ECOWAS COMMISSION
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NINETY-FOURTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Abuja. June 19-20, 2025

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF ECOWAS COMMISSION

H.E. DR. OMAR ALIEU TOURAY

ECOWAS Commission
June 2025

- **Your Excellency Yusuf Maitama Tuggar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria and Chair of Council of Ministers**
- **Your Excellencies, Members of the Council**
- **The Vice President of the Commission and Heads of ECOWAS Institutions**
- **Honourable Commissioners**
- **Distinguished Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of the Management and staff of ECOWAS Institutions, I would like to warmly welcome you to the ninety-fourth ordinary session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers.

Permit me to extend our deep appreciation to our host and Chair of Authority, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the warm reception and all the facilities made available for the successful holding of this Session. Let me also appreciate the Chair of Council for his facilitation of the work of Council and for providing all the necessary support towards the organisation of this Meeting.

Your Excellencies,

ECOWAS institutions have continued to pursue their various mandates for the integration and development of our region. In this regard, various memoranda will be presented to you relating to the progress made in the promotion of regional integration and development.

We shall be presenting you with the outcome of the Joint Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Trade and Industry, who met to examine and validate the key regional instruments, as well as discuss the regional and continental

issues relating to trade, industry and investment promotion. Specifically, the ministers examined the question of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) within the framework of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) and the AfCFTA. Your excellencies, the non-tariff barriers have become a perineal obstacle to boosting regional trade, investment, industrialisation, competitiveness and economic growth of our region. Despite numerous initiatives, including the Presidential Tasks Force on Trade Liberation Scheme, the problem persists. In May, I travelled by road from Lagos to Cotonou to see the situation along the regional corridor and the joint border post established at the Seme/Krake border between Nigeria and Benin. I saw first hand the challenges posed by non-tariff barriers along the corridor. We must do everything to put an end to this and facilitate economic exchange across the region.

Furthermore, the Ministers of Trade and Industry have considered the Cooperation Agreement between ERCA and Member States on the implementation of Competition and Consumer Protection Rules within ECOWAS and requested Member States to take necessary measures for its signature by the end of June 2025. The ministers also approved the Trade and Investment Promotion Strategy and urged member states to accelerate the ratification of the WTO Fisheries Subsidy Agreement and the AfCFTA.

With regard to our Inter-regional and international trade, the Ministers also reviewed the West Africa – European Union Economic Partnership Agreement (WA-EU EPA) and recommended further national consultation with key stakeholders, in particular the private sector to propose a way forward. On the new US tariff policy, the Ministers discussed the need to develop a regional response.

Your Excellencies, the issues of standards and mutual recognition of inspection certificates are critical to both regional trade and industrialisation.

In this regard, progress has been made regarding the industry Standards Harmonisation Model (ECOSHAM) document, the revised ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure Scheme document, the mutual recognition agreement for inspection certificates, and the fifty-eight (58) ECOWAS standards (ECOSTANDS) relating to the textile value chain. The result of these and other efforts towards strengthening our regional market and economic integration will be presented to you in this session.

Your Excellencies,

On the issue of security and political stability, we have secured an understanding with Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger on the need to work together to build confidence to collectively confront terrorism and violent extremism. We have also converged on the need to sustain the gains made under various ECOWAS protocols relating to economic integration, development programmes and social cohesion. With Guinea, discussions have resumed on political transition, and we are working to create the right environment for the people of Guinea to determine the political future of their country.

Your Excellencies,

The Commission and other institutions of ECOWAS count on your usual wisdom, collective engagement and regional solidarity to examine the items on the agenda and provide the necessary orientation for accelerating our regional integration and development process.

I thank you for your kind attention.