

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

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Authority Chairperson: John Dramani Mahama, Ghana (elected by the ECOWAS Assembly in March

2014 for a one-year term)

Commission President: Kadré Désiré Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso (appointed by the Authority of

Heads of State and Government in February 2012 for a four-year term)

Purpose

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established by the ECOWAS Treaty in May 1975 with the primary objective of promoting economic integration in "all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions, social and cultural matters".

Article 3(1) of the ECOWAS Treaty provides that the aims of the Community are to:

- Promote cooperation and integration in the region, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples
- Maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent.

Structure

ECOWAS is governed by its Authority of Heads of State and Government. The Authority

Chairperson is usually elected for a one-year term. ECOWAS's structure includes the:

- Council of Ministers, which oversees policy implementation
- Commission (Secretariat until 2006), which carries out all executive functions

- Community Parliament, which represents all the peoples of West Africa
- Economic and Social Council, which considers economic and social matters
- Community Court of Justice, which interprets the ECOWAS Treaty and adjudicates on matters arising out of obligations under ECOWAS law
- Fund for Cooperation, Compensation and Development
- Six specialized technical commissions
- Bank for Infrastructure and Development.

In addition, the private sector organizations Eco bank (Eco bank Transnational Inc. (ETI)) and Eco marine International (shipping) is associated with the ECOWAS system. ECOWAS also oversees 12 specialized agencies, the:

- West African Health Organization (WAHO)
- West African Monetary Agency (WAMA)
- West African Monetary Institute (WAMI)
- ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre (EYSDC)
- ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC)
- Water Resources Coordination Unit (WRCU)
- ECOWAS Brown Card
- West African Power Pool (WAPP)
- Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing in West Africa (GIABA)
- West African Regional Health Programme (PRSAO)
- ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE)
- ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA).

Meetings

The Authority of Heads of State and Government meet at least once a year. It may also meet in extraordinary session.

Members (15)

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger , Nigeria , Senegal , Sierra Leone, Togo