

# WEST AFRICAN CHURCH LEADERS' CONFERENCE

ON

*“TRADE, MIGRATION AND REGIONAL INTERGRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT”*

HELD BY

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN COUNCILS AND CHURCHES IN WEST AFRICA  
(FECCIWA)



FECCIWA  
General Coordination

HOSTED BY THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF TOGO (CCT)

## FINAL DECLARATION

Lomé, Togo

February 26, 2017



## INTRODUCTION

We, representing the leaderships of Churches and Organizations of Christian Faith under the canopy of the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa (FECCIWA), made up of 20 Delegates and 10 Observers from member countries namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, gathered from 22-26 February at the Hotel PESCO, Lomé – Togo to reflect and deliberate on the theme: “**TRADE, MIGRATION AND REGIONAL INTERGRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**”.

HAVING acknowledged that Africa is considered as a continent of mass displacement, poverty, violent conflicts, wide spread illiteracy, poor infrastructure development and unemployment caused by colonialism, unfair international structures and trade, operations of off-shore institutions as safe havens for safeguard of unexplainable wealth, weak investment in science and technology in Africa, lack of coherent economic development plan in Africa and organized political corruption;

NOTING that the condition of the African continent has further forced many people in the ECOWAS sub-region especially young men and women to migrate to more developed countries especially Europe in search for enhanced wellbeing including predictable livelihood and education. Regrettably, many of the migrants that travel by boats get drown in the process and others brutally maltreated by European Frontier Police. This brutal treatment of West African migrants into Europe is justified by most European governments as appropriate response to the “invasion of Europe” by the migrants;

ACCORDINGLY, the conference is deeply concerned about the predicaments of West African migrants into developed countries including Europe and upheld that intra-ECOWAS migration, integration and fair trade foster sustainable development of the ECOWAS sub-region. The issues of **TRADE, MIGRATION AND REGIONAL INTERGRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** were deliberated under the following headings:

### ON TRADE

THAT even though ECOWAS and the European Union (EU) desire to enhance inter trade relationship:

- The West Africa EPAs require West Africa to forgo its annual tariff revenue of \$2.4 billion annually for already allocated EU 6.5 billion Euro aid over a period of five years.
- The EPAs are not people-centred, do not promote knowledge and technological transfer, undermines local industrialization and job creation and threatens the wellbeing of West Africans especially women and children.
- The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) pose serious threats for West Africa's future industrialisation, job creation and regional integration. For example, the West Africa EPA would undermine Nigeria's efforts to build vibrant industries such as



those in pharmaceuticals, value added petroleum derivatives, light industrial products and vehicles and agricultural processing industries.

- This makes the agreement unfair, unsustainable and socially catastrophic for West Africa.
- The ratification of the interim EPAs by Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire prevents harmonization of regional import policies thereby jeopardizing the regional integration of West Africa.

## **ON MIGRATION**

### ***INTRA-ECOWAS MIGRATION***

THAT intra ECOWAS Migration contributes to the regional integration process by enhancing trade, commerce and developing social capital in the sub-region, however:

- The regional migration policies of ECOWAS should be totally applied and systems put in place to protect the rights and dignity of migrants in all the member states.
- ECOWAS member states have to engage faith based and civil society organizations to sensitize the public on the contents of the ECOWAS legal instruments, rights and responsibilities of all the stakeholders and the security implications of migration within the sub-region.
- ECOWAS member states are to ensure strict applications of the contents of the ECOWAS legal instruments on migration.
- The Churches in West Africa urge ECOWAS member states to establish robust border surveillance mechanisms to prevent cross border criminalities including terrorism without hindering legitimate trade and the free movement of citizens of the member countries.

### ***INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION***

THAT thousands of young men and women from West Africa are trying to reach other continents especially Europe through the desert and sea. Most of them are loosing their lives or experiencing inhuman treatments in trying to reach their destinations. Those who succeed to get to their destinations are also perceived as threats and are treated as suspected criminals and subjected to discriminations.

### **WE CALL ON:**

1. The international community to partner with ECOWAS Commission in general and the ECOWAS member states in particular to address the factors that propel young people to move from the West Africa sub-region.
2. The international community ensures the full applications of laws on the migrants' rights especially the rights of women and children.

## **ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

WE RECOGNISE THAT regional integration is a key strategy for development and intra-regional trade that could produce considerable economic gains for West Africa as it plays a

significant role in accelerating economic growth and poverty reduction and enhancing food and energy security.

#### **ACCORDINGLY**

- The ECOWAS legal instruments on (i) free movements of people and goods and (ii) rights to settlements are to have full applications by all the member states.
- That there should be a robust sensitization on regional integration and more expressive political will and commitment to accomplish the full application of the economic and political integration of the ECOWAS member states.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The Conference RESOLVE and AFFIRMED that the ECOWAS legal instruments on intra-regional migration and regional integration are comprehensive and that their full applications will result into sustainable economic growth.

#### **WE COMMEND**

- The EU for the continued assistance it renders to West Africa to foster good governance, support peace and security and encourage economic development.
- Those West African countries that have not signed the regional EPAs

#### **WE RECOMMEND**

- Those countries that have not signed the West Africa EPAs to continue to do so in the interest of regional cooperation and the full development of the West African common market.
- EU to stop pressuring Nigeria and The Gambia to sign the West Africa EPAs
- Total freeze of the implementation of the Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire EPAs
- An assessment of EPA impacts should be made in terms of human rights, environment, food security and Brexit (Britain's exit from the EU).
- That church leaders engage the governments of their respective countries not to sign or implement the EPAs in its current form and that churches undertake sensitization of its members and citizens on the ills of the EPAs.
- That the ECOWAS Commission initiates a 'people centered' and fair trade relationships with the EU.

Adopted in the City of Lomé, Togo, this Sunday, February 26, 2017.

Signed:

Rev. Dr Tolbert Thomas JALLAH, Jr  
Secretary – General/CEO, FECCIWA

Approved:

His Eminence, Dr. Emmanuel Josiah UDOFIA  
President, FECCIWA