

Intégr'ation

ECOWAS's Citizens voice

Bimonthly information on regional integration published with the support of OSIWA



13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO): ENDA CACID takes stock

The 13th WTO Ministerial Conference took place from February 26th to March 1st, 2024 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The African Centre for Trade, Integration and Development (ENDA CACID) took an active part in this important multilateral meeting on trade-related issues, as it has done at previous Ministerial Conferences. As a member of the Senegalese delegation led by the former Minister of Trade, Consumer Affairs and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Mr Abdou Karim Fofana, ENDA CACID attended the negotiation sessions and civil society initiatives.

The Conference was held against a backdrop of uncertainty about the global economic recovery following the difficult period of COVID-19. The event provided an opportunity to revisit the discussions already begun in Geneva on a wide range of subjects, and to look for areas of convergence, with a view to achieving convincing results. In the customary speeches, delivered successively by the Chairman of the Conference, the Chairman of the General Council and the Director-General of the WTO, several points were addressed:

- The WTO's contribution to economic development and job creation over the past thirty years,

- The report on WTO discussions since the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference and the progress made, notably the adoption, in October 2023, of a decision on duty-free and quota-free market access for reclassified LDCs,
- The accession of Comoros and Timor-Leste, and a ceremony to receive the instruments of acceptance of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement.

The issues dealt with were many and varied, including:

Fisheries subsidies: discussions at WC13 failed to resolve differences over the additional provisions. Points of disagreement included subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing, TSD, notification of non-

fuel-specific subsidies, subsidies in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and the definition of artisanal and small-scale fishing, among others.

Despite this impasse, most members felt that the draft text proposed by the Chairman provided a good basis for further work.

Agriculture: while the Conference was expected to provide answers to the problems posed by agricultural policies, notably through major commitments by members concerning agricultural subsidies, export competition, market access, restrictions on food exports, the holding of public stocks, etc., the results were ultimately very mixed.

Continued on page 5 ►



ENDA CACID invests in the Dakar-Bamako corridor

ENDA CACID coordinated observation and information caravans along the Dakar-Bamako corridors. These activities were carried out as part of a cross-border cooperation support project (PRACT/ECOWAS). The observation missions brought together some twenty (20) stakeholders with a variety of profiles (traders, transporters, journalists, students and private sector representatives from both sides of the corridors).

In West Africa, only three (3) countries do not have a coastline: Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. Because of their geographical position and status, these countries are dependent on coastal countries for freight and supplies. Senegal, which borders Mali, is its main supplier in terms of commercial exports. The Dakar-Bamako corridor, almost 1,400 km long, is a strategic trade route between Mali and Senegal.

During the caravan, data was collected through interviews, a document review and observations in the field. The Entrepôts Maliens au Sénégal (EMASE) and the Malian heavy goods vehicle station in Senegal were used as sources of information.

Warehouses are logistical infrastructures designed for the storage of goods, playing an essential role in reducing costs and optimising logistical cycles by making it possible to regulate lead times in the event of delays in the logistics and distribution chain. EMASE is an institution that facilitates the trade and transit of goods along the corridor. Senegal also has a similar structure in Mali. Alongside these logistics facilities, Mali's heavy goods vehicle station is a logistical tool for transporting goods. According to statistics, around 1,000 lorries pass through on this corridor every day.

TRANSPORTING GOODS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES

87% of traffic to Mali is by land, while 95% of Mali's international trade volume is by sea.

As a result, Malian exporters depend on the port of Dakar in Senegal for their operations.

Only 5% of total exports are transported by air.

► FROM SENEGAL TO MALI

Cement, hydrocarbons, chemicals, equipment and construction materials, food products, vehicles and machinery

► FROM MALI TO SENEGAL

Cotton and its derivatives, shea butter, oilcakes, cereals, gum arabic, leather hides, textile fibres and other miscellaneous products

Field observation: field observation revealed an improvement in the situation along the Dakar-Bamako corridor, particularly between Tambacounda and Kidira. Following discussions with hauliers, it was noted that the offences

recorded on the Tambacounda-Kidira leg were minor. Here are the types of offence noted: tyre wear, lack of a badge, speeding, etc.

With regard to checkpoints, it is important to note that there has been a significant reduction in their number along this route. This reduction may facilitate the movement of goods and reduce delays. However, it should be stressed that this route is sometimes the scene of seizures of narcotics such as drugs, hashish and cocaine. This situation calls for increased vigilance on the part of the authorities to combat drug trafficking.

At the Kidira border, traffic is flowing smoothly thanks to the installation of modern infrastructure. These include surveillance cameras to monitor the flow of vehicles in real time and identify any suspicious activity.

In addition, a data recording system has been set up to facilitate police formalities. This enables carriers to provide the necessary information on their goods and transport documents quickly and efficiently.

These improvements at the Kidira bor-

der will help to reduce crossing times and facilitate trade between the various countries. They also improve

security by enabling better control of goods entering and leaving the country.

SOME STATISTICAL DATA ON THE ENTRY AND EXIT OF ECOWAS CITIZENS VIA THE KIDIRA CHECKPOINT IN SEPTEMBER 2023:

SEPTEMBRE 2023						
Entry (Senegal)			Exit (Senegal)			
Maliens	Burkinabe	Nigeriens	Senegalese	Maliens	Guineans	Nigeriens
3 997	384	280	2 891	2 843	112	98

It is also important to note that other nationalities pass through the Kidira but with a lower frequency.



With regard to vehicle mobility, it is important to stress that document control is compulsory. The crossing conditions require the presentation of three (3) essential documents, particularly if the vehicle is driven by a third party:

■ **Power of attorney:** This document certifies that the owner of the vehicle authorises another person to drive it. It must be duly completed and signed by the owner, including the necessary information about the person authorised to drive the vehicle.

■ **Lease contract:** If the vehicle is leased, a valid lease contract must be presented at the inspection. This

contract must specify the details of the lease, the lessee's obligations and the conditions for returning the vehicle.

■ **Certificate of sale:** if the vehicle is sold, the certificate of sale must be presented. This document proves that ownership of the vehicle has been transferred from the previous owner to the new buyer.

It is essential to comply with these requirements when travelling with a vehicle, so that you can pass through the checkpoints with complete peace of mind.

The authorities responsible for security, such as customs and border police, maintain close relations and hold regular meetings on both sides of the border between Senegal and Mali. ■

Summary: ENDA CACID

Presentation of the system for registering and checking passers-by at the KIDIRA station





ENDA CACID introduces women to the professionalisation of their commercial activities

As part of the dissemination of its study "Manuel de professionnalisation des activités des PME-PMI exportatrices détenues par des femmes", ENDA CACID has undertaken a series of capacity-building activities for women traders. These workshops took place on 2nd and 3rd November 2023 in Ziguinchor and 19th and 20th December 2023 in Kaolack. The aim of these meetings was to train beneficiaries to understand the tools needed to professionalise their commercial activities. In clear terms: formalise to benefit from public contracts.



Ansou Souba Badji
Director of Trade

The African Centre for Trade, Integration and Development (ENDA CACID) has developed training tools tailored to the conditions and needs of all the players with whom it works, including government players, civil society organisations, the private sector, as well as players involved in cross-border trade, in particular women small-scale traders.

The two training workshops took place in two (2) regions (Ziguinchor and Kaolack) where cross-border trade is particularly dynamic. The aim of these capacity-building sessions was to train women traders from the southern regions (Ziguinchor, Kolda, Vélingara, Sédhiou, Oussouye and Bignona) and the groundnut basin (Kaolack, Thiès, Diourbel), as well as Tambacounda and Dakar, to become more formalized in order to benefit more from oil and gas exploitation through the implementation of the law on local content.

The training sessions focused on one main theme: the process of profes-

sionalising the activities of women traders.

THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF PROFESSIONALISATION

The main obstacles to the formalisation of women-owned businesses or MSEs are the red tape and taxes to which any formalised commercial activity is subject. However, there are a number of factors that justify the importance of formalising, including size or the desire to grow, the need for guidance and support, the search for finance, and the aspiration to export. Consequently, the formalities required to professionalise women's businesses are as follows:

- A declaration on honour, obtained from APIX, completed and signed by the manager or an extract from the criminal record;
- Drawing up the notarial deeds needed to set up companies;
- Registering the share capital with a notary or the bank (for companies)
- Official registration of articles of as-

sociation for companies and economic interest groupings;

- Obtaining a National Identification Number for Companies and Associations (NINEA);
- Declaration of Establishment to the competent authorities;
- Publication of a legal notice of the company's incorporation in the Journal Officiel ;
- After registering the company with the RCCM, the applicant must produce a criminal record that is less than three (3) months old.

Professionalisation offers a number of advantages to women working in commerce, including access to support services, funding, public contracts and tax and social benefits.

Like most African countries, Senegal today has a wealth of natural resources. Exploiting these deposits requires proper preparation and training for women traders, so that they can make the most of this windfall. Senegal's mining code stipulates that mining companies must provide financial support for women's empowerment projects, because women, organised into local companies, GIEs, etc., are now capable of providing quality services to mining companies and the general public. To do this, they need to formalise their operations, but also to understand all the legal documents linked to trade, such as FRA authorisations, bar codes and other instruments for financing their activities. ■

Summary: ENDA CACID



►CONTINUED ON PAGE 1

The Ministers were unable to find points of convergence on the disciplines related to these agricultural policies. Nevertheless, they agreed to continue work to make markets fairer and more competitive, while taking into account concerns such as food security for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Developing Countries (DCs).

Electronic commerce: the majority of members, including Senegal, were in favor of maintaining or not maintaining the moratorium on imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions. Senegal believes that there is currently no way of levying customs duties on electronic transmissions, and is calling for WTO work on this issue to be revitalized, and for the potential loss of customs revenue resulting from the moratorium to be assessed.

Finally, Members agreed to periodically review the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce, with a view to formulating recommendations for WC14. They also decided to maintain the practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions until the next conference.

Reform of the Dispute Settlement

Body: WTO members have expressed their concern about the dispute settlement mechanism, which has been dysfunctional for some years, due to the stalled appointment of new Appellate Body judges.

Following consultations led by the facilitator, a compromise was reached, enabling the adoption of the Decision on the reform of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB). The Ministers recognize that further work is required, and have urged those responsible in Geneva to accelerate work to achieve a fully operational and universally accessible dispute settlement system by 2024.

Development: the issue of development has taken on an important role within the World Trade Organization (WTO), with the aim of increasing trade opportunities for developing and least-developed countries. For this reason, the issue of development was widely addressed at WT13.

Despite the efforts made by members, no results were achieved on this issue. Nevertheless, in the Ministerial Declaration, members undertook to pursue their efforts to improve the application of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) provisions for developing countries (DCs) and least developed countries (LDCs).

The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS):

With regard to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Council), the Council's work was presented to Ministers at CM13.

Having taken note of the implementation of the decision taken at WC12 concerning the waiver of the TRIPS Agreement for the production of drugs and vaccines against Covid-19, the Ministers decided to continue examining complaints linked to situations of non-violation or motivated by other circumstances in the field of TRIPS, with a view to formulating recommendations at the fourteenth Ministerial Conference.

Results of the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference:

WTO members, after lengthy negotiating sessions, successfully concluded CM13 with the adoption of several decisions and declarations, namely:

1. The adoption of the final document, known as the "Abu Dhabi Ministerial Declaration", reflects members' commitment to strengthening the multilateral trading system,
2. The adoption of a ministerial decision on dispute settlement reform,

3. The adoption of a ministerial decision on measures to facilitate the smooth graduation of the least-developed countries from this category, for a period of three (3) years;

4. Reaffirmation of the commitment to the work program on small economies;

5. Adoption of a decision on the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce with a view to presenting recommendations for action and maintaining the moratorium until the 14th session of the Ministerial Conference (MC14),

6. The extension of the moratorium on non-violation complaints concerning the TRIPS Agreement until CM14,

7. Adoption of a Ministerial Decision on the reform of the Dispute Settlement System;

8. The Declaration on the Precise, Effective and Operational Implementation of the Special and Differential Treatment Provisions of the Agreements on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and on Technical Barriers to Trade,

9. The Declaration on Enhanced Regulatory Cooperation to Reduce Technical Barriers to Trade.

The highlight of the 13th Ministerial Conference was the accession of the Comoros and Timor-Leste to the WTO. In addition, the Conference urged members to redouble their efforts to reinvigorate the multilateral trading system in an uncertain economic and geopolitical context. ■



"Civil society at the heart of trade facilitation: The FEAO Programme in action"

ENDA CACID as secretariat of the Platform of West African Civil Society Organisations on Trade (POSCAO) is one of the implementing partners of the Trade Facilitation Programme implemented in West Africa. This project aims to strengthen the voice of citizens in policy dialogue on trade promotion.

Training and capacity building for civil society organisations (CSOs) in advocacy is one of the flagship projects of the West Africa Trade Facilitation Programme. This multi-donor programme aims to equip CSOs with the knowledge and skills they need to play a more effective role in the dialogue on regional trade policies, in particular trade facilitation and the free movement of goods and people. The African Centre for Trade, Integration and Development (ENDA CACID) has been chosen to coordinate this process in nine ECOWAS countries (Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Mali, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina and Senegal). The project was implemented in two phases.

Thanks to its network and its status as secretariat of the platform of West African civil society organisations, particularly on trade issues, ENDA CACID coordinated phase I, which began with the mapping of civil society organisations representing traders active in small-scale cross-border trade, both at national and regional level. This mapping covered nine countries and examined six trade corridors. The results of this study revealed the existence of 569 organisations, comprising 398 associations and NGOs as well as 171 umbrella organisations.

An assessment was then carried out to identify the needs of CSOs in terms of training, human and financial resources, and knowledge in the field of trade facilitation. The assessment also examined their training activities and successes. On the basis of these results, a capacity-building plan was drawn up to design realistic strategies to fill out the skills gaps in these CSOs.



Between November 2021 and December 2022, one regional and nine national workshops were organised on the theme of "Training in advocacy for trade facilitation within ECOWAS", for the benefit of the regional (19) and national (174) CSOs identified during the mapping exercise.

The post-training evaluation of these workshops revealed that national CSOs have a limited understanding of trade facilitation and advocacy techniques, reducing their capacity to interact effectively with national and regional authorities to influence trade facilitation policies.

Building on the achievements and results of Phase I, ENDA CACID has been selected for the second phase, demonstrating its effectiveness in delivering this trade facilitation programme.

Phase II is a pilot project covering only two (2) countries: Togo and Benin. It began with the organisation of two workshops to consolidate and put into practice what had been learned. CSOs

from Togo and Benin took part in these workshops on 29-30 January and 1st - 2nd February 2024 respectively, in order to put into practice the knowledge acquired during Phase I.

In addition to this, the FEAO Programme offers groups of learners trained at the consolidation workshop the opportunity to be accompanied by a mentor. The aim of these group mentoring sessions is to assist learners in designing, implementing and monitoring an advocacy strategy in the field. Finally, the project process will conclude with the organisation of two feedback dialogues for the learners, in the presence of the regional authorities.

As a reminder, the West Africa Trade Facilitation Programme has enabled West African civil society, under the coordination of ENDA CACID, to strengthen its knowledge of trade issues, particularly with regard to the free movement of people and goods. ■

Summary: ENDA CACID



Key decisions of the ECOWAS summit of heads of state and government

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held its extraordinary summit on 24 February 2024 in Abuja, Nigeria, to examine the political and security situation in the region. Several important decisions have been taken by Heads of State and Government, including on the crises in Niger, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso, as well as on the withdrawal of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) from ECOWAS.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RESOLUTIONS OF THE SUMMIT

The withdrawal of the three (3) ECOWAS countries was the focus of the agenda. Indeed, on January 28, 2024, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger announced their immediate withdrawal from ECOWAS, accusing the sub-regional institution of unfair sanctions, its departure from its initial objectives and its subjection to foreign powers. This extraordinary summit served as a framework for the Heads of State and Government to assess the consequences of such decisions on the progress of the institution and the construction of regional dynamics.

On the Alliance of Sahel States (AES): ECOWAS considered that this decision undermined regional integration and solidarity among ECOWAS member states. ECOWAS therefore urged the three countries to reconsider their decision, given the benefits that membership in ECOWAS provides to all member states and their citizens.

On Niger: ECOWAS decided to lift with immediate effect the sanctions it had imposed on the country following the coup d'état of July 26, 2023 which toppled elected President Mohamed Bazoum. ECOWAS welcomed the ef-

forts of the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and the Rule of Law (CNRDR) to engage in an inclusive dialogue with political actors and civil society for a peaceful and consensual transition. ECOWAS, however, demanded the immediate and unconditional release of President Bazoum and other figures detained since the coup, as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. ECOWAS also reaffirmed its support to Niger in the fight against terrorism and insecurity in the Sahel region.

On Mali: ECOWAS noted the progress made by the transitional authorities in implementing the roadmap for the return to constitutional order, including the organization of the constitutional referendum scheduled for March 27, 2024 and general elections scheduled for May 29, 2024. ECOWAS therefore lifted the sanctions it had imposed on Mali following the two successive coups in 2020 and 2021, while remaining vigilant on compliance with the commitments made by the transitional authorities.

On Burkina Faso: ECOWAS congratulated the military authorities for holding a constitutional referendum on February 13, 2024 that allowed the adoption of a new Constitution establishing a semi-presidential regime. ECOWAS also welcomed the announcement by the military authorities of the holding of general elections on 28 August 2024 to restore a democratically elected civil power. ECOWAS also lifted the sanctions it had imposed on Burkina Faso following the 25 November 2023 coup d'état that toppled President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré.

On Guinea: Despite not being concerned by the withdrawal, ECOWAS strongly condemned the coup d'état of 5 September 2021 which overthrew President Alpha Condé and suspended the Constitution. ECOWAS demanded the immediate restoration of constitutional order and the return to civilian rule as soon as possible. ECOWAS also lifted its sanctions against Guinea following the coup, while calling on the military authorities to engage in an inclusive dialogue with political actors and civil society for a peaceful and consensual transition.

Commitments and Appeals: The extraordinary ECOWAS summit thus demonstrated the willingness of the Heads of State and Government to strengthen democracy, peace and stability in the West African region, despite the challenges and crises they face. ECOWAS also reaffirmed its commitment to promoting regional integration and the economic and social development of its Member States.

This extraordinary summit of ECOWAS allowed the three countries to find the head office at the risk of disintegrating the harmonious construction of our region with various and varied implications namely politico-security, socio-economic implications, financial and institutional.

Since its creation in 1975, ECOWAS has experienced political and social upheavals and has always managed to overcome them as best as possible even if Mauritania left the ship to devote itself to the construction of the Arab Maghreb Union in 2000. ■



Civil Society from three Regional Economic Communities in Dakar for a proper implementation of the AfCFTA

On the initiative of the African Centre for Trade, Integration and Development (ENDA CACID), Dakar hosted a regional multi-stakeholder forum on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in November 2023. The forum was attended by stakeholders from the following regional economic communities: ECOWAS, EECAC, MAU.

Held under the theme “Building sustainable and effective regional alliances for the successful implementation of the FTAA”, the regional forum was attended by national civil society platforms and organisations with a regional dimension, civil society organisations from West, Central and North Africa, government officials and polit-

ical institutions, employers’ organisations, chambers of commerce, trade union organisations, exporting companies, representatives from the academic world, women traders’ organisations, etc. For a long time left on the sidelines of the formulation of regional and continental integration policies, civil society organisations have resolved in recent years to take an interest in, monitor and document major projects such as the FTAA. The Dakar forum was part of this dynamic of monitoring and contribution by CSOs to the FTAA negotiations. Its objective was to build a strong consensus for convergence of ideas and approaches between the three Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Discussions at the forum took place over two days and focused on trade-related issues, in particular the FTAA negotiations and the building of re-

gional alliances to monitor these negotiations.

Addressing the need to build regional alliances and to make this forum a starting point for joint initiatives between players and between regions, the participants made the following recommendations, among others:

- Draw on existing best practice to implement the Agreement ;
- Setting up a regional one-stop shop to facilitate procedures;
- Promote regional alliances to better address intra-African trade facilitation issues;
- Making electronic and digital commerce an innovative tool;
- Reduce development disparities between countries (strong countries must support weak countries);
- And so on. ■

Summary: ENDA CACID

Regional agenda



April 2024 (France)

Forum « Invest in Africa »

23 to 25 April 2024 (Addis Ababa)

10th session of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

May 2024

2nd (second phase) AfCFTA guided trade initiative

27 to 31 May 2024 (Kenya)

Annual Meetings of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group

15 to 16 June (Zambia)

ZLECAf Digital Trade Forum

African Center for Trade, Integration and Development (ENDA CACID)

Dakar - 73 Carnot Street
Mailbox : 6879 (Dakar-Etoile)
Phone: +221 33 821 70 37
Email: info@endacacid.org Web-site: www.endacacid.org

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR:
PROJECT MANAGER:
COORDINATOR:
DESIGN:

Souleymane BARRO
Mounirou Alioune KANE
Awa DIONE
ABK

Posting onboarding information regional published with the support of OSIWA

OPEN SOCIETY
Initiative for West Africa