



A cross section of ECOWAS Staff and Members of the Diplomatic Corps.

evolution of ECOWAS and gave a rundown of the ECOWAS trajectory since inception surmising that the regional group is “perhaps the single most important collective achievement in independent West Africa” He maintained that the watchful world was quite satisfied with the fact that ECOWAS has established the nexus between peace and development and between conflict and stability and progress.

The ambassador of Liberia to Nigeria accredited to the ECOWAS Commission Al-Hassan Conteh who spoke on behalf of the Permanent Representative of member states to ECOWAS thanked the president of the ECOWAS Commission for the strides made so far by ECOWAS.

He lauded the efforts towards attaining the single currency for the region, the adoption of the Biometric

Card as well as the other programmes that promote integration. He located other achievement in the areas of trade liberalization, Customs union, favourable industrial policy, Mines development, agriculture and the environment, infrastructure, transport, telecommunications and energy.

Ambassador Conteh commended ECOWAS for the resolution of the crisis in Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau and Mali. He pledged that the Permanent Representatives “stand ready to play our part in helping ECOWAS to attain the integration agenda...” He also thanked the government of Nigeria for recently pledging its full support to the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja.

Invited guests were shown the documentary “If I Were Told about ECOWAS” and thereafter treated to

celebration songs by the ECOWAS Staff Choir and a cocktail. In attendance were members of the diplomatic community and Member States ambassadors from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. There were also representatives of 66 other diplomatic Missions accredited to ECOWAS.

ECOWAS was established on May 28 1975 via the treaty of Lagos, with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries.

Its foundation treaty was revised in 1993 to make room for reforms that aid greater integration and co prosperity for the citizens of West Africa. ■

ECOWAS Commission Wants Effective Involvement of Stakeholders in the Implementation of Climate Change Decisions

The ECOWAS Commission is desirous of having a strong participation of stakeholders in the implementation of climate change decisions especially the Paris Agreement. To this end, the Commission through its Environment Directorate organised a capacity building workshop on climate change for West African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Media and the Private Sector between the 13th and 15th of July 2016 in Abuja.

Welcoming participants while opening the workshop, Mr. Tchambakou Ayassor Commissioner of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources of the ECOWAS Commission who was represented by Dr. Johnson Boanuh, the Director of Environment said that global scientific data on greenhouse gases still point to the main emitting sectors as energy, industry, forestry, agriculture and transport among others.

He added that the consequences of these changes are multifaceted and translate into droughts, Floods, recurrently affecting our populations, living environment, and place a risk on our capabilities of production and all efforts undertaken towards development at the regional level.

The Commissioner urged the stakeholders to use the opportunity of the workshop to reinforce the various actions conducted in the region to combat adverse effects of climate change with emphasis on the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the climate funds made available at the global level. He also expressed his gratitude to the



A group Photograph of participants at the meeting

Swedish government for continuous support to the region and ECOWAS as an organization.

The meeting had focused on the analysis and understanding of the Paris Agreement on climate change adopted during the last Conference of Parties 21 (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in December 2015 in Paris, having also identified the opportunities provided by the Agreement and the roles to be played by stakeholders in its implementation.

The workshop also dealt extensively on climate major issues and challenges including linkages with the sectors of economic development, international negotiations on climate change up to the Paris Agreement (and lessons learnt), legal aspects and implications of the Agreement on climate change as well as funding opportunities from the Climate Funds and the Green Climate Fund.

The presentations and interactive sessions helped the participants to deepen their understanding of the

challenges of climate change including the outcomes and implications of the Paris Agreement while the group work and exercises were handy in identifying regional and national contributions and possible actions to be taken by participating stakeholders in the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change in West Africa.

Participants expressed the desire to further disseminate the knowledge gained among their partners and networks for wider involvement in the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the common fight against climate change effects in West Africa.

The workshop was attended by representatives of West African CSOs, and media practitioners. There were also high level representations from the private sector which included the Executive Secretary of the Federation of Employers' Organisations of West Africa as well as the President of the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry. ■

Experts of Telecommunication/ICT and Post Prepare to hold their Ministerial Statutory Meetings

Niger's Minister of Post, Telecommunications and the Digital Economy, Mr Yahouza Sadissou lauded the decision to choose Niger to host the meeting of the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Board of the Regulatory Authority of the West African Postal Conference (WAPCO) and Meeting of Experts of Telecommunication/ICT of ECOWAS Member States. The two meetings, which opened simultaneously in Niamey on 20 June 2016 are expected to be preparatory meetings to the 2nd Session of Ministers of Post scheduled to hold on 23 June 2016 and the 14th Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Telecommunication/ ICT scheduled for 24 June 2016, also in the Niger capital.

The Ministers will consider the main documents presented to them by Experts of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Experts of Posts who are expected to conclude their meetings on 22 June 2016. The documents for the first meeting include the consideration of the Annual and Financial Reports as well as the Draft Budget of the CMPWA for the 2016/2018 Financial Years, the 2016/2020 WAPCO Regional Action Plan, the West African Postal Services Master Plan as well as the draft Directive on Postal Reform and Regulation.

The Chairman of WAPCO's Regulatory Authority, Mr Djéméléou, also drew participants' attention to the bane to the smooth running of regional organisations, namely the challenge of payment of contributions. «I would like to point out that out of a total budget of US\$770,000 for the 2012/2016 quadrennial period, only US\$250,000 have been paid-up by Member States, that is, 32.4%. Total amount of arrears of contributions is US\$520,000, representing 67.53% of budget... I use the opportunity of this forum to appeal to defaulting countries to pay up, thus demonstrate their solidarity to the organisation, pleaded Mr Bilé. As far as



(R-L) Dr Isaias Barreto da Rosa, Mr Djéméléou Bile and Mr. Yahouza Sadissou at the meeting

the second meeting, participants will consider the Regulation on the conditions of access of landlocked countries to national and international bandwidth on terrestrial networks in the Community, Strategy Paper on the ECOWAS ICT Sector for the 2016/2020 period, and last but not the least, the Status of Implementation of the 2011/2015 Strategic Plan.

The Niger Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Digital Economy, Yaouza Sadissou enjoined participants in the two preparatory meetings to demonstrate diligence in their deliberations to ensure that relevant recommendations are made, which will ensure the success of the meeting of the sectoral ministers. On his part, the ECOWAS Commissioner for Telecommunications and Information Technology, Dr Isaias Barreto da Rosa recalled the relevance of ICT to the implementation of the ECOWAS Vision 2020 which involves moving from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of People.

Mr da Rosa said that ICT is a cross-cutting sector to the realisation of this vision aimed at supporting and enhancing the regional integration process. Indeed, Information and

Communication Technologies remain the engine of regional integration in West Africa. ICT applications in the various sectors are considered as catalysts to socio-economic development, he explained, pointing out that they may facilitate the attainment of the objectives of sustainable development in ECOWAS Member States.

In the same vein, the President of the National Council of Post and Telecommunications of Niger, Mrs Bety Aïchatou Habibou buttressed the importance of ICT and the Post, which, according to her, constitute the means of communication between people and nations.

The Chairman of Liberia's Telecommunications Authority and Chair of the meeting, Mrs. Angelique Weeks, whose country is the current Chair of ECOWAS emphasised the need for regional solidarity in the ICT sector. We cannot afford that any Member State be left out. We hope each Member State would make reasonable effort to support ECOWAS in the attainment of its objectives through its post and telecommunications programmes Mrs. Weeks informed the participants. ■

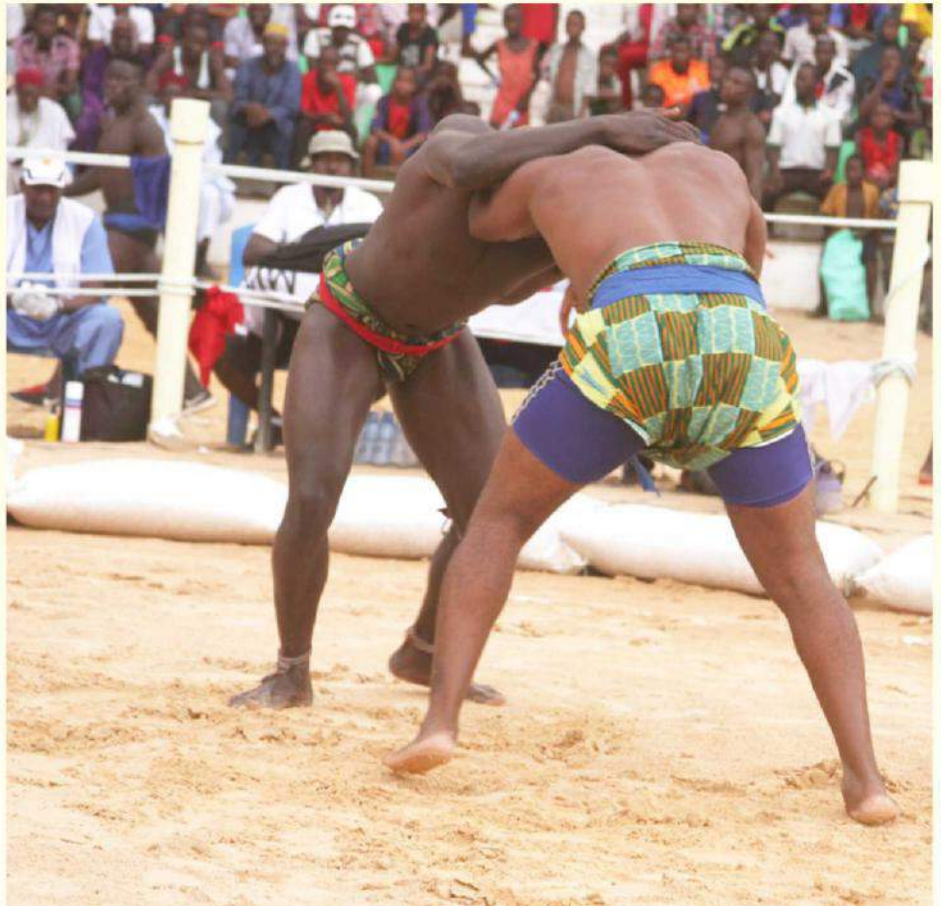
Senegal Wins ECOWAS Wrestling Tournament in Dosso

Senegal beat Niger Republic in the finals of the team event to win the gold medal, with Niger winning the silver and Nigeria the bronze.

The tournament which featured team and individual events in 66kg, 76kg, 86kg, 100kg and 120kg categories ended on the 8th of May, 2016 with Senegal dominating the medals table at the individual category with Oumar Kane of Senegal winning the gold medal for the 120kg, while Nigeria's Boltic Sinivie won the silver and Adamou Abdou of Niger the bronze.

Similarly, Senegal won the gold medals for the 100kg, 86kg and 76kg categories while Nigeria won gold for the 66kg and silver for the 100kg and 76kg categories.

TOLAC 2016 which was organized with support from Niger Republic's



Wrestlers in action during the TOLAC Competition



(L-R) Nigeria 3rd, Senegal 1st, and Niger 2nd – Winners of the Team Category of TOLAC with Salissou Ada, the Minister of Youth & Sports of Niger

Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture featured wrestlers from Bénin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

Wrestlers in Action during the TOLAC Competition. The tournament was attended by top government delegations from participating member states and His Excellency Salissou Ada, the Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture of the Republic of Niger, Dr. Fatimata Dia Sow, the Commissioner of Social Affairs and Gender of the ECOWAS Commission and Abdoulaye Issa, the Governor of the Region of Dosso among others. ■

ECOWAS Member States Discuss How To Unlock Transit Challenges Along the Main Trade Corridors in West Africa



A group photograph of the participant at the meeting in Accra - Ghana

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the World Bank Group co-hosted a technical workshop in Ghana from June 7–8, under the Improved and Facilitated Trade in West Africa Project. The project aims to unlock transit challenges across key trade corridors in West Africa. Over 40 participants, including representatives from the ECOWAS and the West Africa Economic Monetary Union (WAEMU) Commissions, the European Union, the World Bank Group, and stakeholders from the public and private sectors along the three main trade corridors in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Ghana, attended the two-day event.

“The Economic Community of West African States is committed to implementing programs that facilitate regional integration and making it work for private sector operators and the people of West Africa,” said Mr. Louali Chaibou, Commissioner, Trade Customs and Free Movement, ECOWAS Commission.

“The fact the European Union is financing this event is testimony of the importance we give to the promotion of the private sector as an engine for an economic and social development of West Africa. Our support to improving trade conditions is a priority of the EU cooperation with the region,” said Delphine Aupicon, Program Officer / Macro-economic and Trade Section who represented Ambassador William

Hanna, Head of the EU Delegation to Ghana.

The Improved and Facilitated Trade in West Africa Project is a four-year initiative that was launched in November 2014. The €3.5 million project seeks to support ECOWAS to improve trade in the West African region and, specifically, transit trade along the region's major trade corridors. It focuses on reducing the time and cost to trade, and increasing border agency cooperation and coordination, to encourage a better flow of goods within the region, and with international trading partners.

“West African countries have enormous potential to strengthen competitiveness and increase trade flows, which can drive growth, reduce poverty, and deliver jobs to the region. The World Bank Group is pleased to be working in partnership with regional organizations, member states, the private sector and development partners to help these countries unlock transit challenges along key trade corridors, and improve their competitiveness within the global economy,” said Ronke-Amoni Ogunsulire, IFC Country Manager for Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger and Togo.

They looked at how to generate epidemiology data at the regional and national level on drug treatment demand indicators and aggregate data on drug supply as well as the need to build scientific-based evidence for drug demand reduction through the effective

treatment and prevention activities.

Also appraised were matters revolving around analytical methodologies for effective data collection, generation, dissemination as well as overview of country reporting format.

Further, presentations were made on lessons learnt and the all-important issue of promoting sustainability of data collection at the national level while looking at regional perspectives, among others. There were also scenario review on the situation in member states like Nigeria including drug treatment data and drug seizures at the national level after a presentation of the working methodology and general objectives of the WENDU convergence was given by the ECOWAS Programme Officer Drug Demand Reduction Dr. Olubusayo Akinola. Before rising, the experts reached agreements on desirable strategies to foster inter-agency collaboration among key stakeholders including civil society in gathering and analysis of data. The NFP in applying the tools with the technical support of ECOWAS and UNODC are to now send in reports that will feed into the ECOWAS Annual Drug Report.

The report of the meeting, to be presented at a later date would generally cover improved, institutionalized data collection and analysis mechanisms, availability of published studies at the regional and national levels as well as raising of evidence based policies on drug demand reduction. ■



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101, Yakubu Gowon Crescent, Asokoro District, P.M.B. 401 Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: info@ecowas.int; website: www.ecowas.int



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