



ECOWAS COMMISSION
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Accra Declaration on « **Accelerating the Operationalisation of Strategic Food Security Reserves at the Regional Level and within the Member States of the Economic Community of West African States** »

« *ECOWAS Specialised Technical Committee on Food and Agriculture* »

MINDFUL OF THE REVISED TREATY of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in **article 25 of Chapter IV** on "Cooperation in the field of food and agriculture", **paragraph 2-f-iv** relating to "the provision of food assistance to Member States in the event of serious shortage" and **paragraph 2-g** relating to "The establishment of a community early warning system";

MINDFUL OF THE ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL A/SP.1/06/06 amending the Revised Treaty of the Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in its new article 22 paragraph 1 establishing the "Technical Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources";

MINDFUL OF THE DECISION A/DEC.11/01/05 adopting the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) adopted by the 28th Ordinary Conference of Heads of State and Government on 19th January 2005 in Accra (Ghana) as an instrument for the implementation of (i) the Comprehensive Detailed Development Programme of Agriculture in Africa; (ii) the 2014 Malabo Declaration; (iii) the Sustainable Development Goals; and the ECOWAP Strategic Operational Framework for 2025 adopted in Dakar (Senegal) in 2015;

MINDFUL OF THE ADDITIONAL ACT AS/2/02/13 related to the establishment of Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) adopted by the ECOWAS of Heads of State and Government 42nd Ordinary Meeting, held in Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire) from 27 and 28 February 2013;

BEARING IN MIND the relevance of the ECOWAP Vision which is: "A modern and sustainable agriculture, based on the effectiveness and efficiency of family farms and the promotion of agricultural enterprises through the involvement of the private sector; productive and competitive on the intra-community and international markets, it must ensure food security and provide a decent income for its workers";

BEARING IN MIND also that ECOWAP pursues the general objective of "contributing in a sustainable manner to the satisfaction of the food needs of the population, to economic and social development and to the reduction of poverty within Member States, as well as reducing inequalities between territories, areas and countries";

CONSIDERING the enormous potential of the food economy, which is worth at least USD 260 billion (34% of regional GDP) and is the main source of employment (94 million of people, nearly 61% of the working population);

RECOGNISING ECOWAS Member States commitment and efforts in (i) the formulation and implementation of national and regional agricultural investment, food security and nutrition plans, (ii) the formulation and implementation of regional and national stocks strategies, (iii) the formulation and implementation of governance mechanisms of the food security reserves at the regional and national levels, and (iv) the humanitarian responses and emergency plans deployed by the region and by the Countries;

NOTING with satisfaction the achievements of the West Africa Support Project to Food Security Stocks funded by the 10th European Development Fund of the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP/10thEDF) in support for the implementation of the Regional Food Security Stocks Strategy;

CONSIDERING the recurrence, persistence, intensification and territorial spreading of food crises in the Sahel and West Africa affecting since 2008, between 6 and 25 million people per year (nearly 27 million people expected in 2021 in phase 3 of the Harmonised Framework)

CONSIDERING that food crises are no longer linked exclusively to declines in productivity, that they are recurrent and mainly linked to (i) shocks and hazards of climate variability and change (ii) the variability and instability of basic foodstuff prices limiting people's access to food on the one hand and reducing producers' incomes on the other, (iii) animal diseases, parasitic pressures and plant pests, (iv) epidemics and pandemics, (v) terrorism and conflicts between communities leading to population large-scale forced displacements;

CONSIDERING particularly the opposing effects and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on (i) the functioning of local, national, regional, continental and global food markets, (ii) access to production and food factors, (iii) the increase in the basic foodstuffs price, (iv) the macro-economic balances of States and the region, etc;

CONSIDERING the loss of food sovereignty resulting from the consequences of regular disruptions of imported food supplies caused and generated by climate change, health crises such as COVID19 and the high instability of international transport costs and logistics;

CONSIDERING the synthesis of conclusions and recommendations during the International Online Conference on Food Security Stocks organised by ECOWAS,

UEMOA and CILSS from 28 April to 7 May 2021, under the ECOWAS Chairmanship by the Republic of Ghana;

REAFFIRMING the relevance of the establishment of strategic food security reserves at local, national and regional levels as defined in the Additional Act establishing and operating the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR);

REAFFIRMING the relevance, complementarity and effectiveness of the three lines of defence of the stockholding system, namely (i) local community stocks as the first line of defence, (ii) national public stocks as the second line of defence and (iii) the regional reserve as the third line of defence;

REAFFIRMING that strategic food security reserves are powerful instruments of resilience for grassroots communities, states and ECOWAS and that they contribute to the dignity and food sovereignty of the populations of the Sahel and West Africa;

The Ministers in charge of Agriculture and Food Security of ECOWAS Member States, met on 10 May 2021 within the framework of the Technical Committee on Agriculture and Food in its ordinary session, chaired by His Excellency Dr. OWUSU AFRIYIE AKOTO, the Minister of Food and Agriculture of the Republic of Ghana:

1. **RECOGNISE** the need to ensure strong integration and coherence between food security stocks policy, the desire to secure basic food supplies for the population through the promotion of local products, nutritional and social protection policies for the most vulnerable households and the strengthening of resilience;
2. **COMMIT** themselves, individually and collectively to mobilise and allocate significant resources to:
 - a. strengthen and develop local stocks in order to achieve the MDG 2 "Eliminate Hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture";
 - b. establish and increase national food security stock (physical and/or financial);
 - c. Reach by 2025 at least 1,500,000 equivalent metric tons of foodstuffs forming the food base of the populations of the Sahel and West Africa;
 - d. continue the Principles of "grain for grain" reimbursement from the regional stock in order to ensure its sustainability;
 - e. Encourage the allocation of national public financial resources and private resources needed to accelerate the creation of stocks, processing and marketing infrastructures;
 - f. Promote trade between deficit areas/countries and surplus areas/countries in accordance with the principle of free trade and movement of goods within the ECOWAS and UEMOA Communities;
3. **RENEW** their commitment to allocate 5% of their national stock through the Network of National Companies or Offices in charge of the Management

of Food Security Stocks in the Sahel and West Africa (RESOGEST) in solidarity with the Member States affected by serious food crises characterised in the "Harmonised Framework" mechanism and validated in the food crisis prevention and management mechanism;

4. **ENGAGECE** the ECOWAS Commission to:

- a. ensure and monitor the implementation of the Supplementary Act establishing a Regional Food Security Reserve;
- b. evaluate annually the performance of the schemes in each country;
- c. mobilize resources and increase the annual allocation to the ECOWAS Agriculture and food Development Fund (ECOWADF) from which a part will be used to increase the intervention capacity of the Regional Food Security Reserve to 410,000 metric tons, of which 150,000 metric tons are in the form of physical stocks and the remainder in the form of financial reserves;
- d. work closely with other Intergovernmental Economic and Integration Organisations (UEMOA, etc.) and Technical Cooperation Organisations (FAO, CILSS, etc.) to maximise efforts, strengthen synergies and coordination;
- e. Promote third-party payment mechanisms with national (public, associative and private), sub-regional and international donors in the humanitarian aid system for vulnerable people;
- f. continue to mobilise financial and technical resources from international, regional and national partners for the implementation of ECOWAP;

5. **INVITE** financial partners to:

- a. Ensure that the specificities of the regional stocks system are taken into account in international arrangements and the resulting trade rules, in particular in the context of the WTO negotiations and the G20 initiatives;
- b. Participate with the ECOWAS Commission in the co-financing of the ECOWAS Agriculture and food Development Fund (ECOWADF);
- c. Give priority in their support to the procurement of local food in order to strengthen the resilience of local agri-food systems;
- d. Support local populations efforts in their local resilience mechanisms;
- e. Align their interventions with those of the Countries and Institutions of the Sahel and West Africa, Countries mandated to achieve food and nutritional security in the Sahel and West Africa;
- f. consider the nexus "Humanitarian-Development-Peace" approach;
- g. Support ECOWAS in the preparation of phase 2 of the RFSR/RRSA project taking into account the guidelines of this declaration; and
- h. more generally to support the promotion of sustainable and more resilient agri-food systems by assisting governments, communities and rural areas with essential infrastructure such as access to energy and preservation and drying systems;

6. **ENCOURAGE** Humanitarian and Development Agencies of the United Nations System (FAO, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, etc.) and NGOs of Development Aid to:
 - a. Give priority in their support to local purchases of basic foodstuffs in order to strengthen the resilience of local agri-food systems;
 - b. Support the efforts of local populations in their local resilience mechanisms;
 - c. Align their interventions with those of the Sahel and West African Countries and Institutions mandated to achieve food and nutrition security in the Sahel and West Africa; et
 - d. Integrate the development of the West African food security stocks system and the costs of its mobilisation in response to crises into their financing plans;

7. **CALL** on the Investment and Development Banks (EBID, BOAD, AfDB, WB, BADEA, IFC, OFID, IFAD, AFD, etc.), Commercial Banks, private institutions and businessmen and women in the region to:
 - a. Develop national, sub-regional and regional partnerships and propose innovative financing mechanisms for physical and financial food reserves for socio-professional agricultural organisations and private sector actors
 - b. Invest in stocks infrastructure, logistics, food processing industry and the development of nutritional food production capacities (fortified compound flours, lipid-based nutritional supplements, etc.); and
 - c. Support the efforts of Member States and the ECOWAS Commission in food assistance interventions and the development of agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries value chains and capacity building of stakeholders;

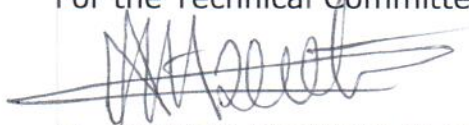
8. **CALL** on the ECOWAS the statutory organs of ECOWAS, in particular the ECOWAS Parliament, the Statutory Council of Ministers and the Administration and Finance Committee to undertake all advocacy and political influence actions so that substantial budgets are allocated by the Ministers of finance and planning in Member States from one hand and substantial financial annual resources allocated by Ecowas Commission in order to promote the constitution of national and regional food stocks on the basis of local production from the other hand;

9. **PROPOSE** for a term of three (3) years non renewable:
 - a. The appointment of a Head of State as ECOWAP and Food Security Stock Champion among his peers; and
 - b. The appointment of a Businessman or Businesswoman from the region as a "Goodwill Ambassador" to promote Food and Nutrition Security in the Sahel and West Africa;

10. **RECOMMEND** to the ECOWAS Statutory Council of Ministers and the Conference of Heads of State and Government to endorse this declaration.

Done in Accra (Ghana) on 10 May 2021

For the Technical Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources



Dr OWUSU AFRIYIE AKOTO

Minister of Food and Agriculture; Republic of Ghana

Chairman of the Committee