



The Regional multi-stakeholder dialogue

## The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) under discussion in Dakar

*A regional multi-stakeholder dialogue on the issues and implications of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was held in Dakar Senegal, 26 - 27 July 2018.*

A regional multi-stakeholder dialogue on the issues and implications of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was held in Dakar Senegal, 26 - 27 July 2018.

The dialogue on the is at the initiative of a pool of regional and international organizations as well as stakeholders, including the African Center for Trade, Integration and Development (Enda CACID), and other organizations and institutions, but also the private sector, civil society, the public administrations of the States etc

The objective pursued by the regional dialogue is to create an open space for substantive interactions and inclusive exchange on the bottom, the shape and the issues of the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The work was conducted based on 7 thematic sessions : the issues negotiated in the first phase, those provided in the second phase and other subjects which have strong links with the agree-

ment but not incorporated in the AfCFTA agenda. The Presentations, followed by discussions, highlighted a series of problems that can be summarized in the following elements:

- the legal and systemic links between the AfCFTA and the obligations and commitments from the texts of ECOWAS;
- the framework and general conditions of development, the financial cost of investments and defending common positions of ECOWAS on the offer of market access, trade defence measures, rules of origin, services, among other subjects;
- economic and strategic issues of the negotiations on investment, competition policy and intellectual property were discussed in the second phase of the negotiation of the AfCFTA;
- the way it could encourage, support and promote sustainable development and the improvement of the living conditions of African populations. In particular

### OBJECTIVE

**Create an open space for substantive interactions and inclusive exchange on the bottom, the shape and the issues of the implementation of the AfCFTA.**

women and actors of informal trade and cross-border trade;

- and how some instruments like electronic commerce and trade facilitation agreement could act as driving forces and positive externalities to facilitate the implementation of the CFTA and leverage its efforts;

- non state actors and private sectors need to be fully involved to ensure inclusive and participatory nature of the negotiation process in order to facilitate its appropriation by the African populations.

Further to the page 2

At the end of the two days of the meeting, participants recognized the centrality of the AfCFTA as a driving force of the African regional economic integration agenda.

They also noted that all States, including those who have not yet signed and ratified the agreement, the RECs as well as the actors of the private sector and civil society have expressed their support to the idea of strengthening economic integration.

However, participants noted a lack of consultations and dialogue between all stakeholders both at the national and regional levels. It's one of the major constraints that justify the fears and legitimate concerns expressed by some actors in many countries.

In accordance with the directions given by the heads of State, the AfCFTA must be a tool for strengthening the achievements of the RECs. However, legal constraints linked to the customs union have not been fully taken into account in the negotiations. This has resulted in a problem of coordination and implementation consistency between the commitments made at the national, regional, continental and international levels when it comes to market access offer, rules of origin, trade defence measures, settlement of disputes, etc.

In addition, it was noted that it would be useful to take into account the difference in level of development of countries, of their realities and needs of industrialization and their structural deficiencies during the negotiation process. The tariff liberalization is important to make the AfCFTA a development tool, but participants noted that non-tariff barriers, the administrative and technical obstacles, the weakness of trade-related infrastructure have, in some cases, a more significant impact on the costs of transactions and therefore on intra trade.

After reviewing the issues and challenges of the AfCFTA for ECOWAS, the participants adopted the following recommendations:

- Assume the regional leadership role in the negotiations, by taking into account the customs union and other sectoral policies in the making or being implemented, by accompanying and coordinating the actions of Member States around common positions;

- Formulate and defend an access to the market offer including the same products to liberalize and same sensitive products or to exclude and take into account the difference in development between States;

- Adopt flexible rules of origin to ensure priority access of African enterprises to the mainland market, so that they can reinforce, develop their production capacity and create value chains of regional and continental stations. further negotiations for a promising development on the trade in services agreement. But they must ask for a moratorium of a few months to make necessary analyses, especially in terms of political economy of the sector, so that the offers are based on the realities of the economic and social data that are known at the national and regional levels;

- The negotiation of the CFTA gives opportu-

## DIRECTIVES OF THE HEADS OF STATE

**The AfCFTA must be a tool for strengthening the achievements of the RECs**

nity to reexamine certain previous agreements between the African countries and regions with external partners, in particular the (EPAs) economic partnership agreements with the European Union, revise certain protocols and intra-regional agreements where it is needed;

- The direct interaction between national and regional Governments with the private sector and civil society actors to create the conditions for a good ownership of the AfCFTA by all stakeholders and facilitate its inclusive implementation;

- Make every effort, at the ECOWAS level, so that the integrity of the customs union is preserved. This include that the countries in the region must avoid taking certain commitments or only implement the AfCFTA individually and outside their regional obligations;

- Increase the training, capacity-building and facilitate the sharing of experiences among countries of ECOWAS in the areas of electronic commerce and trade facilitation, among others;

- It is therefore necessary to harness all the expertise necessary in the States, regional institutions and civil society organizations to support the ECOWAS States in the formulation of gender-sensitive positions, taking into account the Economic and social concerns of the African people; consistent with the Milleunium Development Goal (OMG).

The dialogue saw the participation of some 50 Government executives of high level from ECOWAS and CEMAC. It aims to promote the interregional partnership, co-decision-making and sharing experiences between regional economic communities around the AfCFTA. The meeting was closed by Mr. Alioune

SARR, Minister of trade of Senegal who strongly committed to take the recommendations at the political level so that they are taken into account by decision makers in all discussions related to the AfCFTA. According to economists, the forecasts are: intra trade will evolve from 16% to + 53.2% by 2022, the Global GDP will reach the value of 2500 billion Us dollar for a market of 1.2 billion consumers. ■

### GLOBAL GDP

# 2 500

billion dollar for

# 1.2

billion consumers

Synthesis by ENDA CACID

## Summary of the proceedings of the 53rd Session of the ECOWAS

*The fifty-third regular session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held on July 31, 2018 at Lomé, in Togo Republic, under the chairmanship of Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, President of the Togolese Republic, President of the Conference. The appointment of a new president of the Conference of Heads of State, the process of creation of ECO-WAS currency, the review of the EPA, the negotiations on the AfCFTA, the swearing-in of the new president of the commission; the appointment of new judges were among other highlights of the Summit. One of the major facts of the Lome Summit, has been the hand-over between the head of State of Togo, Faure Gnassingbé and the nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari. The latter will preside over the destinies of the Organization for a term of one year.*



gle currency of ECOWAS. In a final communiqué, the Conference « congratulated the heads of State members of the Task Force for the progress made in the implementation of the roadmap of the ECO-WAS single currency activities and the results achieved ». « It is clear that harmonization of the monetary policy framework and the model of the future Central Bank will also be examined, on the occasion of the consultations and meetings on the exchange rate regime ».

### About free movement...

The free movement of people and goods has always been a battle of the heads of State. For this purpose, they urged the Commission to take any initiative that can help reduce obstacles to free movement and to report to the political authorities of Member States concerned. It was decided that The commission would provide appropriate training to customs officials and strengthen its support to the two Member States that have not yet implemented the Common External Tariff.

### Re-examining the ECOWAS-EU Economic Partnership Agreement

Addressing the nagging question of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) between ECOWAS and the European Union, the final communiqué of the 52nd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the countries of ECOWAS, held on December, 16th, in Abuja, the leaders made the following point clear : « On the partnership agreements between the West African region and the European

Union, the Conference stressed the need to review the situation in light of recent developments ». This position is adopted by the heads of states as not all states members have signed the regional EPAs and implemented the interim EPAs. Or better still, the 53rd Summit appealed to European partners asking them for more flexibility on the issue of the EPAs and the timetable for the implementation of the interim EPAs.

### African Continental Free Trade Area

Another agreement, in negotiations involving ECOWAS, is the African Continental Free Trade Area. After welcoming the launch of the African Continentale Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) during the extraordinary Summit of the Conference of the AU held in Kigali, Rwanda on March 21, 2018, the Conference invited States that had not yet signed to speed up the process of accession. They also instructed the ECOWAS commission to grant technical assistance to Member States in order to find a regional consensus on outstanding issues including tariff concessions, the schedule of specific commitments on services and rules of origin. Besides, a dialogue opened in Dakar, on July 26-28 on the issue of the AfCFTA.

Furthermore, it should be noted that The conference acknowledged the swearing-in of the new president of the ECO-WAS Commission, Mr Jean Claude Kassi Brou and five (5) new judges of the Court of justice of ECOWAS at the opening session.

The next regular session of the Conference will be held on December 22, 2018 in Abuja, Nigeria. ■

### Good economic prospects in sight

The assessment of economic performance and the implementation of integration programmes showed a positive development thanks to the rise of raw materials in the world as well as economic reforms and the investments in the field of infrastructure. The Conference welcomed the good prospects for economic growth in the region with a rate of 3.2% in 2018 compared to the achievements of 2.3% in 2017 and 0.2% in 2016.

### ECOWAS single Currency : a work in progress

The Conference fully appreciated the value of the study on the single currency carried out by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which specifies the conditions of the creation of the future sin-



The new President of the ECOWAS Commission, Jean Claude Brou and five (5) new judges of the ECOWAS court of justice officially took oath on Tuesday, July 31, 2018 at the solemn opening of the 53 regular session of the heads of State and Government of the subregional organization held in Lomé.

## Oath taking of the new president of the ECOWAS Commission and 5 judges of the ECOWAS court of justice in Lome

During the swearing-in ceremony attended by the 15 heads of states of the ECOWAS. Mr Jean Claude Brou said: « I swear to serve loyally and faithfully the economic community of West African states as president of the ECOWAS Commission without asking nor accept any instruction from any government or authority external to the Community in the performance of my duties ».

The president of the ECOWAS Faure Gnassingbé congratulated Mr. Jean Claude Brou on his new position. It should be recalled that African leaders attributed the position of pre-

### THE OATH

“ *I swear to serve loyally and faithfully the economic community of West African states as president of the ECOWAS Commission without asking nor accept any instruction from any government or authority external to the Community in the performance of my duties.* ”

sident of the ECOWAS Commission to Ivory Coast at the end of the 52nd regular meeting held in December 2017 in Abuja. They had also approved the appointment of Mr Jean Claude Brou as president of the Commission for a four year term as of march 1st, 2018. Composed of thirteen (13) members, the commission shall adopt rules for the implementation of the acts promulgated by the Council.

Before his appointment as president of the Commission mr Brou was minister of industries and Mines in his country, Ivory Coast. In addition to the president of the Commission, five (5) new judges of the ECOWAS Court of Justice also took oath. It's the Cape Verdean Januaria Tavares Silva Moreira Costa, the Nigerian Dupe Atoki, Gberi-Be Ouattara from Ivory Coast, the Ghanaian Edward Amoako Asante, and the sierra Leonean Kekura Bangura.

They are appointed for a non-renewable term of four (4) years. Their term of office shall take effect from the date of their swearing-in in front of the president of the conference; therefore this July 31st, 2018. Created by a protocol signed in 1991, the Court of justice is the principal judicial organ of the community. The Court of justice of ECOWAS's main role is to ensure the respect of the law and the principles of fairness in the interpretation and application of the provisions of the treaties revised and other subsidiary legal instruments adopted by the community. There is a need for in-depth thinking on the judicial institution of ECOWAS. In the light of recent news with filing of complaints before the court on the one hand and the record of outgoing president of the ECOWAS Commission Marcel de Souza ( from April 8th 2016 to February 28th 2018) on the other; it is becoming apparent that the rulings of the court of justice of the community are neither respected nor applied.

With the appointment of the new judges and swearing-in of Mr. Jean Claude Kassi Brou, sanctions as a last resort should be considered for the good of the Community market. ■

Synthesis by ENDA CACID



## Prince Adetokunbo Kayode

President of the Chamber of commerce and industry (ACCI) in Abuja

### « We have nothing to lose by signing the African Continental Free Trade area (AfCFTA) »

Just the mention of his name translate gigantism in Africa. Nigeria, almost 194 million people (52 percent of ECOWAS) 63% of which are under 25 years old( source IMF) with a GDP of around 395 USD billion( that is 70% of the ECOWAS GDP, encompassing a land area of 923 768 square kilometers).

Given the huge advantages to the agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the African giant's accession to the free trade zone is highly anticipated in all the African business community. The President of the Chamber of commerce and industry of Abuja (ACCI), Prince Mumuni Kayode urged the federal Government to sign an agreement on the African continental free trade area (AfCFTA) in order to allow the Nigerians working in other African countries to repatriate their wealth to the country. Prince Adetokunbo Kayode uttered these words during his retreat in Akure, capital of the State of Ondo. A few months ago, Nigeria refused to join the agreement to protect its private sector and its industry.

President Buhari had also wished to take notice of the nigerian employers before any decision. The president's position has evolved ever since. In a discussion with his south African counterpart he appears to have changed his mind ; in any case for the benefit of the African Union. « *Maybe I'm slow in reading, because I am a former soldier. I have not read quickly enough before my officials told me everything was fine for the signature. I kept it on my table. I'll sign it soon* », he said. This communication of president Buhari seems to bolster the nigerian private sector. And Prince adetokunbo kayode to insist that « *as the economic center of Africa Nigeria cannot afford to be a sleeping giant while other countries are taking concrete measures towards economic prosperity for their respective nations for a better living conditions of their citizens* ».

The Chamber of commerce and industry in Abuja by the voice of its president shows his optimism about the benefits that Nigeria could learn by joining the AfCFTA.

« *The nigerian private sector is competitive* », said Prince Ade-

“
   
*As the economic center of Africa Nigeria cannot afford to be a sleeping giant while other countries are taking concrete measures towards economic prosperity for their respective nations for a better living conditions of their citizens.*
 ”

tokunbo Kayode and therefore invites the federal Government to bring a new dynamism to their development by signing this agreement in order to allow them to conquer other markets (trade in goods, services and skills on the continent) .

« *It is pretty sad that other small African countries much less gifted with natural and human potential are strategically positioning themselves to*

*benefit from the initiative. But I am optimistic that we will sign... accordingly* », he added. Speaking of domestic economic policy, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode has urged the Governments of the States throughout the federation to support and encourage the Chambers of commerce in their respective fields as a way to promote the creation of prosperity and wealth. He invites the federal Government to follow the line indicated by the private sector by introducing better mechanisms for the financing of small and medium-sized enterprises, to create job opportunities and generate wealth. Forty-four African countries signed on March 21st, 2018 in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, the agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area. However, it should be specified that the hardest part has yet to begin.

The signatories must now ratify the agreement through their national parliaments, and it will take at least 22 ratifications. The idea is to arrive at an effective opening in January 2019. Today the margin of progression to the effectiveness of this common market is very slow and full of pitfalls.

Of the 49 States signatories to the agreement, only 6 (Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, Niger, Chad, and Eswantini (Ex-Swaziland) have ratified it thus far.

The agreement establishing the AfCFTA contains many challenges, that would be essential to raise, such as the degree of commitment of the States in the ratification of the agreement and the non membership of the nigerian giant. ■

Synthesis by ENDA CACID



## ECOWAS expresses its solidarity to Niger through the delivery of food products

The Economic Community of the States of West African States (ECOWAS), through its regional food security Reserve, put at the disposal of the authorities of Niger 6 528 tons of grain for people facing food problems. The ceremony of the food donation took place on Tuesday, August 7, 2018, in Dosso, a community located 135 km from Niamey, capital of Niger, in the presence of Mr. Sékou Sangaré, representing the president of the ECOWAS

Commission and Adamou Scott Henry Director of the office of the Prime Minister of Niger.

While receiving the food, 3 028 tons of maize, 3 000 tons of millet, and 500 tons of sorghum, Adamou Scott Henry expressed his gratitude to the president of the ECOWAS Commission, Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, for this very significant humanitarian assistance. He said that this complex

For a financing of  
**56** million  
€

food situation has been brought about by a rainfall situation in 2017/2018 marked both by a late start and an early stop of the rains; aggravated by the binding security situation.

In taking the floor on behalf of the Niger's government Mr. Sékou Sangaré said that « as part of this regional agricultural Reserve effort, this intervention in Niger is a first step, as the Government of Niger is committed at the highest level to repay, grain for grain, the entire stock provided to the country. This means to make effective the principle of Community solidarity, and to perpetuate our regional food reserve system.»

He recalled that ECOWAS cereal stocks are made up of local food products, produced in West Africa by West African producers, and purchased from the latter, in accordance with the will of the leaders of the community to create the regional food security Reserve. The ECOWAS food security Reserve was created on February 28, 2013, in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast, by West African leaders. They want it to be a tool for the promotion of regional solidarity with the States, to provide a rapid and diversified food assistance and nutrition.

Dosso is the 2nd intervention of the regional food security Reserve after 1130 tons of grain were given by the ECOWAS, on August 8, 2017, in Maiduguri, in solidarity with the people of Northern Nigeria affected by a situation of food difficulty.

Note that the delivery of food to the Government of Niger has been made possible thanks to the European Union, who is funding the project to support the storage of food security in West Africa, to the tune of 56 EUR million. ■

**3 028**

tons of maize

**3 000**

tons of millet

**500**

tons of sorghum

Synthesis by ENDA CACID

## SENEGAL-ECOWAS – FINANCE

### The board of directors and bank governors of EBID are meeting in Dakar

The Board of Directors of the Bank For Investment and Development of ECOWAS (EBID) held its 58th session on Wednesday in Dakar in preparation for the meeting of its governors scheduled on Friday in the Senegalese capital. Administrators who approved the minutes of the 57th session of the Board of Directors, also validated a rehabilitation project of the health system in Ivory Coast.

This project with a cost of US \$ 20 million, aims to improve the health of women and children, said the president of Ebid, the Nigerian Bashir Mamman Ifo. « This project will allow the acquisition of materials, rehabilitation of the health system and to combat infant mortality » welcomed Mr. Ifo ; stressing that EBID intervenes in the public and private financing of projects in the sectors of transport, agriculture, industry, tourism, etc...

Cost of the project:

**20** millions of dollars

The Bank was involved in the financing of agricultural projects, roads and the construction of the hotel Radisson Blue in Senegal, he said. EBid is presented as the financial arm of ECOWAS, it belongs to the 15 Member States of the Economic Community of the States of West Africa (ECOWAS). The Cooperation and Compensation funds of ECOWAS in 1999, from which it comes from, the banking group EBID aims to be «the first regional finance institution of investment and development in West Africa and an effective instrument for combating poverty, creating wealth and employment for the wellness of people in the region ».

The Bank operates in the areas of infrastructure and basic facilities related to the transport, energy and telecommunications, rural development, the environment, the social sector, industry, services (financial services, services related to information technology, engineering, Hotel and Restaurant Economy, etc.).

A press document indicates that after 13 years of activity (2004-2016), the Bank has almost multiplied by 7.6 its cumulative net commitments from 121 million of UA in January 2004 to 917,6 million of UA on December 31, 2016 for 135 active projects.

The same source reports that since its creation in december 2017 EBID total cumulative net commitments in favor of the countries for different projects in many sectors would amount to 1.27 billion of UA (=1.702 billion dollars or 1059 billion CFA).

The bank partnership can take a number of forms, including direct loans in the long, medium and short term, equity participation, granting credit lines and implementation of framework agreements of refinancing, engineering and financial services operations.

The Bank said to have strengthened its own funds since October 10th, 2011, bringing its total authorized capital of \$ 603 million to 1 billion UA, about 1.5 billion US dollars ; up to 70% owned by the regional (15 Member States of ECOWAS), the remaining 30% or about US \$ 450 million, are open to subscription for non-regional countries.

The Bank is a founding shareholder of Ecobank Transnational Inc. (ETI); founding shareholder of the airline Asky Airlines; initiator of the African Biofuels and Renewable Energy Fund ( ABREF), partner and Manager of the Guarantee Fund for Cultural Industries (GFCI) etc.

In the framework of its strategic plan, the Bank plans to inject into the region's economy 1.32 billion dollar (about 1 042 billion CFA francs) for the 2016-2020 period. These interventions will focus on growth-generating projects of infrastructure, transport and energy sector. ■

Source : APS

### A top joint summit ECOWAS-CAEMC: now institutionalized

The top joint summit of the Economic Community of West African States ( ECOWAS) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) was held on July 30, 2018, in Lome Republic of Togo, under the Co-Chair of their Excellencies Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe President of the Togolese Republic and current Chairman of ECOWAS, and Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic and Chairman of CEMAC. The meeting of the two blocks of 'West' and 'Center' integration has resulted in a note of satisfaction with major decisions at the end. The joint summit aimed at achieving lasting peace and a secure environment in the area common to both regions. It brought together 26 delegations who focused on different topics related to peace, security, stability and the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in the ECOWAS and the CEMAC area.

#### General review of the security situation in West and Central Africa

Addressing this aspect, the joint conference of the heads of State and Government noted the risks created by the rise of security challenges, especially in regard to terrorism, arms trafficking , humans and drugs trafficking, money laundering and cybercrime.

For this purpose, the heads of State and Government committed themselves to go further in consolidating the cooperation already existing between the two regions (ECOWAS and CEMAC) in the field of security and maritime safety, in particular within the framework of the Interregional Coordination center (ICC) adopted at the top joint summit ECOWAS CEMAC on 25 June 2013 in Yaounde, Republic of Cameroon. In order to prevent or compel the security threats, the heads of State and Government stressed the need for more enhanced and effective cooperation between the two communities which resulted in the adoption of the Lomé Declaration on peace, security, stability and the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in the ECOWAS-CEMAC area.

#### The prevention and fight against terrorism and violent extremism

The heads of State and Government made a recommendation for a quick resolution of the Libyan crisis that feeds the sources of instability in the two regions and encourage the skills of their respective States security services to exchange their reports and relevant information. To this end, they decided to set up a ministerial follow-up Committee of the implementation of the decisions of this joint Summit scheduled to meet once a year, said the final statement. The involvement of religious leaders, women, actors of the education system and other groups in the development and implementation of de-radicalization, rehabilitation, reintegration and reconciliation programs is welcomed by the conference. The joint conference also gave mandate to the Ministers in charge of the security of the States members of ECOWAS and CEMAC, to send, before the next summits, proposals on mechanisms and procedures suitable for the sharing of information between States to the President of the ECOWAS Commission and the Secretary-General of CEMAC.

#### Establishment of an area of effective governance and monitoring of the commitments

The top joint summit ECOWAS CEMAC held its second edition, after that of June 25, 2013 in Yaounde, Republic of Cameroon. A landmark Joint Summit in Togo was proven decisive in the relationship of the two blocks of integration. The two communities have decided to institutionalize the Joint Summit which will be held every two years alternatively in one or the other of the two communities. The next Joint Summit is announced in N'Djamena in 2020 in Chad. The heads of State and Government, too, were required to meet on the sidelines of the annual summits of the African Union, which are usually held in January of each year. ■

Synthesis by ENDA CACID

## Institutional reforms of the AU: what does the report say?

He is admired as much as he annoys, the arrival of the Rwandan president at the head of the continental institution sparked many comments. The « Kagame method » is at the heart of the Management of the African Union since July 2017 when his peers have appointed him to complete the reforms that everyone is calling for.

The 31st Inter-African Summit of Nouakchott (1-2 July 2018) under the theme: « *Win the battle against corruption: a sustainable path towards the transformation of Africa* », was also marked by his personal 'touch' and his striking appearance as an accomplished leader, who is in charge of a vast programme of reforms of the institution.

### What does the report say?

A report on the institutional reforms sponsored by the president of the institution was handed to delegations, at the 31st Summit of the African Union. When it comes to financial contribution, the report notes that most members do not pay in time. A situation which rubbed off on the implementation of programs and execution of the budgets of the Union. The question on the revision of the scale of compulsory contributions, the rapporteurs provide options. One of which is the application of a minimum rate of \$ 200,000 us (= 170,000 euros). The questions about the difficulties of applying the Kaberuka tax which come up against national legislative incompatibilities (constitution of the States) and multilateral (WTO) commitments were also raised. As such, the report suggests that States can determine the form and means to be used for the collection of the 0.2 percent tax without violating its international trade obligations. The method of appointment of the president of the Commission, its Vice President and each of its eight Commissioners who are elected hitherto by the Member States of the AU are Among the highlights of the reports. On this point, the rapporteurs have reached a compromise in these terms: the Vice President and Commissioners would be elected by the States, but the president of the Commission will decide on the allocation of their portfolios and «will have the powers to redeploy them (or even terminate their contracts).

The report has not dispelled all the reservations as some States members are still lagging behind on the reforms proposed by the Kagame-Mahamat tandem. Sanctions are waived for the States who do not meet their financial commitments. These sanctions will result in the suspension of their participation in the summits and executive office of any organ of the Union, the endorsement of the AU for any international position and a ban to host meetings of the African Union bodies institutions or offices.

Questions related to the AfCFTA have also been discussed at the Nouakchott summit. Some progress can be reported with regard to the African Continental Free Trade Area creation. As five new countries, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Namibia, Lesotho and Burundi, have joined the group of 44 signatory countries. Bringing to 49 the number of signatories to the agreement. Chad and Eswatini (ex Swaziland) have joined the group of 4 countries (Ghana, Niger, Ghana, Rwanda) that have ratified the agreement. However, it should be noted that 22 ratifications are needed before the agreement can enter into force. ■

Synthesis by ENDA CACID

## The ECOWAS single currency : a work in progress!

*The fifty-third regular session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the economic community of West African States (ECOWAS), held on July 31, 2018, in Lome, Togolese Republic, gave an important place to this ECOWAS single currency project.*

The president of Ghana and Niger are, since the special session of October 25th, 2013, in charge of the supervision of the ECOWAS single currency project and progress are being made. Thus, in the light of the reports on the meetings of the Presidential Task Force in charge of the program of the single currency of ECOWAS presented at this fifty-third regular session, the Conference of Heads of State and Government approved the conclusions and recommendations that « represent significant progress towards the goal of providing the region with a monetary union ».

In a final communiqué, the Conference « congratulated the heads of State members of the Task Force for the progress made in the implementation of the roadmap of the currency of ECOWAS activities and results achieved ». « It is clear that harmonization of the monetary policy framework and the model of the future Central Bank » will also be examined, on the occasion of the consultations and meetings on the exchange rate regime. The Conference also « instructed the Commission of ECOWAS, in collaboration with the Wama and the central banks of the community, to submit proposals for the future common currency name » at its next session.

After « reviewing the new road map for the program of the single currency and the creation of a special fund to cover its need », the heads of State and Government urged the stakeholders to « take all the » provisions for the effective involvement of all the Governors of the central banks in the process of creation of the single currency of ECOWAS. In this respect, they « asked the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) and the Bank of Ghana to take the necessary measures for the payment of their assessed share ». The Conference fully appreciated the value of the study on the single currency carried out by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which specifies the conditions of the creation of the future single currency of ECOWAS. The process leading to the creation of the ECOWAS single currency began in the 1980s. Since then, initiatives have been undertaken on the sidelines of the Conference of Heads of State and Government. However, noting the slow pace of the launch of the new currency, the heads of State and Government decided to give a new impetus to the process.

In clear terms, the heads of State adopted a gradual approach to start the monetary union with countries which respect the convergence criteria and have set the year 2020 for the implementation of the 'task force' on one ECOWAS currency.

Today, the ECOWAS, is eight countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo) which have the CFA franc in common, and the rest ( Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Cape Verde) has each its own currency.

A situation of monetary co-existence in a customs union fully justifies the implementation of a single sovereign currency of ECOWAS. ■

Synthesis by ENDA CACID

## Regional Agenda

- In October 2018 (Erevan, Arménie): 17th Summit of the Francophony
- December 22nd, 2018: Summit of the Heads of state and Government of the ECOWAS
- In January 2019 (Niamey, Niger): African Union Summit
- In 2020 (N'Djamena Tchad) : A Top joint Summit ECOWAS-CAEMC

 centre africain pour le commerce l'intégration et le développement	ADDRESS - Dakar - 73, Rue Carnot BP: 6879 (Dakar-Etoile) Phone: +221 33 821 70 37 Email: info@endacacid.org Site web: www.endacacid.org
	Publishing director: <b>Dr Cheikh Tidiane DIEYE</b> Project Manager: <b>Ndèye NIANG</b> Coordinator: <b>Souleymane BARRO</b>
Design: <b>Alioune KASSE</b>	With support from: 