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Sub regional Office for West Africa



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ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES OF WEST
AFRICAN STATES



COMMUNAUTES ECONOMIQUES DES
ETATS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

HARNESSING REGIONAL INTEGRATION RESOURCES AND INSTITUTIONS IN WEST AFRICA TO MEET AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Centre International de Conférence de Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
16-17 December 2007

REPORT



1. INTRODUCTION

Under the partnership agreement signed in August 2007 between the UNECA Sub-regional Office for West Africa (SRO-WA) and the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States, the two institutions jointly organized a High-Level Experts' Group meeting on the theme "**Harnessing Regional Integration Resources and Institutions in West Africa to Meet Africa's Development Priorities**", from 16 to 17 December 2007 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The meeting was attended by 23 participants representing the following intergovernmental organizations (IGOs): The Autorité du Liptako-Gourma (ALG);The Niger Basin Authority (ABN);The Central Bank of West African States (BECEAO);The West African Development Bank (BOAD) The African Centre for Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD); The Mano River Union (MRU);The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS);The Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);The Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA);Senegal River Basin Development Organization (OMVG/OMVS);The West African Monetary Institute (WAMI)

The Participants' List is attached to this report as an annex.

In line with efforts to accelerate sub-regional integration, the key objective of the meeting was to bring together regional integration institutions in a neutral environment to discuss strategically, constructively and consensually the following issues:

- (i) Rationale for setting up a West African IGO Forum;
- (ii) Institutional modalities for implementing the Forum: areas of cooperation, governance mechanisms, monitoring-evaluation mechanisms;
- (iii) Concrete steps and actions for running the Forum.

The Meeting's governance philosophy: Meeting by and for IGOs

An all-inclusive and participatory leadership approach was adopted, with the regional integration institutions being involved in the process, from start to end. Representatives of the regional integration institutions therefore chaired and led the various sessions, while some were appointed meeting Rapporteurs.

2. OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony was chaired by the Minister Delegate in charge of Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso, and speeches were made by the Chairman of the ECOWAS Commission, the representative of UEMOA and the Director of the UNECA SRO-WA.

The various speakers all stressed the need for West African countries to accelerate regional integration so as to find appropriate solutions to the development needs and priorities of the countries and to reposition the sub-region as an international player in this era of globalization. They also dwelt at length on the urgent need to create coherence, synergy and complementarity among IGOs with a view to harnessing regional integration

resources. This, indeed, made the meeting timely, in terms of facilitating policy dialogue for establishing the IGO Forum, to which they were all fully committed.

The Minister extended to participants the warm greetings and words of support from His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaore, President of Burkina Faso and current Chairman of ECOWAS, as well as from the Burkinabe people, and urged participants to implement appropriate actions for the Forum to yield the expected outcomes. The Minister also reiterated the firm commitment of the President and his peers to the regional integration process. She then declared open the High-Level Expert Group Meeting on West African IGOs.

3. MEETING DELIBERATIONS

The meeting was divided into three main sessions as follows:

Session 3: Rationale for Instituting a West African IGO Forum:

- 3.1 : The principle of “Delivering as One”;
- 3.2 : Policy dialogue between ECOWAS and UEMOA

Session 4: Practical Modalities: What institutional and governance mechanisms should be used for the West African IGO Forum?

- 4.1: What should be the areas/subjects of cooperation?
- 4.2: What should be the institutional and governance mechanisms?
- 4.3: What monitoring-evaluation mechanisms should be used?

Session 5: What steps and concrete actions should be taken to establish the Forum?

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Rationale for Instituting the West African IGO Forum

Three presentations were made in this session by the Director of SRO-WA and the representatives of ECOWAS and UEMOA on (i) the principle of “Delivering as One” and (ii) Policy Dialogue between ECOWAS and UEMOA respectively.

3.1.1 Presentation by UNECA SRO-WA

In his presentation, the Director of the UNECA SRO-WA said that concerted action by the sub-regional institutions would add value by creating synergy to harness the sub-region’s wealth of resources. In this regard, it was necessary to form a Forum of IGOs to rethink the system of governance of institutional, human, natural, financial and regional integration resources. The Director then proposed an organizational outline for the Forum, as follows: (i) Set up a Task Force for the various areas of integration; (ii) Assign specialized institutions the role of “Task Force Team Leaders”, depending on their

comparative advantage; (iii) Set up the Supreme Council on regional integration, with specific responsibilities in the optimal use of the various community levies and accountable to the Council of Ministers and the ECOWAS Parliament. This approach would be useful for the rethinking of internal governance of IGOs and the building of capable, responsible and accountable States across West Africa.

The following also emerged from the presentation:

- The need to promote the development of a public-private sector partnership in business management and investment, that would be sharp at the regional level and strategic at the international level;
- The need to achieve a single but significant levy to help finance regional integration sectoral programmes, including the partial or total running of regional integration institutions. The value-added activities of the regional integration institutions will contribute to strengthening the economic and fiscal base. This would lead to steady growth in the community levy that could be used to sustain a sub-regional development fund;
- The need to prepare a joint economic report that could be presented to the sub-region's parliament.

Two salient points emerged from the discussions:

- The representatives of the regional integration institutions all recognized the usefulness and urgency to create a West African IGO Forum and unanimously gave it their consent;
- It was proposed that civil society should be involved to the process.

3.1.2 Presentations by ECOWAS and UEMOA

The ECOWAS Commissioner responsible for Macro-economy presented the Community Development Programme (CDP) which is in process, in line with Vision 2020, adopted by the Summit of Heads of State, for the “West African area to move from an “ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of people”. The Community Development programme is an instrument for standardizing and guiding all interventions taking place within ECOWAS. It should therefore be drawn up in conjunction with all of the sub-region's development stakeholders.

The representative of UEMOA said that UEMOA hosts the secretariat for the regular consultations taking place with ECOWAS. These consultations cover several areas including multi-lateral surveillance, standardization of statistics, the legal framework, taxation, the Common External tariff (CET) and various sectoral programmes, including transport, infrastructure, telecommunications, energy, health, environment and agriculture. He then presented the Regional Economic Programme which is being updated in the UEMOA member States, and the sub-regional poverty reduction programme paper, whose financing request has been submitted to the African Development Bank (ADB).

The following recommendations ensued from the discussions:

- ECOWAS must take UEMOA's Regional Economic Programme into account in the Community Development Programme under preparation, in order to avoid duplication;
- The issue of covering the operating expenses of IGOs under the Forum should be discussed and appropriate solutions found.

3.2 Practical Modalities: What institutional and governance mechanisms should be used for the West African IGO Forum?

3.2.1 What should be the Forum's areas/subjects of Cooperation?

Participants discussed at length the possible areas of cooperation for the IGOs.

The following key ideas and recommendations emerged from the discussions:

- IGOs must be prepared to take risks;
- The concern raised by some IGOs is the fear of demise. However, with the new-found solidarity among the IGOs, such fears should be dispelled, as all the IGOs will receive allocations from the community levy fund.
- Financial, agricultural, water resources, energy, environmental and climate issues, as well as monetary and fiscal matters were identified as possible areas of cooperation for IGOs;
- The areas of cooperation should be identified in the light of the sub-region's priorities and the comparative advantages of the IGOs;
- A joint programme-budget must then be drawn up, based on these areas of cooperation, where each IGO would be empowered according to its comparative advantages. This programme will constitute the common platform of West African IGOs.

3.2.2 Institutional and Governance Mechanisms

Reiterating the urgent need to create the Forum to facilitate the transition toward the implementation of Vision 2020, adopted by the Heads of State of the sub-region, the following mechanisms were recommended:

- A Committee of Experts comprising IGO experts will be responsible for the technical work needed to run the forum;
- A regional integration supreme council comprising IGO heads should assess and validate the technical work done by the committee of experts;
- The Forum must be made official by a legal instrument;

- The proceedings of the Forum will be submitted to the Council of Ministers and the Summit of Heads of State of ECOWAS;
- However, IGOs which so wish may also submit their proceedings to their statutory organs.

In the long run, the Forum's operations will be funded by proceeds from the community levy.

A Secretariat has been set up to ensure the good running of the Forum.

The Secretariat comprises the following:

1. ECOWAS (coordinator)
2. ALG
3. ACMAD
4. CILSS
5. OMVG
6. UNECA will assist the Secretariat

The Secretariat was assigned a role to ensure efficient and constant facilitation of the operations of the Forum. All the IGOs should be proactive in their support of the Secretariat.

3.2.3 Monitoring-Evaluation Mechanism

To ensure proper monitoring of the Forum's operations, the Secretariat should:

- Draw up the terms of reference, which should clearly state the objectives of the Forum, the expected outcomes, a matrix of indicators and an activity time-table. The terms of reference should show the main conclusions of the Ouagadougou meeting;
- Adopt the necessary provisions to ensure adherence to the January and June 2008 dates for the establishment of the Forum;
- Draw up a programme covering the major areas adopted, as well as indicators and monitoring and evaluation;
- Organize periodic meetings and prepare reports on programme implementation and impact;
- Internal and external evaluation of programmes and stakeholders and the Forum's added value relative to the expected outcomes.

3.2.4 Support for the operations of the Forum:

UNECA SRO-WA will provide the Forum with a P4 level international officer, a G7 level local officer and access to the video conference room to facilitate interactions among Forum members.

3.3 Closing Session

The Commissioner responsible for Macro-economic Policy at the ECOWAS Commission thanked the representatives of the IGOs for their dynamic participation in the meeting and the firm commitment shown. He reiterated the support of ECOWAS for the running of the Forum.

The Director of the UNECA SRO-WA welcomed the outcomes of the Meeting, which was a success. He said that in two days, the sheer collective determination of the representatives of the IGOs to better serve West Africa and its people have helped them harmonize their points of view, thrash out their differences for a common cause: accelerating regional integration and sustainable development in the sub-region. On behalf of the Executive Secretary and on his own behalf, he thanked the IGO representatives and reiterated the support of ECA to ensure that the Forum produces the expected outcomes.

The Representative of WAMI read the vote of thanks, on behalf of the IGO representatives. He lauded the strategic initiative taken by SRO-WA and the ECOWAS Commission and reaffirmed the joint will of the IGOs to “deliver as one” to ensure the efficient running of the newly-established Forum.

Annex 1: Meeting Programme

DAY 1:

16 DECEMBER 2007

3:00 – 3:45 p.m. -

SESSION 1: OPENING CEREMONY

Chair: Representative of ECOWAS Chairman

Welcome remarks: Representative, UEMOA Commission
Remarks: Director, ECA Sub-regional Office for West Africa

Address: Representative of the Chairman of the ECOWAS
Commission

Official Opening: Representative of the Chairman of ECOWAS
(Burkina Faso).

Rapporteur: OMVS

3:45 – 4:00 p.m. -

SESSION 2: MEETING OBJECTIVES AND WORK PROGRAMME

Chair: ECOWAS Commission

Presenter: SRO-WA

Rapporteur: MRU

4:00 – 4:15 p.m. -

Coffee Break

SESSION 3: RATIONALE FOR THE INSTITUTION OF A WEST AFRICAN IGO FORUM

4:15 – 5:00 p.m. 3.1. The principle of “Delivering as One” in the West African Regional Integration Process

Chair: UEMOA Commission

Presenter: Director SRO-WA

Rapporteur: ALG

Discussions

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. 3.2: Policy dialogue between ECOWAS and UEMOA: Status and Lessons Learned

Chair: WAMI

Presenter 1: ECOWAS Commission
Presenter 2: UEMOA Commission
Rapporteur: CILSS
Discussions

DAY 2: **17 DECEMBER 2007**

SESSION 4: PRACTICAL MODALITIES: WHAT INSTITUTIONAL AND GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS ARE NEEDED FOR THE WEST AFRICAN IGO FORUM?

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

4.1: What are the areas/subjects of cooperation?

Chairman: ECOWAS Commission

Rapporteur: CILSS

9:00 – 9:30

4.2: What are the institutional and governance mechanisms?

Chair: MRU

Rapporteur: WAHO

9 30 –10:00 a.m.

4.3 What are the monitoring-evaluation mechanisms?

Chair: UEMOA Commission

Rapporteur: BCEAO

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Coffee Break

Session 5: Prospects: What steps and concrete actions are needed for the establishment of the Forum?

Chair: BOAD

Rapporteur: ABN

Presenter: Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Meeting Report

10:30a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Drafting of the Report by the Committee

12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Lunch

2:20 – 14:20

Presentation of the Drafting Committee Report

2:20 – 4:00 pm.

Discussions

4:20 – 4:15

Coffee Break

5:30 – 6:00 p.m. -

SESSION 6: CLOSING SESSION

Chair: Representative of the Chairman of ECOWAS (Burkina Faso)

Director ECA/SRO-WA

UEMOA Commission

ECOWAS Commission.

Closing Remarks: Representative of the Chairman of ECOWAS
(Burkina Faso)

Rapporteur: CILSS

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