

ECOWAS-EU-UNOWA Framework of Action for Peace and Security¹

According to the Communiqué of the 7th EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika meeting held in Luxembourg on 18 May 2005, ECOWAS, EU and UNOWA “endorsed the List of Recommendations for a Trilateral Framework of Action for Peace and Security, which was prepared by a working group following the mandate of the last Ministerial Troika meeting held in Accra (Ghana) on 8 November 2004 and recommended its approval by the ECOWAS member states and the subsequent development of an action plan with a timeframe to ensure its implementation.”

These recommendations outlined below draw upon the findings of the Report of the UN Security Council Mission to West Africa (July 2004), the EU Strategy for West Africa (April 2004), the Report of the EU-UN Joint Assessment Mission to ECOWAS (March 2004), and the Progress Report of the Secretary General on Ways to Combat sub-regional and cross-border problems in West Africa (February 2005).

This document is not an exhaustive list of peace and security activities planned in the ECOWAS region. It prioritises those areas where collaboration among the EU, ECOWAS and UNOWA is feasible and would have the greatest impact. In this context, efforts will be made to involve other partners. The ECOWAS Secretariat, the EU and the UNOWA, through their respective mechanisms, will pursue a continuous dialogue with the ECOWAS Member States on the implementation of these priorities, and will exchange information and coordinate their efforts to this end. Joint fact-finding and preparatory missions will be undertaken as necessary. This list of priorities will be reviewed and updated annually. The attached table for action shall serve as the basis for monitoring implementation.

I. ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Regional Conflict Prevention Strategy. Integrated approaches linking security and development are essential for preventing conflict in West Africa. The EU, ECOWAS and UNOWA will work towards the development and implementation of a shared regional conflict prevention strategy. This should include the use of development instruments to address structural causes of conflict, such as inadequate governance and human rights violations, environmental degradation, economic stagnation and youth unemployment and demographic trends, including massive urbanization. The EU and UNOWA will also continue to support the strategic planning capacity of the ECOWAS Secretariat in this regard.

II. BORDER ISSUES

Sensitive Border Areas. Border areas in West Africa are a subject that is receiving increasing attention. Not only in terms of regional economic integration, for which ECOWAS has adopted the “pays frontières” approach², but also in terms of conflict prevention, since border areas are usually the first affected by instability in neighbouring countries. ECOWAS needs to devise and implement integrated strategies incorporating development, trade, humanitarian, security and

¹ To be submitted to and approved by the ECOWAS Member States.

² As adopted by the 28th Session of the Authority of the Heads of State and Government in Accra, Ghana, January 2005.

governance issues for a number of especially sensitive border areas. The EU and UNOWA are committed to supporting such efforts.

In this regard, the three organizations plan to focus on the following priority clusters of border areas: i) southern Guinea and neighbouring areas of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire; ii) southern Mali, southern Burkina Faso and northern Côte d'Ivoire; iii) northern Mali and neighbouring countries.

Free Movement. Particular attention will be paid to the facilitation of freedom of movement, which is a fundamental part of the economic integration agenda of both ECOWAS and UEMOA and is at the core of the European Commission regional strategy. This will include raising awareness of and enforcing relevant ECOWAS Protocols. As an initial priority, with the support of the EU and UNOWA, the ECOWAS Secretariat, ECOWAS Member States and the relevant UN missions in the region will work to remove illegal checkpoints, which threaten human security, economic activity and regional integration alike.

Cross-border issues. ECOWAS will work to strengthen cross-border security cooperation, especially to address illegal trafficking of children, weapons, drugs and conflict resources and the movement of armed bands and mercenaries. The EU and UNOWA will support projects by ECOWAS and its Member States to prevent the proliferation of small arms, including the strengthening of National Commissions and the transformation of the ECOWAS Moratorium into a binding convention,

III. IMPROVING GOVERNANCE AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Security Sector Reform. Security sector reform is a vital challenge facing West Africa and a priority for ECOWAS, given that security forces have often proved a cause of instability. The EU, ECOWAS and UNOWA will work on the development of feasible programmes to reform the security sector. These programmes should include the establishment of democratic control over the armed forces, their re-structuring and downsizing, improving living conditions in barracks, training and developing alternative occupations. The first of these programmes could start in Guinea Bissau. Trilateral efforts should also be made to urge all ECOWAS Member States to adhere to the UN convention against the recruitment, training and use of mercenaries.

Electoral Assistance and Observation. The EU and UNOWA will support the strengthening of ECOWAS' Secretariat's electoral capacity, especially its Electoral Assistance and Observation Unit, and will provide technical assistance for observation missions.

Transparency. Recognising that instability is aggravated by mismanagement of natural resources and corrupt practices, the EU and UNOWA will support ECOWAS in the elaboration of an annual report on transparency and the fight against corruption in all ECOWAS Member States. Independent organizations can be sub-contracted to carry out these studies.

Human Rights. ECOWAS, the EU and UNOWA shall promote the ratification of and respect for international and regional human rights agreements, the sensitisation of populations about their benefits and their integration into national legislation.

IV. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Coordination. The EU, ECOWAS and UNOWA will adopt a joint planning process for crisis management that builds on the experience of the UN system's Consolidated Appeals Process (CAPs) and contingency planning for humanitarian action. These mechanisms could serve as a model to establish more flexible programming and financing instruments for coordinating the political and peacekeeping aspects of crisis management.

Mediation and Facilitation. The EU and UNOWA shall help build capacity within ECOWAS to support mediation efforts in the region. This may include the provision of mediation and negotiation training, the provision of support to Special Representatives of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary and mediation efforts in crisis situations.

Peace Agreements. The EU and UNOWA will support African efforts to develop realistic, inclusive and enforceable peace agreements that take account of the protection of civilians and country-specific circumstances. These agreements should reflect the capacity and time required to deliver post-conflict measures, such as DDR and elections. A lessons learned exercise on previous peace agreements could serve as a starting point. The EU and UNOWA will support ECOWAS mediation efforts through the provision of technical assistance or good offices.

Peace-Support Operations. The EU and UNOWA will support the creation of the ECOWAS Standby Force and the harmonization of procedures for peace support operations, as a part of the African Union efforts in this field. The ECOWAS Secretariat will work to improve coordination among partners and between missions. Harmonization will include introduction of the UN-DPKO standard training modules as core curricula for ECOWAS peacekeepers and assistance to ECOWAS for developing a doctrine on peace support operations.

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR). The ECOWAS, EU and UNOWA recognize that DDR processes are critical to post-conflict stabilization. They will review DDR experiences in the region in order to improve future operations. The importance of securing timely resources and undertaking sufficient planning for rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants will require particular emphasis, as will the need for a regional approach to DDR that also takes into account those countries affected by neighbouring conflicts.