



Message of the Special Representative of the Secretary-general and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) to the 47th Ordinary Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Abuja, 16 December 2015-*Your Excellency, Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, and Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government;*
Your Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
Excellencies Heads of State and Government;
Honorable Ministers;
Your Excellency, Kadré Ouédraogo, President of the ECOWAS Commission;
Excellencies Ambassadors and Heads of Regional and International Organisations;
Distinguished Vice President of the Commission, Heads of ECOWAS Institutions and Statutory Appointees;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor to be able to address you today. Allow me to extend the warmest greetings of the Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon who wishes you every success in your deliberations to further consolidate peace, security and development in West Africa.

Since your last Summit of September 2015, a great deal has been achieved in West Africa. Notably, the region has witnessed elections in a number of countries, where the people have demonstrated maturity and determination in freely and peacefully exercising their right to choose their leaders through participatory and transparent political processes.

We salute the people of Guinea for the conduct of peaceful presidential election on 11 October and would like to congratulate President Alpha Condé on his re-election and swearing-in on 14th December. The opposition parties deserve commendation for the democratic spirit displayed throughout the electoral process. The UN urges national stakeholders to continue to advance Guinea's democratic journey, by implementing the decisions of the 20 August Accord, in organizing local elections and carrying out reforms that will further enhance confidence among national actors and institutions.

We wish to congratulate the people of Côte d'Ivoire, who have resoundingly expressed their political will in the presidential elections of 25 October. With a clear mandate, it is evident that the new government will be well placed to continue not only to accelerate economic

growth for the benefit of all of its citizens, but to also to deepen its national reconciliation agenda.

While paying tribute to the people of Burkina Faso, whose democratic resolve, tenacity, and maturity, are envied around the world, we wholeheartedly commend the electoral bodies and the transitional authorities who showed professionalism and dexterity in managing the transition process, and in overcoming challenges and difficulties on many fronts. The Secretary General has congratulated the President-Elect, and was heartened to see the magnanimity of his main challenger, who came forward to offer his congratulations even before the results were officially announced. This makes us confident that “Le Pays des Hommes Intègres” will continue to inspire those seeking fairness and opportunity.

These remarkable successes would not have been possible without the resolute support of ECOWAS and its insistence on the foundational principles, enshrined in the “Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance”. In this spirit, we remain optimistic that the series of elections ahead of us next year will continue to set examples in the sub-region, and beyond.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The UN acknowledges the important strides achieved in the fight against Boko Haram, and is delighted to see the countries of West and Central Africa coming together to operationalize the Multi-National Joint Task Force. We must all intensify our engagement, cooperation and collective will in combatting the scourge of Boko Haram and all forms of extremism in the subregion. As you have made clear on many occasions, there can be no development without peace and security. We hope you will address these crucial issues during the proposed joint ECOWAS-ECCAS Summit. While the task is vast, clear policies, determination and commitment will lead to success. Be assured that the United Nations stands ready to support you in your endeavors.

The UN is cognizant of the ongoing challenges to human security in Mali and other countries of the Sahel. It is pleased to note that ECOWAS continues to develop its institutional frameworks, such as the 'Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security'. The United Nations, including through UNOWA and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel, stands ready to support your efforts.

The West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI), in support of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit Drug trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa, is yet another example of the benefits of working in an integrated manner. In a globalized world, no country can on its own confront criminal networks cooperating across borders. I am very pleased to note the commitment of Member States displayed during the recent WACI High Level Policy Committee meeting that I chaired in Bissau.

Together, we have also made advances in combating piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. As a result of our collective efforts, the number of incidents of piracy in the sub-region has declined. We note, however, that some zones are still not operational, and appeal to Member States not to relent in efforts to set up the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Western Africa (CRESMAO), as well as in operationalizing the Inter-regional Coordination Centre. The UN appreciates the active engagement of the Group of the Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, known as the G7 +++

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Looking back 40 years ago, we are witnessing a proud history of cooperation between ECOWAS and the United Nations. Our joint involvement in the transition in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Guinea are just a few examples of such cooperation. It is the same spirit of enhancing regional security and development that guides our collaboration with the Mano River Union, the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, among others.

UNOWA, and the United Nations system as a whole, is committed to further solidifying its partnership with ECOWAS in addressing threats to peace and security in the region and in mobilizing international attention and support to combat these threats.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to seize the opportunity to commend the ECOWAS for its work and dedication, and to pay tribute to the governments of the Ebola-affected countries and to the many national, regional and international medical professionals who have risked their lives to save others from the torments of the Ebola virus disease, and particularly those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Je souhaite un joyeux anniversaire à la CEDEAO. Et puisque nous nous acheminons vers la fin de l'année, je souhaite à tous les peuples d'Afrique de l'Ouest une nouvelle année heureuse et prospère.

Je vous remercie.