

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF  
WEST AFRICAN STATES



COMMUNAUTE ECONOMIQUE  
DES ETATS DE L'AFRIQUE  
DE L'OUEST

**THIRTY-FOURTH ORDINARY SUMMIT OF THE  
AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

**(ABUJA, 23 JUNE 2008)**

**STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT,  
ECOWAS COMMISSION,  
DR. MOHAMED IBN CHAMBAS**

Abuja, June 2008

- Your Excellency, Blaise Compaoré, Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, and President of Burkina Faso;
- Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS;
- The Special Representative of the UN Secretary General;
- Honourable Ministers;
- The Representative of the AU Commission;
- The President, UEMOA Commission;
- Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Colleague Heads of Institution and ECOWAS Statutory Appointees;
- Distinguished Invited Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is with profound pleasure that I associate myself with the host President, His Excellency, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to welcome Your Excellencies and your delegations to Abuja, and to the 34<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

On behalf of all Community citizens, I wish to express heart-felt appreciation to you our Leaders for your commitment to the development of our region and for purposeful and exemplary policy guidance of the Community Institutions. Your Excellencies have always been our pillar of support and our torch-bearers in our march towards a prosperous, secure, peaceful and unified economic space in West Africa.

We are indeed grateful to Your Excellencies for your collective effort in ensuring a smooth and efficient implementation of the integration agenda. Your resolve to consolidate peace in our Community and the laudable economic and political reforms embarked upon in the Member States have helped to ensure positive economic growth rate for the region in spite of the recent exogenous shocks triggered by high oil and food prices.

Also, on behalf of my colleague Heads of ECOWAS Institutions, I wish to express our deep gratitude to Your Excellencies for the trust and unflinching support that you have demonstrated towards us. We promise to continue to justify the confidence so reposed in us by faithfully implementing the policies of the decision making organs of the Community with a view to ensuring sustainable development, peace and security of the region.

Excellencies,

Permit me to express special gratitude to the current Chairman of ECOWAS, His Excellency Blaise Compaoré, for his exemplary leadership in fostering peace and stability in the region. Apart from his untiring efforts to return Côte d'Ivoire to lasting peace and stability, I would like to recall that less than a month ago, in the face of a recent mounting of political tension in Guinea our eminent Chairman quickly moved to support the Government and people of the country by convening an emergency mini Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in the margins of TICAD IV in Japan, to discuss and agree a strategy on the situation. We salute Your Excellency for your astute leadership in steering the integration ship of the region.

Excellency Chairman,

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, I had the pleasure and privilege to discuss the challenges of our region with the UN Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki Moon. We exchanged views on a number of issues of mutual interests such as the current food crisis, the

forthcoming elections in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, armed attacks by renegade elements in the North of Mali and Niger, and cross border crimes that threaten the fragile peace and stability of our region, in particular, drug trafficking.

We found the Secretary-General keen and enthusiastic to work with our Leaders and ECOWAS in strengthening UN-ECOWAS cooperation to face these daunting challenges and to demonstrate the mutual benefits that can be gained from close collaboration between the UN and regional organisations. It is in this regard that we welcome to this meeting Ambassador Saïd Djinnit, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General who is now in charge of UNOWA in Dakar. We pledge to work closely with UNOWA to consolidate peace and democracy, and in the fight against poverty and deprivation in our region.

Excellencies,

I would also like to acknowledge with sincere appreciation, the role of other development partners who have been very supportive of all our different regional initiatives, which include consolidation of economic integration through increased trade and

building of regional infrastructure, harmonisation of sectoral policies, regional peace and stability, and the institutional capacity building of the Community institutions and the Member States.

Excellencies,

May I also on your behalf, express our profound gratitude to His Excellency, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and his government for the excellent facilities provided for the hosting of this mid-year statutory meeting. By this, our host country continues to demonstrate her unflinching support for ECOWAS activities.

While wishing Your Excellencies very fruitful deliberations, I thank you for your kind attention.