

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

“ECOWAS AT 40: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS”

Abuja, November 2015

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
AECID	Agency for International Development
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFRISTAT	African Statistical Observatory Office (Bamako)
AIF	Inter-governmental Agency of the Francophonie
AML/CFT	Anti Money laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing
BCEAO	Central Bank of West African States
BOAD	West African Development Bank
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (of NEPAD)
CCC	Community Computer Centre
CCR	Center for Conflict Resolution
CCSP	Coordinating Committee of ECOWAS Strategic Planning
CET	Common External Tariff
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CILSS	Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel
CORAF	West and Central African Council on Agricultural Research
CSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
CSF	Community Strategic Framework
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EBID	ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOFEST	ECOWAS Festival of Arts & Culture
ECOMAC	ECOWAS Common Statistics Database System for Multilateral Surveillance
ECOQUAL	ECOWAS Quality Policy
ECOSAP	ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme
ECOWAP	ECOWAS Agricultural Policy
ECOWARN	ECOWAS-wide Warning and Response Network
ECOWIC	ECOWAS Investment Code
ECOWIP	ECOWAS Investment Policy
EDF	European Development Fund
EMPC	ECOWAS Monetary cooperation programme
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EPF	ECOWAS Peace Fund
ERDF	ECOWAS Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	European Statistical Office (Luxembourg)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GIABA	Inter-governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in Africa
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IGOs	Inter-governmental Organisations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPAS	Investment Promotion Agencies
IPAWAS	Investment Promotion Agencies of West Africa

IPPF	Infrastructural Project Preparation Facility (NEPAD Facility)
ISRT	Inter-State road transit (ECOWAS convention)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSA	Non State Actors
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OMC	Observation and Monitoring Centre (ECOWAS facility)
OMVG	Organisation for Development of the Gambia Basin
PPDU	Project Preparation and Development Unit
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PRAFAD	Regional Programme of Action on the Fight against Desertification
PRIA	Regional Agricultural Investment Programme
PRSPs	Poverty reduction strategy papers
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RTIS	Regional Trade Information System
SAP	Systems, Applications and products
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TNCB	Trade Negotiation Capacity Building Project
TRAPCA	Trade Policy Training Centre for Africa
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WABA	West African Bankers Association
WACSOFF	West African Civil Society Forum
WAHO	West African Health Organisation
WAMA	West African Monetary Agency
WAMI	West African Monetary Institute
WAPP	West African Power Pool
WHO	World Health Organisation

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECOWAS COMMISSION

Before presenting the activities undertaken by ECOWAS in 2015, I would like to warmly congratulate the new President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari for his brilliant victory in the elections which were transparent, credible and peaceful.

Also, I would like to extend similar congratulations to Their Excellencies Presidents Faure Gnassingbe of Togo, Prof. Alpha Conde of Guinea and Alassane Ouattara for their brilliant re-election.

We strongly expect that the forthcoming presidential and legislative elections in Burkina Faso scheduled for November would produce the same results.

The West African regional economy is resilient in spite of both endogenous and exogenous shocks it is confronted with. However, regional economic growth which stood at 6.1 percent in 2014 is projected to decline to 4.2 percent in 2015. This situation places our region second in Africa in terms of growth after East Africa with a projected growth rate of 5.3 percent. This constitutes a break from the past decade when the region recorded average annual growth rate of more than 5 percent. The underlying reasons are numerous and include the structural transformation in China, in terms of migration from manufacturing to services which affected exports from ECOWAS Member States especially iron ore and base metals. In addition, fall in commodity prices, in particular crude oil, gold and iron ore, adversely affected the region's exports and fiscal revenue. Nevertheless, the region is addressing the fiscal challenge through macroeconomic and institutional reforms.

In the area of politics, with the concerted efforts of our leaders, the region was able to surmount the political crises in Burkina Faso and Guinea Bissau as well as insurgency in the Northern part of Mali and North-eastern part of Nigeria. During the year, successful elections were held in Nigeria (March and April), Togo (April), Guinea (October), Côte d'Ivoire (October) and Burkina Faso (November). It is gratifying to underscore that democracy has taken root in ECOWAS as our institutions have zero tolerance for unconstitutional removal of government. The results of regional efforts in the domain of peace and security enables us to affirm that coups d'état can no longer succeed. The last examples in Mali, Guinea Bissau and Burkina Faso are sufficient testaments. These important achievements are credit to our leaders.

Also, achievements have been recorded in many areas including implementation of Common External Tariff (CET) regime, signing of Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between West Africa and European Union, and infrastructure development.

With respect to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), West Africa's performance was more or less satisfactory. Many of our people still live below the poverty line of US\$1.90 per day. However, with the advent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which came into operation in September 2015 to replace the MDGs, it is hoped that all ECOWAS Member States will perform well on the human development scale.

The 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development (or the Post-2015 Development Agenda) is not in conflict with the African Union Agenda 2063 of "Africa that We Want" and the Pan African vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena" within the next 50 years. May I state that ECOWAS subscribes fully to the Common African Position (CAP) in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. ECOWAS will continue to do everything possible to achieve all the 17 SDGs including SDG1, which aims to end poverty in all forms and dimensions by 2030.

Established only forty years ago, ECOWAS strives to be a model regional economic community on the African continent. For the past forty years, ECOWAS has enhanced the integration of the peoples of the West African countries along economic, social, cultural and political lines. In other words, efforts are being made to create a borderless and single economic space in West Africa devoid of impediments to all forms of development of the Community. This year is the 40th Anniversary of ECOWAS. Thus, the theme of the 2015 Annual Report is “ECOWAS at 40: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects”. The current Management under my leadership has consolidated on the achievements and tackled the challenges with a view to making ECOWAS a more prosperous Community.

Our Community faced a number of economic, social, political and security challenges, which were resolved. Achievements in these areas relate to the priority areas as contained in the ECOWAS Vision 2020:

1. Consolidation of peace, security, democracy and human rights;
2. Acceleration of regional integration in all areas of economic and social life;
3. Promotion of economic prosperity by establishing a viable regional environment that enhances investment and entrepreneurship; and
4. Building of relationships and mutually beneficial partnerships with all other parts of Africa and the world to address the challenges of globalization.

To support actions to be undertaken within the context of these four priority areas, our Community needs strong institutions. In this regard, the Community embarked on institutional reforms which involve all stakeholders in the integration and development process. The first phase of the study has already been submitted to ECOWAS Council of Ministers.

Moreover, ECOWAS has made immense efforts to address the security and political crises facing the Community and promote a free and crisis-free political environment in our Member States. Indeed, peace and stability are key prerequisites for economic, social, cultural and political development. Clearly, there is no stability without respect for democratic principles, good governance and respect for human rights and universal values.

We shall, as a matter of duty to our Community, continue to work relentlessly to promote the culture of democracy in our community. Strict respect for the Constitution by the State is a key obligation and the people have the right to choose their leaders freely. Also, ECOWAS is strongly committed to the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance as well as the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey my gratitude to our Community leadership for the excellent ways in which they have been providing both policy and strategic direction to all the Community Institutions. May I specially thank the current Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, His Excellency Macky Sall and colleague Heads of State and Government for their commitment to finding solutions to the crises that occurred in some Member States.

I wish to thank all ECOWAS institutions, the Commissioners and their technical staff as well as the support staff who supported the preparation of this Annual Report.

Finally, may I also, on behalf of all the institutions of our Community, express our deep gratitude to all our development partners for their continuous technical and financial support and their willingness to continue to support the region in its fight against poverty, insecurity and under-development.

Let me conclude by expressing my strong belief in the enormous potential of our region and my full confidence that, under the leadership of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, ECOWAS

will continue to implement people-centred programmes. In fact, it is steadily transforming from an “ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of People”.

Long live the people and leaders of all ECOWAS Member States.

Long live the ECOWAS Community

H.E. Kadré Désiré OUEDRAOGO
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i. The ECOWAS Annual Report for 2015 provides a comprehensive account of the status of implementation of the Community Work Programme in 2014 and highlights potential challenges, prospects and the way forward for the West African economic integration process. This Report, was prepared, under the theme **“ECOWAS at Forty: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects”** with a view to highlighting the progress made since inception and the challenges that have, and are affecting the regional integration process in West Africa as well as the prospects for the medium term.
- ii. The Annual Report is based on contributions from the various Departments of the Commission and other Community Institutions on progress made in the implementation of their programmes covering the period under review. These activities were carried out in an environment characterised by relative improvement in national economic governance and improved political will by the ECOWAS Authorities to accelerate regional integration and development, albeit the sluggish global economic recovery and the continued adverse impact of the international commodity price fall on the economies of the region.
- iii. At the Community level, the environment was marked, among other things, by the election of H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republics of Senegal as Chairman of ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for one year during the 47th Ordinary Session of their Summit in Accra on 17 May 2015; celebration of forty years of regional integration in West Africa; launching of the ECOLINK project to enhance transparency and probity in financial reporting and management of ECOWAS institutions; conclusion of the EPA negotiations and ensuring that all Member States sign and ratify the Agreement; launching the Common External Tariff (CET) and its effective implementation; and support to containment of the *Ebola* outbreak in the region and post recovery efforts of the respective Member States affected by the crisis.
- iv. **Economic performance:** The world economy grew by 3.4 percent in 2014 and is expected to witness a decline of 3.1 percent in 2015 before increasing slightly by 3.6 per cent in 2016. Concerning inflation, headline inflation of advanced countries declined from 1.4% in 2014 to 0.3% in 2015, despite the fact that core inflation remained stable. This decline is as a result of the decline in oil prices and lower prices for other commodities.
- v. The growth outlook for African economies indicate a decline in the growth rate of Africa's real GDP in 2015 by 3.7% against 3.9% in 2014, the lowest in six years. The unfavourable conditions in the international environment, namely, the depression in the international prices of major export commodities and the less conducive financial conditions are sources of the slowdown in Africa's growth.
- vi. Analysis of Africa's growth dynamics and overall economic performance disguises disparities with East Africa expecting to record the highest growth rate in Africa of 5.3% against 5.9% in 2014 due to the rapid expansion in financial services, transportation and communication as well as infrastructure investments, particularly in the rail sector.
- vii. West Africa, which is the leading African region in terms of production, contributing to nearly 30% of the continent's GDP would experience a marked slowdown in its growth rate, from 6.1% in 2014 to 4.2% in 2015 due to the adverse effects of the persistent decline in the international prices of major exports commodities as well as the increasing political instability and terrorism in some countries of the region and the effects of the *Ebola* epidemic. However, the overall regional reality masks some differences between countries in terms of economic performance. Only five countries - Cote d'Ivoire (9.5%), Gambia (7%), Senegal

- (5.4%), Guinea Bissau (4.7%), and Burkina Faso (4.4%) - will record higher growth rates in 2015 compared to those recorded in 2014 - 8.5%, 0.5%, 4.7%, 2.9% and 4.4% respectively.
- viii. On the other hand, the growth rates of major oil-exporting countries such as Nigeria and to a lesser extent Ghana, will suffer declines while the growth performance of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea will be affected by the lingering adverse effects of the Ebola outbreak in 2014.
 - ix. Regarding the status of implementation of the Community Work Programme, the Commission and other Community institutions recorded the following achievements:
 - x. **Monetary Integration:** In addition to ensuring the effective operations of the institutional organs of the ECOWAS Multilateral Surveillance Mechanism, progress was made in monitoring the effective implementation of the activities outlined in the Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency including the finalisation of the draft project proposal on the establishment of the ECOWAS Monetary Institute (EMI) as well as revision and costing of the roadmap for the ECOWAS single currency.
 - xi. **Private Sector:** The Commission, within the framework of the West African Capital Market Integration Council, facilitated the harmonisation and adoption of the regulatory and operational frameworks in the proposed integrated capital market which resulted in the first cross-border trade under the sponsored broker market access phase of the initiative on 1 July 2015 involving United Capital Plc in Lagos and the Accra-based CAL Brokers.
 - xii. **Research and Statistics:** Key activities implemented focused on : (i) formulation of the regional economic research programme; (ii) implementation of statistical harmonisation methodologies in consumer price index, national accounts, balance of payments and public finance; and (iii) launching of the *ECOBASE* database;
 - xiii. **Community Development Programme (CDP):** The Community activities with regard to the ECOWAS Community Development Programme (CDP) focused on preparatory activities towards a high level conference for internal resource mobilization within the ECOWAS Region and a donor's roundtable for the financing of CDP projects, both scheduled to hold in 2016 in Abidjan.
 - xiv. **ECOWAS Sahel Strategy:** Activities implemented included country tours to Member States of the G5 Sahel to sensitise government authorities on the ECOWAS Sahel Strategy; and launching of the Socioeconomic Database Initiative for the Sahel in the third quarter of 2015 in Lomé (Togo);
 - xv. **Economic Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU):** The Commission undertook a series of activities relating to: (i) strengthening the technical and research capacity of the Department of Macroeconomic Policy and Economic Research; (ii) undertaking policy analysis, research and management in promoting regional integration in West Africa; and (iii) promoting network of regional bodies, groups and institutions.

Trade, Customs, Industry, Mines, Free Movement and Tourism

- xvi. **Trade:** Significant progress was made in the formulation of an ECOWAS Common Trade Policy (CTP) and the implementation of trade promotion activities in the region relating to the organisation of the proposed 8th ECOWAS Trade Fair in Niger in 2016 and the updating of the Trade Information System (ECOBiz). The ECOWAS Commission also embarked on a number of priority activities to prepare the region for the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and West Africa which has already been signed by 28 EU countries and 13 of the 16 West African Member States.

- xvii. **Customs Union:** Progress was made on the effective implementation of the Customs Union through the application of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET), more efficient implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) as well as facilitating the harmonization of internal indirect tax systems and tax transition.
- xviii. **Free Movement and, Cross- border Cooperation:** Under the free movement and migration project, the Commission commenced activities relating to the introduction of the ECOWAS Biometric Identity Card with specific focus on the production of the specimen ID card to be adopted by Member States and the deployment of the requisite infrastructure and procedures for the usage of the Biometric Card. Other key activities included the drafting of a Regional Border Management Manual for use in immigration/security training institutions within the region as well as the formulation of a new programme Cycle (2016-2020) for Cross Border Cooperation.

Industry and Mines

- xix. **Industry: The New Strategy of West African Common Industrial Policy (WACIP):** The first revision of the West Africa Common Industrial Policy (WACIP) strategy for 2015 – 2020 was completed during the review period. The effective implementation of the ECOWAS Quality Policy (ECOQUAL) also commenced in 2015. Furthermore, a total of 26 regional standards and technical regulations on agricultural and foods products were finalized by the Regional Technical Committee;
- xx. **Mines:** The First ECOWAS Mining & Petroleum Forum (ECOMOF 2015) was held in Accra from 6 to 8 October 2015. Significant progress was also made towards the establishment of the ECOWAS Federation of Chambers of Mines by the National Chambers of Mines and the formulation of an ECOWAS Mining & Minerals Development Act (Code, EMMDA), ECOWAS Hydrocarbons Development Policy (EHDP), and a technical feasibility report for the ECOWAS Geo-extractives Observatory & Cadastre System.

Agriculture and Environment

- xxi. **Agriculture:** Programme interventions under agriculture focused on the evaluation of the steps taken with Member States and different stakeholders towards the implementation of National Agricultural Investment Programmes (NAIP) on one hand, and regional programmes on the other. Other priority programmes implemented during the review period include (i) the promotion of strategic products for food security and sovereignty; (ii) reduction of food vulnerability and promoting sustainable access to food; (iii) coordination and monitoring of National Agriculture Investment Programmes; (iv) monitoring and coordination of regional projects/programmes and diverse initiatives supported by technical and financial partners; (v) and follow-up and domestication of continental guidelines in the development and transformation process of agriculture to allow for shared prosperity.
- xxii. **Environment:** In the area of environment, the Commission's activities related to three priority areas of the ECOWAS Environmental Policy. They are: (i) enhancement of environmental governance and capacity building, (ii) promotion of sustainable resource management for the development of an environment friendly, sub-regional economy, and (iii) enhancement of the management of pollution and nuisances, urban waste, chemical products and dangerous waste.

Infrastructure Development

- xxiii. **Road Transport:** The principal activity in the Land Transport sector was the continued implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Road Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme with focus on (i) the ECOWAS Joint Border Post Programme; (ii) the Nigeria-Cameroon

- Multinational Highway and Facilitation Programme as part of the Trans-Africa Highway programme; (iii) consultations with the AfDB and AU for funding request and project preparation and investment advisory services for Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Development Programme; (iv) commencement of the Trans-Gambia Transport Corridor; (v) commencement of the Trans-West African Coastal Highway programme under the European Union 10th Regional Indicative Programme; and (vi) consultations with the AfDB for the implementation of the Multinational Road Development and Transport Facilitation Programme within the Mano River Union.
- xxiv. **Air Transport:** Key activities executed included the : (i) organisation of the Nigerian Aviation Executives Business Forum held in 10 March, 2015 to sensitize the Nigerian Aviation Stakeholders on the constraints, challenges, achievements of air transport in all of ECOWAS region; (ii) facilitating aeronautical cooperation and signing of a Joint ECOWAS/ICAO Air Transport Action Plan for air transport development in the region; and (iii) organization of the 2015 bi-annual meeting of the World Bank/UEMOA/ECOWAS in February 2015.
- xxv. **Project Preparation and Development Unit (PPDU):** Key activities executed in 2015 included the completion of the feasibility study on the establishment of the Fund for the Development and Financing of the Transport and Energy Sectors (FODETE-ECOWAS) and the commissioning of priority studies to demonstrate bankability of regional infrastructure projects.
- xxvi. **Telecommunications:** The Commission assisted Member states to meet the 17th June 2015 deadline for the transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) and commenced preparatory activities towards the establishment of the establishment of an ECOWAS radio/television station and the Regional Data base SIGTEL. Other key activities undertaken included the review and validation of the 2016 – 2020 Community ICT strategy document; adoption of a commemorative stamp to mark the occasion of the 40th anniversary of ECOWAS by the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Post and organisation of a regional Forum on Postal Reform and Regulation to assess the ECOWAS postal sector.
- xxvii. **Energy:** The Commission, among other things, provided funding to support the implementation of the emergency electrical energy supply programmes to the Gambia, Mali and Sierra Leone, facilitated the popularization of the use of LPG as cooking energy in the ECOWAS region and commissioned studies on the coordination of regional activities in the energy sector including the finalization of the feasibility study on the extension of the West African Gas Pipe line network.
- xxviii. **ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA);** Key programmes and activities undertaken during the period under review focused on the development and regulation of the regional power market as well as capacity building activities aimed at developing the capacity of ERRA staff, national regulators and other key stakeholders of the regional market.
- xxix. **ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) :** The Commission, through the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) implemented activities in four priority areas of intervention namely, Tailored Policy, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks; Capacity Development; Awareness Raising and Knowledge Management; and Project Development and Investment Promotion.
- xxx. **West African Power Pool (WAPP):** Key programmes implemented by the West African Power PPOL (WAPP) included the commencement of preparation and implementation of priority interconnection reinforcement projects in various ECOWAS Member States as well as the implementation of activities relating to the establishment of a regional electricity

market, cross border electrification projects in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Ghana, Togo and Benin and the implementation of the ECOWAS Emergency Power Supply Programmes for Mali, Sierra Leone and the Gambia.

Human Development

- xxxii. **Humanitarian and Social Affairs:** Key activities implemented included the implementation of a regional response to eliminating the scourge of Ebola in the region, provision of financial and humanitarian support to the victims of Boko Haram insurgency in North Eastern Nigeria and collaboration with the relevant stakeholders in the implementation of activities aimed at disaster risk management and reduction; development of guidelines for child protection framework and new Plans of Action on Counter Trafficking in persons; development of a database on labour market and employment in the ECOWAS region; review of ECOWAS Emergency Response Team (EERT) processes and procedure; and development of a regional instrument on the right to nationality and concrete framework for eradicating statelessness.

Gender, Child Development, Youth/Sports, Civil Society, Employment and Drug Control

- xxxiii. **Gender and Child:** In addition to participating in international meetings and conferences on gender –related issues, the Commission facilitated the implementation of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) funded Women and Peace Security Work Plan on promoting dialogue, mediation and countering violent extremism in West Africa as well as the implementation of the project to support the establishment of Business Incubator for African Women Entrepreneurs (BIAWE) in two pilot countries, namely, Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso. The Commission also continued with the implementation of the ECOWAS Child Protection Programme with specific focus on the development of implementation guidelines for the Draft ECOWAS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework on Child Protection and the organisation of a Regional Training Programme on Ending Child Marriage in Nigeria.
- xxxiiii. **Youth Employment:** Key activities undertaken included the organisation of a (i) round table of private sector with universities on best labour market initiatives for tertiary institutions in the region; (ii) consultative forum for the establishment of a regional platform of national youth councils, associations and stakeholders; and (iii) training workshop on promoting youth employment through integrated small and medium scale enterprises (SMES) and cooperatives development.
- xxxv. **Drug Trafficking Control:** Besides participating in various international meetings and conferences on drug control and related issues, the Commission also collaborated with the EU in ensuring the effective implementation and monitoring of the Regional Drug Action Plan including the commencement of staff recruitment. The Commission also collaborated with UNODC to conduct an assessment of the key capacity gaps and vulnerabilities on Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West African countries using the West Africa Strategic Assistance Framework (WASAF) adopted by G7 Assistance Strategy Committee.
- xxxvi. **Civil Society:** The West African Civil Society Forum, (WACSOFF), with support of the ECOWAS Commission, commenced the finalisation of the Civil Society Directory and review of its activities as well as undertake a study tour to the African Union in Addis Ababa to establish linkages with the apex organisation in the implementation of the civil society agenda at the continental level
- xxxvii. **ECOWAS Gender Development Centre:** Activities of the Gender Centre were focused on two main programmes drawn from its strategic plan, namely (i) Programme on the Institutional and Organisational Capacity Building of National Gender Machineries; and (ii) Programme on

Human Capital Development, Economic Empowerment of Women, Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, Peace and Security.

- xxxvii. **ECOWAS Centre for Youth and Sports Development:** In the area of sports, the Commission, in addition to organising the Dakar wrestling tournament in October 2015 also conducted a preparatory mission for the training of young people in Benin, July 2015 as well as the provision of training opportunities in pastoral agro forestry for 90 young people from the 15 Member States at the Songhai Centre, Porto-Novo (Benin) from 15 October to 14 November 2015.

Education, Culture, Science and Technology

- xxxviii. **Education:** The priority areas of the Commission for Education and Training in 2015 centred around promotion of higher education and teacher development, mutual recognition of certificates, harmonization of education systems and harmonization of basic education and literacy. The priority programmes included the promotion of Higher Education through the ECOWAS Academic Mobility Scheme; development of Benchmarks for Equivalence of Certificate; and development of a regional strategy for the revitalization of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
- xxxix. **Science and Technology:** The main activities undertaken by the Commission focused on: (i) development of decision-making support indicators to provide scientific data for the continuous assessment of the status of science and innovation in the region; (ii) development of STI Research Outputs to boost scientific creativity and research in the region; and (iii) facilitating the networking of research institutions through the creation of centres of excellence.
- xl. **Culture:** The Commission continued to implement the ECOWAS Culture priority programmes as well as the review and implementation of some of the priority projects, programmes and activities of the NEPAD- Culture Regional Action Plan. The Commission also embarked on high level consultations with religious leaders in the region and finalised a mechanism for kick-starting a regular intra and inter-religious dialogue in the region.

Political Affairs, Regional Peace and Security

- xli. **Political Affairs:** Key activities implemented included the (i) review of the ECOWAS Legal Texts on the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of 1999, and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; (ii) operationalisation of the Mediation Facilitation Division (MFD) and establishment of the Secretariat of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) in the ECOWAS Commission ; (iii) establishment of a Network of Civil Society Organisation Human Rights Monitors (NCSOHRM) to enhance the promotion and respect of rule of law and human rights in Member States; (iv) provision of electoral assistance packages and deployment of pre-election fact-finding missions, Long Term Observation/Situation Room and Election Observation missions to cover all aspects of the electoral process in selected Member States.
- xlii. **Early Warning:** The main activities implemented included the organisation of advocacy visits to selected Member States (Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso and Liberia) and commencement of preparatory activities for the launching of the Street Children Project.
- xliii. **Peace Support Operations:** Key activities implemented included: (i) review of some of the strategic documents of the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) due to the changing realities as well as emerging challenges in the region; (ii) creation of a Web Page for ECOWAS Civilian Standby Roster; and (iii) continued the implementation of the 5-Year Priority Activity Plan of the

- ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, with focus on capacity building and management of the Exemption Procedure.
- xliv. **Regional Security:** A major activity undertaken by the Commission in the area of regional security was the setting up of the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre (MMCC) for Pilot Operational Zone E, comprising four countries (Benin, Niger, Nigeria and Togo).
 - xlv. **Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** Key activities implemented included the (i) establishment of the ECOWAS Regional Computer Society Consultation Exercise (ERCS) to facilitate the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) within the region; (ii) launching of the new ECOWAS website and that of the ECOWAS Commission in March 2015 and the deployment of *ECOSUITE*, (the ECOWAS Intranet solution and suite of applications); and (iii) organisation of technical and management meetings involving Member States on the ALISA/PACIR project aimed at interconnection of customs computer systems in the ECOWAS region.
 - xlvi. **Legal and Institutional Matters:** In relation to legal and institutional matters, the Commission continued to play its statutory role of providing the appropriate legal framework for community integration activities, a process that leads to the continuous development of Community laws. In this regard, priority activities by the Commission included (i) Harmonisation of Business Laws in ECOWAS Member States and provision of legal advice and legal opinion on several matters and (iii) organisation of annual consultative meetings with Member States to cement better understanding of Community laws and programmes.
 - xlvii. **Strategic Planning:** With respect to Strategic Planning, the Commission focused primarily on the preparation of the Community Strategic Framework (CSF), 2016 – 2020 and the Strategic Action Programme for the implementation of the CSF.
 - xlviii. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The Commission’s M&E activities primarily focused on the finalisation of the 2014 annual performance report of the Commission (including technical assistance to directorates and services for the preparation of their annual performance reports); organisation of the fourth meeting of the “Forum of Stakeholders on ECOWAS M&E System”; and production of various M&E reports such as the interim performance report (for AFC), the 2015 quarterly reports, the Regional Strategic Plan (RSP) evaluation report and the M&E framework for the Community Strategic Framework
 - xlix. **Relations with Other ECOWAS Institutions:** Key activities executed included the (i) recruitment of a consultant to conduct an assessment of the state of relations between the Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions; (ii) setting up of mechanism for permanent consultations between the ECOWAS Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions; (iii) coordination of meetings of the Joint Working Committee between ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) in September 2015 in Abuja; (iv) and the creation of a strategic alliance between ECOWAS Commission and other International Organizations to draw lessons on best practices.
- I. **Finance :** The Commission fielded high-level and technical monitoring missions to Member States to ensure compliance and full implementation of the Community Levy Protocol in order to foster political cooperation on the implementation of the protocol. Furthermore, the SAP (ECO Link) project and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) were introduced in all ECOWAS Institutions aimed at enhancing probity and transparency in the utilisation and management of Community finances.

- li. **Human Resources:** In the area of human resources, the Commission's activities were focused on the (i) recruitment into the remaining eighteen (18) out of the fifty-two (52) critical positions for which there were no suitable candidates in 2013; (ii) recruitment into the eighty-five (85) critical positions approved by Council in December, 2014; (iii) recruitment into other donor-funded positions (Spanish and EU for the Regional Agency for Agriculture & Food as well as the Department of Social Affairs & Gender); (iv) finalisation of the ECOWAS Biometric Laisser-Passer; (v) finalisation of the ECOWAS Pension Scheme; and (vi) revision of Staff Regulations.
- lii. **General Administration:** The Commission during the review period continued to discharge its primary responsibility of providing a conducive and secure work environment for its staff with specific focus on logistics and fleet management, facilities management, office support and procurement of goods and services. Based on the needs indicated by the various Departments of the Commission, a Procurement Plan for the year 2015 was prepared, with the aim of optimizing the Commission's procurement process.
- liii. **ECOWAS Peace Fund:** The implementation of activities under the ECOWAS Peace Fund (EPF) resulted in the strengthened ECOWAS Commission institutional capacities in conflict prevention and resolution at Regional and National Level as well as the strengthening of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture. The operations of the ECOWAS Peace Fund also contributed to the development of the capacities of the ECOWAS Standby Force under the African Peace Facility and in the provision of funding and institutional support for selected peace initiatives and projects in the region.
- liv. **Communication:** The Commission undertook a massive visibility campaign to mark the 40th Anniversary of ECOWAS through billboard messages at high-traffic urban areas as well as posters and banners within and outside ECOWAS institutions. In order to facilitate the implementation of Community decisions, the Commission continues to publish official journals which provide the official platform for the dissemination of vital information within the community. Volumes 63 and 64 were printed during the period under review.
- lv. **ECOWAS AT 40: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects:** An appraisal of the 40 years of the existence of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), is considered in this chapter. The assessment of regional integration is considered in relation to the three major objectives: the creation of the common market, the establishment of peace and security, as well as the harmonisation of policies and the adoption of common programmes. The status of implementation of major projects by ECOWAS therefore makes it possible to observe that the respective projects are progressing at varying levels.
- lvi. As regards the liberalization of trade, the creation of the Free Trade Area (FTA), has given rise to the establishment of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), a Protocol on Interstate Road Transit (ISRT) and a transit operations guarantee scheme. As regards peace, security and stability, ECOWAS has developed several instruments such as: Preventive diplomacy, early warning, capacity building and peace-keeping and regional security. As regards the Monetary Union, measures for the harmonisation of macroeconomic policies have been put in place resulting in the adoption of macroeconomic convergence criteria within the framework of the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme and the Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency adopted in 2012.
- lvii. The entry into force of the ECOWAS CET in January 2015, is a clear attestation to the fact that the regional integration process is on track. To consolidate this progress, efforts should be intensified in eliminating all restrictions to mutual trade among its member states. The recent measures of the movement of persons and the right of establishment should be

consolidated. The adoption of various common economic and sector policies and programmes as well as the harmonisation and coordination of national policies, as stipulated in Article 3,2 of the Revised Treaty is one crucial step towards the common market and economic union. Furthermore, the consolidation of on-going efforts in the area of budgetary management and the process of financial integration (cooperation of the capital markets, regional settlement system project), coupled with the willingness displayed by ECOWAS Authorities, reinforces the implementation of the single currency roadmap.

- Iviii.** With regard to activities undertaken by **other Community institutions**, the following achievements were recorded in the implementation of their work programmes:
- lix. **ECOWAS Parliament:** The Parliament Standing Committees held several delocalized meetings to consider issues bordering on the Integration and Cooperation process. Furthermore, the Parliament also facilitated the establishment of the Network of West African Parliamentarians on Peace and Security which is now being funded by the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA). The Parliament also benefitted from various capacity building programmes from the National Institute of Legislative Studies (NILS) of the Nigerian National Assembly.
 - lx. **ECOWAS Court of Justice:** Judicial activities of the Court included the Judicial Retreat of the Court and the opening ceremonies marking the 2014-2015 Legal Year of the Court the 2015/2016 Legal Year of the Court. According to the statistics of the Court, ninety one (91) Court sessions were held, of which twenty three (23) judgements and five (5) rulings were delivered. Non judicial activities undertaken during the review period included the organisation of an international conference on human rights in Bissau, Guinea Bissau and the compilation, translation and publication of the 2012 and 2013 Decisions of the Court in the three official languages of the Community.
 - lxi. **West African Health Organisation (WAHO):** The activities implemented by WAHO centred on the fight against the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), establishment of the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Disease Control and Monitoring (ECOWAS-RCDC) and the development of the WAHO Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2020. Other accomplishments included targeted interventions in addressing health related issues in the various ECOWAS Member States.
 - lxii. **Inter-governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA):** GIABA during the course of 2015 continued to provide assistance to Member States in the implementation of effective Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (CFT) regimes. Besides participating in various international meetings and conferences on AML activities, the GIABA Secretariat also organised a workshop for UEMOA Commission financial sector executives on AML/ CFT as well as a validation workshop of the independent evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Plan of GIABA for (2011-2014).
 - lxiii. **ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID):** The activities carried out by EBID during the review period involved the re-enforcement of the Bank's interventions in the Member States, improvement of the Bank governance and the intensification of resource mobilization for the financing of the Bank operations. Among the several activities undertaken by the Bank was the election of Mr Mamadou Igor Diarra as new Chairman of the Board of Governors of EBID, the appointment of three new Directors and renewal of the tenure of the Board of Directors; and the renewal of the tenure of Mr Bashir Mamman IFO as President of the Bank another for four years with effect from October 10, 2015.

INTRODUCTION

1. In 2015, the ECOWAS Commission and other Community institutions continued to pursue the regional integration agenda through the implementation of the Community Work Programme approved by the Council of Ministers. Tremendous progress was made during the year despite the challenges that confronted the region. The success recorded is traceable to the relative political stability, cooperation of the populace to deal with the Ebola scourge, good macroeconomic reforms in the wake of declining international commodity prices. The political will of the Community leadership as well as the diligence of ECOWAS officials in the effective implementation of the Community Work Programme, also contributed to this success.
2. The ECOWAS regional economic growth rate is projected to decline from 6.1 percent in 2014 to 4.2 percent in 2015 attributable to a number of factors including the socio-economic impact of Ebola epidemic fall in international prices of major export products of the region such as crude oil, gold, iron ore and cotton and terrorism. Nevertheless, the regional economic growth rate of 4.2 percent would outpace the projected 2015 global economic growth rate of 3.1 percent and emerging markets and developing economies' growth rate of 4.0 percent.
3. In the quest for development, peace, security and consolidation of regional integration, the Community decision making organs at the three levels of governance, namely: Technical or Expert, Ministerial and Summit levels, provided the conducive environment, resources and policy direction for the effective implementation of the Community work programme.
4. As 2015 marks the 40th Anniversary of ECOWAS, special programmes were designed to celebrate the occasion. The celebrations would be crowned with the formal inauguration of the ECOWAS CHOIR which will perform, for the first time the ECOWAS Anthem and a special anniversary song. The occasion has also been used to take stock of the achievements made since the establishment of the Community, reflect on the key challenges that have confronted the regional integration process, and look into the future of the Community. It is in this light, that the theme for this year's Annual Report was chosen as "ECOWAS at 40: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects".
5. Concerning the policy-programme-project-activity nexus of all the ECOWAS Institutions, the nexus is anchored on two basic pillars, namely, (i) promotion of peace, security and good governance, and (ii) improvement of the standard of living of the people. To achieve the two major goals, the ECOWAS Commission, during the period under review, continued to undertake the implementation of the following priority programmes:
 - Consolidation of peace and security while strengthening the democratic process;
 - Implementation of the Common External Tariff (CET), enhancing free movement of persons and goods, finalisation of agricultural investment programmes and common policies particularly in the industrial sector and infrastructural development;
 - Improvement of the macroeconomic policy framework to lay the foundation for the creation of a credible and sustainable monetary union;
 - Mobilisation of financial resource to support the implementation of the Community Development Programme (CDP) Sahel Strategy;
 - Implementation of an economic cooperation strategy with countries and regional blocs including Brazil, China, India, the European Union, Malaysia, Japan and USA as well as consolidating the traditional relationships with the other developed countries;
 - Acceleration of institutional reforms at the Commission.

6. With respect to democracy and good governance, it is gratifying to note that these are progressively being consolidated. This is manifested, among other things, by the conduct of peaceful, free and fair elections in Nigeria, Togo, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso.
7. The 2015 ECOWAS Annual Report is structured into four major chapters. Following this introductory segment, Chapter One reviews the recent economic developments of the region within the context of the international economic environment. Chapter Two highlights the status of implementation of the Community Work Programme. Chapter Three addresses the theme for the report, while Chapter Four reviews the activities of the other ECOWAS Institutions. The Report ends with Conclusion and Recommendations.

CHAPTER I: RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN WEST AFRICA.

1.1 Global economic situation¹

8. The global economy that witnessed economic growth rate of 3.4 percent in 2014 is expected to witness a decline of 3.1 percent in 2015 before increasing by 3.6 per cent in 2016. This global economic performance portrays a mixed result for advanced economies and emerging and low-income countries. For the advanced economies, overall growth was 1.8 percent in 2014 and projections for 2015 and 2016 are 2.0 and 2.2 percent respectively. Within the advanced economies, there is heterogeneity of countries in terms of economic prospects and development. Some of them are commodity exporters and countries like Canada, Norway, and Australia are facing economic downturns mainly from deteriorating terms of trade effects.
9. The value of world output is projected to decline by 4.9 percent from US \$77.269 trillion in 2014 to US\$73,507 in 2015 but will increase by 3.8 percent to US\$76,321 in 2016 (Table 1). The decline in world economic performance is due to the inter-connectivity of three powerful economic forces, namely, China's structural transformation, fall in commodity prices and the normalization of the United States monetary policy. All these factors have a particular impact on emerging markets and low-income economies.
10. With respect to China's structural transformation, the economy is rebalancing from exports and public investment to consumption, and from manufacturing to services. There is evidence that manufacturing is contracting but services are booming in China. This is both healthy and necessary in the longer term, but in the short term, this development has serious implications on China's growth and its trade relationships with foreign countries.
11. The Chinese authorities rolled out fiscal measures and expanded infrastructure spending. The developments have repercussions for the world economy and these repercussions are greater in countries, such as ECOWAS Member States, that trade with China or that depend on exports which China consumes intensively. China's consumption of base metals is roughly 50 percent on average of global consumption and 60 percent for iron ore. So, for those commodity exporters, including Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the effects of China shifting from manufacturing to services and the reduction in construction activity are really immense. In addition, while the growth slowdown in China is so far broadly in line with IMF forecasts, its cross-border repercussions appear larger than envisaged.
12. The second major factor affecting the world economy is the fall in commodity prices, which, of course, is not unrelated to China's growth experience. After many years of high demand resulting in high prices for commodities and high investment in commodity-producing sectors, China's slowdown, starting earlier in this decade, has led to a decline in commodity prices, which has accelerated in recent months. In the emerging and low-income economies, commodity price falls are having intense effects on these countries that constitute more than half of world GDP and the lion's share of world GDP growth rate. For emerging market and developing economies, forecast shows that 2015 will mark the fifth consecutive year of declining growth. Growth was 4.6 percent in 2014 and it is projected to be 4.0 percent and 4.5 percent in 2015 and 2016 respectively.
13. As regards global oil price, the stability witnessed during the second quarter of 2015, was followed by a decline in the third quarter. Weaker-than-expected global activity played a role, but supply was also higher than expected. This is the reflection of strong production of members of the

¹ Information for this section was obtained from the October 2015 edition of the IMF's publication "World Economic Outlook"

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as well as in the United States and Russia. Furthermore, a future boost to supply is expected, coming from the Islamic Republic of Iran after the recent nuclear agreement with the P5+1 nations (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany).

14. The third major factor is the impending normalization of US monetary policy. The takeoff of U.S. policy rates from the zero lower bound is likely to herald some further tightening of external financial conditions. This is also a healthy and a necessary development. It is healthy in light of the relatively favourable growth in the US, but this has led to global economic misfortune in the emerging and low-income countries.
15. Short-term economic growth still looks stronger in advanced economies, compared to the recent past, but weaker in the emerging market and developing economies that account for a growing share of world output and major share of world growth. Within advanced economies, the combined effects of recent crises, protracted monetary policy support and a return to fiscal neutrality, have underpinned accelerating output and falling unemployment, but deflationary pressures still remain. Recovery is most advanced in the United States and the United Kingdom, where monetary policy looks likely to tighten soon, but is more tentative in the euro area and Japan.
16. In countries outside of the advanced economies, the sources of slower growth are diverse, ranging from commodity price declines (which also has an adverse effect on few advanced economies), to overhangs from past rapid credit growth, and to political turmoil. Different countries face different risks. Concerns about China's potential growth, Greece's future in the euro area, the impact of sharply lower oil prices, and contagious effects could have negative impacts on market volatility. In the advanced economies and China, deflationary pressures are still noticeable. In other countries, political instability is a dominant factor; there are debt overhangs and over-investment in commodity sectors and, in others, a loss of fiscal credibility. Of course, the countries with multiple challenges are facing the lowest growth and higher inflation. The refugee crisis is, of course, a huge humanitarian tragedy and it is a crisis in which all countries have to cooperate to find a lasting solution. There has been a lot of focus on the European aspect of the problem, but there are countries in the Middle East, such as Jordan, which are also facing intense pressure.
17. Accommodating refugees will definitely strain fiscal budgets in some countries. In Germany, for example, 13 percent of the population is foreign-born (citizens with migrant parents). The country has good record of allowing and assimilating immigrants. In all countries, there is going to be the challenge of integrating new arrivals into the labour force. That will take time but eventually will be positive for growth in Europe. Unfortunately, it is tragic development for the countries, such as Syria and Iraq, that are losing large fractions of their population.
18. Global industrial production remained weak in 2014, and this was consistent with low demand of major economies in the first half of 2015. This is also a reflection of inventory building in late 2014 and early 2015 that lower investment growth. World trade volume was very low in the first half of 2015. Weak investment worldwide, particularly in mining, as well as the trade spillovers of China's growth transition, has contributed to the slowdown. Persistently low investment helps in explaining limited labour productivity and wage gains, although the productivity of all factors of production, not just labour, has also been very low. As low aggregate demand discourages investment, so also low expected potential growth dampens aggregate demand, and further limiting investment.. Aging population restrain investment in a number of countries; and in others, weak institution and political instability are impediments of investment. In many countries, political conflict has led to increase in displaced persons and refugees, both within and across borders. The economic and social costs of this development are immense.

19. All of these risks point to the need for adequate and appropriate policy interventions that will enhance resilience of the world economy to these negative developments. These interventions are needed not only in the emerging world but in the advanced economies as well. Targeted structural reforms in labour and product markets that improve the business climate, can be carried out in many countries. There are many collaborative efforts that need to be pursued in order to raise the resilience of the international financial system. These include regulatory cooperation, global safety net, stronger policy frameworks, and structural reforms. Moreover, there is low public and private investment as well as low investment in infrastructure. So, structural policies and greater infrastructure investment that address these problems can benefit the global economy as a whole.
20. In advanced economies and some parts of Asia, deflation remains a major impediment to development. In particular, the case for infrastructure investment seems compelling in an environment of low long-term real interest rates. Investment is one way to enhance potential output growth, but targeted structural reforms can also play an important positive role. Crisis legacies such as non-performing loans in a number of countries and the need to strengthen the banking sector in the euro area remain imperative to build a more resilient system. Such reforms help not only to enhance future growth, but to increase the resilience of growth. They can help low-income countries to diversify their export bases. In all countries, continuous strengthening of micro- and macro-prudential policy frameworks will also support resilience to negative economic shocks.
21. In the emerging world, countries have to get ready for the US Federal Reserve System's plan to increase interest rates. They can do so by improved surveillance of the financial sector; discouragement of foreign exchange-denominated borrowing; greater encouragement of equity inflows, which is related to the governance environment, and finally, smart fiscal frameworks that maintain sustainable fiscal accounts and credibility while preserving growth and at the same time protecting the most vulnerable in the society.

Table 1: World Economic Output (annual percent change) of 2013 to 2016

	2013	2014	Output Projections	
			2015	2016
World Output	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.6
Advanced Economies	1.1	1.8	2.0	2.2
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	5.0	4.6	4.0	4.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.2	5.0	3.8	4.3
Consumer Prices (Inflation):				
Advanced economies	1.4	1.4	0.3	1.2
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	5.8	5.1	5.6	5.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	6.6	6.4	6.9	7.3
Value of world output (billion of US dollars at market exchange rates)	75467	77269	73507	76321

Source: IMF (2015) World Economic Outlook, October 2015

22. Concerning inflation, headline inflation of advanced countries declined from 1.4% in 2014 to 0.3% in 2015 despite the fact that core inflation remained stable. This decline is as a result of the decline in oil prices and lower prices for other commodities. With regard to emerging markets, lower prices of oil and other commodities (including food, which has a larger weight in the consumer price index of emerging market and developing economies) have generally contributed to reduction in inflation, except in countries suffering sizable currency depreciation, such as Russia.

1.2 Growth of the African Economy

23. The growth outlook for African economies confirms the contraction of overall activity in 2015. The latest growth forecasts provided in the course of the second half of the year² rely on much more pessimistic scenarios than the ones initially adopted. As such, from recent forecasts for African countries, a decline in the growth rate of Africa's real GDP is expected in 2015, dropping to 3.7% against 3.9% in 2014, the lowest in six years.
24. The unfavourable conditions in the international environment, namely, the depression in the raw materials market, and the less conducive financial conditions, are sources of the slowdown in Africa's growth. In fact, the persistent drop in commodity prices, especially crude oil, has worsened since the second half of 2014, adversely affecting the continent's growth outlook.
25. However, significant disparities can be seen between the countries. The difference between crude oil exporters and importers is a fundamental reason for the differences in growth. Many oil-importing countries, mostly low income countries, continue to record growth rates exceeding 5%. This increase is driven by domestic demand, in itself supported by the continued rise in infrastructure investment and household consumption, which benefits from the decline in the price of oil.
26. On the other hand, the major oil-exporting countries are the most severely affected by the collapsing price of oil which has reached on average its lowest level in eight years. In September 2015, the average price of a barrel of oil dropped by approximately 44%, compared to the annual average of 2014. Over the years, the price of oil has fallen by more than 50%. The budgetary situation of these countries should therefore remain tight throughout the year 2015, with consequent reduction in capital expenditure, the first target for budgetary savings, as well as worsening public deficits.
27. Moreover, the continent's economic outlook indicates an expected decline in the pace of activity in all the major African regions³, with the exception of North Africa (see figure 2). Even if the gravity of the decline differs across regions, the factors responsible for the latter are almost the same. They have to do with the sharp and continuing fall in prices of raw materials.
28. **Southern Africa** represents on average nearly a quarter (25 %) of the continent's GDP, but would record a decline in its growth rate, from 2.9% in 2014 to 2.3% in 2015. This decline is primarily linked to the slowdown of economic activity in South Africa, the region's leading economy, with a growth rate that would fall to 1.4% in 2015 against 1.5% in 2014. The expected decrease in the growth rate of Angola (3.5% in 2015 against 4.8% in 2014), Africa's second largest oil producer, adds to the decline in regional growth. Finally, the growth forecasts indicate a growth decline in all the countries, with the exception of Namibia and the Lesotho.

² See the IMF Regional Economic Outlook of October 2015.

³ Southern Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, North Africa and West Africa.

Figure 1 : Real GDP Growth of African Regions



Source: IMF – WEO data October 2015

29. **Central Africa**, which represents a little more than 5% of Africa's GDP, is one of the regions heavily affected by the fall in commodity prices since nearly all are oil exporting countries. There is an expected decline of more than two percentage points in its growth rate, from 5.9% in 2014 to 3.8% in 2015. In addition, the security situation in the north of Cameroon and in Chad represents an additional risk. The acts of violence perpetrated by Boko Haram cause widespread suffering and weigh on economic activity, straining the budgets and lowering investment prospects.
30. Representing nearly 12% of the output of the continent, **East Africa** has, in recent years, become one of the most successful regions of Africa. Driven by the economies of Ethiopia and Kenya, and to a lesser extent Tanzania and Uganda, the region would, in 2015, record the highest growth rate in Africa, being 5.3% against 5.9% in 2014. The region's growth results from the rapid expansion in financial services, transportation and communication as well as infrastructure investments, particularly in the rail sector.
31. By contrast, **North Africa**, is the only African region set to record a clear acceleration of its growth rate. The growth rate will rise to 3.9% in 2015, from 1.2% in 2014. Responsible for over 28% of the continent's GDP, North Africa would contribute significantly to sustaining Africa's growth. Prospects for accelerated growth in North Africa are tied to the return to socio-political stability in Egypt and Tunisia.
32. **West Africa** is the leading African region in terms of production, contributing to nearly 30% of the continent's GDP. The region should experience a marked slowdown in growth rate, from 6.1% in 2014 to 4.2% in 2015. Besides the adverse conditions of the raw materials market, the downturn in the pace of economic activity would be due to the increasing political instability and terrorism in some countries of the region such as Mali and Nigeria, as well as the effects of the Ebola epidemic, preventing exponential growth.
33. In the final analysis, despite continuing growth in Africa over the years, a number of external and internal risks continue to pose uncertainties on the economic performance of the continent. The most recurrent of the risks has to do with: the instability of prices of raw materials, the worsening deficits resulting in debt accumulation and political instability. These risks jeopardize the

significant improvement to the macroeconomic and business environment, responsible for bringing about the sustained growth of the past few years.

34. Therefore, the diversification of the economies and exploitation of the huge tax potential of the region serve as alternatives that could help countries to continue to finance development and infrastructure needs while limiting the increase in public debt.

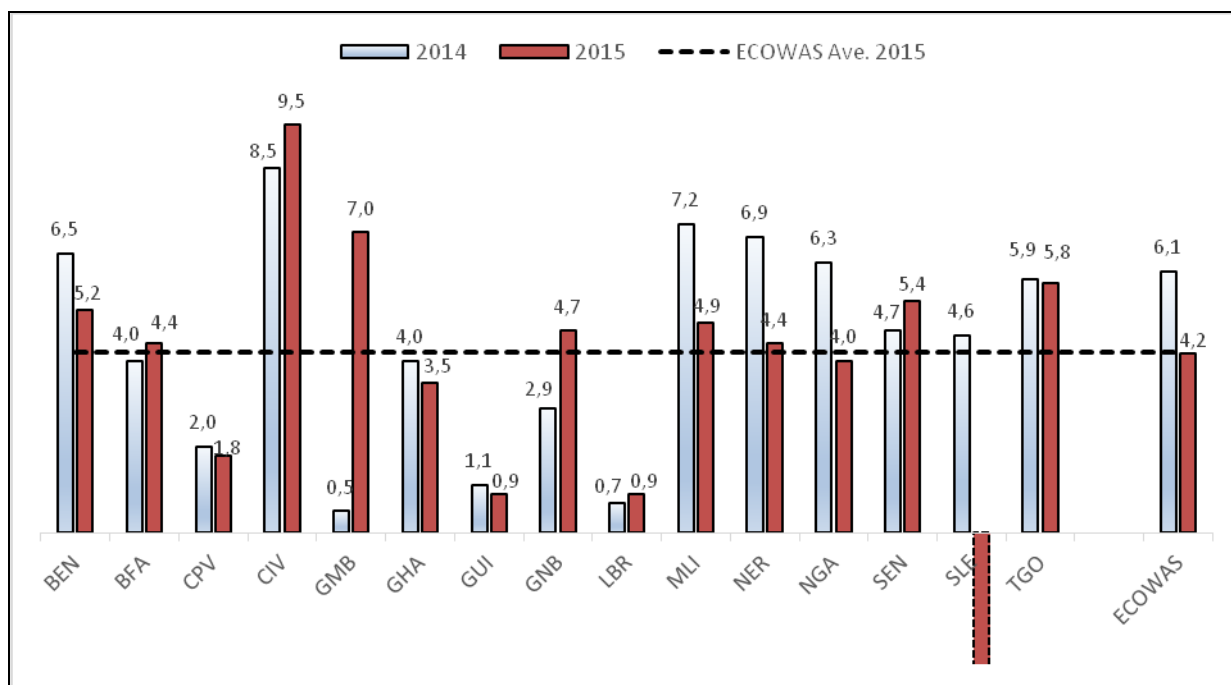
1.3 West African Economies

35. The population of ECOWAS is estimated at approximately 327 million inhabitants, of which nearly half resides in Nigeria. The average population density of 64.1 inhabitants/km² masks great disparities: countries with low density are mainly the landlocked countries of the Sahel (Niger and Mali, less than 13 inhabitants/km²), while densely populated areas are found in the coastal countries (179.5 ; 126.1 ; 101.3 ; inhabitants/km² in Nigeria, Cape Verde and Togo, respectively).
36. The population of ECOWAS is predominantly young and growing exponentially with an average annual rate of 2.7 %. The population growth rate varies between 1.46% in Cape Verde and 3.2% in Nigeria. Consequently, the percentage of young people below 15 years is very high, and represents nearly half the population.
37. The economies of the Community are characterized by a predominant tertiary sector (43.5% of GDP on average). The primary sector (agriculture, fisheries) is also significant and contributes a third of the GDP. In addition, agriculture employs about 65% of the active population.
38. On the other hand, the secondary sector's share in the GDP is low (20 %). This breakdown of each sector's contribution to the GDP reflects the challenges facing most countries of the region in the development of an industrial capacity capable of driving sustainable growth.

1.3.1. Economic growth

39. West Africa's actual growth would stand at 4.2% in 2015, against 6.1% in 2014, a break from the average 5% of the last decade. This unprecedented decline in the region's growth in recent times mainly results from the persistent drop in the prices of raw materials, particularly oil. The sharp and unexpected drop in the price of oil, which has lost more than half its value in less than a year, displayed the fragile foundations of West Africa's growth, heavily dependent on exports of raw materials. Most of the countries reveal a slowdown in the pace of economic activity (Figure 2).
40. However, the overall regional reality masks some differences between countries in terms of economic performance. Only five countries - Cote d'Ivoire (9.5%), Gambia (7%), Senegal (5.4%), Guinea Bissau (4.7%), and Burkina Faso (4.4%) - will record an acceleration in economic growth in 2015, against 8.5%, 0.5%, 4.7%, 2.9% and 4.0 % respectively in 2014. In addition, though a slight decline compared to 2014, Togo (5.8 %), Benin (5.2 %), and to a lesser extent Mali (4.9 %) and Niger (4.4 %), will record a relatively strong growth in 2015.
41. Increased investments, particularly in infrastructure, curbing of the adverse effect of the Ebola outbreak, better management of political crises (Guinea Bissau, Mali and Burkina Faso), together with the reduced cost of imported petroleum products , enable a positive outlook for these countries.

Figure 2 : Real GDP growth of ECOWAS Member States



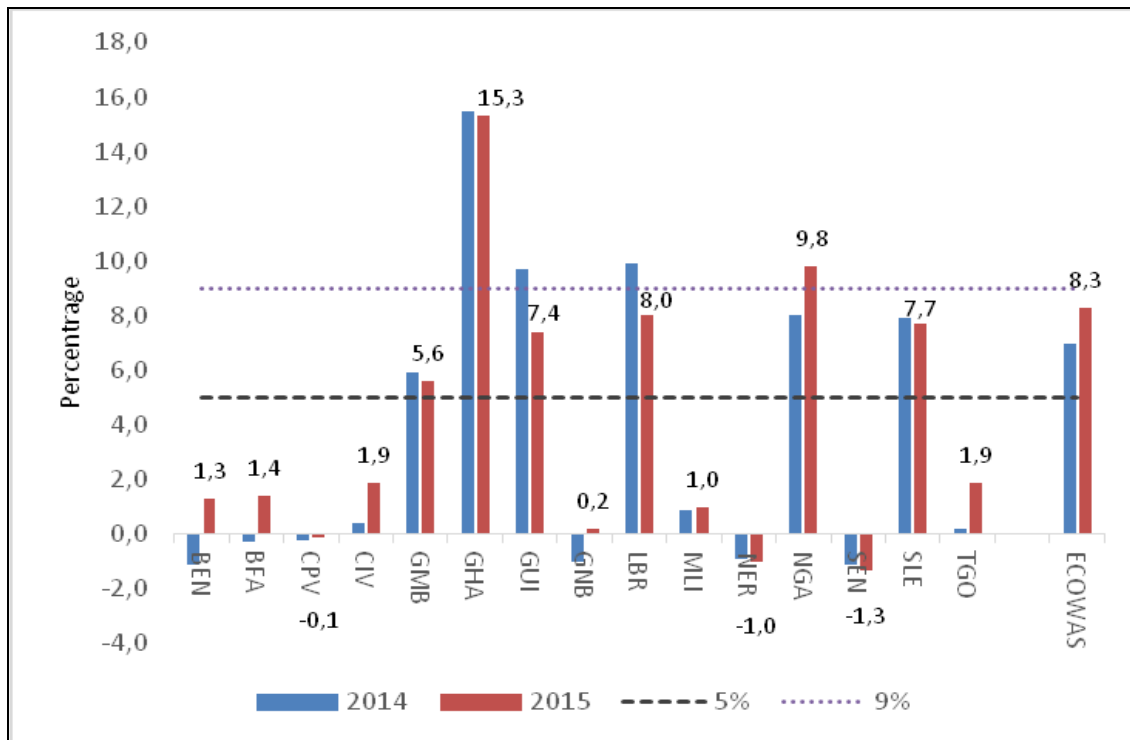
Source : ECOWAS Commission

42. On the other hand, the major oil-exporting countries such as Nigeria, and to a lesser extent Ghana, will be worst hit by the adverse effects of the on-going price crash. Nigeria's growth is expected to drop by more than 2 percentage points to 4% in 2015, compared to 6.3% in 2014. In Ghana, economic activity is expected to decline further from 4% in 2014 to 3.5% in 2015. Sierra Leone would bear the impact of the Ebola outbreak in 2014, leading to a sharp contraction of economic activity. The country's GDP would drop to -21.5% in 2015 against 4.6% in 2014. This decline is due to an almost zero-contribution of the mining sector, particularly iron ore, in 2014 and the first half of 2015. Guinea and Liberia, also affected by the Ebola epidemic, would have difficulty recovering from the severe health crises that affected their social and production systems. Their growth rates will remain low in 2015 at 0.9% each, compared to 1.1 % and 0.7% respectively in 2014.

1.3.2. Inflation

43. Price stability, measured by the consumer price index, is one of the key indicators of the ECOWAS macroeconomic convergence tool. The objective is to maintain an acceptable level of inflation in all States. Clearly, the inflation rate must be a figure with a structural level below 5%.
44. However, the results are still varied in terms of compliance with the inflation target, though recent developments are quite encouraging (Figure 3). Apart from the UEMOA countries and Cape Verde, where inflation is structurally below the set target, the situation of other countries is fairly volatile, threatening the much sought after stability.
45. In effect, inflation in West Africa would rise to 8.3% in 2015, as against 7% the previous year. This overall rise would be linked to the expected rise in inflation in Nigeria (9.8% against 8% in 2014) and the high inflation expected in Ghana (15.3%).

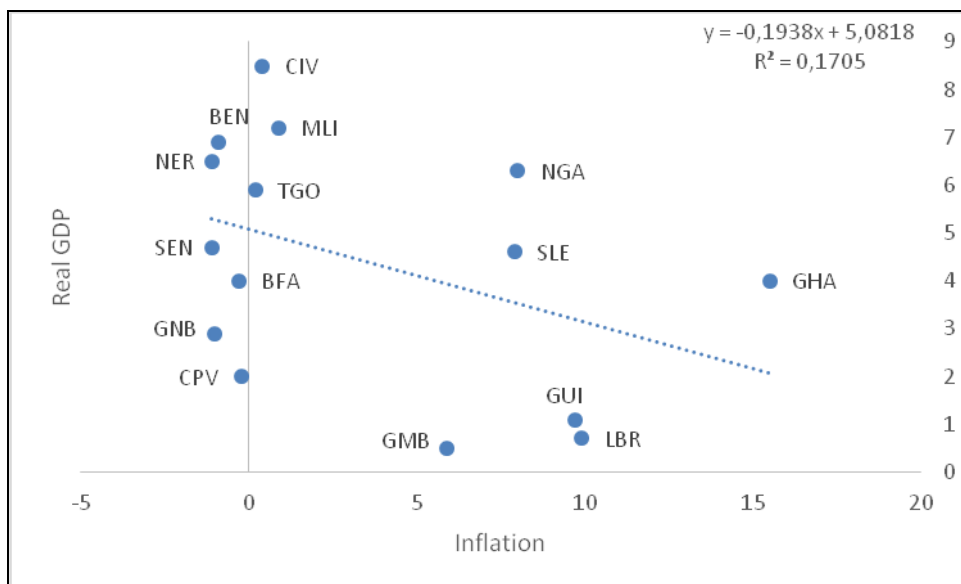
Figure 3 : Inflation in ECOWAS Member States



Source : ECOWAS Commission

46. In general, the forecasts project a drop in inflation in 2015 in the other non UEMOA countries, compared to 2014. Thus, inflation is projected to decline in Guinea (7.4% against 9.7%), Liberia (8% against 9.9%), Sierra Leone (7.7% against 7.9%) and The Gambia (5.6% against 5.9%).
47. Even if the situation of UEMOA countries and Cabo Verde is not alarming, it is appropriate to monitor the deflationary tendencies being observed in some of the countries. Some countries would record negative inflation in 2014 and 2015, such as Cape Verde (-0.2% and -0.1 %), Niger - 0.9% and -1 %) and Senegal (-1.1% and -1.3 %). In this case, the drop in prices may be the result of decline in activity, which generates less revenue, and subsequently tends to a drop in demand, including domestic. Deflation is a vicious self-generating cycle and impacts negatively on growth.

Figure 4: Growth and Inflation



Source: ECOWAS Commission

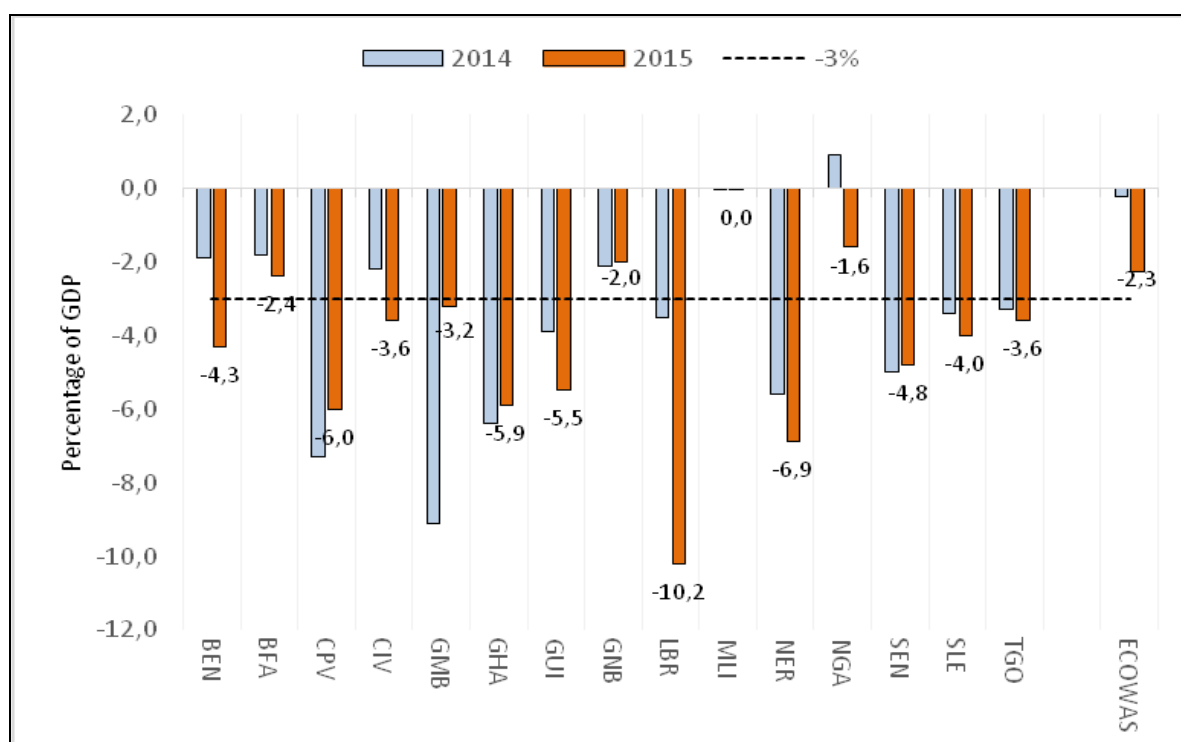
48. In addition, the often negative correlation between real growth and inflation is, in some respects, established in ECOWAS countries (Figure 4). In other words, high prices bear negatively on economic activity and social well-being. This dynamic relationship is even more important in countries such as Senegal, Togo, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Niger and Benin.

1.3.3. Budget deficit

49. Worsening of budget deficits beyond the optimal threshold, has long affected macroeconomic performance of ECOWAS States. Efforts made since the middle of the 2000s to reduce these deficits are often cited as one of the factors underlying sustained growth of the past few years. Regular monitoring of this indicator is therefore of great importance to the ECOWAS macroeconomic management plan.

50. By deciding to contain the fiscal deficit below the critical threshold of 3% of GDP, ECOWAS seeks to avoid past mistakes through the viability and the stabilization of the financial situation of governments. However, despite the progress made, the situation remains fragile because a number of countries reveal an unstable deficit (figure 5).

Figure 5 : Public Deficit of ECOWAS Member States



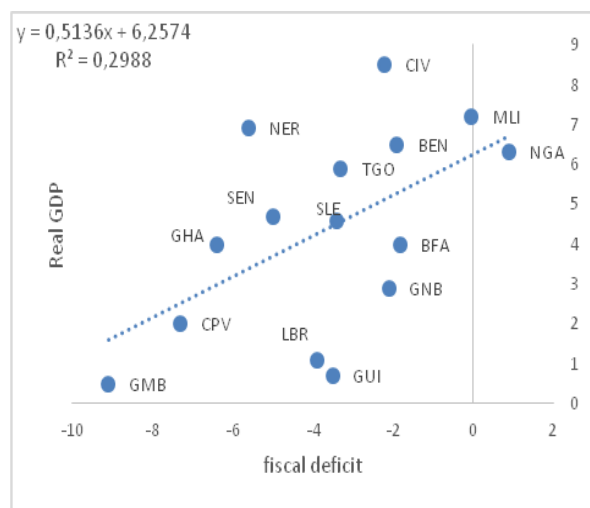
Source : ECOWAS Commission

51. The region's overall deficit, even if maintained below the Community threshold, would deteriorate in 2015 to 2.2% against 0.2% in 2014. This result is mainly due to the evolution Nigeria's deficit, which would deteriorate in 2015 to 1.6% against a surplus of 0.9% of the previous year. The strain on public finances, due to falling oil prices, would explain this negative result. Aside from Nigeria, Mali (0.03 %), Guinea Bissau (2 %) and Burkina Faso (2.4 %) would have a public deficit within the required limit of (3%).

52. By contrast, the deficit would deteriorate in 2015 in Benin (4.3% against 1.9 %) and Ivory Coast (3.6 % against 2.2 %) beyond the Community threshold, compared to 2014, . It would remain relatively high in Cape Verde (6% against 7.3 %), Ghana (5.9% against 6.4 %), Guinea (5.5 % against 3.9 %), Niger (6.9 % against 5.6 %), Senegal (4.8% against 5 %), Sierra Leone (4% against

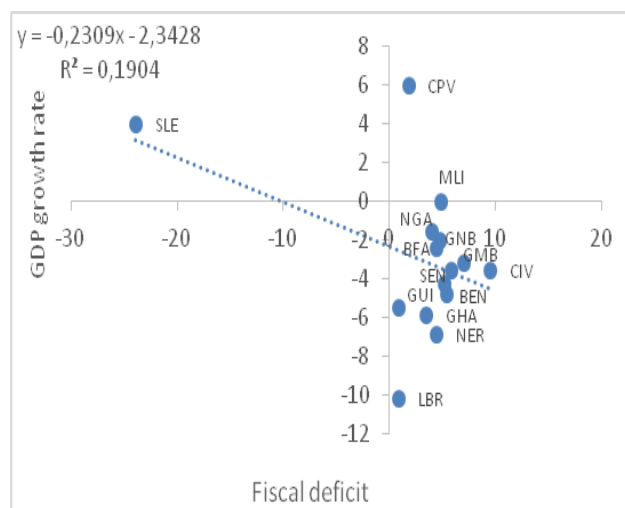
3.4 %) and Togo (3.6% against 3.3%). Liberia will record a sharp deterioration of its public deficit in 2015 (10.2% against 3.5% the previous year).

Figure 6 : Growth and Public Deficit in 2014



Source : ECOWAS Commission

Figure 7 : Growth and Public Deficit in 2015



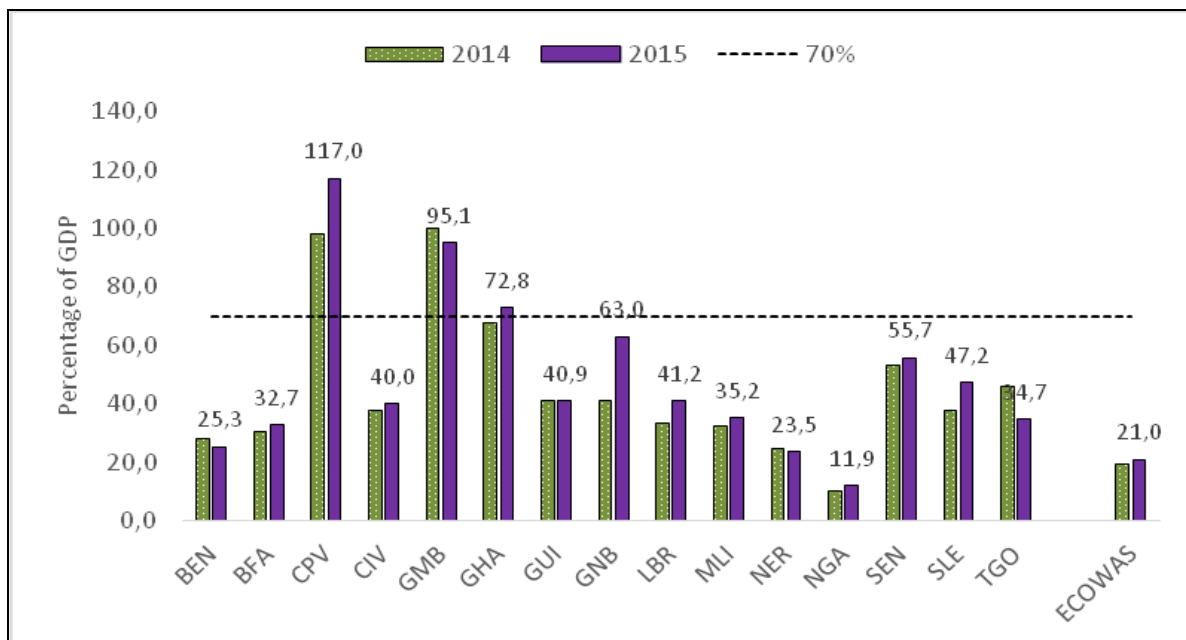
Source : ECOWAS Commission

53. The situation of public finances remains a concern in most countries of the region. The governments seem to be torn between two apparently contradictory objectives: funding investment, engine of growth, on the one hand, and balancing public finances, on the other. The chronic instability of the budget deficit ratio seems tied to this ambivalence.
54. In effect, the reality is somewhat unclear as evidenced in the analysis of stylized facts on the ECOWAS countries. A moderate deficit level seems to stimulate economic growth. This positive and quite significant interconnection between economic growth and public deficit is observed in almost all countries (figure 6). It is more relevant in Sierra Leone, Benin, Togo, the Ivory Coast and Senegal.
55. However, the reverse is the case whenever deficit is relatively high (figure 7). That is precisely one of the sources of the ambiguity because the point where deficit becomes detrimental to growth is not clearly defined.

1.3.4. Public Debt

56. Related to the fiscal deficit, public debt accumulation is a matter of concern. Lessons drawn from the debt crises of the 1980s require increased vigilance. It is important not to undermine the gains made from the debt management of early 2000s, particularly the HIPC initiative, which gave the States a significant margin for manoeuvre.
57. However, even if not generally alarming, States are gradually falling back into debt. The public debt as a proportion of GDP of ECOWAS in 2015 would reach 21% against 19.3% in 2014, well below the critical threshold of 70% set in the ECOWAS convergence mechanism. This joint reality could not overshadow the sometimes significant differences between countries (figure 8) Reporting.

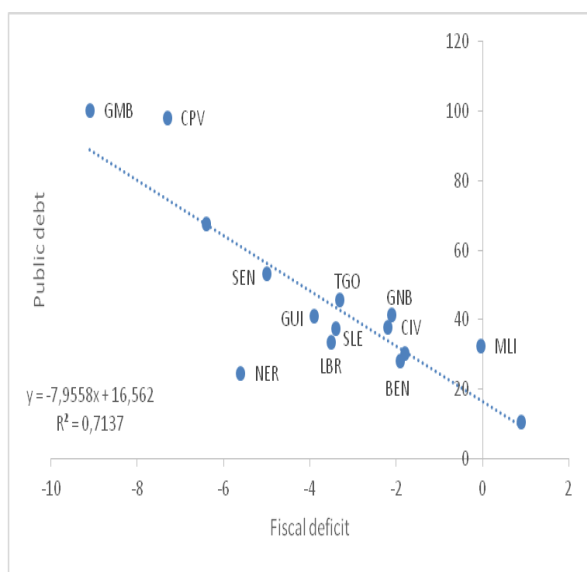
Figure 8 : Debt ratio of ECOWAS Member States



Source : ECOWAS Commission

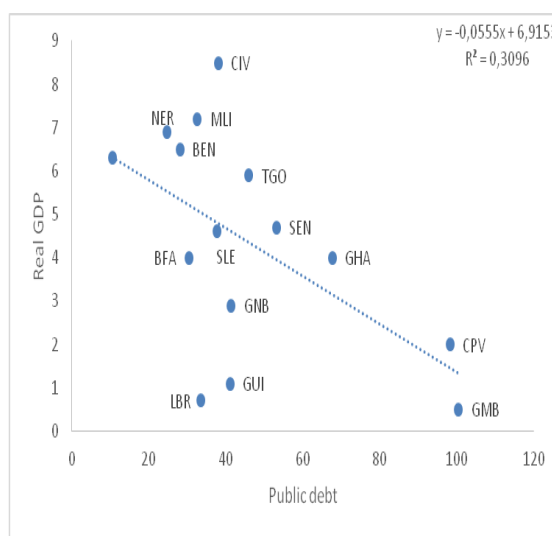
- 58. Most of the countries would have a debt/GDP ratio below the threshold of 70 %. Capo Verde (117 %) and The Gambia (95.1 %) which are the only countries that did not benefit from the HIPC initiative, have a high level of debt. Ghana's public debt/GDP ratio is expected to rise to 72.8 %. Nigeria's debt ratio (11.9 %) is the lowest, followed by Niger (23.5 %) and Benin (25.3 %).
- 59. The worsening budget deficit is linked to the increasing public debt by the States. (Figure 9). Furthermore, the adverse effect of debt on actual growth is clear in the case of countries of West Africa (figure 10).

Figure 9 : Public debt and public deficit



Source : ECOWAS Commission

Figure 10 : Real GDP and public debt



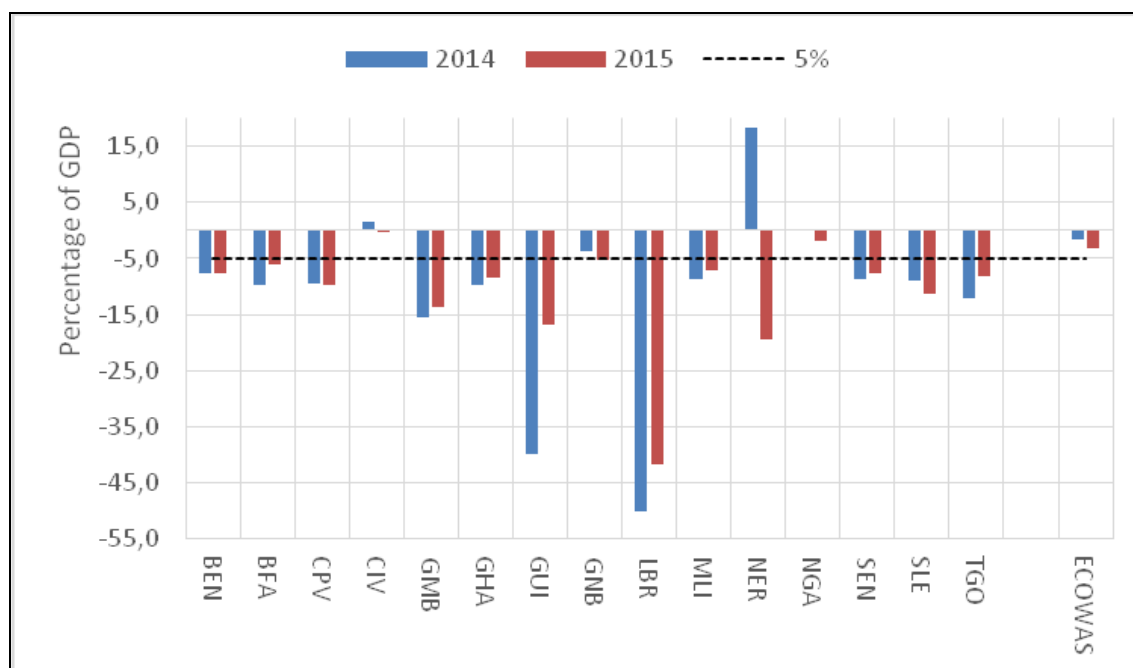
Source : ECOWAS Commission

- 60. The negative relationship between growth and debt, is in large part due to the allocation of resources. The resulting effect differs, depending on whether the resources are allocated for investment or consumption. In other words, the disparity between the countries is in relation to the use of the borrowed resources.

1.3.5. Current account balance

61. The current account balance of almost all the countries of the region is structurally in deficit and very unstable. The current depression in the raw commodities market further aggravates the imbalance in the international status of Member States. Thus, the current account deficit of ECOWAS would deteriorate in 2015 to 3.1% against 1.6% in 2014. Only Nigeria (1.9 %) and Cote d'Ivoire (0.2 %) would have current account deficits below 5%.

Figure 11 : Current external balance of ECOWAS Member States



Source : ECOWAS Commission

62. The other countries would suffer a deficit above 5%, with the more alarming situations being those of Liberia (41.6 %), Niger (19.5%), Guinea (16.7 %) and The Gambia (13.5 %).

63. Ultimately, the analysis of the recent economic situation of Member States reveals the structural transformation challenge of West African economies. The fall in price of raw commodities, particularly oil, shows the fragile nature of the region's growth. The diversification of the economies is therefore needed as the right alternative to specialization in the export of raw materials, to which the countries seem confined. In addition, the security issue remains a concern as political instability continues to pose uncertainty on the growth prospects of the region..

1.4 Review of Economic Performance and Reforms in ECOWAS Member States

Benin

64. Benin's macroeconomic performance has remained strong since 2014. Low budget deficits recorded in the past ensured low levels of the public debt which has now provided sufficient fiscal space for the government's plan of scaling-up public investment aimed at removing growth bottlenecks in energy and transportation. Medium term growth is expected to be moderate compared to 2014. Government recognizes the need to raise growth rate and make growth more inclusive in order to reduce poverty.

65. In this context, structural reforms are being pursued on three main fronts: First, further reforms in public financial management are being undertaken to ensure that investment spending delivers

high-quality infrastructure. This also includes establishing a good regulatory framework for Public Private Partnerships and improved monitoring of state-owned enterprises. Second, mobilizing more domestic tax revenues to create additional fiscal space for investment spending as well as reduce the country's dependence on customs revenues. Third, recognizing that public infrastructure investment will not be sufficient to attract private investment unless the business environment is further improved, efforts are being made to strengthen the financial sector to improve access to finance and its contribution to economic growth. In order to strongly accelerate investment for the rest of 2015, the government reacted to these shortfalls by increasing the placement of bonds on the regional financial market

Burkina Faso

66. The economy of Burkina Faso has faced severe challenges over the past year as a result of worsened terms of trade, spillovers from the Ebola crisis in the region and internal political upheaval. In the run up to national elections scheduled for October 2015, the transition government took action to safeguard macroeconomic stability and launch reforms to address long-standing structural problems.
67. Building on the success of recent reforms, the government committed to numerous immediate measures to boost revenues and combat fraud, in light of the need to boost revenues in the short term. Also, measures to improve treasury management enhance statistics on economic activity and contain increases in the public wage bill were undertaken. Following audits of the state-owned oil importer SONABHY and electricity company Société nationale d'électricité du Burkina (SONABEL), the government decided to undertake reforms that will substantially reduce the underlying costs of the two public entities and regularize their financial transactions with the central government. Lowering underlying costs will ultimately provide more scope for improving cost recovery through more flexible prices.

Cabo Verde

68. Cabo Verde's economy navigated difficult waters in 2014, with economic growth only picking up slightly. The recovery in Europe—on which Cabo Verde's economy is highly dependent—remained weak. Tourism declined for the first time in many years as the Ebola outbreak on the West African mainland deterred tourists temporarily during the third quarter of 2014, even though Cabo Verde remained and still remains free of the disease.
69. On the positive side, exports of goods, mainly fish, grew strongly, remittances remained stable, and foreign direct investment resumed later in the year. For 2015, a more marked acceleration of growth is anticipated, reflecting the continued recovery in Europe, a rebound in tourism, rising foreign direct investment, and lower oil prices. The government continues to implement reform programmes designed to improve the performance of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that deliver essential infrastructure services to the economy. In this context, management contracts were introduced at the electricity and water company, while the national airline produced encouraging progress in improving their operational performance that remains critical to restoring financial health and reducing contingent fiscal liabilities.

Cote d'Ivoire

70. The country made significant progress in the last few years toward improving the business climate and tax administration, and some inroads have been made towards the restructuring of public banks. The fiscal stance for 2015 remained appropriate despite emerging budgetary pressures. To

contain the overall deficit to 3.7 percent of GDP, the government made adjustments to the 2015 budget, which include mobilization of additional revenues and spending cuts. Despite these adjustments, the budget remained broadly growth-friendly and pro-poor, with significant increases in public investment and poverty-reduction expenditures.

71. In the medium term, the challenge would be how to maintain the high growth rates currently being recorded while preserving macroeconomic stability. To stand up to this challenge, the government is implementing further reforms to improve the business climate, reduce domestic payments delays, improve relations between tax payers and tax collection agencies through enhanced transparency in tax control procedures, implement the financial sector development strategy to foster access to credit by SMEs and control increases in current spending over the medium term.

The Gambia

72. The Gambian economy experienced sizable exogenous shocks in 2014 in addition to persistent policy slippages. The regional Ebola outbreak is estimated to have cut tourism receipts for the 2014/15 season by more than half while the delayed rains in 2014 led to a 15 percent decline of the year's crop with serious implications for food security. These shocks came in the wake of an extended period of weak policy implementation, putting additional pressure on the current account, fiscal deficits and public debt.
73. The Gambian government undertook to implement corrective policies with the broad objective of achieving a sound fiscal position over the medium-term.

Ghana

74. The economy of Ghana has been going through hard times with declining growth rates, fiscal slippages and rising public debt on the back of energy challenges, rising utility prices and falling international prices of the country's major export commodities. Addressing these challenges and bringing the economy back on track prompted the government to embark on ambitious fiscal consolidation and structural reform programmes, in particular, in addressing payroll irregularities, enhancing public finance management and transparency and liberalizing the oil distribution sector.
75. In addition, efforts were put into addressing the energy problem to provide a catalyst for rebound of the economy. Also, the country is making strong efforts to reduce the budget deficit.

Guinea

76. Guinea was hit by an outbreak of Ebola virus disease in 2014 which claimed numerous lives and inflicted a heavy social and economic toll. As a result, economic growth slowed despite agricultural production growing strongly. Macroeconomic stability was maintained due to sound policies and stepped up international support to fight the Ebola outbreak. Inflation declined to 8.5 percent in March 2015 and the Central Bank's international reserves remained at safe levels. The Guinean franc depreciated slightly against the US dollar, but strengthened against the euro.
77. The government continued to implement structural reform agenda, but difficulties in securing technical assistance slowed the pace of reforms. The reforms aim at strengthening public financial management, improving the business environment, bolstering the productivity of the public sector, strengthening the electricity sector and finalizing the transformation of the mining sector's institutional and legal environment. The completion of the Kaleta Dam would contribute, in no small manner, to solving the energy problems of the country.

Guinea Bissau

78. A series of coups d'état since independence have resulted in chronic political instability and deterred economic and social progress. However, the socio-economic situation in Guinea-Bissau is in the progressively normalising. The economy is now recovering and the impact could be appreciable following the success of the Brussels Roundtable if the efforts are made to mobilise resources for bankable projects. Inflation remains low, and socio-political stability seems achievable.
79. The country's development programme is anchored on the Strategic Plan for 2014–18, which aims to consolidate the fiscal position through better expenditure management and enhanced revenue mobilization, deepen institutional reform, mitigate vulnerabilities, and develop the private sector to support growth and employment. The programme focuses on improving the policy framework by addressing governance and security issues, strengthening budgetary transparency as well as public investment and debt management, and improving compilation of statistics.

Liberia

80. Liberia's economy was greatly affected by the Ebola crisis which affected the country in 2014. The economic impact of the Ebola outbreak was compounded by the steep decline in iron ore prices which affected planned investment in the mining sector. Consumer price inflation declined to 7.3 percent in March 2015 after peaking at 13.5 percent in September 2014 as lower international oil prices more than offset higher domestic food prices. Gross international reserves stood at about 2.7 months of imports as of end-April 2015.
81. The government's reform programmes include actions to restore growth to pre-crisis levels while protecting vulnerable groups, strengthen the budget process and improve public financial management, rebuild international reserves, modernize tax administration, and strengthen financial regulation and supervision.

Mali

82. After an unusually strong growth performance (7.2%) in 2014, growth in 2015 is expected to slow down and be in line with its historical trend. The harvest turned out well, but manufacturing output weakened in 2015. To strengthen the economy and raise expectations for the medium term, the government has been focusing on policies that foster sustained and inclusive medium-term growth and job creation. These include accelerating structural transformation, implementing fiscal decentralization at a measured pace, and improving the business environment, including strengthening governance and reforming the structure of taxation of wages and salaries. Also, the government undertook prudent management of public finances which led to the attainment of revenue objectives, benefiting from new results-based management and from buoyant revenue from petroleum product taxation.

Niger

83. Niger's overall macroeconomic performance has been generally satisfactory. Despite a deterioration of the security context in the region, real gross domestic product (GDP) in 2014 rebounded, driven by agriculture and services. Average inflation receded in 2014 due, in particular, to an improved food supply spurred, in part, by the government's food aid programme, which helped to attenuate the increase of prices of food products.

84. The economic outlook for 2015 and the medium-term remain favourable. Although real GDP growth is expected to recede in 2015, growth is projected to average 7 percent during 2016-2018, mainly as a result of the expansion of the extractive industries sector and an increase in public investments. Inflation is expected to remain contained below 2 percent, well below the 5 percent ECOWAS convergence criterion. The medium-term prospects remain subject to substantial external and domestic risks, including the negative externalities of regional conflicts and the country's vulnerability to natural disasters.

Nigeria

85. Nigeria's economy continued to grow strongly in 2014 and remains robust in 2015, albeit a slight decline. With declining prices of crude oil, the country's major export commodity, growth is supported by robust performance of the non-oil economy (agriculture, trade, and services).
86. The longer-term challenge, however, is to successfully put the economy on a path to lower oil-dependency and a diversified and competitive investment-driven non-oil sector. In that regard, there are ongoing efforts to promote targeted and core infrastructure (in power, integrated transport network, aviation); reduce business environment costs and encourage high value-chain sectors (agriculture); promote employment of youth and female populations, and advance human capital development (health and education).
87. Given the developments in the oil markets, the government embarked on initiatives to diversify revenue sources, address the cost of governance (an opportunity cost to capital and social investment), improve efficiency of public sector service delivery, galvanize public financial management reforms, and improve effective capacity at the state and local tiers of government.

Senegal

88. The economic outlook of the country remains favourable with a rate of growth of above 5 percent in 2015 and 6 percent in 2016. This reflects the initial implementation of the *Plan Sénégal Emergent* (PSE), strengthened trade with Mali, and falling oil prices. Inflation is expected to remain moderate during the year.
89. With respect to government finance, the government is on a course to strengthen revenue mobilisation and streamline public consumption to support the financing of public investment and social spending, improve the quality of government expenditure and press ahead with structural reforms with the aim of putting Senegal on the road to strong, sustainable, and more inclusive growth. Measures were also taken to enhance economic governance and formalize the intervention framework for distressed enterprises.

Sierra Leone

90. Sierra Leone continues to battle the adverse impact of two severe exogenous shocks: the Ebola epidemic and the crisis in the mining sector that began with the collapse of iron ore prices and culminated in the cessation of production in April 2015. Though good progress has been made in containing Ebola, real GDP is expected to decline by 21.5 percent in 2015, following a 4.6 percent growth in 2014. Revenue shortfalls, arising from the loss of revenue from iron-ore mining and higher than budgeted spending related to the Ebola epidemic, contributed to deterioration in the fiscal balance, with the deficit projected to be 4.8 percent of GDP in 2015.
91. Notwithstanding the difficult economic environment, the government forged ahead with their reform programmes. Implementation of structural reform measures which were delayed due to

the impact of Ebola resumed. Importantly, the Public Finance Management Bill was submitted to Parliament in August and implementation of measures on revenue mobilization and expenditure management proceeded in earnest. These reforms will require time and persistent efforts before their beneficial impact is felt on the economy.

Togo

92. Togo's economy has been expanding at a healthy rate in recent years. Output growth averaged 5.4 percent in 2013-14, reflecting strong growth in agricultural production, expansion of the Port of Lomé and the international airport, and construction of major road networks. Inflation slowed mainly due to declining food prices and reductions in retail fuel prices. The increase in public investment, however, led to a marked increase in borrowing on the sub-regional market and in the current account deficit.
93. The growth outlook remains positive over the medium term as the government remains committed to complete the network of major roads and gradually invest more in secondary roads, increase social spending, including investing in new schools, health centres, and a major hospital complex in Lomé. The government's desire to turn the country into a commercial and transportation hub in the region is being backed by developments in energy and communications as well as improving the business climate and the efficiency of public investment projects.

CHAPTER II: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMME

2.1 Harmonization of macroeconomic policies and private sector promotion

2.1.1 Multilateral Surveillance

94. Multilateral surveillance of economic and financial policies of ECOWAS Member States provides the framework for monitoring the economic performance of Member States and assessing the status of macroeconomic convergence in the ECOWAS region. The mechanism also constitutes the basis for the effective implementation of the Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme. Key activities implemented during the period under review are presented below.

✓ Assessing the Status of Macroeconomic Convergence in ECOWAS

95. The implementation of multilateral surveillance activities focused on assessing macroeconomic performance and the status of macroeconomic convergence in the ECOWAS Member States. Against this backdrop, the Commission conducted half-yearly Joint ECOWAS Commission- West African Monetary Agency (WAMA) - West African Monetary Institute (WAMI) surveillance missions to ECOWAS Member States in April 2015 and September 2015 to assess the state of the economies and status of macroeconomic convergence in 2014 and the first half of 2015 respectively.

96. During the Joint Missions, discussions were held with key policy-makers in the Member States on policy harmonisation measures relating to the Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency. The Commission, furthermore, continued with the monitoring and harmonisation of macroeconomic statistics for multilateral surveillance in the region through the management and regular updating of the ECOWAS Macroeconomic database for Multilateral Surveillance (ECOMAC) which is available online at www.ecomac.int.

97. The Commission also organised the technical meeting of Macroeconomic Policy Committee from 31 August to 2 September 2015, followed by the statutory meeting of the ECOWAS Convergence Council on 4 September 2015 in Dakar. The Council considered the report of the preceding meeting of the Technical Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, adopted the 2014 Convergence Report, and the draft project report on the establishment of the ECOWAS Monetary Institute (EMI) and endorsed the revised Supplementary Act A/SA.4/06/12 of 29 June 2012 on the ECOWAS Macroeconomic Convergence Pact.

✓ Implementation of the Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme

98. The Commission, in pursuit of the effective implementation of the Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency, organised the third meeting of the Presidential Task Force on the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme (EMCP) from 4 to 6 February 2015 in Niamey, followed by a meeting of the Presidents of Ghana and Niger on 9 February 2015.

99. The Task Force meeting, among other things, endorsed the draft project proposal on the establishment of the ECOWAS Monetary Institute (EMI), the revised roadmap for the ECOWAS single currency and the amendments made on the rationalised macroeconomic convergence criteria. The four primary convergence criteria thus recommended were: Ratio of budget deficit (including grants and on commitment basis) to GDP less than or equal to 3 %; Average annual inflation of less than 10%, with a long term goal of less than or equal to 5% by 2019; Central bank financing of the -budget deficit less than or equal to 10% of the previous year's tax revenue; and Gross External Reserves greater than or equal to 3 months of imports. The secondary convergence

criteria remained Public debt as a ratio of GDP less than or equal to 70% and Nominal Exchange Rate Variation plus or minus 10%

100. In addition, the meeting recommended the expansion of the composition of the Presidential Task Force to include Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire.
101. As a sequel to the Niamey meeting of the Task Force, organized a special meeting of the Inter-Institutional Technical Committee on the Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency was held in Lomé from 25 to 27 March 2015 to finalise the draft project proposal on the establishment of the ECOWAS Monetary Institute (EMI) with a detailed cost component and the roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency, also with a detailed cost component.
102. In addition, the Commission continued to work on the harmonisation of Public finance frameworks in ECOWAS. To this end, a meeting of experts was organised from 30 June to 2 July 2015 in Abuja to review the draft regional strategies for the harmonisation of public finance frameworks in ECOWAS and recommended, for adoption by Member States, the Accounting, Public Procurement and Public Finance frameworks. The proposed harmonised frameworks were subsequently forwarded to the Member States for final review and adoption.

✓ ***Establishment and effective operation of the Institutional organs of the multilateral surveillance mechanism***

103. During the period under review, the ECOWAS Commission continued implementation of activities aimed at strengthening the technical and financial capacity of the National Coordinating Committees (NCCs) to enable them function effectively. In this regard, the processes for the disbursement of ECOWAS Subvention to the NCCs for the first half of 2015 commenced in April 2015. The subventions for the second half of 2015 are expected to be disbursed before the end of the year.
104. The Commission also facilitated the effective operations of the institutional organs of the ECOWAS Multilateral Surveillance Mechanism through the organisation of the technical meeting of the ECOWAS Joint Secretariat from 8 to 11 June 2015 in Abuja, followed by the organisation of the regional meeting of the NCCs from 22 to 26 June 2015 in Bamako. The Technical meeting of the Joint Secretariat reviewed the country economic reports of the NCCs and made suggestions and recommendations for improvement. The regional meeting of the NCCs provided a platform for peer review of macroeconomic performance and status of macroeconomic convergence of the Member States.
105. Also, the Commission organised Appraisal Missions to the NCCs in Benin, The Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria from 23 February to 4 March 2015 to assess the operations of the NCCs in these countries, with focus on the efficient utilisation of the ECOWAS subvention for 2014. The missions also reviewed recent macroeconomic developments in the countries and assessed progress made in the preparation of the Multi-year Convergence Programmes and the Country Economic Reports for 2014.

✓ ***Cooperation with other regional institutions involved in the ECOWAS Multilateral Surveillance Mechanism***

106. In its efforts to strengthen cooperation and collaboration with other institutions involved in the multilateral surveillance mechanism in the region, the Commission organised the 12th meeting of the ECOWAS-WAMI Joint Task Force on Trade and trade-related issues from 18 to 20 March 2015 in Abuja. The meeting reviewed the status of implementation of tasks assigned to the Joint Task Force in 2014 and 2015 with specific focus on the implementation of ECOWAS trade and trade-related protocols and conventions.

2.1.2 Private Sector Promotion

107. **Development of Common Investment Code and Policy:** The draft ECOWAS Common Investment Policy and Common Investment Code which were prepared in 2014, were reviewed to incorporate the concerns expressed by some Member States. The revised document was rescheduled to be submitted to the next Council of Ministers for adoption.
108. **Business Climate and Investment Improvement Programme:** Implementation of the Business Climate and Investment improvement programme continued in 2015. This programme started in 2014 with a Financing Agreement between the European Union and the ECOWAS Commission for an amount of € 8 million.
109. During the period under review, the programme produced a score card for benchmarking reforms in investment policy issues in Member States. A baseline assessment of the policy issues in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo was completed in the first quarter of 2015. Also, an inaugural ECOWAS Regional Investment Policy workshop was held in June 2015 for policy experts from investment promotion agencies, ministries of investments and organized private sector in June 2015. A major outcome of these activities was the development of an outline of national investment policies reform priorities and recommendations for the revitalization of a regional PPD platform.
110. **Integration of Capital Markets in West Africa:** The Commission, in collaboration with the Securities and Exchange Commissions (SECs) and Stock Exchanges in the region, is implementing the West African Capital Markets integration programme which is piloted by the West Africa Capital Market Integration Council (WACMIC). The objective of this programme is to strengthen business financing through cross border bond and equity issues, listing, trading and investments across stock markets in Member States.
111. The three-phase markets integration programme which is currently in its first phase, allows cross border securities subscriptions and trading through sponsoring stockbrokers in Member States' Stock Exchanges. In the period under review, three meetings of the Technical Committees of the Council and two Council meetings were held to harmonize and approve respectively, the legal and regulatory regimes for quotation, issuing and listing of securities in the proposed integrated market and the rules for depository, trading, clearing and settlement of securities transaction among the stock exchanges in the region.
112. Regulatory and operational frameworks were harmonized, approved and adopted by the Council in September 2015. Work on the harmonization of the framework for Pension Funds to invest in the regional stock markets and double taxation agreement frameworks to support cross border securities transaction are in progress. In practical consummation of the first phase of the markets integration process, United Capital Plc in Lagos and the Accra-based CAL Brokers executed in July 2015 the first cross-border trade under the sponsored broker market access phase of the initiative.
113. **Establishment of a regional Investment Guarantee Mechanism:** Following the adoption of the programme by the Council of Ministers in December 2013, the Commission continued to work with the Project Implementation Committee (EBID, African Trade Insurance Agency, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria) for the operationalization of the programme. In this regard, missions were conducted to the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) to solicit for funding and support for payment of the subscription of ECOWAS Countries to the membership of ATI so as to make the mechanism operational before the end of 2016. The project is intended to facilitate the financing of major public and private projects and provide covers for commercial and political risks for investors in the region.

114. During the period under review, the project recorded the following achievements:
- ✓ A draft Partnership agreement between ECOWAS and African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI) was concluded in the PIC meeting held in Kenya in April 2015. The agreement is being prepared for signature by ECOWAS and ATI;
 - ✓ A high level ECOWAS-ATI mission was undertaken to the World Bank in April 2015 to discuss financing modalities for the project in line with the directives of the Council of Ministers in June 2014
 - ✓ A request for funding of Member States' subscription to the capital of ATI was submitted to the World Bank Group and African Development Bank, through the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, with each Member State's Minister of Finance in copy in July 2015.
 - ✓ Some Member States have already applied for the facility, with Cote d'Ivoire signing the ATI membership agreement in addition to Benin.
115. **The Regional Payments and Settlement System:** Aimed at reducing the time and cost of payments and settlements and facilitate markets integration and trade, implementation of the regional payments programme continued with the establishment of the steering committee recommended by the committee of Governors of Central Banks of ECOWAS Member States to review the project feasibility report and make it operational.
116. Following the directives of the Committee of Governors of Central Banks, the Project Steering Committee met in May 2015 to:
- ✓ Reviewed the project feasibility report and project cost
 - ✓ Recommended the project for adoption by the Committee of Central Bank Governors
 - ✓ Recommendation that the project should be implemented by the Region and in phases, beginning with the Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS)
 - ✓ Agreed on a road map for the project implementation from 2016
117. **Public Private Partnership (PPP):** In view of the rising number of PPP arrangements in the region, which is an indication of the importance of PPP as a mechanism for financing infrastructure development in the region, a study was commissioned to establish the profile of PPPs in the region and set up a framework for their increased use and promotion. The report of the study was reviewed and adopted by experts from Member States and the recommendations made would be submitted to the sector ministers.
118. **Promotion Strategy and Charter for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs):** MSMEs constitute over 80% of regional companies and employment but contribute less than 15% of regional GDP. To improve the situation and leverage the capacities of this large and important group, the Commission is pursuing the adoption of a regional MSME support strategy. This strategy will aim at capacity building, development of entrepreneurship, access to finance, access to domestic and regional markets, institutional development, etc. Its implementation will engage governments, financial institutions, regional organizations and development partners. The Strategy was presented to and adopted by the experts of Member states along with an MSME Charter in June, 2015.
119. **Business Partnership and Institutional Support to Businesses:** Considering the importance of the USA in global business and investment, a Draft MOU has been completed for endorsement between ECOWAS and the US Chamber of Commerce on 29 September, 2015. Collaboration is also ongoing with Development Markets Associates (DMA) of the UK to organize a business forum in London to re-stimulate and drive business and investment in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. A business forum was held in Japan, on the initiative of the ECOWAS Diplomatic Group, in October to promote business and trade for the region.

2.1.3 Research and Statistics

120. The major activities carried out in the areas of Research and Statistics centred on the following programmes: (i) Research and Development, (ii) Economic and Social Analysis, (iii) Coordination and Harmonisation of Statistical Methods, (iv) Data Management and Statistical Publication.
121. In the area of **research and development**, the Commission is currently formulating the regional economic research programme, the provisional version of which has undergone technical pre-validation. A five year programme (2016-2020) is being prepared for the implementation of the ECOWAS Research Policy adopted in 2013.
- Furthermore, as part of the publication of research outcomes, a document entitled "Growth and Development in West Africa", which presents a comprehensive overview of growth sources, has been prepared and is available at the Commission.
122. With regard to **economic and social analysis**, the ECOWAS Commission, in conjunction with the UEMOA Commission, continued to work on the revision of the Regional Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (RPRSP) for West Africa. The revision became necessary given the need to adapt the regional strategy by Member States in the areas of development strategy and the fight against poverty. In that respect, a preliminary report presenting the developments in countries and the region was considered and is in the process of being finalised.
123. With regard to the **coordination and harmonisation of statistical methods for public finance statistics**, the draft Action Plan for the harmonisation of public finance statistics within ECOWAS (PASFP 2014 - 2018) was updated and validated by Member States' experts. The draft methodology note for the compilation of Regional Tables of Government Financial Operations (TOGF) from the current Member States' national TOGF was also validated. The first model of the ECOWAS Table of Government Financial Operations, in French and English, which is also in consonance with the IMF 2001 and 2014 Government Finance Statistics Manual (GFSM), is being developed and may become available by December 2015.
124. In terms of national accounts, the draft Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the System of National Accounts (SNA 2008) covering the period 2014 – 2018 (PARSCN 2014 - 2018) in the ECOWAS region was updated and validated by Member States' experts and the document is expected to be finalised in November 2015. Similarly, a draft methodology note for the compilation of ECOWAS regional GDP by supply and uses and the relevant computer application are being prepared and will undergo technical validation in December 2015. The Nomenclature of activities and products for ECOWAS Member States was finalised and translated into Portuguese. Regarding prices, the Member States' baskets and the proposed products for the compilation of the Harmonised Consumer Prices Index (HCPI) were considered by Member States' experts in August 2015. A roadmap for the implementation of the methodology guide for HCPI compilation within ECOWAS was validated.
125. Regarding Balance of Payments, the activities centred essentially on the consolidation of remarks by Member States' Central Banks for the finalisation of two draft Regulations on the establishment of the Regional Committee for Reconciliation of Intra-Community BOP and IIP statistics and the establishment of the Regional Committee for the validation of BOP and IIP statistics within ECOWAS. The methodology guide was validated and the texts expected to put in place institutional arrangement for the compilation of the regional Balance of Payments will be submitted to the next Council of Ministers. In addition, the process for the preparation of a draft methodology note for the compilation of ECOWAS Regional BOP and IIP and developing the relevant software application has commenced.

126. In order to keep up with the developments in international trade harmonise the regulations in force within the region and keep up with the new vision on international merchandise trade advocated by the IMTS 2010, the Commission ensured that common Guide for the compilation of external trade statistics within ECOWAS was adopted by Member States' experts and the Directors General of National Statistics Offices. The objective is to achieve standardisation in the legal and accounting frameworks for compiling external trade statistics in order to improve the comparability of national and regional data. The draft regional methodology guide for the compilation of indices of international merchandise trade is being prepared and translated and will be validated shortly by Member States' experts.
127. Moreover, as part of the implementation of statistical harmonisation and methodology in the Regional Statistics Programme (2014 – 2018 RSP) adopted in December 2013, the Commission seeks to operationalise the agreements with technical and financial partners to provide support to ECOWAS. To this end, the resource mobilisation plan was validated by the Directors General of Statistics. The report will be presented to the Council of Ministers.
128. With regard to **Data management and Statistical Publication**, the economic, financial, monetary and social database "ECOBASE", adopted in December 2013, was set up in all ECOWAS Member States in the last and first quarters of 2014 and 2015 respectively. Presently, ten (10) experts from agencies responsible for the implementation of the ECOWAS multilateral surveillance mechanism have been trained on how to manage, capture data and update ECOBASE.
129. Regarding statistical publications, draft documents prepared in 2014 on (i) analytical note on ECOWAS' external trade, and (ii) note on ECOWAS national accounts with data on GDP by supply and use for the period 1990 – 2014 are expected to be validated and finalised by November 2015. The statistical bulletin and the note on ECOWAS' socio-economic indicators are being finalised.
130. **Regarding statistical cooperation**, visits to international institutions and partners were conducted to mobilise technical and financial assistance. The Commission participated and funded the participation of Member States in the annual meeting of United Nations Statistical Commission.
131. The draft **2014** report on the status of statistics in the region is scheduled to be presented to the meeting of Directors General and Ministers responsible for statistics in December 2015 for validation. At the meeting the regional harmonisation guide for external trade statistics and some regional statistics policy would also be presented for adoption.

2.1.4 Community Development Programme (CDP)

132. Following the adoption of the Community Development Programme (CDP) by the Authority of Heads of State and Government at the 45th Ordinary Summit held in Accra, Ghana, the ECOWAS Commission was enjoined to make necessary arrangements to mobilize resources to finance implementation of the projects contained in the programme.
133. In relation to this, the Commission undertook a number of key activities during the period under review which are presented as follows:
134. The Commission set up a Resource Mobilisation Committee, composed of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions and their respective development banks (EBID and BOAD).
135. Under the auspices of the ECOWAS Commission, the Committee carried out the following activities: (i) update of CDP priority projects; (ii) preparatory activities towards a high level conference for internal resource mobilization within the ECOWAS Region and a donor's roundtable for the financing of CDP projects both scheduled to hold in 2016 in Abidjan; (iii) summary of thematic studies commissioned for the conference and concept notes for the two events; (iv) update of the CDP Action Plan.

136. Also, consultative meetings were held by the Resource Mobilisation Committee with several stakeholders to strengthen cooperation among them. In this regard, a meeting was organized with 15 national networks of economic journalists and media in West Africa in Accra, Ghana which led to the finalization of a draft communication plan designed for the high-level conference and roundtable for the mobilization of resources to finance the CDP. Subsequently, a meeting of Directors of Communication from ECOWAS, UEMOA, EBID, BOAD, and UNECA/ SRO-WA was held to validate the communication plan and budget of the two events.
137. In addition, the ECOWAS Commission initiated a high level meeting with the African Development Bank (AfDB) to discuss potential avenues for collaboration and support to both the Commission and the Community Development Programme. To this end, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is being prepared by the two institutions. The AfDB has agreed in principle to provide technical support for the organization of the two major events. In the same vein, the West African Regional Office of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA/SRO-AO) has also agreed to provide technical support for the successful organization of the high level conference and the donor's roundtable for the financing of CDP projects.

2.1.5 ECOWAS Sahel Strategy

138. ECOWAS initiated the formulation of a strategy for the Sahel region on the basis of the Decision of the 43rd Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held on 17 and 18 July 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria. Activities carried out in the context of the Strategy during the year 2015 are centred on two major programmes, namely (i) Political Dialogue and Partnership, and (ii) Formulation and Implementation.
139. With respect to the first programme "Dialogue and Partnership", country tours were undertaken in Member States of the G5 Sahel during the first half of the year 2015. The aim of these visits was to sensitise government authorities on the ECOWAS Sahel Strategy, developed a year earlier, which pursues similar objectives of development and security in the Sahel Saharan zones. These meetings revealed important complementarity and potential areas of synergy with G5 Sahel initiatives.
140. Furthermore, a meeting of the Technical Secretariat and the Coordination Platform of the Sahel strategy was organised during the last quarter of 2015 to strengthen political dialogue and synergy of action among stakeholders operating in the Sahel region. This meeting helped: (i) discuss the financing modalities of the Action Plan through financing instruments, including the European Union Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) and the EU Trust Fund; (ii) select group leaders for the five thematic groups to facilitate their operationalization; and (iii) gather comments from members of the platform on ways to improve the synergy between the various initiatives being carried out in the Sahelo-Saharan zone.
141. Regarding the second programme "Formulation and Implementation" the following activities were carried out:
142. A meeting of the Sahel Strategy Task Force, which is composed of technical Directorates of ECOWAS Commission, was organised in Abuja (Nigeria) during the first quarter of 2015. The purpose of the meeting was to inform member of the task force on progress made with respect to the implementation of the strategy and to review updated project datasheets of the Action Plan.
143. The Socioeconomic Database Initiative for the Sahel was launched during the third quarter of 2015 in Lomé (Togo) to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation of the ECOWAS Sahel Strategy. The meeting helped define modalities for setting up specific database for the Sahel Saharan region

2.1.6 Economic Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU)

144. During the period under review, the Economic Policy Analysis Unit of the ECOWAS Commission undertook a number of activities to (i) Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Macroeconomic Policy and Economic Research Department, (ii) Conduct Policy analysis and research with the view of promoting regional integration in West Africa, and (iii) Develop working relationship international institutions i.e. UNICEF.
145. In the area of policy analysis and research, the ECOWAS Commission finalized a set of country case studies on: “The Sustainability of Fiscal Policy in ECOWAS member States”. The followings findings resulted from the studies: Fiscal policy in four countries are weakly sustainable (Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria). Fiscal policy is sustainable in three countries (Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo). In Senegal, and Guinea Bissau Fiscal Policy is not sustainable. The finalized studies will be published as a book and distributed to member States.
146. The commission has initiated discussions with officials of UNICEF-Nigeria for possible collaboration in the area of research especially on Child Poverty and social protection

2.2. Trade, Customs, Industry, Mines, Free Movement and Tourism

2.2.1 Trade

✓ Trade policy and promotion

147. **Trade Policy:** The overall objective of the Trade Policy Programme is to harmonise Member States’ trade policies leading to the creation of a common market that will enable the region enjoy economies of scale, accelerate economic development and facilitate the integration of the West African region into the global economy.
148. With support from the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), through the “Promoting West Africa Trade Integration” Programme, a study on the formulation of an ECOWAS Common Trade Policy (CTP) Framework was completed. Progress towards the formulation of an ECOWAS Common Trade Policy (CTP) is currently underway, and a group of consultants have been recruited for the exercise in line with Phase Two of the Terms of Reference for the assignment.
149. **Trade Promotion:** Following the postponement of the 8th ECOWAS Trade Fair, which was originally scheduled for 2015 in Niger, the Regional Organising Committee (ROC) inspected the proposed site for the 8th ECOWAS Trade Fair and accepted the proposal of the Seyni Kountche Stadium and the Academy of Arts and Sciences of Niger to serve as venues for the Trade Fair,. An MOU between the ECOWAS Commission and the Republic of Niger has also been signed. The second ROC meeting for the consideration of publicity materials for the Trade Fair is scheduled to hold in December 2015.
150. **Trade Information:** The overall objective of the Trade Promotion programme is to promote the trade and business contacts between ECOWAS and the rest of the world. This is achieved principally through the ECOWAS Trade Fair and the Trade Information System, also known as ECOBiz. During the period under review, ECOWAS successfully participated in, and collected data for the ECOBIZ platform at the Kaduna, Abuja and Lagos International Trade Fairs in May, September and November 2015 respectively.

✓ Competition And Informal Trade

151. **Competition:** Implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Competition Policy entails, essentially, the establishment of the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA). On the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, the 47th Ordinary Session of the Summit of Heads of

State and Government held in Accra, through Decision A/Dec.3/05/15, selected the Republic of The Gambia, among two other States that had applied to host the institution's headquarters, as host country for the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA). In the light of the Decision, a consultative meeting was held with the host country on the kick-off of ERCA activities

152. **Informal Trade:** Following the adoption by Member States of the Regional Support Programme for Informal Trade Regulation within ECOWAS (PARCI) in November 2013, efforts have been made to make the programme operational with the financial support of some development partners particularly the African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and European Union (EU). The support will be channelled to the priority activities including the setting up of a reliable informal trade information system and a regional platform for stakeholders in this sector.

✓ **Trade and Development**

153. The Trade and Development programme was designed to foster mutually supportive partnerships and facilitate the implementation of trade-related development programmes. Following extensive consultations, the ECOWAS Aid for Trade Strategy (and its related Action Plan) was validated at the Regional Aid for Trade Expert Group meeting in May 2015. The overall objective of the Strategy is to “contribute to the growth of trade in the region and accelerate the integration of Member States into the multilateral trading system”. The three pillars of the strategy aim at: (i) increasing the capacity of the region to participate in trade negotiations, formulate and implement trade-related policies, and coordinate aid for trade programmes; (ii) improving regional infrastructure, transport and trade facilitation; and (iii) improving the region's capacity for better integration of Member States in chains of regional and global value
154. Within the framework of ECOWAS – U.S. cooperation, the first Council meeting of the ECOWAS – U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) was held on the margins of the 14th AGOA Forum in Libreville in August 2015. The meeting served as a forum for the United States and ECOWAS to discuss ways of better utilizing the recently reauthorized trade preferences of the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA).

✓ **Trade Negotiations And Management Of Agreements**

155. While granting final approval for the EPA, the 45th Authority of Heads of State instructed the ECOWAS Commission to take every necessary measure to start the implementation of the **Agreement**. In execution of this decision, the ECOWAS Commission embarked on a number of priority activities to prepare the region for EPA implementation. The activities include the setting up of the EPA institutional mechanism, implementation of the EPA development component (EPA-DP), establishment of a regional EPA Fund and the Competitiveness Observatory and implementation of the EPA communication plan.
156. ECOWAS Commission in collaboration with the UEMOA Commission, made proposals on all the **above-mentioned** areas. The proposals were considered by Member States from West Africa (WA) at a regional meeting held in Lome, Togo from 2 to 16 October 2015. The outcome of the meetings will be discussed with the European party (EU) at a meeting scheduled for the end of November 2015. In addition, the ECOWAS Commission continued to make efforts to ensure the final signing of the EPA by the three countries yet to do so. An update on these activities is presented as follows:
- **Finalisation of EPA signing:** as at the date of this report, the EPA has been signed by 28 EU countries and 13 of the 16 WA Member States. The remaining 3 WA countries are Nigeria, The Gambia and Mauritania. Following the signing of the

Agreement by all State parties, a joint official ceremony will be held during which the European Commission and the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions will append their signatures to the Agreement. In order to hasten the final signing of the Agreement, information activities have been conducted with key stakeholders of the partnership and will continue at a high level with the leaders of the three countries.

- **Operationalisation of the EPA institutional mechanism:** the proposals adopted by WA on this issue are aimed at putting in place a regional mechanism to ensure that the region participates effectively in the joint EPA governing bodies. The mechanism includes all key stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society. The ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions will hold discussions with regional parliaments and regional platforms of the private sector and civil society, to draw up the modalities for stakeholder representation in their governing bodies set up for monitoring EPA implementation.
- **Implementation of the EPA Development Programme (EPA-DP):** the ECOWAS Commission has deployed efforts to mobilise funds in order to secure the contribution of the European Union to EPA-DP financing, amounting to €6.5 billion. The implementation of some EPA-DP projects has commenced under the National Indicative Programmes of the 11th EDF, notably in the areas of support for growth and energy sectors and the civil society. The ongoing project selection for the 11th EDF Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) will allow for the inclusion of several EPA-DP projects relating to, in particular, tax reforms, infrastructure and enhancing the competitiveness of the private sector. In addition, the EU and WA parties have agreed that a meeting with EU Member States and the European Investment Bank (EIB) will be held before the end of 2015, to consider modalities for the contribution of these stakeholders to EPA-DP financing.
- **Competitiveness Observatory:** The Competitiveness Observatory is a joint EU - WA instrument for **monitoring** EPA implementation, set up not only to provide indicators with which to assess EPA impact on regional competitiveness, but also to measure the progress achieved in implementing the Agreement. The proposals on the Observatory accepted by the region's experts, focus on operational modalities including the institutional framework. In addition, indicators have been proposed for measuring changes in intra-regional and global trade of specific EPA-related products, business investment, job creation, consumer basket, etc.
- **Regional EPA Fund:** The regional EPA fund is the preferred instrument for channelling resources mobilised to support the EPA. At the EU – WA meeting of July 2015, both sides agreed on the need to finalise the initial discussions and adopt modalities for the establishment and operation of the Regional EPA Fund by the West Africa. In that regard, WA Member States, at a meeting held from 14 to 16 October 2015, made new proposals on the functioning of the Regional EPA Fund, which will be discussed with the European side.
- **EPA Communication Plan:** In light of the importance and complexity of the EPA, the ECOWAS Summit directed the two Commissions to intensify communication and awareness creation efforts on the Agreement. The action plan for the EPA communication strategy was revisited at a regional meeting held from 14 to 16 October 2015. Member States reiterated the need to present to a wider West African audience, the opportunity to better understand the Agreement and effectively participate in the EPA process. The media's role in disseminating information on the Agreement was thus reaffirmed. In addition to the actions

already taken, the two Commissions are required to provide support to Member States in strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders, mobilise the necessary resources to accelerate the implementation of the strategy and action plan, include women, young people and local communities in the capacity building activities and ensure coordination between the national and regional levels in the strategy implementation.

157. **Association agreement with Mauritania:** at the EPA negotiations which took place from 2 to 6 February 2015 with the Mauritanian authorities, consensus was reached on the three major aspects of the agreement, being:
- Mauritania's membership of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff and Trade Liberalisation Scheme,
 - Liberalisation of the trade in services within the ECOWAS area and Mauritania,
 - Mauritania's acceptance of cooperation modalities for the management of the Association Agreement and implementation of the ECOWAS CET and ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme.
158. Discussions are underway with Mauritania to find common ground on pending issues relating to the possibility for the parties to each offer concessionary tariffs to third-countries in the future and the free movement of persons across the borders of the parties to the Agreement. In that regard, political measures will also be required.

✓ **Trade Capacity Building Projects**

159. **Trade negotiation capacity building (tncb) project:** The ECOWAS Trade Negotiation Capacity Building (TNCB) Project was set up to build the negotiation capacity of the ECOWAS Commission and its Member States to meaningfully engage in Trade Negotiations and effectively implement Trade Agreements with a view to benefitting from their participation in the global trading system. In its second phase (i.e. 2008 – 2015), the TNCB project has established and/or operationalized Inter-Institutional Committees (IIC) on trade issues in the 15 ECOWAS countries, trained over 1,500 government officials and non-state actors (e.g. private sector, civil society, academia) and provided technical and financial support in the formulation and implementation of regional and national trade related policies and programmes. In 2015, the TNCB project held two statutory planning and coordination meetings, supported 18 national trade meetings and workshops, held 2 regional capacity building workshops, as well implemented its first joint ECOWAS – United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR) e-learning course. Based on the positive evaluation of the Project's achievements, a new phase of capacity building, for ECOWAS institutions and its Member States, is being formulated.
160. **Implementation of HUB & SPOKES II programme:** the current phase of the programme "Enhancing Trade Development Capacity in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Regions" known as Hub and Spokes II began in 2013 with European Union funding. With the funds thus received, regional Advisors were recruited for the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions and national Advisors for 9 ECOWAS countries namely Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Mali, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo. To ensure complete coverage of West Africa in accordance with the recommendations of the EPA Ministerial Monitoring Committee, the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions committed to contribute funds to the project. With this contribution, new Advisers were recruited and are awaiting posting to Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.

161. Furthermore, the ECOWAS Commission took part in the different activities organised under the ongoing Programme in 2015. These include various training programmes on areas of international trade and programme coordination and management meetings.
162. Discussions between the Commission the Directorate for Francophonie economy are currently underway on enlarging the scope of cooperation with the OIF to include matters relating to the re-negotiation of concessionary tariffs for ECOWAS Member States at the WTO following ECOWAS CET implementation. The talks also include cooperation on renewable energy within the framework of the budding partnership between the Francophonie economy and the Quebec government.
163. The ECOWAS Commission is also engaged in discussions with a view to finding solutions to the difficulties being experienced by the programme in West Africa. This includes in particular, the transfer of the UEMOA Commission's 2014 contribution to OIF which was provided to the Commission and the ECOWAS Commission's 2015 contribution.

2.2.2 Customs

164. In the course of the year, the Commission focused its efforts on effective implementation of the Customs Union through the application of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) and the formulation of a strategy for more efficient implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS).
165. It will be recalled that the **ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET)** received the political endorsement of the Authority of Heads of State and Government at the Extraordinary Summit held on 25 October 2013 in Dakar. The Summit also instructed the ECOWAS Commission to take all necessary measures to ensure the application of the CET in all Member States with effect from 1st January 2015.
166. It is against this background that the Commission, in collaboration with the Ministries in charge of finance and customs in Member States, provided technical and financial support and other forms including training, awareness creation, production of teaching and learning materials in 2014. These activities enabled customs officers, customs agents and forwarding agents to acquire better knowledge of the CET and created awareness of the ECOWAS CET among economic operators.
167. The ECOWAS CET entered into force on 1st January 2015 with a number of Member States that had started its implementation, while others, for various reasons, postponed the implementation. In August 2015, the ECOWAS Commission sent a support mission to the fifteen (15) Member States to review the status of CET implementation and make specific recommendations to each Member State. It emerged from the mission that eight (8) Member States had started the implementation of ECOWAS CET. They are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.
168. Ghana, due to constraints arising from parliamentary procedures, can only commence CET application at the start of 2016. For Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, CET implementation will begin in 2016 due to the Ebola epidemic crisis which caused delays in the preparatory activities including awareness campaigns and the training necessary for the implementation of such a -trade instrument in Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau, the delay in CET implementation is explained by the late provision of the Portuguese version of the CET documents. This also led to delays in the preparatory activities to meet the deadline for implementation. In The Gambia, technical problems due largely to the integration of CET into the computerised customs system delayed the implementation process.

169. For countries which have already commenced CET implementation, the process is progressing in a satisfactory manner. To date, customs agencies in Member States have yet to report any negative impact on import revenue mobilisation. A meeting of Ministers of Finance is scheduled to hold at the end of 2015 in order to evaluate the first year of CET implementation and draw initial lessons.
170. The 17th meeting of the Joint ECOWAS-UEMOA Committee held from 31 May to 2 June 2015 provided the opportunity to review CET application in each Member State and amend some of the regulations on the CET to facilitate their implementation.
171. Concurrently with the work on CET implementation, the Commission, in collaboration with ECOWAS Member States' Ambassador in Geneva, embarked on preparatory talks with the technical departments of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in view of the future re-negotiations of the consolidated rates of Member States with this institution. The re-negotiations are aimed at achieving compatibility between the ECOWAS CET and the previous commitments of some Member States to WTO not to exceed the maximum level of customs duties on certain products.
172. Regarding the draft ECOWAS Community Customs Code, the technical aspects have been finalised by the Commission. Concerted efforts are underway with the UEMOA Commission for the validation of the Code by Member States in the first quarter of 2016.
173. In the area of the **formulation of a strategy for more effective implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS)**, particularly with regard to the free movement of persons and goods, ECOWAS Commission and Burkina Faso, together with UEMOA Commission, CILSS and technical and financial partners (TFP), have adopted the Action Plan for the implementation of recommendations of the Regional Citizen Forum. The Forum was held in Ouagadougou from 3 to 5 July 2014 on the aforementioned subject. The Action Plan defines short and medium term actions to be undertaken to boost intra-community trade within ECOWAS.
174. In perspective, the Commission intends, in the first half of 2016, to set up the ETLS Task Force (ETLS-TF) and organise, under the mandate of the President of Burkina Faso, the following meetings on free movement of persons and goods: (i) meeting of Member States' experts to review proposals to be submitted to an extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers, (ii) meeting of the Technical Committee on Trade, Customs and Free Movement of Persons, (iii) extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers extended to include the Ministers of Finance, Immigration, Security and Defence,
175. Concerning product approvals under the trade liberalisation scheme, several applications approved under the scheme by the National Approval Committees (NAC) of Member States were received at the Commission. Consequently, the usual investigations were conducted and all Member States were notified of the decision to issue product approvals where the applications met the requirements on content and presentation. Approval applications were submitted by eleven (11) Member States (Benin, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo), thus bearing evidence to the growing interest of companies for the ECOWAS sub-regional market. A total of 179 companies and 304 industrial products were approved and notifications issued thereof to the 15 ECOWAS Member States.
176. In 2015, there has been growing number of applications' approval under the scheme and fewer complaints about implementation. The reduced number of complaints is due to the establishment of an exchange system in Member States by the Commission. This system allows countries to discuss with one another and resolve disputes before referring matters to the ECOWAS Commission. All Member States' Focal Points were closely involved, during the year, in resolving difficulties regarding ETLS implementation.

177. However, the Commission provided a solution to complaints made by a Member State. The complaint of Niger regarding the origin of Ghanaian products was resolved with the dispatch of a team to the approved firm for which the origin of its products was in question. A report on the investigation is available at the Commission
178. To facilitate more effective implementation of the Scheme, the Commission provided training for Customs officers in Member States implementing the Scheme. The trainings were conducted in Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal (for Guinea Bissau Customs officers) and almost 350 officers took part in the training programme. The awareness sessions conducted simultaneously in Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria and were attended by nearly 1,500 economic operators.
179. In the same context, some legal texts relating to the Scheme were revised in 2015, in order, to reduce the processing time for approval applications and ensure consistency with UEMOA texts on the Scheme.
180. For the *harmonisation of internal indirect tax systems and tax transition*, the ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with the West African Union Tax Institution (WAUTI), organised its annual meeting on the theme "Assessment and rationalisation of tax expenditure - Towards sound management of public finances". This platform enabled the ECOWAS Commission to present the ongoing work on this issue and prepare a work programme with the Association which brings together tax agencies in West Africa.
181. Furthermore, a study was finalised by the Commission on exemptions to be harmonised under the Value Added Tax (VAT). On the basis of the proposed exemptions, a draft Directive was prepared and will be submitted to Member States in the first quarter of 2016.
182. A study was undertaken by the ECOWAS Commission to assess the impact of a VAT increase from 5% to 10% or more, on national income and economic effects in Nigeria. Given its VAT rate of 5% - the lowest in the ECOWAS region - it is timely to discuss the possibility of an increase with this country.

2.2.3 Industry

183. **The New Strategy of West African Common Industrial Policy (WACIP):** The implementation of West Africa Common Industrial Policy (WACIP), adopted in December 2010, continued during the review period with the adoption, by the Ministers of Industry, of the first revision of the WACIP strategy for 2015 – 2020. The main pillars of the new strategy include: Industry Sector Governance and Regional Cooperation, Regional Market Surveillance and Access, Competitiveness and Finance Mobilization for industry. The four (4) main regional sectoral priorities identified were agro industries and agribusiness, pharmaceutical Industry, construction Industry and automotive and machinery.
184. **Implementation of ECOWAS Quality Policy (ECOQUAL):** The implementation of ECOWAS Quality Policy (ECOQUAL) which was launched in 2014 started effectively in 2015 with the support of the ECOWAS – EU Programme for Quality Infrastructure System. The programme aims at setting up a regional quality infrastructure to protect consumers, strengthen regional trade and promote easy access to international markets by local producers. The main activities of the programme in 2015 include support to ECOSHAM meetings, provision of training to members of national committees, data collection for the establishment of ECOWAS database on quality and the selection of Conformity Assessment bodies.
185. **ECOWAS Standard Harmonization Scheme and Industrial Upgrading Program:** In 2015, a total of 26 regional standards and technical regulations on agricultural and foods products were finalized

by the Regional Technical Committee, which consist of all national standards bodies. The standards will be submitted to the next meeting of Council of Ministers for adoption. Also, the Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has formulated a regional upgrading programme which was validated by the Member States, regional business associations and regional finance institutions.

186. **ECOWAS Sectoral Strategy:** The Commission has set up the Agro industry value chains development framework with focus on the regional industrialisation plan for agro industry products to be exported, agro industry products for the regional markets and for products to support the agro industry. On the regional pharmaceutical plan, the Commission, in collaboration with the West Africa Health Organization (WAHO), validated an ECOWAS Regional Pharmaceutical Plan which was subsequently endorsed by the sector Ministers. The Commission also reached out to development partners for support and received pledges to support the implementation of the plan as detailed in the road map. With regard to the ECOWAS Automotive and Machinery Industry Strategy, the processes for the development of a regional plan commenced. The Commission is also collaborating with stakeholders, particularly the Nigeria Automotive Council, to formulate a strategy for the harmonization and development of regional industry and market for automobiles. On ECOWAS Construction Material Industry Strategy, the Commission is collaborating with the World Bank to develop a regional plan on construction material industry value chain.

2.2.4 Mines

187. ECOWAS Commission hosted a second Facilitation Meeting in March 2015 on the establishment of ECOWAS Federation of Chambers of Mines by the National Chambers of Mines. The meeting which was held in Abuja reviewed the Draft Constitution for the Regional Chamber. The finalized document has been forwarded to the Chambers of Mines of Member States for consideration and approval by their Councils. A minimum criteria of five (5) officially communicated approvals to ECOWAS Commission on/before 31 July 2015 was set as the benchmark to undertake the next-steps towards the inauguration and incorporation of the Regional Chamber.
188. To date, four (4) unconditional and two (2) conditional approvals have been officially communicated to the Commission. The Commission is still awaiting the decisions of the Councils of two (2) remaining National Chambers who, together with the other six (6), may become the Founding Members.
189. As part of activities towards the *'Promotion of Multi-stakeholder Consultation Mechanisms in all aspects of the Mineral Sector'*, ECOWAS Commission organized a Consultative Meeting with selected Regional Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in March 2015. The meeting was to harness expert advice to support the ECOWAS Commission to develop, from the CSOs perspective, a well-structured framework to guide the Commission in its engagement processes towards optimal development of the geo-extractives sector in the Community.
190. The meeting identified key areas for regional cooperation and outlined specific, regional-scale CSO-related activities which, when undertaken, will be beneficial to the geo-extractives sector. It was also decided to call this stakeholder platform *'ECOWAS – Regional Geo-extractives Sector CSOs Joint Forum'* with its Main objective as *'Enhance effective and sustained engagement between Civil Society and ECOWAS Commission on geo-extractives issues'*. As mandated, the Working Group which was constituted has used the decisions taken at the Abuja meeting to make available a Draft Concept Paper/ Implementation Matrix for this ECOWAS-CSOs Joint Forum for subsequent validation.
191. The First ECOWAS Mining & Petroleum Forum (ECOMOF 2015) came-off successfully in Accra, Ghana from 06-08 October 2015 under the distinguished patronage of H. E. John Dramani MAHAMA, President of Republic of Ghana and H. E. Kadré Désiré OUEDRAOGO, President of

ECOWAS Commission. The theme was *'Valorizing West Africa's Mineral & Petroleum Resources through Regional Cooperation'*. A Joint Committee on ECOMOF 2015 which was made up of ECOWAS Commission, Local Organizing Committee in Ghana, and AME Trade Ltd., U. K as the organizing consultant was responsible for the preparatory activities.

192. On policy development, processes are in advanced stages for the procurement of services towards the formulation of an ECOWAS Mining and Minerals Development Act (Code, EMMDA), ECOWAS Hydrocarbons Development Policy (EHDP), and a technical feasibility report for the ECOWAS Geo-extractives Observatory and Cadastre System.
193. Preparations are also ongoing to secure services for a technical feasibility report on an ECOWAS Geo-extractives Database and Statistical Information Reporting Framework to guide the reporting of development progress in the sector.

2.2.5 Free Movement of Persons and Tourism

✓ Free movement

194. The implementation of the free movement programmes aimed at creating understanding of the Free Movement texts as a critical instrument to the integration drive of the region. The recent migration crisis in Europe has also underpinned the urgent need for Member States to implement the action plan of the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration to meet with the nascent dynamics of the migration flows across the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean routes. In this context, the following activities were executed.

- **ECOWAS Biometric ID Card**

195. The Commission organised a meeting of experts on ECOWAS Biometric ID card and the biometric registration of ECOWAS nationals in ECOWAS host countries in Dakar in February 2015 to discuss the measures relating to the production of the specimen ID card to be adopted by Member States and the deployment of the requisite infrastructure and procedures for the usage of the Biometric Card. The meeting adopted the proposed security features for the ECOWAS Biometric ID card and the necessary measures to ensure its smooth deployment. An action plan for the development of a regional platform for biometric data exchange of the Community citizens amongst ECOWAS Member States' consular services, host country immigration services and ECOWAS was also adopted.

- **Transport Facilitation Project of Cote d'Ivoire**

196. The launch of the Cote d'Ivoire transport facilitation project was held on from 17 to 22 January 2015 in Abidjan. The Cote d'Ivoire project is expected to be replicated in three (3) other pilot Member States namely, Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger. The "Cote d'Ivoire travel facilitation project" Phase I was launched in Niamey, Niger from 4 to 9 March 2015.

- **Drafting of a Regional Border management manual**

197. The Commission is currently drafting a Regional Border Management Manual for use in immigration/security training institutions within the region. The first draft of the Border Management manual has been drafted and the document is expected to be validated before the end of the year.

- **Sensitization**

198. Sensitisation and awareness raising activities among Member States were undertaken on the issuance process of the newly updated ECOWAS Brown card and vehicular mobility in order to enhance intra-regional mobility and improved security. The sensitization activities were also aimed at addressing the incessant cases of harassment related to the recognition of the newly deployed Brown card.

- **Meeting of Ministers in charge of Security**

199. A ministerial meeting on the Specimen Identity Card was held in Mauritania which aimed at evaluating the recommendations of the preceding meeting of experts, focusing on facilitating intra-regional mobility, eliminating harassment along ECOWAS highways and strengthening the security architecture of the region by supporting the introduction of the approved ECOWAS Biometric ID card. The meeting approved the specimen ID card proposed by the preceding experts meeting as well as the deployment of requisite infrastructure and procedures for the usage of the Biometric Card. The meeting also considered a Memorandum presented by the ECOWAS Commission for developing a monitoring mechanism for vehicular movement and increased physical monitoring and evaluation of the Free Movement Protocol by ECOWAS staff on the field.

- **Identity Management and Civil Registry**

200. The Commission organised an experts meeting on Identity Management and Civil Registry from 27 to 30 April, 2015, in Cotonou, Benin. The meeting deliberated on the most recent developments in the field of civil registry in ECOWAS region and proposed common coordination modalities amongst Member States to ensure enhanced civil registration process. The meeting also delivered a Master Class on Identity Management to increase awareness by the Member States' delegates of its core principles.

- **Irregular Migration**

201. The ECOWAS Commission is collaborating with Member States to achieve a common position in the forthcoming Africa-EU Dialogue in Valletta, Malta on Irregular Migration within the framework of the EU funded project "Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa (FMM West Africa)". To address migration capacity building needs in ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania, the FMM West Africa Project has established a flexible Demand Driven Facility (DDF) for national institutions to which the national institutions can submit requests for capacity building and technical assistance according to their specific needs. Areas of intervention include border management, labour migration, counter trafficking and related policy development and implementation. Several requests have already been approved and the implementation of the actions is ongoing.

202. To promote the engagement of Non-State Actors, a Call for Proposals was launched in July 2015. Under this Call for Proposals, FMM West Africa provides funding to Non-State Actors in ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania to implement projects in the following areas: free movement, cross-border cooperation, protection and empowerment of migrants, reintegration of returning migrants, gender and migration.

✓ **Cross-Border Cooperation**

203. Key activities implemented during the course of 2015 focused on the elaboration of a new Programme Cycle 2016 – 2020. Hence, the Commission continued work with the Task-Force and Working Group set up for the purpose of developing the Programme. Work is now well advanced to anchor the new ECOWAS CBC Programme as a viable regional integration tool for West Africa. The Draft Programme Strategic Framework Document - Logical Framework, Regional Plan of Action, Communication and Resource Mobilization Strategies and the Programme's 5-Year Regional Budget have been concluded and efforts are now focused on ensuring the technical validation and adoption of the programme at the ministerial level during the fourth quarter of 2015.
204. The Commission also approved subvention for Regional Cross-Border Cooperation Pilot Projects in two (2) ECOWAS CBC Pilot Operating Zones. The subvention will support Joint Community development projects in the SKBO and Southern Sene-Gambia Zones covering Mali, Burkina Faso and Cote D'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau, Senegal and The Gambia which focuses on Access to Health care services in Border Regions, Market Development for Gender in Cross-Border Trade and Free Movement, promoting culture as a tool to achieve peace and security in the region as well as work with civil society and the media, especially community radio stations on awareness creation campaigns in the local languages to educate border populations on the provisions of ECOWAS Protocols and their Rights and Responsibilities as Community citizens..

✓ **Tourism**

205. The Commission's activities in the area of tourism were primarily focused on the following programmes:
- development of the ECOWAS regional tourism policy,
 - preparation of a 2015 – 2025 action plan (ECOTOUR 15/25),
 - validation of the policy by Member States' experts,
 - adoption of the policy and the ECOTOUR 15/25 action plan by the ECOWAS Ministers for Tourism.
206. Regarding programme implementation, the Commission prepared the regional tourism policy document and translated it into a 2015 – 2025 action plan (ECOTOUR 15/25). The Commission also organised an experts' meeting for the validation of the documents and a ministerial meeting which adopted the regional tourism policy.
207. The regional tourism policy was prepared to serve as a dashboard and a tool for marshalling efforts and promoting synergy among public and private sector stakeholders. It is expected that the deployment of these concerted efforts will result in strengthening SMEs in the tourism sector and accrue benefits to the local communities.
208. The policy is more than a simple statement of intentions, having been designed as a reference document containing the aspirations, objectives and decisions of stakeholders, to be brought to fruition by 2025. The policy has a monitoring and evaluation mechanism with performance indicators and provides the incorporation of new issues and ideas.

2.3 Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources

2.3.1 Agricultural Development

209. The year 2015 is a critical period in the implementation process of ECOWAS/CAADP. ECOWAP, adopted by the Heads of State and Government in 2005 is now in its 10th year. Also, activities in 2015 were marked by the evaluation of the steps taken with Member States and different stakeholders towards the implementation of National Agricultural Investment Programmes (NAIP) on one hand, and regional programmes on the other. The report also takes stock of activities coordinated by the African Union and its operational agencies (NEPAD and BIRA), which also involved the ECOWAS Commission, in the domestication of strategies developed in national and regional agricultural investment programmes. The key activities linked to the priority programmes are discussed in detail below.

✓ *Promotion of strategic products for food security and sovereignty*

210. The programme supporting the promotion of livestock production chains was developed and adopted by all ECOWAS Member States. It should serve as frame of reference for the promotion of animal production chains for Member States when formulating the new phase of National Agricultural Investment Programmes.

211. Trade in livestock is hampered in the West and Central African regions for diverse reasons: terrorism, non-tariff barriers. Faced with this situation, the ECOWAS Commission in collaboration with ECCAS, with the support of the World Bank, developed a programme to ease trade in livestock between the two regions. The implementation of this programme will help resolve not only trade in cattle, but also develop joint programmes for combating cross-border livestock diseases.

212. West Africa is the region most affected by the *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR) (Sheep and Goat Plague). For several decades now, the disease has existed as an endemic, making West Africa the epicentre of the PPR in Africa. Some countries developed regular programmes to combat the disease. They include Senegal, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. The disease has therefore taken a regional dimension. ECOWAS has developed a control programme to curb the rapid spread of the disease that poses great risks to rearing sheep and goats. A workshop involving the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resource and FAO will take place in Abuja before the end of the year to agree on strategies for putting an end to this disease which has led to huge loss of sheep and goats. The goal is the adoption of a strategy for the harmonisation of animal diseases control measures within ECOWAS from the beginning of 2016. The Regional Centre for Animal Health (CRSA) in Bamako is required to play a major role.

213. The training of agriculturists and agro-allied entrepreneurs is in connection with food sovereignty. In that vein, a programme aimed at training and equipping 45 young agricultural entrepreneurs – three per Member State - is currently being carried out in collaboration with the Centre Songhaï in Porto Novo, Benin. The ECOWAS Commission released US\$ 300,000.00 for the current session. The amount covers the cost of training and equipment for the trainees. This will be the second batch sponsored by the Commission. Also, steps are being taken, in collaboration with ECOWAS partners, to secure additional financial resources to augment the equipment needed by the first batch to run their micro-enterprises full scale. Moreover, there is the need to improve the equipment required by the next batch of trainees which is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2016. Establishing these young trainees is a springboard for the spread of the agricultural transformation process and shared prosperity, as desired by Heads of State and Government of the African Union through the Malabo declaration of 2014, which sees training in agriculture as a link to progress.

✓ **Promoting an overall favourable environment for regional agricultural development**

214. The regional agriculture information system (ECOAGRIS) is at a dynamic phase including all 15 Member States and two states bordering ECOWAS inland - Mauritania and Chad. Both countries, like the ECOWAS Member States, experience the same problems tied to unreliable statistical data on agriculture. An 18 million-Euro funding has been obtained and the CILSS AGRYMETH Regional Centre will be developed in order to promote on-going projects and provide the region with a veritable decision-making tool. This funding is part of the overall framework of the implementation of the Regional Food Security Reserve. The implementation of the subsidized harmonised framework will accompany the vulnerability analysis process in order to facilitate decision making by regional and national leaders in the face of eventual food and nutritional crises.
215. Fruit fly impacts negatively on the mango industry in many countries, leading to shortfalls at microeconomic level (producers and other links in the distribution chain), and also at macroeconomic level (regional and national accountability). The regional effort to combat the fruit fly covers eight countries of the ECOWAS (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Senegal). The coordination unit is located within the Regional Centre for Animal Health in Bamako. The overall worth of the funding stands at 23.5 million Euros. The project, which has commenced activities, has the following financial framework: EU: 17.5 million Euros; AFD: 1.5 million Euros; beneficiary countries: 3.5 million Euros and the ECOWAS Commission 1.5 million Euros. The programme has a research component being implemented by CORAF/WECARD, the technical arm of the ECOWAS for agronomy research matters. This project seeks to reduce, and even eliminate the "fruit fly", and once successful, will help to reduce and even put an end to the infestation of fruit and vegetable plantations in the ECOWAS region that has led the ECOWAS zone being quarantined and containers destroyed upon arrival in European markets. Also, there will be regular income for farmers and also States of the region.
216. Pastoral livestock farming is the most significant medium of animal production accounting for about 60% of the herds of cattle, goats, and camels. This productive practice continues to encounter many significant challenges, some of which include the seasonal movement of animals seemingly obscured in the principle of free movement of persons and goods on one hand and the low financing of this sector on the other hand. Faced with this situation, and in cooperation with the World Bank, ECOWAS and UEMOA provided political backing for an initiative which led to the formulation of the Regional project to support pastoralism in the Sahel (PRAPS), with CILSS and CRSA providing the technical support at regional level on animal health in collaboration with the World Health Organisation. The beneficiary countries are six in number of which four are ECOWAS Member States (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal), the other two being Mauritania and Chad. The total amount for an initial six-year phase is USD 245 million. The aim is to foster regional integration of more than 2 million herdsmen and agropastoralists living in the Sahel. It will therefore help to enhance their access to key means of production and services and to the market while strengthening the capacity of the countries to provide timely and effective response in the event of crises.

✓ **Reducing food vulnerability and promoting sustainable access to food**

217. Access to balanced nutrition for every human being is a human security issue. Hence, ECOWAS developed the Regional Food Security Reserve initiative which today is at an advanced implementation phase. Financial resources amounting to 56 million Euros were obtained from the European Union. The financing agreement between ECOWAS and the European Union has been signed. The personnel have been recruited and experts appointed through Spanish and French

cooperation. The Commission needs to work towards contributing its share, promised to States, which amounts to USD 20 million in order to complement national reserves for achieving the said initiative that will help the region to break out of the vicious cycle of famine and malnutrition.

218. The Regional programme to support national social security programmes in West Africa worth USD 850.15 million, aims to strengthen the resilience of homes and communities and more particularly reduce infant malnutrition, and are adapted and developed on a broad scale by several countries in the region. The “resiliency priority projects” were developed for seven countries through the European Union’s 2.5 million-Euro support. Other funding totalling USD 5,647 million was mobilised from the Spanish cooperation and an ECOWAS contribution of USD 564,735. The combined financial resources made it possible to call for bids from service providers.

✓ **Governance**

219. Coordination of the ECOWAP/CAADP process is subdivided into two sections namely: monitoring-evaluation of programmes carried out at regional level; and anchoring of regional consultation frameworks. The latter also covers interventions at continental level where the whole CAADP process is steered by the African Union and two specialised agencies, NEPAD and BIRA.

- *Coordinating and monitoring-evaluation of the implementation of ECOWAP/CAADP*

✓ **Coordination and monitoring of National Agriculture Investment Programmes**

220. The Commission is in the process of supporting countries in the review of the agricultural sector in order to develop the new generation of NAIPs. Qualitative and quantitative results have been attained but there is still work to be done. As regards the qualitative results, the NAIPs offered forums for dialogue between state and non-state actors on the agriculture policy. The formulation of the NAIP helped the TFPs to work in tandem with priorities defined in the sectoral programmes, while providing private investors with more opportunities in the different agriculture value chains. On the quantitative scale, several countries have attained or exceeded the 10 to 14% threshold of their respective nominal GDP in the financing of agriculture. An evaluation is now required in order to ascertain the percentage for investments/ allocation for operational expenditure. On the other hand, the regional level succeeded in sourcing 311 million from partners for Burkina Faso, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone. The sum is meant to finance the nutrition aspect of the respective National Agriculture Investment Programmes. Also, within the framework of the Agricultural Productivity Programme in Africa, the ECOWAS Commission through its technical arm CORAF/WECARD enabled 13 countries to receive loans totalling USD 456.5 million for setting up operational programmes for agronomy and zoology research with a view to encouraging innovations likely to positively change the production and productivity of different endeavours. In the area of monitoring-evaluation, provision was made that will serve to equip all the countries with information communication technology facilities before the end of December 2012 in order to improve monitoring of NAIP activities in the countries as well as the evolving state of national agriculture. They will immediately become additional channels for ECOAGRIS.

✓ **Monitoring-evaluation mechanism**

221. After some initial delays in starting up, the monitoring-evaluation became operational during the year 2015. Each country receives support in the area of collation and analysis of information. The sum of USD 4.9 million was effectively released. The Commission on its part must make a direct contribution to countries in order to ensure independent implementation of the monitoring-

evaluation mechanism. However the contribution is still pending and States had opened accounts that are attracting overdraft charges.

222. The capacity building of ECOWAS regional stakeholders is promising. Professionals that hitherto worked in isolation are now working together and on that basis, the Commission signed agreements with nine of the most dynamic professional community organisations that largely represent the interest of rural dwellers and citizens. They are: APESS/CORET, AFAO/WAWA, COFENABVI-AO, UOFA-AO, NANTS, RBM, RESIMAO, ROPPA, and the Civil Society (POSCAO). As such they are credited for activities in the following areas: Observatories on small-scale farming, cross-border transhumance, and trade in livestock within the ECOWAS and beyond (ECCAS), collation of statistics both in the ECOWAS region and the countries beyond its borders inland (ECCAS) especially Cameroun and Chad, which are very much involved in cattle trade with the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This division of labour founded on the principle of subsidiarity has made it so that the partners give the funding directly to develop activities from production to commercialisation as well as literacy and training for herdsmen, women and youth in the cross-border areas. The Swiss cooperation grants over USD 1.6 million to support the capacity building of regional farmer associations as well as their national platforms. Over 3 million Swiss Francs is pumped into literacy. However, there are delays in the payment of subsidies approved by the ECOWAS Commission. Actions are being taken to correct this situation that if unresolved, is capable of discouraging major donors.

▪ ***Monitoring/coordination of regional projects/programmes and diverse initiatives supported by technical and financial partners.***

223. These programmes are in line with the commitments to assist the region, made by technical and financial partners during the signing of the Regional Pact at the PRIA Conference in November 2009 in Abuja. The funding amounts to USD 214 million. ECOWAS' contribution in that regard amounts to USD 11.4 million while the fund from different technical and financial partners is USD 203 million.

224. The pact signed in November 2009 also required that the Commission assist the Member States in obtaining additional funding for the implementation of national programmes. On that note ECOWAS supported country beneficiaries of the GAFPS to obtain funding in order to mainstream nutrition into their respective NAIP as well as agronomical research programmes that will improve agricultural productivity. The sum of USD 310.8 million was mobilized for nutrition. The beneficiary countries are: Burkina Faso, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. As regards agricultural research, 13 countries have received funding for innovations that will induce productivity in agriculture, livestock and fishery to respond to the growing food demands. The funding amounts to USD 456.8 million. The fund enabled States to finance work and to also set up eight (08) Specialised National Centres (CNS) : Rice (Mali) ; Dry grains (Senegal) ; Fruits and vegetables (Burkina Faso) ; Aquaculture (Nigeria) ; Corn (Benin) ; Roots and tubers (Ghana), Banana and plantain (Côte d'Ivoire) ; Livestock (Niger). The aim of the CNS is to promote the productivity in agricultural and animal sectors by relying on the scientific strengths of each of the States and therefore rationalise the use of financial resources. An innovative technology that is tested in one country can be transferred more easily to another country without intensive investment in human and financial resources. At present, plans are underway to transform the CNS into Regional Centres of Excellence (CRE) and may become reality by 2016.

225. The ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food, based in Lome and established in September 2013 is in the process of becoming fully operational and effective. The human resources capacity has been outfitted for monitoring-evaluation, in order to kick-off operations of the "Regional Food Security Reserve" and the different projects and programmes scheduled to

hold in the countries. Today, the agency manages a portfolio that revolves around the USD 203 million. The ECOWAS Commission is to make a contribution of about USD 11 million.

▪ ***Follow-up and domestication of continental guidelines in the development and transformation process of agriculture to allow for shared prosperity***

226. The process of agriculture transformation in Africa is coordinated by the African Union through the NEPAD Agency and the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resource (BIRA). The NEPAD Agency provides consistency for interventions required to effectively transform agriculture for shared prosperity, agricultural growth, and alleviation of hunger and malnutrition. The Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resource focuses on livestock farming, fishery, aquaculture and animal health. The ECOWAS Commission has played an active role in all these initiatives developed by the African Union Commission. All the initiatives being promoted at continental level are domesticated in the regional policies and will help move towards economic growth driven by agriculture and the transformation of its activities. The ECOWAS Commission has therefore been very active in formulating African strategies for agribusiness development; livestock development in Africa (LiDeSA); fishery, genetic resources; apiculture coupled with the new commitment of Heads of State and Government to formulate the conditions for operationalizing the agricultural professional training and education in National Agriculture Investment Programmes ; Aflatoxin pest control which gives rise to both human and animal mortality and , consequently a regional programme was developed and will, as from 2016, succeed the on-going pilot programme in Gambia, Nigeria and Senegal. There is also the programme on combating plant diseases; combatting the tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis. All these initiatives are being domesticated in the subsequent regional agriculture investment programme (RIAP) and national agriculture investment programme (NAIP) which will be submitted to the Ministers of rural development sectors in November 2015. If adopted, they will form the new phase of agriculture investment programmes for the next five years.

2.3.2 Environment

227. In 2015, the activities of the Commission with regard to the environment were focused on three priority areas of the ECOWAS Environmental Policy. They are: (i) enhancement of environmental governance and capacity building, (ii) promotion of sustainable resource management for the development of an environmentally friendly, sub-regional economy, and (iii) enhancement of the management of pollution and nuisances, urban waste, chemical products and dangerous waste. The detailed activities undertaken in each area are presented below.

228. **Enhancement of Environmental Governance and Capacity Building: Follow-up activities were undertaken** on the implementation of the Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa (MESA) project through participation in stakeholder information, advocacy and awareness tours that were carried out from 4 to 19 January 2015. The tours were concerned with two of the project's themes for the region namely, Environment and Security Monitoring with CILSS and Monitoring of Coastal and Marine Resources Management with the University of Accra.

229. In addition, it is noteworthy that cooperation efforts with UNEP have commenced under this programme, for the preparation of the sub-regional report on the status of the environment, with the ECOWAS Commission's participation at the regional meeting for Africa on the Environmental Resources Information Network (ERIN). The meeting took place from 20 to 22 April 2015.

230. **Promotion of Sustainable Resource Management for the development of the sub-regional economy in an environmentally friendly manner: activities in this area were implemented through the under-listed sub-programmes:**

✓ **implementation of the project on early climate change activities and climate change activities in general.**

231. In this area, the Commission set up a cooperation framework on climate change with the UEMOA Commission, CILSS Secretariat, BOAD and IUCN. A meeting was held in February 2015 with these regional institutions which led to consensus on the roadmap for COP 21.
232. In the implementation of this common roadmap, joint activities were carried out in the areas of: (i) capacity building for participants from twelve (12) ECOWAS Member States on INDCs preparation, (ii) review of the priorities and concerns of the ECOWAS region in respect of negotiations for new climate agreement in conjunction with Member States (iii) capacity building for Member States' representatives on direct access to the Climate Fund, and (iv) meetings with experts and scientists from civil society organisations, Member States' experts and joint Ministerial meeting with UEMOA, CILSS and the Francophonie Institute for Sustainable Development.
233. Moreover, the Commission worked with USAID to define the October 2015 - October 2016 work programme for the new WA-BiCC project which has a total duration of five years. Component 2 of the project concerns strengthening the resilience capacity of coastal areas to climate change.

✓ **implementation of the forestry policy and convergence plan for the sustainable management and use of forest ecosystems**

234. Achievements under this sub-programme include:
- capacity building for Member States' stakeholders in Lusaka, Zambia in February 2015, on inclusion of the social and environmental aspects in the Carbon project on the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+);
 - capacity building for Member States on the Regional Programme for Integrated Development of the Fouta Djallon mountains (PRAI-MFD), held in April 2015 during the planning meeting for the 2nd phase of the Project for the Integrated Management of the Fouta Djallon Natural Resources (EPINT / 503 / GEF),
 - organisation of the inaugural workshop for thematic working groups to validate the results chain and refined indicators of the logical framework for the West Africa forest convergence plan (PCFAO). The Commission also prepared the draft versions of specific action plans for the effective implementation of the seven (7) PCFAO priority intervention areas,
 - organisation in September 2015, of a small working group meeting which finalised the specific action plans for the seven (7) PCFAO priority areas of intervention for the period (2016 to 2020) to start the operational implementation of these plans.

✓ **Regional programme to combat desertification**

235. The Commission carried out the following:
- preparation of the project on the implementation of the sub-Regional Programme to combat desertification in conjunction with CILSS and UEMOA,
 - follow-up on negotiations with UNCCD through participation at the meeting of the intergovernmental working group on the Rio+20 outcomes on combating desertification, held in Rome in March 2015 and the 12th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Ankara in October 2015.

✓ **Capacity building for the prevention of technological risks**

236. The Commission, in collaboration with UEMOA and CILSS, organised a meeting to review the last version of the sub-region's draft Regulation already adopted by UEMOA and the draft Implementing Regulations for the said Regulation.

237. **Promotion of the improved management of pollution, nuisances and dangerous waste**

Activities carried out include, among others:

- finalisation of strategic documents with the organisation of: (i) a consolidation meeting on the preliminary draft of the sub-regional strategy for chemicals and hazardous waste management in Abuja in April 2015, (ii) a regional meeting for the reduction of sulphur in the fuel in May 2015 in collaboration with UNEP, and (iii) a regional meeting of Member States for the development of a draft regional strategic programme for chemicals management in May 2015.
- monitoring of the implementation of regional projects through participation in the Steering Committees of (i) the project on capacity building and technical assistance to the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS) of Africa, to undertake their national implementing plans (NIPs) for the Stockholm Convention and (ii) the PCB project for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention.

2.4 Infrastructure Development

2.4.1 Transport

✓ **Land Transport**

238. The principal activity in the Land Transport sector has been the continued implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Road Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme contained in ECOWAS C/DEC. 13/01/03. The key achievements for the period under review include the following:

❖ **ECOWAS Joint Border Posts Programme:**

• **Noepe JBP (between Ghana and Togo)**

239. The construction of the Noepe Joint Border Post (JBP) between Ghana and Togo has been completed and handed over to the two countries, Ghana and Togo at a ceremony held on 3 November 2014 which was attended by the Presidents of the two countries and other top Government officials as well as the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Commissioners and other officials. The JBP was constructed at an estimated cost of €11,393,992.76. The provision of equipment of the JBP and the development of the operationalization manuals for all border Agencies has been initiated with the European Union under the Technical Cooperation Facility (TFF) in March 2015. The Consultant submitted the Draft Final Report in July 2015 with the validation workshop held in August 2015 in Abuja, with Customs and Immigration officials from the beneficiary Member States of Ghana and Togo.

• **Seme JBP (between Benin & Nigeria)**

240. Following the cancellation of the Works Contract with Messrs. JDP Ltd for poor performance on site, a new contract was awarded to Messrs. GER Togo for completion within 11 months. A construction works re-launch and ground breaking ceremony was done on 24 October, 2014, on the Seme border site by the ECOWAS Commission with the Presidents of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Republic of Benin and other officials from the ECOWAS Commission and the two

countries, in attendance. As at August 2015, the physical progress of works was 43%, and a financial progress of 25%.

• **Noe Elubo JBP (between Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire)**

241. The ECOWAS Commission intend to finance the construction of this JBP using Internal Resources, and launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the consultancy service in 2014 for the recruitment of a Consultant to review the Engineering Design and Tender Dossier of the JBP as well as partake in the supervision of the project. The EOIs were received in November 2014, with the evaluation carried out in June 2015. An Introductory Meeting with Ministers, Experts and Transport Industry stakeholders from Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire was held in Takoradi, Ghana from 4 to 8 May 2015, to discuss the modalities for the implementation of the project as well as to undertake a visit to the project site at the Elubo-Noe Border.

❖ **Nigeria-Cameroon Multinational Highway and Transport Facilitation Programme as part of the Trans-Africa Highway programme:**

• **Design and Construction of Mfum Joint Border Post**

242. Funded under the African Development Bank, the Final Detailed Engineering Designs containing tender dossiers and drawings for the construction of Joint Border Post at Mfum border between Nigeria and Cameroon was submitted by the Design Consultant in Mid-January 2015. The Bank issued their No Objection to the tender dossier in April 2015. The advert for the works procurement was launched on 28 April 2015 with deadline of 28 July 2015. A total of 21 bids were purchased with only 11 bids submitted at the deadline for submission of bids. The bids were evaluated in August 2015 by an evaluation committee made up of representatives from ECOWAS, ECCAS, Nigeria and Cameroon. The evaluation reports were submitted to the Bank for No objection in August 2015. The next stage is negotiation and award of works contract to the lowest evaluated bidder once ECOWAS receives the No Objection of the Bank.

• **Study on the Development of Legal Framework for Mfum JBP and Axle Load Harmonization Between Nigeria and Cameroon**

243. ECOWAS Commission successfully selected and negotiated a Consultancy Contract for the development of a legal framework for the Mfum JBP and for the harmonization of Axle Load control standards between Cameroon and Nigeria in 2014. The Draft Final Reports on the projects were submitted in January 2015, and validated by experts from both countries in February 2015. The final deliverables submitted contained Bilateral Agreement to be signed between Nigeria and Cameroon to govern the operations at the JBP. The next step is the implementation of the Bilateral Agreement that would govern the operations of the JBP as well as the signing of the Memorandum of Understand on axle load harmonization.

❖ **Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Development Programme**

244. In line with the decision of the Presidents of the five countries along the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor in February 2013, to construct a 6-Lane (2x3) dual-carriage Highway from Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire through Accra, Lome and Cotonou to Lagos in Nigeria, the Commission held four meetings of the Steering Committee established by the Presidents (made up of all the Road Infrastructure Ministers from the five countries) to oversee the project. Major achievements in the implementation of this project include:

- Signing of the Treaty (Agreement) by the Presidents of the concerned Member States at the margins of the ECOWAS Summit in February 2014 at Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire.
- Finalization of the Terms of Reference for feasibility and detailed design studies for the highway construction.
- A seed fund of \$50million to be contributed by the concerned countries so as to fast track the studies. In view of the urgency and at the request of the Presidents of the other Member States, Nigeria agreed to provide this seed fund upfront on behalf of the other countries on the margins of the ECOWAS Summit in June 2014 in Accra. The Commission is liaising closely with the Presidency of Nigeria for the transfer of the funds to be effected.

245. In the areas of project preparation and investment advisory services, the African Union Commission, with the support of GIZ is supporting the ECOWAS Commission with Advisory Consultancy Services in the areas of Financial, Legal and Institutional advisory services. An MOU initiated by the AUC in February, 2015 was completed and signed in March, 2015. The Terms of Reference for the consultancy services has been completed and EOI were launched in May, 2015.

246. Following funding request to the African Development Bank relating to the feasibility and detailed engineering design of the corridor, the AfDB responded with an Appraisal Mission to all the five corridor countries with the ECOWAS Commission and the ECOWAS Project Preparation and Development Unit in attendance. The mission culminated with the preparation of a Project Appraisal Report (PAR) which defines the activities to be undertaken in the course of the programme. The funding for the programme was in the form of Loans to Members States and Grant to ECOWAS. Negotiations and endorsements of the Loans/Grant were held in the first week of October 2015, with Mid-October, 2015 set for presentation of the Loan/Grant Agreements to AfDB Board of Directors for approval.

❖ **Trans-Gambia transport corridor**

247. This includes the construction of the Trans-Gambia Bridge and Joint Border Posts (JBP) as well as the rehabilitation of 137 km of roads connecting the northern and southern parts of both The Gambia and Senegal. The AfDB in July, 2013 initiated the process of conducting a detailed study for the establishment of the JBP and the Border Procedures and Processes along the Trans-Gambia Bridge. The total cost for Phase I of the project is UA 67.36 million, which is co-financed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) 99.07%, the Government of the Gambia (0.24%) and the Government of Senegal (0.69%) and will be executed over a five year period (2012-2017).

248. The project ground breaking ceremony for the construction of the Trans-Gambia Bridge was held in February, 2015, with the construction works awarded to Messrs Isolux-Corsan (Leader - Spanish firm) and Messrs. Areski Construction (Partner – Senegalese Firm) at a contract sum of US\$ 65 million with contract duration of 36 months.

❖ **Trans-West African Coastal Highway programme**

249. With support from the European Union 10th Regional Indicative Programme, €62.245 million was programmed by the European Union to support the construction of three bridges in Sierra Leone and the road section between the Moa Bridge and Liberia border which are missing links on the Trans coastal highway. The funds would also be used for the construction of the Zinder-Nigeria Border road and Koupela Piega-Fada Gourma Niger Border on the Trans-Sahelian highway. In agreement with the European Union, the ECOWAS Commission transferred its authority to the National Authorizing Officers of the respective countries to implement the projects. The feasibility

study, detailed design and preparation of works tender documents have been completed for Bandajuma – Liberia Border Road and Bridges. The tendering process for the award of the works contract is ongoing.

❖ ***Consultancy for the Assessment of the Implementation of African Decade of Action on Road Safety: 2011-2020***

250. In order to monitor the implementation of the African Road Safety Action Plan 2011-2020 in line with the objectives of the African Union Commission, the ECOWAS Commission has launched a consultancy service to assess the implementation of the action plan by Member States and support in areas of shortcomings. This consultancy study being financed through ECOWAS' internal funds entails, amongst other activities, an assessment of Member States level of implementation of the Five Pillars of the African Road Safety Plan of Action based on the Decade's log frame.
251. The Expression of Interest and Request for Proposals were launched and evaluated in 2014 and the Contract documents signed in January 2015. The contract was awarded at a total contract sum of US\$83,316.00 with contract duration of 4.5 months. A kick-off meeting with the consultant to ensure better understanding of the scope of the services was held in April 2015. The Inception report was received and approved in June 2015. The draft final report, submitted in August 2015, is currently undergoing review. Validation of the draft final report is planned to be held in November 2015.

❖ ***Establishment of the Regional Transport Facilitation Observatory.***

252. A multi-stakeholder Working Group co-chaired by the ECOWAS Commission and UEMOA have been established to guide the development of a Regional Transport and Facilitation Observatory. The Group had its 7th meeting for the implementation of the Regional Transport and Facilitation Observatory in Accra on 11 and 12 December, 2014. The A Technical working group meeting to harmonize the indicators was held in April 2015 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Some key milestones achieved by the Working Group include the establishment of a Joint Observatory Coordination Committee (Steering Committee) to guide the Observatory Working Group, completion of Project Documentation which includes the Project Concept Note and Action Plan, and the development of web portal for monitoring of Corridor Performance

❖ ***Multinational (Cote D'ivoire/Guinea/Liberia): Road Development and Transport Facilitation Programme within the Mano River Union***

253. As part of the development of road transport facilitation programme within ECOWAS, a strategic project has been developed to improve trade facilitation and free movement within the Mano River Union. Negotiations of loan agreements with the African Development Bank were held on 24 and 25 November 2014 at the Bank's headquarters in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The project consists of the upgrading of 276.35 km of roads within the Mano River Union. More specifically the sections to be upgraded include: Danané (Cote d'Ivoire)-Lola (Guinea) (87.35 km); Bloléquin-Toulépleu-Border with Liberia (65 km) in Cote d'Ivoire; Tabou-Prollo/Cavally (28 km); Karloken-Fish Town (80 km) in Liberia and Harper junction -Cavally (16 km). The ECOWAS Commission would be responsible for the transport facilitation component of the programme which includes the construction of Joint Border Post.
254. The inaugural meeting of stakeholders from Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia was held in July 2015 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Following the inaugural meeting, a site identification mission for the Joint Border Post between Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea border was held in the first week of August

2015, and the second mission was scheduled to hold at the end of August 2015 for Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia border.

❖ **Railways sub sector**

255. In the Railways sub sector, detailed engineering studies of the Kaya-Dory-Niamey link connecting the Abidjan-Ouagadougou railway line to the Republic of Niger was initiated with funding from the European Union in 2010. The Final Report was validated in September, 2014 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, bringing to closure of this activity. The next stage will be to undertake the Detailed Engineering Studies to enable the financing and procurement of the works contract to be initiated. Construction work on the Niamey-Dosso section of the railway line is about to be completed and is being financed by the firm Bolloré.

✓ **Air Transport**

256. The main activities carried out are the following:

❖ **Implementation of President portfolios.**

257. In furtherance to a request made to the Procurement Committee, it was agreed in August 2015 (by the Procurement Committee) that a restrictive tender process should be implemented in order to fast track the feasibility studies of three flagship projects namely, Upgrade of Business Plan for Regional Aircraft Maintenance Facility, Regional Aircraft Leasing Company and Common Policy on Aviation Charges and Fees. The Air Transport Unit worked closely with the PPDU in the follow up of the study on Development of Airport Infrastructure and actively participated at the Study Launch Workshop in Lomé, Togo, on 25 and 26 March, 2015, and also participated in the Data Collection in Member States, from 27 May to 13 June, 2015.

❖ **Nigerian aviation executives business forum, 10 march, 2015.**

258. This forum availed the Air Transport Unit an opportunity to sensitize the Nigerian Aviation Stakeholders on the constraints, challenges, achievements of air transport in all of ECOWAS region and programmes being run by ECOWAS Commission to enhance air transport.

❖ **Aeronautical Cooperation.**

259. The ICAO Regional Director paid a courtesy call to the ECOWAS Commission in February 2015, in order to express his appreciation for the commitment demonstrated by signing a Joint ECOWAS/ICAO Air Transport Action Plan for air transport development in the region. He expressed his gratitude to the ECOWAS Commission for its commitment to enhancing civil aviation in West Africa. In the framework of implementation of the said Action Plan, the Commission participated in two ICAO meetings- one on Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa held in Madagascar in March 2015 and the other on Aviation and Climate Change, held in Montreal, Canada, from 16 to 18 September, 2015. The ECOWAS Commission, in conjunction with ICAO also participated in an Aviation Safety Enhancement and Cooperation meeting held by the United States Federal Aviation Administration where initiatives on further assisting Member States to attain global aviation safety standards were highlighted.

❖ **Mobilization of Funds.**

260. Two missions in November 2014 and February 2015 were undertaken to the African Development Bank in Abidjan to negotiate a grant that supports Regional Air Transport Sectors in Central and West Africa following a joint request to the Bank by ECCAS, ECOWAS and UEMOA. The Board of

AfDB in July 2015 approved the grant to ECOWAS Commission amounting to AU 3,042,000 (equivalent to USD 4,453,488) covering 4 years from 2015 to 2019. The AfDB grant will contribute significantly towards the development of Air Transport sector in the region, especially in the improvement of Airport Safety through the ACI-APEX reviews; setting up a Regional Pool for Aviation Security; capacity building for aviation safety oversight by Civil Aviation Authorities and BAGASOO/ACSSA-UEMOA; and setting up a Regional Aviation Investigation Bureau and studies on Aviation Search and Rescue (SAR), and Gender in Aviation.

261. The 2015 bi-annual Meeting of the World Bank/UEMOA/ECOWAS was held in February 2015 where the Working Group on Air Transport acknowledged the progress made in the implementation of the 2013 Action Plan by UEMOA and ECOWAS. Recommendations made at the meeting for technical and financial support included (i) development of a benchmarking System to monitor developments in the air transport within an initial period of 12 to 18 months; (ii) promoting industry consultation and dialogue with relevant stakeholders (airlines, freight operators, tourism, etc) through a series of workshops within a period of 12 to 18 months; (iii) review of aviation charges to meet compliance with ICAO policy and help reduce overall costs of travel within 12 months; (iv) liberalization of air services in order to remove all restrictions and protectionist practices on bilateral air service agreements (BASAs) within a period of 12 to 18 months; and (v) adoption of a timeline Action Plan from 2015 to 2020.

2.4.2 Project Preparation and Development Unit (PPDU)

262. The PPDU is responsible for: preparing and developing regional infrastructure projects, resource mobilization, promotion of public/private partnerships in investment financing and project management, elaboration of feasibility studies (technical, economic, financial, social, environmental, impact etc.) and capacity building for similar structure in ECOWAS Member States etc. The main activities carried out from January to September 2015 are:

✓ Programme Management and establishing Infrastructure development funding mechanism

- PPDU Strategic Business Plan 2016-220

263. In order to ensure the effective functioning of the PPDU, a Consultant was hired to draft a Strategic Business Plan 2016-2020. The draft Business Plan has been elaborated and will be submitted to the PPDU Steering Committee for adoption.

- Establishment of the FODETE-ECOWAS

264. ECOWAS Heads of State and Government at their 37th Summit in Abuja on 22nd June 2009 instructed the Commission to come up with the modalities for establishing a fund dedicated to financing the development of regional infrastructure in the Transport and Energy sectors (Fund for the Development and Financing of the Transport and Energy Sectors - FODETE-ECOWAS). The fund is expected to be financed from a levy on the key export resources within the region (agriculture, mines, oil, gas, fisheries, etc.).
265. Within the framework of the establishment of the Fund, a Consulting Firm was hired to undertake the feasibility study. The final report of the study is expected to be delivered by the end of 2015. Based on the consultants proposed levy rates, preliminary simulation indicates that revenues of around US\$ 350 million per year can be raised through the FODETE. The final report and recommendations of the study will be submitted to be ECOWAS Statutory Authorities for adoption after Member States experts' validation.

✓ **Project Preparation**

266. The key component of the PPDU project preparation activities is to conduct relevant studies to demonstrate bankability of regional infrastructure projects. Consequently, procurement process for hiring consultants to conduct several priority studies were initiated in 2014/2015.

a. 2015 Priority Studies

267. The contracts for the studies were signed in February 2015. The following are the priority studies concerned:

- **Infrastructure Master Plan (Transport, Energy, ICT, Water)**

268. The objective of the Study is to undertake a diagnostic review of the four sectors and determine the needs over the next 30 years, develop synchronized sector plans and establish an implementation plan. The recruited consulting firm commenced work on 17 March 2015 to carry out this study for a duration of 18 months

- **Airport Infrastructure improvement**

269. The study will conduct situational analysis on airport equipment and infrastructure in ECOWAS Member States in order to determine current and future needs to enhance efficient operation of airports. The recruited consulting firm commenced work on 25 March 2015 to carry out this study for a duration of 8 months.

- **Dakar – Lagos Corridor missing links**

270. A study to undertake an economic assessment of the economic viability of the Lagos-Dakar corridor for investment considerations. The study will also include establishing a complete inventory of the missing links with the description of the road assets, condition and location and a comprehensive scope of works intervention on the missing links and upgrading of existing ones. The recruited consulting firm commenced work on 26 March 2015 to carry out this study for a duration of 8 months

- **Supplementary (Update of the) regional railway master plan**

271. The overall objective is to conduct a situation analysis of the railway sector and on this basis, update the 2008 ECOWAS railway masterplan. The study will also emphasis a proposal for a mini railway system covering Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and The Gambia, which were inadequately considered for incorporation into the main masterplan. The recruited consulting firm commenced work on 16 March 2015 to carry out this study for a duration of 8 months

- **ECOWAN Market Analysis**

272. The objective of the study is to undertake a comprehensive and evidence based market analysis of the probable income that can be generated from possible services rendered on the ECOWAS Wide Area-Network (ECOWAN) and its user applications. ECOWAN is an e-governance platform through which ECOWAS institutions and Member States can communicate, manage and share common resources online in real time at high bandwidth. The recruited consulting firm is expected to deliver the final report by end October 2015.

- **Postal Services Master Plan**

273. The overall objective of this study is to develop a Postal Service Master Plan in ECOWAS Member States, through sustainable initiatives, programmes and projects including defining strategies for

revamping and restructuring postal services. The recruited consulting firm commenced work on 16th March 2015 to carry out this study for a duration of 8 months.

- ***Extension of the West Africa gas pipeline network***

274. The objectives of the study are to analyze the current operation of the existing pipeline and propose solutions for the optimization of this operation and analyze the technical and economic conditions for the extension of the pipeline network to other ECOWAS countries not party to the WAGP. The recruited consulting firm commenced work on 24 February 2015 to carry out this study for a duration of 18 months.

- ***Rural electrification master plan***

275. The overall objective of study is to determine the current state of rural and peri-urban electrification in each country, determine the future needs and develop a set of programmes to address these needs. The recruited consulting firm commenced work in September 2015 to carry out this study for a duration of 8 months

b. Status of Studies

276. The kick-off meetings for the above studies were held in March, April and June 2015. Data collection in all ECOWAS Member States and Institutions were carried out between May and June 2015. Inception reports, data collection reports and some preliminary reports were delivered by the selected firms. Validation workshops were organized to review the preliminary reports submitted the draft final and final reports of most of the studies are expected by end of year 2015.

277. Other activities and studies planned for implementation include *Technical assistance to the Gender and Social Development Department* for the construction of a humanitarian depot and annexes in Bamako, Mali including detailed engineering study, tender documents and procurement process, supervision of works; (ii) collaboration with the *West Africa Telecommunication Regulators Association (WATRA)* to conduct a study on free roaming services in West Africa as recommended by the WATRA Member States; (iii) support to Port Management Association of West and Central Africa (PMAWCA) to conduct a study on socio-economic impact of PPP concession on maritime sector with a view to benchmarking successes and to inform decision making on future PPP concessions in the region.

✓ ***Coordination, Cooperation and Partnership Development***

- ***Partnership with Islamic Development Bank***

278. The ECOWAS Commission for Infrastructure and the Project Preparation and Development Unit (PPDU) undertook a mission to the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) in Saudi Arabia in February 2015. As a result of the mission a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clearly define the areas of collaboration between the two institutions is expected to be signed by the end of the year has been submitted to ISdB.

- ***Partnership with Spanish Co-operation (AECID)***

279. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between ECOWAS and the Spanish Co-operation in February 2015 providing a framework for support to the PPDU. An amount of €5 million was granted by the Spanish Co-operation in the area of capacity building / technical assistance and project preparation.

- **Partnership with Senegal Republic**

280. A meeting was held in Dakar at the request of the Government of Senegal which currently serves as Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority. As a result of the meeting, the following regional infrastructure projects were targeted to be sponsored by the PPDU and championed by the President of Senegal, namely setting up of the FODETE-ECOWAS; upgrading of the Dakar-Bamako railway link; construction of Sambagalou Dam with OMVG; and construction of the Dakar-Abidjan and Abidjan-Lagos corridor project.

2.4.3 Telecommunications

281. The main activities undertaken by the Commission with respect to telecommunication are presented as follows:

✓ **Broadband Connectivity of ECOWAS Member States**

282. With the assistance of the African Development Bank (AfDB) two consultants completed a study that aims at proposing an appropriate technical solution for rolling out broadband fibre networks over electricity networks for the Mano River Union (MRU). This alternative network will complement the terrestrial broadband network. The study also looked at the appropriate investment options, including costing, for the MRU (Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) Regional Fibre Optic Backbone project (MRU Project).

✓ **Implementation of the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT)**

283. In line with the implementation of the technical roadmap adopted by ECOWAS to meet the 17th June 2015 deadline for the transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), the ECOWAS Commission disseminated the report outlining the key actions and decisions to be implemented to the relevant national entities involved in the implementation of DTT for their necessary actions. The selection process for the test laboratories is in progress and a workshop was convened to review the implementation status of DTT in Member States and make recommendations on how Member States can utilise the additional spectrum available to benefit DTT to ensure Member States meet the new digital transition deadline of June 2017.

✓ **Harmonization of policy and regulatory framework in ICT sector**

284. The African Union-ECOWAS Regional Interconnection Policy Framework workshop was organised to review the status of alignment of individual national policies and regulations in Member States with existing ECOWAS model policies and regulations and to develop a policy framework that will facilitate regional interconnection within the region. A roadmap for implementation of ECOWAS Regional Interconnection Policy and Regulatory Framework was also developed.

✓ **ECOWAS ICT Strategy document**

285. The need for a comprehensive regional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategy for the continuous growth and development of the West African region led to a regional workshop to review the strategy on ICT in light of significant developments in the sector. The workshop also reviewed and validated the 2016 – 2020 Community ICT strategy document.

✓ **Postal sector**

286. Following the recommendation of the ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Post, on the issuance of a commemorative stamp to mark the occasion of the 40th anniversary of ECOWAS. The official

launching is scheduled for December 2015 by the Member States during the summit of the Heads of State and Government.

287. ECOWAS, in collaboration with West African Postal Conference (WAPCO) organised a regional Forum on Postal Reform and Regulation to assess the ECOWAS postal sector, share experiences of Member States in reform and regulation, as well as best practices for the regulation of the postal sector and towards the development of an ECOWAS Postal Master Plan. Draft guidelines on postal regulation as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanism were proposed.
288. Also, the study on the Postal Service Master Plan (PSMP) to modernise the postal services within the ECOWAS (CEDEAO) Region is ongoing. The inception report, data collection mission report and preliminary report have been delivered.

✓ **World Radio Communication**

289. The ECOWAS Preparatory meeting towards the World Radio Communication Conference 2015 (WRC-15) was held in May 2015 to establish the ECOWAS Member States Common Positions (ECOCOPs). A final review of the ECOCOPs was conducted in August 2015 and submitted to the African Telecommunication Union (ATU) for compilation before the final presentation at the World Conference in November 2015.

✓ **The ECOWAS Radio/TV Project**

290. At the 71st ordinary session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers' meeting, held in December 2013 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Ministers recommended that the Commission implement as soon as possible the decision taken by the Heads of State and Government on 15 and 16 December 2000, on the creation of ECOWAS Radio/Television. The Commission started the process in March 2014 with the drafting of a concept note and preparation of a preliminary feasibility study. During the period under review, these two documents were validated by the 1st meeting of Member States held on 28 and 29 October 2015 in Abuja. This meeting resulted in establishing a steering committee and a road map which includes solicitation of local audiovisual private sectors supported by private operators, in accordance with the directives of the Heads of State and Government, and the values of cultural and linguistic diversity of our Community.

✓ **Implementation of the ECOWAS Wide Area Network (ECOWAN)**

291. The ECOWAS Wide Area Network (ECOWAN) is envisaged to be a public sector e-governance platform through which ECOWAS institutions and Member States can communicate, manage and share common resources online in real time at high bandwidth. Key applications such as ALISA (the regional Customs connectivity application/software), RVAIS (Regional Vehicle Administration Information System) and other regional applications requiring real-time connections between ECOWAS institutions can be deployed on this secure site managed solely for and by the region. The ongoing comprehensive and evidence-based market analysis of the probable income that can be generated from possible services rendered on the ECOWAN and its user applications will be completed before the end of the year.

✓ **Establishment of the Regional Data base SIGTEL**

292. The Computerised Telecommunications Management Information System (SIGTEL) is the primary Internet portal for information on the Telecommunications/ICT sector in the ECOWAS region and it is designed to cater for information needs of ECOWAS development partners and investors as well as Member States. The development of the new Eco-SIGTEL suite is ongoing in collaboration

with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for collection of updated and current telecommunication indicators.

✓ **Capacity building**

293. As e-commerce is fast developing with the growth of the Internet, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in collaboration with the Commission, trained hundreds of ECOWAS citizens in 2015 on Legal Aspects of e-Commerce to raise awareness, particularly of lawmakers and government officials, on key aspects to be considered for the drafting of Electronic Commerce Laws, as well as on e-Commerce for Practitioners that aims to promote e-Commerce in ECOWAS region

2.4.4 Energy

294. The main activities undertaken by the Commission in the energy sector are summarised as follows :

✓ **Implementation Of The Emergency Electric Power Supply Programmes**

295. The Commission continued implementation of the emergency electric power supply in the Gambia, Mali and Sierra Leone. In The Gambia, the amount granted for this programme is US\$ 31.90 million. Implementation of the programme is in progress and so far, the entire programme is 55% completed (100% for fuel and lubricants, 70% for maintenance of generators and procurement of spares parts, 30% for the rehabilitation of the Generators G3 and G8 and 20% for capacity building).
296. In Mali a total of US\$ 54.34 million was granted for this Programme. Overall achievement of the implementation is 45 %. The component relating to the procurement of Fuel for the operations of the power plant generators has been completed. The component pertaining to the reinforcement of the generating units of isolated power plants is ongoing and is about 44% completed. The contracts for the procurement of vehicles and special equipment have been signed and 25% executed. The activities relating to the overhauling of generators operating in the occupied areas are 10% executed. Moreover, the Contract of the WAPP Resident Expert which expired in July 2015 has been extend for six (6) month.
297. In Sierra Leone, an amount of US\$ 21.8 million was granted for this Programme. The implementation of the activities was adversely affected by the EBOLA epidemic. The execution of the various components of the Programme is ongoing. A total of six Supply Contracts and one EPC Contract were signed, out of which five supply Contracts (for fuel, lubricants, water coolants, and prepaid meter) have been completed whilst contract for Spare parts for the Generators is 95% completed. The Maintenance contract of the Wartsila generator remains is yet to be signed. The EPC Contract for the transmission and distribution network is ongoing as well as the capacity building programme. Furthermore, the Contract for the WAPP Resident Expert which expired in July 2015 has been extended for one (1) year.

✓ **Coordination of Regional Activities in the Energy Sector**

298. **Update on the ECOWAS Energy Policy:** The Terms of Reference for the study, developed in 2013, were revised. The duration of the study was reduced from 18 months to 11 months in order to remain in the budget allocated for the study and accelerate its implementation. On 1 September 2015, the sub-committee evaluated the expressions of interest from fourteen (14) firms that submitted proposals. Following this assessment, seven (7) firms were selected, and requests for technical and financial proposals will be transmitted to them.

299. **Meeting of Ministers in Charge of Energy:** A meeting of Ministers of Energy in the region would be held in November to review all activities being carried out by the Commission and all ECOWAS energy agencies and to submit for adoption the policies and main documents validated by experts from the Member States.

✓ **Energy Access For All**

300. **Study for the development of rural and peri-urban electrification in West Africa:** The recruitment of the consultant was completed in February 2015. After several delays due to some administrative constraints related to the consultant, the kick-off meeting was finally held in September 2015 at which the inception report submitted by the consultant was validated. Subsequently, data collection missions began and were expected to be completed in mid-October 2015.
301. The Commission organized a regional experts meeting on the popularization of the use of LPG as cooking energy in the ECOWAS region from April 21 to 23 2015 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The meeting enabled experts to take an inventory of the use of LPG as a cooking energy in each ECOWAS state and identify actions, programmes or initiatives that contribute to the popularization of the use of LPG in the ECOWAS region.
302. The Commission participated in the Ministerial Conference on the International Charter of Energy (Hague II) in the Netherlands in May 2015 at which the International Energy Charter was adopted as update of the European Energy Charter. The principle of this charter is to strengthen international cooperation in order to face common problems in terms of energy at the national, regional and international, including the evolution of the global energy architecture. The three major areas of action identified in the Charter are the development of trade in energy consistent with major relevant multilateral agreements, cooperation in the field of energy, energy efficiency and environmental protection. The Commission made a presentation at this conference to provide the adhesion of ECOWAS to this charter.
303. The Commission also participated in the first summit of the infrastructure resilient to climate change in Africa in April 2015, which objectives was to present to representatives of Member states of the African Union practical solutions and technical cooperation of private sector, to prepare them to meet the challenges of climate change impacts on infrastructure in the fields of energy, ICT, infrastructure construction, water, agriculture and food security and attracting international private investors and development agencies to invest in resilient infrastructure projects in Africa.
304. At the request of the Ministry of Energy and Mines of Burkina Faso, the Commission contributed financially to the organization of the international conference on solar energy in Africa - in 2015 AfricaSolar - with the theme "The Solar Market in Africa: Strengths and Weaknesses" that was held in June 2015 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. This meeting allowed experts from the sub-region and investors to hold discussions, share experiences and formulate concrete conclusions on the roles of public and private stakeholders in promoting the development of the solar market in Africa.
305. The Commission participated in the Africa Energy Indaba and the meeting on energy in Africa in May 2015, held in Johannesburg in South Africa. This conference provided an opportunity for the Commission to hold discussions with senior decision makers on regional initiatives on energy and to seek support for the implementation of its programmes in the field of energy.

✓ **Development Of Oil And Gas Sectors**

306. In preparation for the beginning and monitoring of the study for the extension of the gas pipeline network, the Commission undertook, with the support of WAPGA in March 2015, a technical tour of the pipeline facilities. The tour began in Lagos and Cotonou, Lome, Tema and Accra. It enabled the Commission to assess the current operation of the pipeline and become familiar with existing infrastructure in order to have a better understanding that will facilitate the evaluation of the consultant's reports.
307. **Feasibility study for the extension of the West African Gas Pipeline Network:** Following the finalization of the recruitment of the firm in December 2014 for the completion of this study, a kick off meeting was held in Abuja in April 2015, with the participation of representatives of Penspen consultant, the PPDU, the WAGPA. The meeting made it possible to validate the details of the methodology and work plan proposed by the consultant and to ensure the availability of its project team. During the meeting, the modalities and the practical conditions for the data collection missions in Member States were determined and an updated timeframe for the study was proposed. To date, nine countries have been visited and data collection missions are ongoing. The consultant will submit, at the end of these visits, a data collection report which will be validated by ECOWAS.
308. As part of the initiatives planned by the Commission to improve the supply of hydrocarbons in the ECOWAS region, and following the meeting of the Commission with WAEMU in December 2014, a meeting was held in March 2015 with the Commission for Energy of WAEMU. It was decided that cooperation between the two institutions be strengthened to address this issue as recommended by Joint ECOWAS-WAEMU Committee.
309. As part of activities for the development of the use of fossil fuels in the region, the Commission organized a high-level meeting in May 2015 in Abuja, Nigeria, with the African Refiners Association (ARA) for the development of cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons. The meeting which was attended by the President and the Executive Secretary of ARA enabled both institutions to identify the following areas of cooperation: improving the quality of petroleum products in the ECOWAS region; facilitation of hydrocarbons supply in the ECOWAS region; and building the capacity of national stakeholders in the downstream oil sector. To this end, the Commission will work with ARA to harmonize regional specifications on petroleum products (AFRI standards) for adoption by the Ministers in charge of energy and hydrocarbons in the region.
310. To develop appropriate mechanisms for cooperation that will ensure a regular supply of hydrocarbons in the ECOWAS region, a high-level technical mission was undertaken to Headquarters of the Association of African Petroleum Producers (APPA) in the Republic of Congo in June 2015, for the development of cooperation between ECOWAS and the APPA in the fields of energy and hydrocarbons. The mission offered the two institutions the opportunity to affirm their willingness to cooperate in the field of energy, especially in the hydrocarbon sector, in order to meet the energy needs of the people. A draft memorandum of understanding to formalize various areas of cooperation and collaboration identified above was developed
311. The Commission participated in the regional workshop on the reduction of sulfur in fuel in May 2015 organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Public Safety and Sustainable Development (MINESUDD) Côte-d'Ivoire, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Coalition for Clean Air and Climate (CCW) and ECOWAS Commission. Major recommendations made during the workshop are the harmonization of standards and specifications for petroleum products and the harmonization of regulations relating to air quality in the ECOWAS and adoption of these regulations by the Heads of State.

312. Also, the Commission participated in the regional workshop on capacity building for the development of biofuels in Accra in August 2015. The workshop aimed at providing a solution to the issues of inadequate supply of electrical energy by the implementation of projects that promote the development of biofuels in Africa. Organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, with the support of the Commission of the African Union and NEPAD, the workshop provided an opportunity to discuss the formulation of policies and programmes.

2.4.5 ECOWAS Regional Electricity regulatory Authority (ERERA)

313. Key programmes and activities undertaken by ERERA during the period under review are presented below:

✓ Development of Regional Power Market.

314. The ultimate strategic objective of the programme for Development of the regional power market is the setting up of a regulatory and economic environment conducive for the launching of Phase 1 of the programme by 31 December 2016. The following achievements were realised during the course of 2015:

- The Fifth Meeting of the Consultative Committees of Regulators and Operators of ERERA was held on 12 and 13 May 2015 in Akosombo, Ghana. The meeting reviewed the Regional Market Rules and WAPP Operational Manual and recommended their approval by the ERERA's Regulatory Council;
- The adoption by the Regulatory Council of the Regional Transmission Tariff methodology for the West African Power Pool (WAPP) in August 2015;
- The approval by the Regulatory Council of the Regional Market Rules for the West African Power Pool (WAPP) in August 2015;
- The approval by the Regulatory Council of the West African Power Pool (WAPP) Operation Manual in September 2015;
- With the financial and technical support of the European Union Commission, the development of Rules and Procedures for dispute resolution and sanctions started in June 2015 and are likely to be completed by December 2015;
- ERERA obtained the support of the *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) for the finalisation of the transmission pricing models, various templates for Model Power Purchase Agreements and standard Connection and Use of Network Agreements prior to the approval of these documents by ERERA; and
- With the support of GIZ, sensitization campaigns on the Organization of the Regional Electricity Market were conducted by ERERA to the OMVG Countries (Senegal, Guinea, the Gambia and Guinea Bissau), Sierra Leone, Niger, Ghana, Togo and Benin. The missions to Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso are slated to be carried out before the end of 2015. Concerning Guinea Bissau, the assistance consisted of organizing a sensitization workshop on the fundamentals of the regulation in order to establish a regulatory body as part of the implementation of the Directive on the organisation of the regional electricity market.

✓ Regulation of the regional power market

315. The strategic objective of Programme 2 (Regulation of the regional power market) is to enhance the visibility of ERERA's regulatory activities and strengthen its operations as well as the

operations of its Consultative Committees. In relation to this, two working groups were established; one for the collection of data essential for regulatory decisions and the other for consultations on ERERA's work programme.

✓ **Capacity building of institutions**

316. In accordance with the strategic objectives of Programme 3 (Capacity building of the institutions), a training programme on the application of PSSE-Software is expected to be conducted by SIEMENS in December 2015 for staff of ERERA, WAPPP_ICC and some Control Areas.

2.4.6 ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE)

317. The ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) is a specialised agency of the ECOWAS for the promotion of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency technologies in the region. ECREEE has four priority areas of intervention: Tailored Policy, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks; Capacity Development; Awareness Raising and Knowledge Management; and Project Development and Investment Promotion.

✓ **Tailored policy, legal and regulatory frameworks created and implemented**

318. In July 2013, the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government renewed its commitment to the provision of access to sustainable energy services in West Africa by adopting two path-breaking policies - the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy (EREP), which aims to increase the share of renewable energy in the region's overall electricity mix to 35% in 2020 and 48% in 2030; and the ECOWAS Energy Efficiency Policy (EEEP), which aims to implement measures that free 2000 MW of power generation capacity and in the long term, more than double the annual improvement in energy efficiency, so as to attain levels comparable to those of world leaders. The policies include a broad range of RE&EE measures to be implemented at regional and national levels, and represent the ECOWAS contribution to the achievement of the SE4ALL targets. Based on the mandate by the ECOWAS authorities to coordinate the implementation of the regional policies as well the SE4ALL Initiative in West Africa, ECREEE is currently assisting the ECOWAS Member States to develop a coherent and aligned roadmap process.
319. ECOWAS Member States, with the support of ECREEE and partners, notably the Governments of Austria, Spain, Germany, and the United States, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the European Union (EU), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), have made major progress in the development of their respective National Sustainable Energy Country Action Plans. This effort aims at ensuring attainment of the regional targets by 2020 and 2030 in the ECOWAS Member States, and is a critical component of the implementation of the regional renewable energy and energy efficiency policies, as well as the SE4All Initiative in the ECOWAS region. Through the national action plan process, Member States are being supported to institutionalize actions that promote investments in sustainable energy services. Targets set are based on national potentials and socio-economic assessments, and will require that they are underpinned by concrete laws, incentives and measures as well as a clear financing strategy and technically well-designed interventions.
320. ECREEE continues to facilitate regional exchange and cooperation among the Member States on the Action Plan development process, and support MS to develop high quality National Sustainable Energy Country Action Plans. In this context, a high level forum on the ECOWAS Sustainable Energy Policy & Investment was held in Abidjan from 14 to 17 August 2015 with the

objective of highlighting the concrete investment opportunities that could be drawn from the National Sustainable Energy Action Plans of the respective to serve as input for the preparation of investment prospectus to support the operationalisation of the Country Action Agenda. The Prospectus aims at achieving the SE4ALL objectives by identifying and developing a set of implementable programmes and projects, including their investment requirements, which can be presented to potential private and public investors.

321. Within the framework of implementing the ECOWAS Energy Efficiency policy, which among others, sets specific targets regarding the development and adoption of region-wide efficiency standards for buildings, ECREEE has developed an ECOWAS Directive on Energy Efficiency Buildings (EEB). The main purpose of the Directive is to promote the improvement of energy efficiency in buildings in ECOWAS Member States. The Directive will be adopted at the next meeting of ECOWAS Ministers.
322. Also, the Centre developed the ECOWAS Bio-energy Policy framework to promote partnership and ownership and provide guidance to ECOWAS Member States in developing national policies and regulations for sustainable and socially friendly bioenergy policies and implementation plans. It was initiated with a view to providing guidelines to enhance energy security and access without compromising food security, as well as rural development in West Africa, as part of the contribution of the ECOWAS Commission to the SE4ALL initiative.
323. ECREEE is also promoting gender mainstreaming in energy access. In partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United States National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), ECREEE has developed the ECOWAS Policy for Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access, which would be the first of its kind globally. It aims at addressing barriers that hinder the participation of women in the expansion of energy access by ensuring that women make both intellectual and business-wise contributions to ending the region's energy crises, as well as benefit from the region's energy interventions.

✓ ***Capacities are strengthened and applied***

324. ECREEE continues to build the capacity of market-enablers and players to develop and implement renewable energy and energy efficiency programs in the ECOWAS Region. ECREEE has implemented several train-the-trainer (TTT) programmes for a number of relevant renewable energy tools, such as RetScreen and the hybrid optimization model for electric renewables (HOMER). Follow-up trainings have been undertaken across the ECOWAS Member States. Other trainings include impact of high RE penetration on electrical systems; installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems; E-learning program on Sustainable Energy Solutions; study tours and field visits for West African energy sector stakeholders.
325. ECREEE recently finalised a concept for the ECOWAS Training and Certification Program for solar PV installers in the ECOWAS region. This is against the background of promising market trends due to increasingly lower prices which has also led to a rise in the demand for qualified installers and technicians to design, install, and maintain the systems. Certification therefore ensures that a certain level of competence of the "certified" installer to complete a PV installation professionally, safely and effectively by creating a regional certification scheme for all ECOWAS countries. This is the first step for a more global certification scheme for all technologies.
326. ECREEE is also currently implementing the ECOWAS Solar Thermal Energy Training and Demonstration Program, in collaboration with seven training institutions in Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. The practical training program, which is being funded by Austria and Spain, successfully commenced with a technical training in solar water heating and solar drying of agricultural products.

327. A Capacity Building Programme for RE&EE was developed, in line with the regional renewable energy and energy efficiency policies. The capacity building programme particularly addresses the gender aspect as well as south–south and north–south knowledge transfer issues.
328. ECREEE is also collaborating with the Government of Cape Verde and the Luxembourg Development Cooperation in the formulation of a business plan for the operationalization of the Energy Training Centre based in Praia, Cape Verde. The training centre is poised to become the first regional training centre carrying out renewable energy vocational training in the ECOWAS region.

✓ ***Knowledge base, awareness raising and advocacy strengthened***

329. Through the ECOWAS Observatory for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECOWREX), a web-based portal launched in 2012, ECREEE is providing decision-makers, project developers, investors and other marked enablers with tailored information, and data and planning strategies. ECOWREX allows users to access a broad range of data on different types of RE technologies such as: solar, wind, biomass and hydro resource. Also included are electricity infrastructure, relevant documents, energy country profiles which ultimately contributes to the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency in the region.
330. ECREEE is currently implementing an ACP-EU Co-operation Programme in Science and Technology (S&T II) project - “Promoting Sustainable Energy Access Through the Use of Geospatial Technologies in West Africa”. The project aims to enhance the functionalities of the ECOWREX platform by incorporating new technologies compliant with international standards for aiding data interoperability, extraction, sharing and transfer of scientific knowledge. As part of the project, ECREEE is currently developing a software model, for planning toward improving access to electricity. This includes development of energy access maps, green power potential maps and electricity consumption maps. In this last quarter of 2015, ECREEE will mainly focus on data collection, update of the ECOWREX portal and improvement of the Geoserver functionality.
331. The ECOWAS Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Status Report, was also produced collaboratively by REN21 and ECREEE, the report provides a regional perspective on the renewable energy and energy efficiency market and industry development in West Africa. The report, which was launched on 10th November 2014, concludes that renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies have rapidly become cost effective solutions for overcoming the diverse array of energy challenges currently facing the ECOWAS region.

✓ ***Business and Investment Promotion***

332. ECREEE continues to actively mobilize investments in clean, efficient and renewable energy technologies. Its investment programme is being implemented within two major initiatives: the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Facility (EREF) and the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Investment Initiative (EREI). The EREF is an innovative investment fund for RE&EE projects: over 40 projects of the first call have been completed and 6 are currently under implementation in the framework of the second call and will be completed by the end of 2016 in Cabo Verde, Nigeria, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Niger and Burkina Faso. the third EREF Call has been launched and aims to ensure further rollout of clean energy mini-grids with particular emphasis on supporting and promoting productive uses of electricity.
333. Similarly, ECREEE has commenced the implementation of the ECOWAS Program on Access to Sustainable Electricity Services (EPASES), which is a component of the ECREEE Access to Improved Energy Services (EAIES) Initiative. Under this programme, the Centre is currently supporting Niger to develop a robust Rural Electrification Master Plan.

334. As part of efforts to increase energy access for the rural population, ECREEE is implementing an Energy Facility project with support from the European Union (EU) to provide access to electricity services in forty villages with solar mini-grids in the southeast of Senegal, particularly in Ziguinchor, Kolda and Tambacounda, over the next four years. The 8.9 million Euro project is being co-financed by the EU to the tune of 6.4 million Euros.
335. ECREEE also serves as the implementing agency for the GEF-UNIDO project “Promoting market based development of small to medium scale renewable energy systems in Cabo Verde”. The project supports sustainable development in Cabo Verde through the creation of market conditions conducive for the development of small to medium-scale renewable energy systems in line with national energy policy objectives of making the country less dependent on imported fossil fuels. Similarly, a UNIDO/ECREEE-GEF project has been established to increase renewable energy in the electricity sector of Guinea-Bissau. The project will promote the installation of 2.5 MW renewable energy generation capacity and foster the development of a National Renewable Energy Investment Plan. Moreover, it aims at developing and bringing the 18 MW Saltinho Hydropower project to financial close. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Guinea-Bissau, OMVG, UNIDO, African Development Bank (AfDB) and ECREEE is under preparation.
336. ECREEE is providing support, partially in collaboration with GIZ, to project preparatory activities. The Ministries of Energy of Mali and Burkina Faso have been supported in their competitive biddings for grid-connected renewable energy power plants and the Gambian utility (NAWEC) in contract negotiation with a solar PV private promoter. Conversations are currently on-going with the governments of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Togo and Benin on similar engagements. ECREEE is also working with the private sector, supporting them in the framework of two initiatives i.e. PROSPER with IRENA and WAFCEF with CTI-PFAN and AfDB. The finalists of the WAFCEF competition were presented to potential investors during the Abidjan High Level Policy and Investment Forum which also provided a platform for debate between public sector actors, private promoters and financiers.
337. Before the end of 2015, ECREEE will launch several activities including an analysis of de-risking public policy and financial measures to promote private sector investment in renewable energy and the identification of regulatory, administrative and procedural steps for doing business in the clean energy sector.

2.4.7 West African Power Pool (WAPP)

338. The WAPP investment programme is derived from the ECOWAS Master Plan for the Generation and Transmission of Electrical Energy developed in 1999 and revised in 2005. The progress made by WAPP in the implementation of its investment programme in 2015 is as follows:

✓ Projects Under Preparation

339. **330 kV Côte d’Ivoire - Ghana Interconnection Reinforcement Project:** The project is under preparation with funding of €1.75 million from the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund. The Final Feasibility Report was adopted by the concerned countries and the Financing Agencies. The final report on the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the Ghana component of the project was completed and an Environmental Permit issued. For the Cote d’Ivoire component, the report is being finalised for permitting. Financing of the entire project cost of approximately €185.5 million was secured from KfW and the European Investment Bank (EIB) and related project appraisal missions conducted. Commissioning of the project is expected in 2019.

340. **225 kV Guinea – Mali Interconnection Project:** The project was prepared with funding of about US\$4.3 million from the African Development Bank (AfDB). The Final Feasibility Report was adopted by the stakeholders. The project cost is estimated to €286 million. The ESIA for the project was completed and Environmental Permits have been issued by both countries. Plans are underway to organise a Donor Roundtable Meeting to mobilise financing for the project. Commissioning of the project is expected in 2019.
341. **225 kV Ghana – Burkina Faso - Mali Interconnection Project:** Pre-investment studies funded by EIB was concluded. With support from the Indian Government, Mali commenced the construction of the Sikasso – Bamako segment. As to the remaining part of the interconnection, Consultants were recruited to develop an appropriate commercial framework, and relevant tender documents and update the environmental and social impact and line route study. These complementary studies were funded by the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund through the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) with an amount of €1.2 million. A provisional line route for the project was adopted, and the update of the ESIA is ongoing, following the No-Objection of the Funding Agent on the modalities for preparing the Resettlement Action Plan. The draft Feasibility Study Update Report was also prepared by the Consultant. Commissioning of the project is expected in 2020.
342. **450 MW Domunli (Ghana) and Maria Gléta (Benin) Regional Power Generation Facilities:** These projects are to be implemented through Public-Private Partnerships. 46 hectares of land at Maria Gleta with free-zone status was granted by the Government of Benin. A site at Domunli was identified and efforts are underway to secure the land title from the Government of Ghana. Furthermore, the WAPP entered into a Joint Development Agreement and Confidentiality Agreement with a Project Developer, Africa Finance Corporation, and the update of pre-investment studies commenced. Commissioning of the project is expected in 2020.
343. **515 MW Souapiti (Guinea) Hydropower Facility:** The project is under preparation with funding from the World Bank of amount US\$1.3 million and entails a Feasibility Study Update and Determination of Best Option to develop the project under the framework of a Public-Private Partnership (PPP). The study on the project commenced and is expected to be completed in March 2016. Commissioning of the project is envisaged in 2021.
344. **330 kV Nigeria – Niger – Burkina – Benin/Togo Interconnection Project:** The project is under preparation with funding of US\$5.9 million from the NEPAD-IPPF to be complemented with counterpart funding from the beneficiary utilities. The Line Route and ESIA Study as well as the Feasibility Study and Preparation of Bidding are ongoing and expected to be completed in May 2016. Project is expected to be completed in 2020.
345. **330 kV TCN (Nigeria) - CEB (Benin - Togo) Interconnection Reinforcement Project:** The project requires funding to prepare pre-investment studies. The NEPAD-IPPF of the AfDB carried out a re-appraisal of the Request for Funding from the WAPP Secretariat in April 2015 with a view to processing for approval. In the meantime, the WAPP Secretariat, within the framework of the Bank's Advance Procurement possibility, re-launched the Call for Expressions of Interest to accelerate the Consultant recruitment process.
346. **147 MW Adjarala (Togo/Benin) Hydropower Facility:** The project is under negotiations for financing. The update of pre-investment studies was concluded by CEB and an Environmental Permit issued for the project. Requests for financing were submitted by the Governments of Togo and Benin to China Exim-Bank for consideration. The Bank subsequently conducted Appraisal Missions and continued evaluating the Requests. Commissioning of the project is expected in 2020.

347. **30 MW Solar Power Plant in Mali:** In response to a request from WAPP to fund the Feasibility Study as well as the ESIA, KfW undertook a mission to Bamako in January 2015 to appraise the Request with the Authorities in Mali. KfW was however informed that the preference of Mali was to let the private sector develop the renewable energy projects. In light of this, KfW informed WAPP of its inability to continue processing the Request from WAPP.
348. **OMVG Energy Project (Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau):** The project involves the construction of the 240 MW Hydropower Facility at Kaleta, the 128 MW Hydropower Facility at Sambangalou and 225 kV Transmission line of length 1,677 km interconnecting 4 countries. The 240 MW Kaleta Hydropower Project financed by the Government of Guinea with support from China Eximbank was commissioned in August 2015. The OMVG Member countries have submitted requests for financing to the China Eximbank for the realisation of the 128 MW Sambangalou Hydropower Facility. The AfDB, WB, EIB, AFD, KfW, IsDB, BOAD, and Kuwait Fund have confirmed their interest to fund the transmission line and the procurement process has been launched. The Boards of Directors of IsDB, WB and AfDB have already approved their components of the project financing. Commissioning of the 128 MW Hydropower Facility at Sambangalou is expected in 2020 and the 225 kV Transmission line in 2019.

✓ *Projects under Implementation are as follows:*

349. **330 kV Volta (Ghana) – Lome ‘C’ (Togo) – Sakété (Benin) Interconnection Project:** The project is financed by the African Development Bank (AfDB), World Bank (WB), KfW and Banque Ouest Africain de Développement (BOAD) to the tune of US\$105 million. Construction works on the Ghana portion of the project were completed, while the construction works for the Togo/Benin portion are in progress and expected to be completed in 2017.
350. **225 kV Bolgatanga (Ghana) - Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) Interconnection Project:** The project is financed by the WB, AfDB and EIB to the tune of US\$105 million. With the support of the Owners’ Engineer, the recruitment of Contractors for various packages of the Project was concluded in line with the procurement processes of the Funding Agencies. The project is expected to be commissioned by 2017.
351. **330 kV Aboadze (Ghana) – Prestea (Ghana) – Kumasi (Ghana) - Bolgatanga (Ghana) Transmission Line Project:** Financing of €141 million has been secured from AFD by GRIDCo for the construction of the Kumasi – Bolgatanga segment. . The Owner’s Engineer has been recruited for supervision of works and the **recruitment** of Contractors is in progress. The 330 kV Aboadze – Prestea - Kumasi section is under negotiation by GRIDCo with Strategic Partners for implementation. Expected commissioning of the 330 kV Kumasi – Bolgatanga segment is 2018, whilst the 330 kV Aboadze – Prestea – Kumasi section is expected in 2020.
352. **161 kV Tumu (Ghana) – Han (Ghana) - Wa (Ghana) Transmission Line Project:** Construction works on the Sawla, Wa and Tumu transmission line and sub-stations have been completed and commissioned.
353. **225 kV Côte d’Ivoire – Liberia - Sierra Leone - Guinea Interconnection Project:** The project financing, estimated at €329 million, has been totally secured from the AfDB, WB, EIB and KfW. The corresponding Loan Agreements have been executed between the concerned countries and the Funding Agencies. The project is being implemented through a Special Purpose Company, TRANSCO CLSG owned by the four concerned national power utilities. With the assistance of the Owner’s Engineer Phase 1, TRANSCO CLSG has launched the procurement for the works. The commercial framework (Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), Transmission Service Agreement (TSA)) for the project is being finalised. Commissioning of the project is expected in 2018.

354. **Cross- Border Electrification Projects:**

- **Côte d'Ivoire - Liberia (1st Energy Facility):** This project was funded by the European Union (EU), Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) and Société des Énergies de Côte d'Ivoire (CI-Energies), to the tune of €9.6 million for the electrification of 18 rural communities in Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire. Works on the Côte d'Ivoire segment has been completed. In Liberia, works in the Nimba completed whilst Grand Gedeh and Maryland Counties are at various level of completion. 28,000 persons will benefit directly from project
- **Ghana - Togo South (2nd Energy Facility):** This project, funded by the EU, ECG, Communauté Électrique du Bénin (CEB) and Compagnie Energie Electrique de Togo (CEET) to the tune of €2.3 million for the electrification of 12 rural communities in southern Togo from Ghana has been completed and commissioned with over 9,200 persons as direct beneficiaries.
- **Benin - Togo North (2nd Energy Facility):** This project, funded by the EU, CEB and CEET to the tune of €2.1 million for the electrification of 10 rural communities in northern Togo from Benin has been completed and commissioned with over 8,100 persons as direct beneficiaries.

✓ **Regional Electricity Market**

355. The **activities** undertaken in relation to the establishment of a regional electricity market are as follow:

- ***Establishment of a Reliable Power Pool Operation***

356. **Synchronization of WAPP Interconnected Network:** The project is funded by the World Bank with an amount of US\$ 21.5 million including a Technical Assistance to WAPP Secretariat.

- The study to evaluate among others, the equipment requirements for attaining sustained synchronisation of the WAPP interconnected system was launched in December 2014 and is ongoing.
- Review and update of the WAPP Operations Manual is in progress.
- Development of a WAPP Certification Programme for System Operators in progress.

357. **Implementation of WAPP Information and Coordination Center (ICC):** Funding for the project to the tune of € 30 million was secured from European Union. A Consultant was recruited to develop the Architectural Design for the ICC building and equipment and prepare the Bidding Documents. The relatives Documents have been completed and adopted by WAPP Task Force and the Bidding process is being finalized for launching.

358. **Assessment of Network Reliability:** Load flow simulation for peak load and contingency analysis were done with the updated WAPP Model to assess the network reliability against contingencies;

359. **Implementation of WAPP Dark Fibre Project:** A Consortium Agreement was prepared and adopted as well as dispatched to WAPP Member Utilities for execution.

- **Establishment of the Regional Market**

360. **Implementation of the Regional Electricity Market Road Map:** The WAPP-ICC has been designated as the Regional Market Operator to implement the Market Road Map. A Template Contract for market operations has been developed to this effect.
361. Transmission tariff methodology for point to point transactions was developed as well as procedures for assessing and payment for transmission service.
362. **Implementation of Distribution Investment Development and Loss Reduction Program:** Funding was secured from GIZ to support the program. A Consultant was recruited to prepare Feasibility Study and toolkits aimed at facilitating the project preparation.

- **Ensure Periodic Reporting of Market Operations**

363. **Enhancement of Monitoring & Evaluation Function:** A Consultant was recruited to review M&E Framework and M&E Manual.
364. **Development of WAPP Geographical Information System (GIS):** The development of a WAPP GIS containing database on power infrastructure in the sub-region with accompanying maps is ongoing with the support of EU.

✓ **ECOWAS Technical and Financial Assistance Programme for City of Conakry**

365. US\$30 million was provided by ECOWAS Commission in 2011 for the Programme with US\$20 million as Loan and US\$10 million as Grant. At the 74th "Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers" held in May 2015, the US\$ 20 million Loan was converted to a Grant. The Outstanding activities of the Programme are being finalized with the view to closing the project;

2.5. Human Development

2.5.1 Humanitarian Affairs and Social Affairs

366. **In the area of humanitarian and social affairs, the Commission** continued to focus on improvement of the social conditions of ECOWAS citizen and the humanitarian space of the Region. This was achieved through capacity building for disaster management and response to humanitarian risks emanating from conflict, other man- made and natural causes. The principal activities undertaken in this domain are presented as follows:
367. **Response to Ebola Virus Disease (EVD):** During the period, the Commission conducted an assessment of the Ebola situation in the three most affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). In response to the results of the assessment, Liberia and Sierra Leone have both been declared Ebola free. Several accompanying measures to support the final eradication of the disease are underway including assistance for social mobilization, ongoing awareness and support to orphans and vulnerable survivors in the three countries. As a result of the consultations, with African Union, ECOWAS is in the process of establishing a Regional Centre for Disease Control to support the establishment of resilient health systems at national level, facilitated by regional structures. Also, robust proposals for the United States support against Ebola were outlined to be implemented by the ECOWAS Commission and Member States.
368. **Boko Haram Insurgency:** Towards assisting the population affected by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, the Commission has set aside the sum of US\$ 700,000.00 for assisting the internally displaced persons (IDP) and Refugees. Also, the ECOWAS Emergency Response Team (EERT)

worked closely with the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and the UNHCR to develop best modality for assisting the victims.

369. **Review of EERT Processes and Procedure:** A draft ECOWAS Standardized Emergency Management Systems (ESEMS) document was developed for adoption by Ministers in charge of humanitarian affairs in Member States in 2016. The objective of the document is to review the operations of the EERT to better position the Commission for timely, standardized and effective humanitarian management and response.
370. **Capacity Building:** The Commission in collaboration with the UN Organization for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) conducted training courses and consultative meetings with the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC).
371. **Humanitarian Depot:** With regard to the development of the humanitarian depot in Mali, a new piece of land has been allocated for the construction of the depot and processes are ongoing to recruit consultants for the engineering study and architectural design.
372. **ECOWAS _UNHCR Collaboration:** ECOWAS and the UNHCR have made progress on the right to nationality and eradication of statelessness in the foreseeable future. In this regard, regional instrument on the right to nationality and concrete framework for eradicating statelessness was developed during the year. In addition, under the ECOWAS-UNHCR joint partnership, sensitization missions were carried out to Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Nigeria on the need to domesticate the Kampala Convention on IDP.
373. **Disaster Risk Reduction:** The Commission participated in the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held during the period. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a new framework for disaster risk reduction for the period 2015-2030. Also, preparation for the implementation of the ACP EU \$5 Million Grant for "Strengthening Disaster Risk Management Capacity" project in West Africa commenced. Furthermore Member States have adopted the model on national disaster management agency and risk reduction.
374. **Counter Trafficking in Persons:** The Commission held series of meetings with stakeholders to assist Member States to build capacity, develop guidelines for child protection framework and new Plans of Action on Counter Trafficking in persons.
375. **Social Affairs:** On social affairs, the process of developing a database on labour market and employment in the ECOWAS region which started in 2014 is in progress. Two documents, the study on the establishment of a regional information system on the labour market and the study on the establishment of a Regional Bank utility of employment were validated in April 2015. A draft feasibility study for the harmonization of labour laws in the region was produced and will be validated by the ECOWAS decision-making bodies.

2.5.2 Gender, Child Development, Youth/Sports, Civil Society, Employment and Drug Control

❖ GENDER

376. The ECOWAS Experts and Ministers in charge of Gender and Women Affairs' meeting was held in early January, 2015 in Dakar. The following documents were adopted during the meeting: (i) Supplementary Act on Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region; (ii) ECOWAS Plan of Action on Gender and Trade; (iii) ECOWAS Framework and Plan of Action on Gender and Migration; (iv) The Accra Declaration on Social Protection; and (v) Declaration on the Abduction of the Chibok Girls in Nigeria. These operational documents are indispensable for the implementation of the ECOWAS Gender Policy.

377. **ECOWAS Commission** also participated in the African Union Summit on Gender and Women Empowerment Related Meetings which took place from 23 to 31 January 2015. The African Union (AU) has dedicated 2015 as the “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063,” and it falls within the African Union Women’s Decade (2010-2020).
378. **Other key meetings and international conferences attended by the Commission in 2015 included** (i) participation in the United Nations Commission on Status of Women where the leader of the ECOWAS delegation addressed the plenary session on ECOWAS Post-Beijing +20 activities; (ii) participation in the inception meeting for the drafting of the Gender and Energy Policy which took place in February, 2015 in Abidjan (iii) collaborating with the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) to jointly organise a regional Gender and Energy Workshop to validate the draft ECOWAS Policy for Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access in Dakar from 3 to 6 June 2015; and (iv) participation in the Global Conference entitled “Women and Social Inclusion: From Beijing to Post-2015”, jointly organised by the UNDP and UN Women and the Government of Argentina as part of a year-long series of events to commemorate the Twentieth Anniversary of the Beijing Conference.
379. Mainstreaming gender issues into regional integration programmes was also facilitated during the course of the year. In this respect, technical assistance was provided for the Draft ECOWAS Emergency Management System, Draft Plan of Action on Statelessness, Draft Human Resource document for the Recruitment of Civilian staff for Peace Support Operations, Gender and Energy, Free Movement and Migration Programme, Child Labour, Environment, Human Resources, Political Affairs, etc.

✓ ***Implementation of women, peace security work plan***

380. ECOWAS Commission, with support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and in collaboration with the West Africa Network for Peace building, WANEP, and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWA&SD) in Nigeria, conducted a capacity building workshop for 30 Women Community Leaders from the North East region (the region where the Chibok Girls were abducted) of Nigeria on Dialogue and Mediation from 27 to 30 January 2015. The training aimed at strengthening the capacities of women from the North East zone with the skills for effective participation in peace processes, especially in the areas of dialogue, mediation and other preventive mechanisms and introduce them to strategies and techniques necessary for competent mediation and dialogue practice.
381. As part of the strengthening of resources for Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE), the ECOWAS Commission has worked extensively on electoral matters but for the first time has extended its efforts to enhancing women’s participation in electoral processes in West Africa by organising Gender and Election BRIDGE trainings in Nigeria, Togo, Burkina Faso, Cote D’Ivoire and Guinea – the five countries in West Africa holding elections in 2015. In each of the five countries Gender and Election Bridge training was held for about 40 women leaders from civil society, media, political parties, traditional leaders and staff of the respective national Ministries in charge of Women and Gender Affairs.
382. ECOWAS Commission participated in the October 2015 Security Council Open Debate and high level Review of Women, Peace and Security and made a presentation on the ECOWAS regional framework and status of implementation of UNSCR 1325..The Commission was also a panelist on a discussion on “Holding Ourselves Accountable: African Experiences on UNSCR 1325”, and participated in bi-lateral meetings with UN Department of Political Affairs and the Bureau of Conflict Prevention and Resolution.

383. Within the context of the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Strengthening the role of women and community leaders in the fight against violent extremism (FAV) in West Africa, ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) organised a pilot workshop from 4 to 6 August 2015 in Abuja to engage community leaders, women and young people in dialogue on countering violent extremism. The workshop focused on how to strengthen community resilience against harmful ideologies and networks involved in radicalization, and on how to forge greater partnerships between ECOWAS and civil society organizations in the fight against terrorism.

✓ ***Integration of Gender in the development programmes***

384. During the year 2015 the business incubator program for women entrepreneurs (BIAWE) following its implementation is to finalize the feasibility study for the incubator model in Sierra Leone. The process began with launch of feasibility study and national validation in Burkina Faso in December 2014. This was followed by an ECOWAS internal validation workshop in April 2015 to examine and validate the Burkina Faso Business Incubator Model in collaboration with NEPAD and AECID. The sum of 50,000 Euros is available to be disbursed to women entrepreneurs in Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone as credit through recognized micro-finance agency. The model incubator project was launched in Burkina Faso in October, 2015.

385. The Ebola outbreak delayed the take-off of the feasibility study in Sierra Leone. However, the ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs of Sierra Leone, re-launched the implementation of the BIAWE project in Sierra Leone. In this regard, an induction and planning meeting was held in September 2015 and the launch of the incubator model is planned for the end of the 2015. It is expected that the two pilot incubators will support the development of 40 entrepreneurs (20 per country) with innovative ideas to develop their businesses and increase access to the local and regional markets.

386. ECOWAS is currently collaborating with the NEPAD Agency of the African Union on the Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture Programme. The aim of the programme is to achieve an effective and equitable participation of African women smallholder farmers, youth and other vulnerable groups in climate-smart agriculture.

387. ECOWAS is currently collaborating with FAO to implement a project on Gender and Agriculture. The overarching goal of this project is to ensure that agricultural transformation and inclusive agricultural growth fully benefit and empower women and youth farmers in the ECOWAS Region.

❖ **ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC)**

388. Activities were focused on two main programmes drawn from its strategic plan, namely (i) Programme on the Institutional and Organisational Capacity Building of National Gender Machineries; and (ii) Programme on Human Capital Development, Economic Empowerment of Women, Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, Peace and Security.

- ***Institutional and Organisational Capacity Building of National Gender Machineries***

389. Within the framework of this programme, the EGDC aims at creating an enabling institutional and organisational environment for the promotion of gender equality in the ECOWAS region through building the capacity of the national gender machineries, key stakeholders and gender-based civil society organisations to mainstream gender in the development policies, strategies and programmes of ECOWAS Member states. The following activities were carried out under this programme :

- National Gender Training Workshops in ECOWAS Member States

390. Three (3) National Gender Training Workshops were held in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali during the period under review. The main objective of the workshops was to build the knowledge and skills of key gender actors and stakeholders to undertake gender analysis and gender mainstreaming in the national policies, strategies and programmes of the Member states.
391. The three workshops trained a total of **one hundred and five (105) participants** drawn from the sector ministries, national parliaments, security and law enforcement agencies, women groups, civil society organisations, private sector operators, youth groups, the ECOWAS National Units and the media.

- Adoption of the Supplementary Act on Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in West Africa

392. Under the auspices of the Gender Centre, the ECOWAS Ministers responsible for Gender Affairs adopted the ECOWAS Supplementary Act on Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in West Africa at their meeting held in Dakar in January 2015. The Supplementary Act is a regional instrument that both addresses the existing gaps in the legal instruments relating to women's rights and takes into account the new challenges and issues relating to women's empowerment and participation in the sustainable development of the West African region.

- Participation of the EGDC in the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

393. The Centre participated in the 59th Session of the CSW, held in New York in March 2015. This activity enabled the EGDC to enhance the visibility of ECOWAS activities on gender and to strengthen its ties with other development partners.

- Human Capital Development, Economic Empowerment of Women, Peace, Security, Good Governance and Human Rights

394. Under this programme which aims at contributing to the creation of an enabling environment for building the capacity of women and empowering them economically; and for ensuring a peaceful and secure society in which gender equality and human rights are guaranteed, the following activities were carried out:

- Scholarships of Excellence for Girls

395. Aimed at contributing to the promotion of gender equity and equality in the education sector, the Centre is currently supporting a total of one hundred and eighty-three (183) brilliant but needy girls in specialised technical and professional training in all the ECOWAS Member States with scholarships.

- Provision of Medical and Financial Support to Women and Girls suffering from Obstetrics Fistula

396. The main objective of this activity is to improve the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls suffering from obstetric fistula with the view to enabling them to live useful, dignifying, productive and reproductive lives. In the long term, the Gender Centre aims at eradicating fistula obstetrics from the ECOWAS region.

397. Under this programme, a total of three hundred and forty-three (343) women suffering from obstetrics fistula have so far been treated in ECOWAS Member states within the framework of this activity. Out of this number, two hundred and ninety (290) women cured of fistula have been successfully re-integrated socially and economically.

- Development of Joint ECOWAS/UNFPA regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Obstetric Fistula from West Africa

398. The Gender Centre, in collaboration with the UNFPA Regional Office for West and Central Africa, developed a Regional Plan of Action for the Elimination of Obstetric Fistula from West Africa. The main purpose of this initiative is to provide a consolidated regional approach to the treatment and eradication of obstetric fistula in the ECOWAS Region.

399. The draft plan of action would be taken through the necessary adoption procedures leading to the mobilization of resources and the subsequent implementation of the plan.

- Provision of Technical and Financial support to Women engaged in the Processing of Agricultural, Forestry and Handicraft Products

400. The main objective of this activity is to empower women economically through building their capacity to engage in the processing of agricultural, fishery and handicraft products to enable them to create and manage profitable and sustainable businesses.

401. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) women from eight Member states have been trained within the framework of this activity, on techniques of food processing and basic business management skills.

402. The EGDC has provided financial support to these women to invest in their economic ventures; and is in the process of providing them with technical support in the form of agricultural equipment to enable them intensify their processing activities.

- Provision of support to the Network on Peace and Security for Women in the ECOWAS Region (NOPSWECO)

403. The implementation of this activity is in progress. The MOU between ECOWAS and NOPSWECO is yet to be signed to pave the way for the transfer of funds to the NOPSWECO Regional Secretariat in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, for the upkeep of the secretariat and the subsequent holding of the NOPSWECO General Assembly Meeting.

- Provision of support to the Network of Young Female Leaders of West Africa (ROAJELF)

404. Within the framework of this activity, the EGDC is providing support to ROAJELF to develop a five-year strategic plan. The development of the draft plan is far advanced, with the major remaining tasks being the finalisation of the strategic plan and its validation.

- Terminal Evaluation of EGDC Strategic Plan 2009 - 2013

405. The Gender Centre is in the process of evaluating its strategic plan and preparing a new plan for 2016 – 2020. An external consultant has been contracted to carry out the evaluation and it is expected that this exercise will be concluded before the end of the year.

✓ **CHILD**

406. Work on ECOWAS Child Protection is ongoing and a Concept Note has been written on the forthcoming meeting on the development of implementation guidelines for the Draft ECOWAS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework on Child Protection. Some meetings have also been held with key partners on collaboration for moving forward the ECOWAS Child Protection Programme.
407. Also, the Commission is cooperating with the African Union, UNICEF and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Nigeria to hold a Regional Training Programme on Ending Child Marriage planned to hold in Abuja before the end of 2015.

❖ **DRUG CONTROL AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

✓ **DRUG CONTROL**

- ***ECOWAS Commission-EU sign a Grant Agreement***

408. The ECOWAS Commission and EU in February, 2015 signed a Standard Grant Agreement in the sum of Three Million, Six Hundred and Seventy Thousand and Fifty Seven Euros (3, 670.057 EUR) to support capacity building of the ECOWAS Commission Drug Unit in order to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and implementation of the Regional Drug Action Plan. In this respect, the first phase of staff recruited under the EU Grant commenced duty in September 2015 while the second phase of recruitment is in progress.

- ***Participation at the 58th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 6th- 14th March, 2015, Austria, Vienna.***

409. ECOWAS Commission led by the President of the Commission, His Excellency, Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo participated at the 58th Session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in Vienna and co-hosted a side-event with UNODC at the margins of the meeting on 10 March 2015 with the theme "Countering Drug Trafficking and Consumption in West Africa: Achievements, Challenges and New Priorities."
410. A Bilateral meeting was also held between ECOWAS Commission and the UNODC which discussed areas of existing collaboration between UNODC and ECOWAS and progress in the implementation of the ECOWAS Drug Action Plan (2008-2014).

- ***First African Union Meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Population and Drug Control, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 13th – 17th, 2015***

411. ECOWAS participated at the First African Union meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Population and Drug Control in Addis Ababa from 13 to 17 April 2015.. The meeting examined the first progress report on the implementation of the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control, (2013 – 2017) based on reports submitted to the African Union from the Regional Economic Communities, UNODC and other AU technical partners..

- ***West African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (WENDU) Report Back Meeting, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, April 21st – 23rd, 2015.***

412. The meeting discussed presentations from experts in all the Member States, drawn from psychiatric hospitals, treatment and rehabilitation centres on the use of the WENDU data collection form, and the presentation of country reports on the drug abuse situation in their country. The WENDU Project aims at ensuring the availability of valid and reliable data to assist policy and decision makers to formulate effective policies to reduce drug abuse in the region.

- **ECOWAS and UNODC are collaborating to conduct an assessment of the key capacity gaps and vulnerabilities on Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West African countries using the West Africa Strategic Assistance Framework (WASAF) adopted by G7 Assistance Strategy Committee.**

413. The WASAF Project is an initiative of the G7+ Assistance Strategy Committee on serious and organized crimes in West Africa conducted in partnership between UNODC and ECOWAS. The UK has already provided funding to support the work. Key **achieved** made during the course of the year include (i) -Reviewing and forwarding of ECOWAS inputs to UNODC on the Draft WASAF questionnaire and methodology for the study - May, 4-13th, 2015; and Joint ECOWAS –UNODC Assessment Mission to Benin and Togo, from 22 to 28 June, 2015 following which the following observations on drug use and efforts to address the problem were made:

- Need for improved prison conditions
- There is need to re- enforce checks at the airport; many arrests of drug traffickers are made on a daily basis.
- Falsification of international travel passports is rampant. Government ministries need technical assistance to stem down the rise.
- Need for increased collaboration among law enforcement officers to counteract the sophisticated tools and methods used by drug traffickers.

414. The second assessment mission to Cape Verde was schedule for a later date in the year.

- **ECOWAS-UNODC-EU Support for the Implementation of ECOWAS Drug Action Plan**

415. ECOWAS hosted a meeting with the UNODC on the 3rd June, 2015. The meeting provided an opportunity for Mr. Pierre Lapaque, the **Regional** Representative of UNODC for West and Central Africa to introduce the new UNODC project staff to be based at the ECOWAS Commission.. .

- **Workshop for Civil Society Organizations on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse, July 28th – 30th, 2015.**

416. The Workshop for Regional Civil **Society** Organizations on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa, was held from July 28th – 30th at the ECOWAS Commission. The workshop aimed at identifying sustainable intervention strategies to reduce the human suffering caused by drug trafficking and abuse in the region and also to make inputs into the draft 2016-2020 Drug Action Plan.

- **Joint Operations Mission to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea Conakry**

417. The operation aims at reducing trans-national organised criminal activities in the borders along Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. **Joint** police operations will be carried out at the States' sea/air ports and borders against illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, illegal immigration, car hijacking and theft. The activity will be implemented in the 4th quarter of 2015 if funds are available.

❖ CIVIL SOCIETY

- *Finalization of Civil Society Directory*

418. The activity aims at advancing the process of developing a Directory of ECOWAS Region Non state Actors. A **Comprehensive** Civil Society Directory will enable regional stakeholders, development partners and the ECOWAS Commission to have access to vital information on Non state Actors for programme and project implementation in the region.

- *Civil Society Internal Consultations*

419. The main objective of the activity is to review WACSOF work since 2003 in relation to ECOWAS Commission integration process, identify gaps and define the way forward. It also aims at exploring how WACSOF can synergize with other civil society networks to implement ECOWAS integration programme. The activity is expected to hold from 26th to 28th October, 2015 in Togo pending availability of funds.

- *Study Tour to African Union (CIDO) Secretariat and Centre for Citizens Participation on the African Union, (CCP-AU) Nairobi, Kenya*

420. This activity which aims at **establishing** linkages with the African Union to implement civil society agenda at the continental level is planned to commence in November 2015 pending availability of funds.

❖ YOUTH, EMPLOYMENTS AND SPORTS

• *Round table of private sector with universities on best labour market initiatives for tertiary institutions in the region*

421. ECOWAS within the context of its employment programme organized a Round Table of the Private Sector and Universities on best labour market initiatives for universities and other tertiary institutions from the 5 -7 February, 2015, in Dakar, Senegal. The meeting, among other things, adopted a roadmap of activities that will sustain and carry forward implementation of the recommendations that emanated from the meeting. The Round table was organized against the backdrop of the fact that many graduates produced by tertiary institutions in the region lack the necessary skills that match labour market requirements.

• *Consultative Forum for the Establishment of a Regional Platform of National Youth Councils, Associations and Stakeholders*

422. ECOWAS organized a three day consultative workshop from 4 – 6 May, 2015 in Abuja, Nigeria, with the primary objective of mobilising and strengthening capacities of Member States National Youth Councils and Associations for effective youth development in the region. Youth representatives at the meeting agreed to establish a regional consultative platform for effective cooperation with ECOWAS, African Union and other stakeholders in the region. This platform is expected to foster synergy between ECOWAS and National Youth Councils in the implementation of youth development and employment programmes in the region.

- **Regional Consultation on the Establishment of the National Federations of West African Public Service Games.**

423. A regional consultation for the establishment of national federations of West African Public Service Games was held from the 6 -7 August, 2015 in Abuja, Nigeria. The consultation produced a roadmap of activities that will culminate in the organization of the First Edition of the games in 2016. Nigeria was selected as host country for the pilot edition of the games.

- **Training Workshop on Promoting Youth Employment**

424. Empowering youth with skills, especially entrepreneurial skills in the area of cooperatives is critical to youth employment and job creation in the region. To this effect, ECOWAS Commission organized a training workshop with the primary objective of encouraging youths to engage in entrepreneurship and job creation through SMEs and cooperatives in order to be gainfully employed. The workshop was also to inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship through SMEs and cooperatives among youths in the region. Participants were drawn from National Youth Councils and Ministries in charge of youths in the Member States and were provided with knowledge, skills and strategies on effective entrepreneurship and cooperatives development.

- **Participation in First Technical Session of the Social Development, Labour and Social Affairs of Africa Union**

425. ECOWAS participated in the first specialized technical session of the Social Development, Labour and Employment Commission of the African Union, under the theme “Social Protection and Inclusive Development” from the 20 - 24 April, 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Specialized Technical Committee meeting was held to consider social inclusion challenges for vulnerable groups in Member States including the expansion of social protection systems to combat poverty and exclusion, as well as to establish synergies among the social development, labour and employment sectors. ECOWAS presentation at the session included a score card on regional initiatives on the eradication of the Ebola Viral Disease epidemic in the region.

❖ **YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT**

426. The Commission’s strategic priority in the area of youth and sport is to foster youth development and empowerment and sports development as instruments for the promotion of regional peace.

427. In the **area of sports**, the activities are based on the ECOWAS Vision 2020. During the year, preparatory activities were carried out for the Dakar wrestling tournament expected to take place from 8 to 11 October 2015 and the “Sports and Employment” Seminar scheduled for November 2015.

428. The Commission also approved support in the course of the year, for the sporting activities of partner associations for the purpose of building their organisational capacity and consolidating the interaction among sport stakeholders in the region. This enabled five groups in Member States to carry out their activities due to the support received.

429. **With regard to youth matters**, the Commission conducted a preparatory mission for the training of young people in Benin from 8 to 11 July 2015. The objectives of the youth training programmes are, among others, to increase the employability of young people and enhance assistance to young entrepreneurs by providing them with starter kits. In this regard, the Commission provided training in pastoral agro forestry for 90 young people from the 15 Member States at the Songhai Centre, Porto-Novo (Benin) from 15 October to 14 November 2015.

430. Due to the crisis experienced in Burkina Faso in the course of the year, the training of young people initially planned for the second half of the year was postponed and a new schedule will be decided along with the Burkinabè authorities.
431. In order to diversify the training provided to young people, the Commission undertook visits to Cape Verde and Nigeria in November 2015, with the aim of identifying new training centres and modules.
432. Under *the ECOWAS Volunteer Programme* officially launched in Monrovia, Liberia, on 26 March 2010, a total of 96 volunteers from 12 Member States were deployed in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone in the education (69%), health (30%) and youth (1%) sectors.
433. In spite of the lack of funds, the implementation of activities for the end of the pilot phase continued under the Programme. In that regard, a final evaluation of the phase was carried out with the recipient countries and technical and financial partners (UNV, AfDB, Peace Fund). The first meeting of the Regional Coordination Council was held in Abuja while a supervisory visit for activities in Guinea and a technical cooperation mission with the Regional Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Dakar, Senegal were carried out. The latter mission sought to deploy midwives in Sierra Leone and it led to the signing of an agreement with UNFPA and the deployment of the first set of midwife volunteers in October 2015.
434. The Regional Coordination Council, as part of its regular Programme follow-up meetings, plans to organise its November meeting in Ouagadougou, to enable its members assess the achievements of the EVP and make proposals for the Programme's continuation beyond the pilot phase.

2.5.3 Education, Culture, Science and Technology

✓ Education And Training

435. The Commission's activities in the area of Education and Training centred around the promotion of higher education and teacher development, mutual recognition of certificates, harmonization of education systems and harmonization of basic education and literacy.
436. **Promotion of Higher Education through the ECOWAS Academic Mobility Scheme:** The Commission introduced the ECOWAS Academic Mobility Scheme from the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year. The objective is to promote access to higher education and thereby produce high level personnel that can act creatively upon the environment and come up with ideas that can help solve the multi-faceted problems of the Community. The Scheme has been designed to cater for three categories of beneficiaries, namely: Scholarship offers to 50 students at the Masters Level; Scholarships to 25 Students at the Ph.D level; and Exchange programmes for 13 lecturers across the region. In order to promote integration, successful scholarship awardees were assigned to institutions outside their respective countries and language blocs. After due consultation among experts in the region, the Mobility Scheme has also been designed to focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); Earth and Life Sciences including Environment and Climate Change; Health (Medical, Veterinary and Health Sciences); Agriculture; History of Africa and; Information Communication Technology which were considered to be of strategic importance to the region.
437. **Development of Benchmarks for Equivalence of Certificates:** Following the adoption of the ECOWAS Convention on the Recognition and Equivalence of Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other qualifications in 2003, a number of steps such as the inauguration of the Ad-hoc Committee in 2005, conduct of a feasibility study for the Convention in 2010 and a series of consultations and validation meetings, has been taken between 2010 and 2015 towards its realisation. In 2015, the major milestone was the development of regional benchmarks for the establishment of certificate

equivalencies and the harmonization of education systems. In particular, the Commission developed benchmarks for the recognition of Bachelors, Masters and PhDs degrees. Also, a broad framework for the definition of terms or nomenclatures that will facilitate certificate equivalences and harmonization of education systems in the region was agreed upon.

438. **Harmonization of Basic Education:** A status report on Basic Education in the region with emphasis on administrative structure, duration, curriculum content, evaluation procedure and challenges was prepared by the Commission. Based on the regional report, a mechanism for the harmonization of at least 9 years of basic education was developed. The mechanism would be used for advocacy and as reference document for Member States.
439. **Development of a regional strategy for the revitalization of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET):** As a step towards curbing youth restiveness, unemployment and the various desperate attempts being made by youths to earn a living, ECOWAS continued with the capacity building sessions for TVET teachers, administrators, and practitioners. The sessions were designed to improve the pedagogical skills of TVET personnel and skills for the development and revision of curriculum and instructional materials using ICT. Also, in order to ascertain the strengths, challenges and prospects of TVET in each Member State and to provide country specific needs, the Commission continued with the conduct of the in-country surveys on TVET Management Information Systems and Delivery.
440. In addition, the Commission developed a Regional Strategy for the revitalization of TVET based on the recommendations of various workshops and the output of the country-specific surveys.

✓ *Science*

441. Activities in the science sector revolved around the four programmes presented below.

- ***Development of decision-making support indicators***

442. The aim of the programme is to provide scientific data for the continuous assessment of the status of science and innovation in the region. In this regard, the Commission's activities focused on the preparation of the 2015 ECOWAS bibliometric outlook. Bibliometrics refer to the set of mathematical and statistical methods used for the quantitative analysis of bibliographic data of scientific and technological works. It is also used in the qualitative analysis of scientific networks.
443. The Outlook will highlight data which can be used to compare different aspects of the scientific works of a given entity (researcher, institution, country, region, etc.) to the entity itself, in order to identify trends over time. Comparison may also be made with the scientific output of partners or competitors, with a view to establishing research and development (R&D) policies adapted to the focus of the development plans of Member States and the region. The implementing agency for the programme is the African Observatory on Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI), which has received ECOWAS funding by virtue of an MOU with the Commission.

- ***Development of STI Research Outputs***

444. This programme seeks to boost scientific creativity and research through the creation of an enabling environment for increased technical, human and scientific capacities in the region. In order to foster the skills necessary for scientific and technological creativity and innovation, the Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Award for Women was set up to recognise deserving women researchers who have demonstrated excellence in their work in the areas of life and earth sciences, basic science, technology and innovation. The call for nominations was made in March 2015 and the Jury session took place in October 2015, culminating in the selection of winners in the fields of basic science, technology and innovation.

- **Networking of ECOWAS Centres of Excellence**

445. The objective of this programme is to facilitate the networking of research institutions through the creation of centres of excellence based on themes of strategic importance. Under this programme, a study was conducted for the establishment of an ECOWAS Joint Research Centre (EJRC). The study will be validated in 2016. Priority area 3 of ECOPOST and its action plan provide the basis for the decision to create a regional joint research centre.

- **Popularisation of STI**

446. The programme aims at increasing and enhancing understanding of STEM through a citizen and participatory approach involving the public and decision-makers. To this end, three training workshops were organised for 70 journalists based on their language groups. In 2015, 15 science journalists from Portuguese-speaking countries were trained in Cape Verde from 26 October to 7 November 2015, to enable them improve the quality of their scientific reports to the public. The central theme of the workshop was "**Providing access to scientific information for ECOWAS citizens for personal growth and community development.**" The workshops will contribute to improving the interaction among science journalists, researchers and policy-makers and should eventually lead to the establishment of a network of West African science journalist.

✓ **Culture**

447. The Commission continued implementation of the ECOWAS Culture priority programmes. During the review period, some of the priority projects, programmes and activities of the NEPAD-Culture Regional Action Plan were reviewed by the Commission and are being implemented.

448. **Education for the Culture of Peace through Inter and Intra-Religious Dialogue:** In 2015, the Commission embarked on high level consultations with religious leaders in the region and finalised a mechanism for kick-starting a regular intra and inter-religious dialogue in the region. This was necessary because of the realisation that while the existing peace building and conflict prevention, management, resolution and control mechanisms remain viable options, the need to rise to emerging challenges of insurgency and intolerance in our region requires diversification of approaches to conflict prevention. Some of these approaches include education for the culture of peace through curriculum revision and adaptation, intra and inter-religious dialogue and political dialogue. In 2015, a detailed analysis of the diversities and intricacies of religious groups and organizations in the region was concluded

2.5.4 Malaria Elimination Campaign

449. Regarding the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement ECOWAS/Cuba/Venezuela for the ECOWAS Malaria Elimination Campaign, negotiations to access funds for the building of the three (3) factories (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria) for the production of the biolarvicides are ongoing. In relation to this, a high level mission led by the President of the Commission took place in Venezuela in July 2015 with EBID and WAHO. The Popular Republic of China has also expressed interest in contributing to the building of the biolarvicide factories.

2.6. Political Affairs, Regional Peace and Security

2.6.1 Political Affairs

450. In line with the mandate of the Commission to enhance cooperation with relevant multilateral organizations on peace and stability in West Africa, ECOWAS participated at the U.N General

Assembly and the African Union Summit, and held meetings on the margins of the Assembly and the Summit with relevant institutions on how to jointly resolve political crises in a number of Member States. Also, in line with the efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region, ECOWAS, in conjunction with the other members of the International Follow-Up and Support Group on Burkina Faso (GISAT-BF), held meetings on the political crisis in Burkina Faso.

451. In response to the political developments in Guinea Bissau and on the pre-election situation in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, two Extraordinary Sessions of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government were held in Senegal and Nigeria respectively on 12 and 22 September 2015.

✓ **Review of Protocols**

452. In line with the instructions of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State, ECOWAS, in collaboration with regional experts, undertook a review of the ECOWAS Legal Texts on the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of 1999, and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. The recommendations on the Texts will be reviewed and decided upon by the Authority at its next Ordinary Session, scheduled for the end of 2015.

✓ **Mediation Facilitation**

453. The Mediation Facilitation Division (MFD) was operationalized in June 2015 with the recruitment of Staff to backstop mediation efforts of ECOWAS. From 18 to 25 July 2015, the Commission backstopped the High-Level Solidarity and Information Mission to the Republic of Guinea to facilitate the creation of an enabling environment conducive for holding the 11 October 2015 Presidential elections. Furthermore, the Commission held a Technical Meeting on ECOWAS Mediation Roster and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) from 3 to 6 August 2015 to deliberate upon and evaluate the best procedures and methodology to build a Mediation roster and database of potential mediators and resources in the region and strategize on developing a Standard Operating Procedure to guide the work of the Division and ECOWAS Mediators. The Commission was also involved in the fact-finding Mission to Niger from 2 to 11 October 2015 as part of efforts to resolve political disputes over the 2016 election timetable and disagreements over the voter register.

454. In line with the mandate of the Commission to deepen democracy and rule of law in the region, a Roundtable Meeting on 'Whistle-Blowing' was held for the Network of Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa (NACIWA) to promote transparency and accountability in governance. A key outcome of the meeting was a recommendation for the ECOWAS Commission to develop a regional strategy to promote whistleblowing and protect whistle-blowers.

✓ **Human Rights Monitoring**

455. Also, a Network of Civil Society Organisation Human Rights Monitors (NCSOHRM) was established to enhance the promotion and respect of rule of law and human rights in Member States. NCSOHRM has amongst its key responsibilities the mandate to produce a report on a yearly basis on the state and status of human rights protection in the ECOWAS region. In addition, key human rights stakeholders in the region, namely the Network National Human Rights Institutions in West Africa (NNHRI), and NCSOHRM have agreed to mark an ECOWAS Human Rights Day.

456. In the bid to further broaden the space of improving the capacities of the regional stakeholders in participatory democracy, three (3) training modules on Political Party Financing Internal Party

Democracy and Administrative Setting Programme and Campaign financing were adopted and validated. The modules will be used for the training of political parties in the region.

✓ **ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework**

457. In 2015, the Secretariat of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was constituted. The Internal Steering Committee (ISC) of the ECPF convened a meeting on 14 August 2015 for the purpose of consolidating ownership of the ECPF by the relevant ECOWAS Directorates. Other issues discussed at the meeting focused on the role played by the ECPF Focal Points in the operationalization of the ECPF at the Directorate level using the ECPF Reporting Template; the finalizing the ECPF Web Portal by the ECPF Secretariat, and the need for the EU-ECOWAS PSS Project Support Unit to work in close cooperation with ECPF Secretariat and Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.
458. The Commission also organized a Civil Society Organization (CSO) Sensitization Workshop on the Implementation of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) in Member States in Accra on 19 and 20 August, 2015, for the purpose of understanding and implementing the ECPF at multi-dimensional levels with key actors such as ECOWAS, Member States, Civil Society Organizations and Development Partners. Key outcomes of the meeting included an agreement that CSOs play a greater role in the prevention of conflicts in Member States; an agreement on the need for CSOs to make a more meaningful impact in terms of conflict prevention initiatives through its partnership with the State, and an acknowledgement of the importance of continued collaboration and coordination between regional and national level initiatives. The meeting also identified lead institutions and other CSOs for collaboration at the national level in the implementation of the ECPF.

✓ **Election Monitoring**

459. Pursuant to the provisions of Article 12 of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; Article 53 (c) of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework; and the decision of the Authority of Heads of State and Government to deploy timely pre-election missions to Member States organizing elections, the Commission provided Electoral Assistance packages in the preparation of these elections.
460. The series of elections planned for 2015 started on a very positive note with elections held in Nigeria, Togo, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Presidential elections are scheduled for 29 November 2015 in Burkina Faso.
461. In facilitating the provision of electoral assistance packages to these Member States, the Commission has deployed: Pre-election fact-finding missions, Long Term Observation/Situation Room and Election Observation missions to cover all aspects of the electoral process in these countries. For Niger, a Technical Mission comprising a voter registration and mediation expert was deployed to the country to facilitate preparatory activities for the 2016 elections. ECOWAS, on the margin of the ECONEC Annual General Assembly meeting, reviewed electoral processes in the region and strengthened the Electoral Commission networks to better prepare them for the challenging elections planned for 2016 in Niger, Benin, Cabo Verde, The Gambia and Ghana.

2.6.2 Peacekeeping and Regional Security

✓ **. Peace Support Operations**

462. **ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF):** During the period under review, the ESF initiated the review of some of its strategic documents due to the changing realities as well as emerging challenges in the

region. These documents include the ESF Doctrine, Operational Framework and SOPs for the ESF, Proposed ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Doctrine, ESF Logistics Concept and Force Generation Policy Guidelines. The ESF conducted the Contingent – Owned Equipment Inspection in Guinea Bissau from 24 to 27 March 2015 with the objective of ascertaining the availability and serviceability of equipment used by deployed troops. The ESF also participated in Exercise Western Accord 15 from 20 to 31 July 2015 and Exercise Amani Africa II from 19 October to 06 November 2015. A Peace Support Operation Planning Course was conducted from 13 to 24 April 2015 in Abuja, Nigeria. The 35th Ordinary meeting of the Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff (CCDS) was held in Dakar, Senegal from 9 to 11 September 2015.

463. **Police Component:** The Police Planning Element of the ESF conducted a workshop in Abuja from 25 to 27 March 2015 to validate the findings of the Training Needs Assessment Exercise that was carried out on Police personnel from 2013 -2014. This activity was significant as the Police training experts from ECOWAS Member States and Training Centres of Excellence outlined a Training Plan which now informs the commencement of Training of the Police Component of the ESF, a Middle Level Management Course, to be organized at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra in April 2016.
464. **Civilian Component:** As part of the Integrated Planning Element of the ECOWAS Standby Force, the Civilian Component conducted key activities, namely the creation of a Web Page for ECOWAS Civilian Standby Roster, the recruitment of a consultant to conceptualize a database in support of the Civilian Standby Roster and the recruitment of a consultant to develop a Human Resources Policy Framework for the deployment of Civilians in ECOWAS Peace Support Operations. With a view to strengthening the networking and coordination of the Civilian Dimension activities throughout the region, focal points were identified at the Civil Society Organizations' level. Identification of the focal points at the level of government is in progress.

✓ **Small Arms**

465. With respect to Small Arms, the Commission continued implementation of the 5-Year Priority Activity Plan, the implementation framework for the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, with focus on capacity building and management of the Exemption Procedure.
466. As enshrined in the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Commission began the process of deepening the promotion of confidence building among Member States and public transparency on arms transfer. In this light, a meeting of Database Experts was convened at which the modalities and methodologies for the establishment and maintenance of the ECOWAS Database and Register on SALW were agreed upon.
467. At the Annual Meeting of the National Commission on SALW held in June 2015, the Commission Member States were apprised on modern strategies on SALW control. The meeting also served as a platform for capacity building, peer review, experience sharing and enhancement of coordination of efforts on SALW control in the region. In the same vein, the Commission provided support for Annual Forum for the West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) for cross border collaboration, exchange of experiences and synergy by CSOs in the fight against proliferation of SALW in the region.
468. The implementation of the Exemption Procedures to the ECOWAS Convention on SALW continued with the provision of strategic training for national security officers in charge of the management of the exemption process in Nigeria and Niger in August and September 2015 respectively. In all, a total of one hundred and forty (140) officers were trained on the effective management of the Exemption Procedure of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW in their respective countries.

469. Furthermore, the Commission collaborated with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) to promote the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) alongside the ECOWAS Convention on SALW. Member States were exposed to the synergies and complementarities among the ATT, the UNPOA and the ECOWAS Convention on SALW as well as their implications for national institutional arrangements and national arms control systems.

✓ *Regional Security*

470. A major activity undertaken by the Commission in the area of regional security was the setting up of the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre (MMCC) for Pilot Operational Zone E, comprising four countries (Benin, Niger, Nigeria and Togo), in accordance with the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS) adopted by Heads of States and Government in March, 2014 at Yamoussokoro, Cote d'Ivoire which provides for the for the creation of Maritime Operational Zones E, F and G and a Regional Maritime Coordination Centre (RMCC) to coordinate the activities of the 3 Zones. The objective of the Centre is to monitor the coastal Maritime space of West Africa with a view to responding, operationally, to illicit maritime activities such as oil bunkering, illicit fishing, hostage taking, piracy, illicit waste dumping, among others.

471. In addition, the Commission undertook technical assessment missions to Abidjan, Cote d' Ivoire (4 to 8 March 2015) and Calabar, Nigeria (14 to 17 March, 2015) to inspect proposed facilities by the two countries which had indicated interest to host the Regional Maritime Coordination Centre RMCC. A similar mission was undertaken in June to Accra, to evaluate the prepared of Ghana to host the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre.

472. With respect to the fight against transnational organized crime, the Commission organised a meeting of the Sub-Committee for Training and Operations of the West African Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO) in Niamey as well as the 4th Training on Regional Transnational Organized Crime Training for Law Enforcement Agents in West Africa in Abidjan, training in national counter-terrorism was conducted for the same agents in August 2015. These training programmes contributed to strengthening the capacities of Law Enforcement Agents in the region to fight transnational organised crime.

2.6.3 Early Warning

473. The Commission's activities in the area of Earning Warning centred on the implementation of two main projects - the National Early Warning and Response Mechanism (NEWRM) and the Street Children Project. Following the adoption of the National Early Warning and Response Mechanism framework by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in July 2014, and subsequent pledge by the US Government to support the project, the Commission initiated project implementation by conducting advocacy visits to Member States to engage the government and key stakeholders on the modalities for setting up National Centres for the coordination of response mechanisms. The first phase of the visits was to five of the six countries where the President of ECOWAS Commission has Special Representatives, namely Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso and Liberia. The main objectives of the advocacy visits were:

- ✓ To inform the Government and relevant Ministers of the background and context that led to ECOWAS' advocacy for the deployment of NEWRM at Member States level and the role they need play to ensure effective national ownership of the processes;
- ✓ To exchange views with key stakeholders on the administrative modalities for establishing NEWRM, specific to each Member State;

- ✓ To expound on ECOWAS and other partners' Technical and Financial support for the establishment of NERWM at the initial phase of the project before effective transfer of such responsibilities to the Member States.

474. The Street Children project, which was conceived by the results of studies carried out on risks and vulnerabilities, is intended to support the eradication of the syndrome of children on the streets in the ECOWAS region. The project aims at defining a strategy for dealing with the phenomenon by employing a multipronged, holistic approach with strong systems and support structures, enforcing existing legislation on child protection, child labour and trafficking and enacting new legislation where necessary.
475. To launch the project, a meeting was organised from 22 to 24 in June 2015 in Dakar to draw up strategies for the implementation of the project. Among the recommendations made at the meeting was the creation of a legal instrument along the lines of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adapted to local socio-cultural conditions or circumstances. The meeting also emphasized the need for a legally-binding instrument to further strengthen commitment of Member States to end the plight of young children living on the streets.

2.7. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

476. The Commission, through the Community Computer Centre, undertakes a broad range of activities that relate to facilitation, enhancement and modernisation of ICT development in Member States and Community institutions. The main activities undertaken during the period under review are as follows:
477. Strengthening **the Business Information System (ECOBIZ)**: During the review period, the initiatives were taken to broaden the scope of sensitization activities on the ECOBIZ system. These include:
- ✓ On-the-desk review and update of registered company data on the web site by ECOBIZ Implementation Assistants. The total number of registered companies to date is 7608;
 - ✓ Continuation of the process for introducing the electronic payment module into the ECOBIZ platform in collaboration with the Private Sector directorate of the Commission and the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce. Also, a meeting was organized to review a prototype developed by a consultant which will subsequently be validated at a stakeholders meeting;
 - ✓ Continuous updating of the ECOBIZ database particularly during trade events taking place in Member States. For instance, in Nigeria, during the Kaduna International Trade Fair which was held from 29 April to 2 May 2015, 85 new companies were registered and 550 existing in the data base were updated.
478. **ECOWAS Regional Computer Society Consultation Exercise (ERCS)**: The mission of the ECOWAS Regional Computer Society (ERCS) is to provide an avenue for the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and promote best practices within the region.
479. Establishment of the ERCS is in line with the regional ICT objective of CCC and will complement work currently being carried out. It will act as a means to facilitate the accessibility and dissemination of information to a wider audience through innovative e-products and services. It is envisaged that the ERCS will provide a platform for enhancing ICT revolution in West Africa.
480. The nascent structures for the establishment of the Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire chapters of the ERCS were discussed with IT professional groups and government authorities in the two countries in June 2015. The Ghana chapter organized its maiden meeting in October 2015.

481. **Systems Development Activities (Intranet, Document Management System etc.):** In order to promote international best practices in software development within the Commission and all Institutions of ECOWAS, the deployment of **ECOSUITE**, the ECOWAS Intranet solution and suite of applications commenced during the period and the technical team has begun the first stage of implementation.
482. ECOSUITE's applications include Document Management systems, Approval workflows, Document Translation system (designed for the Language Unit to help automate the language translation workflow), Central calendars of Events, etc. The Unified Communication component includes voice messaging, instant messaging and video conference calls.
483. The installation of Microsoft SharePoint and Lync, the base systems for the ECOSUITE project, has been completed while its configuration is 80% complete. Functional designs, logical architecture and work flow diagrams for intranet implementation have been done. Series of tests, documentation and the process of synchronizing the SAP processes with Intranet is currently ongoing. It is expected that the system will be launched before the end of the year.
484. **Websites:** In March 2015, the new ECOWAS website and that of the ECOWAS Commission were launched.
485. These interactive and user-friendly websites provide the following advantages owing to the Content Management System Technologies employed in their development:
- ✓ Facilitate easy access by search engines enabling very rapid propagation of information leading to greater visibility of the websites;
 - ✓ Facilitate delegation of update roles, enabling task distribution even to the regional level to media organs in a secured manner and making information on the site more up to date ;
 - ✓ Facilitate the integration of social networks, allowing interaction and communication among Community institutions thus accelerating in a way the attainment of the objective of 'transforming the ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of peoples per the ECOWAS Vision 2020';
 - ✓ A credible source of very rich information on ECOWAS with facilitated access that Community citizens and other interested visitors can easily access.
486. The two sites developed from templates created by the in-house team from the CCC and the Communications Directorate serve as models for all other websites of Community institutions.
487. **Technical support to SAP:** The Community Computer Center (CCC) continues to provide technical support to the SAP project at the Commission and other ECOWAS institutions. CCC technical team contributed immensely to the launching of ECOLink in February 2015. The day to day management of the equipment and servers hosting the SAP is performed by the technical team of CCC.
488. **ECOWAS Network Modernization:** During the reporting period, the following were achieved in support of timely and efficient realization of the ECOWAS Network Modernization:-
489. With respect to the modernization of networks, the first and second phases of the Network Infrastructure Modernization project was implemented successfully, leading to the deployment of VOIP communication between the Commission Headquarters at Asokoro and the two annexes at River Plaza & Niger House respectively. In addition, implementation of the Data Modernisation project commenced and is currently ongoing, while all Departments/Directorates of the Commission were supported in the acquisition, installation and maintenance of IT systems.

490. **E-Learning for Staff:** The staff e-Learning facility was launched in July 2015. The facility is aimed at assisting staff to acquire skills and knowledge in disciplines related to the job function which engages their interest.
491. **The ALISA Project, Customs Transit and Trade Facilitation:** In 2015, the CCC in collaboration with the Customs Directorate organized two technical and management meetings involving Member States on the ALISA/PACIR project. – the project for the interconnection of customs computer systems in the ECOWAS region for the purposes of facilitating trade through the electronic management of customs transit activities in the region and the related goods transport issues.
492. The meetings were geared at scheduling of activities for the production of the software solution for the interconnection project.
493. With regards to trade, the CCC began preparations for the development of the data and information exchange software for the regional transit system and ALISA. The Centre has already validated the procedures manual with the regional group of experts.

2.8 Legal and Institutional Matter

2.8.1 Legal Affairs

494. In relation to legal and institutional matters, the Commission continued to play its statutory role of providing the appropriate legal framework for community integration activities, a process that leads to the continuous development of Community laws. In this context, the Commission undertook the following activities:

✓ **Institutional Matters**

495. Regarding institutional matters, the achievements are as follows:
- Harmonisation of Business Laws in ECOWAS Member States which led to the drafting of about fifteen (15) legal instruments presently at the concluding stage;
 - Issuing of seventy-four (74) Exemption Certificates to Member States to import small arms and light weapons;
 - Follow-up on the processes of ratification of Community Conventions and Protocols in Member States;
 - Endorsement by the President of the Commission of over one hundred and fifty (150) contracts following the expansion of the Commission and associated with it, and increase in the number of Memoranda of Understanding, Cooperation Agreements, Service/staff contracts and multi/bilateral agreements;
 - Provision of legal advice on several matters, among which is the case of tenure of statutory appointees, and several legal opinions on adoption matters by Community staff.
 - Organisation of annual consultative meetings with Member States to cement better understanding of Community laws and programmes as a strategy for attaining compliance with Member States, in line with new legal regimes and procedures for drafting contracts and memoranda of understanding.

✓ **Legal Matters**

496. In the domain of legal matters, the following achievements were recorded:
- **Amicable Settlement:** The Commission reached an amicable settlement with N. Stephen Construction, through an out of court settlement, of a suit brought against the Commission by the former at the Federal High Court in Abuja, over the settlement

of outstanding payment in respect of renovation works carried out at the ECOWAS Headquarters building in 2008. The settlement involved payment of one hundred and twenty-eight dollars (US \$128,000.00) as outstanding balance, while negotiations are still on-going for the final settlement of interest demanded by the company.

- **Litigation and Arbitration:** The tribunal of Arbitration of London litigated over the non-construction of the Joint Border Post (JBP) of Seme-Krake project by the JDP/Contractor (firm). From 13 to 24 July 2015, hearings were done and a preliminary judgement in favour of ECOWAS was given by the Tribunal.
- **ECOWAS Court of Justice:** Cases involving the Commission before this court mainly relate to terminal benefits of Contract Staff. The cases of Doctor Rose Mbatumo and Mr. Man Joof, retired member staff, are under hearing before the Court.
- Also before the Court is the case of arrears of rent between Obama Massa, Intercontinental Bank PLC and others, versus ECOWAS. ECOWAS rented the premises from 2006 to 2010 from a supposed owner. But the relationship between the supposed owner, the Intercontinental Bank and other persons involved in certain transactions could not be resolved. ECOWAS has made some initial payment. In the application of the law, who pays wrongly pays two twice. ECOWAS has been seeking the appropriate person to whom to pay before the Court.

2.8.2 Strategic Planning

497. With respect to Strategic Planning, the Commission focused primarily on the preparation of the Community Strategic Framework (CSF), 2016 – 2020 and the Strategic Action Programme for the implementation of the CSF. The CSF is the successor to the Regional Strategic Plan (RSP), 2011 - 2015 whose implementation would come to an end in 2015. Therefore the CSF will provide guidance to Community institutions on key programmes and projects required to address the major socio-economic and political challenges in the Community and drive the realisation of the ECOWAS Vision 2020 during the period 2016 – 2020.
498. In order to ensure that the Community Strategic Framework (CSF) is comprehensive, practical, implementable and in alignment with the African Union Agenda 2063 and National Development Plans of Member States, a number of activities were undertaken. They include organisation of the tenth (10th) Meeting of the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee (SPCC) to review the first Working Draft of the CSF at the end of which a roadmap that would lead to the finalisation and launch of the CSF and its Strategic Action Programme was discussed and adopted; organisation of the Inaugural Meeting of National Planning Experts with the ECOWAS Commission at which an institutional framework for mainstreaming Regional Plans such as the CSF into National Development Plans of Member States was developed; and undertaking a working visit to the West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI) in Accra to discuss and agree on collaboration between the two institutions in the areas of capacity building and advocacy for the implementation of the CSF.
499. Aimed at ensuring that the CSF reflects the spirit of the AU Agenda 2063, the Commission participated in AU-related activities such as a workshop hosted by the African Union Commission (AUC) in April 2015 in Lusaka, Zambia on the Ten (10) Year Implementation Plan for the Agenda 2063 and hosting of an AUC consultant working on the Capacity Development Plan for Agenda 2063 at the Commission.
500. Also, the Directorate undertook a working visit to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), one of the strategic partners of the ECOWAS Commission in the development of

the CSF, to present the CSF to the institution and make a proposal for technical assistance in building capacity for its implementation.

2.8.3 Monitoring and Evaluation System

501. The mandate of the ECOWAS Commission with regard to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is to ensure accountability of all Community institutions through regular reporting on the performance of their activities, projects and programmes.

502. The Commission's M&E activities in 2015 were designed to achieve the following: finalisation of the 2014 annual performance report of the Commission (including technical assistance to directorates and services for the preparation of their annual performance reports), the interim performance report (for AFC), the 2015 quarterly reports, the Regional Strategic Plan (RSP) evaluation report, the M&E framework for the Community Strategic Framework and the preparation of the fourth meeting of the Forum of Stakeholders on ECOWAS M&E system.

✓ 2014 Annual Performance Report of the Commission

503. The 2014 Performance Report of the ECOWAS Commission was finalised and submitted to Management on the 30 March 2015. The report focused on drawing the lessons learnt from the performance reports prepared over the past four years.

✓ 2015 Quarterly Performance Reports

504. A summary of the quarterly reports collected from directorates and units of the Commission is submitted to the President of the Commission no later than two weeks following the mandatory deadline provided by the M&E Manual of the Commission. In this regard, the second quarter summary report was submitted to the President of the Commission on time. Preparation of the third quarter's report is in progress.

✓ Regional Strategic Plan Evaluation Report

505. As the 2011-2015 Regional Strategic Plan is about to end, consultants were recruited for its evaluation. The main objective of this evaluation is to provide input and basic information for the finalisation of the Community Strategic Framework 2016-2020 and its Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

✓ M&E Framework for the Community Strategic Framework (CSF)

506. To enhance the effective implementation of the CSF, a monitoring and evaluation framework, including outcomes and verifiable objective indicators (VOI) has been developed.

✓ Fourth Meeting of the "Forum of Stakeholders on ECOWAS M&E System"

507. The Fourth Meeting of the Forum of Stakeholders on ECOWAS M&E System took place from 5 to 7 August 2015 in Lomé. The overall objective of the fourth meeting was to discuss progress on the preparation of the Community Strategic Framework and review the draft M&E framework for its implementation.

✓ Meeting with other RECs

508. The objective of the annual meeting with other RECs (EAC, CADC, COMESA, AUC etc.) is to share M&E best practices towards convergence to AU goals. This year's meeting was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 19 to 25 September 2015.

✓ **Preparation of Community Annual Performance Report for AFC**

509. It may be recalled that at its 73rd Ordinary Session held from 11 to 14 December 2014, the ECOWAS Council of Ministers requested the Commission to prepare a Community Annual Performance Report prior to the adoption of the 2016 annual budget. In response to this request, the Commission has prepared the said report which will be submitted to the next meeting of the Administration and Finance Committee for review.

2.8.4 External Relations

510. With respect to external relations, the Commission's activities were pursued to encourage Member States to take ownership of regional programmes and strengthen partnerships to support the implementation of ECOWAS programmes.

✓ **Relations with Member States**

511. The Commission's activities were guided by opportunities associated with ECOWAS 40th Anniversary celebration. The Commission continued its close collaboration with Member States to formalize national festivities. The annual meeting of National Units held in April 2015 in Accra helped ensure the complementarity of programmes in line with guidelines adopted at regional level. In particular, the meeting enabled Member States, on the basis of country reports, to evaluate the challenges in monitoring the implementation of Community programmes in line with the National Units Operating Manual.

512. For enhanced ownership of the Manual, the Commission initiated the process for its effective outreach and dissemination in order to highlight the accompanying capacity building measures on which the Commission intends to base its support to Member States.

513. As part of efforts to promote greater involvement of ECOWAS Permanent Representatives in regional activities and programmes, the Commission carried out activities with ECOWAS Ambassadors in Abuja to fine-tune discussions on their role and involvement in the integration process, as well as ensure enhanced communication flow and information sharing.

514. In the context of strengthening diplomatic relations, the Commission received several new Ambassadors accredited to ECOWAS.

✓ **Coordination and Resource Mobilization,**

515. During the period under review, activities under the various thematic coordination mechanisms were conducted to ensure regular cooperation on the regional agenda and development partners' support strategies. The thematic groups respectively held their coordination meetings. The annual meeting of development partners held in Abuja on 16 and 17 November 2015 did not only help strengthen this coordination, but also consolidate partners's support for the integration process.

516. Monitoring was provided for the implementation of the 10th EDF RIP projects through the various planned steering committee meetings that were convened during the period. In particular, the 11th EDF RIP document was finalized and signed on 7 July 2015 in the amount of EUR 1.1 billion. The second meeting of the Strategic Orientation Committee held in Brussels on 6 and 7 July 2015 led to an agreement on modalities for effective and rapid implementation of the 11th EDF RIP in three focus areas, namely (i) peace and regional security, (ii) economic integration and aid for trade, and (iii) food security and resilience and natural resources. Since the signing of the RIP document, the Commission has been engaged in a process of identifying projects involving Member States.

517. In order to strengthen multilateral relations, the Commission continued its engagement with the World Bank in identifying new areas of cooperation and implementation of regional projects. The ECOWAS-UEMOA-World Bank inter-institutional meeting held in Accra from 9 to 11 February reviewed the implementation of joint programmes identified in agriculture, education, trade facilitation, transportation, business environment and the Sahel. More importantly, the meeting made new commitments to address the challenges of the Ebola Virus Disease, confront growing security threats and consolidate air transport in Member States. An Action Plan was prepared in that respect and will serve as a tool to monitor cooperation between West Africa and the World Bank.
518. In continuing with its resource mobilisation strategy, the Commission fielded high-level missions notably, to Geneva, Venezuela, Japan and China to develop more strategic partnerships towards achieving Vision 2020. The efforts culminated in the signing of agreements in the area of trade, investment, aviation, infrastructure, capacity building, etc Consultations were also held with Japan to strengthen partnership in the identification and implementation of infrastructure programmes under TICAD V and make preparations ahead of TICAD VI.
519. Furthermore, cooperation was strengthened with organizations such as the Mano River Union (signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of cross-border initiatives on peace and security in West Africa), UNESCO (finalisation of an Agreement to revitalize cooperation in the education sector) and the *Conseil de l'Entente*

2.8.5 Relations with other ECOWAS Institutions

520. The Commission commenced implementation of programmes with respect to relations with other ECOWAS institutions in 2015 following the establishment of a special unit for the purpose and subsequent recruitment of staff for the unit. The activities carried out in this broad area centred around two main objectives:
- ✓ design a strategic framework on relations with Institutions in order to assess the state of relations between the Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions;
 - ✓ improve and enhance effective co-operation and better coordination and harmonization with other ECOWAS Institutions, identifying focal points and designing guidelines, methodologies, etc.
521. In order to design a strategic framework on relations with other institutions the unit recruited a consultant and conducted an assessment of the state of relations between the Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions in line with its mission and mandate. Following the publication of the Consultant report relating to Phase I of the Institutional Reform, the Unit coordinated from 3rd to 5th March 2015 a roundtable discussions with experts on Institutional Reforms at the ECOWAS Headquarters. The meeting was convened subsequent to the recommendations made by the 73rd meeting of Council of Ministers held in Abuja in December 2014 that considered the Phase 1 Report of the Consultants, Maxwell and Stamp on Institutional Reforms and directed the ECOWAS Commission to work closely with the Consultants and hold further consultations on several specified actions with a view to clarify and agreeing on the recommendations.
522. In addition, the Unit undertook working sessions with all the specialized Agencies and other ECOWAS Institutions. Following the approval by the Committee on Procurement, of the Terms of reference for the Unit, to recruit a resource person to carry out a study on the state of the relations with other ECOWAS Institutions and after a due process a consultant was recruited. Currently, the study is ongoing.

523. The third quarter registered the active participation of the Unit in the Strategic Planning and the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit's activities. As regard to the Strategic Planning, the Unit contributed to the preparatory workshop on ECOWAS Strategic Action Program (ECSAP), 2016-2020, the action program for the CSF held in Abuja, from 28 to 30th July 2015. Equally, in August 2015, the Unit met and interacted with Representatives of Heads of other ECOWAS Institutions during the Fourth meeting of the Monitoring and Evaluation Stakeholders and reiterated the importance of the Community Strategic Framework for coordination, harmonization and the improvement of the relations between the ECOWAS Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions.
524. In September 2015, the Unit coordinated at ECOWAS Commission Headquarters (Abuja) the holding of three important meetings of the Joint Working Committee between ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). The meetings gathered the high Representatives of the ECOWAS Commission and those of the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) with a view to revitalize the joint Committee and take stock of the activities of the Committee with regard to the administration and management of the ECOWAS subvention allocated to the EBID Interest Rate Subsidy Fund and the ECOWAS Infrastructure Fund for Telecommunication and, Information and Communication Technology (IFCT).
525. In order to exchange views, draw lessons and adopt best practices and methodologies as well as discuss ways and means of improving and strengthening relations between the ECOWAS Commission and other International Organizations, the Unit planned to undertake study visit at the African Union Commission, European Union Commission as well as the United Nations.
526. **Achievement of the 2015 activity programs:** Despite the fact that the Unit started operation in 2015 and the numerous challenges encountered, significant progress has been achieved, these include:
- The elaboration and approval of the mission and mandate of the Unit as well as the recruitment of a resource person to undertake the assessment study on the state of the relations with other ECOWAS Institutions;
 - The real state of affairs or diagnostic of the relations between ECOWAS Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions that revealed among other things that relations between Institutions were problematic/difficult and there was lack of communication between and among Institutions;
 - The setting up of mechanism for permanent consultations between the ECOWAS Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions;
 - The agreement or consensus of the other ECOWAS Institutions to fast-track the implementation of the phase I of the reports and recommendations of the institutional reforms study with a view of making efficient and effective the Commission work and accelerating the regional integration process;
 - The revitalization and the new impetus in the relations between the Commission and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID);
 - The creation of a strategic alliance between ECOWAS Commission and other International Organizations that would permit the Unit to draw lessons from best practices to improve relations between ECOWAS Commission and other ECOWAS Institutions.

2.8.6 Human Resources

527. In the area of human resources, the Commission's activities were focused on completion of activities carried over from the previous year (work in process) and the revision of the Staff Regulations. Carried-over activities included:

- Recruitment into the remaining eighteen (18) out of the fifty-two (52) critical positions for which there were no suitable candidates in 2013;
- Recruitment into the eighty-five (85) critical positions approved by Council in December, 2014;
- Recruitment into other donor-funded positions (Spanish and EU for the Regional Agency for Agriculture & Food as well as the Dept of Social Affairs & Gender);
- Finalisation of the ECOWAS Biometric Laisser-Passer;
- Finalisation of the ECOWAS Pension Scheme;
- Revision of Staff Regulations

✓ ***Recruitment into the remaining eighteen (18) out of the fifty-two (52) critical positions for which there were no suitable candidates in 2013;***

528. It will be recalled that subsequent to the special dispensation granted to the Commission by the Council of Ministers, at its 68th Ordinary Session held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire from 11th – 12th June, 2012, to recruit into fifty-two (52) critical positions, the Recruitment Process for the 52 (fifty-two) critical positions was launched on 1st October, 2012 and concluded with the interview of candidates in November/December, 2013.
529. Out of the fifty-two (52) critical and nine (9) donor-funded positions that were advertised, a total of forty-two (42) candidates were recommended for appointment while the other remaining positions had to be re-advertised as there were either no suitable candidates for some positions or not enough candidates for the others.
530. The recruitment has been completed as all positions had been readvertised, applications filtered and candidates shortlisted and interviewed. Some of the candidates who have been cleared by the background check exercise, as agreed with Council, have already assumed duty while the others are just waiting to be cleared to assume duty before mid- December, 2015.

✓ ***Recruitment into other donor-funded positions (Spanish, EU and Swedish***

531. The recruitment of candidates into positions under DANIDA-funded project has been completed and the successful candidates have all assumed duty. With regard recruitment under the Spanish and EU-funded projects, all have been completed except three positions that are at an advanced stage and are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

✓ ***Staffing New Departments***

532. Subsequent to the expansion of the Commission from a nine (9) member to a fifteen (15) member Commission and the appointment of six (6) new Commissioners and the creation of a corresponding number of new departments to be headed by the Commissioners, there is an urgent and absolute need to recruit staff to man the new departments. In this regard, Council at its 73rd Session held from 9th to 11th December, 2014, in Abuja, Nigeria, granted special dispensation to all Community institutions to recruit a total of 76 (seventy-six), and later increase to 85, critical positions, as an interim measure to alleviate the situation of the new departments.
533. Following the combined efforts of all the Institutions the job profiles of all the positions were developed and the advertisement commenced in phases. The first and second batches, totaling sixty-three (63) positions have been translated and advertised in the three languages of the Community. The third and final batch of twenty-two (22) positions is expected to be advertised by

the end of the year. Meanwhile, the selection process of candidates for the first batch of forty-one is well underway.

✓ **Laissez-Passer**

534. Following the signing of the contract and the user-acceptance test, the biometric Laissez-Passer that conforms to international security standards, has already been delivered. The Commission has, in this regard, requested for the usual ICAO three-letter security and identity code. Following a request from the Commission, and as required by ICAO, some Member States have already written to ICAO supporting the use of the authentication of the Biometric Laissez-Passer.

✓ **Pension Scheme**

535. The ECOWAS Pension Scheme was expected to be operational from 1st January, 2015, following the signing of the contract with Messrs. Alexander Forbes, Kenya. However, due to certain administrative issues, mainly associated with the late submission of relevant data from some of the Institutions, the Scheme was delayed. Following the submission of the relevant data, the Consultant, Alexander Forbes, submitted their report as agreed on 20 September 2015. Consequently, the Scheme is now expected to take off officially by end of November, 2015.

✓ **Revision of Staff Regulations**

536. One of the major objectives of the Commission in the area of human resources is the revision of the ECOWAS Staff Regulations to make them more responsive to staff needs and to reflect the expected outcome of the current institutional reform process. To meet this objective, the Commission embarked on the review exercise during the year, culminating in the production of a draft document which was submitted to Management for review before being submitted to the decision-making organs of the Community. This process is expected to be completed and validated by the end of this year.

✓ **Staffing Situation**

537. Capacity in terms of staffing of the various departments has been slightly improved following the recruitment of personnel to fill the 52 critical positions. It is expected that by the completion of the recruitment into the 85 critical as well as other contract and donor positions during the course of next year, 2016, capacity will have improved significantly.

538. As at 6 October 2015, the total staff strength of the Commission stood at 714, and distributed as follows:

Gender	Number	Permanent Staff	Contract Staff
Males	514 (72%)	273	241
Females	200 (28%)	84	116
TOTAL	714 (100%)	357 (50%)	357 (50%)

2.8.7 General Administration

539. The Commission continued to discharge its primary responsibility of providing a conducive and secure work environment for its staff. In pursuit of this objective, the major services provided in respect of this mandate fall into four categories: logistics and fleet management, facilities management, office support and procurement of goods and services. During the year, the

Commission undertook maintenance works on the outside of the Headquarters building by washing and polishing the mosaic tiles and painting the perimeter fence to give it a new outlook and replaced the electricity meter which had been damaged for some time and, thus, resulted in the payment of huge electricity bills. In addition, The Commission worked closely with the Federal Capital Territory Authority to produce architectural design for the modification of the official residence of the President of the Commission.

540. The concerns that had surrounded the wasting away of the ECOWAS Housing Estate Project at Katampe were addressed. On the 27th of May, 2015, the Commission officially handed over the Katampe Estate to the Nigerian Government by which arrangement an amount of \$9,834,020.58, being an outstanding balance on the loan the Commission took from the Federal Government of Nigeria for the project would be written off.
541. Also, fixed assets of the Commission were insured while the Group Life and Group Personal Accident insurance covered were obtained for all staff
542. In the area of security, the Commission effectively coordinated the activities of personnel from the various state security agencies, as well as the private security guard company, to protect life and property on all facilities of the ECOWAS Commission. To further enhance security of staff, visitors and property, a reputable international security organization was engaged to conduct a security audit on all the facilities. The company has since submitted its report and the implementation of their recommendations is scheduled to commence in 2016.
543. In collaboration with the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency, a solar project is to be undertaken to provide lighting at the Commission's Headquarters during nights of power outages and to also provide temporary power supply to some key areas and sensitive installations in the building. The procurement process has already started with bids currently being evaluated. Execution of the project is expected to commence before the end of the year.
544. Based on the needs indicated by the various Departments of the Commission, a Procurement Plan for year 2015 was prepared, with the aim of optimizing the Commission's procurement process. The Procurement Plan was approved and implementation commenced immediately.

2.8.8 ECOWAS Peace Fund

545. The activities carried out by the ECOWAS Peace Fund fall under four headings: i) Core Peace Fund; ii) European Union Support to ECOWAS Regional Peace, Security and Stability mandate project (EU-ECOWAS PSS); iii) Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Support Programme; iv) Project Support to Training Institutions.

✓ Core Peace Fund

546. Under the Core Peace Fund (annual allocation of funds from the Community Levy), the following activities were implemented: assessment of projects submitted to the ECOWAS Peace Fund for funding by the Project Review and Approval Committee; organization of a visibility workshop which defined a visibility scheme and tools to support the Peace Fund; improvement of the EPF website (www.peacefund.ecowas.int) and; support and funding for the Forum on the education on the culture of peace through the inter and intra-religious dialogue.

✓ ECOWAS Regional Peace, Security and Stability Mandate Project (EU-ECOWAS/PSS)

547. Implementation of the European Union support to ECOWAS Regional Peace, Security and Stability Mandate Project (EU-ECOWAS/PSS) formally started in 2015 and will run for a period of four (4) years.

548. The main objective of the project, with a total estimated cost of € 29.3m, is to strengthen ECOWAS' conflict prevention and resolution mandate to support regional stability, with a shift from a reactive to a preventive mode in terms of conflict mitigation and prevention. The project envisages two main results:

- ✓ Strengthened ECOWAS Commission institutional capacities in conflict prevention and resolution at Regional and National Level, mainly the Department for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) and the ECOWAS Peace Fund (EPF);
- ✓ Enhanced implementation of selected components of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF).

✓ ***APSA Support Programme***

549. The Commission continued implementation of this programme which is supported by the African Union and the European Union under the Africa Peace Facility (10th EDF). Activities carried out under the programme include training/capacity building, exchanges and procurement of equipment. The outcomes achieved so far include strengthening of ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture and improvement of the Commission's collaboration/relationship with the African Union, sister Regional Economic Communities and the European Union.

✓ ***European Union and Africa Union Support to West Africa Training Institutions and Centres of Excellence on Peace and Security***

550. Under this programme, a total of nine (9) Training Institutions and Training Centres of Excellence (TI-TCE) operating in the area of peace and security in West Africa are being supported by the EU and AU under the Africa Peace Facility (10th EDF), in a bid to enable them to develop the capacities of ECOWAS Standby Force. The TI-TCE conducted trainings for civilians, police and military from Member States, and acquired equipment and training materials that enhanced their capabilities.

2.8.9 Communication

551. During the period under review, the Commission supported the National News agency of Cote D'Ivoire with relevant communication equipment with the aim of boosting their efficiency and effectiveness in contributing towards the visibility of ECOWAS in Cote D'Ivoire through radio and television platforms.

552. The Commission undertook a massive visibility campaign to mark the 40th Anniversary of ECOWAS through billboard messages at high-traffic urban areas as well as posters and banners within and outside ECOWAS institutions. The President of the Commission in his bid to generate publicity around the milestone year, undertook a series of interviews with various media agencies to highlight the major achievements of ECOWAS in the last forty Years.

553. Within the context of promoting publicity around the 40th Anniversary, the Commission embarked on a visibility campaign during the annual Festival des Musiques Urbaines d'Anoumabo (FEMUA 8) in Coted D'Ivoire and leveraged on the extensive local and international media coverage received during this festival to sensitize the populace on the ECOWAS 40th Anniversary.

554. Furthermore, the Commission launched a revamped and dynamic version of its website with a user friendly platform which features new content as well as integrated dynamic and modern tools such as multimedia and social media which enables interactions with citizens of the community. The new website also features a dedicated page for each Member State containing useful information pertinent to the respective country.

555. In order to facilitate the implementation of Community decisions, the Commission continues to publish official journals which provide the official platform for the dissemination of vital information within the community. Volumes 63 and 64 were printed during the period under review.
556. Over 1500 reference enquiries were received and attended to from within the community and outside. These enquiries ranged from simple facts on the institution to requests for documents relating to integration as a concept and achievements of the ECOWAS Commission.
557. Adequate reprographic, minor printing and binding services were provided during the period. Video/photo coverage of over 700 meetings and events held within and outside the Commission during the period were adequately documented by the Unit

2.8.10 Finance

✓ Implementation of Community Levy Protocol

558. The Community Levy Protocol was adopted on 27th July 1996 by the Authority of Heads of State and Government - A/P1/7/96 to address the funding challenge of an ambitious Regional Integration agenda as envisioned by the founding fathers. Over the years, it has become a source of pride to the Community, and reference point and benchmark by other Regional Economic Communities (RECs).
559. The Commission, in execution of the provisions of the Community Levy Protocol and the Supplementary Decisions of the Council of Ministers continues to monitor the implementation of the Protocol by Member States. The monitoring mechanisms over the years have revealed that several challenges still persist in the harmonization of the implementation modalities. Thus most Member States apply the Levy Protocol differently and no Member State is fully compliant with the Protocol. Details of the non-compliance are as follows:
- Member States collecting the Community Levy and depositing the proceeds into their own Treasury without remitting to the Levy account in accordance with the Protocol. (Violation of Article 10 of the Community Levy Protocol)
 - Member States maintaining parallel accounts into which the Community Levy proceeds are deposited and only make partial, irregular or no remittance into the Levy account. (Violation of Article 10 of the Community Levy Protocol)
 - Member States withholding the Bank account and not giving ECOWAS access to operate the account while making partial remittances. (Violation of Article 10 of the Community Levy Protocol)
 - Member States centralizing the Community Levy proceeds with the Customs headquarters making only periodic remittances into the Levy account. (Violation of Article 10 of the Community Levy Protocol)
 - Member States not applying the Community Levy on petroleum products. (Violation of Article 4 of the Community Levy Protocol)
 - Member States not sending Customs statements on a monthly basis to the Commission (Violation of Article 8 (3) of the Community Levy Protocol)
 - Member States not supplying the database to enable the Commission assess the application of the tax base. (Violation of Article 8 (3) of the Community Levy Protocol)
 - Member States inability to convert their local currencies into international currencies and remit to the Community Levy Pool Account.

560. The Community Levy Management Committee and the Community Levy Sub-Committee continue to field high-level and technical monitoring missions to Member States in order to ascertain problems encountered by Member States in the harmonisation and full implementation of the Community Levy Protocol in order to foster political cooperation on the implementation of the protocol.
561. The non-compliance of the Community Levy Protocol by Member States has invariably affected the availability of financial resources for the Community Institutions, Statutory Obligations, Special Programmes and Interventions in Member States, and Peace and Security programmes. Consequently, the level of implementation of some of the Community's flagship and notable programmes and projects have been relatively below expectation.
562. In spite of the current difficulties, there are other looming and serious challenges ahead, posed by the global economic downturn and policy changes in some Member States that will lead to further possible reduction in revenue. The recent policy changes by Nigeria, the highest contributor, relating to imported items may lead to significant reduction in revenue.
563. In order to cushion these effects, there is the need to rationalize the use of the Community resources by re-focusing and re-strategizing to ensure that priority programmes are not marred by the expected decline in resources. There is also the need to pursue and cooperate with our Development Partners to ensure that they are sufficiently mobilized for certain Special Projects which cut across Regional, albeit International boundaries, such as the maintenance of Peace and Security, Drug Controls, Terrorism, etc. are collectively undertaken.

✓ **Implementation of SAP (ECOLink) in ECOWAS Institutions**

564. Conceived to foster an effective and efficient Community-wide Resource Planning (Finance, Procurement, Human Resources & Travel Management), ECOLink 'Go-Live' of Wave I (Finance & Control – FICO & Materials Management – MM) took place at the Commission on 23rd February 2015. Subsequently, over a period of two months, this system was deployed at the Court of Justice, Parliament, WAHO, GIABA and other Agencies of the Commission (Water Resources Coordination Unit, Youth & Sports Development Center, Gender Development Center, ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency, and the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Agency). This was the culmination of over six months work coordinated by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), chaired by Commissioner for Finance, a dedicated Inter-Institutional Project Team and a team of Implementers/Consultants (Deloitte, Kenya). This singular event signalled the commencement of a Community-Wide Financial and Materials Management Platform. The Finance & Control (FICO) and Materials Management (MM) modules are fully operational in all five (5) ECOWAS Institutions.
565. Wave II (Human resources & Travel Management) were initially planned for deployment in August 2015. However, due to outstanding issues identified from Wave I by our Quality Assurance Consultants engaged with the support of the European Union, Wave II is currently on hold pending the resolution of all outstanding issues.

✓ **Implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in ECOWAS Institutions**

566. Article 58 of the ECOWAS Financial Regulations stipulates the Community's Financial Statements shall be prepared in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). Furthermore, Article 71 of the Regulation mandates that IPSAS standards shall become effective on 1st January 2011. Taking into consideration the re-organization of some financial and internal

accounting systems, Council at its 67th Ordinary session held in Abuja on 19th to 21st December 2011 directed that IPSAS becomes effective on 1st January 2014.

567. With the support of the World Bank, the Commission engaged an IPSAS Consultant to assist us identify standards applicable to our Institutions and to develop an action plan for implementation of IPSAS. The Consultant has conducted a Gap Analysis between the current situation 'as-is' and the desired situation (IPSAS compliant). In addition, an Implementation plan has been prepared outlining all activities required for all Community Institutions to achieve full IPSAS compliance. In order to ensure adequate collaboration and effective implementation, an Inter-Institutional Committee has been established. The ultimate target is to prepare an IPSAS compliant 2014 Financial Statements by December 2015 and the 2015 Financial Statements by Mid-year 2016.

CHAPTER III: ECOWAS AT 40: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

568. An appraisal of the 40 years of the existence of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is considered in this chapter in a simple progress report that provides an assessment of the impact of activities carried out within the framework of regional integration. Identifying the activities implemented in the light of set objectives is a significant opportunity to draw useful lessons for the future. In other words, it is an opportunity to outline the prospects for the coming years. However, considering the statistical report of countries of the region, mid and long term projections prove difficult especially in a 40-year period .
569. Moreover, the approach considered is likely less ambitious. It involves an assessment of the 40 years of existence of ECOWAS from 1975 to 2015, highlighting ideas or rather, some major pillars based on strengths and weaknesses identified so as to meet the expectations of the founding fathers and Heads of State and Government as contained in the Revised Treaty of July 1993. Simply put, it involves seeking out and gleaning ideas in order to make long-term projections through synergised activities of all ECOWAS Institutions :The Commission, Parliament, Court of Justice, other institutions and specialised agencies.
570. Founded on 28 May 1975 through the Lagos Treaty, ECOWAS' mandate is to promote economic cooperation and integration in all economic spheres among the Member States comprising Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, , Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Togo
571. The founding fathers of this organization believed in this instrument because they were convinced that regional integration was the only way for member states to combine efforts towards ensuring the harmonized and sustainable development of the region. This would in turn improve the standard of living of people and promote collective self-sufficient mind-set. The goal is to create a large trade bloc like the European Union or other regional organizations and to subsequently achieve Economic and Monetary Union, and even political union.
572. In this regard, the driving force will be the full realization of the regional integration objectives and vision 2020 that will lead to an ECOWAS of people.

3.1. The Regional Integration Process From 1975 To Present Day

573. **Priority objectives:** In the beginning, the regional integration process in West Africa had two major objectives. The first was to promote cooperation among Member States, through the elimination of different barriers to the free movement of persons and goods, restrictions to trade and the harmonisation of economic and sectoral policies. The second objective was economic progress and development particularly through the actualisation of common programmes in the area of agriculture and natural resources, industry, transport and communication, energy, trade, currency and finance, and economic reforms, as well as health, justice, peace and security.
574. In view of these objectives, it appears that the regional integration initiatives were hinged on the creation of a common market and economic union. Moreover, three major phases can be identified in the implementation of the major integration efforts. First from 1975 to 1993, there was the adoption of measures to remove obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods and services and capital among Member States as well as to grant rights of residence and establishment. Second, from 1994 to the end of 2004, there was the adoption of the peace and security instruments and the implementation of economic and institutional reforms; and thirdly,

from 2005 to date, key activities aimed at the completion of significant programmes and sector projects were initiated.

575. 40 years of ECOWAS can be assessed in line with these objectives notwithstanding the security issues encountered from the 1990s, marked by several conflicts in the region.

3.1.1 From 1975 to 1993

576. The first twenty years of the liberalisation process in West Africa was mainly marked by actions in favour of the free movement of persons within the ECOWAS and trade liberalisation through the elimination of customs duty on imports and exports of goods among Member States, and the elimination of non-tariff barriers with a view to creating a free trade area within the Community.
577. The protocol A/P1/5/79 on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment, signed in May 1979 and entered into force in April 1980. This protocol enshrined, very early, the will for an integrated region and a community citizenship. Protocol A/P3/5/82 relating to the definition of Community Citizen, which entered into force in July 1984, is clear proof of this achievement. Furthermore, Article 12 of the Lagos Treaty stipulates that: *“there shall be progressively established, a Customs Union among the Member States that will cover all trade in goods”*. The treaty therefore projects the gradual elimination of all hindrances to trade among member countries of the ECOWAS.

3.1.2. 1994 to 2004

578. The Revised ECOWAS Treaty signed in July 1993 enshrined and allowed for emphasis on certain objectives such as the creation and actualisation of an economic and monetary union (section IX) and cooperation in the area of political affairs, and regional security (section X).
579. The post-Revised Treaty-period was mainly marked by the adoption of the peacekeeping and security instruments. The period also witnessed the establishment of key economic and institutional reforms, following the emergence of crises in the region that were at the same time economic, political as well as social, and led to civil wars. There was also the stated objective to create an ECOWAS single currency, initially slated for January 2003.
580. As regards peace and security, one can say that the reoccurrence of crises and instability, which led to the armed conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the late 1980s and early 1990s, moved the Community's highest authority to adopt an instrument for the prevention and management of conflict. Protocol A/P1/12/99, signed in Lome on 10 December 1999, on the Mechanism for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflict, Peacekeeping and Security, entered into force from the date of its signature, revealed the gravity of the challenge and the strong will of Heads of State to act quickly. This instrument made it possible to stem recent crises in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Guinea Bissau and Mali.
581. The security challenge extended to democracy and good governance, giving rise to the Protocol A/SP1/12/01, of 21 December 2001, on Democracy and Good Governance, in addition to the aforementioned protocol. The mechanism allowed for various preventive actions and mediation efforts during pre and post electoral tension and crises within the region.
582. This period was also marked by significant reforms especially with the creation and establishment of certain organs and institutions for integration. They include: (i) the Community Parliament (Protocol A/P2/8/94, entered into force 14/03/2000), (ii) the Community Court of Justice (Protocol A/P1/7/91, entered into force 5/11/1996), (iii) the West Africa Monetary Agency (Protocol A/P1/7/93, entered into force 1/08/1995), (iv) the institution of the Community Levy (Protocol A/P7/96, which entered into force 4/01/2000, a significant provision for the financial autonomy of

ECOWAS institutions, (v) the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID, Protocol A/P2/12/01, which entered into force 10/08/2004), key institution for financing the economies.

583. Consolidation of the institutional arrangement helped to further ensure justice, transparency, good governance while ensuring increased commitment from the different stakeholders involved in the actualization of the final objective of regional integration.
584. Faced with the economic crises of the 1980s and the limitations of the structural adjustment programmes engineered by the Breton Wood Institutions, regional integration efforts appeared to be a solution to the structural problems that the member states were unable to address independently.
585. As a result, there were reforms undertaken at community level aimed at waiving certain structural constraints of the economies, and had to do specifically with macroeconomic management, industry, mining, transport and agriculture.
586. Also, as regards the Monetary Union, measures for the harmonisation of macroeconomic policies were put in place. The resulting economic convergence provision, adopted by Decision A/DEC.7/12/99 of 10 December 1999, targets: (i) harmonious growth in per capita income, (ii) strengthening of the macroeconomic framework, (iii) building up of solid financial systems to enable their increased involvement in financing the economies, and (iv) enhancing private sector support mechanisms.

3.1.3. 2005 onwards

587. The adoption of various common economic and sector policies and programmes as well as the harmonisation and coordination of national policies, as stipulated in Article 3,2 of the Revised Treaty is one crucial step towards the common market and economic union.
588. These policies include: (i) harmonisation and coordination of policies aimed at protecting the environment; (ii) the adoption of measures aimed at promoting private sector integration, including the creation of a favourable environment for promoting small and medium-scale enterprises; (iii) the promotion of joint ventures by private sector organisations and other economic operators including the conclusion of a regional agreement on cross-border investments; (iv) the establishment of a favourable legal environment; (v) the harmonisation of national investment codes culminating in the adoption of a single community investment code; and (vi) the harmonisation of standards and measures.
589. To effectively actualize this objective that seems to be a prerequisite to the consolidation of the ECOWAS mission, the Community's Governing Body decided, in 2006, to enhance the role of the Executive Secretariat by transforming it into a Commission. Over the past decade, a number of policies, programmes, projects were adopted, implemented or are currently being implemented.

3.2. Assessment of regional integration activities

590. The status of implementation of major projects by the ECOWAS since inception to date enables an assessment of results obtained in terms of actual successes, progress in certain cases and some more or less recognizable gaps in other instances, which require appropriate measures to reverse the trend.
591. However, for lack of relevant analysis measuring the impact of all actions undertaken within the framework of regional integration, what is presented in this chapter is a status report on activities performed, even though often uncompleted. This analysis is set against the backdrop of set integration objectives on one hand, and the regional economic situation on the other hand. The causal link is not necessarily researched into as it is not formally established in all the cases.

3.2.1. Assessment based on the main objectives

592. The assessment of regional integration is considered in relation to the three major objectives: the creation of the common market, the establishment of peace and security, as well as the harmonisation of policies and the adoption of common programmes.
593. The status of implementation of major projects by ECOWAS therefore makes it possible to observe that the respective projects are progressing at varying levels. In view of this, three categories can be identified: activities recording *significant success*; activity areas with *some measure of progress*, with the understanding that there is still much to do; and then activities recording *less progress*.

3.2.1.1 In relation to the objective of creating a common market

594. Within the framework of the common market objective, the emphasis is on the following efforts:

✓ Free movement of persons

595. This is one of the great achievements and may be labelled a significant success for the following reasons:
- ECOWAS is the only region in Africa where, since 1980, Member States have not required visas from its citizens (in comparison, even if unnecessary, it was only in 2005 that the Schengen Agreement of the European Union entered into force).
 - A community identity exists (travel document and ECOWAS passport): nationals enjoy a right of residence and access to jobs.
 - The introduction of the ECOWAS travel certificate, adopted in all Member States, but being implemented by eight (8) Member States which are: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo.
 - The introduction of harmonized immigration forms: a measure adopted by all Member States except Liberia.
 - The introduction of the brown insurance card: adopted by all countries except Cape Verde; and.
 - The introduction of laws on the Right of establishment and residence: the legal bases for the right of residence and establishment have been established. And in several cases, these rights have been implemented.
596. However, there are still significant obstacles to the free movement of persons, resulting, for instance, in: the selective implementation of the Protocol on free movement and related relevant texts, (ii) the proliferation of unauthorized road blocks; (iii). Harassment at border crossings, and (iv) the Community citizens and security agents not properly informed on the rights set out in the Protocol on free movement.

✓ Liberalization of trade

597. As regards the liberalization of trade, some progress can be noted. The creation of the Free Trade Area (FTA), has given rise to the establishment of a ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), a Protocol on Interstate Road Transit (ISRT) and a transit operations guarantee scheme
598. However, in the area of trade liberalization, the expected results are still far from being achieved. The implementation of the ETLS has not brought about the creation or diversion of trade within the region. The following reasons explain this under-performance: (I) most of the countries, as

part of the ETLs, eliminated tariff barriers on raw materials but very few did same on industrial products, (ii) the language barrier (non-translated documents) and the absence of community standards, coupled with the will of some States to protect their producers; and (iii) the lack of an adapted jurisdictional provision further complicates the resolution of disputes. The court of justice is empowered to resolve issues of blocked products. However, ECOWAS has no court of arbitration. Moreover, the gaps in the free movement of goods are as a result of the ineffectiveness of the customs union which entered into force in January 2015.

✓ **ECOWAS Common External Tariff (ECOWAS-CET)**

599. As an important and decisive stage in the creation of the customs union and the deepening of economic integration in the region, the ECOWAS-CET was adopted in October 2013 with six (06) key regulations and entered into force in January 2015. The ECOWAS-CET could help to expedite certain developments in key strategic sectors of the region.

3.2.1.2. In relation to the objective of establishing an environment of peace and security

600. As regards peace, security and stability, some progress can be identified. ECOWAS has several instruments such as: Preventive diplomacy, early warning, capacity building and peace-keeping and regional security.

601. The achievements include:

- The more or less successful management of first generation crises in Liberia, Sierra Leone and more recently, Mali and Guinea-Bissau with the support of Member States and development partners;
- The implementation and subsequent administration of the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance have helped to increase the influence of ECOWAS on countries in crisis; and
- We observed with great hope and satisfaction the return to stability that enabled the concerned countries to rebuild, and recording strong economic growth. The case of Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra-Leone and Niger, to mention a few, has demonstrated the existence of a very close link between stability and growth, coupled with far better economic reforms.

602. However, despite the progress made in terms of peace and security, uncertainty and anxiety still exist and the situation remains fragile in some countries, especially with the increasing rate of terrorism. There is therefore need to intensify efforts to maintain this momentum and address the gaps identified from the experience.

3.2.1.3. In relation to the objective of harmonization of policies and the promotion of common programmes

603. In general, there is less progress in the area of common policies and programmes. Despite the adoption of several policy and programme harmonization frameworks, the situation is still bleak in terms of the areas of intervention. Analysis of the following four programmes provides an assessment of the very partial actualisation of these efforts and the job that still needs to be done.

✓ **Harmonization of macroeconomic policies**

604. Within this framework, a multilateral surveillance mechanism was adopted to ensure an evolution of some key macroeconomic indicators tend towards set targets (convergence criteria). This goal suggests that the convergence of all countries towards these criteria is necessary, though incapable of ensuring optimal monetary union. The mechanism, in relation to budgetary, financial

and monetary integration, has not always helped in the harmonious evolution of the region's economies.

✓ **ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP)**

605. The ECOWAP, adopted in January 2005, is the sub-regional component of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP). The programme aims to ensure food security for the people of West Africa; reduce food dependency by becoming self-sufficient; open the markets to producers; create an income generating employment capable of improving standard of living in rural areas and the provision of services to rural dwellers; ensure that the systems of productions are sustainable; reduce the vulnerability of West African economies by tackling instability and security factors; and adopt an appropriate funding mechanism.

606. To achieve these objectives, several actions were carried out, such as:

- National Agricultural Investment Plans (PNIA);
- Regional Agricultural Investment Plans (PRIA);
- Creation of instruments specially for increasing production and agricultural productivity;
- Regional Agency for Agricultural Resilience (ARRA);
- Regional Food Bank ; and
- Regional Support Programme for the sustainable development of rice farming in West Africa with the assumption that the region will be self-sufficient in rice by 2025.

607. However, the issue of food security remains a major challenge that regional authorities are paying close attention to. Recent demonstrations against food shortage and the high cost of living in many countries of the region (caricatured by some as "*the demonstrations of hunger*") are indicative of the magnitude of the problem.

✓ **Infrastructure Programmes**

608. To increase trade and investment, the ECOWAS is implementing transit and transport facilitation programmes. However, the results are still poor, as West Africa's infrastructural deficit remains evident. For example, although more than 90% of the transportation of cargo and passengers is still by road, the countries of the ECOWAS region remain ill-equipped in terms of road infrastructures. In effect the region has only approximately 4.7 km of road to every 100 km² compared to an average of 6.8 km for the African continent.

✓ **Energy Policy**

609. In order to address the significant energy challenge of the region, ECOWAS has proceeded to:

- adopt a regional policy on energy ;
- create a Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency;
- create the West African Power Pool (WAPP) ;
- create the West Africa Gas Pipeline. Having started operations in 1982 and attracted much hope, and having led to the signing of several intergovernmental agreements, this project is, to this day, not fully operational because of the insufficient gas supply. Yet 70% of the installations were completed;
- The creation, in 2008, of a Regional Regulatory Authority (ERERA).

610. Despite all of these initiatives and the region's enormous energy potential - 30% of the proven crude oil reserves (3,017 million tonnes) and 3,581 million m³ of natural gas, 31% of proven reserves of the continent, to which we must add a hydroelectric potential estimated at 23,900 MW and the opportunities for developing solar and wind energy - major difficulties facing this sector are tied to the poor production capacity as well as the run-down distribution infrastructure. Less than 30% of the population has direct access to electricity of which only 6% in rural areas. A 7.6% increase in demand is expected by 2020.

3.2.2. Assessment in relation to economic performance

611. The evaluation of activities of ECOWAS Institutions may equally be considered from the angle of economic performance even if such an exercise is in reality quite complex. A brief analysis of the status of intra-regional trade as well as the overall activity is, in some respects, a means to draw lessons regarding the impact of the integration process on the economic and social progress.

3.2.2.1. Trade Performance

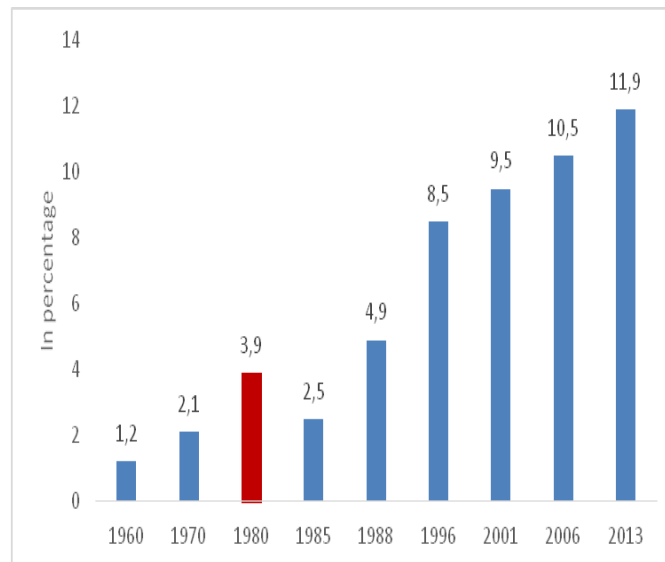
612. There are no accurate and detailed statistics with which to measure the influence of the free movement of goods in intra-Community trade. In fact, the statistics does not contain significant border trade. On the whole, though relatively low compared to the total trade, intra-regional trade is on the increase. Since 1980, with the entry into force of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), initially on agricultural products and handicrafts, and subsequently extended in 1990 to include manufactured products of origin, the region has witnessed a rise in intra-ECOWAS trade (see Table 2).

Table 2: Exports intra-ECOWAS

Years	Intra regional Trade in millions of USD	Total Exports in millions of USD	Share of intra regional Trade (%)
1960	17	1 330	1.2
1970	61	2 960	2.1
1980	1 056	32 450	3.9
1985	481	19 440	2.5
1988	684	14 100	4.9
1996	3 571	42 012	8.5
2001	2 292	24 126	9.5
2006	7 153	68 124	10.5
2013	13 037	109 555	11.9

Source: ECOWAS Commission

Figure 12: Exports intra-ECOWAS



Source: ECOWAS Commission

613. In 1970, intra-regional trade represented only 2.1% of the region's total exports and at the time of entry into force of the ECOWAS free trade area in 1980, it stood at 3.9%. Today, intra-ECOWAS trade represents nearly 12% of the region's total trade. It is an encouraging fact, coupled with the observable upswing of the indicator based on Figure 1 above.

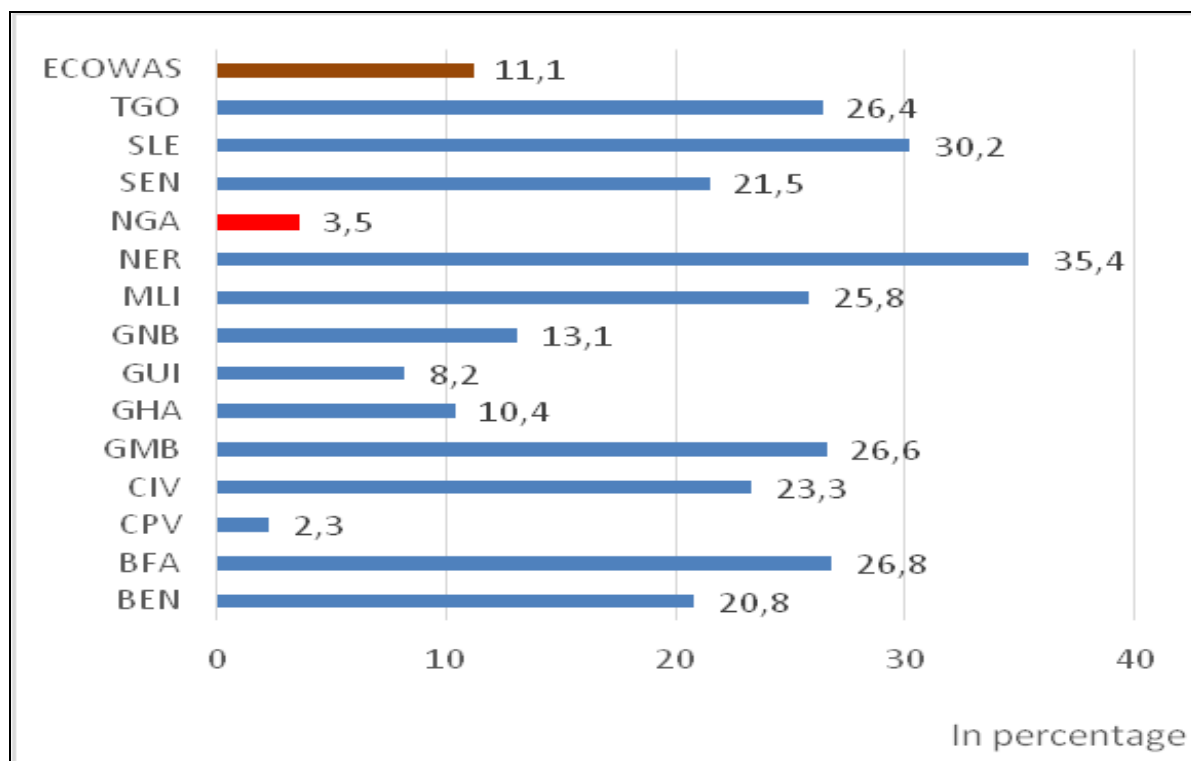
614. However, the abovementioned overall development masks the disparities among countries (see figure 2):

- ✓ 9 countries record over 20% in percentage of Trade, with a maximum of 35.4% for Niger;

- ✓ Nigeria, which represents nearly 75% of the total trade of the ECOWAS, contributes only 3.5% to intra-regional trade just ahead of Cape Verde (2.3%), the lowest; and

615. As a result, the relatively poor intra-regional trade compared to external trade is a direct result of Nigeria's low contribution to intra-ECOWAS trade.

Figure 13: Intra-ECOWAS Trade by Member States (in % of total trade)



616. In summary, there is no doubt as to the fact that belonging to a free trade area has positive impact on intra-regional trade. However, there is still no proper evaluation of the growth of the intra-trade. The imbalance created by the tariff and non-tariff barriers fosters informal border trade, and impact negatively on formal trade among Member States.

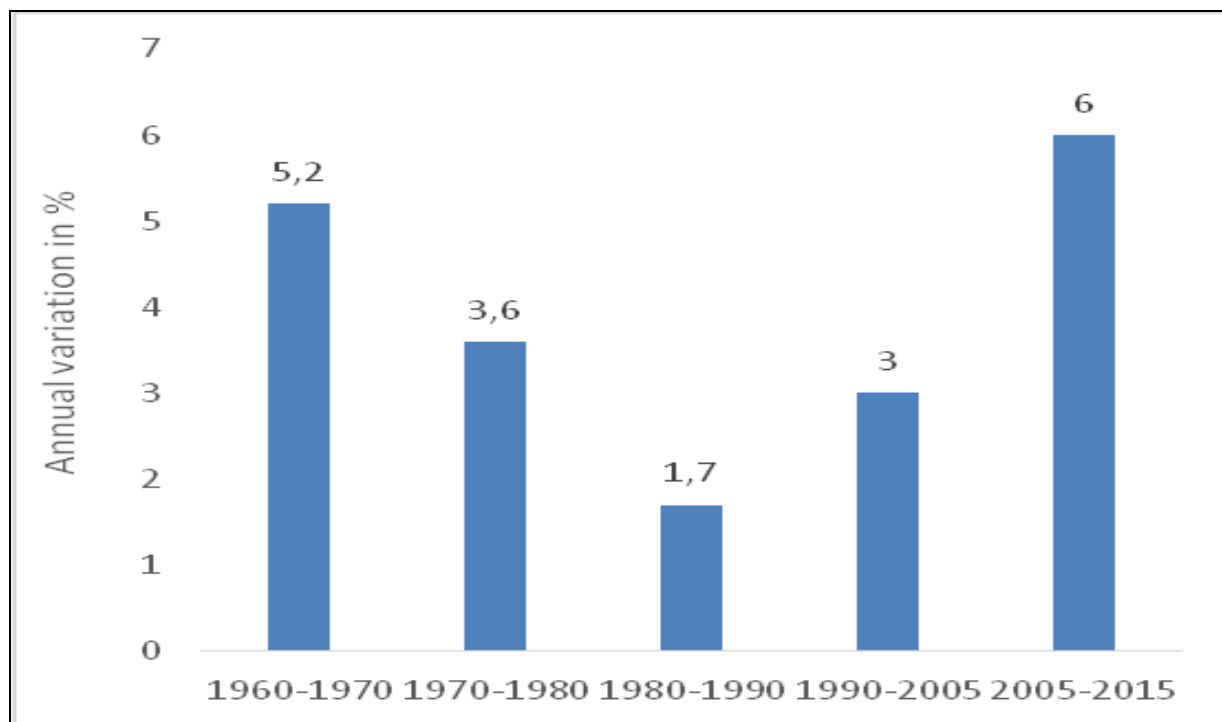
3.2.2.2. Macroeconomic Performance

617. The creation of ECOWAS occurred during the economic slowdown of the mid 1970s, that was the results of worsening trade terms and debt crisis. The average growth of the region, set at 5.2% during the period from 1960 to 1970, dropped to 3.6% from 1970-1980. The proposed solution to address the crisis was the application of the Washington agreement through the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) aimed at integrating the African countries into the global market. The consequences of these measures are well known and economic activity worsened: the average growth rate dropped to 1.7% between 1980 and 1990 (OECD, 2009).

618. From the mid-1990s, the overall economic situation in West Africa improved, with an increasing growth rate. The growth rate increased to 3% between 1990 and 2005. However, over the last decade, it has recorded 6% on average with projections up to 2025 fixed at below 5% (OECD, 2009⁴).

⁴ OCDE (2009) *translate to English*

Figure 14: Periodic evolution of the ECOWAS growth rate



Source: ECOWAS

619. This significant improvement in the macroeconomic situation since the 1990s, as shown by macroeconomic indicators are renewed growth; better management of economic imbalances and inflation; increased external assets that is certainly due to the improved foreign environment with good commodity pricing of agricultural products, minerals and energy resources due to strong pressure from emerging economies and the broadening of possibilities for funding, such as the debt cancellation under the HIPC initiative, and the reforms undertaken by the States. The role of Regional Integration Organisations, like the ECOWAS, cannot be overlooked in this positive move. The reasons outlined above help to ensure:

- Improvement to the economic environment through peace-building and security as well as democratic West African political institutions;
- Development of new community programmes better suited to the needs of the people, with a broadened scope of application;
- Trade opening that enables Member States to enjoy opportunities being offered by a vast regional market; and
- Regional solidarity.

3.3. Overcoming The Challenges

620. Despite ECOWAS' efforts towards the consolidation of regional integration, a number of challenges still exist. West Africa remains marginalised in international trade and trade among Member States is still emerging. Factors explaining this slow pace are: (i) the poor diversification and transformation of raw materials, due to the extreme structural rigidity of economies in the region, (ii) the high cost of factors of production (iii) the inadequate complementarity between

national economies (iv) poor infrastructure, particularly transport and energy, as well as (v) poor implementation of economic integration solutions (an often vague application of certain agreements and protocols). In addition to the aforementioned are gaps in the business environment, constraints from the foreign environment, such as the protectionist practices restricting regional products' access to the markets of developed countries and subsidies and grants to producers of these countries.

621. Faced with all these constraints that hamper development of regional trade, and regional integration process, the main challenges that ECOWAS must address has to do with deepening of structural reforms, improving the institutional framework, maintaining macroeconomic stability and harmonizing macroeconomic policies, building physical infrastructure and human capital, consolidating the monetary cooperation framework, customs union, agricultural development, and strengthening political stability and social harmony.
622. On the *structural transformation of the economies*, the initial challenges relate to poor production capacities especially in the industrial sector.
623. In that regard, the mid and long term priorities must focus on measures likely to transform the structure of economies with a view to diversifying sources of growth for a more robust and solid structure, while creating more jobs in all sectors of the economy. Hence, the promotion of private investment both local and foreign is a fundamental strategic element for ensuring the acceleration of growth and development. Foreign investment, that especially includes the transfer of technologies, should play a vital role in capacity building. In this case, economic policy and institutional context will have positive impact on business investments.
624. Moreover, as regards *macroeconomic stability and harmonisation of macroeconomic policies*, many gaps still exist as economic and financial management rules vary considerably, and adherence to the macroeconomic convergence criteria is poor.
625. Hence, ECOWAS should establish a strict macroeconomic management pact and consolidate structural policies. The regional organisation should create conditions for effective resource allocation and promote competitiveness. With this in view, promoting an efficient and stable financial system appears to be the necessary requirement that will energise the real sector of the region.
626. Also, it is widely accepted that macroeconomic management and *good governance* complement each other and together contribute to a strong and sustainable growth. The cross-cutting issue of governance is recurrent and its inadequacies continue to impede on development efforts.
627. It is therefore necessary to enhance the credibility of governments, through adherence to the rule of law and good governance, and wage a more active war against corruption. In effect, corruption and the lack of credibility are highlighted as the main reasons for the failure of economic policies.
628. Furthermore, *poor regional infrastructure* is a hindrance to trade among Member States. The cost of transactions across countries is high due to poor interconnection among countries.
629. Therefore, for the success of economic integration, it is crucial to work towards:
- speeding up and completing regional road, rail, air and sea transport projects;
 - completing telecommunication interconnection projects, by building fibre optic cable links between countries;
 - making up for the region's late digitization compared to other regions of the world, through the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT);
 - achieving the supply of power for the entire region through increased production and

distribution capacities. Priorities of the energy policy should therefore equally centre on the development of renewable energy (solar, wind, water, biofuel, etc.).

630. Inadequate *skilled human capital*, which constitutes the basis for progress and development, is one of the major challenges of the region where the level of instruction and education of the population is low. Also, the effectiveness of the health system is considerably basic.
631. Improving the educational and training system as well as the health system will help to significantly increase productivity. Public expenditure should therefore be channelled towards supporting investment effort in these areas.
632. 6. In addition, *monetary and financial cooperation* is still at its rudimentary stage, though it is essential to the development of regional transactions. This slow pace is in relation to the gaps in macroeconomic harmonisation and the weak cross-border payment and settlement system.
633. The consolidation of economic convergence and harmonisation of economic and financial policies of Member States, are crucial to the creation of the single currency in the ECOWAS region.
634. 7. The numerous impediments to the free movement of goods and persons are significant challenges to the establishment of the *customs union* which has just been adopted, as well as the effective implementation of the ECOWAS trade liberalisation scheme (ETLS).
635. Also, the implementation of the ECOWAS CET and the ETLS should be accompanied by trade facilitation measures, especially waiving technical barriers to trade, and by appropriate industrial development strategies within the region. In order to avoid diversion of business to benefit products from third countries, Member States are urged to strictly apply the provisions of ECOWAS' rules of origin.
636. 8. Limits to *agricultural development* remain one of the key concerns of the ECOWAS because humanitarian and food crises regularly affect countries in the region. The region therefore needs to work towards significantly reducing food vulnerability, while promoting sustainable access to food, providing structured responses to aid people affected by food crises.
637. 9. On the *legal and institutional* scale, gaps can be observed in the implementation of regional agreements and protocols and in the governance of regional integration Institutions. Also, the poor mobilisation of resources for financing regional programmes, and inadequate ownership of our development strategies is a major challenge.
638. Actions that are therefore geared towards Member States effective application of regional agreements and protocols, including coercion measures, should be carried out for the success of the integration process.
639. 10. Finally, the aforementioned efforts would only be possible in an environment of *peace and security*. In effect, the achievements notwithstanding, political and social instability remain a major concern so that current achievements still hang in the balance.
640. To do this, ECOWAS must promote dialogue and preventive diplomacy and provide leadership in consolidating the democratisation process in West Africa, then peace-building and democracy.

3.4. Mid And Long Term Perspectives

641. The various stakeholders in the regional integration process in West Africa, including ECOWAS Authorities, regional organisations, local and external partners, have learned important lessons from the journey so far and the existing gaps. Diverse scenarios exist for projection into the

future and consolidating achievements and curbing challenges. These will help to assess the relevance of initiatives being undertaken in the region.

642. Projections to the future should hinge on the notion of ECOWAS as “*a transformed region, with shared prosperity and an inclusive development with institutions that citizens can rely on*”.

3.4.1. Prospects for Sustainable Development

643. This goal falls in line with the overall objective of structural transformation of the region’s economies where industrial and services sectors will really take on agriculture, exportation, and trade of raw commodities as major sources of growth and wealth creation.

644. This goal is also based on the objectives of sector programmes currently being implemented within the ECOWAS, which include:

- *The Community Development Programme*: long-term development programme adopted in 2013 that aims to turn the region into a competitive economy particularly through reduction of costs that will make the ECOWAS space more economically viable within the context of a globalised economy. The programme is to also make the region experience a stronger more sustainable economic growth. And enhanced integration of people within the ECOWAS region.
- *The EPA Development Programme (EPADP)*: the main objectives of this programme include diversification and increase of production capacities of the West African region with a view to increasing its supply capacity in the regional and international market.
- *Industrial development strategy*: aims to, by 2030, have turned ECOWAS into an industrial region where:
 - the industrial sector’s contribution to regional GDP rises from 6-7% to 25% ;
 - the industrial sector attains a 12% growth rate;
 - regional trade attains 50% of manufactured goods;
 - the use of local raw materials increases from 15-20% to 30%; and
 - Exports of manufactured products to global markets increases from 0.1% to 1%.

645. On the whole, all the analyses suggest that the current trend of regional economic growth (an average of over 6%) should continue over the next ten years, as this will lead to economic progress and development.

3.4.2. Outlook on an Economic and Monetary Union

646. The entry into force of the ECOWAS CET in January 2015, is a clear attestation to the fact that the regional integration process is on track. To consolidate this progress, efforts should be intensified in eliminating all restrictions to mutual trade among its member states. There is the need for the establishment of a common system of tariff and non-tariff measures on imports from third countries ; exchange information on the collection and sharing of customs revenue received on imports from third countries, and common customs management..

647. The recent measures of the movement of persons and the right of establishment undertaken by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in Accra in 2014 should be consolidated. The basic implication is that two criteria of *mobility of factors* and *opening-up of the economies* among six key criteria of the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme’s roadmap, are being actualised..

648. Furthermore, the consolidation of on-going efforts in the area of budgetary management and the process of financial integration (cooperation of the capital markets, regional settlement system

project), coupled with the willingness displayed by ECOWAS Authorities, reinforces the implementation of the single currency roadmap.

3.4.3. Outlook on Infrastructure development and a competitive economic environment

649. The main preoccupations of the Authorities is the goal of infrastructure development which is the well-packed regional and continental agenda on infrastructure. Many regional infrastructural projects will help the region to meet the infrastructural gap, and consequently provide enabling economic environment that boost economic growth. The increased involvement of the private sector in the construction and development of infrastructure within the ECOWAS region complementing public provision is a welcome development. Public-private partnerships are increasingly part of the strategy for the infrastructural development in the region.

3.4.4. Outlook on Democracy and Good governance

650. Democracy and good governance presents promising prospects in the light of progress recorded in the past few years. Forceful taking over of power is almost non-existent, and the only cases recorded in recent years failed due to the commitment of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS to clamp down on such activity.

651. The culture of democracy is on course in West Africa. The passage to a completely peaceful political environment where good governance, democratic values, gender equality, justice, and the respect of human rights are a must is welcomed.

3.5 Conclusion and recommendations

652. The region has experienced relative improvement in its security situation, even if the situation still calls for vigilance. The threat posed by extremist and armed groups in Mali, Niger and Nigeria continues to raise uncertainty over the already fragile stability of the Sahel-Saharan and by extension the entire region.

653. We seize this opportunity to commend the leadership of our highest authorities who continue to do all that is necessary to regain lasting peace in the region.

654. On the economic level, despite the slowdown in economic growth at global level, the region experienced robust growth which stood at 6.2% in 2014. It is necessary to do all to ensure that the increase in wealth contributes even more significantly to the reduction of poverty in the region.

655. In this context, ECOWAS will work towards the implementation of its programmes to achieve:

- ✓ *Customs Union*: effective functioning of the Customs Union through the application of the Common External Tariff (CET), removal of obstacles to the free movement of persons and goods and removal of non-tariff barriers;
- ✓ *Signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)*: the complete signing with the European Union, of a fair, balanced, development-oriented regional agreement;
- ✓ *Monetary Integration* involving the harmonization of economic and financial policies of the Member States, leading to the creation of the single currency for the entire region ;
- ✓ *Regional Infrastructure Development*: drive forward the establishment of the action plans adopted especially through the implementation of facilitation activities in the transport and road transit facilitation programme, and effective liberalization of air transport in the region ;
- ✓ *Agricultural development*: carry on with the process of developing national agricultural investment programmes and ensure the implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) as well as the regional initiatives to produce food and combat hunger.

- ✓ *Peace-building and security*: promoting dialogue and preventive diplomacy and providing leadership in strengthening the democratization process in West Africa particularly in Guinea Bissau, Guinea, and Mali, and finally peace-building and democracy..

CHAPTER IV: ACTIVITIES OF OTHER COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

4.1 THE ECOWAS PARLIAMENT

656. The Parliament Standing Committees held several delocalized meetings to consider issues bordering on the Integration and Cooperation process. These meetings include the following:
- ✓ The Joint Committee meeting on Political Affairs, Peace and Security, NEPAD and African Peer Review Mechanism and Committee on Legal and Judicial Affairs was held in Praia, Cape Verde from 24 to 28 February 2015. The theme of the meeting was “ECOWAS texts on the fight against corruption and money laundering: status and prospects of their effective implementation.”
 - ✓ The Joint Committee on Health and Social Services/Committee on Gender, Labour, Employment and Social Welfare held a meeting in Dakar, Senegal, from 3 to 7 March 2015, with the theme of “EBOLA Virus, Fever Epidemic: Evolution, status of control measures and outlook.”
 - ✓ The Joint Committee on Human Rights and Child Protection/Committee on Legal and Judicial Affairs held a meeting in Bamako, Mali, from 10 to 14 March 2015. The theme of the meeting was “Parliamentary Actions in the area of Human Rights- What inputs is the ECOWAS Parliament expected to make.”
 - ✓ The Joint Committee on Agriculture, Environment, Water Resources and Rural Development/Committee on Infrastructure and Industrial Development held a meeting in Banjul, The Gambia, from 17th to 21st March 2015. The theme of the meeting was “The impact of the Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (RAIP) and National Agricultural Investment Programmes of the various Member States on Agricultural Productivity and the food security situation in the Region.”
657. The 2015 First Ordinary Session of the Parliament was held from 11 to 28 May 2015. It was essentially the working session of the Parliament. Besides the consideration and adoption of the reports of delocalized meetings of the Standing Committees, the Session also focused attention on the following subjects:
- ✓ Xenophobic attacks in the Republic of South Africa: The Parliament condemned in unequivocal terms, the reign of terror and mayhem visited on nationals of many African countries resident in South Africa. It called on the Government of that country to investigate the killings and bring the culprits to book. It also asked that measures be put in place to prevent any future occurrence.
 - ✓ Plight of African Immigrants in the Mediterranean Sea: The Parliament observed that there had been an upsurge in the number of African youths attempting illegal and risky crossings into Europe. This has therefore led to more sea accidents leading to the death of the youths. The Parliament called on the various Governments, especially in Africa, to provide more means of livelihood to the people and hence make sea crossing less attractive.
 - ✓ Elections conducted in some Member States, notably Nigeria and Togo: The Parliament commended the conduct of presidential elections in both Nigeria and Togo. It specifically noted the peaceful nature of the elections, leading to the acceptance of the outcome not only by the international community, but even by contending parties.
658. The Supplementary Act on the Enhancement of the Powers of the ECOWAS Parliament was adopted by the Community decision-making bodies. The Administration and Finance Commission (AFC), at its 14th meeting, held in Abuja from 1 to 7 December 2014, considered the financial implication of the Act. This was sequel to a directive issued by the 72nd Ordinary Session of the

Council of Ministers held in Accra, Ghana, on 19 and 20 June 2014, seeking information on the cost implications of an enhanced Parliament. The Council of Ministers, at its 73rd Ordinary Session held in Abuja from 9 to 11 December 2014, considered and adopted the financial implication and recommended the Supplementary Act for adoption by the Authority of Heads of State and Government. The Authority, on its part, held its 46th Ordinary Session in Abuja on 15 December 2014 and adopted the Act. What remains outstanding is the signing of the Act by Heads of State of the Community.

659. The Parliament also organised an Extra Ordinary Session in Abuja from 2 to 7 February 2015 to consider the current status relating to the enhancement of powers of the ECOWAS Parliament and to suggest a way forward. Parliament acknowledged the present status of the quest for the enhancement of its powers. It specifically noted the adoption of the Act by the Community Decision Makers and the need for the document to be signed. In view of the foregoing, Parliament adopted a resolution to submit a request to the Authority of Heads of State and Government, proposing an extension to its tenure for a period of one year. This was based on the need for the 3rd legislature to put in place transitional arrangements for the next legislature, which is expected to operate based on the provisions of the new Act. The proposal to have its tenure extension, to enable the 3rd Legislature put the necessary structures for a successful take-off of the enhanced Parliament was however rejected by the Authority of Heads of State and Government. Consequently, the tenure of the 3rd Legislature of the Parliament lapsed on 10th August 2015. The inauguration of the 4th Legislature is yet to be done.
660. As part of the strengthening of its Institutional role, the ECOWAS Parliament went live on the ECOLink system at the launching of the system on 18 March 2015.. The implementation of the ECOLink system is restricted to Wave 1, focusing on finance and material management.
661. There was the establishment of a Network of West African Parliamentarians on Peace and Security. The formation of the Network, aims at foster parliamentary participation in efforts at promoting peace and security within the region. This initiative is for now supported by the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA). So far the basic documents of the Network have been prepared and were considered by a sub-committee at a meeting held in Bamako, Mali on 16 to 17 March 2015. This is prior to the official launch of the Network, due to come up later in the year.
662. Furthermore, the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) had extended an invitation to the Parliament to attend the MDG Parliamentary Conference on Peace, Security and Sustainable Development. This conference, jointly organised by AWEPA and the Belgian Senate, was held on 8 and 9 October 2015, in Brussels, Belgium. It focused mainly on the root causes of terrorism and insurgency around the world.
663. The Parliament benefitted from various capacity building programmes from the National Institute of Legislative Studies (NILS), of the Nigerian National Assembly. Consequently, the following training programmes were organised for Members of Parliament: Effective Executive-Legislative Relations and Performance, organised by John Hopkins University, USA; Advanced Strategic Planning and Management, organised by the International Law Institute, USA; and Strategic Leadership, organised by Oxford University in the UK.
664. Furthermore, Staff of the ECOWAS Parliament, alongside Staff from National Parliaments of ECOWAS Member States benefitted from training programmes in the following areas: Advanced Legislative Research Methodology; Advanced Legislative Practice and Procedure; Effective Speech and Report Writing; Budget Process Workshop; Intensive Legislative Drafting Workshop; Short Course on E-Journalism (Ghana Institute of Journalism); ICT for effective Parliamentary Service Delivery; Legislative Strategic Management. And Results Based Management (RBM).

665. In addition, the Parliament participated in the 133rd Session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which was held from 17 to 21 October in Geneva, Switzerland

4.2 COMMUNITY COURT OF JUSTICE

666. This is the report of the Community Court of Justice, ECOWAS on its judicial and non-judicial activities from 1st January to 31st October, 2015. It should be noted that the Court observed its *usual Court vacation from 15th July to 15th September* as provided for under Article 24 (1) (c) of its Rules.

✓ *Judicial Activities*

667. According to the statistics of the Court ninety one (91) Court sessions were held, wherein twenty three (23) judgements and five (5) rulings were delivered. Thirty one (31) new cases were filed during the period under review. At the end of the review period, there were fifty eight (58) cases pending before the Court. In addition, the Court held an external court session in Bissau, the Republic of Guinea Bissau, from 23 to 25 March 2015 at which it heard eleven (11) cases, delivered three (3) judgments and one (1) ruling.

- *Judges and Judicial Retreat*

668. The 2014 Judges and Judicial Retreat of the Court under the theme "*The jurisprudence of the ECOWAS Court of Justice from 2003 to 2014*" was held in Calabar, Nigeria from 20 to 25 January, 2015. The seven (7) new Members of the Court, their Personal Assistants, the Chief Registrar and the other Legal Staff of the Court participated actively in the retreat.

- *Opening Ceremony of the Legal Year of the Court*

669. The Solemn Ceremony marking the opening of the 2014-2015 Legal Year of the Court was held at the Seat of the Court on 21st February 2015. At the ceremony, the new Members of the Court were formally installed by the Chairman of the Judicial Council of the Community, Hon. Justice Mamadou Koné, former President of the Supreme Court of Cote d'Ivoire. The ceremony was attended by the President of ECOWAS Commission, the Bureau of the Judicial Council, ECOWAS Ambassadors/High Commissioners and representatives of other ECOWAS Institutions.

670. Also, the Solemn Ceremony marking the opening of the 2015/2016 Legal Year of the Court was held at the Seat of the Court on 22nd October, 2015. The ceremony was attended by the Vice-President of ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Ambassadors/High Commissioners, Representatives of other ECOWAS Institutions and some prominent jurists from the sub-region.

✓ *Non Judicial Activities*

671. In addition to the judiciary functions, the Court undertook other activities which are summarized below.

• *External Relations and Co-operation with International Organisations*

672. The Court attended the Ministerial Conference on Statelessness in the ECOWAS Region in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire, under the auspices of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at which it made a presentation on the Right to Nationality and ECOWAS Citizenship. The Court also signed an MOU with UNHCR to establish a framework for cooperation in order to better protect the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless persons and those at risk of statelessness in West Africa.

• *International Conference in Guinea Bissau:*

673. The Court held an International Conference in Bissau, Guinea Bissau from 18 to 20 March, 2015 under the theme "*Human Rights as a fundamental value of ECOWAS: An analysis of the*

jurisprudence of the ECOWAS Court of Justice". There were international human rights scholars from across the Community in attendance.

- *Publication of the Court*

674. The 2012 and 2013 Decisions of the Court were compiled and translated into English and French languages for printing. To ensure that these legal documents are printed in the three official languages of the Community, freelance translators were engaged to translate the Decisions into Portuguese Language. These Law Reports are with the printer awaiting printing.

- *Annual Training:*

675. With respect to capacity building, staff of the Court underwent various trainings in line with the recommendations of their Heads of Departments as contained in their Annual Performance and Evaluation Forms.

✓ *Challenges*

676. Although, the Rules of Procedure of the Court require the Court to set up a translation service staffed by experts with adequate legal training and thorough knowledge of several official languages of the Court, the Court has inadequate number of Translators and Revisors which has been causing delays in the translation of legal pleadings. This is posing a very serious threat to the smooth administration of justice because inordinate delay in the translation of legal pleadings causes delays in the hearing of cases. This challenge is further compounded by the fact that the Court has inadequate staff for Portuguese language translation as it had capacity for English and French Languages translation only recently since its inception. Now that the Court has Members from the three language blocks of the Community, it is imperative to recruit Portuguese Translators and Revisors without delay.

677. The Court is still facing an acute office accommodation crisis due to inadequate office space for the Judges, their support staff and the various Departments and Divisions of the Court. It is noted that by Decision A/DEC.20/12/01 Relating to the Seat of the Community Court of Justice and the Headquarters Agreement between ECOWAS and the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the responsibility of providing office building for the Court is that of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Although the host Government provided an office building for the Court in 2002, it is important to state that the building is grossly inadequate and the Court has had an annex office since 2007 which has not been able to solve the accommodation crisis of the Court. The Court continues to appeal for the provision of a befitting office complex.

4.3 WEST AFRICAN HEALTH ORGANISATION (WAHO)

678. The activities implemented by WAHO in the period under review fall within the framework of the implementation of the 2014 - 2015 Interim Plan. The Strategic pillars are also those of the 2009 - 2013 Strategic Plan which consist of:

- support for improved quality of health systems in the ECOWAS sub-region,
- support for improved health coverage in the ECOWAS sub-region,
- support for the development of sustainable health financing,
- WAHO's institutional development.

679. This WAHO activity report focuses on the following aspects:

- summary of results obtained by WAHO in the period under review,
- challenges and outlook

✓ *Summary of results obtained*

680. As part of efforts to attain its objectives, most of the activities carried out in 2015 were centred on the fight against the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), establishment of the ECOWAS Regional Centre For Disease Control And Monitoring (ECOWAS-RCDC) and the development of the WAHO Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2020.

681. Taking all programmes into account, the results obtained during the 2015 period are as follows:

- human resource capacity building for more effective treatment of health problems in children by the setting up of IMCI trainers' pools in Niger and Togo,
- capacity building for countries for the re-launch of family planning campaigns in Niger and Togo,
- capacity building for twenty (20) professionals from English-speaking Member States in the evaluation and quantification of contraceptive needs,
- capacity building in universal healthcare coverage for twenty (20) professionals from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo,
- training of twenty-four (24) staff members in SAP/Ecolink,
- preparation of a guidebook for Member States on the formulation of a national quality assurance policy for health services,
- formulation of the national policy on community-based interventions,
- Burkina Faso established its Technical Consultative Group on Vaccination (GTCV) and appointed members to the Group,
- organisation of the first forum on good health practices which led to the documentation and dissemination of good health practices,
- revision of the technical guide on the treatment of HIV infection,
- support to Senegal and Ghana in the provision of ARVs to prevent stock shortages,
- organisation of regional consultations on key populations and the HIV epidemic. This enabled the main stakeholders concerned with evidence-based programming for the fight against HIV/AIDS to be informed of the stakes involved in the spread of HIV/AIDS in ECOWAS countries and the signing of a declaration (Dakar Declaration) by Member States to show the major consensus achieved in the stride towards objective zero,
- development of a harmonised framework for the management, maintenance and repair of biomedical equipment within ECOWAS,
- adoption of the Regional Plan for Malaria Control and Elimination,

- adoption of the ECOWAS Pharmaceutical Plan,
- validation of a Regional Strategic Plan for Research in ECOWAS,
- preparation of the draft harmonised regulations on pharmacists' practice within ECOWAS,
- finalisation of accreditation criteria for all healthcare sectors,
- finalisation of curricula for basic and specialised training for pharmacy dispensers and technicians within ECOWAS
- development of training curricula for nurses and specialist mid-wives in ECOWAS French speaking countries,
- development of curricula for initial education for physiologists, optometrists and opticians, biomedical equipment technologists, dental assistants and technologists, nutritionists and dieticians, medical sales representatives,
- development of a harmonised curriculum for the training of all allied health specialists,
- capacity building for eight (8) doctors from French-speaking ECOWAS Member States in TB / HIV co-infection management,
- training and follow-up for epidemiologic monitoring data managers (15 professionals) in the use of the regional platform,
- preparation of a roadmap for implementation of the regional micronutrient initiative aimed at improving the sustainability of Vitamin A supplementation in Ghana and The Gambia and reviving folic acid and iron supplementation during pregnancy in Niger,
- implementation of the harmonisation process for pharmaceutical regulation in ECOWAS Member States,
- creation of the Champions Network for Adequate Health Financing (RCPFAS) in Cote-d'Ivoire,
- adoption of the resolution on harmonisation of the 15% calculation method contained in the Abuja Declaration,;
- preparation of internal and external evaluation reports for the 2009 – 2013 Strategic Plan,
- preparation of the draft WAHO Strategic Plan for 2016 - 2020,
- take-off of the "Leadership Capacity Strengthening Project (CAPS)" with a budget of \$4,676,680. The project aims at creating an environment in Member States and the region, that will promote the improved use of health services,
- take-off of the « Moving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Evidence into Policy in West Africa" project with a budget of CAN\$2,600,000. The project aims at improving the use of research outcomes in the formulation of maternal, neonatal and infant health policies and programmes within ECOWAS,
- strengthening of regional epidemiological monitoring with the implementation of the "West African Regional Disease Surveillance -WARDS" programme.

682. With specific regard to the fight against the Ebola virus disease, the major accomplishments are as follows:

- formulation of a regional multi-sectoral Plan to combat the Ebola Virus Disease ;
- establishment of a Ministerial Coordinating Group and Technical Follow-up and Monitoring Group;
- preparation of a roadmap defining the activities, schedule and implementing agencies,
- mobilisation and provision of funds to countries totalling US\$ 7,700,000 for the acquisition of logistics (vehicles, fully-equipped ambulances, personal protective equipment, thermal image scanners, sprayers, medicines, sanitary and hygiene products, laboratory reagents and consumables, etc.),
- the fifteen (15) countries in the region have EVD National Prevention and Response Plans,
- formulation and provision of technical documents to the Member States;

- training and provision of one hundred and fifteen (115) doctors, nurses and healthcare technicians to the three (3) most affected countries,
- redeployment of WAHO personnel in the three (3) most affected countries to strengthen national coordination
- launch of the process for the establishment of the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in response to the decision of the forty-seventh session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government held in Accra, Ghana on 19 May 2015 whereby the Commission was instructed to establish, in conjunction with WAHO, the Centre with headquarters in Nigeria :
 - o drafting of the concept note on the establishment of the Regional Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECOWAS-RCDC),
 - o preparation of the terms of reference for the mapping of structures within ECOWAS which can potentially take part in disease monitoring at the Community scale and in early warning and response systems,
 - o preparation of legal texts for the creation and operations of the Centre (ECOWAS-RCDC Regulation, profiles of national coordination institutions and the decision on the ECOWAS-RCDC network and national coordination institutions).

✓ **Challenges**

683. In spite of the achievements recorded, the implementation of planned activities by WAHO was impeded in the following areas:

- control and elimination of the EBOLA Virus Disease,
- strengthening of healthcare systems in Member States,
- implementation of the resolutions, decisions and recommendations of the various governing bodies,
- ensuring programme implementation given the inadequate and late allocation of funds by ECOWAS Commission,
- provision to WAHO of budgetary resources commensurate to the health challenges of the region,
- filling the key vacant positions in the institution;
- ensuring Member States take ownership of WAHO activities.

✓ **Outlook**

684. WAHO expects to carry out the following activities:

- adoption of the WAHO Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2020,
- putting in place of a regional rapid response team
- continued implementation of the activities for the establishment of the Regional Centre for Disease Control and Monitoring (ECOWAS – RCDC),
- evaluation of the level of achievement of the Abuja Declaration on Health Financing ;
- continuation of ongoing project/programme implementation (LMG, WARDS, PRSM/PF, Regional Nutrition Project , Moving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Evidence into Policy in West Africa, CAPS)
- take-off of projects : malaria and neglected tropical diseases control in the Sahel project, the Demographic Dividend Project, etc.,
- finalisation / signature of the Strengthening of Regional and National Laboratories for Epidemic management project (POARLAB) and the regional project on pandemics control in West Africa.

685. In conclusion, 2015, in spite of the difficulties encountered (financial, inadequate staffing, the Ebola epidemic, etc.), WAHO negotiated a number of projects (CAPS, WAMEP, SWEDD, MTN, PORLAB) with its financial partners such as World Bank, USAID, CRDI, KFW and GIZ. It also strengthened its relations with Member States and other Community institutions. It is clear that the considerable effort made to combat the EVD epidemic was successful given the current trend in curbing the epidemic. The year also provided the opportunity to develop the the WAHO Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2020 based on the 2016 – 2020 Community Strategic Framework.

4.4 INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP AGAINST MONEY LAUNDERING IN WEST AFRICA (GIABA)

686. In 2015, a note by the Secretariat on the three most affected countries EVD was adopted. In accordance with the Protocol, a declaration of solidarity with the three (3) countries was published and the Secretariat was instructed to continue to cooperate with the Member States to help them to fill gaps identified in their respective AML / CFT regimes. A memorandum on the revision of the mutual evaluation calendar for the GIABA Member States was adopted.
687. A report of the Secretariat on a high-level mission in Guinea-Bissau on the implementation of mutual evaluations was examined. Given the commitment of stakeholders AML / CFT after the mission, the Plenary has made a public statement on Guinea-Bissau and called on the country to work with the Secretariat to work on creating an action plan with a realistic timetable to facilitate rapid solution to all deficiencies observed in the AML / CFT in the country;
688. The uniform UEMOA law on ML / TF and its adoption by Member States of GIABA will allow the countries concerned to address the gaps identified in the plans AML / CFT. The plenary encouraged UEMOA to intensify its efforts towards the finalization of the promulgation of the law process;
- ✓ ***Participation in the Meeting of GIABA's Anti-Laundering Liaison Committee (CLAB) of the Franc Zone, February 12, 2015, Moroni (Comoros).***
689. The experts took note of the various AML / CFT in the UEMOA zone, CEMAC, the Comoros and France. The meeting particularly urged GIABA to continue to provide statistics on the situation AML / CFT in the context of cooperation and information sharing between the members of the CLAB; (ii) to continue its support and support for the benefit of GABAC to help access the status of associate member of the FATF.
690. Finally, at this meeting GIABA has asked the Union of the Comoros to fulfill vis-à-vis ESAAMLG, for the payment of its contribution arrears with a view to finalizing its dossier adherence to GIABA. The GIABA Secretariat undertook advocacy visits to the high authorities of the Member States and development partners. GIABA The delegation met with high-Bissau Guinean authorities to transmit the message of congratulations and encouragement of GIABA Community President and Head of State and especially for the measures already taken as a testament to the commitment Farm Bissau-Guinean authorities to the fight against economic and financial crimes in the context of the institution of good governance.
691. The delegation also met with three different ministers, and members of the Interdepartmental Committee and stakeholders on AML / CFT in Guinea-Bissau, to explain the need for collaboration among all stakeholders in AML / FT if they wish to achieve visible results. All these meetings have demonstrated the degree of commitment of the authorities to provide support for the FIU of Guinea-Bissau.
692. There was also a meeting with the Prime Minister of Togo during which the Director-General explained to the Prime Minister the level of performance Togo AML / CFT and the challenges facing this country during the second round of mutual evaluations, which put the emphasis on risk assessment. The Director General took this opportunity to present to the authorities the concerns of the national FIU regarding the renewal of its staff and achieving more significant results in the freezing, seizure, forfeiture and condemnation of perpetrators of these crimes and money laundering offenses and predicate offenses.

693. An awareness seminar on AML / CFT has been organized to provide participants with the investigative techniques in cases of money laundering and terrorist financing. Specifically, the seminar participants with AML / CFT tools that allow them to produce consistent reports on issues of AML / CFT and improve the functioning of the network of journalists.
694. An awareness session was organized with the aim to sensitize publishers newspapers, Television and Radio, mainly on the adverse effects of ML / FT in the West Africa region and mobilize to support the process of AML / CFT awareness in the Member States.
695. A workshop for regional capacity building on AML / CFT for judges and prosecutors and investigators was held to review international standards in the fight against money laundering, financing of terrorism; Customary law and civil law; prosecutions and convictions for economic and financial crimes; guidelines on sentencing for economic and financial crimes; coordination and cooperation during the investigation and prosecution of money laundering and other financial crimes.
696. GIABA Jointly facilitate a session of the Technical Subcommittee of the West African Police Chiefs WAPCO to discuss its role in AML / CFT and roles of law enforcement and Committee of ECOWAS on small arms and light weapons.
697. Co-organization of a training workshop on the implementation of the Memorandum of Algiers on good practices in the prevention of terrorist kidnapping against ransom and elimination of benefits. The objectives of the workshop were to i) identify the arrangements, international agreements or typologies, regional and other instruments that address the abduction issue and the fight against ransom wedged against individuals or terrorist groups to commit the offense; ii) to review the provisions of regional and international agreements on the issue and how they are applied; iii) examine the difficulties related to the adoption or implementation of best practice and guidelines or other provisions to fight against the kidnapping of terrorist organizations for ransom.
698. As part of the deployment of Ecolink system in ECOWAS institutions and agencies, a delegation of GIABA undertook a mission to Lagos Information Center (Nigeria) to train the agent of the said information center in preparing the purchase request. The training focused on the equipment management module. The beneficiary of the training is able to prepare an application on the community platform and convey their request to others who deal until it is validated by the Financial Controller and approved by the appropriate person.
699. GIABA participated in the 4th meeting of ECOWAS Stakeholder Forum on monitoring and evaluation system to discuss responsibilities and stakeholder comments for finalizing the 2016-2020 Community Strategic Framework (CSF) the draft report on the evaluation of Regional Strategic Plan 2011-2015 (RSP) and to review the framework for monitoring and evaluation project for the implementation of the 2016 to 2020 CSF.
700. The exchanges occurred in the course of the meeting show that the RSP evaluation report should be finalized and submitted for approval by the ECOWAS monitoring and evaluation Coordinating Committee before being submitted to the Council Ministers at the end of 2015 for adoption.
701. From 9 to 29 August 2015 technical training on the SAP was held at the ECOWAS Training Centre in Abuja for technicians of ECOWAS institutions. The objective of this program was to train a pool of technicians from the Technical Directors and the Ecolink system support staff.
702. After the training, participants were able to perform maintenance functions for the benefit of users, perform maintenance and perform maintenance functions for the benefit of users as well as maintain the system. They were also able to carry out maintenance of the database and configure and install of a printer in the system.

703. In accordance with GIABA's request to open two (02) information centers in the ECOWAS region, a delegation of GIABA was sent to the site to monitor the implementation of labor for the construction and delivery equipment. The mission focused mainly on the distribution of the equipment in accordance with standards to ECOWAS, the selection of service providers who will be responsible for building maintenance, and subscription to the electricity, water, telephone, Internet and business property and accident insurance contracts.

704. Following a request from a Japanese mission, a working session was held between GIABA and delegations from JICA to strengthen the capacity of Francophone West African countries in the fight against transnational organized crime, the situation AML / CFT in West Africa to better target their intervention and support to countries and stakeholders in the region, and identify resource persons capable of participating in the training of stakeholders.

✓ ***Participation in statutory meetings of the FATF 21 to 27 February, 2015, Paris, France***

705. This meeting was devoted to consideration:

- Monitoring reports on the assessment of Member States,
- Emerging issues related to risk assessment and
- Those related to better understanding and ownership of the 41 FATF Recommendations

706. The focal point of this meeting was the contribution of France through its Minister of Finance and Public Accounts, Mr. Michel SAPIN, the need for greater mobilization to better fight against terrorism and the role of the FATF in the establishment of this new bulwark against terrorism.

✓ ***Organization by GIABA a Dialogue of WAEMU financial sector executives on AML / CFT, September 22, 2015, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire***

707. GIABA organized a forum for exchange and discussion called "Dialogue of financial sector executives WAEMU," September 22, 2015 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. This meeting saw the participation of 45 executives WAEMU financial sector aimed to strengthen collaboration and cooperation between regulators and the financial sector operators to facilitate effective implementation of AML / CFT measures in the financial sector of the Member States of WAEMU.

708. The meeting allowed participants to define the conditions for greater synergy of action among stakeholders on AML / CFT, to consider appropriate additional measures to be taken to the level required legal device for Full compliance with the FATF 40 Recommendations and seek ways and means to perpetuate this meeting framework to regularly set the record for the second round of mutual evaluation UEMOA member states is an inclusive and participatory process . Finally, the meeting enabled participants to better understand their obligations in AML / CFT according to revised FATF standards and strengthen their ability to respond effectively to the requirements of the second round of mutual evaluation of Member States of GIABA expected start in 2016 .

✓ ***Training workshop for pre-assessment of Ghana, 28-30 September 2015, Accra, Ghana***

709. GIABA organized a training workshop for pre-assessment to the Republic of Ghana from 28 to 30 September 2015. The main objectives of the workshop were to sensitize representatives of institutions involved in AML / CFT, which will be involved in the process of mutual evaluation, including measures to monitor and ensure that Ghana is adequately prepared for the site visit provided for in September 2016.

710. The workshop was attended by 42 delegates. It was facilitated by the Secretariat of GIABA and the Financial Intelligence Unit of Ghana. The participants demonstrated a moderate understanding of the mutual evaluation process and have requested additional training before the site visit. Ghana

has expressed its willingness to organize additional training on the themes of AML / CFT including the mutual evaluation for the benefit of stakeholders before the site visit. GIABA invite Ghana to provide technical assistance.

✓ ***Organization by GIABA in the final report validation workshop of the independent evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2014 of GIABA, 09-10 October 2015, Saly, Senegal***

711. In December 2014, GIABA has completed the implementation of its 3rd strategic plan covering the period 2011-2014, after the first two strategic plans that treated periods 2007-2009 and 2009-2011. In order to take stock of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2014, GIABA has conducted an independent evaluation of the plan. Prior to the publication of the report on this assessment, GIABA held in Saly (Senegal) from 9 to 10 October 2015, a validation workshop of the report not only to determine progress and performances, but also difficulties encountered in the implementation of this plan. This workshop was attended by member States of GIABA through its national correspondents, those of these technical and financial partners and ambassadors of member states of GIABA accredited to Senegal, was an opportunity to collect their contributions in the finalization of the report of the independent evaluation.
712. GIABA organized a workshop on typologies of Money Laundering from the electronic counterfeiting and intellectual property theft in West Africa, 12-15 October 2015, Saly, Senegal. The objectives of the workshop were to: a) identify techniques and methods and ways of counterfeit electronics and theft of intellectual property in West Africa; b) review the adequacy of legal and institutional frameworks to combat counterfeiting and electronic theft of intellectual property in West Africa; c) a better understanding of the dynamics of both illicit activities through case studies; to make recommendations to national authorities and relevant structures for a better action against money laundering related to electronic counterfeiting and intellectual property theft.
713. Furthermore, it was organized a forum for exchange and discussion entitled "Dialogue of financial sector executives WAEMU" to strengthen collaboration and cooperation between regulators and financial sector operators to facilitate the effective implementation of AML / CFT in the financial sector of the Member States of UEMOA. GIABA was part of a meeting organized by the Directorate of Cooperation for the Development of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on "illicit financial flows from the illicit trade in West Africa", 13 March 2015, Paris, France
714. GIABA participated in a meeting organized by the Directorate of Cooperation for the Development of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) March 13, 2015 in Paris, France on "illicit financial flows from the illicit trade in West Africa. " GIABA was invited to this meeting as a partner in the study on the topic.
715. The GIABA participation was to help analyze the expert's report on the launch of the above-mentioned theme, to ensure that the study is correctly oriented to useful goals that will better understand the phenomenon of illicit financial flows in the region as well as generating factors including corruption, drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking and piracy etc.
716. Participation of GIABA in the international conference organized by the Court of Justice on "the human rights as fundamental values of ECOWAS: an analysis of the case law of the Community Court of Justice", March 23, 2015 Bissau, Guinea Bissau. Under the enhanced inter-institutional cooperation within ECOWAS, GIABA participated in an international conference organized by the Court of Justice on "the human rights as fundamental values of ECOWAS: an analysis the jurisprudence of the Community Court of Justice ", March 23, 2015, Bissau, Guinea Bissau.

717. The objective of the conference was to review and reflect on the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of ECOWAS in terms of human rights. GIABA participated in this conference, not only as an institution Community, but also because of the implications of its mandate in the theme of human rights in the region.

✓ ***Participation of GIABA to the Advisory Forum of the private sector with the FATF, from March 25 to 27 2015, Brussels, Belgium.***

718. The purpose of these meetings was to open a discussion on the main challenges of the implementation of certain FATF recommendations by the private sector, and to find solutions to improving standards and practices.

719. The FATF has also held discussions with representatives of virtual currency providers to develop an approach to risk-based guide for this sector. The discussions also focused on emerging technological and commercial innovations in providing financial services through mobile payments and other forms of Internet-based payments. All practices that impact on financial inclusion and the management of risk ML / FT for financial institutions.

720. Co-animated by GIABA the meeting of the Anti Laundering Committee (CLAB) and the Finance Ministers of the Franc Zone from 9 to 10 April 2015 in Bamako (Mali) The overall objective was to take part in the CLAB meeting of experts and attend the deliberations of the ministerial meeting of the Franc Zone. Specifically, the meeting was to take stock of the AML / CFT in the Member States, the AML / CFT as well as economic and financial convergence policies for a plea to the makers of the Zone area .

721. The objectives of the workshop were to: i) awareness of the relevant standards and best practices in regulation and supervision of NPOs, ii) identifying shortcomings in the regulatory framework in the region, iii) exploring the inter-institutional cooperation between operators and regulatory bodies and law enforcement, to strengthen supervision and law enforcement.

✓ ***Participation in statutory meetings of the FATF June 24 to 26 2015, Brisbane, Australia***

722. This meeting was devoted to consideration: evaluation of monitoring reports from Member States, and emerging issues related to risk assessment at national level;

723. Participation of GIABA in a training workshop on designation of terrorists and asset freezing, 12 - 13 August 2015, Dhaka, Bangladesh. This training aimed to strengthen Bangladesh officials' knowledge to make them capable of preventing the financing of terrorism as defined in the existing international framework, including the resolutions of the UN Security Council, namely 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 1373 to 2001, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

✓ ***Participation of the Directorate General of GIABA in the conference on "The culture of peace in the face of violent extremism: the Mauritanian approach", August 19, 2015, Nouakchott, Mauritania***

724. This conference which saw the participation of several countries, regional and international organizations, as well as experts and specialists in various departments of government, academia and civil society, aimed to analyze the Mauritanian approach based on the culture of peace as a means of struggle against violent extremism.

✓ **Participation of GIABA in a joint meeting of the FATF experts and GAFILAT typologies of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, 07-09 September 2015, Mexico City, Mexico**

725. GIABA co-hosted a joint meeting of experts and GAFILAT FATF on Money Laundering and typologies of the Financing of Terrorism 7 to 9 September 2015 in Mexico City (Mexico). The meeting dealt primarily the issue of FT, was attended by experts from operational agencies of law enforcement and financial intelligence. Its aim was to share experiences on current policies and those emerging from FT. The meeting discussed further involvement of the private sector financial management practices and the use of modern communication networks, financing foreign terrorist fighters, and the theme of the exploitation of natural resources for FT .
726. The Director General of GIABA led the delegation which participated in the meeting of the Anti-Laundering Committee of the Franc Zone (CLAB), held September 30, 2015 in the premises of the Bank of France. This delegation, then participated in the meeting of experts and that the Ministers of Finance of the Franc Zone, held in the conference room of the Ministry of Economy, on 1 and 2 October 2015 respectively.
727. Furthermore, GIABA told members of CLAB admission of CENTIF of Niger in June 2015, as a member of the Egmont Group. This performance leads to 6 of 8, the number of CRF in the franc zone and member of GIABA, who visited the Egmont network. Finally, GIABA expressed satisfaction with the decision of Council of Ministers of WAEMU, which adopted July 2, 2015, the draft Uniform Law AML / CFT, translated by Directive No. 02/2015 / CM / UEMOA . This was transmitted to member State for inclusion in their national legal system, that within six months. However, the FATF considers that the new texts still contain some shortcomings that could have been corrected if they had been submitted during the consultation phase.
728. The secretariat of GIABA and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire signed a headquarters agreement March 29, 2014 in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire for the opening of a Centre for Information on AML / CFT dedicated to country French and Portuguese speaking ECOWAS in Abidjan. The Information Centre officially opened Monday, September 21, 2015 by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire's main objectives are:
- Educate, train and supervise all stakeholders on AML / CFT for better strengthening of regional and international alliance against financial crime and transnational organized;
 - To raise increased awareness of stakeholders and actors of civil society on the threats and adverse effects related to these ills, destabilizing factors of our states;
 - Encourage and promote greater involvement and ownership of risks, trends and methods by stakeholders in the fight (supervisory authorities, supervision and enforcement) for an effective action;
 - Increase the visibility of GIABA in Member States through better information on its activities.

4.5 ECOWAS BANK FOR INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (EBID)

729. The 2015 contributions to the annual report covers the performance of the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) for the first half of 2015.
730. Thus, in accordance with its mission, the activities carried out by the Bank involved the re-enforcement of the Bank's interventions in the Member States, the improvement of the Bank governance and the intensification of resource mobilization for financing of the Bank's operations.

✓ Activities Of The Governing Bodies

• Board Of Governors

731. The Board of Governors of the Bank held its 13th Ordinary Meeting on June 15, 2015 in Bamako, Republic of Mali. This session adopted several documents notably among them, the minutes of the 12th Ordinary General Meeting held in Monrovia, Liberia on June 16, 2014, the Activity report as well as the accounts of the Bank for the 2014 financial year. Furthermore, apart from the election of Mr Mamadou Igor Diarra as new Chairman of the Board of Governors of EBID, the meeting equally adopted several resolutions. These include:

- ✓ the Resolution urging the ECOWAS Commission to accelerate the process of transfer of the resources of the Community Levy allocated by the Council of Ministers for the EBID Interest Rate Subsidy Fund in respect of the 2015 financial year;
- ✓ the Resolution appointing three new Directors and renewing the tenure of the Board of Directors;
- ✓ The Resolution renewing the tenure of Mr Bashir Mamman IFO as President of the Bank, for four years with effect from October 10, 2015.

• Board of Directors

732. The Board of Directors of the Bank held its 46th Meeting on April 9, 2015 in Lomé, Togo. At this meeting, the Board:
- adopted the report of the 7th Home Consultation of the Board of Directors conducted from December 8 to 18, 2014 ;
 - adopted the Activity report and closed the accounts for the year ended December 31, 2014 ;
 - authorized the Management to contract a loan in the amount five hundred million euros (500 000 000 euros) from Great Joint International / African Network Finance and Development ;
 - approved the project relating to the provision of a medium term facility in the amount of CFA F 17.36 billion to Bonkougou Mamadou et Fils Company (EBOMAF) for pre-financing the construction and bituminous surfacing of the Mandouri-Benin border (7.5 km) road, as well as a bridge of a length of 180m in Togo, and;
 - adopted several resolutions from the various standing committees of the Board of Directors.

✓ **Operational Activities**

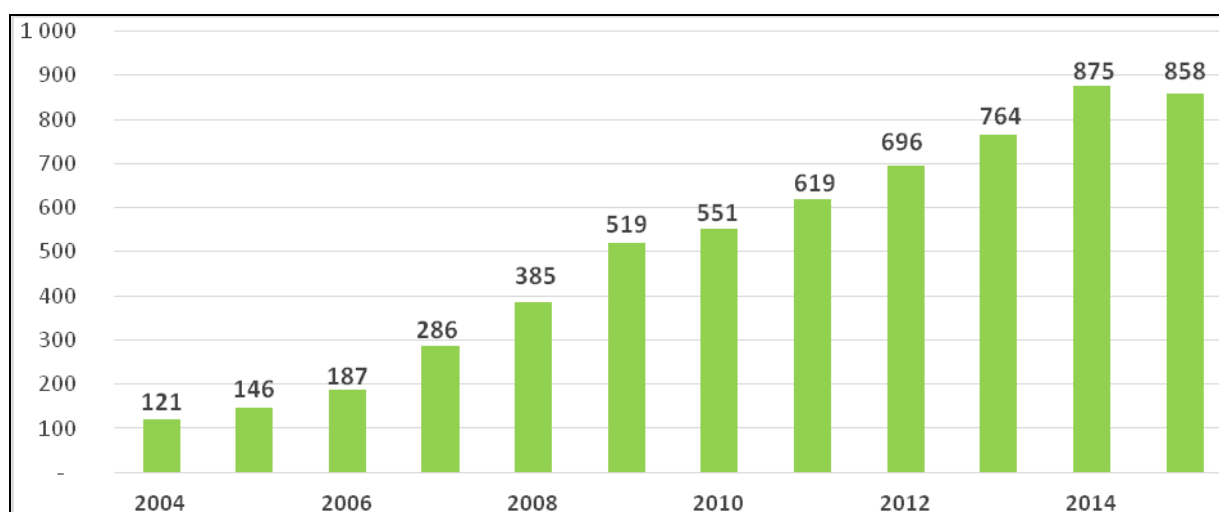
• *Overview of the activities*

733. The operational activities of the Bank mainly focused on project appraisal, signing of financial agreements and supervision of the implementation of funded projects.
734. During the period under review, only two private sector projects amounting to CFA18.7 billion were appraised.
735. With respect to Approvals, the Board of Directors of the Bank approved the financing of two projects amounting to UA 46.98 million.
736. Eight (8) projects, of which five (5) were from the public sector, were supervised

• *Status of Commitments*

737. As at end of June 2015, the gross total commitments of the Bank increased slightly by 2.49% compared to the level as at the end of December 2014. These amounted to UA 1.14 billion or US\$ 1.60 billion for a total of 200 projects.
738. The Bank's cumulative net commitments to the ECOWAS Member States amounted to UA857.9 million, or USD 1.2 billion for 134 on-going projects as against UA874.6 million, or USD 1.23 billion in respect of 141 on-going projects as at December 31, 2014. This decline is explained by the removal of eight (8) projects from the Bank's portfolio as at June 30, 2015, of which four (4) were fully refunded while the other four (4) were cancelled for failing to fulfill the conditions precedent to first disbursement.
739. As shown in the figure below, after eleven (11) years of activity (2004- June 2015) the Bank has multiplied its net total commitments by 7.1, from UA 121 million to UA 857.89 million.

Figure 15 : Net Total Commitment of EBID between 2004 and June 2015 (millions of UA)



✓ **Partnership, Cooperation And Resource Mobilization Activities**

740. The implementation of partnership, cooperation and resource mobilization activities is an important component in EBID's development strategy. It has the dual objective of strengthening the reputation of the Bank within the Community and with development partners and having adequate resources to provide the necessary impetus to its project financing activities, guaranteed profitability and sustainability

• *Cooperation and Partnership Activities*

741. In terms of cooperation and partnership, the major activities carried out in the first half of 2015 focused on continued implementation of the technical assistance programme signed with AfDB, on 4th March, 2013, financed with a grant of US\$ 950.400 from the Fund for African Private Sector Assistance (FAPA). The benefits were sequenced into two batches covering the six sub-components of the programme:

- **Benefits to be provided under the first batch:**
 - Visibility and Positioning Study
 - Strengthening Human Capital ;
 - Pricing Policy and Model.
- **Benefits to be provided under the second batch:**
 - Private Sector Intervention Strategy,
 - Resource Mobilisation Strategy,
 - Strengthening the Legal Department.

• *Resource Mobilisation Activities*

742. The resource mobilization activities focused on capital resources, borrowed resources and special resources.

743. **Regarding capital resources**, the Bank received five (5) payments amounting to UA 14 026 377 from Ghana (UA 6 666 003), Mali (UA 2 274 425), Burkina Faso (UA 1 841 593), Togo (UA 1 778 550) and Senegal (UA 1 465 806).

744. **With regard to borrowed resources**, no progress was made during the period under review.

745. **Special resources**, relate mainly to the mobilization of resources within the Community, such as a portion of the Community Levy. Discussions failed to yield any significant results in the first semester of 2015.

746. In a nutshell, the issue of resource mobilization remains the major challenge of the Bank given the huge requests for the financing of projects and programmes in the sub-region and in each of the fifteen ECOWAS Member States. In this context, the Member States' capital resource contributions, and access to the Community Levy fund are viable alternatives to strengthening the capital base of the Bank and thus be in a position to grant concessional facilities to the public sector projects.

✓ ***The Financial Position Of The Bank As At 30th June, 2015***

747. Analysis of the provisional accounts of the Bank, established at the end of the first half of the current fiscal year, highlights an increase of 7.5% of the balance sheet liability, which stood at UA 542.8 million, against UA504.7 million in December 2014. Compared to June 2014, total assets increased by 11.6% as a result of increased loans to States and long-term investments which recorded increases of 17.3% and 18.6% respectively. The provisional income statements net charges recorded a surplus of UA 3.2 million, thereby consolidating the result of UA 1.1 million profit recorded in respect of the 2014 financial year.

• *Balance Sheet between December 2014 and June 2015*

748. Between December 2014 and June 2015, the balance of assets and liabilities stood at UA 542.8 million, thus recording a 7.5% increase compared to an amount of UA 504.7 million at the end of December 2014.

749. Compared to June 2014, the total balance sheet increased by 11.6% driven by the increase of loans to Member States and long term investments that increased by 17.3% and 18.6% in 2014 and 2015 respectively. These two aggregates accounted for over 85% of growth between June 2014 and June 2015.

Table 3 : Bank's Balance Sheet between December 2014 and June 2015 (in thousands of UA)

	30/06/2014	31/12/2014	30/06/2015	Variation (%)	
				June 15 / June 14	June 15 / Dec. 14
ASSETS					
Cash and Bank account	1 872	11 707	8 731	366.4	-25.4
Short term investments	66 233	37 354	49 734	-24.9	33.1
Loans to Member States	363 502	401 063	426 211	17.3	6.3
Inter-Institutional Accounts	838	527	269	-67.9	-48.9
Other debit balances	13 969	12 383	14 444	3.4	16.6
Long-term investments	22 652	24 678	26 861	18.6	8.8
Fixed assets	17 504	16 943	16 553	-5.4	-2.3
Total assets	486 569	504 657	542 804	11.6	7.5
LIABILITIES					
Accounts payable	7 478	8 439	6 689	-10.6	-20.7
Borrowings	279 822	281 863	302 788	8.2	7.4
Inter-institutional accounts	1 522	1 508	1 508	-0.9	0.0
Capital	166 105	183 650	197 677	19.0	7.6
Free reserves	18 792	18 792	21 616	15.0	15.0
Profit / Loss	2 669	1 126	3 231		186.8
	476 388	495 378	533 507	12.0	7.7
Minority interests	10 182	9 279	9 297	-8.7	0.2
Total liabilities	486 569	504 657	542 804	11.6	7.5
OFF BALANCE SHEET	23 231	13 095	13 095	-43.6	0.0

• *Income Statement between December 2014 and June 2015*

750. As at the end of June, 2015, the provisional income statement of the Bank showed a surplus of UA 3.2 million, owing to the improved in-flows in respect of interests and commissions on loans. The interest margin stood at UA 7.3 million for the first half of the year, a clear progression compared to the same period in the year 2014.

Table 4: Income Statement between December 2014 and June 2015 (thousands of UA)

	31/03/2014	31/12/2014	31/03/2015
INCOMES			
Interests and commissions on loans	9 866	20 706	11 798
Interests on placements	707	1 729	544
Interest expenses	-3 992	-10 725	-5 055
Net Interests	6 582	11 711	7 287
Dividends	0	0	0
Other incomes	138	3 893	124
Total income	6 720	15 604	7 411
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	2 389	5 725	2 772
Other operating costs	852	3 169	948
Total expenditure	3 241	8 894	3 720
Gross operating results	3 478	6 709	3 691
Amortisation	-504	-1 004	-428
Provision on loans	0	-7 895	0
Exchange Gain / Loss	-116	2 601	-14
Operating Result	2 858	412	3 249
Net Profit / Loss from minority interests	-189	715	-18
Profit / Loss of the year transferred to income reserves	2 669	1 126	3 231

751. In conclusion, during the first half of 2015, the Bank's operational activities virtually stagnated, due to the strain on the Bank's cash-flow and lack of concessional resources to meet the numerous requests from Member States.
752. Financially, the position of the Bank was consolidated with a total balance sheet that grew by UA 38.1 million and a profit result of UA 3.2 million.
753. Regarding resource mobilisation, the Bank continued to intensify its initiatives on sources of financing that are likely to support its loans portfolio substantially, since this is the only way of ensuring its viability and profitability. In this regard, payments amounting to UA 14.0 million were made by Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo and Senegal in respect of arrears on the two tranches of the called up capital.
754. Despite these favourable developments, the main challenge of the Bank remains the mobilization of adequate resources, especially at Community level. In this regard, the effective implementation of the decision of the ECOWAS Authority of Head of States and Government regarding mobilization of part of the Community Levy remains a viable option for sustaining the Bank. Similarly, the payment of the second tranche of capital by Member States would no doubt serve as an effective tool for mobilising of more resources from other partners.

CONCLUSION

755. The 2014 Annual Report presents a comprehensive account of key activities carried out during the period under review. It provides satisfactory signals that the guidelines for the implementation of the Commission's 2015 work programme were firmly adhered to despite the serious challenges and setbacks posed by exogeneous shocks and the Ebola virus outbreak. With unalloyed cooperation and support of all stakeholders including the international community, the menace was frontally confronted and largely contained during the course of the year.
756. As regards the macroeconomic environment, the global economy is expected to witness a decline of 3.1 percent in 2015 from 3.4 percent in 2014. Whilst advanced economies are expected to grow marginally at the rate of 2.0 percent in 2015 as against 1.8 percent in 2014, emerging markets and developing economies will record a slight decline in growth from 4.6 percent in 2014 to 4.0 percent in 2015 and 4.5 percent in 2016. In sub Saharan Africa, real GDP growth is expected to decline significantly from 5.0 percent in 2014 to 3.6 percent in 2015.
757. In West Africa, real GDP growth is expected to experience a marked slowdown from 6.1% in 2014 to 4.2% in 2015 due to the adverse effects of the decline in the international prices of major exports commodities, terrorism in some countries of the region and the effects of the Ebola epidemic.
758. With respect to the implementation of the Community Work Programme, the Commission facilitated the continued operations of the Presidential Task Force on the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme to ensure the effective implementation of the ECOWAS Multilateral Surveillance Mechanism and the Road Map for the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme. In the area of Private Sector development, the Commission, within the framework of the West African Capital Market Integration Council, facilitated the harmonisation and adoption of the regulatory and operational frameworks in the proposed integrated capital market which resulted in the first cross-border trade under the sponsored broker market access phase of the initiative. With regard to the Community Development Programme, preparatory activities were undertaken towards the organisation of a high-level conference and roundtable for the mobilization of resources to finance the CDP.
759. Considerable progress was made towards the establishment of a customs union in the region with the launching of the Common External Tariff (CET) on 1 January 2015. The Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and West Africa negotiations were also concluded and signed by 28 EU countries and 13 of the 16 West African Member States. On Free Movement and Cross-border cooperation, the Commission finalized preparatory activities towards the development and implementation of the ECOWAS Biometric ID card and the biometric registration of ECOWAS nationals.
760. In the area of infrastructure development, key achievements recorded included completion of the Noepe Joint Border Post between Ghana and Togo, a re-launch and ground breaking ceremony of the Seme Joint Border Post, and consultations with the AfDB for technical and financial assistance for the feasibility studies of the Lagos-Abidjan Highway. With regard to Energy, significant progress was made in the implementation of the emergency electrical power supply programmes in The Gambia, Mali and Sierra Leone. In addition, the Specialized Agencies of the Commission, namely, WAPP, ERERA and ECREEE implemented programmes that will contribute to the reduction of the energy deficit in the region.

761. In the area of humanitarian and social affairs, the Commission continued to focus on improvement of the social conditions of ECOWAS citizens and the humanitarian space of the Region. This was achieved through capacity building for disaster management and response to humanitarian risks emanating from conflicts and other man-made and natural causes. In the domain of good governance and regional security, achievements recorded include the peaceful conduct of elections in Nigeria, Togo, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso.
762. These achievements are undoubtedly quite encouraging. To accelerate the regional integration process and consolidate the activities of ECOWAS Institutions, it is worth making the following recommendations: Member States are called upon to:
- comply with the provisions of the Community Levy Protocol;
 - maintain and strengthen efforts towards the development of regional infrastructure in particular those that would promote trade and business competitiveness;
 - continue to deepen regional integration by accelerating the implementation of the single currency programme of the Community,
 - expedite the implementation of the, Common Market, Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) and the Protocol on Free Movement of persons, goods and services ;
 - accelerate implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (PNIA and PRIA); and
 - continue efforts to consolidate peace and security in the region and promote dialogue and preventive diplomacy in strengthening the democratization process in West Africa.

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ANNEXES