	16
Niger	15
Guinea	15
Burkina Faso	13
Nigeria	13
Gambia	12
Togo	11
Mali	11
Sierra Leone	11
Senegal	11
Ghana	10

(Source: ECOWAS Annual Report 2008)

Since half of the member states had not ratified more than half of the protocols and conventions of ECOWAS, it is clear that community decisions are not high on the agenda of national policy-makers. Even the strongest supporters of regional integration, such as the government of Ghana, have yet to enact almost a fifth of protocols.

<sup>3</sup> ECOWAS is based on a total of 52 protocols and conventions. Note that not all countries have signed all treaties. For example, Guinea-Bissau did not sign the Convention on Extradition and Cape Verde has not signed any of the security policy conventions.

## Programmes and projects: some vivid examples

Since the 1990s, ECOWAS appears to have become more dynamic and proactive. This perception stems partly from the higher profile of the community in regard to security policy, as will be discussed in chapter 8. On the other hand, it is clear that after the “lost decade” of the 1980s increased attention has been focussed on putting worthwhile projects and programmes in place. This ties-in with increased attention of donors to regional integration and the desire of many important donors to support such structures everywhere in the world. ECOWAS has benefited from this new focus. The community is active in many fields. But if we look at the most practical projects with the most visible progress, even if only incremental, it is clear that thus far, with the exception of security policy, the focus of the community has been on transport, communication and energy. Other areas – including health, social policy and even agriculture – are still relatively dormant. There are plans to fill that gap, but let’s focus first on current projects.

- The **West African Gas Pipeline Project (WAGP)** involves the construction of a 680 kilometre network designed to carry natural gas from Nigeria to markets in Benin, Togo and Ghana. After many delays, the first gas flowed to Ghana in December 2008. The project was financed by a consortium of private companies led by Chevron. The investment was guaranteed through the World Bank’s Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) in 2004. The estimated cost of the project was US\$125m. While the primary goal was to provide a reliable and affordable source of energy for three of Nigeria’s neighbouring countries, reducing costs of energy production and distribution, there were also secondary objectives, including reducing gas flaring in Nigeria, a significant cause of global warming, and reducing pollution in the Niger Delta. Despite the clear positive economic effects expected, communities in the Niger Delta have claimed that the environmental impact assessment was faulty and benefits for local communities – especially those resettled during the project – have not been forthcoming. Even so, the WAPG is still regarded as a beacon of regional cooperation. A feasibility study is underway to extend the pipeline to Côte d’Ivoire.
- The **West African Power Pool (WAPP)** is a regional effort to tackle long-standing energy crisis in the sub-region. The aim is to connect national power grids in the sub-region and establish sub-regional “power parks” with a total capacity of 950 MW and Free Zone status. These power parks are intended to alleviate power shortages in the sub-region. The major energy source for the generating plants is Nigerian natural gas. Though work on these power-parks has yet to begin, ECOWAS member states have agreed in principle to a Regional Regulatory Body (RBB) to enable and facilitate cross-border exchange of electricity. A Chinese company has been contracted to build four power stations and a dam to boost electricity supply in Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. WAPP is also active in renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- In transport, two important projects deserve mention. The first is the **interconnection of national railway networks** via 17 priority connections. Engineering studies for the two most important lines – Kaya-Dory-Niamey and Abidjan-Ouagadougou – have started. In air transport, plans for a **new regional airline**, originating as the Regional

Airline Promotion Company, have led to the creation of a regional airline, ASKY, which was scheduled to start operating in January 2010 ([www.flyasky.com](http://www.flyasky.com)).

- In telecommunications, two **INTELCOM programmes** are significant. They are aimed at connecting all West African capitals by direct telephone and data links (At present most international connections within the sub-region are routed through European networks). The idea is to establish a regional broadband backbone infrastructure. While some steps have begun and construction is underway in some areas, progress has generally been slow for want of money. To alleviate this problem, ECOWAS is working with the World Bank, the International Telecommunications Union and the African Development Bank to tap some of the US\$55bn pledged for the interconnection of all African capitals and major cities at the Connect Africa Summit in 2007. Another important issue being discussed is provision of a stable regional interconnection framework for mobile telephones, to enable international roaming for both pre-paid and post-paid customers. Though this framework was scheduled to take effect in 2008, full international roaming is not yet possible.

ECOWAS has an ECOWAS Agriculture Policy (ECOWAP) and participates in related NEPAD activities, but a new regional agricultural programme has been under development and was scheduled to be finalized at the end of 2009. Both national and regional investment programmes have been developed, but nearly all activities are still at the planning stage. The only outcomes to date are planning documents and studies. The same is true for a swathe of proposed environmental initiatives, which are also closely linked to the welfare of citizens. Apart from planning and observation activities, mostly concerning the vital issue of water resources, there are as yet no tangible results.

## Still weak: social policies within ECOWAS

So-called “soft” political issues have never been an ECOWAS strength. This is unsurprising, since social policies cost money, and except for Nigeria during the oil price boom, West African countries are not affluent. Nevertheless, and especially since the 1990s, ECOWAS has embarked on a variety of initiatives to change that picture. Since creating a post of Commissioner for Human Development and Gender, the community is trying to ensure these issues get more consideration.

The current ECOWAS work programme also includes Promotion of Girls Education, with a focus on advocacy and high-level communication; education on HIV/AIDS, with the (as yet unfulfilled) aim of formulating a regional AIDS policy; and vocational training projects to improve skills in the community. One major project is the development of an ECOWAS Labour Policy and Strategic Plan, now nearing completion and expected to be endorsed.

But in most cases action on these themes amount to little more than action plans, meetings, monitoring efforts, preparation of papers and studies and formulation of policy guidelines. The big challenge of implementation remains. This problem is well exemplified by the Labour Policy to be developed within the region. Most ECOWAS countries have signed several charters and declarations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) normally include a big chapter on these issues. To qualify for debt-relief within the joint IMF/World Bank Heavily Indebted

Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative it is necessary to show how financial relief will better the social situation of the population. ECOWAS may simply seek to reinforce policies that nominally exist under existing declarations. So it is questionable whether there will be any added value or tangible benefits from a regional labour policy, if it emerges.

Many of these recently-finalised action plans and policy guidelines will need careful media monitoring to see whether they end with the formulation of goals, and fail to be implemented. To date, the record of ECOWAS in these areas leaves room for improvement.

## EBID: Loans and projects through the investment bank

Finally, to grasp the full scope of ECOWAS activities, it is essential to look at the programme of the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), since the EBID budget is separate from that of ECOWAS. The EBID lends money for specific projects in specific countries and refinances itself through donor grants or via institutions including the African Development Bank. Loans can be made to both public and private organisations. During 2008, a total of 18 projects were appraised and are expected to receive loans.

**Table 8: Projects appraised by EBID in 2008**

Project	Country	Amount
Procurement of pumping equipment, crane trucks and drilling units (public)	Senegal	US\$ 14,835,511
Construction of dam (public)	Niger	US\$5m
Renovation of electricity distribution (public)	Togo	US\$13m
Renovation of airport (public)	Benin	US\$3.5m
Connection Mali-Côte d'Ivoire electricity grid (public)	Mali / Côte d'Ivoire	US\$30m
Construction of dam (public)	Mali	UA 5m
Upgrading electricity production (private)	Cape Verde	€ 6.5m
Expansion of filling stations for PRIDE Petroleum (private)	Côte d'Ivoire	US\$3.401m
SANTINOS (private)	Ghana	US\$1.75m
AMASA Agro Processing (private)	Ghana	US\$2.650m
Expansion pharmaceutical products factory (private)	Togo	CFA 4.5bn
Clinique Akoma (private)	Benin	CFA 1.768bn
Siyag Industries (private)	Côte d'Ivoire	CFA 1.88bn
Sitrade (private)	Côte d'Ivoire	CFA 6.149bn

GMCO SA (private)	Côte d'Ivoire	CFA 6.999bn
Scanning Systems Co. (private)	Gambia	US\$ 2.5m
Interceel Guinea (private)	Guinea	€ 6m
Crownec Green Ltd. (private)	Nigeria	US\$14m

In 2008 the total of approved loans amounted to US\$93,127,683, with agreements for partial financing of projects with a combined value of US\$138,360,496. A geographical breakdown shows Benin received more than 20% of loans granted, followed by Togo (13%), Burkina Faso (13%) and Senegal (12.5%). Bottom of the list are Liberia (0.53%), Guinea-Bissau (0.52%) and Niger (0.44%). The financial situation of EBID appears healthy. By September 2008, the Bank had posted profits of UA 46,669,918.

That some countries have benefited much less from EBID loans than others highlights problems of management ability. To qualify for loans from institutions such as EBID, applicants must meet formal preconditions. If the local situation prevents fulfilment of these preconditions – because of lack of skilled managers, lack of worthwhile projects, lack of political will or lack of information, the chances of obtaining a loan are restricted. Capacity-building is very important to enable countries and companies to successfully seek EBID funding.

Compared to the more-or-less defunct funds the EBID replaced after the reforming treaty, the bank appears a regional success story. Accepted by a variety of donors as a viable conduit for financing and with a variety of public and private projects ranging from infrastructure, rural development, and industry to services, including health, tourism, banking and transport, EBID loans, equity participations and guarantees cover the whole sub-region and touch economic and public life nearly everywhere.

## Tackling the global economic crisis

The economic and financial crisis which started in 2008 and continued well into 2009 might have been relatively short, but was deep. It affected the regions of the world to a varying extent. The World Bank predicted in its Global Economic Prospects 2008 report that because African economies are less integrated into the international financial system and rely relatively less on international capital and bond markets for investment, the financial crisis would affect the continent less than regions more integrated into the global economy.

But the economic crisis came in waves, with financial market difficulty concentrated at its beginning. In 2009, the World Bank revised its view, saying that a group of Least Developed Countries, most of them in Africa, would face serious financing challenges because their external reserves would fall to an all-time low. A sudden decrease in growth, caused by weakened demand for the raw materials they export, coincided with a downturn in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and drastic shrinking of foreign remittances, because the émigrés were hard hit by rising unemployment and labour market constraints in

developed countries. That less developed countries are less integrated into the global economy was an illusion, and even individuals proved dependent upon it.

The crisis took both of the major regional organisations, ECOWAS and francophone UEMOA (see chapter 9), by surprise. After many years of stable growth, in which countries like Ghana had hopes of achieving some of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, many policy-makers were unprepared for the sudden downturn. But the food crisis of 2007, partly caused by overheating of the world economy and a resulting surge in demand for food and commodities, had already signalled to the sub-region that global growth could have negative consequences. The food and fuel crisis became enduring features of the West African economy. The banking sector in the region, however, seemed largely untouched by the financial crisis and continued to expand both in the sub-region and across the continent.

In cooperation with UEMOA, ECOWAS drew up a broad-ranging regional Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (RPRSP) and a Priority Action Programme, which largely reinforces existing policies. Its focus was on increasing food production and building food reserves. The 2008 heads of state summit concentrated on the structure and regulation of agricultural markets and food safety. But many of its decisions and the policies supposedly reinforced remained no more than declarations, with no tangible measures except in donor-sponsored programmes.

Although the financial crisis did not affect the region as much as the rest of the world, ECOWAS accepted the 2008 resolution of African Ministers of Finance and Governors of Central Banks, which included a call for more regulation and oversight of financial institutions and improved accountability standards. The sub-region already has a strong and effective Central Bank for the CFA zone. Some other countries – notably Nigeria – have carried out stringent reform of the banking sector, partly as a precondition for expansion of financial services in the sub-region. So the aim is to strengthen application of existing regulations rather than introduce new ones.

In sum, the regional community response has been confined to declarations of good intent, especially where the region has not been directly affected by the crisis. Where problems persisted – notably in the food-sector – measures were taken, mostly with support of donors, either to reinforce existing initiatives or implement measures already planned.

## Major problem areas

From the lost decade of the 1980s, ECOWAS has clearly come a long way, and not only with regard to security policy, now a hot topic. Though challenges remain, there have been some dynamic developments. But there are still some major problem with which ECOWAS has yet to grapple, and where its impact on the life of ordinary citizens is still insufficiently visible.

- **Free movement of persons.** This important first step from the late 1970s is still not effective across the sub-region. This strongly reflects the inability of member states to implement decisions effectively. Though it is simple to decide that ECOWAS citizens should be able to travel within the region without harassment, it is difficult to oblige customs and security officials to adhere to the new rules and implement

them properly. To tackle this problem, ECOWAS decided to set up so-called Pilot Monitoring Units in all member-states to check progress on implementation of this important protocol. Though too early to assess monitoring results, it is clear that good plans remain challenged if weak state structures fail to implement them.

- **Health and Agriculture.** Though many programmes and policy papers have been developed, ECOWAS has yet to achieve visible progress in these two important areas. Issues of health – especially communicable diseases and the particular problem of Malaria – and food security are important problems which remain to be tackled.
- Despite the recent appointment of a Commissioner for Human Development and Gender, **social issues** generally remain marginalized within ECOWAS policies. This is unsurprising since social policy is not strong in any of the member states, and is entirely absent in some. If ECOWAS wants to deliver benefits for ordinary people, some flagship projects will be required that go beyond mere development of concepts and plans. It remains to be seen whether sufficient donor support can be mobilized to launch tangible projects.
- One major ECOWAS programme – creating a **customs union** with a common external tariff (CET) – has made painfully slow progress and suffered repeated setbacks. In cooperation with UEMOA – which already has a functioning CET (see chapter 9) the list of products and enterprises to be approved under the ECOWAS trade liberalization scheme is growing. But progress in setting up a true customs union looks bureaucratic and piecemeal.

After this general overview, we will focus on two fields of ECOWAS activity which have a high regional and international profile: monetary union and security policy.

#### More food for thought: How would you define success?

It is easy to point to bad results and it is easy to praise the obvious. For a complex and multi-level process like regional integration, defining clear success indicators is difficult. But if as a journalist you intend to scrutinize the progress of ECOWAS, you have to decide what you regard as “success” – and how to weigh progress and problems against each other. What is more important – creating a regional road network or increasing funding for public and private projects through EBID? Setting up a regional airline or connecting national railway systems?

**Leading question:** Define for yourself what ECOWAS must achieve to be a success and make a list of clear indicators on which to base your personal judgement. Remember that the real work of ECOWAS only began in the 1990s, although it was nominally founded in 1975. Realistically, what can be expected?

## Further reading:

The best source of information about current activities is the ECOWAS annual report, complemented since 2009 by a half-year-report. The documents cannot yet be downloaded from the ECOWAS website but must be ordered from ECOWAS headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria.

If you want to know more about the work of the ECOWAS Court of Justice, see an interesting paper at:

[http://codesria.org/Links/Publications/ad1\\_07/banjo.pdf](http://codesria.org/Links/Publications/ad1_07/banjo.pdf)

Details of ECOWAS parliament rules and regulations can be found in this comprehensive summary:

[http://www.iss.co.za/Af/RegOrg/unity\\_to\\_union/pdfs/ecowas/parlyglance.pdf](http://www.iss.co.za/Af/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/ecowas/parlyglance.pdf)

Unlike ECOWAS, the EBID maintains a very good website and all reports and documents are online for easy download:

<http://www.bidc-ebid.org/en/documentation.php>

# The big issue: Monetary union and the Eco

One of the major topics under consideration within ECOWAS is the long-term goal of a monetary union. Long-term? If we look at the timetables drawn by the heads of state and their subsequent modification over the years, it seems that for ECOWAS establishing a monetary union is not a long-term, but a near-term goal. This might be why the community has failed to stick to its timetables and keeps deferring them. Before we look at the obstacles to monetary union in West Africa, we should briefly consider why monetary union is such an attractive idea, especially for West Africa. What are the potentially benefits of monetary union?

- **A common currency reduces transaction costs.** If a trader travels from Nigeria to Ghana with a bundle of Naira in his pocket, he might be lucky enough to find someone who will change his currency into Cedi, but the rate will not be favourable, and the agent will take a commission. To avoid the bartering, he might change his Naira to dollars or Euros, carry the foreign currency to Ghana, and change it into Cedi. In either case, he would lose money in the process because the broker will take a profit. In an even worse case, a trader travelling on business from Nigeria through Benin and on via Ghana and Liberia to Gambia (and changing his money into the local currency in every country he visits) might lose half of the money he is carrying in exchange fees, without even buying anything. A common currency will erase all these costs.
- **A common currency reduces the likelihood of government intervention.** Today, many governments have great influence over monetary policy. They more or less control their central banks directly or indirectly. This can have very adverse effects, because governments often solve financial problems – like a large internal debt or a sudden need for expenditure – by printing money. In doing so, they fuel inflation and undermine the stability of their currency, creating downward pressure on its exchange rate. Both the Eurozone and the CFA Franc zone show that a common, regional central bank, free from the whims of one individual government in one member state, can focus on core monetary issues like stability, exchange rates and inflation without major interference.
- **A common currency enhances credibility.** While African currencies generally lack credibility abroad, a common currency underpins a more positive view among foreign investors, tourists and occasional visitors and increases both acceptance and use of the currency. A major problem of many African countries – an endemic dollarization of the economy caused by flight from their own currencies – can be tackled by a credible common currency.
- **A common currency makes spending money easier.** It is not only transaction costs that diminish the returns of traders and businessmen, multiple currencies reduce transparency and make it difficult to assess the real price of a given product. A common currency reveals that chemical products, say, in Nigeria are more expensive than identical products manufactured and sold in Ghana. Adding transport costs, a prospective buyer in Sierra Leone can make a clear calculation and is more inclined to buy on the local market than before. Together with a real free market area and without the impediments of road-blocks and customs officers, a common currency can enhance cross-border trade.

These are some of the most obvious advantages of a monetary union. They show why the idea is attractive to policy-makers. The relative resilience of the Euro during the 2008–2009 economic crisis, which has drawn praise even from unexpected quarters,

adds to the evidence that monetary unions are also very helpful in facing destabilising economic crises. We don't have to go as far as Europe for evidence. Despite political turmoil in Guinea-Bissau, a serious drought in Niger and a civil war in Côte d'Ivoire, the CFA Franc CFA remained impressively stable – whereas the Liberian dollar suffered during the years of turmoil there.

## Preconditions of monetary union in West Africa

Like European counterparts in the run-up to the launch of the Euro, ECOWAS governments have been well aware that any political harmonization involving monetary and economic cooperation requires a degree of economic policy convergence. That is, major economic indicators have to be within a specified range to ensure that policies are sound and that integration will work. To collect necessary data, ECOWAS has introduced its ECOWAS Multilateral Surveillance Mechanism which covers all ECOWAS countries, including those with an established monetary union. The West African Monetary Agency (WAMA) is in charge of collecting the data. The most recent overview paints a challenging picture.

The four primary criteria are a low budget deficit (not more than 4% of Gross Domestic Product), inflation below 5%, budget deficit financing through the central bank below 10% and gross external reserves equal to at least six months of imports.

**Table 9: Number of countries that met the primary criteria 2000–2008**

Criteria	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Budget deficit	6	6	6	5	5	5	6	6	6
Inflation	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	7	9
Central Bank financing	10	12	12	11	14	15	13	14	15
Reserves	9	10	9	8	9	9	9	9	9

(Source: ECOWAS mid-term report 2009)

While the situation doesn't look too bad with regard to the primary criteria – with the exception of the budget deficit – it looks much more problematic on secondary criteria. These include the amount of internally-generated tax revenue in relation to GDP, the relationship between tax revenue and the salary bill, the relationship between public investment and tax revenue, positive real interest rates and real exchange rate stability of the currency. The tax revenue/GDP indicator shows a particularly bleak picture with only small improvements. The best results relate to real exchange rate stability. In summary: no ECOWAS country has *ever* been able to achieve all primary and secondary criteria and member-states have generally found it difficult to sustain their performance in recent years.

## The West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ)

The WAMZ consists of five ECOWAS members (Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) who are not part of the CFA Franc zone and who decided to establish their own common monetary zone with a goal of replacing their national currencies with a common currency, to be called the Eco. This should be a precursor to discussions with the CFA Franc zone about establishing a region-wide common currency.

The coordinating body for the WAMZ is the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI) based in Accra, Ghana. The WAMI is supposed to take on the role of a West African Central Bank (WACB) once monetary union has been established. WAMI's budget for 2008 was around US\$4.2m and it has been overhauled to enhance its performance.

The revised timetable foresees the introduction of the Eco in 2015. When the WAMZ was set up in 2000, monetary union was scheduled to take effect by 2003. It was subsequently deferred until 2005, then 2009 and now until 2015 (see Annex 1 for details). Critics argue that even this revised strategy is too ambitious and that a further postponement is likely. So what are the challenges that have caused repeated postponement of this apparently important project?

- Within the WAMZ, the five participating countries struggle – like the rest of ECOWAS – to meet the primary convergence criteria. In 2008 Gambia was the only country to meet all four key criteria. Ghana met none, Guinea two, Nigeria three and Sierra Leone two.
- Issues of structural convergence remain, notably huge differences in the payments systems of the WAMZ countries. A project intended to bring the payments systems of Sierra Leone, Gambia and Guinea up to the level of those in Ghana and Nigeria is underway.
- Market convergence, especially the full implementation of Common External Tariffs and customs union, has not been achieved.

Confronted with these problems, the heads of state had two strategic options: either ignore the difficulties of member states in meeting the major convergence criteria and jump into an immediate monetary union or follow a strategy of incremental convergence, hoping that more time would help solve the problems. They picked the second strategy, because the risk that an immediate union would fail was deemed high.

Talks are now under way how about how to organise the WACB if the conditions for a union are all met by 2015. Two options are available: A unitary Central Bank which replaces all national Central Banks or a federal Central Bank, which would have sovereignty over existing national Central Banks. As setup costs for a heavily centralized, unitary WACB would be considerable, experts assume that a more federal approach, comparable with that of Europe's monetary union, will be favoured.

In conclusion, the prospects for launching the Eco in 2015 are not good. A lack of political commitment is among the challenges. The difficult fiscal and economic situation of WAMZ members and their inability to meet the convergence criteria are also major obstacles. Critics argue that ECOWAS tries to achieve too much in too short a time. Past timetables have proven untenable. It might also be argued that monetary union is a final step that should follow creation of a well-functioning free trade area and an effective

customs union. Trying to achieve multiple layers of economic integration simultaneously – despite the difficulties faced by West African – seems to be overstretching the political and economic management capabilities of the sub-region.

#### **More food for thought: Another approach to monetary union?**

Monetary union seems to be an important project. Significant amounts of money and resources are devoted to it. ECOWAS has been under fire since 2000 for repeatedly deferring implementation. Members of the CFA Franc zone, who have a common currency, wonder why the WAMZ struggles to deliver.

**Leading question:** If achieving monetary union is an urgent priority, why don't the Anglophone ECOWAS members follow the example of Portuguese-speaking Guinea-Bissau and enter the CFA zone, instead of creating their own currency?

## **Further reading:**

The WAMI website has excellent documentation and up-to-date information, including meeting protocols and PowerPoint presentations used during the proceedings and supplementary detail.

West African Monetary Institute  
[www.wami-imao.org](http://www.wami-imao.org)

Germany's Friedrich Ebert Foundation has published a paper about possible consequences of monetary union in West Africa:

<http://www.fes.de/cotonou/downloads/official/INTERNATIONAL/WP02226+IMF+ON+MONETARY+UNION+IN+ECOWAS.PDF>

# Security policy within ECOWAS: a star is born

As mentioned earlier, it is security policy that has won ECOWAS international attention. Security policy has also motivated the community to look at its own issues more closely and prepare for future challenges. The reform process which culminated in the new treaty was heavily influenced by security concerns, and this shows in its new-found dynamism. Outside the sub-region, the makeshift ECOWAS security mechanism, which enabled the deployment of ECOMOG in Liberia, has been praised as the first genuine effort by a regional body in Africa to “keep its own house in order”. So it is worth looking at how regional security policy works, and how that has been achieved.

## Regional security and ECOWAS: from improvisation to institutionalisation

The outbreak of civil war in Liberia coincided with a very important historical event which would shape the structure of global politics: the end of the Cold War. During the decades of rivalry and animosity between the United States and the Soviet Union and their two distinct economic and social systems, African countries, like many others in the developing world, had clear expectations of the North.

Getting cosy with a “godfather” helped many dictators and autocrats win support they needed to stay in power – so long as they whistled the tune of their protectors. Samuel Doe of Liberia, who came to power in a bloody coup, was a master of the craft. Liberia, with its strong historic ties to the US, was depicted by Doe as a bastion against the spread of communism and Soviet influence in the sub-region. Because there were more-or-less socialist countries including Benin and Guinea nearby, his strategy worked quite well. Despite much criticism of his governance – oppressive, brutal and with a strong bias towards his own ethnic group – he retained support. But when Charles Taylor took up arms and started his insurgency, the global landscape had changed considerably. The “godfather” was not interested anymore. The only reaction of the US government was to send a ship to collect its nationals. Doe was left to his own diminishing resources.

At first, it was difficult for African leaders to recognise that the era of foreign intervention in local conflicts was over. But the remaining superpower had other interests and the Soviet system had collapsed. As a second wave of democratization swept Africa, it dawned on policy-makers that security policy had “come home”. The hastily cobbled-together peacekeeping force which finally landed in the Liberian capital of Monrovia, the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), was very far from an ideal intervention force. Many suspicions lingered around the deployment of this force, dominated as it was by Nigerian soldiers. Critics accused Nigeria’s president, General Sani Abacha, of using interventions, especially later in Sierra Leone, primarily to bolster his damaged international image. Unity within ECOWAS was fragile and sometimes non-existent. Some heads of state attended peace conferences whilst simultaneously supporting warlords and factions with money and weapons – or even benefiting from contraband trade, like the infamous “blood diamonds”.

Despite the initial obstacles and setbacks, security policy, which began to develop with the intervention in Liberia, had come to stay. Realizing this, ECOWAS leaders decided to establish a clear framework for future interventions if deemed necessary. And the necessity

is apparent. There are plenty of “hot spots” in West Africa. Troubles include civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire, political turmoil in Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and most recently in Niger, conflicts between ethnic groups in Senegal and Mali, the Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria and fears of Islamic fundamentalism – to mention only major issues for concern. With the establishment of a West African Security Council and the aim of transforming the hastily-assembled ECOMOG into a well-structured, well-equipped and well-led Standby Force, West African leaders have taken up the challenge.

## Major challenges of regional security policy

The crises in Liberia and Sierra Leone raise several issues for future security policy in the region:

- Lack of unity and dedication among political leaders. Given earlier remarks about the importance of individual power-brokers heading political systems in the region, achieving sufficient unity among leaders is a very important precondition for an effective security policy. In the case of Liberia, this unity emerged only in the later stages of the conflict. Lack of political commitment to the agreed peace negotiation process and the deployment of military force prolonged the Liberian crisis unnecessarily.
- Lack of adequate military forces. If we look into the military capabilities of ECOWAS member states, it is clear that only a few countries are capable of fielding a substantial military force beyond their own borders. It is not only the size of the force that matters but also its equipment and its ability to transport men and weapons beyond its borders. Interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone highlighted the lack of transport capacity. Training and support are also problems. Again, as experiences in Liberia and Sierra Leone have shown, many soldiers were inadequately trained for the kind of combat they were to fight and essential services and supplies were lacking in the field: medical treatment, food and even bullets for the guns. At times, citizens of Monrovia suggested ironically that ECOMOG stood for “Every Moveable Cargo or Other Good”, highlighting the rampant pillage ECOMOG soldiers committed in the capital.

**Table 10: Military strength of ECOWAS armed forces**

Country	Personnel	Defence budget as % of GDP
Benin	4,550	1.7
Burkina Faso	10,800	1.2
Côte d’Ivoire	8,100	1.6
Gambia	800	0.5
Ghana	7,000	0.8
Guinea	9,700	1.7

Guinea-Bissau	9,250	3.1
Cape Verde	1,000	0.7
Liberia	13,000	1.3
Mali	7,350	1.9
Niger	5,460	1.3
Nigeria	78,500	1.5
Senegal	13,620	1.4
Togo	8,550	1.6

Source: [www.globaldefence.net](http://www.globaldefence.net)

- **Lack of preparedness.** While it might be unfair to criticise ECOWAS for being unprepared for a task it was not designed for, the outbreak of hostilities came as a surprise. Information gathering and early-warning capabilities were non-existent, and information from the theatre was scarce and not always current. Operations were based on assumptions more than on information, especially during the initial stages. Clearly, discontent and internal cleavages in Liberia were underestimated by neighbouring countries and their officials.
- **Lack of a strategy.** Though ECOMOG officially acted as a “monitoring group”, it came to play an active part in the hostilities. Peace-enforcing and peace-keeping are two very different approaches to a conflict situation. In addition, there was no clear concept for the post-conflict phase. ECOWAS operated on a definition of peace as “negative peace”, that is, the absence of war. To make peace endure, it is necessary to implement “positive peace”, based on a reconstructed society which is able to resolve disputes without going to war and address the root problems, including poverty and lack of basic freedoms. The importance of civil society for the post-war process was not on the agenda of ECOWAS. Post-war reconstruction and reconciliation has been left to donors.

Drawing upon the sobering experiences of ECOWAS interventions, a new structure for security policy was devised. But before this new structure was ready new conflicts arose and had to be tackled by ECOWAS. The mix of diplomacy and intervention employed in Guinea-Bissau failed to produce lasting results. But looming conflicts, such as the succession crisis in Togo, were alleviated through diplomatic efforts.

## The consequences: the ECOWAS security mechanism

The ECOWAS security mechanism rests on three pillars – or maybe three and a half.

- **ECOWAS Security and Mediation Council.** Developed out of the ad-hoc Standing Mediation Committee that tried to tackle the Liberian crisis, this new ECOWAS

body deals solely with matters of regional security. It meets on a ministerial level or as a meeting of heads of state, where decisions on deployment of military force can be made. The Security Council is supported by a number of technical experts and a new unit within the Commission, made up of military officers. In addition to the Council, regular meetings of chiefs of staff have taken place, especially in preparation for formation of the ECOWAS Standby Force.

- **ECOWAS Standby Force.** After the learning experience of ECOMOG, the Community decided to create a permanent military force comprising adequate troops from all ECOWAS member states (with the exception of Cape Verde, which has not signed any protocol in regard to security policy). The Standby Force is not a coherent military troop assembled in one place, but contingents of national armies which can be called upon by the Security Council in times of emergency. Also learning from the immense logistical problems faced by ECOMOG in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, a military air base in Sierra Leone has been designated as a depot for the Standby Force. Equipment used by UN forces in Liberia and Sierra Leone has been donated for use by the ECOWAS Standby Force in the future. But the depot has yet to receive the equipment. In addition to the depot, a Field Training Exercise location has been designated in Burkina Faso. But so far, only high-ranking officers of the national armed forces have come together for tactical planning exercises.
- In order to avoid the “surprise” occurrence of a new conflict, ECOWAS has set up ECOWARN, an **early warning system** covering the whole sub-region, with offices in every capital. ECOWARN is to file daily reports from across the sub-region according to a set level of reporting indicators to provide timely warning of developing tensions.

For a detailed look into the protocol which created the ECOWAS security mechanism, please see to Annex 2 of this handbook.

As mentioned, the ECOWAS Council of the Wise is expected to play a role in mediation and arbitration as well. Members of this Council undergo regular training and are employed on an ad-hoc basis. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of this body.

Realising that security policy is most costly when a crisis has already started, ECOWAS has embarked on a variety of initiatives intended to defuse possible conflicts and is strengthening diplomatic efforts toward conflict resolution. These include participation in international efforts such as the NEPAD Peer Review Mechanism, creation of an ECOWAS Electoral Assistance Unit, and cooperation with other international bodies including the Commonwealth.

## Challenges for the future

Security policy understood only as the work of diplomats and soldiers is too short-sighted. Poverty and deprivation are the root causes of many conflicts. If people have enough to eat, live under a good roof, can send their children to school, have access to at least basic medical services and enjoy a certain degree of security and freedom, they will not tend to throw everything away to join a disgruntled warlord or rebel leader. It is those who have nothing to lose who are most easily attracted by the prospect of upheaval and violence.

Child-soldiers are the most vulnerable, lacking the means to defend themselves against the exploitation of which they are the victims. Ultimately, all of the activities of ECOWAS, to provide constant power supplies, clean drinking water, the framework for profitable trade, a hard currency, and good roads – all of these are security policy and should be viewed as such. And for the “core” of security policy, this means that after the work of the diplomats and soldiers is done, there has to be something in place that works towards a lasting and sustainable “positive peace”. Thus far, this perspective is not sufficiently embedded into ECOWAS security policy.

Another outstanding issue is the lopsided structure of ECOWAS. It is one thing to intervene and even deploy troops in small countries like Guinea-Bissau or Sierra Leone. Intervening in the second biggest regional state, Côte d’Ivoire, was a bigger challenge, and eventually it fell to France to provide sufficient military muscle to stop the situation deteriorating. But what would happen if Nigeria, the region’s “big brother”, descends into chaos and crisis? Neighbouring countries are already bothered by the persistent and violent Niger Delta crisis, and the 2009 military action against an Islamic fundamentalist sect in Maiduguri has been a clear warning sign as well. How and with whom would ECOWAS intervene in Nigeria, which makes up more than half of the region’s population, economic power – and military force?

It is clear that Security Policy, as envisaged by ECOWAS, is a one-way ticket – supported by Nigeria to solve problems outside Nigeria. For the “big brother” itself, other rules apply. Unfortunately, these rules are informal and not enshrined in protocols and conventions. An expert once said that “Nigeria is too big to fail”. To put it differently: if Nigeria is sick, the whole of ECOWAS gets a cold. This element of security policy is not openly or widely discussed. But it could belong to the challenges of the future.

#### More food for thought: Layers of security

Aside from the ECOWAS security mechanism, there are more layers of security policy which might affect West Africa. There is an African security policy in the making, with an AU Standby Force comparable to the one to be established by ECOWAS. And we still have the UN system in place which can respond to conflicts, witness UN activities in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. The relationship between these three levels or layers of security policy is not well defined and will have to prove itself on a case-by-case basis.

**Leading question:** What are the limits of a West African security policy? Under what conditions might it be necessary for a “higher level” to intervene in the future?

## Further reading:

A paper by the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) outlines some important issues for reforming security policies:

[http://www.dcaf.ch/\\_docs/ppo8\\_security\\_sector\\_governance\\_west\\_africa.pdf](http://www.dcaf.ch/_docs/ppo8_security_sector_governance_west_africa.pdf)

The Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra publishes papers about the subject: see this one about the regional early warning system and the role of civil society:

[http://www.kaiptc.org/\\_upload/general/KAIPTC\\_11.pdf](http://www.kaiptc.org/_upload/general/KAIPTC_11.pdf)

A more general article on security issues in West Africa can be found here:

<http://www.issafrica.org/pubs/ASR/14No2/EBah.htm>

# The alternative within: UEMOA

Rivalry between France and Nigeria has had an important influence on regional politics, and was especially strong in the 1970s. That was a time when high oil prices and the discovery of vast oil reserves made Nigeria one of the fastest growing West African countries, and increasingly self-confident. Nigerian policy-makers, at the head of one of the most populous African nations, with seemingly-abundant financial resources, saw the destiny of their country as a leading voice of Africa in the world. But French foreign policy still regarded France's former colonies as its "policy backyard". In its endeavour to position France as a "superpower" betwixt the US and the Soviet Union, influence in Africa was an important tool to prove this claim. The creation of the West Africa Economic Community (Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest – CEAO) in the early 1970s and the maintenance of the CFA Franc through successive decades are clear indications of the importance of its former colonies in the eyes of successive French governments.

Yet the relationship with Nigeria has been a mixture of love and hate. During the Biafran war of 1967–1970, France supported the secessionists against the federal government, and some of its former colonies recognized Biafra as an independent state. For Nigerian foreign policy, this was a painful wake-up call. Nigeria pursued a low-level foreign policy before the outbreak of the civil war. That African solidarity didn't work as well as expected in the crisis shaped the future of Nigerian security policy. Nigerian rivalry with France has been a major factor for a long period of time, but even so, French investment in Nigeria has been crucial to the economic development of the country.

The rivalry between Nigeria and France became less problematic from the early 1980s onward. Two factors contributed to this improvement. First, a fall in oil prices pushed Nigeria into a long and painful economic crisis. The star of West Africa became the most heavily-indebted nation on African soil. Political instability and endemic corruption weakened Nigeria's international credibility, and its previous strategy of "spraying diplomacy" – presidents travelling abroad and spraying cheques and cash over their poorer neighbours – was no longer affordable. Some years later, the late French president François Mitterrand started to redefine French policy towards Africa, increasing French focus on Europe and, after the end of the cold war, on the East. Africa has apparently become less and less important to France, both economically and politically. A sustained disinvestment by French business began even in its most loyal allied states. French military presence was considerably reduced. The heat was taken out of the conflict from both sides.

Most recently, with Nigeria recovering, surprised observers have seen France and Nigeria collaborate politically. Nigerian and French soldiers served in peace-keeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire, Nigerian and French foreign ministers alike opposed US proposals to invade Iraq. Though competition remains, the political framework in the new millennium is much more conducive to bridging the gap between the English and French-speaking countries of West Africa, and cooperation is a clear priority in both Abuja and Paris. This helps explain why the existence of two parallel integration schemes in West Africa has been a problem – and might not be a problem anymore.

## UEMOA: Major features

What is now the “L’Union Economique et Monétaire Ouestafricaine” was until 1994 two separate organisations: the CEAO as a kind of francophone ECOWAS and the CFA Franc zone monetary union. The drive to reform and combine the two organisations arose mainly from France’s gradual withdrawal from West Africa. The devaluation of the CFA Franc in the early 1990s, the end of the Cold War and the parallel reforms initiated within ECOWAS were contributory factors. In its organisation, UEMOA resembles the reformed ECOWAS, and is similarly modelled on the European Union. UEMOA has eight member states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo and, since 1997, Guinea-Bissau – its first non-francophone member. The remaining francophone country in the sub-region, Guinea, is not a UEMOA member. In the past, the Guinean government repeatedly distanced itself from French “neo-colonialism”. Perhaps because Guinea was the first former French colony to become independent, successive Guinean governments have kept France at arm’s length. Guinea left the CFA Franc zone early, and has its own currency. It is now a member of the WAMZ, participating in efforts to launch the Eco.

**Table 11: The organisational structure of UEMOA**

Institution	Comparison with ECOWAS
La Conférence des Chefs d’Etats	Comparable to the ECOWAS Authority of heads of state
La commission	Comparable to the ECOWAS Commission
Le Conseil des Ministres	Comparable to the ECOWAS Council of Ministers
La Cour de Justice	Comparable to the ECOWAS Court of Justice
La Cour des Comptes	The General Auditor (In ECOWAS, auditing is done through a special unit within the ECOWAS Commission)
Le Comité Interparlementaire	Comparable to the ECOWAS Parliament
La Banque Ouest-Africaine de Développement (BOAD)	Comparable to EBID
La Banque Centrale des Etats de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (BCEAO)	The West African Central Bank (in ECOWAS, WAMI is intended to play that role for the Eco in the future)

For a long time, UEMOA and its predecessor CEAO offered a permanent “escape clause” for francophone countries. If ECOWAS failed, their existing organisation provided an institutional safety-net. The slow progress of ECOWAS during its first two decades can partly be explained by a preference for concentrating resources upon their existing project, rather than experimenting with a larger alternative. When obliged to choose where to commit money and staff to integration activities, most francophone countries favoured their ‘own’ project. Continuing French support for the francophone project helped it achieve modest success which ECOWAS struggled to match. Existing commonalities were important. The former French colonies had inherited similar accounting standards, regulatory arrangements, laws and judicial systems, as well as a common currency and language, and these factors helped accelerate the integration process. Within the “new”

UEMOA, strategic direction is based upon so-called “chantiers”, or pillars, of which there are four:

- Economic policy
- Tax and customs
- Structural funds and common international cooperation
- Sectoral programmes (agriculture, infrastructure etc.)

Security policy is not among the major occupations of UEMOA. The community has always focused on economic integration. So it is unsurprising that its progress has outpaced that of ECOWAS.

## The UEMOA budget

The organisation’s 2008 budget was derived 54% from internal sources, notably from a community levy like that of ECOWAS<sup>4</sup>, and 46% from external sources, mainly in the form of contributions and grants from donors. The total budget amounted to 111,890,929,714 CFA Francs. UEMOA employs a staff of 267, mostly at the commission headquarters in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

The origin of past contributions to the budget is enlightening:

**Table 12: Origin of member state contributions to UEMOA, 2002–2007**

Country	Amount (CFA Francs)
Benin	674,916,985
Burkina Faso	1,763,785,361
Côte d’Ivoire	8,278,542,432
Guinea-Bissau	160,506,391
Mali	1,111,880,417
Niger	4,180,904,414
Senegal	10,726,604,220
Togo	1,608,765,891

(Source: UEMOA website)

<sup>4</sup> This highlights the “spaghetti-bowl” problem: UEMOA members who also belong to ECOWAS have to allow the deduction of two community levies from their customs revenues – one for UEMOA and one for ECOWAS.

Civil war in Côte d'Ivoire has had a profound effect on UEMOA, and not just upon its budget. Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire, is home to the stock exchange for all member states. The Abidjan exchange, together with those in Accra and Lagos, is a key platform for trading shares in West Africa. It has been hard hit by unrest in Côte d'Ivoire and investors have been deterred from putting money even into shares of companies elsewhere in the region. The rerouting of trade from the port of Abidjan via other cities, including Accra and Cotonou in Benin, has considerably increased transport costs for landlocked countries including Mali and Burkina Faso. Just as Nigeria's wellbeing is vital to ECOWAS, Côte d'Ivoire's health critical to the health of UEMOA.

## UEMOA activities and achievements

Economically, in particular, UEMOA has been more successful than ECOWAS. The harmonization of investment law, procedures and accounting practices has made good progress since 1994, aided by the common French colonial heritage. The shared stock market, established in 1998, has worked well. Since 1 January 2000, UEMOA has operated a customs union with a common external tariff. And since the devaluation of the CFA Franc and the merger of CEAO with the monetary zone, the common currency has proved stable and free from political influence, and has helped keep inflation relatively low. But despite these achievements, trade within UEMOA is only around 11% of members' total external trade, according to official figures.

## Cooperation with ECOWAS

Though the CEAO originated as a rival to Nigeria's community project, the decline of French interest in the sub-region and a more pragmatic view of international politics both in Paris and Abuja have helped make redundant the question of which community is better. Both organisations are fighting the negative effects of the spaghetti bowl. They now cooperate in comparing their respective programmes and streamlining them to avoid duplicating efforts in the same area, and combine resources where possible. Regular meetings between the two organisations take place alternatively at the UEMOA or ECOWAS commissions in either Abuja or Ouagadougou. The convergence and coherence of regional programmes is working better and better, and competition has been replaced by a positive spirit of cooperation.

### More food for thought: Tempting Ghana

Not many years ago UEMOA invited Ghana to join. The Ghanaian government, then headed by President John Kufuor, politely declined the offer.

**Leading question:** Why?

## Further reading:

The UEMOA website is rich in documentation, and annual reports of the community are available to download. All official documents are in French:

[www.uemoa.int](http://www.uemoa.int).

An interview in English with the Director of the Cabinet of the UEMOA Commission President can be found on the OECD website at:

[http://www.oecd.org/document/5/0,3343,en\\_38233741-38242551-42541125-I-I-I-I,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/5/0,3343,en_38233741-38242551-42541125-I-I-I-I,00.html)

# Defiance or acceptance: ECOWAS and the European Partnership Agreement (EPA)

In a 2007 study by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the author shows that the reluctance of donor countries to transfer funds they have pledged for development cooperation is a major reason for the inefficiency of international aid. This problem is twofold: damage occurs both if a donor provides more money than pledged as well as if a donor transfers less, or none. Countries that depend upon aid react pragmatically: long-term investments remain low – based on what they can be sure to receive – while current expenditure rises and falls according to the unpredictable flow of aid. If less money arrives than is needed, long-term investment is cut, because urgent expenditure, such as the salaries of civil servants, must be paid and are a higher priority. If more money is available than was expected, the windfall is not used for productive investment because often recipients cannot be sure that comparable amounts will remain available. So the windfall is disbursed on short-term expenditure, mostly consumption. The author concludes that effectiveness of aid suffers under these circumstances.

The treaties between the European Union and the ACP (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) countries, named after the African capitals where they were signed (Yaoundé, Lomé and Cotonou), were an attempt to create reliable and sustainable relationships in economic and aid-related matters between North and South. In the 1970s ACP treaties heavily influenced discussion of the “justice” of international economic relations, especially those about a new economic world order. When negotiations ahead of the foundation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) started, it became clear that one-sided preferential trade agreements which were the backbone of the ACP treaties would not be legal under the new global trade regime. So this decade-old relationship had to be revised. During deliberations about the last ACP treaty – the Cotonou Agreement – this perspective was put to paper. ACP relations were supposed to be widened through so-called European Partnership Agreements (EPAs). These agreements were supposed to fulfil two goals: to put the relationship between the EU and the ACP on a sound legal footing, compatible with WTO rules, and to provide a strong frame of reference for political and economical relations, supporting regional integration schemes among ACP countries.

Six communities were defined as partners in cooperation:

- ECOWAS (including Mauretania, which left the community in 2002)
- Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l’Afrique Centrale (CEMAC, Central African Economic and Monetary union, including Sao Tomé and Principe, which is not a CEMAC member)
- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Caribbean Community (CARICOM)
- Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- and a group of Pacific island states

Before negotiations began it had been obvious that in some areas the costs of EU-ACP cooperation exceeded the benefits. Cooperation was seen as too bureaucratic and structures had been retained without any serious reform attempt. Some elements of the old treaty, such as compensation schemes for reduced trade in certain raw materials, diminished the attractions of diversifying.

The division of the ACP into six areas resulted in negotiations proceeding at varying speeds. This was partly because the “negotiating power” of the regions varied. Discussions

with ECOWAS proved to be the most difficult from the out-set, because the African side was inflexible on several issues. In addition, campaigns by EPA opponents, notably civil society groups in the North and the South, gained momentum over the years and made negotiations more difficult. Finally, the countries involved, including those of ECOWAS failed to present a united front. In Africa, 33 of 45 countries qualify for the EU “everything but arms” initiative, which allows customs-free and tariff-free access to the EU market. These countries showed considerably less enthusiasm for a more complex agreement which would clearly go further. Because WTO rules allowed one-sided preference in favour of Least Developed Countries, these LDCs didn’t see the need to change the international setup, since any EPA would require them to make commitments not needed from them under a more general system of preferences. Within ECOWAS an internal division was apparent. Nigeria, Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, which do not belong to the LDC category and therefore cannot enjoy unilateral preference without reciprocity, took a different standpoint to the rest of the community, which belongs to the LDC category. For Nigeria, Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire to access the EU market an EPA is essential – for the rest, it is not.

The main issues for EPA critics, or where they seek changes, are:

- **Lack of coherence** between the politics and concepts of regional integration schemes and the targets and content of EPA negotiations. The political agenda of the community differs from the agenda of the EU for the development of an EPA. This problem was exacerbated by the spaghetti bowl arising from membership of multiple integration projects especially of COMESA and SADC in Southern Africa.
- **The classification of products** as “sensitive” – which would exempt them from liberalization – wasn’t done properly. As a result, some products, essential to the economies of some countries, were not exempted, raising a risk of harmful consequences. In addition, the EU consistently asked for liberalization of the service sector as well, although that is not required under WTO rules. The EU sought concessions beyond the legal minimum, which upset many African negotiators.
- **Rules of Origin** are mostly either too complicated or too tough. This is also a problem for ECOWAS in its own customs union talks. But the EU has shown some flexibility in this respect: in the first EPA treaty concluded with the Caribbean countries weaker economies have been allowed less stringent rules, and rules of origin were allowed to be “cumulative”. So a regional product which would not qualify for exemption of duties could qualify if value was added by processing in other states which were party to the agreements.
- Topics closely related to trade issues, such as the efficiency of customs administration, problems of international transport, access to important economic data for companies and questions of human development, were **not taken into consideration** despite their importance especially in a sub-region such as West Africa.

A major challenge arises because for most ECOWAS countries, revenues from custom duties are the state’s main income. Weak internal tax revenue adds to this problem. If the EPA were implemented according to the wishes of the EU, countries such as Cape Verde would lose up to 80% of their customs revenue, without any realistic chance of compensation. Though the shortfall in other ECOWAS countries would be less severe, the issue is extremely problematic. The EU concedes that initially the EPA could harm public finances in the sub-region.

The most challenging issues discussed between ECOWAS and the EU in 2008 were:

- An ECOWAS insistence that removal of tariffs should not extend to the community levy used to finance both ECOWAS and UEMOA, as proposed by the EU.
- The ECOWAS view that the capacity of customs administrations in the sub-region are inadequate to allow clearance operations without obligatory intervention by customs officials for clearance operations, as the EU has proposed.
- ECOWAS rejection of EU assertions that it can employ modern customs clearance technologies immediately, without phased adoption.
- EU requests for greater access to the West African market than stipulated by WTO rules. ECOWAS is not obliged to grant this access.
- Negotiations to provide market access for goods failed to get underway in 2008, although some ECOWAS countries, which lacked LDC status, were obliged to enter into Interim EPAs (for goods only) to obtain EU market access.

One major problem for ECOWAS is that most trade provisions within the proposed EPA have an unlimited time-frame, while EU commitments to financial cooperation over EPA implementation are time-limited. ECOWAS believes financing needs will exceed what the EU foresees and is willing to provide. ECOWAS wants the EU to develop and offer financial tools which will allow full implementation of an EPA, beyond funding already provided under the Cotonou agreement.

Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire have signed Interim EPAs with the EU pending a broader agreement. Cape Verde, which lost its LDC status on 1 January 2008, has a grace period of three years in which LDC preferences still apply. Nigeria has refused to sign an interim EPA and is waiting for a region-wide treaty.

EPA negotiations were supposed to end by the mid-2009, to be followed by conclusion of a treaty shortly thereafter.

## A short comparison: The result of EPA negotiations in the Caribbean and their impact on regional integration

In October 2008, an EPA was finalised between the European Union and the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM). CARIFORUM members are Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Haiti, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Although the negotiation process was relatively quick and resulted in the first EPA signed, it was subject to conflict and delays.

Observers say that the EPA achieved was a product of “give and take” in the final negotiations. On the plus side, cumulative rules of origin and compromise on regulations regarding public procurement are positive signs for regional integration. On the other hand critics say the EU policy also poses challenges to creation of a single Caribbean economic and monetary union. The EPA negotiations included the Dominican Republic, which is not part

of the regionally-developed integration model. There is a strong impression that the European Union used its negotiating strength to pursue its own economic interest and failed to take sufficiently into consideration the integration needs and efforts of the region.

If so, why did the Caribbean states agree an EPA that some were apparently unhappy with? One major reason is lack of coordination among members of the regional body CARICOM, the local equivalent of ECOWAS. Division of institutional responsibilities and lack of communication and preparation are blamed. So the Caribbean states must take part of the responsibility for any shortcomings in the outcome of the negotiations. That said, the core problem is that the EU was not able or willing to prioritise regional integration policies, although official EPA policy always says they should be favoured.

Finally, the EPA – and consequently the new thrust in regional integration – is completely focussed on economic matters. Other important aspects of integration – cultural, social and political – are not taken into account. This has also been a major bone of contention during negotiations between ECOWAS and the EU.

The lessons of this experience are clear: regional groups entering negotiations with any outside power, whether the European Union or another, must ensure they have a clear common focus that is well-formulated, shared by all involved and communicated clearly and decisively. Any internal friction, lack of communication, lack of coordination and lack of preparedness will benefit those on the other side of the negotiating table. Thus far, it seems that ECOWAS has been more courageous and painstaking in negotiations than the Caribbean states – a positive sign.

#### More food for thought: Nigerian solidarity?

Unlike Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria refused to sign an interim EPA. Because it is not an LDC, its access to the EU market will remain more limited until a region-wide EPA is agreed.

**Leading question:** Why did Nigeria refuse to sign even a short-term interim EPA with the European Union?

## Further reading

The article about consequences of donor funding unpredictability mentioned at the beginning of this chapter can be found at:

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPRS1/Resources/Thematic-Workshops/Celasun\\_Walliser\\_AidPredictability.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPRS1/Resources/Thematic-Workshops/Celasun_Walliser_AidPredictability.pdf)

A study of the fiscal revenue consequences for ECOWAS of an EPA agreement is available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/wps/wpro3.pdf>

An assessment of the general impact of an EPA on ECOWAS can be found at: <http://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/13292/>

# A difficult comparison: ECOWAS and the EU

ECOWAS and other African integration schemes are often compared with the successes and achievements of the European Union. That is because most regional integration organisations share a similar model, including the names of their institutions. ECOWAS is no exception.

But the comparison is flawed. ECOWAS and the EU began integration at quite different points in their development. When the European Coal and Steel Community was founded in 1951, followed by signing of the Treaties of Rome in 1957, preconditions were different:

- The member states of the community were stable and well-established democracies with an accepted legitimacy of power within their territory and generally efficient and effective administrative systems
- European infrastructure had been largely restored after the destruction of the Second World War: there was an extensive and functioning road and rail network covering the whole region
- The economies of member states were already well diversified, competitive and integrated into the emerging world market. They were also compatible, offering products and services of economic interest to other members
- Within civil society popular consent for European cooperation, designed to achieve lasting peace, was high
- The European Community of 1957 was launched at a time of rapid economic growth and industrial development

We have reviewed the conditions under which the ECOWAS integration project was started and operates. Without attributing blame or dismissing progress made, especially since the 1990s, it is clear that the structural background of integration is hugely different and the challenges much more daunting than those faced by the EU's founding members.

Any comparisons must therefore be made with great care. There is little point in a sweeping comparison of the two organisations as a basis to criticise ECOWAS for lack of progress or commitment. Any useful comparison must focus upon areas where institutional arrangements appear similar. Technical details matter. Comparisons are also useful to define a vision. Though that vision might not be achievable short-term, it might signal future aspirations. To see ways in which EU experience might help develop a genuine vision for ECOWAS, it is essential to reflect briefly upon the achievements of the European Union and the challenges it faces today.

## Institutional achievements and challenges of the EU

Many EU institutions have similar or identical names to those of ECOWAS counterparts. But this can be misleading, since EU institutions fulfil different or more extensive roles than their equivalents in West Africa.

- The European Commission is much more than an extended secretariat. EU Commissioners are more like “European Ministers” and have great influence within their area of authority. Their appointments are a big political issue within the EU, primarily because of the power they hold. Commissioners are not solely appointed by heads of state, as they are in ECOWAS. The proposed Cabinet of Commissioners has to be approved by the European Parliament. If the parliament rejects some candidates – as has happened in the past – a new list must be proposed. The most important position is that of Commission President. He is one of the most influential and well-known EU politicians.
- The European Parliament was initially made up, like that of ECOWAS, of deputies from national assemblies. Since 1979, the parliament has been elected by EU citizens. Over the decades, its power and influence have increased considerably. From a mere advisory body, the parliament has evolved into a real power-broker. The EU budget must be approved not only by the Commission, but also the EU parliament. Important regulations in many areas need the approval of parliamentarians. EU citizens can participate in European elections no matter where they live in the Union, even when they are not a citizen of the country where they live.
- The European Court of Justice is a very important judicial body within the EU. Citizens and national governments can appeal to the court on a vast range of matters. The Commission can take national governments to court if they fail to execute EU regulations to the letter.
- In addition, the EU has many institutional arrangements which have touched the life and wellbeing of people within and beyond the EU. EuropeAid, the development-cooperation institution, is well known in West Africa. The European Social Fund spends on labour market projects and programmes supporting vulnerable groups including unemployed youths, migrants and people with disabilities. The European Regional Fund supports infrastructure projects in poorer regions of the European Union. EU programmes such as the Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus programmes foster research, student-exchanges and study-visits designed to deepen understanding of important issues in the region. There are many institutions and every citizen will be affected by EU policy at some point in his or her life.

But these institutional achievements come at a price. The EU budget continues to grow, reaching €134bn in 2009. EU policies have sometimes opened the door to corruption, and scandals have even involved Commissioners. Moreover, popular enthusiasm for the geographical and political expansion of the EU has diminished, with feelings against Brussels ‘bureaucrats’ sometimes running high. Critics complain of over-regulation and meddling in national affairs, contributing, some say, to “euro-pessimism”, now a real challenge for the legitimacy of EU policy.

## Political achievements and challenges of the EU

Institutions aside, there are “soft” achievements which are today part of the life of everyone in the EU. Many are no longer seen as achievements but are taken for granted.

- The introduction of Union citizenship gave EU citizens a number of equal rights no matter where in the EU they live. Besides freedom of choice over their occupation and place of residence and the right to participate in EU and local elections wherever they live, they also enjoy social rights and equal treatment by public courts. Freedom of movement and travel are guaranteed, especially within the area covered by the Schengen treaty which abolished customs and border controls. The Schengen area covers most of the mainland EU but not all states – Britain is not a member.
- The common currency – the Euro – introduced as an accounting currency in 1999 and as coins and notes in 2002, is used in 16 of the 27 member states. It helps foster trade and tourism within the EU. It minimized transaction costs for exports and imports between participating states and has become one of the leading currencies in the world. The relative stability of the currency during the current financial crisis and the independence of the European Central Bank have been highlighted as achievements by many observers recently.
- One of the major successes of European integration lies in building bridges between populations of countries which were at war not too long ago. Establishment of lasting peace within the EU, under which former foes became friends, is a big achievement. Yet that peace is also now taken for granted by most people.

Aside from these achievements, there are also some political areas where European policy lacks coherence or has a less constructive impact. Security policy and migration policy are good examples. Despite some attempts at developing a common security policy – and cooperative engagements in conflict-ridden areas such as Kosovo – national perspectives still dominate international security issues. This was particularly evident over Iraq, where the EU split between supporters of the US-lead invasion and staunch opponents of invasion, led by France and Germany. In migration policy, the EU countries seem to cooperate through shared fear and apprehension, imposing ever-higher restrictions on immigration despite aging populations across Union. The debate around “Fortress Europe” shows that cooperation and integration do not automatically equal liberalisation.

## The four characteristics of the EU

The EU can best be summarised by four characteristics:

1. **First:** The development of the EU is a permanent process of *open-ended* negotiation. There is no “final EU” enshrined in any document. The process of integration is continuously negotiated by all partners and – as difficulties over the EU constitution adopted in 2009 show – it can face set-backs.

2. **Second:** The EU's mixture of supra-national and inter-governmental institutions is unique in the world. The EU is something *between an international organisation and a European Federal State*. While ECOWAS is an intergovernmental body – everything done and decided is a matter of the heads of state – the EU embodies features similar to those of a nation state.
3. **Third:** The EU is a *multi level organisation* with a very complex organisational framework touching nearly every aspect of politics in its member states. With its multitude of organisations and affiliate institutions, the EU is much more than the major structure that is visible to all. The EU strives for permanent specialisation and diversification of its tasks.
4. **Fourth:** *Equality within inequality*. Even small and weak member states have a strong influence, which is not proportional to their economic strength. Contrary to the views of critics, France and Germany are not the EU. Small countries like Luxembourg have proved efficient negotiators and moderators, therefore exercising a much greater influence than their size suggests. Political muscle in the EU goes beyond the size of the population and the economy: it derives from the ability to use the European political arena efficiently.

## Lessons for ECOWAS?

Keeping in mind the reservations voiced at the beginning of this chapter, can ECOWAS learn lessons from the experience of the EU? Some conclusions can be drawn:

- **Integration policies work only on a solid foundation.** It is futile to make far-reaching, visionary, high-level political decisions that are not implemented. If there are basic structural causes for the failure of regional policies, they must first be addressed.
- **Integration is supposed to be politics for the people.** Great effort should be made to make the benefits of integration policy clear to ordinary citizens. Tangible results are not produced by papers and studies, but by actions. Professional self-promotion is necessary as well. If there are achievements to boast of, the boasting should be heard everywhere.
- **Integration is an issue of exchange and communication.** The language-gap between English and French-speaking countries is very visible and can only partly be bridged by use of trans-border African languages such as Hausa. While willingness to learn English is relatively high in francophone countries, English speakers are more reluctant to learn French. Language promotion is promotion of understanding and it safeguards against misunderstandings and misconceptions. Exchange programmes for young people can be a stepping stone to forging a regional identity.
- **A spaghetti bowl is not helpful.** The European integration process gave clear priority to the EU in all of its activities. Other schemes either had little overlap or were gradually integrated into EU structures.
- **Not everyone has to be there at the same time.** The EU allowed for different “speeds of integration” at some stages of its development. Not all EU countries use the Euro as a common currency. Not all countries have signed the Schengen agreement to

abolish border controls. But they remain within the EU, adhering to other rules they have agreed. An integration project may advance more quickly if not all members are obliged to reach the goalpost simultaneously.

## Are the African Union and NEPAD useful tools for West Africa?

ECOWAS, like all other African regional integration schemes, is intended to be a stepping stone towards full continental integration. ECOWAS annual reports contain references to the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Some ECOWAS programmes claim a direct link to NEPAD activities. Former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo was a key architect of NEPAD and ECOWAS member Ghana was the first country to be scrutinized under the Peer Review Mechanism.

In fact, the integration levels are mutually-supporting. The African Union, trying to develop from a "trade union of presidents" to a meaningful and viable international organisation, depends on the achievements of smaller groupings to sustain its own activities. Despite the call for self-reliance originally voiced in Thabo Mbeki's "African Renaissance" project, NEPAD is heavily dependent on the goodwill of donors. So critics have started to argue that NEPAD is merely a set of projects and programmes under a new name, but lacking any new drive and direction. Only the Peer Review Mechanism is seen as a clear innovation, and one that has yet to prove its efficiency.

An interconnection of NEPAD and ECOWAS activities helps avoid negative effects of the spaghetti bowl, especially the waste of scarce resources and duplication of effort. But there is a danger that by putting labels on activities which would have been started anyway, both NEPAD and ECOWAS seek to demonstrate their programmes are active and useful, without having to engage in new thinking.

Today, the African Union is still a comparatively weak organisation. Commitment to it among African leaders is even weaker than their commitment to regional projects. Problems and challenges in their sub-region are closer and more immediate. The African Union, a continent-wide integration project, offers a vision no-one really expects to realize within the foreseeable future.

Such comparisons are of only limited value to ECOWAS. On a technical level, some lessons may be relevant, but ECOWAS exists to tackle specific problems and its structures are shaped around the needs of the sub-region. Finding appropriate solutions, rather copying from other areas of the world is more difficult and requires more work. But in the long run it may be a better strategy.

### More food for thought: Balancing the view

The European Union is undoubtedly the global role-model for economic and political integration. ECOWAS has often been described as the most successful integration scheme on African soil, so the parallels are interesting. The success of Europe's customs union and single currency are often cited as examples of the challenges that remain for ECOWAS.

**Leading question:** In which ways should ECOWAS follow the European Union model more closely, and which EU strategies do you think it should avoid?

## Further reading:

There are plenty of documents available about EU policies. The EU website at [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu) provides a mass of information, although it tends to accentuate the positives. But the range of original documents and studies available online, many written by external consultants, offers a varied picture of current EU policies.

# Annex

## Annex 1: New timetable for implementation of the Eco in the West African Monetary Zone

Schedule of Activities	2010				2011				2012				2013				2014				2015	
	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2
Macroeconomic surveillance																						
Payments Outstanding Contribution to Capital WACB																						
Strategy & Pooling of Foreign Reserves																						
Transfer Portions of Reserves																						
Appointment of Executive Board WAMZ Secretariat, WACB & WAFSA																						
Activation of WACB, WAMZ Secretariat & WAFSA																						
Ratification & Domestication of WAMZ Statutes																						
Establishment of National Steering Committee																						
Massive Sensitization Campaigns																						
Capital Account Liberalization in WAMZ																						
Financial Sector Changeover Plan																						
Harmonization of Statistical Data																						
Harmonization of Monetary Policy Instruments																						
Harmonization of Foreign Exchange Operations & Mgmt by member central banks																						
Operationalisation and integration of Payments system (RTGS ...)																						
Harmonization of Accounting Rules & Procedures																						
Currency Design and preparatory works																						
Currency Printing																						
Currency distribution																						
Introduction of Physical Currency																						
Withdrawal of Legacy Currency																						

## Annex 2: Protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security

**We, the heads of state and government of the member states of the economic community of West African states (ECOWAS);**

**Mindful of** the ECOWAS Revised Treaty signed in Cotonou on 23 July 1993 notably its Article 58;

**Mindful of** the relevant provisions of the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU);

**Mindful of** the United Nations Charter, with particular reference to its Chapters VI, VII and VIII;

**Mindful of** the provisions of Protocols A/PI/5/79, A/SP2/7/85, A/SP1/7/86, A/SP1/6/88, A/SP2/5/90 relating to the free movement of persons, the right of residence and establishment;

**Recalling** the Protocol on Non-Aggression signed in Lagos on 22 April 1978 and the Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence signed in Freetown on 29 May 1981, notably our resolve to give mutual aid and assistance for defence against any armed threat or aggression on a Member State;

**Considering** the Framework Agreement of the Protocol on Non-Aggression and Assistance in Defence (ANAD) signed in Abidjan on 9 June 1977;

**Considering also** the Protocol on the enforcement of the above-mentioned Framework Agreement signed in Dakar on 14 December 1981, as well as the subsequent Protocols;

**Reaffirming** our commitment to the ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles adopted in Abuja on 6 July 1991, on freedom, people's rights and democratisation;

**Recalling** the relevant provisions of the ECOWAS Conventions on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and on Extradition, signed in Dakar on 29 July 1992 and in Abuja on 6 August 1994, respectively;

**Recalling also** the Cairo Declaration of 29 June 1993 on the establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa adopted by the 29th Session of the OAU Conference of Heads of State and Government;

**Concerned** about the proliferation of conflicts which constitute a threat to the peace and security in the African continent, and undermines our efforts to improve the living standards of our peoples;

**Convinced of** the need to develop effective policies that will alleviate the suffering of the civil population, especially women and children, and, restore life to normalcy after conflicts or natural disasters, and desirous of making further efforts in the humanitarian sphere;

**Conscious of the fact** that good governance, the rule of law and sustainable development are essential for peace and conflict prevention;

**Recalling** the Declaration of the moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons, adopted by the 21st Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held in Abuja on 30 and 31 October, 1998;

**Recalling** also the conclusions of the meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the effective implementation of PCASED, held in Bamako on 24 March, 1999;

**Convinced** that cross-border crimes, the proliferation of small arms and all illicit trafficking contribute to the development of insecurity and instability and jeopardise the economic and social development of the sub-region;

**Aware** that these phenomena constitute serious social and economic problems which can only be resolved within the framework of increased and well-coordinated multilateral cooperation;

**Recognising** the need to make the relevant treaties and protocols more adequate, effective and pragmatic;

**Desiring** to consolidate our achievements in the resolution of conflicts through the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

**Recalling** our Decision A/DEC.11/10/98 adopted in Abuja on 31 October 1998, relating to the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security;

**Desirous** to establish an operational structure for the implementation of the said Decision;

**Hereby agree on the following:**

## Definitions

For the purposes of this Protocol;

**“Treaty”** means the revised Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signed in Cotonou on 24 July 1993;

**“Community”** means the Economic Community of West African States referred to under Article 2 of the Treaty;

**“Authority”** means the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States established by Article 7 of the Treaty;

**“Mediation and Security Council”** means the Mediation and Security Council as defined by Article 8 of this Protocol;

**“Defence and Security Commission”** means the Defence and Security Commission as defined in Article 18 of this Protocol;

**“Executive Secretary”** means the ECOWAS Executive Secretary appointed in accordance with Article 18 of the Treaty;

**“Council of Elders”** means the Council of Elders as defined in Article 20 of this Protocol;

“**Meeting of Ambassadors**” means the meeting of Ambassadors as defined by Article 14 of this Protocol;

“**Special Representative**” means the Special Representative as defined by Article 32 of this Protocol;

“**Deputy Executive Secretary**” means the Deputy Executive Secretary in charge of Political Affairs, Defence and Security as referred to in Article 16 of this Protocol;

“**Institution**” means any of the structures provided for under Article 4 of this Protocol;

“**Organ**” means any of the structures provided for under Article 17 of this Protocol;

“**Observation and Monitoring Centre**” means the Regional Peace and Security Monitoring Centre as provided for under Article 58 of the Treaty and referred to in Article 23 of this Protocol;

“**ECOMOG**” means the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group which constitutes the Community’s intervention force as defined in Article 21 of this Protocol;

“**Force Commander**” means the Force Commander appointed in accordance with the provisions of Article 33 of this Protocol;

“**Trans-border crime**” refers to all crimes organised or perpetrated by individuals, organisations or networks of local and/or foreign criminals operating beyond the national boundaries of a Member State, or acting in complicity with associates based in one or several States adjoining the country where the crimes are actually committed or having any connection with any Member State;

“**Member State in crisis**” refers both to a Member State experiencing an armed conflict as well as a Member State facing serious and persisting problems or situations of extreme tension which, if left unchecked, could lead to serious humanitarian disaster or threaten peace and security in the sub-region or in any Member State affected by the overthrow or attempted overthrow of a democratically elected government.

## Chapter I

### Establishment, principles and objectives of the mechanism

#### Article 1: Establishment

There is hereby established within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a mechanism for collective security and peace to be known as “Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security”.

#### Article 2: Principles

Member States reaffirm their commitment to the principles contained in the Charters of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, particularly the following fundamental principles:

that economic and social development and the security of peoples and States are inextricably linked;

promotion and reinforcement of the free movement of persons, the right of residence and establishment which contribute to the reinforcement of good neighbourliness;

promotion and consolidation of a democratic government as well as democratic institutions in each Member State;

protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms and the rules of international humanitarian laws;

equality of sovereign States;

territorial integrity and political independence of Member States;

### **Article 3: Objectives of the Mechanism**

The objectives of the Mechanism shall be as follows:

prevent, manage and resolve internal and inter-State conflicts under the conditions provided in Paragraph 46 of the Framework of the Mechanism ratified as per Decision A/DEC.11/10/98 of 31 October 1998;

implement the relevant provisions of Article 58 of the Revised Treaty;

implement the relevant provisions of the Protocols on Non-Aggression, Mutual Assistance in Defence, Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment;

strengthen cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention, early-warning, peace-keeping operations, the control of cross-border crime, international terrorism and proliferation of small arms and anti-personnel mines;

maintain and consolidate peace, security and stability within the Community;

establish institutions and formulate policies that would allow for the organisation and coordination of humanitarian relief missions;

promote close cooperation between Member States in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping;

constitute and deploy a civilian and military force to maintain or restore peace within the sub-region, whenever the need arises;

set up an appropriate framework for the rational and equitable management of natural resources shared by neighbouring Member States which may be causes of frequent inter-State conflicts;

protect the environment and take steps to restore the degraded environment to its natural state;

safeguard the cultural heritage of Member States;;

formulate and implement policies on anti-corruption, money-laundering and illegal circulation of small arms.

## Chapter II

### Institutions of the mechanism

#### Article 4: Institutions

The institutions of the Mechanism shall be:

The Authority;

The Mediation and Security Council;

The Executive Secretariat;

Any other institution as may be established by the Authority.

#### Article 5: Composition and Meetings of the Authority

The Authority is composed of Heads of State and Government of Member States as stipulated in Paragraph 1, Article 7 of the Revised Treaty.

The Authority shall meet as often as necessary.

#### Article 6: Functions

The Authority shall be the Mechanism's highest decision-making body.

It shall have powers to act on all matters concerning conflict prevention, management and resolution, peace-keeping, security, humanitarian support, peace-building, control of cross-border crime, proliferation of small arms, as well as all other matters covered by the provisions of this Mechanism.

#### Article 7: Delegation of Powers

Without prejudice to its wide-ranging powers as provided under Article 9 of the Treaty and in Article 6 above, the Authority hereby mandates the Mediation and Security Council to take, on its behalf, appropriate decisions for the implementation of the provisions of this Mechanism.

#### Article 8: Composition of the Mediation and Security Council

The Mediation and Security Council shall comprise nine (9) Member States of which seven (7) shall be elected by the Authority. The other two (2) members shall be the current chairman and the immediate past chairman of the Authority, each of whom shall have an automatic right to membership of the Mediation and Security Council.

The elected Members of the Mediation and Security Council shall serve for two (2) years renewable.

### **Article 9: Quorum and Decisions**

The meeting of the Mediation and Security Council shall be properly constituted when at least two-thirds of its Members are present.

Decisions of the Mediation and Security Council shall be taken by a two-thirds majority vote of Members present.

### **Article 10: Functions**

The Mediation and Security Council shall take decisions on issues of peace and security in the sub-region on behalf of the Authority. It shall also implement all the provisions of this Protocol.

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 7 of this Protocol and Paragraph 1 above, the Mediation and Security Council shall:

decide on all matters relating to peace and security;

decide and implement all policies for conflict prevention, management and resolution, peace-keeping and security;

authorise all forms of intervention and decide particularly on the deployment of political and military missions;

approve mandates and terms of reference for such missions;

review the mandates and terms of reference periodically, on the basis of evolving situations;

on the recommendation of the Executive Secretary, appoint the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary and the Force Commander.

### **Article 11: Meetings of the Mediation and Security Council**

Deliberations of the Mediation and Security Council shall be held at three (3) levels: Heads of State and Government, Ministerial and Ambassadorial levels.

All meetings of the Mediation and Security Council shall be presided over by the Member State elected as the current Chairman of the Authority.

### **Article 12: Meeting at the Level of Heads of State and Government**

The Heads of State and Government of the Mediation and Security Council shall meet at least twice a year in ordinary sessions. Extraordinary Sessions may be convened by the Chairman when the need arises or at the request of a simple majority of the Members of the Council.

The Heads of State and Government of the Mediation and Security Council shall take final decisions on all issues under their authority and competence, including field missions and approve the terms of reference, for such missions.

### **Article 13: Meeting at the Ministerial Level**

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Affairs and Security of the Mediation Security Council shall meet at least once every three (3) months to review the general political and security situation in the sub-region. They may also meet when the need arises.

The recommendations emanating from the Ministerial meetings shall be submitted to the member Heads of State and Government of the Mediation and Security Council.

### **Article 14: Meeting at the Ambassadorial Level**

ECOWAS Member States shall accredit Ambassadors as permanent representatives to the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat. These Ambassadors may also be those accredited to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Ambassadors of Member States of the Mediation and Security Council shall meet once a month to review issues relating to sub-regional peace and security. They may also meet when the need arises.

All reports and recommendations of meetings of the Ambassadors shall be forwarded by the Executive Secretary to all Member States of the Mediation and Security Council and to the Member States concerned. The Reports shall also be submitted for consideration by the meeting of Ministers of the Mediation and Security Council.

### **Article 15: Role and Functions of the Executive Secretary**

The Executive Secretary shall have the power to initiate actions for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security in the sub-region. Such actions may include fact-finding, mediation, facilitation, negotiation and reconciliation of parties in conflict.

The role of the Executive Secretary shall include the following:

recommend the appointment of the Special Representative and the Force Commander for approval by the Mediation and Security Council ;

appoint members of the Council of Elders;

have responsibility for political, administrative and operational activities and provide logistic support for the mission;

prepare periodic reports on activities of the Mechanism for the Mediation and Security Council and Member States;

deploy fact-finding and mediation missions, on the basis of his/her assessment of the existing situation;

convene, in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority, all meetings of the Mediation and Security Council, the Council of Elders, and the Defence and Security Commission;

Implement all decisions of the Mediation and Security Council.

The ECOWAS Secretariat shall service the Mediation and Security Council and the Defence and Security Commission.

In implementing the provisions of this Mechanism, the Executive Secretary shall be assisted by the Deputy Executive Secretary in charge of Political Affairs, Defence and Security.

**Article 16: The Deputy Executive Secretary**

1. Under the direction of the Executive Secretary, the Deputy Executive Secretary in charge of Political Affairs, Defence and Security shall initiate and undertake all activities relating to the implementation of the Mechanism.

2. The office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Political Affairs, Defence and Security, shall be headed by a statutory officer appointed in accordance with Paragraph 4 (a), Article 18 of the Treaty. He shall have under his supervision appropriate departments, divisions and sections, as may be necessary, including:

the Department of Political Affairs;

the Department of Humanitarian Affairs;

the Department of Defence and Security;

the Observation and Monitoring Centre; and

such other departments as may be established by the Council of Ministers on the recommendation of the Mediation and Security Council.

## Chapter III

**Supporting organs of the institutions of the mechanism**

in carrying out their missions, the Institutions stipulated in Article 4 shall be assisted by the organs enumerated in Article 17 of this Protocol.

**Article 17: Organs**

The following organs are hereby established to assist the Mediation and Security Council.

The Defence and Security Commission;

The Council of Elders;

ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

**Article 18: Composition of the Defence and Security Commission**

The following representatives from Member States shall constitute the Defence and Security Commission:

Chiefs of Defence Staff or equivalent;

Officers responsible for Internal Affairs and Security;

Experts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Depending on the agenda, Heads of any of the following services may be invited:

Immigration;  
 Customs;  
 Drug/Narcotic Agencies;  
 Border Guards; and  
 Civil Protection Force.

#### **Article 19: Functions**

The Defence and Security Commission shall examine all technical and administrative issues and assess logistical requirements for peace-keeping operations. It shall assist the Mediation and Security Council in:

- formulating the mandate of the Peace-keeping Force;
- defining the terms of reference for the Force;
- appointing the Force Commander;
- determining the composition of the Contingents.

The Defence and Security Commission shall meet once every quarter and when necessary. The Commission shall examine reports from the Observation and Monitoring Centres and make recommendations to the Mediation and Security Council.

#### **Article 20: Composition and Mandate of the Council of Elders**

The Executive Secretary shall compile annually, a list of eminent personalities who, on behalf of ECOWAS, can use their good offices and experience to play the role of mediators, conciliators and facilitators. The list shall comprise eminent persons from various segments of society, including women, political, traditional and religious leaders. The list shall be approved by the Mediation and Security Council at the level of the Heads of State and Government.

These Personalities shall be requested by the Executive Secretary or the Mediation and Security Council, whenever the need arises, to deal with a given conflict situation.

Whenever the circumstances require, the Executive Secretary shall assemble eminent personalities from the approved list who shall now constitute the Council of Elders.

The composition and mandate of the Council of Elders shall be defined by the Executive Secretary on the basis of the missions to be carried out.

Members of the Council of Elders selected to deal with a given situation shall report to the Executive Secretary.

The Executive Secretary shall report to the Mediation and Security Council on the initiatives taken in conformity with the provisions of Paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Article

Members of the Council of Elders shall be neutral, impartial and objective in carrying out their mission.

**Article 21: Composition of ECOMOG**

The ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is a structure composed of several Stand-by multi-purpose modules (civilian and military) in their countries of origin and ready for immediate deployment.

**Article 22: Role of ECOMOG**

ECOMOG is charged, among others, with the following missions:

Observation and Monitoring;

Peace-keeping and restoration of peace;

Humanitarian intervention in support of humanitarian disaster;

Enforcement of sanctions, including embargo;

Preventive deployment;

Peace-building, disarmament and demobilisation;

Policing activities, including the control of fraud and organised crime;

Any other operations as may be mandated by the Mediation and Security Council.

## Chapter IV

**Sub-regional peace and security observation system (early warning)**

A sub-regional peace and security observation system known as the Early Warning System or “The System” is hereby established for the purposes of conflict prevention and in accordance with Article 58 of the Revised Treaty. The System shall consist of:

- An Observation and Monitoring Centre located at the Secretariat;
- Observation and Monitoring Zones within the sub-region.

**Article 23: Observation and Monitoring Centre**

The Observation and Monitoring Centre shall be responsible for data collection and analyses and preparation of reports for the use of the Executive Secretariat.

The Centre shall collaborate with the United Nations Organisation, the Organisation of African Unity, research centres and all other relevant international regional and sub-regional organisations.

**Article 24: Observation and Monitoring Zones**

Member States shall be divided into zones on the basis of proximity, ease of communication and efficiency. Each zone shall be identified by a number and each shall have a zonal headquarters. The following four (4) Observation and Monitoring Zones are hereby created:

ZONE N° COUNTRIES ZONAL CAPITAL

Cape Verde – Banjul

The Gambia

Guinea-Bissau

Mauritania

Senegal

Burkina Faso – Ouagadougou

Cote d'Ivoire

Mali

Niger

Ghana – Monrovia

Guinea

Liberia

Sierra Leone

Benin – Cotonou

Nigeria

Togo.

The zoning provided for in Paragraph 1 above may be altered, if necessary, by the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

Each zonal headquarters shall be provided with an office and placed under the authority of the Executive Secretary, through the office of the Deputy Executive Secretary.

Member States hereby undertake to guarantee the freedom of operations of the zonal head-quarters in accordance with the privileges, immunities and security to property, assets and staff of the bureaux as provided by the ECOWAS General Convention on Privileges and Immunities and the Headquarters Agreement.

The Zonal Bureau shall maintain working relations with the host country and local and international institutions.

The Zonal Bureaux shall, on a state by state and day-to-day basis, collect data on indicators that impact on the peace and security of the zone and the sub-region.

The Zonal Headquarters shall process the data collected and prepare a report which they shall send to the Observation and Monitoring Centre. Accordingly, each of the Zonal Headquarters shall be directly linked by appropriate communication means to the Observation and Monitoring Centre.

## Chapter V

### Application of the mechanism

#### Article 25: Conditions for Application

The Mechanism shall be applied in any of the following circumstances:

In cases of aggression or conflict in any Member State or threat thereof;

In case of conflict between two or several Member States;

In case of internal conflict:

that threatens to trigger a humanitarian disaster, or

that poses a serious threat to peace and security in the sub-region;

(d) In event of serious and massive violation of human rights and the rule of law.

In the event of an overthrow or attempted overthrow of a democratically elected government;

Any other situation as may be decided by the Mediation and Security Council.

#### Article 26: Authority to Initiate

The Mechanism shall be put into effect by any of the following:

Upon the decision of the Authority;

Upon the decision of the Mediation and Security Council;

At the request of a Member State;

On the initiative of the Executive Secretary;

At request of the Organisation of African Unity or the United Nations.

#### Article 27: Procedure

The Mechanism shall be applied according to any of the following procedures:

The Executive Secretary shall inform Member States of the Mediation and Security Council and, in consultation with the Chairman, take all necessary and urgent measures;

The Mediation and Security Council shall consider several options and decide on the most appropriate course of action to take in terms of intervention. Such options may include recourse to the Council of Elders, the dispatch of fact-finding missions, political and mediation missions or intervention by ECOMOG;

The Mediation and Security Council shall issue a mandate authorising the Executive Secretary to set up a mission and define its terms of reference;

Where necessary, the Mediation and Security Council shall appoint the principal officers, such as the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary and the ECOMOG Force Commander.

The Chairman of the Mediation and Security Council shall submit a report on the situation to the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations;

The Executive Secretariat shall mobilise all the resources required for the operations.

## Chapter VI

### Conflict management

#### Article 28: Composite Stand-by Units

Member States hereby agree to make available to ECOMOG units adequate resources for the army, air force, navy, gendarmerie, police and all other military, paramilitary or civil formations necessary for the accomplishment of the mission.

Each Member State shall provide ECOMOG with a unit the size of which shall be determined after consultation with each Member State.

The strengths of these units shall be reviewed according to the situation on the ground.

#### Article 29: Mandates of the Force and Missions of Deployed Units

Whenever the force is deployed, the strength, mandates and missions of the units shall vary according to the evolving situation on the ground.

#### Article 30: Training and Preparation of the Composite Stand-by Units

The Executive Secretary, through the departments concerned and, in consultation with Member States, shall contribute to the in training of civilian and military personnel that shall be part of the stand-by units in various fields, particularly in international humanitarian law and human rights.

In this regard, he shall:

support the development of common training programmes and instruction manuals for national schools and training centres;

organise training and proficiency courses for personnel of the units in the regional centres in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana;

work towards the integration of these centres into sub-regional centres for the implementation of this Mechanism.

take the necessary measures for the organisation of periodic staff and commanders' exercises and joint operations.

#### Article 31: Observation Missions

Unarmed civilian and military personnel provided by Member States may be deployed alone or in conjunction with armed personnel. They shall, inter alia, supervise and

monitor cease-fires, disarmament, demobilisation, elections, respect for human rights, humanitarian activities and investigate any complaints or claims brought to their notice. They shall undertake such other activities under the terms of reference as determined by the Mediation and Security Council.

The Observer Missions shall report on their activities and findings to the Executive Secretary.

### **Article 32: Appointment and Functions of the Special Representative**

On the recommendation of the Executive Secretary the Mediation and Security Council shall appoint a Special Representative for each Operation undertaken by ECOMOG.

The principal role and functions of the Special Representative shall include the following:

Serve as the Chief of the Mission and shall be responsible for the political orientation of the mission;

Direct peace-keeping activities and initiate political and diplomatic negotiations with the parties, neighbouring States and other Governments involved in conflict resolution;

Brief troop-contributing States and other States on the situation and operations of the mission as and when required;

Coordinate activities of the sub-regional and international organisations, including NGOs involved in humanitarian relief and peace-building activities in the mission area. Where necessary, he shall be assisted by a Deputy responsible for humanitarian affairs;

Maintain constant contact with and submit regular reports to the Executive Secretary.

### **Article 33: Appointment and Functions of the ECOMOG Force Commander**

On the recommendation of the Executive Secretary an ECOMOG Force Commander shall be appointed by the Mediation and Security Council and in consultation with the Defence and Security Commission for each operation.

The role and functions of the ECOMOG Force Commander shall include the following:

He shall be responsible for the efficiency of operational, administrative and logistical plans of the mission;

He shall issue instructions to contingent commanders for all operational activities.

He shall ensure the security of personnel and materiel of humanitarian organisations' in the mission area.

The ECOMOG Force Commander is accountable to the Executive Secretary, through the Special Representative.

### **Article 34: The Chain of Command**

The Special Representative shall report directly to the Executive Secretary.

The Force Commander shall report to the Executive Secretary through his Special Representative.

All Contingent Commanders shall report directly to the Force Commander.

All Civil Units shall report directly to the Special Representative.

#### **Article 35: Role of Member States**

In addition to their responsibilities as stipulated by the Treaty and this Protocol:

Each Member State shall immediately, upon request, release Stand-by Units with the necessary equipment and materiel;

Member States hereby undertake to fully cooperate with ECOWAS in carrying out the mandates of this Protocol, including all forms of assistance and support required for the Mechanism, especially as regards the free movement of ECOMOG within their territories.

## **Chapter VII**

### **Financing of the mechanism**

#### **Article 36: Funding**

The Executive Secretariat shall make provision in its annual budget, for funds to finance activities of the Mechanism. As soon as the Protocol governing conditions for application of the Community Levy enters into force, a percentage of the said Levy shall be earmarked for these activities.

Special requests for funds shall be made to the United Nations and other international agencies.

Funds for operations may also be raised from the OAU, voluntary contributions and grants from bilateral and multilateral sources.

#### **Article 37: Pre-Financing**

The States contributing contingents may be invited to bear the cost of operations during the first three (3) months.

ECOWAS shall refund the expenditure incurred by the States within a maximum period of six (6) months and then proceed to finance the operations.

#### **Article 38: Logistical Support**

The organisation of logistics, including troop transport, shall be determined by the Executive Secretariat in consultation with the host country and the States contributing troops.

**Article 39: Remuneration and Service Conditions**

The remuneration and conditions of service of the personnel shall be determined by the Council of Ministers on the recommendation of the Mediation and Security Council.

## Chapter VIII

**Humanitarian assistance**

ECOWAS shall take active part in coordinating and conducting humanitarian assistance.

**Article 40: Responsibilities of ECOWAS**

ECOWAS shall intervene to alleviate the suffering of the populations and restore life to normalcy in the event of crises, conflict and disaster.

In this regard, ECOWAS shall develop own capacity to efficiently undertake humanitarian actions for the purposes of conflict prevention and management.

Where the environment of a Member State is gravely devastated, appropriate steps shall be taken to rehabilitate it.

ECOWAS shall recognise, encourage and support the role of women in its initiatives for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security.

**Article 41: Cooperation with Other Organisations**

ECOWAS shall cooperate with the following institutions and organisations:

national, regional NGOs and religious organisations;

Organisation of African Unity, the United Nations and its agencies;

other international organisations intervening in the humanitarian sector.

The ECOMOG unit shall be adequately equipped to undertake humanitarian activities in their mission area under the control of the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary.

ECOMOG shall provide assistance to all national, regional and international agencies, particularly on security issues.

When necessary, ECOMOG shall coordinate the activities of humanitarian agencies in the field.

## Chapter IX

### Peace-building

The Community hereby adopts a graduated strategy for building peace which shall be implemented as a continuum.

#### Article 42: ECOWAS Institutional Capacity for Peace-Building

To stem social and political upheavals, ECOWAS shall be involved in the preparation, organisation and supervision of elections in Member States. ECOWAS shall also monitor and actively support the development of democratic institutions of Member States.

ECOWAS shall endeavour to assist Member States emerging from conflicts to increase their capacity for national, social, economic and cultural reconstruction.

In this regard, all ECOWAS financial institutions shall develop policies to facilitate funding for reintegration and reconstruction programmes.

#### Article 43: Peace-Building During Hostilities

In zones of relative peace, priority shall be accorded to implementation of policies designed to reduce degradation of social and economic conditions arising from conflicts.

#### Article 44: Peace-building at the End of Hostilities

To assist Member States that have been adversely affected by violent conflicts, ECOWAS shall undertake the following activities:

Consolidation of the peace that has been negotiated;

establishment of conditions for the political, social and economic reconstruction of the society and governmental institutions;

Implementation of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes including those for child soldiers;

Resettlement and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons;

Assistance to vulnerable persons, including children, the elderly, women and other traumatised groups in the society.

#### Article 45: Restoration of Political Authority

In situations where the authority of government is absent or has been seriously eroded, ECOWAS shall support processes towards the restoration of political authority. Such support may include the preparation, organisation, monitoring and management of the electoral process, with the cooperation of relevant regional and international organisations. The restoration of political authority shall be undertaken at the same time as the development of respect for human rights, enhancement of the rule of law and the judiciary.

## Chapter X

### Sub-regional security

#### Article 46: Control of Trans-Border Crime

In order to facilitate the control of trans-border crime, ECOWAS shall promote close cooperation among the security services of Member States.

The security services of Member States shall assist one another and ensure proper coordination for the apprehension of criminals.

Member States shall establish specialised departments within their ministries of Justice, Defence and Security with trained personnel and communication equipment for coordination and centralisation of cooperation matters in particular, mutual assistance in criminal matters, and extradition requests.

Member States shall supply the Executive Secretariat with documents setting out the details of criminal procedures in their countries. The information provided by Member States shall include a summary of the criminal process, from beginning to end, and shall outline what is needed for each State to grant a request for mutual assistance, extradition or the restraint or forfeiture of proceeds of crime. Member States shall also provide all the contract particulars for their national units and exchange information concerning any other relevant authorities and provide updated lists of the said units. The information shall be translated and circulated by the ECOWAS Secretariat to all the specialised units (Central authorities) established to handle requests and other related matters that may arise in the course of implementation.

With a view to strengthening national legal instruments on mutual legal assistance and extradition and making them more functional and efficient, all Member States shall harmonize their domestic law in accordance with the relevant ECOWAS Conventions on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and Extradition. Member States undertake to adopt a convention to incriminate and make punishable the most commonly committed crimes in the sub-region.

Member States shall keep statistics, in particular, on the number of mutual legal assistance and extradition requests received and sent, as well as results obtained. There shall also be periodic meetings of the specialised departments of the Ministries of Justice, Defence and Security and the Interpol National Central Bureaux for the purpose of exchanging information on past or on-going cases and on measures aimed at improving cooperation.

Member States shall develop simplified restitution procedures for vehicles and other stolen objects seized by the requested State.

The judicial and police authorities of ECOWAS Member States shall consider the red notices published by the ICPO-Interpol at the request of an ECOWAS Member State as valid requests for provisional arrest for the purpose of Article 22 of the ECOWAS Convention on Extradition.

Member States shall establish a special fund for detected proceeds of crime. This fund can be used for preventive and criminal justice response to, inter alia, trans-border crime

and drug trafficking. Member States shall also give consideration to the establishment of confiscated asset management offices, where required.

Legislation on forfeiture of proceeds of crime in Member State shall be applicable to all crimes.

ECOWAS shall establish a Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Centre (ECPCJS) to serve as focal point for mutual legal assistance. The Centre shall be part of the Legal Department within ECOWAS. This ECPCJC shall assist in linking up ECOWAS Member States to non-ECOWAS Member States in Mutual Assistance Matters. It shall also serve as a supervisory power to ensure that countries implement conventions they sign.

#### **Article 47: Coordination of Policies**

The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for the coordination and implementation of all decisions relating to sub-regional security.

#### **Article 48: Anti-Corruption Measures**

To eradicate corruption within their territories and in the sub-region, ECOWAS and its Member States shall promote transparency, accountability and good governance.

#### **Article 49: Measures Against Money Laundering**

The ECOWAS Secretariat and Member States shall adopt strategies for combatting the problem of money laundering, by extending the scope of offences, enabling the confiscation of laundered proceeds and illicit funds and easing bank secrecy laws within and outside the sub-region.

#### **Article 50: Control of the Proliferation of Small Arms**

While taking into account the legitimate national defence and security needs, and those of international peace-keeping operations, ECOWAS shall establish effective measures to:

control the importation, exportation, manufacture and eradicate the flow of small arms.

register and control the movement and use of legitimate arms stock;

detect, collect and destroy all illicit weapons;

encourage Member States to collect and destroy all surplus weapons.

#### **Article 51: Preventive Measures Against the Illegal Circulation of Small Arms**

ECOWAS shall take all the necessary measures to combat illicit trafficking and circulation of small arms. These measures shall include:

developing a culture of peace;

training for military, security and police forces;

enhance weapons control at border posts;

establishment of a database and regional arms register;

collection and destruction of surplus and illegal weapons;  
 facilitating dialogue with producers and suppliers;  
 reviewing and harmonising national legislation and administrative procedures;  
 mobilising resources.

ECOWAS shall strengthen its institutional and operational capabilities and those of its Member States for the effective implementation of the measures mentioned in Paragraph 1 above.

The Executive Secretariat's Department of Political Affairs, Defence and Security shall coordinate and monitor implementation of all programmes and activities and shall analyse information from the zonal headquarters.

In order to promote and ensure coordination of concrete measures at national level, Member States shall, in accordance with guidelines adopted by ECOWAS, establish national commissions made up of representatives of the relevant authorities and the civil society.

At the beginning of any ECOMOG peacekeeping operations, all dedicated light weapons and ammunition shall be declared to the Executive Secretariat so as to ensure their effective control as well as removal upon completion of the operations.

All weapons collected during any disarmament exercise shall be destroyed.

## Chapter XI

### Cooperation with the organisation of African Unity, United Nations and other international organisations

#### Article 52: Cooperation

In pursuit of its objectives, ECOWAS shall cooperate with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations Organisation (UNO) and other relevant international organisations.

In the implementation of this Mechanism, ECOWAS shall fully cooperate with the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

In accordance with Chapters VII and VIII of the United Nations Charter, ECOWAS shall inform the United Nations of any military intervention undertaken in pursuit of the objectives of this Mechanism.

## Chapter XII

### Special provisions

#### Article 53: Abrogation

The provisions of this Protocol shall replace all the provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance in Defence signed on 29 May 1981, which are in conflict with the spirit of this Protocol.

The provisions of the Protocol on Non-Aggression signed on 22 April, 1978, which are incompatible with those of the present Protocol are hereby declared null and void.

Undertakings devolving from the provisions of this Protocol shall not be interpreted as being against the spirit of Conventions or Agreements between one Member

State and a third State; provided such Conventions and Agreements are consistent with the spirit of this Protocol, otherwise, such provisions are null and void.

#### Article 54: Rationalisation of Subregional Institutions

ECOWAS shall take necessary measures to rationalise all mechanisms, institutions and organs of the sub-region, having similar aims and objectives with this Mechanism.

To this end, ANAD may be transformed into a specialised agency of ECOWAS.

## Chapter XIII

### General and final provisions

#### Article 55: Amendments

Any Member State may submit proposals for the amendment or revision of this Protocol.

Any such proposals shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary who shall notify other Member States not later than thirty days after the receipt of such proposals. Amendments or revisions shall not be considered by the Authority unless Member States shall have been given at least one month's notice thereof.

Amendments or revisions shall be adopted by the Authority.

#### Article 56: Withdrawal

Any Member State wishing to withdraw from this Protocol shall give a one-year written notice to the Executive Secretary who shall inform Member States thereof. At the end of this period of one year, if such notice is not withdrawn, such a State shall cease to be a party to the Protocol.

During the period of one year referred to in the preceding paragraph, such a Member State shall nevertheless continue to observe the provisions of this Protocol and discharge its obligations thereunder.

#### **Article 57: Entry into Force**

This Protocol shall enter into force provisionally upon signature by Heads of State and Government. Accordingly, signatory Member States and the Executive Secretariat hereby undertake to start implementing all provisions of this Mechanism upon signature.

This Protocol shall definitely enter into force upon ratification by at least nine (9) signatory States in accordance with the constitutional procedures of each Member State.

#### **Article 58: Depository Authority**

This Protocol and all instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Executive Secretariat which shall transmit certified true copies to all Member States and notify them of the dates of deposit of instruments of ratification by the Member States and shall register it with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), as well as the United Nations (UN) and any other Organisation as may be decided by the Council.

# International Institute for Journalism

The International Institute for Journalism (IJ) of InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany, was founded in 1962. It gives young, up-and-coming-journalists from developing and transitional countries the opportunity to enhance their knowledge in the media business. The IJ offers advanced training and dialogue for print and news agency journalists as well as for multimedia and online journalists.

The aim of the IJ programme is to strengthen the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press in partner countries of German development cooperation and to thus improve the conditions for democratisation and economic and social development. In this capacity, the IJ represents a key pillar in the media development work of the Federal Government of Germany and in particular of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

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International Institute for Journalism (IJ) of InWEnt  
Stresemannstr. 92  
10963 Berlin  
Germany  
Phone +49 30 439 96-297  
Fax +49 30 439 96-260  
[ijj@inwent.org](mailto:ijj@inwent.org)  
[www.inwent.org/ijj](http://www.inwent.org/ijj)  
[www.ijj-blog.org](http://www.ijj-blog.org)  
[www.twitter.com/ijj](http://www.twitter.com/ijj)



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InWEnt – Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH  
Capacity Building International, Germany  
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 40  
53113 Bonn  
Phone +49 228 4460-0  
Fax +49 228 4460-1766  
[www.inwent.org](http://www.inwent.org)

## Imprint

### Published by:

InWEnt – Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH  
Capacity Building International, Germany  
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 40  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
Phone +49 228 4460-0  
Fax +49 228 4460-1766  
[www.inwent.org](http://www.inwent.org)

International Institute for Journalism (IJ)

Astrid Kohl  
Stresemannstr. 92  
10963 Berlin, Germany  
Phone +49 30 439 96-297  
Fax +49 30 439 96-260  
[astrid.kohl@inwent.org](mailto:astrid.kohl@inwent.org)  
[www.inwent.org/ij](http://www.inwent.org/ij)  
[www.ij-blog.org](http://www.ij-blog.org)

### Author:

Dirk van den Boom

February 2010

### Design:

EYES-OPEN



InWent – Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH  
Capacity Building International, Germany  
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 40  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
Phone +49 228 4460-0  
Fax +49 228 4460-1766  
[www.inwent.org](http://www.inwent.org)

