

EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

(Videoconference, 23rd April 2020)

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. With a view to coordinating and strengthening the fight against the coronavirus disease 2019, otherwise known as COVID-19 in West Africa, the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), under the chairmanship of **H.E. Mr. Issoufou MAHAMADOU**, President of the Republic of Niger, and current Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, held on 23 April 2020 a videoconference Summit on the situation and impact of the coronavirus.

2. The following Heads of State and Government or their duly mandated representatives participated in the Summit:

H.E. **Patrice Guillaume Athanase Talon**, President of the Republic of Benin

H.E. **Roch Marc Christian Kaboré**, President of Burkina Faso

H.E. **Jorge Carlos Fonseca**, President of Cabo Verde

H.E. **Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire

H.E. **Adama Barrow**, President of the Republic of The Gambia

H.E. **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**, President of the Republic of Ghana

H.E. **Alpha Condé**, President of the Republic of Guinea

H.E. **Umaro Sissoco Embaló**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau

H.E. **George Manneh Weah**, President of the Republic of Liberia

H.E. **Ibrahim Boubacar Keita**, President of the Republic of Mali

H.E. **Issoufou Mahamadou**, President of the Republic of Niger

H.E. **Muhammadu Buhari**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

H.E. **Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal

H.E. **Julius Maada Bio**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone;

H.E. **Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe**, President of the Togolese Republic

3. The President of the ECOWAS Commission, H.E. Jean Claude Kassi Brou, also participated in the Extraordinary Summit. In addition, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for West Africa, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas took part in the Summit as observers.

4. The Heads of State and Government commended the Chairperson of the Authority and the President of the Commission for convening this Extraordinary Summit. They took note of the memorandum of the President of the ECOWAS Commission on COVID-19 and his presentation on the situation and the economic, financial and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ECOWAS region. They were deeply concerned about the spread of COVID-19 in the ECOWAS region, which, as at 22 April 2020, had a cumulative number of 6,083 cases consisting of 4,232 active cases, 1,793 recoveries and 158 deaths. In that regard, the Authority wished a speedy recovery to the sick. It particularly expressed sympathy to the people and governments of all Member States for the loss of some citizens as a result of the pandemic and reiterated its solidarity with them during this difficult time.

5. The Summit was also concerned about the negative social, economic, financial and human security impact of COVID-19 on all ECOWAS Member States, as well as the serious threat posed to the regional integration process and regional peace and security agenda.



6. The Authority noted the forecasts which indicate that the economic growth rate, initially projected at 3.3%, would fall to 2% if the pandemic were to end in June 2020. It would fall to -2.1% assuming that the region had not taken adequate measures to slow down the spread of the virus and if the pandemic continues beyond the second half of 2020 as projected by IMF.
7. The Authority also took note of the estimated overall reduction of financial resources for the whole economy occasioned by the pandemic at the regional level.
8. The Summit decided that the containment, prevention and fight against COVID-19 remain a major priority. In this regard, they reaffirmed their determination and willingness to do everything possible to protect citizens and residents of the Community and combine their efforts to find a lasting solution to the health crisis. The Summit commended Member States for their individual efforts to contain the spread of the pandemic in their countries and the palliative measures introduced to alleviate the negative impact of the pandemic on the people.
9. The Heads of State and Government commended the appropriate initiatives and actions taken by the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), in coordination with ECOWAS Commission, to fight the pandemic.
10. The Authority conveyed its gratitude to all partners, particularly the African Union, African Development Bank, United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, European Union, the G20, for the important initiatives taken to support the African continent in the fight against the pandemic.
11. In addition, the Authority saluted the unity and solidarity at the regional and continental levels, in particular the coordinated efforts of the African Union, through the Africa Joint Continental Strategy for the COVID-19 Outbreak.
12. The Summit commended and thanked all people of the region for their efforts and the compliance with laid down procedures and preventive measures aimed at checking the spread of the virus. They saluted the important contribution made by the citizens, particularly the private sector, in the fight against the COVID 19.
13. The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their firm commitment to continue their joint and coordinated efforts in the determined fight against COVID-19 and to take the appropriate measures to contain the impact and revive the economies.



14. Thus, they decide to:

A. in terms of the fight against COVID-19:

- i. invite the ECOWAS member states to make their contribution to the African Union Solidarity Fund and strengthen cooperation between the African CDC and the WAHO in order to make support to the ECOWAS member states more effective;
- ii. strengthen cooperation between member states in research, training and experience sharing in health matters in general, and in the fight against COVID 19 in particular;
- iii. assess the situation thoroughly, on a case-by-case basis, before lifting the measures put in place to protect the population;
- iv. provide WAHO with timely epidemiological information on a daily basis in order to enhance regional coordination and collaboration during the pandemic;
- v. sensitize the population on the dangers of COVID-19 and need for behavioural change, in order to contain the spread and break the chain of transmission of the disease;
- vi. increase testing, continuously trace and treat people suspected of contracting the virus;
- vii. open humanitarian transport corridors for medical and other personnel in the fight against the pandemic, to enable them transport and deliver required personnel, equipment and materials;
- viii. allocate at least 15 percent of their annual budget to strengthen their health care systems as recommended by the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government in its Extraordinary Summit held on 6 November 2014 in Accra, Republic of Ghana, which is contained in Directive A/DIR. 01/11/14 on the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the Region;
- ix. encourage Member States to pool, as far as possible, their purchases of equipment and drugs to combat COVID 19;
- x. continue to put in place humanitarian and palliative measures to assist their population, particularly through the distribution of foodstuffs and provision of financial assistance to the poor in strict compliance with the necessary health measures.



B. in terms of stabilisation and economic recovery:

- i. develop jointly, a response plan taking into account the fight against the spread of the pandemic and a post-pandemic economic recovery plan;
- ii. issue long-term treasury bills and bonds to finance critical investment needs, to support the private sector and revive economies;
- iii. provide substantial support to the social sectors (distance learning tools, strengthening of health systems and facilities, easy Internet access, etc.) and for the most disadvantaged segments of society (social safety nets);
- iv. deploy through the Central Banks, tools, means and significant liquidity to support:
 - the financial sector, in particular banks and financial institutions, in providing assistance to the private sector, especially small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs);
 - microfinance institutions in providing support to the informal sector;
- v. mobilise additional resources from the international community to address the economic and social challenges confronting Member States;
- vi. support the African Union's initiative to negotiate with partners for cancellation of Public debt and restructuring of private debt of African countries;
- vii. implement urgent measures to support the local production of consumer goods, including agricultural products, thereby reducing the import bill for these goods;
- viii. set up a support programme for the pharmaceutical and health protection equipment manufacturing sector, whose output covers barely 20% of the region's current consumption needs;
- ix. avoid the imposition of import restrictions on other ECOWAS countries, particularly with regard to essential goods (drugs, food, etc.);
- x. convene a meeting of the Convergence Council to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications on macroeconomic convergence performance in 2020 and beyond;



15. The Authority also invites all the relevant partners to accelerate efforts for production of vaccines and adequate therapy against the virus, as well as support the region in the development of research capacity. In addition, Authority calls on them to ensure provision of vaccines at subsidized prices, to the affected countries including ECOWAS Member States.

16. With a view to ensuring high-level coordination of all the regional efforts to contain the pandemic, the Summit appoints **H.E. Muhammadu Buhari**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as **Champion** to coordinate the COVID-19 response and eradication process. In addition, the Heads of State and Government set up Ministerial Coordination Committees on Health, Finance and Transport to coordinate regional efforts to fight the pandemic, under the supervision of the Champion.

17. The Authority decide to remain seized of the situation of the pandemic in West Africa and direct the President of the Commission to ensure the implementation of the adopted decisions. To this end, they direct the President of the Commission and the Director General of WAHO to update and implement the costed Regional Plan of Action for Response to COVID-19.

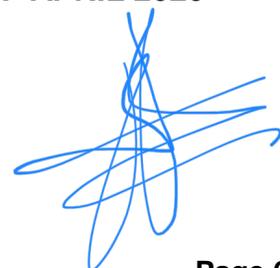
18. Furthermore, the Heads of State and Government noted the outcome of the post-electoral crisis in Guinea Bissau and congratulated H.E. Umaro Sissoco Embaló on his election as President of the Republic and wished him success.

19. In addition, they referred to the abduction of the Honorable Member of Parliament Soumaïla Cissé from Mali and reaffirmed his solidarity and his support to the Malian authorities' efforts for his release.

20. The Heads of State and Government express their profound gratitude to **H.E. Mr. Issoufou MAHAMADOU** President of the Republic of Niger, and current Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, for convening this important Summit.

DONE VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE THIS 23RD DAY OF APRIL 2020

THE AUTHORITY

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines, positioned to the right of the text 'THE AUTHORITY'.