ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY

INTERIM REPORT

PRESENTATION TO THE 2025 FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS PARLIAMENT

(SIXTH LEGISLATURE)

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STATE OF THE COMMUNITY INTERIM REPORT

A. INTRODUCTION

The Interim Report on the State of the Community presents the performance of the Community work programmes, against the background of the global and regional macro-economic, political and security situations which impact on the performance of the Institutions during the first half of the financial year.

B. INTERNATIONAL, CONTINENTAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

i. **The international economic growth in 2025 is expected to be marked by an unfavourable global environment,** characterized by intensified trade and geopolitical tensions, as well as increased vulnerability among low-income countries. These factors are expected to constitute persistent negative shocks to global economic growth, both in 2025 and in the years ahead. Accordingly, global growth is expected to slow to 2.8% in 2025 compared to 3.3% in 2024, before picking up slightly to 3.0% in 2026. However, global inflationary pressures continue to ease in 2025, from 5.7% in 2024 to 4.3%. This downward trend is evident in all regions, particularly in emerging and developing economies, where inflation is projected to decline to 4.6 percent in 2025, compared to 5.5 percent in 2024. In sub-Saharan Africa, inflation is projected to decline significantly, from 18.3% in 2024 to 13.3% in 2025.

ii. **In Africa's economic growth is projected at 4.0% in 2025, up from 3.6% in 2024.** This performance was driven by growth in all regions except Central Africa, which is expected to experience a significant deceleration in growth in 2025. Equally, inflation is expected to decline to 12.8% in 2025, compared to 18.4% in 2024, and decline further to 11.5% in 2026. The ease in inflationary pressures is linked to the tightening of monetary policies, supported by the decline in food and energy prices. Budget deficit continues to worsen, rising from 4.1% in 2023 to 5.1% in 2024 and 6.0% in 2025. The worsening deficit in 2025 is attributable to the deteriorating security situation in the region and the decline in commodity prices. However, the debt ratio is expected to stabilize at 65% of GDP in 2025, as in 2024.

iii. **The current review of the performance of the regional economy is based on the 12 Member States, unlike the previous 15 Member States.** Despite the challenging global environment, the regional economic growth in 2025 outpaces the 2024 growth at 5.1% compared to 4.3% in 2024. The growth would be driven mainly by the four largest economies, namely Cote d'Ivoire (6.5%), Ghana (4.0%), Senegal (7.95%), and Nigeria (4.6%). Inflationary pressure in ECOWAS is expected to ease slightly in 2025 to 19.7%,

compared to 24.8%. This would be mainly driven by the relative stability in the national currencies, energy prices, ease in the supply of food products, and tight monetary policies. The regional budget deficit is expected to improve to 4.6 percent in 2025, compared to 5.2% in 2025, explained mainly by improved revenue mobilization and expenditure rationalization across the Member States. Similarly, the average regional debt-to-GDP ratio would be down to 57.3% compared to 58.2%, driven mainly by new debts.

iv. **The political and security context for the region is also marked by the effective withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali & Niger from ECOWAS**, with the initial tensions generated by the withdrawal waning down, giving way to a more constructive engagement. However, activities of terrorists and armed groups have intensified, with repeated attacks against security forces in northern part of Benin Republic, the resurgence of Boko Haram in the northeast of Nigeria, and the advent of *Lakurawa* armed groups disrupting lives and livelihoods in the northwest of Nigeria. Geo-political tensions have also continued with the persistence of the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the US imposition of tariffs and deportation of migrant communities threatening many economies.

C. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMME

v. Regarding the implementation of community work programmess, some notable results have been achieved in the areas of regional stability, security and governance,

vi. **Regional stability, security and governance programme:** On regional stability, peace, and security, the key issues that dominated the attention of the Community during the period were the political situation of member states (notably in Guinea Bissau and Liberia), and the uncertainties accompanying the effective withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from ECOWAS. We were equally focused on strengthening the governance, peace and security architecture of the region.

vii. With respect to the political situation in Guinea Bissau, particularly on modalities for conducting the forthcoming presidential and legislative elections, the Commission deployed a high-level political mission to Guinea Bissau from 21 to 28 February 2025, with the objective of supporting the efforts by the political actors and stakeholders towards political consensus on the electoral calendar and to establish a consensual framework and modalities for the conduct of legislative and presidential elections. A follow up mission was led by the President of the Commission to Bissau from 25th to 27th May where wide consultations were held with all the key political stakeholders, including the President of the Republic, Speaker of the National Popular Assembly, Chairperson of the Electoral

Commission, the leaders of political parties, among others. The stakeholders converged on the date of the next legislative and Presidential election and the need to ensure the integrity, freedom, and security of the election process, as well as respect for the outcome of the elections. They also emphasised the need to promote national unity and the consolidation of stability in the country.

viii. Similarly, the ECOWAS Commission and Parliament intervened to mediate the political tussle over the Speakership of Liberia's House of Representatives. The matter was eventually settled after a ruling of the country's Supreme Court on 23 April 2025 and subsequent resignation of Speaker Koffa paving the way for election of the current Speaker. There is stability and effective functioning of the House of Representatives and governance in the country.

ix. On the withdrawal of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, the President of the Commission undertook a mission to Bamako on 21-23 May and held extensive consultations with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the three countries. During the Meeting, an understanding was reached for an orderly separation, while retaining some of the achievements of integration in the interest of the population and working to rebuild trust in order to jointly confront terrorism affecting the region. The negotiations to formalise these understanding and agree on the future collaboration will commence as soon as the Chief Negotiator is appointed by the ECOWAS decision-making organs. The Commission will continue to provide support to the process.

x. In a bid to strengthen the peace architecture within the region, ECOWAS brought together National Peace Commissions, Councils and Committees and similar platforms from the member states to exchange on lessons learned, strengthen collaboration and partnership on peacebuilding and mediation processes. In the same vein, ECOWAS undertook some consultations with regional and international stakeholders, including the United Nations, African Union and the European Union aimed at deepening partnerships and collaborations on the evolving peace and security landscape of the region, with a particular focus on implications of the withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS. Of significance is the holding of the 2nd Joint Consultative Meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council at Ambassadorial Level (ECOWAS MSC) from 15 to 17 May 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which among others, reviewed developments and collaborations on peace, governance, security and geo-political dynamics in the ECOWAS region.

xi. With regards to strengthening governance, the Commission sustained its engagements with Member States' institutions advancing accountability in governance, including the Anti-Corruption Institutions. In this regards, officials of anti-corruption institutions in the member states received a Regional Certification Training on the *Fundamentals of Cryptocurrency, Crimes and Anti-Money Laundering Compliance for Anti-Corruption Institutions* from 6 to 12 April 2025. The training, organised in collaboration with the Network of Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa (NACIWA), was aimed at tackling a surge in crypto-currency-related financial crimes in the Community.

xii. Furthermore, to harness the potentials of youth bulge in the region and promote positive inclusion in the democratic process, the Commission organised a regional Conference on Sustainable Participation of Youth in Governance in the ECOWAS Region under the theme: *Harnessing Youth Agency in Deepening Democratic Governance and Inclusive Development*, in Accra, Ghana, from 7 to 9 May 2025. The Conference provided a platform for amplifying the youth's perspectives, role and agency in advancing democratic governance in the ECOWAS region.

xiii. For support to political transition and electoral assistance to Member States in the Community, within the period under review, the Commission deployed a Technical Mission to Guinea from 9 to 12 April 2025, in compliance with the directive of the ECOWAS Authority at its 66th Ordinary Summit held on 15 December 2024 in Abuja, Nigeria. The Mission held consultations with the Guinean authorities on the necessary steps for the implementation of the ten (10) points of the transition roadmap, including national dialogue on the transition process and resource mobilisation. A constitutional referendum has been scheduled for 21 September 2025.

xiv. Furthermore, ahead of the presidential election in the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire scheduled to hold on 25th October 2025, the Commission will deploy a Pre-election Fact-finding Mission in June, to engage with various critical stakeholders in the process, to assess the state of preparedness for the polls and to determine the electoral assistance needed for the scheduled presidential election.

xv. **Consolidation of Regional Economic Integration:** The Commission continued to consolidate and deepen economic integration through the free movement of persons and goods. The President of the ECOWAS Commission embarked on a monitoring mission on the Lagos-Benin highway corridor to assess and appraise the implementation of the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and Goods along the corridor.

xvi. *To deepen free movement of person*, the Commission launched the 2nd phase of the support to free movement of persons and migration in West Africa (FMM II Project) on the development of the ECOVISA portal in March 2025. In addition, concerning the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card (ENBIC***),*** assessment was held to appraise the level of implementation in each Member State and identified gaps and challenges. Thus far only six member states have implemented. On the implementation of the ECOWAS Cross-Border Cooperation Support Programme (ECBCSP 2023-2027), a subvention of one hundred thousand USD ($100,000.00) is being disbursed to each Member State. The Gambia, Ghana and Senegal received the second tranche of the disbursement to finance various projects. Some of the results include the provision of four (4) fenced farmlands totalling twelve hectares, equipped with boreholes to 906 women through their cooperatives in the border areas of São Domingos and Tendinto in the Republic of Guinea Bissau.

xvii. *On Regional Trade Facilitation*, the 6th Meeting of the Regional Trade Facilitation Committee held as part of efforts to address obstacles to trade, promote the efficient movement of goods across borders. The meeting reviewed the implementation of Trade Facilitation reforms, including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and validated various Border Assessment reports. The 4th Joint meeting of the ECOWAS Ministers of Trade and Investment (ECOMOTI) held in Abuja from 15-16 May 2025 and adopted the Trade and Investment Promotion Strategy (ECOTIPS).

xviii. In May 2025, meetings of the four (4) Technical Committees of the ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organisation Network (TPON) were held to take stock of progress made in the development of value chains and business linkages and prepare for the 5th Annual General Meeting.

xix. The Commission continued to support Member States in collecting data on Informal Cross Border Trade (ICBT) to be added to formal trade data for comprehensive information on intra-regional trade. To initiate the operationalisation of the structure for ICBT data collection, processing, and dissemination, a training of trainers was held in April 2025 in Accra-Ghana, for over 30 representatives from the National Bureau of Statistics and the Ministries of Trade across Member States.

xx. *Concerning the Agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)*, all ECOWAS Member States have ratified the AfCFTA except Benin. Regional and National AfCFTA Implementation Committees are being strengthened to facilitate the effective implementation of the AfCFTA Strategy. As of April 2025, eight (8) ECOWAS Member States, namely Benin, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo, had ratified and deposited their instruments of acceptance for the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies. In furtherance of the economic empowerment of Women and Youth, the capacity of over 50 women traders has been enhanced on topics such as how to export, access to finance, and utilisation of trade information systems; 200 traders, entrepreneurs and business associations, including women led businesses trained and ready to export under the AfCFTA.

xxi. *On the consolidation of the ECOWAS Customs Union*, the Commission undertook a series of training and sensitization for members of the National Committee of Origin Recognition (NRCOC) and Customs administration officials in charge of granting the status of "originating goods". The Electronic Certificate of Origin (E-CO) was launched on the 25th of November 2024 in Lagos and now being piloted in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. Concerning tax harmonization, the first National Tax Steering Committee in the Region was established by Federal Ministry of Finance, Nigeria, with the support of the ECOWAS Commission. The Commission also assisted Sierra Leone, Liberia, and The Gambia in tax expenditure governance and reporting, and extended support to Liberia and Guinea-Bissau in the roll out and implementation of the new VAT Regimes in their respective countries. The Commission has drafted its first Fiscal Transition Report to be published by the end of 2025. The report highlights the successes and challenges in fiscal reforms in the various Member States, including discussion on tax to GDP ratio, domestic resource mobilization as well as strengthening of international tax cooperation among Member States.

xxii. *On the trade liberalization scheme*, 96 new companies and 120 products have been approved under the scheme. A new ETLS website/portal https://etls.ecowas.int. has been validated by the Commission to facilitate the identification of registered companies and community goods notified by the Commission. Regarding the implementation of the Interconnected System for the Management of Goods in Transit (SIGMAT), all ECOWAS Member States except Guinea Bissau have deployed SIGMAT. In support of the operationalization of the SIGMAT, an e-hub has been created at the Lome Customs IT

Centre and a SIGMAT mobile application is being deployed and six (6) Member States (Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana) will been connected to the e-hub by June 2025.

xxiii. *Concerning the promotion of a Common Market and private sector development in the region***,** the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA) in 2025 begun drafting a regulation and a manual of procedures on consumer protection, commenced the application of the Community Competition Rules (CCR) and continues to assist Member States in the adoption of competition laws in accordance with regional and continental provisions and best practices and the establishment of competition authorities. ERCA continues to provide support to Guinea Bissau, Cabo Verde, Sierra Leone and Liberia based on cooperation agreements for the establishment of adequate competition laws and functional national competition authorities. A cooperation agreement between ERCA and ECOWAS Member States on the implementation of Competition and Consumer Protection Rules within ECOWAS was adopted by the 4th Joint Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Trade and Industry (ECOMOTI) held in Abuja, Nigeria 15th and 16th May 2025.

xxiv. *Progress has been made in relation to the ECOWAS Common Investment Market (ECIM***)**. In addition to the establishment of the National Coordinating Committees (NCCs) of ECIM in Member States to facilitate the implementation of the ECOWAS Common Investment Code, investment governance, cooperation, and coordination in the ECIM was strengthened to improve the competitiveness and attractiveness of the region. ECIM-Council Manual of Procedures was approved by the 4th Joint Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Trade and Industry (ECOMOTI) held in Abuja. Nigeria from 15-16 May 2025 for transmission to the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and Authority. The Association of Investment Promotion Agencies of West African States (IPAWAS) and the Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) in Member States were trained in "Investment Promotion for Impact and Sustainable Development". The Charter establishing the West African Securities Regulators' Association (WASRA) was revised to enable all ECOWAS Member States to become members and to define the modalities to make WASRA the regional Securities Regulatory Authority in line with Article 53 of the revised ECOWAS Treaty. Capacity building has been held in Cabo Verde and The Gambia on the newly adopted ECOWAS Tourism Classification and Regulation for One hundred and fifty (150) Tourism Practitioners. In collaboration with the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI) and the ECOWAS Small Business Coalition (ESBC), 80 MSMEs and women-led businesses have been sensitized and trained on the provisions of the ECOWAS Trade and Investment protocols.

xxv. *On industrial development*, the Commission has taken several important steps to ensure the operationalization of the ECOWAS Quality Agency (ECOWAQ). The steps taken include benchmarking with the Caribbean Regional Quality Agency (CROSQ). The adoption of fifty-eight (58) ECOWAS standards (ECOSTANDS) on the textile value chain and a mechanism for the mutual recognition of inspection certification, were adopted by the 4th Joint Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Trade and Industry (ECOMOTI) held in Abuja, Nigeria 15th and 16th May 2025. Furthermore, ten (10) regional product certification programmes have been reviewed and three (3) new programmes relating to attiéké, reinforcing bars and paints validated. To develop a robust pharmaceutical sector within the framework of the West Africa Pharmaceutical Industry Development Project, the African Development Bank is funding the recruitment of two (2) consultants to lead the project. The registration of the ECOWAS Quality Certification Mark (ECOQMARK) with the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) and the Nigerian Industrial Property Office (NIPO) has been completed and is now in the process of being registered with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

xxvi. *Within the framework of inclusive and sustainable development*, the Commission continued to implement programs and initiatives in favour of vulnerable populations in the region. These include training sessions for 100 stakeholders from Togo, Ghana, and Guinea-Bissau on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and the African Union Continental Results Framework; 45 criminal justice, social service and humanitarian actors from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Cape Verde were trained on national anti-trafficking strategies; and 120 national stakeholders trained on national protection roadmaps. The Commission continues to provide support towards the socio-economic integration of women cured of fistula. The "Senegal Sanitary Pads" project has been launched by ECOWAS to provide scholarships to women cured of fistula. ECOWAS, through the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC), participated in the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) in March 2025 and organised high-level interactive sessions with Gender Ministers from Member States to highlight key initiatives towards the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in West Africa. The EGDC also organised national training on gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harassment in Gambia, Senegal, and in Guinea-Bissau. Fifty (50) participants from different communities affected by conflict took part in the ECOWAS Community Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security held in Gabu, Guinea-Bissau. An ECOWAS draft regulation for the establishment of the carbon market was developed and capacity building held for officials from Ministries

responsible for Environment and Migration on mainstreaming migration into climate change policies and strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change and conflict as well as provide comprehensive protection services to victims of trafficking. In addition, the implementation of the ECOWAS Strategic Framework on Child Protection was reviewed and Drug Treatment Centres have been established and or renovated in Kano, Abia State, Nigeria, while rehabilitation works in The Gambia and Liberia are ongoing, with 10 centres expected to be operational by June 2025.

xxvii. *On education*, the main activities have focused on the ECOWAS Nnamdi Azikiwe Academic Mobility Scheme (ENAAMS) with the Immersion of Ninety-eight (98) young graduates, comprising thirty-seven (37) females and sixty-one (61) males for twelve (12) months in ECOWAS Institutions and Agencies. Also, the ECOWAS Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) continues to produce a skilled workforce that meets the demands of ECOWAS member states' economies. During the period under review, fifty (50) TVET Graduates are immersed in relevant industries, to gain hands-on experience, mentorship, and professional networks taking into consideration issue of gender and social inclusion. ECOWAS Commission has also supported efforts to assess and constitute a regional heritage list of cultural and natural assets deemed to be of inestimable value. In addition, the regional committee on the restitution of cultural property has updated the Action Plan (2025–2029) relating to the safe return of African cultural assets.

xxviii. During the period under review, ECOWAS deployed 30 volunteers to support the functioning of ECOWAS offices in Benin, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. The Programme organised the 3rd Edition of the School Debate Championship in Sierra Leone and Liberia (to mark the ECOWAS Volunteer Day (EVD) on 26 March 2025. Financial support was provided to the national volunteering agencies in Benin, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Togo for the implementation of local volunteering activities.

xxix. **On the implementation of its energy and infrastructure projects**, ECOWAS has made significant progress. The Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) and the Host Government Agreement (HGA) for the African Atlantic Gas Pipeline Project (AAGP) linking Nigeria to Morocco, supplying ECOWAS Member States along the way including Mauritania and Europe, have been approved and due for signature by ECOWAS Heads of State. The Commission us also working with member states on the need to comply with the **Directive** relating to the harmonized specifications for automotive fuels (gasoline and diesel). Regarding the Project for Electrification of 20,000 villages in West Africa (PRODEL20000), a

draft study covering technical, financial, environmental, and social aspects for the electrification— comprising 1,249 off-grid and 14,042 grid extension projects for 15, 291 localities - was completed and will be validated in June 2025. The ECOWAS Commission is establishing the ECOWAS Geo-extractives Observatory & Cadastre System as provided for under the ECOWAS Mineral Development Policy and its Implementation Matrix (EMDP), which is currently under review. Under the EU-ECOWAS Sustainable Energy Scholarship Programme for master's degree in sustainable energy at specialized universities in West Africa (Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo), 72 students (comprising 17 mobile and 55 stationary scholars (42 male, 30 female) have benefited to date. Seven Member States; Benin, Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo have benefitted from various initiatives under the ECOWAS Special Investment Fund for Renewable Energy Projects during the period under review. Concerning the development of the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market (EREM), pilot test has been under stage one (1) completed with 31 volunteer utilities. Sixteen (16) Market Participants were registered, and six (6) bilateral trade contracts executed. In addition, under the WAPP institutional restructuring, an autonomous System and Market Operator (SMO) was created, which is fully owned by Transmission System Operators and independently governed. Other strategic energy infrastructure projects have continued, including the 1,550 km Nigeria–Benin–Togo–Ghana–Côte d'Ivoire Interconnection. In addition to the progress made on transport infrastructure in the region, the Abidjan–Lagos and Praia-Dakar-Abidjan Corridor development projects are ongoing. The ECOWAS Commission successfully mobilized a NEPAD - INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT PREPARATION FACILITY (IPPF) Grant of $1,793,250 from the AfDB for two crucial initial technical studies for the Praia-Dakar-Abidjan Corridor development project. Furthermore, the ECOWAS Commission with financial support from the AfDB is strengthening institutional capacity for overseeing civil aviation safety and security within the framework of the Support Project for the Air Transport Sector in West and Central Africa (PASTA-CO). In addition, the Commission is preparing to undertake a baseline study to assess the state of implementation of airline charges and taxes in the Member States. Concerning the deployment of the Amilcar Cabral Submarine Cable Project, The Gambia, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have received allocations from the World Bank through the Western Africa Regional Digital Integration Program (WARDIP) Series of Projects 1 (SOP 1) for the deployment of Phase 1 of the submarine cable and technical assistance support. As part of continuing efforts to increase Public Private Partnerships (PPP) the 4th PPP Forum themed "Strengthening Legal Frameworks for Sustainable PPPs", was held in Lagos, Nigeria from 14th -15th May 2025. Participants at the forum included representatives from Regulators /

Units from ECOWAS Member States, Development Partners (AECID, EU, IsDB, GIZ, EBID, AfDB, the World Bank) and Private Sector (FEWACCI, Zeman Capital, PAC Capital, K-Infra).

xxx. **On the promotion of environmental governance and sustainable natural resource management,** the Commission provided support for the protection of the Upper Guinea Forest and the Fouta Djallon Highlands as well as the application to the UNESCO for the classification of the Fouta Djallon Highlands as a World Heritage Site. The action plan on plastic waste management has been validated as part of the region's commitment to the Paris Climate Accord.

xxxi. The Fund for Regional Stabilization and Development has made substantial progress in improving living conditions in fragile communities across ECOWAS member states. While projects in The Gambia are near completion, initiatives in Guinea Bissau, Togo, and Benin have been completed to support the implementation of timely interventions to facilitate socio-economic stabilization in the ECOWAS region. Under the fund, over 6,000 community citizens in The Gambia have benefited from various forms of capacity development for entrepreneurship and value addition in fisheries and horticulture; 66-bed maternity and paediatric facility at the Bafata Hospital, Guinea Bissau, is expected to be completed by December 2025; the rice processing and paving equipment in the Maritime, Kara and Savanes regions of Togo will be officially handed over in the last quarter of 2025 and; targeted support to Atakora, Donga and Collines regions in Benin.

xxxii. The ECOWAS Human Capacity Development Program provided grants of USD 75,000 to Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Togo to develop their national HCD strategies and action plans for 2024-2025. Ghana is yet to meet the requirements for a USD 75,000 grant to develop its strategy.

xxxiii. Towards institutional reform and building capable institutions, the capacity of 204 Staff Members of Director, Professional 5 and 4 Categories were enhanced on Strategic Leadership, Management and Team Building for Effective Communication Skills during the period under review. The Commission has updated its Risk Register as part of efforts towards strengthening Human Resources Management. Concerning Manpower Planning and Recruitment, the Commission advertised two hundred and seventy-one (271) positions at various grade levels from D to G as of end April 2025. Out of Forty (40) positions categorised for readvertisement, twenty-four (24) have already been advertised and Job Descriptions (JD) for sixteen (16) positions are being reviewed for readvertisement for both internal and external candidates. The interview process is expected to be completed for seventy-eight (78) positions by the end of 2025. The Human Resources Manual of Procedures, Scheme of Service, and Salary Structure documents have been developed.

xxxiv. **To mobilize for the payment of Community Levy, the Commission visited Sierra Leone and Gambia**, with further planned visits to Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea and Senegal. As of 2nd May 2025, over UA 21 million had been deposited in the Community Levy accounts by Member States. However, Member States continue to record non-compliance of certain provisions of the Levy Protocol, which the Commission has been reporting. Currently, the Community Levy proceeds fund over 85% of the ECOWAS budget.

xxxv. **On risks mitigation**, the Community institutions diversified its banking relationships - opening new accounts in some banks, on the recommendation of both internal and external auditors. Furthermore, all budget focal persons have been trained on the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). In this regard, capacity has been built within Community Institutions and has resulted in an effective and efficient budgeting process and in furtherance of the implementation of the Cashless Policy, all meeting logistics expenses are disbursed from headquarters via our online banking platforms.

xxxvi. **On the transfer of the Control of the ECOLink to Management**: In line with the directives of the 88th Council of Ministers held in July 2022, the transfer of control is now effective at the level of institutions and agencies. Accordingly, henceforth ex-ante control functions are being handled by Management in line with global best practice, while ex-post audit is handled by the Office of the Auditor General and External Auditors, except for recruitment and procurement.

xxxvii. **On partnerships**, the Commission has initiated and strengthened various forms of cooperation and co-ordinating resource mobilisation for the implementation of the Regional Integration Agenda. The Commission accredited seventeen (17) new Ambassadors and Heads of Mission from Angola, Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Burundi, Brazil, Ghana, Jamaica, Kenya, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, South Sudan, Ukraine, United States, Venezuela, China, Tunisia, Denmark and Zambia. Equally granted audiences to the ECOWAS Permanent Representatives as well as Ambassadors and Heads of Missions of countries such as the People's Republic of China, Cuba, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA among others.

xxxviii. **With respect to communication**, the Commission has introduced an innovative way of reaching internal stakeholders through social media and mail. It has also introduced "ECOWAS Daily News in the African media and "Weekly Newsletters" which highlight major happenings in the region and ECOWAS Institutions. The Commission also introduced regular press conferences with local and international media organizations to create visibility for the region and to counter dis/misinformation.

D. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER ECOWAS INSTITUTIONS

xxxix. **PARLIAMENT: The ECOWAS Parliament held its ordinary sessions as well as several committee meetings, to review and adopt its 2025 work Programme** as well as draft texts to be submitted to the Council of Ministers and the Authority of Heads of State and Government for adoption.

xl. **COMMUNITY COURT OF JUSTICE: At the level of the Community Court of Justice, the Court continued with efforts at enhancing its visibility**. In an attempt to bring justice closer to the grassroots or Community citizens who may lack the means or capacity to travel to the Court's headquarters in Abuja, the institution held its external court sessions at the High Court in Osborne, Ikoyi, Lagos-Nigeria, from 8–16th May 2025 during which fifty-two (52) cases we handled comprising thirty-seven (37) hearings, two (2) rulings, and 13 judgments rendered.

xli. During the period under review, the Court held seventy Court Sessions (70) there was no advisory opinion and twenty - four (24) cases were filed. The Court delivered thirty-six (36) Decisions, comprising thirty-four (34) Judgments and two (2) Rulings, and four (4) Orders, eighty-three (83) cases were pending before the Court. The Registry received and processed one hundred and ten (110) legal documents and effected a total of one thousand, two hundred and ninety-eight (1,298) hybrid services on parties before the Court. There are Two Hundred and Thirty-eight (238) court processes awaiting translation. In addition, the Court also participated in several meetings and workshops aimed at improving the effective functioning of the Community Court. The Court has also taken steps to ensure the enforcement of her judgment by the Member States.

xlii. **WEST AFRICA HEALTH ORGANISATION – WAHO:** Concerning health in the region, there was an increase in case load on Mpox, and multiple concurrent epidemics including cholera, meningitis, chikungunya, measles (reported in all Member States except Cabo Verde), Lassa fever (particularly in Nigeria, Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone), and dengue fever (affecting Cabo Verde, Ghana, Guinea, and Senegal) plague the region. Sierra Leone is experiencing an outbreak of Mpox, with 2,648 confirmed cases and 14 related deaths reported, almost double the cumulative total of confirmed Mpox cases reported by five other affected countries in the region: Nigeria (1,186), Côte d'Ivoire (119), Liberia (94), Ghana (137), Guinea (5) and Togo (2) as of May 19, 2025. The epidemic was officially declared on January 9, 2025. Increases in major infectious diseases have been recorded,

with malaria cases rising by approximately four million new cases (17%), measles up by 29.4% and cholera cases up by (152%).

xliii. In addition, a regional community health policy has been adopted with the following four (4) strategic pillars: (i) strengthening community health governance and institutionalization; (ii) establishing innovative, equitable and sustainable financing; (iii) harmonizing the essential package of community services on a regional scale and (iv) developing a digitalized health information system with an effective community monitoring-evaluation mechanism.

xliv. **To Strengthen Epidemic Surveillance and Management in the region, ECOWAS has procured thirty state-of-the-art ambulances for ECOWAS countries**; Commenced weekly publication of epidemiological bulletins covering all Member States; and organized a tabletop exercise on the Mpox response for nine (9) West African countries, with a particular focus on vaccine deployment. The ECOWAS Commission, through WAHO, continues to collaborate with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI), aimed at improving the region's preparedness for epidemics, pandemics, and prevention and response to infectious diseases.

E. CONCLUSION

From this presentation, the Honourable Members of the Parliament, could see that the Community has continued to show remarkable resilience despite the current economic, political and security contexts at both the international and regional levels. The Community Institutions have continued to implement projects and activities aimed at improving welfare and well being of the citizens. The role of Member States in complying with ECOWAS frameworks such as the Community Levy Act, and the rulings of the ECOWAS Court, among others, is crucial for an accelerated development and integration of the region. As representatives of the people, I invite you to urge our national authorities to do their part in making our community to work and succeed.

I thank you for listening.