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THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
ABUJA, 11-13 DECEMBER 1995

1995 INTERIM REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MR. EDOUARD BENJAMIN

Lagos November 1995

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I have the privilege to submit to Council my third Interim Report on the implementation of the Community Work Programme. It was obvious to all concerned, at the time of the adoption in Lomé of the 1995 Work Programme in December 1994, that 1995 was not going to be an easy year for the institutions of the Community. My colleagues and I, with the responsibility for the execution of the approved work programmes, knew that there would have to be dedication on our part as well as heavy reliance on the good will and commitment of all those officials in Member States connected with the implementation of Community Acts and Decisions.

2. A number of Member States showed proof of such commitment during the year under review. I should like to point out in particular the exemplary role played by Ghana since it assumed the Chairmanship of the Community in July 1994. I had cause to feel immense gratitude on a number of occasions to His Excellency Flt-Lt. Jerry John RAWLINGS, President of the Republic of Ghana and current Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government for the genuine interest and concern he showed about the running of the Community and the time and resources he devoted to ECOWAS affairs. I am aware that the Ghanaian Ministers involved in ECOWAS matters were instrumental in the active participation of President Rawlings and his country in the regional integration process.

3. In this connection, it is my pleasure to recall the invaluable contribution of Honourable Dr Kwesi BOTCHWEY to the development of the Community. As the Ghana Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Dr Botchwey was for many years responsible

for ECOWAS affairs in Ghana and I am happy that he was able, as Chairman of Council, to contribute even more positively to our collective effort before relinquishing his ministerial post. I am glad to announce to members of Council that the Community has in the person of the new Ghana Minister of Finance, Mr Kwame PEPRAH, a worthy replacement for their former colleague. Honourable Mr Peprah, with an enviable record of other ministerial portfolios, has assumed his Chairmanship duties with commendable zeal. I should also like to express my gratitude to the Ghana Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honourable Dr Obed ASAMOAH and his Honourable Deputy, Dr Mohammed Ibn CHAMBAS for the part they are playing in the Liberia peace process.

4. All of us, as officials of the Community, are very aware of the vital role that Honourable members of Council have to play at the national level to ensure the smooth functioning of the Community. During the course of the year, numerous calls were made on Honourable members and their officials for various forms of assistance and in many instances, our requests were heeded. I should like to express our sincere appreciation of the continued support that the Community enjoys in Member States, and to express gratitude to Council members for making this possible.

5. This is also the place for me to record my appreciation of the sense of dedication of my colleagues, the Statutory Appointees as well as other officials of the Community for the stoic manner in which they endured the trying moments brought about by the lack of resources. I was fully aware of the difficulties and frustrations of the past twelve months and I am grateful that my colleagues faced them as a worthy sacrifice in the cause of West African integration.

6. The past year had its bright moments, needless to say. I should like to recall here the impression and impact that the First ECOWAS Trade Fair, held from May 25 to June 4 1995, made on the West African business community and on our external investment partners. The Fair was a powerful and concrete step

taken by the Community in its determination to secure the active participation of the private sector in the West African integration process. The Community institutions were much encouraged by the good reception this initiative received and are determined that the momentum generated would be built upon. Indeed, it is proposed that a regional meeting would be organised in mid-1996 on the enhancement of private sector participation in regional development and integration.

7. It may also be recalled that the stalemate which characterised the Liberia peace process for more than a year was overcome during the review period. This made it possible to constitute a new interim government and declare a workable ceasefire. Much optimism has been generated by these positive developments and the Chairman of the Authority has been relentless in his efforts to whip up international support for the implementation of the Peace Agreement reached in Abuja on August 19, 1995.

8. The Community continued its dialogue with West Africa's traditional development partners, to ensure that assistance for the development and integration processes is maintained. In many of these discussions, officials of the Community were faced with the skepticism of some donors concerning the genuineness of the commitment of West African countries to regional cooperation and support for ECOWAS initiatives. As I indicate elsewhere in this report, unless more proof is shown of commitment to ECOWAS, much assistance available for regional development in West Africa would be dissipated or diverted elsewhere.

9. The substantive part of this Interim Report begins in Chapter II with a brief review of the regional environment, particularly some key economic issues and the prognosis for the coming year. In Chapter III, an account is given of the implementation of the Community Work Programme in 1995, with attention being drawn to some difficulties that were faced during the year. Chapter IV of the Report serves as an introduction to

the Work Programme I am scheduling for 1996. The Interim Report ends with some concluding remarks in Chapter V.

CHAPITRE II

ECONOMIC SITUATION OF WEST AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

10. In my last annual report presented in July, 1995, I gave a detailed account of the economic situation in the region. Since that time, there have been no significant changes in the West African economy. Therefore, in this interim report, I only wish to draw the attention of Council to certain issues which have a bearing on the economic prospects for ECOWAS Member States.

2. EVOLUTION OF THE WEST AFRICAN ECONOMY

11. The performance of the West African economy in 1995 and in the years ahead will be predicated on a number of factors, among which are continuation of increasingly radical economic reform measures, reduction in the external debt stock and debt servicing obligations, and increased inflow of concessionary funds into the countries of the region.

12. By adopting radical economic reform measures, most ECOWAS Member States have been able to achieve economic growth as reflected by some macroeconomic indicators. An example is the UEMOA member countries which devalued the CFA Francs in January 1994. Real GDP growth rates in 1995 are estimated at 3.3% for Niger, 6.7% for Togo and 6.6% for Côte d'Ivoire. Senegal (3.4%), Mali (4.5%), Benin (5.3%) are also expected to achieve appreciable economic growth rates in 1995.

13. The positive performance of the economies of UEMOA member countries can be attributed to the realignment of the parity of

the CFA Franc. This led to a revival of activities, increased tax revenue, more competitive exports and increased external cash inflows. High growth rates are expected in 1995 in some other ECOWAS Member States such as Ghana and Guinea which have embarked on far-reaching economic reform measures. The deregulation of the Nigerian economy in 1995 has started bearing fruit and will help reverse the negative growth which has come to characterise that country for some years now.

14. Concerning inflation, the official price index for the first half of 1995 in UEMOA member countries confirmed a stabilisation in the cost of living. However, disparities exist, such as between Benin (1%), Togo (1.3%), Senegal (1.6%) and Burkina Faso (3.9%), on the one hand, and Niger (5.5%), Mali (8.9%) and Côte d'Ivoire (10.3%) on the other hand. The adoption of austerity measures in the UEMOA member countries augurs well for the success of the anti-inflation objective that has been adopted by the group. Guinea with an inflation rate of 7 % recorded in the first half of 1995, seems set to achieve the objective outlined in its economic development programme.

15. It should be pointed out however, that countries such as Ghana (in spite of an overall positive economic performance) and Nigeria have been recording record high inflation rates during this year. Happily, the authorities in these countries, duly concerned about the situation, have adopted budgetary and monetary measures in a bid to stem inflation.

16. Efforts made so far by donor agencies towards reducing the external debt stock and debt service obligations of West African countries to sustainable levels have not yet yielded any significant results. The debt burden of ECOWAS Member States remains enormous. The situation is compounded by the predominant share of debts owned the multilateral institutions indebtdeness in the overall debt stock. For the time being, no rescheduling agreement on such debts can be concluded. Reduction of the debt stock and the debt service burden to sustainable levels would

boost the development prospects of Member States particularly those implementing comprehensive and sustained economic reform policies. This underscores the need to review the present debt reduction strategy since many countries are still grappling with a debt service burden that is beyond their financing capacity. In order to be credible, any new debt relief option must address the multilateral debt issue. It is encouraging to note that the donor agencies have already begun taking due note since, for the first time, they are seeking more credible ways of rescheduling multilateral debt. The Executive Secretariat is closely monitoring these new developments.

17. Another major issue of crucial importance to countries in the region and which is certain to have an impact on the West African economy is the financing of development initiatives. Improvement in the economic conditions and prospects of ECOWAS Member States requires sustained efforts to mobilise domestic savings and investments to accelerate economic growth and combat poverty. Even with the faithful application of stringent SAPs, the achievement of higher rates of domestic savings and investments, West African countries will still need external assistance in the form of concessionary loans to support domestic development initiatives. ECOWAS Member States implementing serious economic reform programmes cannot find credible solutions to their economic development problems if adequate concessionary funds are not made available. The prevailing atmosphere in the international donor community, however, gives cause for concern. For instance, the volume of IDA and ADF resources has remained low as the industrialised countries, the traditional donors, hesitate to make fresh resources available. Without a massive inflow of such resources, there will continue to be a vital missing link in the development strategy of ECOWAS Member States. If the industrialised countries wish to help with meaningful solutions to the development problems of West African countries, they must accept to replenish the IDA and ADF resources immediately and generally, increase the volume of concessionary funds granted to West African countries. ECOWAS Member States, for

their part, must continue their efforts at establishing an enabling macroeconomic environment for growth by pursuing stringent structural adjustment programmes.

18. In order to promote the economic growth prospects in ECOWAS Member States and to enable such countries to derive greater benefits from their economic reform policies, the volume of investments must be increased substantially; so also should the quality of investment be improved. Accompanying fiscal, legal and other support measures must be put in place urgently in order to make optimal use of local potentials specially in the private sector. Action will also need to be taken to promote intra-Community trade and strengthen regional integration.

CHAPTER III

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1995 WORK PROGRAMME

19. The work programme of the Community institutions involved the adoption of strategies for tackling the implementation of regional policies whose objective is to ensure that the efforts of Member States resulted in more favourable results. This was to be achieved through building upon past initiatives in the priority areas of regional integration and improving the operational procedures of ECOWAS.

20. It may be recalled that there has been emphasis in the recent past on improving upon the rate of implementation of Community Acts and Decisions; indeed, this was the theme of my 1995 Annual Report to the Statutory meetings held in July 1995. This chapter of the Interim Report covers the functioning of the Community during the year (up to the end of October 1995). The chapter reflects what actions have been taken with regard to the work programme approved by the authorities, what issues are left to be tackled and what items could be identified as priority issues for the following year. The highlights of the activities include socio-economic programmes such as the First ECOWAS Trade Fair, a review of economic and financial reform policies implemented by Member States, the progress report on regional peace and security issues as well as administrative and institutional issues concerning the Community.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRAMME

Community levy

21. The Revised Treaty has made provision for the introduction of a Community levy for the financing of the activities of the Community and its institutions. The Secretariat has been preparing the necessary steps to be followed to introduce the levy. A special meeting of national customs and fiscal experts was held in Lagos from 8 to 10 June 1995 to discuss the Community levy to be applied on the value of imports from third countries.

22. The recommendations of this special meeting were submitted to the 34th meeting of the TCIMP Commission held in Lagos from 12 to 14 June 1995. The draft protocols on the Community levy were recommended for the approval of Council at its 37th Session held in Accra from 24 to 27 July 1995. The Council of Ministers however directed the Executive Secretariat to convene another meeting of national experts to reexamine the draft protocols on the Community Levy and the Value Added Tax (VAT).

23. In response to the directive of Council, a meeting of national experts was re-convened in Lagos from 19 to 23 October 1995 and the results of the proceedings have been approved by the TCIMP Commission at the meeting held in Lagos from 24 to 27 October 1995. The two draft protocols on the Community Levy and the Value Added Tax will be presented for approval at the 38th session of Council scheduled to be held in Abuja in December 1995.

Money and payments

24. The Secretariat organised the 15th Meeting of the Directors of Research of Central Banks and the 17th Meeting of the Committee of Governors held in Banjul from 17 to 19 May 1995.

25. The meetings considered the status of implementation of the monetary cooperation programme and made recommendations on the following issues:

- *settlement of arrears in the West African Clearing House;*
- *introduction of the Credit and Guarantee Fund Mechanism; and*
- *ratification of the Protocol on the West African Monetary Agency.*

The Governors recommended a deadline of May 1996 for the resolution of all the issues presented.

26. An extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Governors was held on 22 July 1995. This meeting, which was preparatory to the Consultative Forum, reviewed developments in the financial and monetary sector of the regional economy and made the following recommendations to the Forum:

- *the attention of the political authorities should be drawn to the need to redouble efforts in undertaking macro-economic adjustment measures and reforms within the context of SAPs in order to facilitate the achievement of convergence in the macro-economic aggregates;*
- *in view of its important role in the region, there is the need for Nigeria to implement credible macro-economic policies that are in harmony and consistent with those being implemented by neighbouring countries under SAP;*
- *the Forum should evolve into an organ for monitoring and carrying out annual reviews and dialogue in the implementation of policies within the context of the objectives of the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme.*

Annual Meetings of World Bank and IMF

27. ECOWAS attended the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank held in Washington DC from 10 to 12 October 1995. A number of initiatives of interest to the Community were discussed. These include the study on the consideration of the facility for reduction of debt owed to multilateral institutions, the setting up of a permanent Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF), the funding of IDA-10 and programmes in which most of the poor countries were interested.

28. Bilateral cooperation meetings were also held between the ECOWAS delegation and the IMF, World Bank and the UNDP on assistance for specific ECOWAS programmes. The following issues were raised by the Secretariat for necessary technical assistance:

- *monitoring the implementation of the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme;*
- *harmonisation of macro-economic policies and the introduction of a multilateral surveillance mechanism;*
- *the processes involved in the creation of an enabling environment for private sector investment in West Africa.*

29. During the discussions with each of these multilateral institutions, the attention of the ECOWAS delegation was drawn to the imperative need for Member States to redouble their efforts in implementing Community decisions and policies. It was made clear that the extent of support of the multilateral institutions would depend on the evidence of practical commitment of Member States to regional issues and policies.

First ECOWAS Trade Fair

30. The major socio-economic activity of the 1995 Work Programme was the First ECOWAS Trade Fair which was held in Dakar from 25

May to 4 June 1995. In the process of organising the Trade Fair, the Secretariat, with the active support of the Government of Senegal, obtained the required financing from the European Union; to this effect, a financial agreement was signed in March 1995 which amounted to US$1,143,000. This was supplemented by an ECOWAS contribution of about $200,000 provided under the budget of the Secretariat.

31. The official opening ceremony of the Fair was presided over by His Excellency Abdou DIOUF, President of Senegal on 26 May 1995 while the Fair itself opened on 25 May 1995.

Participation in the Fair

32. All ECOWAS Member States participated in the Fair. Out of the total 444 exhibitors, 437 came from Member States. There were 1,030 professional visitors. The stands erected occupied 4,264 square metres; on exhibition were 480 different regional products, out of which 60 were handicrafts, 114 were from the food industry, 58 were manufactured products, 54 were textile and fashion goods.

Professional contacts

33. A consulting group, AMCO International Consultants, was employed to facilitate professional contacts. A total of 2,358 of such contacts were made during the fair (700 offers, and 1,658 requests). These contacts led to 239 verbal agreements, 131 letters of intent, 45 firm orders and the signing of 51 contracts.

TOPS and BEC

34. The proposed ECOWAS initiative - Trade Opportunities Information's System (TOPS) - was not ready for the fair and instead the Bourse des Echanges Commerciaux (BEC) software of CICES was used. With the participation of the Community Computer

Centre and AMCO International Consultants, 736 companies were registered under the system. Between them, these companies made 1380 product offers and 536 requests. Five contracts were signed and 20 letters of intent were exchanged.

35. The Fair coincided with the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of ECOWAS on 28 May 1995. The ceremony was presided over by the Chairman of the Authority, President Rawlings of Ghana, who also delivered the keynote address at the regional conference organised on the occasion.

7th All-Africa Trade Fair

36. The Secretariat was invited by OAU to be a member of the technical organising committee for the 7th All-Africa Trade Fair scheduled to take place in Nigeria in 1996. The first meeting of the Committee was held in Abuja from 23 to 25 October 1995. The theme of the Fair is the promotion of foreign investment in Africa. A forum on investment is also to be organised in order to identify and present portfolios of investment projects and also to create awareness among the business community on the role of international financial institutions in facilitating investment opportunities.

Consultative Forum

37. The Third Meeting of the Consultative Forum of Ministers of Finance, Ministers of Planning and Governors of Central Banks of ECOWAS Member States was held on 23 July 1995 as part of the annual statutory meetings in Accra. The Executive Secretariat presented reports on the follow-up on the discussions held at the second meeting of the Forum and related matters. There were also reports on the implementation of the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme and proposals for the harmonisation of economic and financial policies of Member States.

38. In the discussion which followed the presentation of these reports, the Forum stressed the need for all Member States to create a healthy economic environment in order to accelerate the regional integration process. In this regard, Member States were urged to continue their pursuit of economic reform measures, particularly by adopting growth-inducing budgetary and monetary policies.

39. The Forum also analysed the effects and the constraints inherent in certain mechanisms initiated for the treatment of the external debt of ECOWAS Member States. Emphasis was laid on the need to obtain substantial external debt relief in order that the region may have the resources to finance development. The Community institutions were therefore directed to study the matter in order to identify strategies to bring down the external debt stock and debt service, especially in respect of multilateral debt which accounts for the bulk of the debt of the majority of Member States. This assignment will have to be undertaken in close collaboration with the international community. Preliminary discussions on these issues formed part of the agenda during the annual meeting of the World Bank and the IMF.

40. In addition to the debt issues, the Secretariat will rely on the assistance of the Bretton Woods institutions in the drafting of proposals for the harmonisation of macro-economic policies, since these international bodies have a long experience in the formulation and implementation of these policies. In particular, assistance will be sought in the introduction of the multilateral surveillance mechanism needed for the monitoring and review of the selected policies for harmonisation.

Regional Conference on Economic Cooperation

41. The Secretariat participated in the Second Regional Conference organised by the West African Enterprise Network in Accra from 10 to 13 November 1995. The conference was organised to develop a private sector platform for the necessary reforms

to enhance trade and investment in the region and highlighted the following three issues of critical interest to private sector operators:

i) facilitating intra-regional monetary transfers;
ii) harmonisation of customs regimes in the region;
iii) improvement of regional transport to promote trade and development.

42. At present, the Network has been established in eleven Member States and there are plans to cover all the Member States in the near future. Papers on the selected issues were prepared and delivered by the Secretariat as well as specialists commissioned by the Network. In the discussions that followed, the participants analysed current economic and trade developments in the region and drew up recommendations needed for improving intra-regional trade and investment. It was also agreed that the platform of the Conference, which consists of a selection of initiatives of the Network and proposals adopted at the Conference, should be prepared for submission to the decision-making bodies of ECOWAS.

43. It may be recalled that at the last Summit held in Accra on 28 and 29 July 1995, the Authority urged all governments and their various public agencies, the West African business community and all other segments of the population in the region to play their respective roles in the regional integration process. The West African Enterprise Network has resolved to respond to the challenge of developing and promoting regional trade and investment. It also intends to present its views to the regional authorities for necessary action. In this regard, while the process for granting observer status is being handled, the Secretariat will continue to develop close working relations with this dynamic regional institution.

44. The Secretariat has found the collaboration with the Enterprise Network very rewarding. New insights have been gained into

the practices involved in the movement of persons and goods within the region and, therefore, fresh ideas about the appropriate policies for ensuring free movement and the facilitation of investment, production and business transactions. The Accra platform is to be finalised for submission to the ECOWAS authorities during the 1996 statutory meetings. It is our hope that with this kind of cooperation with the private sector, the objective of recording substantial and tangible regional integration will be achieved. The experience with the Enterprise Network should pave the way for more equally effective partners and allies of the Community for regional integration.

Minimum Agenda for Action 1995

45. One of the reasons adduced for the poor implementation of the first Minimum Agenda for Action (MAFA) was the very wide scope of that programme. Council, therefore, limited the objective of MAFA 1995 to the free movement of persons, and in its decision C/DEC.6/12/94, spelt out the duties of both the Community institutions and Member States in the form of activities to be undertaken in the course of 1995 at the national or regional level. As I indicated in my 1995 annual report, the current Chairman of the Authority places much importance on free movement within the region and therefore on the implementation of MAFA 1995.

46. In a memorandum being submitted by the Secretariat to Council, the specific assignments under the said Council decision are set out, as well as the reported level of implementation. In brief, the Secretariat endeavoured to fulfil its obligations within the limits of its resources; the uncompleted tasks had to be started behind schedule due to lack of the necessary financial resources. With regard to the performance of Member States, with the notable exception of Togo, there has been no notification of the creation of the national unit and no report on the implementation of the programme, in spite of reminders and, more to the

point, Article 2 of the decision which calls for such a report to Council through the Executive Secretariat.

47. I have, therefore, proposed the review of the implementation of MAFA 1995 as a substantive Agenda item for this session of Council. It is expected that honourable members of Council will give an account of the degree of application of the decision in their respective countries. Without prejudice to the national reports that would be presented during the December 1995 session of Council, the Secretariat has not seen much evidence on the ground concerning the removal of the numerous obstacles to intra-regional movement of persons and recommends therefore that, instead of progressing to the next phase (free movement of goods), 1996 should also be devoted to the execution of the activities envisaged under MAFA 1995. Visible progress towards the free movement of persons must be achieved to serve as a concrete basis for the regional integration process.

Regional Food Security System

48. In 1992, the Community sought the assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in the formulation of a regional food security system. The draft report of the study was discussed at a meeting of officials of Member States and relevant West African inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) held at Akosombo, Ghana in June 1995.

49. The existing food security programmes in the region were reviewed and proposals were submitted on ways of integrating these initiatives into a coherent regional system which could ensure adequate, accessible and reliable supplies of food items. The proposals include the identification of specific roles to be played by the different institutions in the region (ECOWAS, other West African IGOs, relevant agencies of Member States and international agencies concerned with food aid). There was emphasis on the need for close cooperation among the institutions

and coordination of policies at the regional level to ensure that the system being proposed functions effectively.

50. The final report and recommendations which would be presented to the authorities of ECOWAS has placed emphasis on the following issues:

- *peace and security in the region as an indispensable factor for food security. ECOWAS is therefore urged to work actively for peace to prevail in the region;*
- *focus on the inventory of all the existing regional institutions and detailed account of their activities with regard to food production, distribution, storage, processing potential, preservation practices etc.*
- *development of potentials through the existing networks in order to establish a regional system to facilitate the dissemination of information on research, markets, local production etc;*
- *putting in place a system for the control of plant and animal diseases;*
- *implementation of a regional management system for emergency situations;*
- *coordination of food aid;*
- *liberalisation of trade in local products;*
- *poverty alleviation and drawing-up of a regional nutritional strategy and the means for keeping the required targets.*

51. It was proposed that, for the implementation of the strategy for food security in the region, the policy-level committee composed of the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture will oversee the system. The technical aspects of the food security system will be handled by the experts from Member States, the IGOs and the international agencies in charge of food and related issues.

Floating weed control programme

52. The study on the control of floating weeds is being carried out on behalf of the Secretariat by the consulting firm, EUROCONSULT. The work for the year is in two phases: the first phase covered the period January-June 1995. During this period, the Consultant in collaboration with ECOWAS carried out missions to Member States to gather information on floating weeds. National officials assisted the consultant in the evaluation of the menace of floating weeds in the Member States visited. The first meeting of a steering committee to discuss the progress of the study was held in Abuja in January and the second in Lagos in June 1995.

53. The second phase of the study covers July-December 1995. From 20 to 24 November 1995, the Secretariat is organising the third and last meeting of the steering committee in Dakar to review the study and make recommendations concerning the measures to adopt to control floating weeds. The next phase of the programme will include the adoption of policies and the process of implementation.

Road Transport facilitation programme

54. The Secretariat participated in the 7th Meeting of the Higher Committee on Land Transport held in Accra from 31 October to 3 November 1995. The discussions were on measures to ensure the facilitation of road transport and led to the following observations and recommendations:

- *continued efforts to ensure safety on ECOWAS roads;*
- *necessary steps to resolve the continued existence of road blocks and the difficulties of crossing borders;*
- *organisation of awareness seminars to sensitise economic operators and law enforcement officials on the guarantee mechanism for inter-state road transit of goods;*

- *mobilisation of funds to construct the uncompleted sections of the trans-West African Highway network;*
- *the views of all Member States to be sought in the preparation of the background documents for the seminar to be held on identifying the bottlenecks to the effective implementation of transport facilitation policies.*

Energy Cooperation programme

55. The technical consultative committee on hydrocarbons had earlier reviewed the study on the supply and distribution of petrol and petroleum products in Africa South of the Sahara. The recommendations of the Committee were expected to be finalised at a meeting scheduled for 26 to 29 June 1995. The meeting could not be held for lack of quorum. The representatives of the Member States that reported for the meeting constituted themselves into a working group and examined the reports presented. The recommendations of this working group will be submitted to the next meeting of the Transport, Communications and Energy Commission for approval.

56. The Head of Agreement on the gas pipeline project was signed in Lagos on 5 September 1995 between the four Member States involved (Bénin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo). The Executive Secretariat has sent letters to the authorities in these Member States inviting the parties to hold meetings to work out the implementation programme for the subsequent phases of the project.

Telephone communications

57. The evaluation study conducted in the International Transit Switching Centres of five ECOWAS Member States (Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Guinea and Guinea Bissau) has been completed. The main objective was to identify traffic bottlenecks and their causes, with a view to proposing practical solutions to improve the

performance of inter-state telephone links. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report will be included in the 1996 work programme of the Secretariat.

58. Activities towards the post-evaluation study of the INTELCOM I programme have been initiated. The Executive Secretariat has contacted the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to carry out the study and there has been a favourable response to this request. The next action will be the signing of the contract after which the mobilisation fee will be paid for the study to commence.

Aeronautical telecommunications study

59. The feasibility study to improve the aeronautical navigation and communications system within ECOWAS Member States has been completed. The final report was delivered by the Consultant, Louis Berger International in October 1995. The report is being translated and a meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation has been scheduled for the first quarter of 1996 to consider the proposals contained in the study. Meanwhile, the database generated by this study has been transferred to the telecommunications databank in the Secretariat.

Merger of WAHC and OCCGE

60. The Assembly of Health Ministers of the Community recommended during the meeting it held in Cotonou on 6 and 7 July 1995 that the implementation committee should be enlarged. The meeting of the enlarged committee composed of Bénin, Mali and Niger was held in Lagos from 29 August to 1 September 1995. The meeting reviewed the Terms of Reference of the committee as approved by the Assembly of Health Ministers.

61. The Committee also prepared an outline of a Plan of Action for the merger of OCCGE and WACH as well as a provisional budget for the realisation of the Plan of Action. The meeting stressed

the importance of effective information dissemination as an essential tool for appropriate decision-making. The Ministers of Health have been assigned the duty of ensuring that information on the merger is effectively disseminated among decision-makers at the national level.

62. The ECOWAS Secretariat has continued to play its role as coordinator and promoter of activities relating to the establishment of the West African Health Organisation. In this regard, a meeting of the Ministerial Monitoring Committee of ECOWAS Ministers of Health was held in Libreville on 9 September 1995. The report of the above-mentioned Technical Implementation Committee was presented to the ministerial meeting. After the deliberations on the issues presented, the following recommendations were agreed upon:

- *a draft budget for the first full year of operation of the new organisation (WAHO) should be prepared and presented for consideration at the next meeting of the Technical Implementation Committee;*
- *proposals on methods for financing WAHO should be given priority in the next report of the Implementation Committee;*
- *both OCCGE and WAHC should take necessary steps to brief all their collaborators on the aims and objectives to WAHO and the steps being taken to effect their merger. Their collaborators should be encouraged to continue to show interest in the two institutions and to extend the same support and interest to WAHO when it becomes established.*

The next meeting of the technical implementation committee was scheduled to be held from 14 to 17 November 1995 in Lagos.

Programming of the Regional Fund (EDF)

63. The Secretariat convened a meeting of National Authorising Officers (NAOs) in Accra on 26 July 1995 to discuss ways to improve on the level of utilisation of the regional funds allocated to the West African region under the Lomé Conventions.

64. The Secretariat in its memorandum to the NAOs proposed that ECOWAS should be mandated to coordinate the programming of 60% of the regional funds in the three selected priority sectors of transport and telecommunications, development of intra-regional trade and the protection of the environment. The meeting agreed to the mandate being given to ECOWAS and the eight National Authorising Officers present at the Accra meeting signed a decision to that effect. The decision was subsequently presented for signature to the remaining Member States that were not represented at the meeting by their NAOs. The mandate document is to be submitted along with an ECOWAS regional programme (to be prepared in 1996) to the European Union for consideration and appropriate action when the second financial protocol becomes effective.

65. The Secretariat participated in the Joint EEC-ACP Council of Ministers meeting held in Mauritius on 4 November 1995 in connection with the signature of the second financial protocol of the Lomé IV Convention.

Creation of "Democratic Association for African Integration"

66. The Executive Secretariat received information in September about the creation of a Pan-African Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), "Democratic Association for African Integration", with its headquarters in Conakry. The Association aims to work closely with regional and continental NGOs and institutions in the promotion of Africa's socio-economic and cultural development, particularly in the fields of education, health, scientific

research, technology and environmental protection. It was with this aim in mind that the Association established contact with the Executive Secretariat and also requested for possible material and financial support.

Information Programme

67. Information has been recognised as a key component in the Community-building process. Accordingly, the Executive Secretariat devoted considerable attention to the implementation of major decisions on information matters. Particular emphasis was put during the year on the Priority Programme of Action on Information adopted at the 36th Session of the Council in December 1994. The following measures and activities were undertaken:

- *the West African Journalists Association (WAJA) has been granted observer status (Category A) within the institutions of the Community;*
- *in collaboration with WAJA and other media organisations in West Africa, the Executive Secretariat has completed preparations towards the holding of a workshop from 12 to 17 December 1995 in Dakar to propose a code of ethics for the practice of journalism in West Africa. Proposals emanating from this regional workshop will be submitted in 1996 to a Conference of ECOWAS Ministers of Information before being presented to the decision-making organs of the Community;*
- *the Social and Cultural Affairs Commission is being convened to consider the establishment of a Regional Media Trust Fund, the institution of an ECOWAS Press Card and the award of the ECOWAS Order of Merit (this award will be a criterion for the appointment of ECOWAS Goodwill Ambassadors) The competition for an ECOWAS Anthem which has already been advertised in*

various media in Member States is also included in the Agenda of the meeting;

- *the Executive Secretariat, as a follow-up to Council's decision to name a major street in each Member State after ECOWAS, has requested Member States to effect this important initiative aimed at nurturing a culture of integration among the citizenry of the Community;*
- *Member States have also been requested to design and print commemorative stamps depicting images of Community ideals;*
- *seven Member States (Bénin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal) have designated producers for the ECOWAS radio programme -"ECOWAS TIME". The Executive Secretariat has made arrangements for the payment of the subvention allocated to the production of this programme;*
- *the Executive Secretariat provided audio and video recordings of the message on the state of the Community by the Executive Secretary for broadcast on national radio and television stations during the anniversary celebrations of the founding of ECOWAS;*
- *a television documentary on: "ECOWAS, the Way Forward" has been produced by the Executive Secretariat. Copies would be sent to Member States for broadcasting;*
- *the Executive Secretariat continued to encourage its network of West African journalists to provide adequate coverage of ECOWAS activities. Journalists from news agencies, radio and television stations were invited to participate in the First ECOWAS Trade Fair and the Summit of the Authority. As a result, a significant number of national newspapers published special supplements relating to those events;*
- *the Executive Secretariat published two editions of the West African Bulletin and parts of the contents have been reproduced in some national newspapers and magazines. Likewise, the Executive Secretariat*

collaborated with regional magazines, notably, West Africa and Jeune Afrique, in the publication of special supplements on ECOWAS and features on West Africa;

- several letters have been sent to Member States for the implementation of the components of the Information Priority Programme of Action at the national level.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Recovery of Insurance Premium from Brokers

68. As mandated by the Administration and Finance Commission, the Secretariat continued its efforts for the recovery of US$22,098 from Consolidated Insurance Brokers, which was paid in 1993 as insurance premium on the Abuja Headquarters. The Secretariat is yet to receive the refund, but the appropriate Supervising Agency for Insurance is actively looking into the matter and should communicate the outcome in the near future.

Staff Recruitment

69. The functioning of the Executive Secretariat has been considerably impaired by the near-freeze on the filling of vacancies as they fall due. In spite of some important vacancies that have been created through retirements, very few were filled. The Secretariat recruited a Library Assistant last year who assumed duty in March this year. Interviews were also conducted for the post of Conference Interpreter and Librarian/Documentalist in October These officials are expected to assume duty in the Secretariat early next year. Unless the directives are reviewed, the Secretariat expects to fill only established quota posts next year.

Movement to Abuja

70. This was an important task set for the Secretariat in the year under review, but up to the time of preparing this report, there had not been any significant progress. Throughout the year, the Secretariat maintained contact with the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on both the 100 housing units promised the Secretariat and the loan request. Efforts will continue on both issues and, hopefully, there should be definite results on the matter in the coming year.

THE ECOWAS FUND

71. Due to the limited resources of the Fund, its annual operational and investment budgets were reduced to the minimum during 1995. Concerning the operational budget, UA 3,392,000 and UA 4,114,500 in incomes and expenditures respectively were approved for 1995 whilst an investment budget of UA 28.1 million was authorised for the 1995-1997 period.

Account of Programme Performance

Identification and programming missions

72. During the review period, the Fund undertook identification and programming missions to Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Togo. Most of the projects collected were from the private sector which confirms the emphasis currently being placed everywhere on the private sector in the development process. In support of this orientation, the Fund is endeavouring to develop its private sector policy. A mission was also undertaken to Monrovia to review the reconstruction needs of the Liberian national telecommunications network.

Supervision of projects

73. During 1995, the Fund undertook supervision missions in respect of projects in a number of sectors. Concerning the transport sector, the construction of three roads Fada-Pama-frontière Bénin road, Parakou-Djougou road (Bénin), and Dialako-to-Kedougou road (Sénégal) will be completed by the end of this year and the ECOWAS Fund will be expected to participate in the inauguration ceremonies alongside the other co-financiers. The two telecommunications projects supervised during the year were Gabu-Koundara-Mali link between Guinea Bissau and Guinea, and the restoration of the Microwave link between Sierra Leone and Guinea.

74. Four rural development projects (Famoïla Cattle Breeding Centre (Guinea), Guidel Valley Irrigation Project (Sénégal), Accelerated Artisanal Fish Production Project (Nigeria) and Sepeteri Irrigation Project (Nigeria) are being financed from the African Development Fund (ADF) Line of Credit to the Fund. There have been delays in disbursements arising from lack of quick responses by ADF and the Fund has had to contact the ADF to accelerate the process of disbursements.

75. The two industrial sector projects which are receiving attention (Single Superphosphate Fertilizer Plant Rehabilitation (Nigeria) and OSBI Livestock Breeding Project (Sénégal) have also suffered delays in disbursements due to slow responses by the African Development Bank (ADB) and the imposition of sanctions on the countries because of non-payment of arrears on loans. ECOWAS Fund has contacted both ADB and the Member States concerned to take necessary actions to remove the obstacles identified and expedite disbursements on the various projects.

76. During the review period, the Fund appraised three projects, namely, Sourou Irrigation Project (Burkina Faso), SIMGAZ Project (Côte d'Ivoire), and Sepeteri Irrigation Project - this latter operation was in fact a re-appraisal.

77. Feasibility studies were carried out for the digitalisation of the Togo-Benin-Nigeria Microwave link, and the Bamako-Siguiri link between Mali and Guinea.

78. The capital of the Fund continues to be used for financing roads and telecommunications projects. As at 30th September 1995, the cumulative use of the Fund's own resources in the financing of roads and telecommunications projects amounted to UA 14,042,682 and UA 14,575,642 respectively. The cumulative disbursements of the ADB and ADF Lines of Credits for industries and rural development projects amounted to UA 2,105,084 and UA 1,951,231 respectively. The sum of the resources from the EIB disbursed on telecommunications projects amounted to UA 10,775,5-36.

Projection of resources

79. During the year, it was estimated that UA 6,091,000 in respect of capital would be paid in. However, as at 30th September 1995, only UA 1,582,954 (about 26.0%) had been received. If the payments towards capital continue at this rate, the Fund will not be able to intervene in projects, and it will be marginalised among the other development finance institutions in the region.

80. Concerning loan recovery, it was projected that during 1995, an amount of UA 3,705,785 would be repaid. In this regard, we note with satisfaction that as at 30 September 1995, the remarkable figure of 88.7% of loans had been recorded.

Implementation of Community Acts and Decisions relating to the Fund

81. The ECOWAS Fund continued to pursue Resolution No. C/RES.14/7/94 relating to the modalities for settling Member States' financial obligations to Community institutions adopted by the Authority of Heads of State and Government on 6 August

1994 in Abuja. The arrears of contributions referred to relate to the first and second tranches of capital, headquarters construction and compensation budgets. Rescheduling agreements were sent by the Fund to all the Member States. Reminder letters were later sent and personal contacts were also made in a number of Member States. However, apart from Côte d'Ivoire, no other Member State has signed an agreed schedule.

82. Authority Decision A/DEC.10/6/89 relating to the study on enhancing the financial resources of ECOWAS Fund, has been pursued by the Management of the Fund. In this regard, a new study is to be carried out prior to opening up the capital of the Fund. The Fund, together with the ADB, has undertaken negotiations with the consulting firm, Maxwell Stamp Plc, on the study which was expected to start on 20 November, 1995.

83. The resources of the ECOWAS Fund need to be replenished substantially, if it is to be able to intervene more meaningfully in projects in the Member States. The problem of sanctions should be examined seriously by the Community because it is double-edged; it compels States to repay their loans but curtails disbursements which stall projects.

NON-COMPLETION OF WORK PROGRAMME

84. The account on the performance of the Community institutions given in this Chapter might give the impression that the 1995 Work Programme has been substantially executed. The fact, however, is that for a number of reasons, there was considerable slippage with regard to the schedule of implementation adopted at the beginning of the year. Consequently, the objectives and targets that were set for this year could not all be achieved.

85. In general, three factors explain the non-completion of the Work Programme; these are the inordinate demands of the First ECOWAS Trade Fair on the resources of the Secretariat throughout the first half of the year, delays in the submission of expected

inputs from Member States and external bodies, and the poor financial situation of the Community institutions.

86. Concerning the preparations for the ECOWAS Trade Fair, the delay in obtaining the EDF resources meant that many preliminary activities scheduled for 1994 had to be shelved till the beginning of 1995. Additionally, since this was the first time the Secretariat was undertaking such an assignment, the magnitude of the task involved could not be gauged accurately. For these reasons, the Secretariat found itself obliged to mobilise almost all of its available resources (manpower and material) for servicing the pre-fair activities, especially during the three months preceding the fair. The lessons of organising the fair have been learned and I am certain that the Secretariat will not be overwhelmed again when the time comes to hold the Second ECOWAS Trade Fair.

87. Among the important programmes which suffered because of delayed contributions of expected inputs are the "Rationalisation of West African Inter-governmental Organisations" and the "Evaluation of ECOWAS Agricultural Development Policy". With regard to the study on "Rationalisation", the consultants (IDEP) are to finalise their draft report, taking into accounts comments made at a meeting of officials of Member States and IGOs. The consultants have made us understand that the finalisation work has been stalled for lack of resources. Concerning the agricultural programme, assistance has been promised by FAO, but communication problems have held up this collaborative effort.

88. I should like to end this section of the Chapter with a comment on the third factor which has hampered the operations of the Secretariat: liquidity problem. The Authority decision calling for a re-scheduling of the outstanding contributions of Member States raised our hope of putting the financial squeeze behind us. Alas, the flow of contributions throughout this fiscal year has only been in trickles, forcing the Secretariat to cancel, suspend or postpone very many activities. Apart from

the strain it put on all officials, the low resource level proved very disruptive of the operations of the Community and portrayed ECOWAS in very bad light vis-à-vis our development partners who see their assistance as only supplementary to the efforts of the Member States.

REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

89. My previous reports to Council on the Liberian crisis always reflected the apprehension, sadness and hopelessness of both the ordinary Liberian and those assisting with the peace process. It is my pleasure to indicate that the present mood in Liberia, and therefore, the tone of this section of my report is, however, different. When I reflect now on Liberia, it is with a lot of hope for the country, its people and, indeed, the entire West African population. Permanent peace appears now to have finally started to descend on this Member State which has been experiencing the agonies of war for the past six years.

90. The signature of the Abuja Agreement on 19 August 1995 by the leaders of all the warring factions and representatives of the Liberian civilian community marked a very significant milestone on the long road to peace. As in previous agreements, the Abuja Agreement dealt with both the military and political aspects of the crisis. It established a 6-member Council of State with a view to providing Liberia with a governing body that is effective, credible, respectable and above all, capable of ensuring the uninterrupted implementation of the processes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants into the civil society - all this as a prelude to the holding of elections.

91. In accordance with the Abuja Agreement, the Council of State was installed by the Chairman of Authority, His Excellency Jerry John RAWLINGS, in Monrovia on 1 September 1995. All ministerial posts and non-cabinet posts were allocated and filled. The Supreme Court and the Ad hoc Election Commission has also been

put in place. Since its installation, members of the new Council of State have shown willingness and a strong desire to operate together, and make the Liberia National Transitional Government (LNTG) an effective government. Its presence is already being felt in parts of Liberia other than Monrovia and it is showing a strong determination to spread its authority throughout the country.

92. With regard to the military aspects of the Peace Agreement, a comprehensive ceasefire went into effect on 26 August 1995. Since then, however, there have been some violations, which have been investigated and reported upon by the ceasefire violations committee. The disengagement of forces, which was to have been completed by 26 September 1995 is still underway. Some factions have started the process, with ECOMOG and UNOMIL undertaking joint monitoring missions to some of these areas. However, there has to be more effort on the part of the faction leaders, especially with regard to informing their fighters and giving them appropriate orders.

93. Under the Cotonou Accord, the Akosombo Agreement, the Accra Agreement and the Abuja Agreement, the primary responsibility of ECOMOG and indeed ECOWAS is to assist the LNTG with the implementation of the military aspects of these agreements. Specifically, ECOMOG was given the following tasks:

- *secure the borders of Liberia, and all entry points against the inflow of arms and ammunition;*
- *assemble and disarm all combatants;*
- *ensure the opening up of all roads and establish checkpoints throughout the territory of Liberia;*
- *verify placements and movements of arms through Liberia;*
- *assist in the return of refugees and internally displaced persons;*

- *generally assist in the creation of an atmosphere that is conducive to the holding of free and fair elections.*

94. These are enormous responsibilities for ECOMOG. Sadly however, the strength of the ECOMOG forces, in terms of numbers and logistics on the ground, is not adequate to meet their responsibilities. ECOMOG needs approximately 123 million US$ to effectively deploy an additional 6 battalions to complement its present strength of 10 battalions. In this connection, the Chiefs of Staff of ECOMOG-contributing States held a meeting in Accra on 4 and 5 September 1995 to map out strategies for tackling this problem. That meeting decided to call a meeting of Chiefs of Staff of all ECOWAS Member States. The meeting was duly held in Monrovia and gave the Chiefs of Staff the opportunity to interact with members of the new LNTG, as well as acquaint them with the realities of the military situation.

95. Although delegates to the Monrovia meeting did not appear to have the mandate to commit their countries to contribute troops to ECOMOG, they nevertheless showed their willingness to consult with, and advise their respective countries on the need to accede to the ECOMOG request as quickly as possible. A clear message given by all delegates was the need to involve the international community in this final lap in the peace process. It became obvious that while ECOWAS Member States are willing to contribute troops, they do not have the financial capacity nor the necessary logistics for such an exercise. Many Member States therefore made their willingness to contribute troops conditional upon the availability of financial and logistic assistance from the international community.

96. To mobilise the required assistance from the international community, the Chairman of Authority despatched a high-level delegation to the United States, Europe and the United Nations Secretariat. This was followed by a Donors Conference organised

by the Chairman of Authority in collaboration with the UN Secretary General, in New York on 27 October 1995.

97. It was expected that the international community would, at the Donors Conference, make concrete pledges of the amounts and areas in which they would want to assist. It is with a feeling of despair that I report that neither the mission nor the Donor Conference yielded the expected level of positive results. Although the general atmosphere at the pledging conference was friendly, and there was conviction that it was time for the international community to assist Liberia, there was reluctance on the part of many donors to provide direct assistance to ECOMOG operations. Most of the pledges were limited to humanitarian assistance in the areas of food supply, health, sanitation, etc. Some countries wanted more assurance that Liberians are now ready for peace and the peace process is securely on track.

98. The United States Government pledged US$75 million which includes US$ 5 million for the promotion of democracy and US$10 million for assistance to ECOMOG. Germany is another country that pledged specific assistance to ECOMOG. It promised to provide 35 trucks to ECOMOG through UNOMIL. Other areas on which there was general consensus for assistance were in demobilisation, re-integration and reconstruction.

99. From all these, it is clear that the massive assistance needed by ECOMOG was not forthcoming. This poses a serious threat to the peace process, particularly as the leaders of warring factions are fast losing control of their combatants; the fighting forces are getting restless and making life unbearable for the civilian population.

100. In order to capitalise on the euphoria generated by the Abuja Agreement and to sustain the momentum of the peace process, I despatched a mission to Monrovia to meet with the Council of State and other functionaries of the LNTG with the following objectives:

i) finalisation of the Status of Forces Agreement between ECOWAS and the Republic of Liberia as provided by Authority Decision A/DEC.3/11/90, various peace accords including the Cotonou Accord, Akosombo Accord and various other Authority directives; and

ii) formulation of an Economic Reconstruction Programme.

101. In line with the 1990 Authority Decision and subsequent peace accords, the Executive Secretariat despatched in 1993 a draft Status of Forces Agreement to the Liberian Government. The Secretariat mission was informed that an inter-ministerial cabinet committee had been set up to consider the Secretariat draft. The Secretariat is still awaiting the response of the Liberian Government. I must stress that, the finalisation of a status of forces agreement that will define, in clear and unambiguous terms, the status of ECOMOG in Liberia is long over-due.

102. On the issue of an economic reconstruction package for Liberia, it was agreed that a vigorous and sustained international campaign would be needed. For this, a well-prepared document on the country's need for assistance from the international community is to be drafted, before the meeting can be held, presumably in early 1996.

CHAPTER IV

THE 1996 COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

103. As this session of Council is devoted essentially to the examination of the 1996 work programmes and budgets of the Community Institutions, this chapter will give a brief summary of the Community work programme for the coming year. The programme features, for the most part, activities geared towards the implementation of decisions and directives adopted by the ECOWAS decision-making authorities.

104. Most of the programmes emanate from studies carried out over the years in collaboration with some IGOs or international institutions within the framework of regional project programming in West Africa.

HARMONISATION OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL POLICIES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

105. These two programmes overlap and complement each other and involve formulating harmonised macro-economic, financial and sectoral policies aimed at strengthening national SAPs and regional integration efforts.

106. The activities programmed for 1996 are carried over from 1995. They include the establishment of more precise guidelines for convergence indicators, the definition of multilateral a surveillance mechanism, the identification of priority development sectors, the drawing up of harmonised sectoral development programmes, and the organisation of the Consultative Forum of

Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning and Governors of Central Banks.

107. It should be noted also that the following activities included in the 1996 trade promotion programme could equally facilitate and accelerate both the harmonisation of economic and financial policies and the preparation of the regional development programme:

- *harmonisation of internal indirect taxation,*
- *harmonisation and simplification of ECOWAS Customs documents,*
- *harmonisation of Customs regulations and formalities in Member States,*
- *harmonisation of statistics in Member States,*
- *harmonisation of commercial laws within ECOWAS,*
- *establishment of a single monetary zone and a regional financial market,*
- *application of Conventions relating to inter-State road transit of goods and free movement of persons.*

SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

108. The main objectives of these programmes are to widen the production base, protect the environment and put in place physical infrastructures such as transport and communications.

Rural Development

109. The development of the rural sector would be impossible without the implementation of programmes aimed at increasing food production.

110. Under the seed multiplication and cattle breeeding programmes, the Secretariat intends to undertake two main activities in 1996: monitor the execution of projects and conduct a market survey on the seed and breeding cattle stock needs to enable an

assessment of the production levels to be fixed for the Community centres.

111. The Secretariat also intends to establish a pesticide management network and a food security sub-programme in 1996. To that end, it will gather data for the evaluation of agricultural programmes and the preparation of a Community strategy for food production.

Industrial Promotion

112. As part of its attempts to promote industrial development, the Secretariat needs to conduct studies on sub-contracting possibilities in West Africa. The studies will lead to lower production costs by exploiting the sub-contracting potentials at the national and sub-regional levels, thereby increasing the competitiveness of certain goods.

113. Still under industrial cooperation, the Secretariat also intends to exploit the outcome of the 1995 survey to evaluate the sub-region's needs in the area of standardisation and quality control.

114. The promotion of economic integration through the development of inter-State industrial zones is one of the Community's preoccupations. Consequently a feasibility study will be carried out in 1996 on the two inter-State industrial zones identified and approved by the round table meeting organised in Lagos in 1995.

Environmental Protection

115. One of the objectives of the Executive Secretariat for 1996 is to contribute significantly to the long-term management of natural resources through the development of coherent environmental protection programmes

116. One such programme is the floating weed control programme Financing is to be sought for pursuing the use of integrated control methods (bilogical, chemical and physical).

117. Another programme is the coordination of desertification control programmes. This involves the development of integrated sub-regional projects in conjunction with CILSS which has collaborated in the preparation of the sub-regional action plan and which will be equally involved in sourcing funds for the programme.

118. The protection and long-term management of the environment also require the formulation of an integrated sub-regional meteorological project and this will be executed in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organisation.

Energy Development

119. As part of its energy development programme for 1996, the Executive Secretariat will follow-up on the study on the standardisation of specifications for petroleum products and the implementation of the Nigeria-Benin-Togo-Ghana gas pipeline project.

120. The Secretariat also intends to prepare a report on the conclusions of the study on the master plan for the interconnexion of electricity grids in the sub-region, update the study on the requirements of Member States in the area of new and renewable energy equipment, and the establishment of a production plant in the sub-region.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

121. The Community's objective with regard to transport and communications is to facilitate the physical integration of the sub-region. To that end, several programmes are planned for 1996, most of which are carried over from 1995.

Transport

122. Concerning the strengthening of the trans West Africa road network infrastructures, the Secretariat plans to organise a seminar on measures that might lead to improved maintenance of the network.

123. In order to improve the road transport system in the sub-region and ultimately ease free movement of goods and persons, there is the need to facilitate road transport. With this in mind, the Executive Secretariat proposes to conduct a study on road transport costs and tariffs, support the activities of the Secretariat of the ECOWAS Brown Card, and provide logistic support for UTRAO

124. It also intends to conduct studies on the restructuring of railways in West Africa with a view to preparing a programme for the rehabilitation of the existing lines.

125. Concerning the improvement of air links in the sub-region, the activities planned cover such areas of interest as the harmonisation of flight schedules of airlines and the support to be given to the private sector for the establishment of a sub-regional airline.

126. The Secretariat also hopes to put in place maritime and river transport facilities in 1996. This will involve elaborating a maritime and river transport development plan, including the creation of a coastal shipping line by private operators.

Communications

127. The major activity in the communications sector will consist in strengthening on-going efforts to interconnect national networks by modernising and upgrading them with a view to achieving a fully integrated network. Activities to that end in 1996 will focus on measures to permit accurate evaluation of

transit facilities and efforts to resolve transit problems thereby improving inter-State links.

128. The programme to improve aeronautical infrastructures will be pursued in 1996. An implementation programme will be formulated based on the feasibility study which was conducted by Louis Berger International and financed by the United States Trade and Development Agency.

SUPPORT PROGRAMMES TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION

129. These are essentially programmes designed to ease as well as expedite the regional integration process. The most important of these include:

Rationalisation of West African IGOs

130. Activities envisaged in 1996 in this area will culminate in the presentation of a project document to donors containing measures to bring about institutional rationalisation and avoid duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.

Better implementation of Community Acts and Decisions and the Community Information Programme

131. Advancing the cause of West African integration is dependent on greater impetus being given to the integration process through the effective implementation of Community Acts and Decisions. Activities scheduled for 1996 in this connection include an evaluation of these acts and decisions, analysis of problems encountered in their ratification and application and the organisation of a meeting of heads of national units to review the recommendations formulated by the Secretariat.

132. A necessary adjunct to the drive for better implementation will be the formulation of a programme of information to create

awareness of ECOWAS priority programmes among economic operators and the general populace.

133. Other activities included in this programme will be the dissemination of information on Community policies to the media and to economic operators in West Africa, publication of advertisements on Community programmes and adoption of an information strategy in the areas of agriculture, industry, energy, environment, trade, etc.

Enhancing the Secretariat's capability for data analysis

134. The identification, formulation, monitoring and post-evaluation of Community programmes and projects demand access to abundant and relevant economic data. The Secretariat's capabilities are undermined by the dearth of reliable and comprehensive statistical data. A number of measures are envisaged in 1996 to improve the Secretariat's data base - collection of socio-economic data on Member States, compilation of data for publication as statistical handbooks. The Community Computer Centre in Lome will undertake complementary activities in this regard, notably by broadening the scope of statistical data compiled within the framework of ASYCUDA and EUROTRACE to include macro-economic and financial analysis.

Enhancing the financial resources of the Executive Secretariat

135. The main focus of attention in this regard in 1996 will be the signing and ratification of the protocol on the Community levy to finance the activities of the Community and its Institutions. In addition to monitoring the ratification of the Protocol establishing the Community levy, the Secretariat will be involved in the drawing up of practical modalities for successful implementation of this important protocol.

136. It is also expected that the Secretariat will formulate a policy for the mobilisation of external resources. Such a policy should give the Secretariat greater access to financial and technical resources from donors for funding and implementing selected Community projects and programmes In the course of the coming year, efforts will be geared towards the finalisation of an updated catalogue of projects, the preparation of general policy guidelines governing the choice of projects and criteria for project selection, and organisation of donor's meetings.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

137. A significant event since the last session of Council was the entry into force on 23 August 1995 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty. The Revised Treaty prescribes remedial measures for certain important regional integration problems that had been encountered in the past. It also defines clearly the ultimate objectives of the integration process, and outlines some strategic measures for attaining these objectives. It might, therefore, be expected that the Community should launch immediately into a re-dynamisation programme.

138. In a memorandum being submitted to Council, I draw attention to the many important innovations contained in the Revised Treaty, and the need to formulate a schedule of implementation of this new mandate. In programming the activities of the Community, due account must be taken of certain constraints imposed by the prevailing conditions in the region, particularly with regard to the current pre-occupations of Member States. These factors have influenced the tempo and direction of regional integration and are responsible for the severely limited capacity (inadequate financial, material and human resources) of the institutions of the Community.

139. It should be relatively easy for Member States to make available the necessary resources to enable the Community play its catalytic role in the development process and revitalise regional integration. A far greater challenge to regional development resides in the need to achieve national stability in terms of domestic economic interactions and political and social cohesiveness. It is, therefore, important that the Community should increase its efforts at fostering a collective approach

to these developmental problems which seem to defy the energies of individual Member States.

140. A number of regional initiatives which aim at enhancing the efficacy of national policies must be sustained and improved upon. That is why in the coming months, I am proposing that particular attention and support must be given to the following Community programmes:

- *free movement of goods and persons;*
- *harmonisation of macro-economic policies;*
- *regional development programme;*
- *enhancement of ECOWAS Fund resources;*
- *trade promotion programme;*
- *promotion of private sector participation;*
- *establishment of regional information networks;*
- *regional peace and security.*

141. These are programmes whose realisation is not only vital to the regional integration process, but will also contribute directly to the socio-economic performance of each Member State. Focus on these regional programmes will maximise the positive impact that regional integration should be making on the development of the individual countries and also demonstrate both the relevance and responsiveness of the Community to the immediate pre-occupations of its Member States.

142. In their dealings with the international community, the institutions of the Community have been faced with the question of commitment of Member States to ECOWAS. This question stems principally from the perennial problems of implementation of ECOWAS decisions and programmes, financial contributions by Member States and the apparent preference for and recourse to rival regional initiatives. These issues are likely to be raised very strongly during the next few months, when the Executive Secretariat gets involved in the programming exercises to be undertaken by the UNDP and the European Commission. The

possibility for the Community to mobilise maximum external resources for the West African region depends on the commitment and support that the donor community sees Member States to be giving to ECOWAS initiatives.

143. The rate of implementation of Community decisions and programmes did not improve over the review period. The past twelve months have been a rather difficult period for the institutions of the Community since the perennial resource constraint was at its severest. Not only did the Community institutions obtain the lowest approved budget, but the resource flow was also at a low ebb. This situation hampered the efficiency of the functioning of the Community and it is our ardent hope that the institutions would not have to go through such an ordeal ever again.

144. In order to facilitate the task of the Administration and Finance Commission and also the work of Council, I ensured that careful consideration was given to all the proposals in the draft 1996 Work Programme and Budget. Much as we would have wanted to obtain relief in areas where there has been undue suppression of programme activities, we have endeavoured to refrain from requests that would appear to be additions to the current commitments of the Community. This cautious approach is also partly responsible for the deferment of any significant activity in connection with the implementation of the new measures envisaged under the Revised Treaty.

145. It is my duty to point out, however, that the current situation where there are not enough available resources for the institutions to run a minimum set of programme activities affects the credibility of the Community, is damaging to the integration process, and needs to be reversed as soon as possible. Consequently, I should like to invite all Council members when reviewing the 1996 budget proposals, to bear in mind not only the immense contribution that the implementation of the current regional integration programmes could make to the development of

each Member State, but also how much the realisation of many of these programmes has already been held back by resource constraint.

146. The Revised Treaty is an eloquent expression of the wish of Member States to energise the regional integration process. To achieve this laudable objective, it would be necessary to accord regional integration a central place in the economic management strategies of each country and make the necessary resources available to the institutions of the Community. I expect that such a favourable attitude towards ECOWAS will be witnessed during the December 1995 session of Council.