



19th EU-ECOWAS Political Dialogue Meeting at Ministerial Level

Brussels, 16 May 2013

FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ

- 1- The Nineteenth Political Dialogue Meeting at Ministerial Level between the European Union (EU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held in Brussels on 16 May 2013 under the Co-Chairmanship of H.E. Charles Koffi Diby, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire and Chairman of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and H.E. Mr Joe Costello, TD, Minister of State for Trade and Development of Ireland on behalf of the EU.
- 2- In their opening statements, the Co-Chairmen expressed deep satisfaction with on the consolidation and enhancement of the EU-ECOWAS partnership, and the new impulse given to it by the renewal of the ECOWAS top leadership last year. The partnership has become a landmark for cooperation between the EU and Africa, firmly rooted in shared principles, values and interests, and in the principle of African leadership on African affairs. The EU-ECOWAS partnership has become one of the major building blocks for the Pan-African integration architecture, and is at the heart of the two Regions' mutual contribution to the Joint Africa- Europe Strategy (JAES). The Parties reaffirmed their support to the JAES, which remains the political framework of reference to structure the relations between the two continents, and underlined its positive results. They also agreed that the next EU-Africa Summit (Brussels, 2-3 April 2014) should be an opportunity to review its immediate priorities and its implementation modalities to make it more efficient, and agreed to work closely to this end. On that basis, ECOWAS and the EU will maximise the value of their joint contribution to this landmark Summit.

1. Political and institutional developments in ECOWAS and the EU

- 3- The parties welcomed the deepening of links between the EU and ECOWAS under the leadership of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, and committed themselves to making extra efforts for an ever-closer relationship. The renewal ECOWAS leadership and the new impulse given by the rotating Chairmanship of ECOWAS were also commended.

2. Peace, security and stability

a) The regional peace and security architecture

- 4- The EU side congratulated ECOWAS on the adoption of its Counter Terrorism Strategy and Implementation plan in February 2013, and commended its comprehensive approach, including actions to tackle the enabling environment for terrorism, as well as its

commitment to firmly uphold the Rule of Law and Human Rights in the fight against terrorism. In this context, both sides emphasized the paramount importance of intensifying the fight against terrorism, while avoiding disproportionate reactions or any other human rights abuses by security forces in the in the process, first and foremost in order to ensure the success of anti-terrorism actions, but also to uphold our fundamental values,. In this regard, both sides stressed that any violations of human rights and the rule of law by security forces in the fight against terrorism play into the hands of terrorists and fuel the spiral of violence. The EU side expressed its determination to work ever more closely with ECOWAS and Member States in this area.

- 5- The parties commended progress towards the full operationalisation of the ECOWAS Standby Forces (ESF), which should become one of the main security instruments for regional Peace and Stability, and a fundamental building block for the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). However, they agreed that the ESF is still not sufficiently operational to play a critical role in any major security crisis. The parties therefore stressed the very urgent need to accelerate progress in order to meet the 2015 full operationalisation objective, as foreseen by the ESF Roadmap-III (2011-2015). The parties also agreed that given the situation in the region, operationalisation before that deadline would be most appropriate and useful. The EU side expressed its commitment to continue providing its significant support to such efforts, including through a major Peace and Security project under the 10th EDF. The ECOWAS side committed itself to accelerate initiatives towards full ESF operationalisation, including through quick implementation of this project. In addition, the parties agreed on the need to develop solid and functional civilian and police capacities as an integral part of the Standby Force. The ECOWAS side informed of initiatives underway to review the ESF concept, including the adoption of measures to ensure that troops pledged by Member States remain fully available while "standing-by". The parties also identified other important issues requiring attention, including the rapid deployment capability (RDC) within ESF, in particular the development of a logistics depot to ensure effective strategic lift and prompt responsiveness to crisis, strategic and detailed operational planning, and consolidation of capacities and structures. They also expressed the urgency of full implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the ECOWAS Code of Conduct for the West African Armed Forces. Mechanisms to verify track records of military personnel would also be highly advisable. The two sides expressed the view that coordination of international efforts to support the ESF remains key for success and that the organisation by the EU of a dedicated meeting of the ECOWAS Standby Forces P3+ international donors' group in Brussels was one of the operational consequences of the latest Senior Officials Meeting in 2011. They stressed that the donor community and ECOWAS have developed closer coordination, building on the success of that session and of subsequent P3+ meetings. The parties agreed that the upcoming P3+ meeting in Washington should be a good opportunity to encourage all development partners to keep up their support for the ESF and in particular, for the pending actions mentioned.
- 6- ECOWAS took positive note of the EU's on-going implementation of its Sahel Security and Development Strategy, which is making a major contribution to the region's efforts. The EU side underlined that the Strategy aims at providing support for the region's own efforts towards increased security, development and good governance, and that the EU continues its efforts, in close coordination with the governments of the region, to address the underlying causes of instability. ECOWAS commended the firm support provided by the EU and its Member States to this end and welcomed the appointment of Mr Michel Reveyrand-de Menthon as EU Special Representative for the Sahel, Both parties stressed once again the utmost importance of security, development and good governance in the Sahel region, and welcomed stepped-up action by the region itself to address the continued security,

underdevelopment and instability problems in the Sahel region. The EU and ECOWAS reiterated their commitment to jointly continue to work and to step up efforts to that end.

- 7- The ECOWAS side informed of its initiative to develop an ECOWAS Sahel Strategy, which will dovetail into and complement similar strategies by the countries of the Sahel region, the EU, the UN and the AU. The EU welcomed closer involvement by ECOWAS in the Sahel area and commended the initiatives underway to this end. Both sides welcomed stepped up UN efforts and involvement in the Sahel, including the appointment of former EU Commission President Romano Prodi as Special UN Representative for the Sahel, and called on the International Community to further increase its commitment to support such efforts, including through the rapid agreement of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Both parties noted that violent extremism and radicalisation, terrorism, organised crime and trafficking in addition to weak governance, widespread poverty and exposure to the impacts of climate change, continue to contribute to the instability and the weak development of the region. Noting the positive expectations raised by the recent initiatives of closer coordination of the international community led by the region itself, the parties renewed their call on all states in the region to step up their engagement and cooperation under a comprehensive approach led by the region itself, and to consolidate and develop dialogue with and among local communities.
- 8- The EU side commended ECOWAS efforts to develop a strategy in response to the specific challenges and current threats in the Gulf of Guinea, taking particularly into account the need for a comprehensive approach which combines action to ensure safety and combat insecurity and piracy with land-focused security, development and good governance programmes. Both sides stressed the importance of regional ownership and inter-regional coordination. In this context, the EU commended ECOWAS for hosting the ECCAS/ECOWAS ministerial meeting on maritime safety and security in Cotonou last February and thanked ECOWAS for the invitation to EU to participate in the upcoming ECOWAS/ECCAS summit in Yaoundé, which should be a most important step ahead. In turn ECOWAS welcomed the EU's update of its on-going work towards the formulation of an EU comprehensive approach to the Gulf of Guinea, in support to the efforts of the region itself. Both sides agreed to coordinate closely in the development of their respective strategies in order to maximise coherence, consistency and synergies.

b) Good governance, rule of law and consolidation of democratic structures

- 9- The parties reviewed progress and challenges in the promotion of good governance, the rule of law and democratic structures in West Africa, which are of paramount importance both for the EU and for ECOWAS, and which are at the heart of their partnership. They noted that the trend towards deepening of democratisation and improved governance, which has produced significant achievements, has suffered some notable reversals in the region in recent times, and called for increased and urgent efforts to mitigate the setbacks.. Accordingly, both sides agreed to step up action to support good governance, rule of law and democracy in West Africa. They underlined the particular importance of strictly respecting and firmly protecting human rights, something for which West African governments have the main responsibility. In addition, they agreed on the importance of promoting governance at local level and involvement of local communities in decision-making procedures. In this regard, the EU welcomed the accelerated implementation of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) and reiterated its support in these efforts. The two parties also agreed on the usefulness and importance of electoral assistance, in particular election observation, on which both the EU and ECOWAS have invested significant resources, and should continue to do so. They stressed the paramount importance

of conducting free, fair and transparent elections, and in particular respect for electoral results, the renewal and non-perpetuation of leaders, for the deepening of democratic culture and governance.

- 10- Both sides underlined the need to encourage and whenever necessary demand the reform of judicial systems, improved access to justice, and a more vigorous fight against impunity at all levels. They also stressed the particular importance of justice and reconciliation efforts in post-conflict situations in the region. They noted that sustainable reconciliation can only be achieved through a rigorous fight against impunity and on the basis of equitable justice, which must be the same for all without any distinction. They agreed that any persons or entities responsible for serious anti-constitutional behaviour, impunity or violations of human rights must know that they will be held to account, be it at national, continental or global level. In this regard, the parties welcomed the efforts of the International Criminal Court and congratulated HE Ms Fatou Bensouda on her appointment as Prosecutor General of the ICC and welcomed the steps taken to complete the trial of Hissene Habré.

c) Country-specific situations of peace and security in West Africa

Mali

- 11- The parties reiterated once again their staunch commitment to peace, democracy, development and the territorial integrity of the country, and their determination to continue to support Mali's efforts in that direction. The EU commended ECOWAS efforts towards finding a sustainable solution to the crisis, including facilitating the adoption and implementation of the transitional roadmap, mediation, and through its firm commitment to AFISMA. ECOWAS in turn warmly welcomed the determined action undertaken by the EU in support of African efforts to solve the crisis, including through substantial technical and financial support. Both sides welcomed the UN's closer involvement and stepped up efforts to help resolve the crisis, in particular the adoption and implementation of UNSC Resolutions 2071, 2085 and lately 2100. The parties also welcomed the outcome of the High Level Donors' Conference for the development of Mali organised on 15 May in Brussels. They noted that the implementation of the Transition Road Map and the Plan for the Sustainable Recovery of Mali 2013-2014 should help achieve the restoration of full constitutional order, national reconciliation, durable development and lasting peace in Mali. The parties expressed the strongest rejection of gross violations of human rights by terrorist and extremist groups, and also their serious concern about revenge attacks and accusations made against Malian security forces regarding grave human rights violations during their operations. They welcomed the Malian Government's stated determination to investigate and fully address such violations and to take all necessary measures to prevent any future violations. They welcomed the deployment of human rights observers by ECOWAS and the AU as an additional means to monitor the issue. The parties underlined the need to strictly respect and protect civilian lives during interventions, and called for the expeditious commencement of the work of the Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission to ensure inclusive political process with groups rejecting violence and respecting the territorial integrity of Mali in order to address any legitimate demands of local communities. In this regard, the two parties urged all non-state armed groups in the country, including the MNLA, to commit to disarmament and facilitate the deployment of the Mali Defence and Security Forces throughout the territory of Mali. They further urged all stakeholders to refrain from violence and solve any differences around the negotiating table through a meaningful and inclusive reconciliation process. The parties commended Mali's progress towards a return to constitutional order and called for the strict implementation of the agreed roadmap, and underlined the primary responsibility of the Government of Mali in its

implementation. Both parties stressed that the holding of peaceful and democratic elections will be a decisive turning point for the country and in this regard, deemed it absolutely essential that all efforts are made to ensure a peaceful, inclusive, participative, transparent and credible electoral process so that Mali can fully and rapidly return to democracy and constitutional order.

Guinea Bissau

- 12- The parties expressed their profound concern about the continuing impasses in the efforts to resolve the multidimensional and multifaceted political, security, criminal, and institutional challenges facing the country. They reiterated their firm condemnation of the disruption of the electoral process by the coup d'état of 12 April 2012. They reiterated their firm rejection of anti-constitutional behaviour and violations of human rights by the security forces. The implementation on an inclusive roadmap leading to the rapid restoration of constitutional order through the holding of free, fair, transparent and credible election in crucial. These elections should take place before the end of 2013 as requested by the ECOWAS Heads of State Summit. Both sides noted with interest the on-going debate in the Parliament about the transitional roadmap, which could be a positive step, but only if it the calendar is implemented and the conditions for a fully democratic process are ensured, for which a strong and lasting commitment by the Bissau-Guinean authorities is essential. To this end, the parties stressed the importance of expedite action. The EU side expressed its readiness to support the holding of the elections once all the right conditions are met. Both parties welcomed the outcome of the joint assessment mission undertaken by ECOWAS, the AU, EU, the UN and CPLP to Bissau in December 2012 aimed at forging an international consensus on the situation, including the transitional process, the fight against impunity and transnational organised crime as well as the necessary profound reforms of all the major sectors of the Bissau-Guinean political, governance, defence, security, justice and institutional system.
- 13- The EU and ECOWAS agreed that profound and irreversible reforms, starting with the radical restructuring of armed and security forces, particularly the renewal of the top military leadership, deep reform of the security and justice sectors and the political system are essential for the country's stabilisation and prosperity. They expressed their grave concern about the worrying penetration by organised crime and drug trafficking in all the structures of the state, noting that the detention of the former Head of the Navy on drug-trafficking and the indictment of the current Chief of Defence Staff in the process on alleged trafficking illustrate the gravity of the problem. Both sides expressed their determination to take all necessary measures against all individuals and entities convicted in the law courts. The parties stressed the utmost importance of an effective fight against organised crime and drug trafficking, protection of human rights and an end to impunity. They urged all persons in positions of responsibility in Bissau to demonstrate their firm commitment to the fight against drug trafficking, and reiterated that any persons linked with any further violence, anti-constitutional and destabilising activities will be held accountable by the International Community including ECOWAS and the EU.
- 14- The parties stressed the high importance of the preservation and good management of natural resources of Guinea Bissau including the proper and sustainable exploitation of marine and land resources in accordance with applicable rules.
- 15- ECOWAS and the EU highly commended the renewed involvement of the International Community in Guinea-Bissau, in particular through the P5 forum (UN, AU, ECOWAS,

CPLP, EU) whose work provides the basis for coordinated support for a rapid return of democracy to Guinea Bissau.

Guinea

- 16- The EU and ECOWAS expressed concern about the continuing tensions between the Government and the Opposition over the legislative electoral process, which has led to the loss of life and destruction of property. Both parties recalled the highly substantial efforts by ECOWAS and the International Community including the EU through the International Contact Group that led to the restoration of constitutional order in the country in the aftermath of the death of President Lansana Conte and the subsequent military take-over, and urged all stakeholders to prevent a relapse in the democratisation process. The Parties took note of the announcement by President Alpha Condé of the date of 30 June 2013 for the holding of legislative elections and stressed the importance of these polls for the completion of the transition and of the democratic institutional set-up. They stressed the paramount importance of a transparent, peaceful and inclusive process, open to all democratic forces, the outcome of which including the results of the elections should be fully accepted by all whatever the verdict of the ballot box may be. In this context, the parties highlighted the importance of an independent and well-functioning National Electoral Commission. More broadly, they stressed the need for a real dialogue and encouraged the Government and the opposition forces to cooperate with Mr Said Djinnit, the designated UNSG facilitator in the crisis in Guinea. Both sides expressed their commitment to intensify their engagement with Guinea in cooperation and coordination with the UN Facilitator to ensure the holding of inclusive and credible legislative elections.
- 17- In the wake of the recent upsurge in violence in the pre-electoral context, both parties urged all sides to demonstrate responsibility and democratic maturity, including a firm commitment to act peacefully and democratically, avoiding incendiary language or behaviour and warned that anyone or group inciting violence will be held responsible for their acts.
- 18- The Parties congratulated the Government of Guinea for the progress in the implementation of the necessary measures for Security Sector Reform. ECOWAS and the EU committed to cooperate on the additional steps needed to ensure continuous support and coordination on SSR. The EU informed that it will continue its progressive resumption of activities in Guinea, and will resume important programs once the legislative elections are completed. Both sides reiterated their grave concern over the worrying state of justice, reconciliation and the fight against impunity, in particular the continued presence in high public office of persons presumed responsible for the 2009 massacre, and urged the Government to accelerate the legal proceedings with a view to holding them accountable on the basis of a fair and transparent process, as repeatedly requested by the International Community, and to stop the extrajudicial repression of demonstrators.

Togo

- 19- The EU and ECOWAS underlined the importance of the upcoming electoral process in Togo and urged all stakeholders to ensure a peaceful, inclusive and fully democratic process. Both sides reiterated their commitment to support the consolidation and deepening of democracy in Togo including by actions to promote better governance and the rule of law. In this context, the parties called on all stakeholders to pursue intensified efforts towards an open and constructive political dialogue. They urged the parties to integrate the lessons learnt from past processes and the full implementation of recommendations from

international observation missions, including those of the EU and ECOWAS, in order to ensure the necessary democratic environment for these important elections, including the right of all sides to freely express their views without fear of arrest, and the guarantee of equal access to the media. The EU side informed that their High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Commission Vice President, Catherine Ashton, has clearly outlined EU concerns on the elections and the importance of dialogue with the opposition to the Government of Togo. The EU and ECOWAS also reiterated the paramount importance of ensuring a peaceful process and urged all sides to demonstrate restraint, peaceful behaviour and resolution of any conflicts by non-violent means. They called on the Government of Togo to ensure responsible behaviour by security forces, a proportionate response to any problematic situation, and strict respect of the rule of law and human rights throughout the entire electoral process.

3. Regional challenges and initiatives

Fight against corruption and organised crime

- 20- The EU and ECOWAS identified organised crime and corruption as increasingly worrying scourges. They seriously compromise governance, peace, stability and development efforts. Both sides agreed that the fight against corruption, organised crime, impunity, trafficking of all kinds and money laundering should receive more particular and permanent attention, in view of the continued significant negative impact of these scourges on West Africa, the EU and beyond. They agreed that good governance and transparency, as well as the reform of the judiciary and internal procedures, and confiscation of assets, are key elements for ensuring the success of the fight against corruption and organised crime, including through common regional actions. Accordingly, the Parties called on all concerned governments to increase their commitment to implement the necessary measures in the fight against organised crime and corruption, and expressed their determination to step up actions to this end.
- 21- In this context, drug trafficking is particularly worrying as it concerns the illegal activities of criminal networks in the source, transit and destination countries. The Praia Declaration and the ECOWAS Action Plan against drug trafficking is an excellent regional framework for action, which the EU has committed itself to support. The EU congratulated ECOWAS on the renewal of the Praia Declaration and Action Plan. Both sides agreed that it was essential to extend greater direct support towards the urgent development of implementation capacities by ECOWAS and its Member States to ensure ownership and the expeditious implementation of the Plan, which is lagging. Noting that criminal networks are increasingly flexible and transnational, both sides called for vigorous responses to be underpinned by effective cooperative, information sharing and operational capacities. In this context, ECOWAS and the EU called on all stakeholders to commit themselves more strongly to develop the requisite political will and capacities. Both sides welcomed the use of complementary or alternative means of implementing the ECOWAS Plan of Action, which should allow for overcoming some of the capacity issues in the short term, but stressed that this should not replace the urgent need to develop both regional and national capacities and ownership. ECOWAS welcomed the EU's continued support for the fight against drugs in West Africa and expressed its determination to accelerate action to implement the Plan as a matter of priority.

MDGs and post-2015 Goals: the road ahead

- 22- The Parties expressed their concern about the very limited progress achieved by the region towards the MDGs, particularly worrying in LDCs, and encouraged all Governments and relevant authorities and stakeholders to step up their efforts to meet the MDG objectives. It is particularly important to work harder against poverty and to increase actions towards sustainable development. There is a clear link between MDGs achievement and peace and stability. The consolidation of good governance is also both a condition and a consequence of progress towards the MDGs. The Parties therefore called on ECOWAS Member States to strengthen their focus on those issues and target them specifically as a matter of priority in the identification and design of their future development programs and projects, so that the EU and other international partners support can be more targeted. Environmental issues, including the fight against climate change, gas flaring, illegal logging; sustainable land management (including desertification, land degradation and drought), etc. are also essential and must be fully integrated. It is essential that all Governments fully uphold their commitments in such areas.
- 23- In that context, the parties underlined the essential need to address first and foremost the most critical indicators, including life expectancy, maternal and children health, and education. ECOWAS commended the EU for its MDG-initiative which had provided a very valuable contribution at a critical time. However challenges remain enormous and have a massive impact on security, stability and development. The health situation in the region remains especially worrying. Challenges include a very wide range from HIV/Aids to cholera, TB, malaria, and other diseases. Recurrently, the region is swept by epidemics. The EU commended action taken by West Africa including through the West African Health Organisation. However, performances of health systems and access to health are low and significantly hampered by serious problems including at regional level. The parties agreed that further action at all levels is urgently needed to confront this key problem and ensure access to health services for citizens of West Africa, particularly women and children. Increased action on education is also highly important in order to ensure access to education for all, literacy, social mobility, active citizenship, and that African actors have the appropriate education and skills to ensure African leadership of development efforts and societal progress.
- 24- The parties agreed to work jointly and closely in the run up to the major UN event on the post-2015 goals in September, and expressed the need to address the inter-related global challenges in one single overarching post 2015 framework, including both the the MDG review and the follow-up to Rio+20.

Sahel food situation: the EU-West Africa response

- 25- The Sahel continues to suffer cyclical crises with catastrophic loss of human life and wealth. The parties called on the whole of the International Community to pay increased attention to such critical situations. The provision of food aid and other vital actions must always be forthcoming when confronting such major problems. ECOWAS commended the EU for its determined response to the 2012 food situation in the Sahel, which has been key to prevent a more dramatic crisis of potentially enormous consequences.
- 26- Both sides highlighted the importance of the AGIR initiative (Global Alliance for the Resilience Initiative in Sahel and West Africa) and their strong commitment to implement it rapidly as a matter of political and financial priority. This should be an essential step to

ensure resilience and sustainable supplies of food in the region, so that food crises and hunger are banished for ever from West Africa.

- 27- The parties stressed that while combating the food crises and providing food aid continues to be an obligation of West Africa and of the international community, it is also essential to put an end to such hunger cycles. West Africa itself has a leading responsibility. In this context, the EU praised ECOWAS, but also the UEMOA and other organisations such as the CILSS and the Sahel and West Africa Club, for their stepped up efforts towards better coordination and stronger resilience. ECOWAS on its side expressed its gratitude for the EU's committed action and support to the West African initiatives under the ECOWAP/CAADP framework.

4. Regional integration and Development

Challenges of regional economic integration and trade in West Africa: exchange of views on the negotiations of the regional EPA (lead ECOWAS)

- 28- The Parties emphasised the importance of regional economic integration for consolidation of peace and security, the eradication of poverty, improvement of mobility and the development of all economic sectors in West Africa. In this context, the Parties reiterated the commitment of both sides to demonstrate the necessary flexibility in order to resolve the outstanding areas of divergence and swiftly conclude the negotiations for the establishment of a comprehensive regional Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) covering trade in goods, EPA-related cooperation and other trade-related issues such as services and rules of origin. Consequently, the two parties agreed to intensify efforts to resolve the outstanding areas of divergence. Both Parties agreed that the EPA should promote regional integration and the inclusion of West Africa in the global trading economy, boosting growth and competitiveness while allowing for protection of West African countries' sensitive sectors.

EU support: lessons from the 10th EDF and perspectives for the 11th EDF

- 29- The EU welcomed the appropriate measures taken by the West African Region to overcome the hurdles at the delays in the implementation of the 10th EDF Regional Indicative Programme. In particular, the EU welcomed the renewal of ECOWAS and UEMOA top leadership which has provided strong momentum at both organisations, and is greatly helping to overcome the serious 10th EDF implementation delays due mainly due to the lack of implementing capacities.. The Parties welcome the negotiations and agreements reached in December 2011 in the framework of the Mid Term Review which were also most useful to accelerate the implementation of the 10th EDF. The new impulse, which the EU warmly welcomed, should be maintained and further developed. Accordingly the EU invited ECOWAS to maintain and further accelerate such extraordinary implementation efforts, which will be key for a satisfactory level of implementation of the 10th EDF. In this vein, both parties recognise the importance of capacity building in order to achieve the implementation of the RIP, in particular the reinforcement of operational capacities. The Parties are firmly supporting the ongoing efforts.
- 30- The EU urged the Member States of ECOWAS to provide the required political and technical support to the ECOWAS Commission, and in particular to allow for the filling of any vacant positions by finding urgent solutions to the outstanding recruitment freeze, which will be essential for the implementation of the regional programme. The EU also encouraged ECOWAS Member States and the ECOWAS Commission to devote further attention to the effective implementation of regional legislation and programmes, including creating the necessary capacities and processes to ensure and promote compliance.

- 31- ECOWAS reiterate its commitment to continue its accelerated efforts for the implementation of the 10th EDF Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) as a top priority. The parties agreed to consider alternative means of implementation which would secure proper management of regional resources under the RIP. The parties also agreed to duly integrate their new common top priorities, including the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea security, development and good governance strategies.
- 32- For the perspective of 11th EDF, the Parties stressed the importance of integrating the lessons learnt from the 10th EDF into the programming process for the 11th EDF (2014-2020). Despite an unprecedented financial and economic crisis, the EU reiterated its determination to maintain its commitments including to support regional integration in West Africa. It is now more important than ever to ensure the impact of EU Aid, and its timely, effective and proper implementation. The EU's Agenda for Change provides the basis and the principles for a maximised impact of development aid.
- 33- Both parties underlined the need to ensure coherence and complementarity between the National and the Regional Indicative Programmes. In this context they agreed to make all appropriate efforts to accelerate the programming exercise.

The EU and ECOWAS agreed that the next Political Dialogue Meeting at Ministerial level will take place in Africa at a date to be determined by the Parties.

Brussels, 16 May 2013

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