



JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON THE TRIPARTITE ANTI-SMUGGLING COMMITTEE MEETING (BENIN, NIGER AND NIGERIA)

DONE ON THE

14th NOVEMBER 2019, ABUJA, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
NIGERIA

FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The Tripartite Anti-Smuggling Ministerial Committee Meeting was held on 14th November 2019 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Geoffrey Onyeama, Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
2. Present at the meeting were the following Ministers:

Republic of Benin

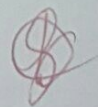
- **H.E. Mr. Aurelien A. Agbenonci**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
- **H.E. Mr. Romuald Wadagni**, Minister of Economy and Finance
- **H.E. Mrs. Shadiya A. Assouman**, Minister of Industry and Commerce

Republic of Niger

- **H.E. Mr. Mohamed Bazoum**, Minister of Interior, Public Security, Decentralization and Customary and Religious Sector
- **H.E. Mr. Sadou Seydou**, Minister of Trade and Private Sector
- **H.E. Lamido Ousseini Salamatou Bala Goga**, State Minister in charge of African Integration and Nigerien Abroad
- **H.E. Mr. Ahmat Mahmadu Diop Jidoud**, Minister of Finance

Federal Republic of Nigeria

- **H.E. Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama**, Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs
 - **H.E. Mrs. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed**, Minister of Finance Budget and National Planning.
 - **H.E. Rauf Aregbesola**, Minister of Interior
 - **H.E. Mr. Lai Mohammed**, Minister of Information, Culture and National Orientation
 - **H.E. Amb. Zubairu Dada**, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
 - **H.E. Amb. Mariam Katagum**, Minister of State for Industry, Trade and Investment.
3. The session was also attended by:
- Mr. Tei Konzi, ECOWAS Commissioner / Trade, Customs & Free Movement
4. At the opening ceremony, welcome remarks were delivered by H.E. Geoffrey Onyeama, the Nigerian Foreign Minister, Heads of delegation from the Republics of Niger and Benin. While an address was delivered by the ECOWAS Commissioner for Trade, Customs and Free Movement.
5. The meeting took note of the mandate of the Committee which includes *inter alia*, measures and actions that would facilitate and enhance the suppression of rice smuggling and other prohibited items along borders of the three countries.
6. On the anti-smuggling issues, the meeting deliberated on the myriad of challenges faced by the three countries, especially in the areas of smuggling of goods and services that are not approved under the Protocols on ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), Free Movement of Persons without valid ECOWAS travel documents, as well as plethora of illegal warehouses along the border corridors.
7. In this regard, the meeting acknowledged smuggling of goods, humans as well as human trafficking as collective violation of ECOWAS Protocols on ETLS and Free Movement that pose severe economic and security threats to intra-regional trade and free movement.



8 Consequently, the meeting took note of all the concerns raised and agreed on the following:

- Establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Committee of the three countries, comprising of Ministers of Finance, Trade, Foreign Affairs. Other members include, Customs, Immigration and the National Security Adviser, with the mandate to ensure actions that would facilitate and enhance the suppression of smuggled goods and other related matters;
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee is to ensure the full implementation of the adopted Mandate of the Joint anti-smuggling Human Trafficking Committee; (Mandate attached as addendum)
- Establishment of Trade Facilitation Committee among the three countries, comprising Ministers of Finance and Trade in order to promote intra-regional trade among the three countries;
- Ensure persons from the three countries enter/exit each other's States with valid ECOWAS recognised travel documents through recognised controlled posts; and
- Establishment of a Joint Border Patrol Team, comprising the Police, Customs, Immigration, Navy and State Security Services of the three countries. The Team is to hold its first meeting in Abuja from 25th -26th November 2019. The Patrol Team is to agree on the modality to carry out its operation and recommend for the re-opening of the borders.

9. The delegation of Benin and Niger appealed for the immediate re-opening of the Nigerian Borders.

10. In conclusion, the three countries reaffirmed their commitment in enhancing economic integration.

DONE IN ABUJA, NIGERIA THIS 14TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2019

THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE

