



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
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ECOWAS VISION 2050

“ECOWAS of the Peoples: Peace and Prosperity for All”





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	5
FOREWORD BY THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT	8
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECOWAS COMMISSION	12
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	17
I. INTRODUCTION	17
I.1. Context	17
I.2. ECOWAS at a Glance	18
I.2.1. General Framework	18
I.2.2. ECOWAS Institutional Mechanisms	20
I.2.3. Institutional Reforms	21
II. ECOWAS INTEGRATION PROCESS: EVALUATION OF VISION 2020 AND RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS	22
II.1. Evaluation of Vision 2020: Lessons Learned	22
II.2. Key Findings of the Retrospective Analysis	25
II.2.1. Demography, Human Capital, Social Development	25
II.2.2. Environment and Natural Resources	30
II.2.3. Governance, Peace and Security	32
II.2.4. Economic Growth, Structural Transformation and Private Sector Development	34
II.2.5. Economic and monetary integration and economic infrastructures	37
III. ECOWAS ASPIRATIONS AND ITS 2050 VISION	40
III.1. Aspirations	40
III.2. Reference Scenario	41
III.3. Vision 2050 and Pillars	42
IV. STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS - GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SUCCESS FACTORS	48
IV.1. Strategic Objectives and Orientations	45
IV.2. Cross-Cutting Issues	46
IV.3. Guiding Principles and Success Factors	49
V. CONCLUSION	51
APPENDICES	52
GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS OF VISION 2050	53
SUMMARY OF THE THREE ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS	58
BIBLIOGRAPHIE	60

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACMAD	African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	Africa Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CAPEC	CIRES Economic Policy Analysis Unit
CET	Common Exterior Tariff
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CO₂	Carbon dioxide
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSO	Civil society organization
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECREEE	for Renewable Energy and Economic Efficiency
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOWIP	ECOWAS Investment Policy
EDF	Energy Development Fund
EIDB	ECOWAS Investment and Development Bank
ERERA	Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign directs Investments
FERDI	Foundation for studies and Research on International Development
GDP	Gross domestic production
GIABA	Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit
HDI	Human development index
IMF	International monetary Funds
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	Information, technologies and communication
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NDP	National Development Plan
NSA	Non state actors
PPP	Public-Private partnership
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematic
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WAHO	West African Health Organization
WAMA	West African Monetary Agency
WAMI	West African Monetary Institute



VISION · VISÃO

FOREWORD BY THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT



H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa AKUFO-ADDO

President of the Republic of Ghana
and Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority
of Heads of State and Government

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

1. The vision of the founding fathers of our regional Organisation, ECOWAS, when it was established in 1975, was to improve the welfare and well-being of all Community citizens. This vision has been aptly summarised in the ECOWAS Treaty as "*promoting co-operation and integration, leading to the establishment of an Economic Union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of the peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations-among Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African Continent*".
2. The Lagos Treaty of 1975 was revised in 1993 in order to deepen the regional integration process, particularly in the areas of peace and security, as well as conflict prevention and resolution. In 2010, in order to guide the Actions of ECOWAS Institutions, the Authority adopted Vision 2020, with the principal aim of moving from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of peoples.
3. Encouraged by the outcomes and impact of Vision 2020, and duly recognising the need to consolidate its achievements in order to deepen and widen the realisation of the legitimate expectations of the ECOWAS citizens, the Community has prepared and adopted a new Vision to guide our development path for the next thirty (30) years. On behalf of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, I, therefore, stand on the weight of history, as I look into the horizon of a better tomorrow for the citizens of our Region, to present to the World our new Vision – Vision 2050. This new Vision encapsulates our collective aspirations for the future we seek – **TOGETHER as a Community!**

4. Indeed, forty-six (46) years after the foundation of ECOWAS, our Region has made significant progress with tangible achievements, particularly in the area of democratic governance, free movement of peoples and goods, gradual transformation of our economies, and improving the functioning of our institutions. Our task, as leaders and citizens, is to sustain and build on these achievements.

5. However, we must acknowledge that the Region is still facing significant challenges: the spread of terrorism has set us many years back, destabilizing the Region, and undermining Member States' development efforts; the outbreaks of health pandemics, i.e., Ebola and COVID-19, have strained the economic and social resilience of our people and institutions; youth unemployment remains a challenge; the impact of climate change is increasingly threatening the fragility of our Region; and regional integration has progressed slower than anticipated, particularly with regard to the realisation of economic and monetary union.

6. One of the lessons learned from the implementation of Vision 2020 was that strategic leadership can pave the way to overcoming our numerous challenges, and lead to the achievement of the positive change we seek for our people and for the Region. Deliberate development requires us, as leaders, to provide the leadership and governance framework for this change to happen.

7. Accordingly, the Vision 2050 is designed to replace Vision 2020, with even more ambitious goals and targets. By 2050, we want our Region to witness accelerated transformation and development – to serve as a catalyst for unleashing the creative and innovative potentials of our peoples, in a peaceful, secure, stable and integrated Community. Our new Vision takes into full account what we have planned to achieve for ourselves in our various countries, and what we have committed to achieving at the regional, continental, and global levels.

8. As ambitious an Agenda as it may be, we are fully committed to its implementation. We will provide the required leadership, mobilise our citizens including women and youth, reform our institutions, mobilise our own resources, and enlist the support of our partners so as to ensure the realization of this Vision. Together, as a people, we will strive and drive on this new road, believing that our faith and determination will make us overcome any obstacle that will come our way. The future is always for the best prepared; WE ARE PREPARED FOR THE NEW FUTURE TODAY! Let us all work together to achieve "***the ECOWAS of the Peoples: Peace and Prosperity for all!***"!

Long live ECOWAS!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo".

**H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo,
President of the Republic of Ghana and
Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority Of
Heads of State and Government**

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECOWAS COMMISSION



H.E. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou
President of the ECOWAS Commission

Message from the President of the ECOWAS Commission

1. I have the honour to present to you the Vision 2050 of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which sets out the policy directions and aspirations of the Community for the next thirty years. I would like to thank all the stakeholders for their involvement in the broadly participatory process that led to the formulation of this new vision that will guide the actions of ECOWAS Institutions for the next three (3) decades.
2. In 2010, ECOWAS launched for the first time a ten-year vision, Vision 2020, which was intended to help the Community's institutions to implement their activities with a view to achieving a tangible impact on the people. As a matter of fact, as early as 2007, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government had decided to move the Region from *an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of People*.
3. At the end of the 2010-2020 decade, the ECOWAS Commission carried out an evaluation of the 2020 Vision by canvassing all the social strata of the Community through broad consultations. This evaluation has drawn important lessons that have shaped the reflection and formulation of the Vision 2050. A detailed retrospective analysis identified areas where the gains of previous years could be built upon.
4. First of all, by setting a longer timescale, ECOWAS is taking into account the future needs of an entire generation on the one hand and providing itself with greater flexibility in accommodating structural changes to achieve Vision 2050, on the other.
5. Furthermore, the process for the development of Vision 2050 was largely participatory and inclusive, thus allowing a wide range of citizens (men, women and the youth) from urban and rural areas, as well as from all social groups in Member States, to be heard. As a result, their deepest aspirations for the next 30 years were captured and grouped into broader thematic areas. 

6. Lastly, the formulation of the Vision took into account the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly impacted the lives of people around the world, including in our region. It also took into consideration terrorism and climate change, which affect our countries. The goal is to build a coherent set of instruments to ensure the resilience and structural transformation of our economies for the benefit of our people.

7. ECOWAS is therefore breaking new ground in the formulation of its Vision 2050 by adopting five federating pillars, which reflect the desire of its citizens to live together, barrier-free, in security and in good health, so as to achieve shared prosperity, while respecting their fundamental rights.

8. This approach has been further developed under each pillar by defining strategic objectives and orientations for the Region. The translation of the Vision into relevant strategic objectives will guide the actions of ECOWAS Member States and Community institutions in all sectors, particularly in the areas of peace and security, health, good governance, the rule of law, economic development, regional trade and free movement, infrastructure, and human and social development. This will also be used, under the guidance of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, to monitor the progress of regional integration in terms of its impact on the well-being of our Community citizens.

9. To conclude, I should like once again to express my appreciation and commend all those who contributed to the development of this important document, thus paving the way for us to move together towards achieving the goal of an "***ECOWAS of People: Peace and Prosperity for All***"!

Long live ECOWAS!



**H.E. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou,
President of the ECOWAS Commission**

REMERCIEMENTS

"In memory of the ECOWAS Citizens who have lost their lives to terrorist attacks and the COVID-19 pandemic"

1. With the expiration of ECOWAS Vision 2020, the Community embarked on another exercise to develop a new Vision, which will serve as the blueprint for the regional development agenda for the next 30 years. This exercise was conducted through a consultative and inclusive process so as to ensure that the aspirations of ECOWAS citizens form the foundation of the 2050 Vision as part of our quest to provide the Community a sustainable development path. The process required hard work and dedication by all stakeholders at the national and regional levels - members states, staff members across all ECOWAS Institutions as well as the technical and financial support of development partners.
2. Preparing the ECOWAS Vision 2050 was both exciting and exacting due to the logistical, technical and financial requirements which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, one of most destabilising global health challenges of the 21st century. Delivering the 2050 Vision under these challenging circumstances is an achievement that would have been impossible without the leadership of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, His Excellency Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, supported by the Vice-President and other members of the ECOWAS management as well as other Heads of ECOWAS Institutions, and partners.
3. The President, working with the team, provided the overall guidance and orientation for the process. This high-level commitment and engagement enabled the mobilisation of all stakeholders leading to the development of a document that encapsulates the future of the ECOWAS region.
4. The Committee of Directors, which was set up to oversee the process of the development of the Vision played a central role in providing the technical orientation for the Vision. I wish to express the Community's appreciation to all members of this Committee for their professionalism and dedication throughout the process, under the facilitation and coordination role of the late Dr. Nelson Magbagbeola, Former Secretary General of the ECOWAS Commission and Dr. Hemou P. Dedou, ECOWAS Permanent Representative to Brussels, who took over after Dr. Nelson's untimely demise. I wish to thank all my colleagues, other Directors, and staff for their contributions to the development of the document. I was privileged to work with a highly competent and committed staff who were instrumental in the development of the Vision. I remain most grateful for their service.



5. The development of the Vision 2050 was facilitated by the technical and financial support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), under the leadership of its Executive Secretary, Ms. Vera Songwe through the West Africa Regional Office Director, Ms Ngoné Diop.
6. I also wish to express profound appreciation to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH for their technical and financial support, which facilitated citizens' consultations and inclusion, the development of the Vision 2050 Communication Strategy and their contribution to the validation process of Vision 2050.
7. The Vision Document is the result of diligent work from several consulting firms, and their contributions and sacrifices to this Community development effort is duly acknowledged. The CAPEC team deserve a special mention for their professionalism, commitment and flexibility. The high quality of their output made it possible for the Community to elaborate a comprehensive Vision document.
8. Finally, I would like to thank all ECOWAS Member States for their engagement in the process of the elaboration of the ECOWAS Vision 2050 document, which considers their aspirations and commitment. It is our hope that this commitment will be extended to the implementation of the Vision to improve the well-being of ECOWAS citizens.

Long Live ECOWAS!



Finda E. M. KOROMA
Vice President, ECOWAS Commission

INTRODUCTION

I.1. Context

1. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established on 28 May 1975, by the Treaty of Lagos, with the objective of “promoting cooperation and integration leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, to maintain and to enhance economic stability, foster relations among Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent”.
2. In pursuit of this objective, in June 2007, the Authority of Heads of State and Government adopted the ECOWAS Vision 2020. The vision was aimed at creating “a borderless, peaceful, prosperous and cohesive region built on good governance and where people have the capacity to access and harness the enormous resources through the creation of opportunities for sustainable development and environmental preservation”.
3. With the expiry of this Vision in December 2020, the region was prompted to develop a new strategic vision for the years to come; a vision that considers the current developmental challenges and emerging regional and global dynamics.
4. Since the last decade, the development context has been marked by major changes at the continental and global levels that profoundly impacted the dynamics of the integration process in West Africa. In addition to the adoption of the African Union’s Agenda 2063, the renewal of commitments to poverty eradication through the adoption of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development constitutes a major change in the development agenda of ECOWAS Member States. Furthermore, the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 for the protection of the planet against the adverse effects of climate change and the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in 2020 are major priorities for ECOWAS countries and issues on which international cooperation has been increasing over recent years.
5. Beyond these multilateral frameworks, the current trend towards the regionalisation of partnerships reaffirms the strategic importance of regional mechanisms in the achievement of development goals. In particular, the deepening of the integration processes at the continental level through the launch (2019) and entry into force (January 2021) of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and, at the West African level, a resolute commitment to the Economic and Monetary Union, are key indicators of the current context in which the region is evolving, which require a clear vision and new strategic orientation by ECOWAS over the next three decades. This new orientation will have to take into account the ongoing “4th Industrial Revolution” marked by the digitalisation of economies and the developmental transformations that it generates.
6. The political situation is relatively stable in West Africa, as evidenced by the consolidation of democratic governance. However, the regional context is still marked by security challenges linked to both maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and terrorism and its financing triggered by the extreme vulnerabilities of the region, especially in the Sahel. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative impacts have revealed, once again, the fragility of the health systems and weak economic resilience of the member countries. Despite encouraging economic growth rates in recent years, the region’s vulnerability to external shocks remains a handicap for its development, largely due to an overdependence on revenues derived from the primary sector, and the low diversification of economies dominated by activity sectors with low added-value. Despite the efforts made, the social situation remains fragile in a region with strong demographic growth, a large percentage of which are young people, low level literacy rates, high levels of inequality, high unemployment,

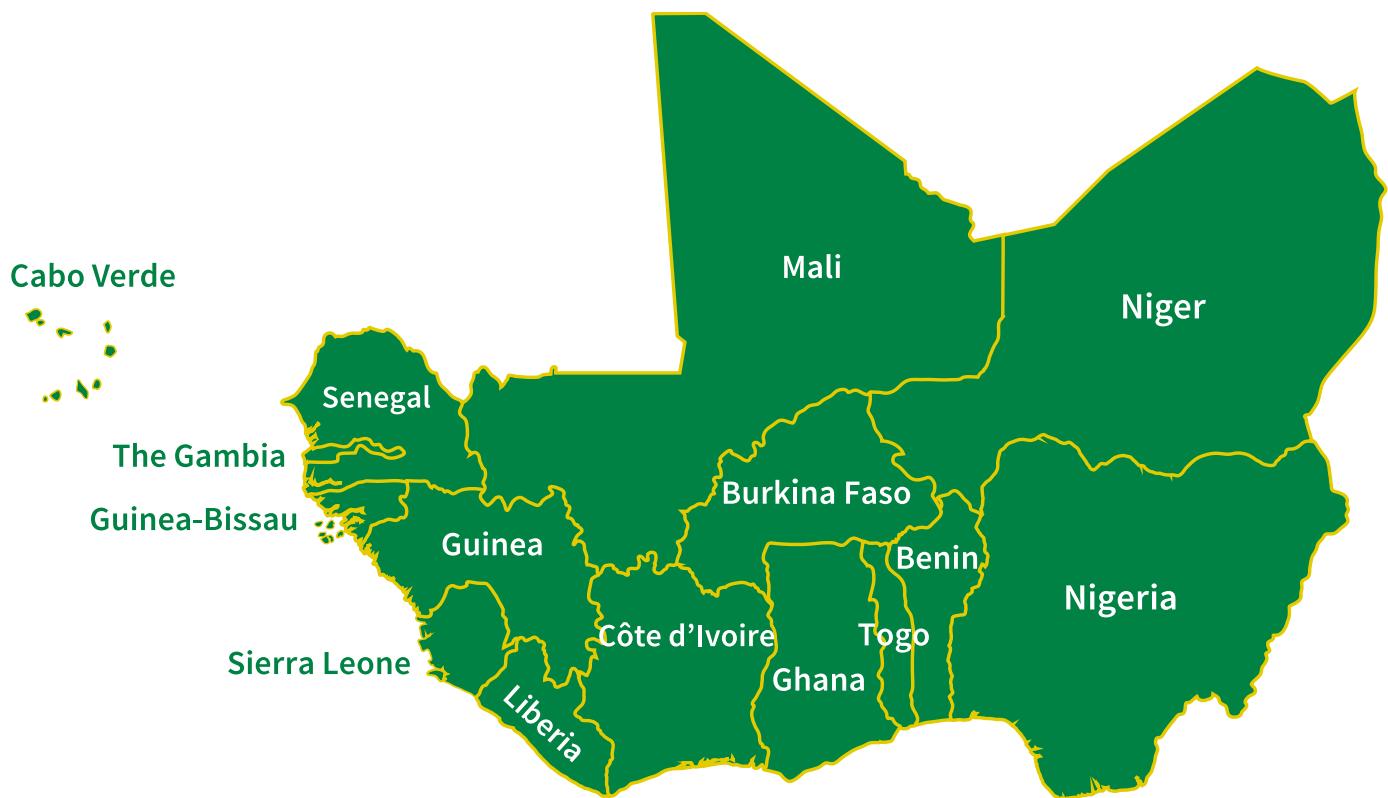
as well as limited basic social services and decent employment.

7. These various challenges (security, health, socio-political, economic, demographic, migration and environmental) have an impact on the future of the region and they must be addressed within the framework of the ECOWAS Vision by the year 2050.
8. Bearing in mind the current situation regarding the ECOWAS integration process, this Vision document articulates the main developmental aspirations of ECOWAS citizens for the next thirty years. It outlines the elements for its realisation and success.

I.2. ECOWAS at a Glance

I.2.1 General Framework

9. Founded by way of Treaty on 28 May 1975, ECOWAS today is comprised of fifteen (15) Member States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo) with a total landmass of 5,112,903 km².



ECOWAS Region, © ECOWAS

10. The population of the region was estimated at 401.9 million as of 2020, with young people constituting over 60% of the population. This makes West Africa one of the youngest regions in the world, with high urban growth.
11. The region has considerable mineral, ecological and agricultural resource potentials with a very large geographical space. In addition to the vast arable and pastoral lands, it has various river basins with enormous potentials for irrigation. Economically, basic commodities remain the pillars of production in the region, notably extractive resources (oil, gold, diamonds, uranium, phosphate, manganese, among

others), as well as agricultural raw materials (basic food items, including fruits and vegetables and cash crops such as cocoa, groundnut, cashew, coffee, cotton, rubber and wood).



Raw materials and development of small-scale mining (diamonds) in Kono, Sierra Leone, © GIZ Michael Duff, Regional Resource Governance Programme (co-funded by EU and BMZ)

- 12.** The revision of the ECOWAS Treaty in 1993 brought about major changes to the integration and development agenda: (i) the strengthening of decision-making bodies; (ii) the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution; (iii) the broadening of the scope of the integration process and of regional cooperation, notably on key sectors such as peace and security, monetary integration, industrial cooperation, private sector and the environment.
- 13.** Since then, the actions carried out have contributed to deepening the integration process. In particular, the regional peace and security architecture has been consolidated through the adoption of relevant legal instruments and the establishment of appropriate regional conflict resolution mechanisms. Furthermore, the consolidation of economic integration has resulted in the adoption of numerous harmonised policies and regulations, sectoral development strategies, as well as the realisation of infrastructure projects, particularly along the different regional corridors. It has also facilitated the free movement of goods and people and the realisation of the customs union with the entry into force of the Common External Tariff (CET) on the 1st of January 2015, and the acceleration of the monetary cooperation programme with a view to establishing a single currency.
- 14.** The various liberalisation and facilitation measures have led to increased trade between Member States, making ECOWAS one of the most dynamic Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa. However, the regional trade is yet to develop to a level comparable to other regional trade regimes such as ASEAN, NAFTA, and the European Union. The creation of the single currency is still a work-in-progress, especially with the renewed political commitment of the Heads of State and Government in June 2021 to the establishment of the ECOWAS single currency (ECO) by 2027.

I.2.2. ECOWAS Institutional Mechanisms

15. To facilitate cooperation, coordination, policy harmonization and implementation as well as to give impetus to the integration process, the ECOWAS has set up governance bodies and institutional structures. The governing bodies are the following: (i) the Authority of Heads of State and Government and (ii) the Council of Ministers. The institutional structures are as follows: (i) the ECOWAS Commission; (ii) the ECOWAS Parliament; (iii) the Community Court of Justice; (iv) the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID); (v) the West African Health Organisation (WAHO); and (vi) the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA). In addition, there are specialised sectoral institutions such as the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA), the West African Power Pool (WAPP), the West African Monetary Agency (WAMA), the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI), the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA) and specialized technical committees.

i. The Authority of Heads of State and Government: As the Community's supreme governing body, it is responsible for providing the general orientations and oversight over the Community and for taking all necessary measures to ensure progressive development and achievement of set objectives.

ii. The Council of Ministers: It is the second highest governing body, and it supports the Authority in its work. The Council is a functional body that reviews all matters brought before the Authority. It is also responsible for ensuring the proper functioning and development of the Community. The Council of Ministers is supported by sectoral Ministerial Committees and Technical Commissions.

iii. The ECOWAS Commission: It is the executive arm of the Community, responsible for coordinating the work of all institutions and for executing the decisions of the Authority and the directives of the Council. Thus, the Commission makes relevant recommendations to the decision-making bodies for the development of the Community and for enhancing the integration process.

iv. The ECOWAS Parliament: As the legislative body of the Community, it is designed to be an "Assembly of the peoples of the Community". Composed of 115 members, the ECOWAS Parliament contributes among other things to the implementation of the objectives and policies of the Community, the strengthening of representative democracy and the promotion of peace. It deals with any issue of interest to the Community, particularly in relation to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The powers of the ECOWAS Parliament have been strengthened to ensure the full participation of ECOWAS citizens in the development and economic integration of the region.

v. The Community Court of Justice: As the Community's principal judicial body, it ensures that laws and the principles of equity are respected in the interpretation and application of the Treaty. To this end, it hears disputes which may involve Member States, Community institutions and individuals and corporate bodies residing within the Community. Nationals of Member States can now refer to the Court directly, whose judgments are binding.

vi. The Community's specialised Institutions and Agencies: For effective implementation of Community development goals, some specialised Institutions were established, with a relative degree of autonomy. Those specialised Institutions are responsible for specific missions conferred on them by the Treaty, and which are related to the integration process. They include (i) the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), (ii) the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), and (iii) the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering (GIABA).

vii. The Sectoral Ministerial Committees and Specialised Technical Commissions: The Sectoral Ministerial Committees, supported by experts, provide governance and orientation on specialised areas

of Community development. Based on their respective competencies and on specific subject matters, they prepare Community projects and programmes and submit them for the consideration of decision-making bodies: the Council and the Authority. The revised Treaty under Article 22 makes provision for eight (8) specialised technical committees and granted the authority to, whenever it deems appropriate, restructure the existing committees, or establish new committees. The eight technical committees are: (i) food and agriculture; (ii) industry, science and technology and energy; (iii) environment and natural resources; (iv) transport, communications and tourism; (v) trade, customs, taxation, statistics, currency and payments; (vi) political, legal and judicial affairs, regional security and immigration; (vii) human resources, information, social and cultural affairs; and (viii) administration and finance. In addition, new technical committees have been created such as the technical committee on Health and the GIABA technical committee. Depending on the subject matter in question, ad hoc technical committees are formed to deal extemporaneously with matters of common interest.

viii. Office of the General Auditor: in its efforts to improve its performance, ECOWAS has established an Office of the General Auditor which is responsible for monitoring the impact, the quality and the effectiveness of programmes. The Office ensures compliance with operational standards and the preservation of the integrity of good governance practices.

I.2.3. Institutional Reforms

- 16.** In 2006, a reform process was initiated to enhance the performance of ECOWAS Institutions, to accelerate the integration process and promote development. As part of the reform, the Executive Secretariat was transformed into a Commission, with a set of Commissioners, each in charge of a specific sector of the regional agenda.
- 17.** Since then, the reforms have been widened and deepened with the reorganisation and restructuring of the operational framework of all ECOWAS Institutions. In particular, in order to further streamline ECOWAS operating cost, the 59th Ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of States and Government, held on 19 June 2021 decided to reduce the size of the Commission from fifteen (15) to a seven (7) member management team. Overall, the reforms initiated are aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the institutions' operating procedures and the strengthening of the internal control systems in the areas of Finance, Audit, Human Resources Management and Procurement.
- 18.** The various restructuring initiatives carried out have reduced operational costs and are meant to ensure, among other things, (i) the establishment of appropriate and viable organisational structures; (ii) the improvement of administrative processes; (iii) the establishment of functional systems for result-based programme design and evaluation; and (iv) the establishment of an electronic records management system.



ECOWAS Conference Hall, Abuja, Nigeria © GIZ

II. ECOWAS INTEGRATION PROCESS: EVALUATION OF VISION 2020 AND RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

19. The ECOWAS integration process is one of the most successful among all the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa. This success is not only based on the advanced stage of the integration process but also on the achievements made since 1975. Despite these developments, challenges relating to the consolidation of the integration process remain. The assessment of Vision 2020 and the key findings of the retrospective analysis on the region summarise both the achievements made and the magnitude of the challenges to be addressed.

II.1. Evaluation of Vision 2020: Lessons Learned

20. Adopted in June 2007, the ECOWAS Vision 2020 was aimed at the eradication of poverty and the consolidation of regional peace and security as well as the promotion of sustainable social and economic development. The Vision, which had as its overarching slogan ‘moving from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of Peoples’, was based on five pillars: (i) peace and security; (ii) good governance; (iii) development of the region’s resources; (iv) economic and monetary integration; and (v) promotion of the private sector.

21. The evaluation of Vision 2020 made it possible to assess not only the level of achievements, but also the challenges related to its implementation.

22. In the area of peace, security and stability, ECOWAS has played a crucial role in the management of numerous political crises, conflict resolution and the consolidation of peace and democracy. This is in part due to the various instruments and mechanisms developed in this area.

23. Furthermore, significant progress has been made regarding the process of consolidation of the common market, notably with the free movement of persons, the trade liberalisation scheme and, above all, the establishment of the Customs Union, with the entry into force of the Common External Tariff (CET) in 2015.



Container ship in Banjul, The Gambia, © Katja Lehmann

- 24.** In the area of infrastructure development, significant efforts have been made in the implementation of the regional transport facilitation programme with particular emphasis on the joint border posts programme and the corridor development programme. There has also been improvement of interconnection between Member States. Indeed, progress has been made in the establishment of electricity exchange systems, the electricity supply programme, the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency programme. These programmes contribute to the improvement of regional competitiveness, supported by the private sector development strategies and common industrial policies.



Construction of Solar Photovoltaic Carport at University of Ibadan, © Ashdam Sola

- 25.** In terms of sectoral programmes, significant achievements have been made in the development of appropriate policies meant to strengthen the resilience of the region. This is particularly the case with the adoption of harmonisation frameworks, such as macroeconomic policies and the enhancement of sectoral strategies in the areas of agriculture and food security, environment and sustainable resource management, and socio-economic and human capital development with relevant policies for youth, women, and children.



Alliance Sahel, Promouvoir une agriculture durable, Burkina Faso, © GIZ / Aude Rossignol

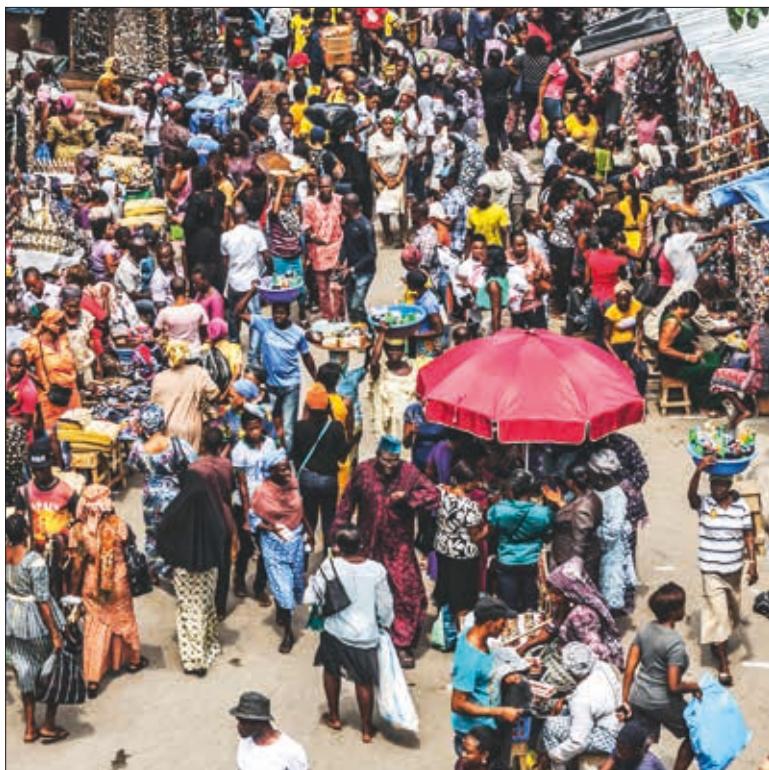
- 26.** The guidance provided by Vision 2020 made it possible through pertinent regional policies and adequate responses to development challenges to consolidate West African integration and to provide a strategic and programmatic approach to the implementation of the Community agenda.
- 27.** Specifically, Vision 2020 has enabled progress in the implementation of sectoral programmes through:
 - better strategic planning and management of the integration process around the restructuring of Community programmes;
 - better prioritisation in regional policy formulation;
 - better involvement of the population in programme implementation monitoring, particularly through the creation of appropriate consultation platforms (Non-state actors: Civil Society, private sector, etc.);
 - better structuring and coordination of partnerships in the implementation of Community programmes and
 - the development of programming and monitoring tools with the creation of relevant departments.
- 28.** Despite these notable achievements, the evaluation of the 2020 Vision has brought to light the need to make efforts, particularly with regard to: (i) improvement of ownership of the programmes and policies by Member States, (ii) ensuring the effective implementation of these programmes, policies and regulations, (iii) enhancement of the visibility of programme interventions, (iv) ensuring the availability of adequate resources, (v) enhancement of steering, coordination and monitoring & evaluation mechanisms and (vi) encouraging a stronger participation from Community citizens, CSOs and private sector participation in the integration process and the development of the region.
- 29.** These efforts need to be sustained and call for the consolidation of the primary role of the Member States in the implementation of the regional agenda and programmes. This role implies a strong commitment through actions, resources and appropriate policies not only to strengthen the resilience of the economies but also to support the development efforts of the Member States, particularly with regard to the access of West African populations to quality basic social services, the fight against gender inequalities and all forms of human right violations, increasing the provision for infrastructure, addressing the vulnerability to climate change and tackling new security, migration and health challenges.

II.2. Key Findings of the Retrospective Analysis

- 30.** Based on the prospective and planning documents of most of the Member States, the retrospective analysis of the region makes it possible to appreciate the extent of the challenges and future perspectives surrounding the following key questions.

II.2.1 Demography, Human Capital, Social Development

- 31. A Region characterised by high fertility rates:** ECOWAS has an estimated population of 401.9 million as of 2020, of which more than half (206.1 million as of 2020) are in Nigeria alone, which is also the largest economy in the region. It is the most populous region on the African continent. Its population has multiplied by almost 5.7 times since 1950, when it was estimated at around 70.9 million people. The overall fertility rate, although declining since 1980, averages over four (4) births per woman over the period 2015-2020 in 13 ECOWAS Member States.



The huge metropolis of Nigeria, Lagos, Photo provided by the Trade Facilitation West Africa Program

- 32. A region with increasing urbanization:** The proportion of the population living in urban centres in West Africa has increased rapidly from 14.7% in 1960 to 47.6% in 2020. This is projected to rise further to 53.5% by 2030 and 63.7% by 2050. Available data shows that more than 50% of the urban population in 10 countries of the region reside in slums, where sanitary and social conditions are more precarious than in rural areas (ECA, 2020a). The growing urbanisation of the region is a key factor in changing people's behaviour. If properly managed, it can be an opportunity to reduce the fertility rate, accelerate demographic transition, enhance peaceful coexistence and promote economic growth.¹
- 33. A young population, an asset but also a risk factor for the stability of the region and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals:** The median age of the region's population is 18 years. Nearly 44% of the population is under 15 years old and 65% is under 25 years (ECA, 2019c; ECOWAS, 2010). While this youth demography can be an asset, it also poses risks of instability, economic and social challenges

¹ The main reason is low mechanisation and low industrialisation of agriculture in most countries.

including the thorny issues of education, youth unemployment and access to health in the region. The official unemployment rate for young people (aged 15 to 24) in West Africa is estimated at 11.9% in 2020. Most jobs are in the informal sector and lack of employment opportunities for young people contributes to migration and regional insecurity.

- 34. A need to accelerate the demographic transition in the region:** The demographic dependency ratio is estimated at 85% in 2020, suggesting that one active person, between the ages of 15 and 64, has 0.85 dependents. This ratio has changed very little over the past 40 years. In 1980, the demographic dependency shifted from 90.8% to 88.5% in 2010. This ratio is influenced by the high proportion of children (0–14 years) in the total population.



Beds ward / treatment centre in Tema, Ghana, © ECOWAS

- 35. Improvements observed but much remains to be done in terms of health:** Improvements have been recorded in the health sector, with increased life expectancy at birth and a decrease in mortality rates over the last 4 decades. However, the performance of countries remains uneven. The child mortality rate for children under 5 years of age is 77.5 deaths per 1,000 live births compared to 74.7 for Sub-Saharan Africa in 2017. The maternal mortality rate is 562.5 cases per 100,000 live births compared to 547 in Sub-Saharan

Africa in 2015. The national health systems of Member States remain fragile, with low resilience to tropical diseases and health shocks (Ebola and COVID-19, for instance). Despite the efforts of the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), challenges relating to the availability of infrastructure, the quantity and quality of medical staff and the governance of health systems remain.



Children are the future of our society, Côte d'Ivoire, © GIZ / Gaël Gellé

- 36. Improved access to education, with a need to adapt education systems to current labour market trends:** Over the last 60 years, access to primary education has improved in West Africa. In 2018, countries such as Benin (122.0%), Cabo Verde (104.0%), Ghana (103.6%), Sierra Leone (112.8%) and Togo (123.8%) have exceeded the targeted 100% enrolment thresholds. However, most Member States are struggling to provide their populations with universal access to quality education because of their limited resources, capacities, and of the challenges of overcoming social and cultural barriers. Therefore, achievements appear insufficient for pre-school, secondary and higher education. Moreover, a high concentration of pupils and students in general education has been noted. Less than 4% of young people aged 15–24 are enrolled in technical and vocational courses in all countries in the region (UNESCO, 2020). In addition, the training provided in schools is often of insufficient quality and unsuited to the needs of the labour market (ECOWAS, 2020).



Secondary school in Cotonou, Benin, © Katja Lehmann

- 37. Insufficient performance in terms of the level of human capital and human development:** Due to shortcomings in the education and health care systems, many ECOWAS countries performed poorly on the World Bank's Human Capital Index. Apart from Ghana, which is in the second quartile of this index, the rest of the countries in the region were in the lowest quartile of the Human Capital Index in 2020². Furthermore, the 2019 Human Development Index shows that 13 of the 15 ECOWAS Member States achieved lower than the HDI averages for developing countries and Sub-Saharan Africa³. Only Cabo Verde (126th) and Ghana (138th) are among the medium human development countries.
- 38. A low unemployment rate with high job insecurity at the regional level:** Unemployment rates are low in most countries of the region with a rate estimated at 6.6% in 2020. However, many of the jobs created are not decent⁴. Most people are self-employed in the informal sector (61.7% in 2018) and are engaged in precarious⁵ jobs which constitute over 70% of available jobs in 12 ECOWAS countries in 2018. About 38.4% of working-age individuals in employment in the region were considered as being below the poverty line in 2018 (living on less than US\$1.90 per day). The proportions of vulnerable employment in the region's economies are positively correlated with the low skills level of the labour force.
- 39. A decrease in the proportion of poor people within the region, however with income inequalities and food insecurity on the rise:** Between 2010 and 2019, the proportion of the West African population living below the poverty line (US\$ 1.9 per day) fell from 49% to almost 36.0%. In contrast to this trend, income inequality has increased in all countries since the early 2000s. Despite the growth in agricultural produc-

2 2020 Data on Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau not available
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital>

3 Calculated from UNDP <https://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/137506>

4 According to the ILO definition, decent work is productive work that women and men can do in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and dignity. This concept therefore implies access to productive and adequately remunerated work, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for individuals to voice their demands, to organise and to participate in decisions that affect their lives, and equal opportunities and treatment for all.

5 Precarious employment most often refers to work experiences associated with low income, instability, lack of protection and socio-economic vulnerability.

tion over the past fifteen (15) years, the region is prone to food insecurity, which has been on the rise since 2014. The prevalence of severe food insecurity has increased from 20.7% in 2014 to 29.5% in 2017⁶. This food insecurity, sometimes chronic and/or cyclical, is linked to the effects of climate change and natural disasters. Food insecurity could worsen with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused, among other things, a downturn in global demand for agricultural and non-agricultural commodities. Moreover, the transformation of food systems remains a major concern for the coming decades. To better exploit the opportunities offered by the size of the domestic market, these systems will have to adapt to changes in demand, taking into account rapid urbanisation. The latter is reflected not only by an increase in the number of non-producer consumers, but also by qualitative changes in demand. The food market is growing rapidly. At least two-thirds of the food requirements are met by the regional market. The food economy is the leading economic sector in the region, accounting for an estimated 36% of regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2011. About 40% of the value added from the food economy is now generated by non-agricultural activities. Consequently, the development of the other segments of the food value chains would be of major relevance to both food and nutrition security in West Africa, which is also based on the maintaining of well-performing agricultural sector.



Photo provided by the Trade Facilitation West Africa Program

- 40. Gender inequalities remain high despite the progress recorded:** Despite the progress made by most countries regarding women's participation in the economic and social sectors, gender inequalities continue to characterise the region. The McKinsey Gender Parity Index indicates a high level of inequality within ECOWAS countries, with scores ranging from 0.45 in Niger to 0.59 in Ghana in 2019⁷. This analysis

6 <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ca2710en.pdf>

7 <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/gender%20equality/the%20power%20of%20parity%20advancing%20womens%20equality%20in%20africa/mgi-the-power-of-parity%20advancing%20womens%20equality%20in%20africa.pdf>

is confirmed by the work done by UNDP in this area, which ranks most of the ECOWAS countries at the bottom 20 of the 2017 global ranking of the PNUD⁸. Gender Inequality Index. These gender inequalities relate among others to access to education, health, the labour market, land resources and national decision-making bodies.

II.2.2. Environment and Natural Resources

- 41. A region that has low environmental pollution/emissions:** According to the Global Carbon Project, the ECOWAS region has a low CO₂ emission, estimated in 2018 at 192.9 Mt CO₂, or 0.52% of the 36,573 Mt CO₂ emitted by all countries in the world. However, to promote better management of environmental pollution, ECOWAS has developed appropriate regional policies with a focus on renewable energy development. Member States aimed to increase the share of renewable energy in the region's overall electricity mix to 10% by 2020 and 19% by 2030. About 25% of the ECOWAS rural population should also be connected to mini-grids and stand-alone systems by 2030.



Training of Trainers on Solar Photovoltaic and Mini-Grid Design, © GIZ / Sharon Kaburuk

- 42. A region highly exposed to climate change:** The West African region can be subdivided into two major climatic zones: The Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea. The average annual temperature almost everywhere across the region is above 28°C. The climatic conditions are influenced by annual rainfall, which varies from 200 mm in the north to more than 2,000 mm in the south. Rainfall levels and patterns may change unpredictably. Rising sea levels accompanied by rising temperatures threaten the coastal regions and ecosystems. According to current climate forecasts, West Africa will be highly affected by climate change. Over the past forty years, the impacts of climate change have exposed the vulnerability of the region. Despite adaptation efforts and the anticipation and early warning measures by Member States, West Africa remains exposed to climate change and climate variability. The different scenarios indicate that current climate variability is likely to increase and intensify. Droughts, floods, and storms which are already recurrent are likely to increase in frequency and intensity.
- 43. Land and forest resources in high demand:** 11% of the world's 1.2 million m² of dense tropical forests are found in West Africa. In the past 25 years, the region has lost about a third of the mangrove forests. Although the benefits of mangrove forests are generally undervalued, they provide vital social, economic and environmental benefits. Weak conservation strategies, weak law enforcement and poor governance

⁸ Cabo Verde, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea not ranked in 2017.

coupled with a lack of incentives for behavioural change are among the factors driving deforestation, land degradation and loss of biodiversity in the region. The protection of these forests, which are often across borders, requires concerted action at all levels (local, national, bilateral and regional).

- 44. High water potential under pressure:** Water is central to life and a key factor in socio-economic development. Access to water, sanitation, increased agricultural productivity, water pollution control, integrated management of cross-border river basins and the development of water infrastructure are key factors in the fight against poverty. West Africa has a significant amount of water resources, with 28 cross-border river basins covering 71% of the total area of the region. However, the region suffers from chronic deficits due to uneven rainfall and stream runoff patterns, poor mobilisation of potential resources and poor management of existing resources. Considering, the rapid growth of the West African population, the increasing environmental degradation and pollution, as well as the threats on a diminishing resource, integrated water resource management appears to be a major development issue for the region. Moreover, access to drinking water is a concern for 40% of the population while lack of access to sanitation affects 60% of the population. Irrigated agriculture is still marginal with only 10% of potentially irrigable land under irrigation. The hydroelectric potential is enormous but only 16% of it has been exploited. The region has few dams, with just under 150 large dams out of a total of 1,300 on the continent.



Installation of a handwash basin at the fish landing side in Brufut, The Gambia, Ngenarr-Yassin Jeng, Brufut, The Gambia

- 45. Huge deposits of extractive resources still largely untapped:** Most of ECOWAS countries are rich in natural resources, mainly gas, oil and other minerals and precious metals. Even though these extractives resources are largely untapped, their availability gives West Africa the status of a region rich in natural potential. The contribution of the oil and mining sectors to the Member States' GDP varies from country to country. In 2020, Mines and quarries represented 7.5% of Ghana's GDP; 10.2% of Burkina Faso's GDP; and 4% of Côte d'Ivoire's GDP. In Nigeria, the extractive sector represented 9% of its GDP in 2020. In view of the importance of the sector in the development process of the region, ECOWAS has adopted appropriate regional policies for the development of mineral resources and the mining sector.



Raw materials and development of small-scale mining (diamonds) in Kono, Sierra Leone, © GIZ Michael Duff, Regional Resource Governance Programme (co-funded by EU and BMZ)

II.2.3. Governance, Peace and Security

46. Signs of weakening democratic governance in the region: The adoption of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (1999) and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) have enabled the region to make progress in the area of conflict prevention. These frameworks have made it possible to progressively consolidate democratic gains around the principles of constitutional convergence based on, *inter alia* separation of powers, political participation of citizens in the democratic process, democratic control, zero tolerance for unconstitutional seizure of power, freedom of the press and freedom of expression. While the unconstitutional seizures of power are less frequent (except for recent cases e.g., Mali in 2020, Guinea in 2021 and Burkina Faso in 2022), there is a trend of crises arising from non-consensual constitutional changes. Democratic processes are still fragile. Frequent disputes on electoral processes (perceived as less consensual), have led to serious political and institutional crises creating instability, sometimes with negative regional implications.



ECOWAS Election Observation Mission in 2019, Guinea-Bissau, © ECOWAS

- 47. An increasingly complex security situation:** Since 2000, there has been a substantial decrease in major civil wars. However, the security situation has become more complex and multifaceted with threats including human, drug and arms trafficking, money laundering, terrorism and the financing of terrorism, cybercrime and counterfeiting of all types of products especially pharmaceuticals. Terrorism and the financing of Terrorism have now become the security quagmire for many countries in the region, particularly in the Sahel area. Initially confined to certain countries in the Sahel (Mali and Niger) and the Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria), terrorist attacks have multiplied and spread to other countries (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire). Despite efforts made by Member States at national and regional levels, terrorism remains a real threat for all countries in the region, including coastal countries. The number of reported deaths from terrorist attacks has increased five-fold in three years reaching in 2019 more than 4,000 victims in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. During the five (5) first months of 2021, 670 armed incidents perpetrated by terrorist groups in the region resulted in more than 2,840 deaths. In addition to being the target of terrorist groups and traffickers of all kinds, the region (especially the coastal countries) is facing growing cross-border insecurity. This is due to the lack of control over maritime areas and the expansion of piracy and all types of illegal activities at sea, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, with direct consequences on the region's resilience. The region's different vulnerabilities, exploited by criminals, are thus exposed with insufficient and inadequate response capacity of Member States to address the threats at sea. In addition to these threats, the management and exploitation of natural resources, the slow pace of defence and security sector reforms and land management issues continues to expose the region's fragility.

- 48. Need to fully operationalise the ECOWAS Standby Force:** Despite ECOWAS' experience in peacekeeping, the weakness of the operational, logistical, and financial capacities of Member States hinders the full operationalisation of both the ECOWAS Standby Force, and the African Standby Force of which it is a pillar. These weaknesses contribute significantly to the slowing down of the effective and efficient implementation of the regional peace and security architecture.

- 49. A worsening humanitarian situation:** The security situation combined with food insecurity, climate change, Community clashes (farmers-herders) and the impact of COVID-19 have exacerbated the humanitarian situation in the region. The general trend of insecurity is leading to large flows of internally displaced persons and an increase in the required level of humanitarian assistance. The region currently has 451,417 refugees and more than 3.7 million of internally displaced persons (UNHCR 2021) of which 57% and 32% are in Nigeria and Burkina Faso, respectively. Insecurity in the region also increases human rights violations and limits humanitarian access, leaving communities without essential assistance. In 2021, almost 29 million Sahelian citizens will need humanitarian assistance and protection; 5 million more than in 2020.



ECOWAS-WAHO COVID-19 medical equipment's for distribution to ECOWAS Member States, Nigeria, Abuja © ECOWAS

- 50. A region still confronted with corruption issues:** Cabo Verde is the only country in the region outside the ‘red zone’ of Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2019. The country also ranks highly at the continental level, where it is ranked 3rd (after Botswana and Seychelles). These achievements reflect a strong political will to fight corruption and a strong social mobilisation against corruption.

II.2.4. Economic Growth, Structural Transformation and Private Sector Development

- 51. Strong economic growth rate that is slowing down, with little impact on people’s living standards:** Most of ECOWAS countries have recorded, high economic growth rates since the early 2000s. The average five-year growth rate rose from 6.8% between 2001 and 2005, to 6.3% between 2006 and 2010, then to 5% between 2011 and 2015. It was estimated at 2.2% between 2016 and 2018. The COVID-19 situation has led to a decline of 1.7% in real GDP in 2020 after real growth of 3.9% in 2019. This slowdown in growth which has led to a fall in per capita output has also resulted in a fall in living standards. This growth is mainly driven by private consumption, with the rise of the middle class.



Alliance Sahel, Promoting Sustainable Agriculture, Burkina Faso, © GIZ/Aude Rossignol

52. A rise in exports and the beginning of diversification: Exports are gradually becoming one of the key drivers of economic growth in the region. However, this progress remains concentrated in a few products. The FERDI⁹ Export Concentration Index was 79/100 for Nigeria in 2018. It was 14/100 for Senegal, 33/100 for Côte d'Ivoire and 42/100 for Ghana. The downward trend in this index since 2006 suggests good prospects for diversifying the region's exports. Indeed, the index fell from 0.63 between 2006 and 2010 to 0.56 between 2011 and 2015 and down to 0.44 between 2016 and 2018.



Exports becoming one of the key drivers of economic growth in the ECOWAS Region, Nigeria, Photo provided by the Trade Facilitation West Africa Program

⁹ This indicator measures the concentration of a country's exports by sector. High export concentration is a source of vulnerability. The measure of export concentration is derived from a Herfindahl-Hirschmann index applied to exports of goods (excluding services) following the SITC „three-digit“ classification. The performance scores are distributed from 0 to 100. The lowest score reflects the best situation. (<https://competitivite.ferdi.fr/indicateurs/concentration-des-exportations>).

- 53. Insufficient mobilisation of domestic resources in a context marked by constraints in development financing:** The majority of ECOWAS Member States are struggling to achieve a tax revenue ratio of over 20%. This low mobilisation of public resources is likely to compromise the sustainability of economic growth of the region, which has been witnessed since the 2000s. The share of the informal sector in the economy varies between 20% and 65%. In the absence of sufficient opportunities in the formal sector, the informal sector has provided many people with their means of livelihood (IMF, 2017). The informalisation of the economy contributes to a weakening of domestic resource mobilisation. In addition, the exhaustion of traditional financing mechanisms such as official development assistance poses additional financing constraints that hinder the achievement of ECOWAS' objectives. These difficulties underpin the importance of using innovative financing methods, which are insufficiently harnessed in the region.
- 54. Low external debt stock, but with a growing burden:** The share of the external debt stock in GDP has fallen sharply since the early 2000s. It fell from 66.9% in 2000 to 10.1% in 2014, largely due to the HIPC initiative from which many countries in the region benefitted. However, this trend is being reversed again, with a debt stock share estimated at 15.1% and 18.1% of GDP respectively in 2019 and 2020. The economic constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have worsened the situation of the Member States. The latter are mobilised to support various initiatives, at the continental and international levels, on the financing of African economies as well as on the restructuring of the debt.
- 55. The emergence of structural transformation in several ECOWAS countries:** From almost 25% in 2000, the share of agriculture in regional GDP rose to almost 35% in 2002 but declined to around 20% in 2018. Moreover, employment in the agricultural sector (54% in 2000 compared to 42.7% in 2017) is declining while employment in services (34% compared to 44.4%) and industry (11% compared to 12.7%) is increasing. In terms of industrialisation, Ghana leads with a share of the industrial and manufacturing sector representing 42% of its GDP. It is followed by Côte d'Ivoire (38%), Nigeria (35%) and Senegal (34%). Structural transformation is beginning to take place in these countries.
- 56. Slow technological innovation to drive transformation:** ECOWAS countries generally have a low level of science and technological expertise which is compounded by the imbalance between men and women in the field of science and technology. Illiteracy rate is still high with a low level of formal training across the region. The illiteracy level has increased from 27% in 1990 to 46% in 2018 for boys, and from 20% to 41% for girls. The gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education was 9.2% in 2012. Furthermore, the share of GDP devoted to research was 0.3% in 2004 with a significant proportion of gross domestic expenditure on research and development (R&D) coming from external funding (UNESCO 2015).
- 57. A Region focused on investment and private sector promotion despite a rather unsatisfactory business environment:** Investments in the ECOWAS region are heavily dependent on external FDI flow and mainly destined for Nigeria. The difficulties in mobilising investments are often linked to the unfavourable business climate in the region. The score for business development in the region is low and for most countries, it is about an average of 3 on a scale of 0 to 6. In addition, scores on property rights are relatively low in most countries. Despite this situation, there has been an increase in the share of credit to the private sector since 2001. This share reached 18.5% of GDP in 2015 and 17.6% of GDP in 2018. In addition, ECOWAS has taken initiatives in recent years to promote investment and with the private sector, through the adoption of appropriate regional policies and the establishment of relevant instruments and mechanisms such as ECOWIP Investment Policy, Regional Public-Private Partnership Policy, Investment Code, ECOBIZ WORLD Market Information System, ECOINVEST Project and ECOBIZ.

II.2.5. Economic and monetary integration and economic infrastructures

- 58. An accelerating economic, monetary and trade integration:** Since the mid-1970s there has been a dynamic process of regional integration in all aspects of development. An important aspect of this process has been the gradual consolidation of the regional market which has resulted in an increase in intra-Community trade, albeit at a low level compared to other regional cooperation arrangements. In 2019, intra-regional trade was up by 12% representing intra- regional exports and imports of 15% and 9% respectively. These figures do not take into consideration the unrecorded small-scale cross border trade. Nevertheless, this performance shows that there is still room for improvement in terms of trade integration. To accelerate regional integration, there's a need to remove all regulatory constraints, develop the required infrastructure for production and to facilitate the free movement of people and goods. The creation of the single currency, the ECO, through the achievement of economic and monetary Union, for which the region's political commitment remains unwavering, should also be a key accelerator for regional trade.



Female Trader crossing the border, Photo provided by the Trade Facilitation West Africa Program

- 59. A major infrastructure development challenge:** The development of adequate infrastructure remains a crucial challenge in West Africa. The current level of infrastructural development is insufficient to spur the required growth and economic development in the region as well as to boost its integration process. A diagnostic review of the road network in the ECOWAS Infrastructure Development Master Plan of 2020 shows that the region has a comprehensive network of nearly 605,691km of roads of which 84,991km asphalted (14%). In terms of the average condition mix of the Community's Road network, about 45% of the road network is of good quality, 28% is of fair quality, while almost 23% of the network is in a bad condition. The road network in the region provides more than 80% of passenger and freight transport.

The density of the asphalted roads¹⁰ of the ECOWAS is about 38 km to 100km² (38%). Compared to other Africa regions, this ratio in 2015, was estimated at 29% for the East African Community (EAC), 92% for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and 4% for the Economic Community of East African States (ECCAS). While ECOWAS ranks 2nd, the density of asphalted roads of quality is still low to initiate and stabilise the economic take-off of the Region.

In the area of Railways, the ECOWAS Region had in the last decade a total rail network of approximately 10,188km, now counts today for 8,052km. Like the road sub-sector, the density of the rail network estimated at 1.9 km/1000 km² relatively low, compared to the continental average of 2.5 km/1000 km² is relatively low. Intra-Community flights and between ECOWAS and the rest of the continent are insufficient with ticket costs among the highest on the continent. In addition, despite the opportunities in the maritime transport (including seaports) sub-sector which carry almost 95% of freight between the region and international markets, the assessment of this sub-sector indicated that there are still challenges to be addressed, notably in terms of capacity of port infrastructure, as well as efficiency of operations and port clearing processes. Over the past decade, there has been expansion in the ICT sector with an increase from 28% to 47% in 2018 in mobile phone penetration, the highest rate among the RECs. In contrast, internet access is still limited with an estimated penetration rate of 26% in 2018 but projected to increase in subsequent years due to mobile internet subscription. The mobile economy has the potential to transform the lives of millions of people in the region if properly harnessed.



Fuel Truck, State Road 1, Burkina Faso, Photo provided by the Trade Facilitation West Africa Program

¹⁰ This indicator defines the ratio of the length of the paved road network to an area of 100 km² in a given region.

60. Insufficient access to electricity despite all efforts and large endowments of energy resources: Access to electricity increased by 20 percentage points between 2000 and 2017. However, those who have access to electricity represent about half of the total population (45%) and only 23% of the population in rural areas¹¹. The dysfunctions within the regional energy market coupled with coordination problems within the sector as well as the low production and the high cost of access to electricity, remain challenges to be overcome in order to satisfy the electricity needs of the population and businesses. It is within this context that ECOWAS has taken various initiatives such as the development of a White Paper and an investment programme for the establishment of a West African Power Pool (WAPP) together with the setting up of appropriate structures for the regulation of the regional electricity market (ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA) as well as the promotion of renewable energy (ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREE).



Training on Solar Photovoltaic Standards for staff of Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON),
© GIZ / Melanie Weber

11 Calculated with data from World development indicator of the World Bank.

III. ECOWAS ASPIRATIONS AND ITS 2050 VISION

61. An assessment of the progress made regarding regional integration since the adoption of Vision 2020 revealed the importance of some developmental themes for the region. The relevance of these themes was corroborated by the aspirations of ECOWAS citizens whose expectations guided the formulation of the ECOWAS Vision 2050. Thus, the region's trajectory over the next three decades is based on an ideal, derived from the expressed aspirations of the populations. Above all, this Vision is built on a reference scenario which has led to the formulation of the pillars on which the strategic objectives are anchored.

III.1. Aspirations

- 62.** Following an inclusive and participatory consultations with stakeholders in Member States, their aspirations highlighted the relevance of the following five developmental themes:
- (i) Demography, human capital, social development and migration;
 - (ii) Environment and Natural Resources;
 - (iii) Governance, Security and Peace;
 - (iv) Economic growth, employment, structural transformation and private sector development and
 - (v) Economic and monetary integration, economic infrastructure, energy and partnerships.
- 63.** Overall, the aspirations expressed are in line with the themes of the retrospective analysis. Almost all the countries consulted expressed aspirations in relation to all the above-mentioned thematic areas. Furthermore, the coherence analysis shows a convergence between these themes and the strategic axes as defined by the Member States in their National Development Plans (NDP). The themes selected are therefore in line and in coherence with the desired future by each Member State. Finally, beyond the convergence of the themes with the strategic axes of most NDPs, the thematic areas selected for the new Vision are consistent with the continental and international development frameworks. The expectations of the ECOWAS populations are in harmony with the SDGs, the aspirations underlying the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the targets set by the ECOWAS Integrated Human Capital Strategy (2020 – 2030).
- 64.** These expectations provide relevant insights into the region's desired future. Indeed, the expressed aspirations confirm the determination of ECOWAS citizens to live in a peaceful and secure environment, free from conflict. Above all, these aspirations confirm their affinity with the universal values of human equality, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the following situations where:
- democratic principles are respected;
 - all forms of discrimination are overcome through the promotion of equal opportunities for all;
 - women and young people are agents of change and have an important role to play in the development process;
 - solidarity is encouraged to strengthen diversity, inclusion, and social cohesion and
 - access to basic social services is guaranteed for a literate, educated, trained, well-nourished and healthy citizenry.
- 65.** Moreover, the aspirations identified point to a profound desire on the part of the citizens to live in:
- an economically integrated region where the development process is driven, among other things, by infrastructure, innovation and technology, the private sector and by the structural transformation of economies based on inclusive growth that generates jobs, capacity building and human capital development and
 - a region inclined to environmental sustainability and adaptation to climate change with strengthened capacities for disaster risk reduction and resilience.

III.2. Reference Scenario

66. The expression of the aspirations of the West African people has helped to define the path to the desired future. This future is anchored on an optimistic baseline scenario called “**Africa’s Torch**”.
67. This ideal scenario¹² is based on the following underlying assumptions:
- an environment of enhanced security and consolidated peace;
 - good governance, strong and credible institutions that respect the rule of law and fundamental freedoms;
 - a fully integrated and globally competitive region in the context of sustainable development and
 - an ECOWAS region with quality human capital and human development.
68. The foundations of this scenario are based on the will and commitment of Member States to overcome all obstacles to development through home-grown solutions that are underpinned by structural reforms and relevant public policies that will provide access to basic services and inclusive growth that generates employment. Accordingly, the relevant measures envisaged requires the deep transformation of the education system and its adaptation to the development and labour needs of the region. This implies an education system that places great importance not only on research but also on technical and vocational training and entrepreneurship, as well as on the promotion of partnerships between schools, universities, and companies in the region. Therefore, the relevant measures envisaged will centre around the development of human capital and the promotion of entrepreneurship and science and technology as drivers of development. These envisaged measures also focused on improving and strengthening the resilience of health systems, with universal access to health through increased service provision and strengthened social protection. Under these conditions, the overall health situation will improve notably with a substantial allocation of adequate resources to the sector in line with the health needs such as better training for doctors and the promotion of medical research.
69. Furthermore, the reference scenario is based on a stable regional environment, conducive to development, with strong and credible institutions, respectful of fundamental rights and freedoms. The inherent model is built around an ideal based on stability, peace building and security, which is an indispensable condition for development. It is also based on political and democratic governance, the rule of law and the efficient and transparent management of public resources. The region therefore becomes a true model of governance and the rule of law that emphasises accountability, transparency, power checks and balances, justice, and the promotion of civic dialogue.
70. Finally, these fundamentals are based on the will to ensure development through the deepening of the regional integration process, particularly through the strengthening of free movement of people and goods, promotion of a diversified regional economy that is competitive and that creates employment, investments in infrastructure and market interconnectivity. The availability and quality of infrastructure fosters an increase in intra-Community trade and the emergence of integrated value chains. These virtuous circles contribute to the development of the industrial sector and the consolidation of the monetary integration. The region becomes attractive to foreign direct investments thereby creating the conditions for technology transfer and accelerated innovation. In addition, structural transformation is at the heart of the region’s development ideal. Beyond the expected role of the private sector, this development is meant to include the participation of vulnerable populations, especially youth, women and persons living

¹² Apart from this ideal scenario, three (3) other scenarios ranging from the less glowing to the more dramatic were used for the purpose of the analysis: “a Community with timid steps”, “the backward movement” and “the suicide of a giant”. The main underlying assumptions of these 3 alternative scenarios are summarized in the annex.

with disability. Above all, it is envisaged that no one will be left behind., A development that guarantees the promotion and resilience of food and nutrition systems through a modern and efficient agriculture. It is also envisaged that the anticipated development will be environmentally friendly with an optimal management of natural resources and an increased resilience to climate change.

- 71.** Through the reference scenario, which allows for the demographic transition of Member States, the structural transformation of economies and the reduction of inequalities and poverty will enable ECOWAS to strengthen its role as the torch bearer of regional integration in Africa and establishes itself as one of the most powerful Regional Economic Communities.

III.3. Vision 2050 and Pillars

- 72.** Given the baseline scenario “Africa’s Torch”, the following Vision Statement forms the bedrock of the ECOWAS Vision 2050:

“A fully integrated Community of peoples, living in a peaceful and prosperous region, with strong institutions and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, striving for inclusive and sustainable development”

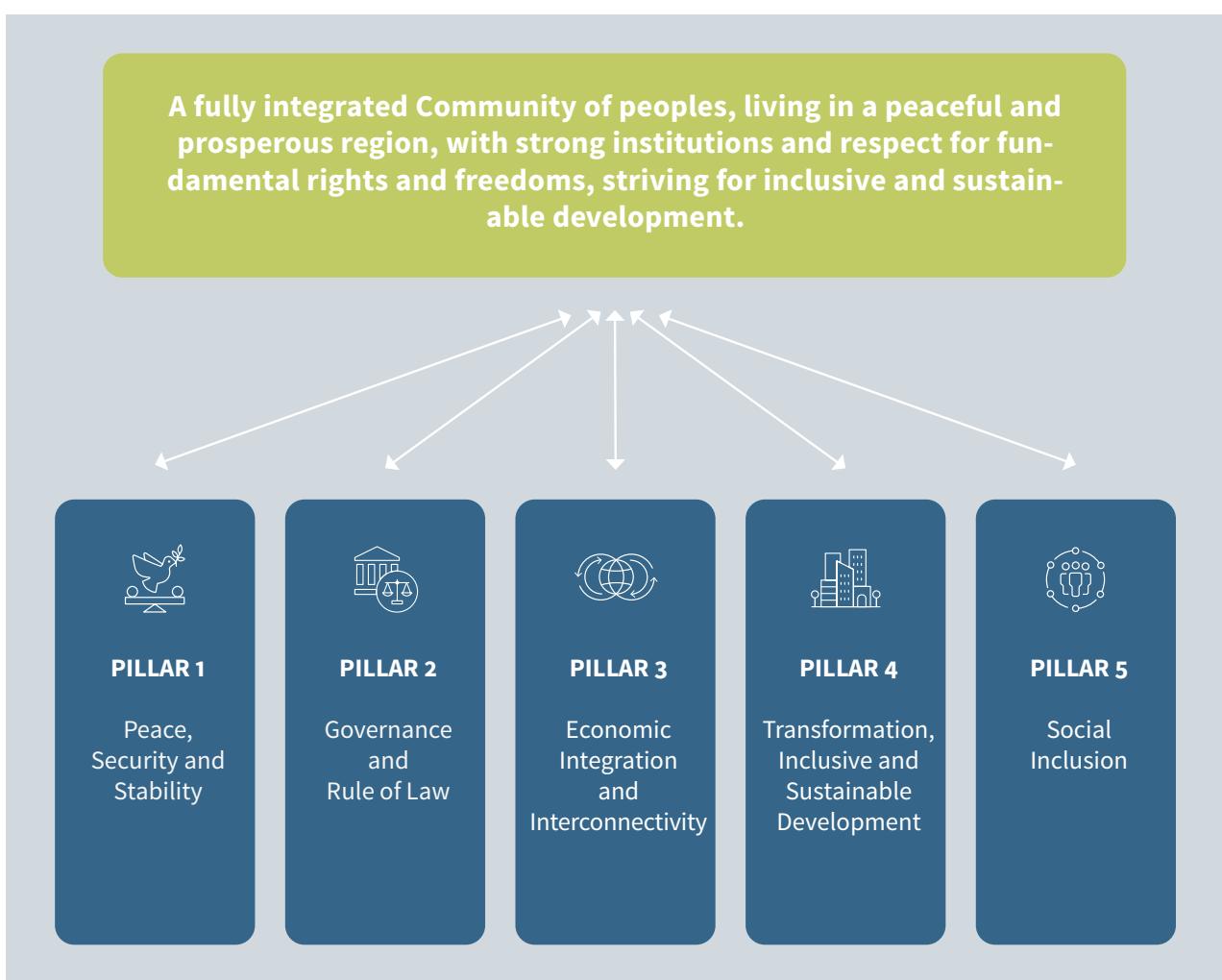
- 73.** This Vision is anchored on five main pillars, namely:

- **Pillar 1: Peace, Security and Stability:** Making ECOWAS a secure, stable, and peaceful region is a development imperative, bearing in mind the multidimensional security threats facing the region. The aim is to strengthen human security through home-grown and sustainable initiatives and the implementation of appropriate instruments and policies as well as the establishment of suitable mechanisms in the region.
- **Pillar 2: Governance and Rule of Law:** To build a region where democracy and the rule of law prevail by 2050, there is a need to ensure the establishment and effective functioning of strong and credible institutions that guarantee the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. The region will work to strengthen democratic governance, consolidate the rule of law, and enhance justice delivery while promoting the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and combat all forms of discrimination.
- **Pillar 3: Economic Integration and Interconnectivity:** Deepening the process of economic integration is at the heart of this pillar. This process is envisaged not only through the free movement of people and goods but also through the enhancement of trade and market integration as well as the achievement of the economic and monetary union. All of these will contribute to the consolidation of ECOWAS integration process and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). From this perspective, the development of an efficient agriculture and the promotion of value chains will be necessary. More importantly, infrastructure development remains a key factor in improving interconnectivity and regional competitiveness.
- **Pillar 4: Transformation, Inclusive and Sustainable Development:** The ultimate goal is to make ECOWAS a regional economic power in Africa and in the world that makes optimal use of its human potentials and natural resources to improve the well-being of its citizens as stipulated in the ECOWAS human capital development strategy¹³. This pillar is therefore based on the improvement of the living conditions of the population through the optimisation of the benefits of the demographic dividend, the

¹³ See ECOWAS Human Capital Development Strategy, ECOWAS 2020.

quality of the education and knowledge building systems, the creation of decent jobs for young people and women as well as the strengthening of resilience to public health. This pillar is also based on the structural transformation of economies driven by the digitalisation of the economy, entrepreneurship, science and technology and structuring investments in growth sectors. It is aimed at promoting the efficient management of natural resources and strengthening the region's resilience to climate change and exogenous shocks.

- **Pillar 5: Social Inclusion:** This pillar places the ECOWAS citizens, mainly women, children and youth, and all vulnerable people (including people with disabilities and the elderly) at the heart of development and the integration process. By 2050, ECOWAS will have to meet the challenges of social cohesion among its people, create the conditions of a sense of belonging that is characteristic of Community citizenship, that would foster the emergence of a cultural identity based on shared values.



IV. STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS – GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SUCCESS FACTORS

- 74.** In order to translate the vision into reality, the Strategic Objectives and orientations that will guide the development of the Medium-Term Strategic Framework and action plans must be clearly defined. In addition to the strategic orientations, the cross-cutting themes that are important in the definition and implementation of development policies and strategies have been identified. The guiding principles and determinants that will drive the effective and harmonious realisation of the Vision 2050 have also been clearly identified.

IV.1. Strategic Objectives and Orientations

- 75.** Each of the Vision 2050 Pillars has been reformulated into a long-term strategic objective, with associated strategic orientations.

- **Pillar 1: Peace, Security and Stability**

Strategic Objective 1: Making ECOWAS a Secure, Stable and Peaceful Region

Strategic Orientation 1: Strengthen regional peace and security

Strategic Orientation 2: Strengthen human security in the region

Strategic Orientation 3: Prevent, manage and resolve conflicts

- **Pillar 2: Governance and Rule of Law**

Strategic Objective 2: Anchoring Democratic Culture and Good Governance and Respect for the Rule of Law and Fundamental Freedoms

Strategic Orientation 1: Strengthen democratic governance

Strategic Orientation 2: Consolidate the rule of law and justice delivery

Strategic Orientation 3: Promote the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms

- **Pillar 3: Economic Integration and Interconnectivity**

Strategic Objective 3: Make ECOWAS a fully Integrated and Interconnected Economic Region

Strategic Orientation 1: Consolidate the free movement of people and goods and accelerate market integration

Strategic Orientation 2: Accelerate monetary union and economic and financial integration

Strategic Orientation 3: Intensify infrastructure development and enhance interconnectivity

- **Pillar 4: Transformation, Inclusive and Sustainable Development**

Strategic Objective 4: Create the Conditions for Economic Transformation and Sustainable well-being of the People

Strategic Orientation 1:	Promote human and social development
Strategic Orientation 2:	Leverage human capital and skills development
Strategic Orientation 3:	Strengthen environmental sustainability and the fight against climate change
Strategic Orientation 4:	Promote sustainable economic growth and development

- **Pillar 5: Social Inclusion**

Strategic Objective 5: Make ECOWAS a Community of Peoples fully inclusive of women, children and youth

Strategic Orientation 1:	Strengthen cultural diversity to promote development and social progress
Strategic Orientation 2:	Strengthen Community citizenship and solidarity
Strategic Orientation 3:	Promote inclusion and strengthen social cohesion

NB: The detailed tables of the breakdown of the Vision 2050 with the potential areas of intervention is attached to this present document as annex.

IV.2. Cross-Cutting Issues

76. The successful implementation of the ECOWAS Vision 2050 is predicated on the full consideration of some cross-cutting issues which must be fully take into account in the definition, formulation and implementation of development policies, programmes and strategies. These issues as outlined below are therefore essential for the successful realisation of the 2050 Vision. Their multidimensional nature makes them cross-cutting whilst at the same time serving as enablers for the achievement of the overall objectives of the Vision.

i. Women-Gender: The region needs to recognise the special role of women as actors, agents, and beneficiaries of development. This will require concerted political commitment and tangible actions to ensure the integration of the gender dimension in all planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes in all areas and at all levels. The mainstreaming of gender will ensure that the concerns and experiences of women as well as men are considered in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally. The empowerment of women and the fight against gender-based discrimination must be at the heart of actions that are designed to address inequalities between men and women and to promote gender equality.



Recognise the special role of women as actors, agents, and beneficiaries of development, Photo provided by the Trade Facilitation West Africa Program

- ii. **Youth-Employment:** The region has a large youthful population which should be considered an opportunity and must not be missed in the regional development agenda. In this regard, it is in line with SDG 8, to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, full employment and decent work for all. The ECOWAS Vision 2050 should enable the adoption of appropriate policies and the implementation of structural reforms in the economic and social landscapes of the region to create decent employment opportunities for young people, strengthen human capital and unleash their ingenuity and potential in building a prosperous and peaceful Community.



Large youthful population which should be considered an opportunity, Côte d'Ivoire, © GIZ/Gaël Gellé

iii. Digitalisation: The growing interest in digitalisation is marked by the efforts made to progressively develop internet networks and the rapid increase of mobile telephone use in West Africa. This important thematic issue is expected to contribute to the effective execution of Vision 2050, as it provides solutions to the development challenges of the region. Digital transformation and solutions contribute to creating jobs, driving education and stimulate competitiveness and innovation. These play key roles in the transformation of economies in West Africa and the improvement of the lives of its citizens. It is therefore necessary for the region to maximize on digitalisation, which today has integrated itself into all socio-economic activities, with its numerous uses such as e-commerce, e-administration, e-health, e-agriculture and e-education. For these reasons, efforts must be made to guarantee access to digital technology and to accelerate the transition towards the solutions it offers. This will require, among other things, the establishment of appropriate regulatory frameworks, sector-adapted governance, as well as affordable, secure and quality digital infrastructure.

iv. Climate Change – Resilience: The region is exposed to various exogenous shocks, economic, political, social, and natural, including climatic change and disasters. All of these underscore the need to build institutional capacities and early warning and resilience mechanisms to better contain in a sustainable manner, the challenges of vulnerability, especially the environmental and climate change challenges.



Alliance Sahel, Promoting Sustainable Agriculture, Burkina Faso, © GIZ / Aude Rossignol

v. Capacity Building: By placing people at the heart of ECOWAS Vision 2050, the sustainable development of the region can be guaranteed. Capacity building and human resources remain essential to ownership and implementation of the development agenda and regional integration in West Africa. Greater effort should be made to provide the region and its Member States with the necessary tools, skills, and knowledge as these will be key to achieving qualitative and impactful development..

IV.3. Guiding Principles and Success Factors

77. ECOWAS Vision 2050 is the reflection of ECOWAS' long-term development ambitions. To achieve this, ECOWAS has set itself ambitious, coherent, and realistic strategic objectives. However, the achievement of these strategic goals over the next 30 years could be subject to potential risks related to political instability, insecurity and unstable macroeconomic environments. In addition, the progress towards the desired future of the region by 2050 could be hampered by various shocks including climatic, health, financial, as well as other risk factors, related among others to a limited commitment of Members States, weak ownership, overlapping responsibilities, insufficient alignment of national strategic development frameworks, uncoordinated initiatives, aversion to change and innovation, institutional weakness and limited capacity of Community institutions to monitor the implementation. Mitigating these various risks will require readjustments and / or adaptation of strategies. Measures of potential risks mitigation at the strategic and operational levels must be based on the internalisation of some key guiding principles and the consideration of some factors of success toward the realisation of the ECOWAS Vision 2050.

- **Guiding Principles**

78. The successful implementation of the ECOWAS Vision 2050 will rest on the following guiding principles:

- i. Leadership and Political Will:** The achievement of ECOWAS Vision 2050 will depend on the impulse of the actions and reforms necessary to achieve the objectives. This requires a strong political commitment and leadership from Member States to foster the dynamics and changes necessary for the realisation of the Vision. This also requires compliance with regional commitments by Member States through the application of Community texts and the alignment of national development plans to the Vision 2050.
- ii. Ownership and Shared Responsibility:** This principle implies the involvement of all stakeholders in the formulation, definition, and implementation process. It will be necessary to ensure the buy-in and ownership of the envisaged regional integration and development process by Member States, institutions, non-state actors, civil society, the private sector, the Diaspora as well as by the various constituents of the ECOWAS population. All these stakeholders should be adequately mobilised to play their part at all stages of the implementation of the Vision.
- iii. Complementarity and Subsidiarity:** The realisation of Vision 2050 requires the complementarity of interventions at local, national, and regional levels to ensure the overall coherence of actions to achieve the set objectives. While these responses may in some cases fall within national competence, in other cases it will require collective action, where ECOWAS' added value is proven. This underpins the necessity of subsidiarity, the comparative advantages of stakeholders and the synergies of actions to be created at all levels to facilitate the harmonious realisation of the Vision.
- iv. Transparency and Accountability:** Mechanisms to ensure transparency, responsibility and oversight of the various decision-making, implementation and monitoring structures will be essential to support the overall governance of the implementation of the Vision 2050 and the participatory approach needed to make it happen. To this end, Member States will volunteer to champion the different pillars of the Vision thereby creating additional conditions for a sustained and shared commitment that ensure the full realisation of the overall objectives of the Vision.

v. Sustainability: The sustainability of outcomes is a key factor in the continuous improvement of Community well-being. Therefore, policies, programmes and projects developed within the Vision 2050 framework should be sustainable to maximise their impact on communities across the region.

- **Success factors**

79. The determining factors listed below constitute guarantees for the realisation of Vision 2050:

- i. **Effective and Conducive Institutional Framework:** In addition to the expected role of all Community institutions in line with their respective competences, the institutional architecture should ensure visibility, flexibility, control, monitoring and effective and efficient inter-institutional coordination based on shared responsibility. The mechanism should be supported by relevant arrangements at Member States' level and through regional consultation platforms for different interventions and actors and at different levels, including civil society and other non-state actors. Moreover, to strengthen Member States' commitment, a regional peer review mechanism instrument shall be put in place in order to improve policies, performance and promote best practices as well as compliance with guiding principles as part of the realisation of Vision 2050.
- ii. **Resource Mobilisation, Cooperation and Strategic Partnerships:** Achieving Vision 2050 requires adequate, sufficient, and complementary resources. It calls for resolute efforts to be made by Member States in the implementation of the Community Levy Protocol. Achieving Vision 2050 also requires efforts in the rationalisation and efficient use of resources. In addition to the mobilisation of domestic and external resources, the implementation of innovative financing strategies involving the private sector will be desirable. Therefore, development cooperation and the establishment of strategic partnerships will be among the key success factors for the realisation of Vision 2050.
- iii. **Programming, Monitoring and Evaluation:** The establishment of coordination mechanisms and effective tools for planning, monitoring and evaluation will be crucial. In this regard, it will be necessary to strengthen the strategic planning and monitoring structures of all institutions in order to ensure a priority-based programmatic approach and full adoption of the results-based management in programme design and implementation. Furthermore, the development of key performance indicators (KPIs) will facilitate the monitoring of programmes and projects implementation, help with the assessment of their impact and improve effectiveness in intervention delivery.
- iv. **Strategic Surveillance:** Achieving ECOWAS' development ambition will depend on the monitoring of the Member States and the Community institutions' progress trajectory. This permanent surveillance of the internal and international environments requires the establishment of a strategic surveillance mechanism. The regular monitoring for strategic decision-making should be anchored in Member States and within the ECOWAS through the establishment of dedicated structures for the prospective and Strategic surveillance. This strategy will make it possible to mitigate the risks of disrupting the region's ability to take advantage of the opportunities and thereby increase Member States' capacity for anticipating risks and responding to them proactively.
- v. **Advocacy, Communication and Awareness:** The success of Vision 2050 depends on its ownership by all stakeholders. Therefore, it will be necessary to ensure its wide dissemination using all available

tools of communication. In this respect, the communication, advocacy and awareness-raising strategy that has been developed remain, an integral part of the Vision implementation process. This will help to create buy-in, mobilise support and commitment from all stakeholders, including the region's bilateral and multilateral partners.

vi. Availability of the Vision operationalisation documents: The timely availability of operational documents will be essential to support the effective achievement of Vision 2050, which is a long-term orientation document. This involves ensuring the development of (i) the first medium-term strategic framework with a breakdown of the various five-year plans including the vi. development of monitoring-evaluation indicators, (ii) the resource mobilization strategy; and (iii) the communication strategy to support the ownership of the Vision 2050.

V. CONCLUSION

80. The forward-looking approach that guided the formulation of the ECOWAS Vision 2050 document is part of an inclusive process that validates the desired development trajectory for the region over the next three decades.
81. This new path has been drawn from the deep desire of the peoples of ECOWAS who, by 2050, aspire to be **“A fully integrated Community of people, living in a peaceful and prosperous region, with strong institutions respectful of fundamental rights and freedoms, striving towards inclusive and sustainable development”**.
82. Vision 2050 therefore places the well-being of West African citizens and their development at the heart of its agenda. It is a Vision that's oriented towards an inclusive society in which special attention is paid to the most vulnerable segment of the population, especially women and young people. As such, over the next thirty (30) years, ECOWAS seeks to realise the objectives of sustainable development by deepening the integration process.
83. This ambition considers emerging challenges that are in line with relevant national, regional, continental and multilateral development frameworks. Above all, it is based on the need for synergies of action, complementary approaches, and responses in addressing development challenges at national and regional levels.
84. Thus, the materialisation of the Vision 2050 calls for a total ownership by the various stakeholders (Member States, institutions, civil society, NSAs and the Private Sector) and their strong involvement in the implementation of the Community development agenda. In particular, it implies the primordial role devolved to the Member States in the impulsion, orientation, and domestication of regional policies/programmes in their national development strategies.
85. Beyond the political will needed to achieve Vision 2050, adequate, sufficient, and complementary resources will be required. This will require the building of appropriate institutional and human capacities, as well as the strong commitment of Member States to the effective implementation of the Community Levy Protocol. It will also require the establishment of strategic partnerships and the exploitation of innovative financing mechanisms in which the role of regional development banks and the private sector will be decisive.
86. Finally, the realisation of Vision 2050 will require innovative working methods which must be based not only on appropriate coordination mechanisms at all levels but also on effective monitoring and evaluation tools. These innovations should also be supported by continued reforms to improve the Community's institutional governance for greater effectiveness and efficiency in the management and use of Community resources.

APPENDICES

Table 1. BREAKDOWN OF PILLAR 1

PILLARS	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS	POSSIBLE AREAS OF INTERVENTION/PRIORITIES
Pillar 1: Peace, Security and Stability	Making ECOWAS a secure, stable and peaceful region	SOR1: Strengthen regional peace and security	(1) Improve regional peace-building mechanisms; (2) Develop regional legal frameworks, strategies and policies; (3) Combat terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism; (4) Strengthen national legal and institutional arrangements for the prevention and suppression of the financing of terrorism and the laundering of the proceeds of organized crime; (5) Strengthen African Peace and Security Architecture and ECOWAS Standby Force, (6) Strengthen Maritime Safety; (7) Strengthen Cyber Security and combat cybercrime; (8) Strengthen Law Enforcement Cooperation; and (9) Fight against organised crime and all types of trafficking.
		SOR2: Strengthen human security	(1) Protect refugees; (2) Provide humanitarian assistance; (3) Internally displaced persons, (4) Address migration/displacement issues; (5) Combat human trafficking; and (6) Protect victims.
		SOR3: Prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts	(1) Strengthen Early Warning Systems; (2) strengthening mediation processes and multi-stakeholder dialogue frameworks; (3) Strengthen the post-conflict stabilisation process; (4) Reform the defence and security sectors and (5) Strength transitional justice and reconciliation processes.

Table 2. BREAKDOWN OF PILLAR 2

PILLARS	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS	POSSIBLE AREAS OF INTERVENTION/PRIORITIES
Pillar 2 Governance and Rule of Law	Anchoring the democratic culture and good governance and the respect of the state of rights and fundamental freedoms	SOR1: Strengthen Democratic Governance	(1) Consolidate democratic principles and universal values of democracy; (2) Promote democratic processes and the integrity of electoral processes; (3) Strengthen mechanisms for electoral management and conflict resolution; (4) Encourage citizen participation and representation; and (5) Strengthen institutional governance.
		SOR2: Strengthen the rule of law and justice	(1) Develop and implement regional laws and policies (2) Strengthen judicial systems; (3) Strengthen the role and powers of parliament; (4) Promote and ensure respect for the rule of law; (5) Prevent and fight corruption; (6) Strengthen accountability; and (7) Strengthen institutional governance, integrity and control mechanisms.
		SOR3: Promote respect for fundamental rights	(1) Promote and respect for and protection of human rights; (2) Promote respect for fundamental freedoms; and (3) Fight against all forms of discrimination.

Table 3. BREAKDOWN OF PILLAR 3

PILLARS	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS	POSSIBLE AREAS OF INTERVENTION/PRIORITIES
Pillar 3: Economic Integration and Interconnectivity	Making ECOWAS a fully integrated and interconnected economic zone	SOR1: Consolidate the Free Movement of People and Goods and accelerate market integration	(1) Consolidate the regional market; (2) Promote regional trade and FTAA implementation; (3) Promote Free Movement of People and Goods; (4) Develop and implement regional policies; (5) Strengthen regional competitiveness; and (6) Develop integrated value chains.
		SOR2: Accelerate monetary union and economic and financial integration	(1) Strengthen multilateral surveillance; (2) Improve the macroeconomic framework; (3) Introduce economic reforms and public financial management; (4) Promote Capital market and payment system integration; (5) Strengthen statistical systems; (6) Improve the Business Climate and Investment; and (7) Fight financial crime
		SOR3: Intensify infrastructure development and interconnectivity	(1) Provide road and rail infrastructure (2) Provide air and sea transport; (3) Promote and provide Energy for all; (4) Provide interconnection networks and energy efficiency; (5) Promote and provide ICT infrastructure and services; and (6) Ensure sector policy and governance.

Table 4. BREAKDOWN OF PILLAR 4

PILLARS	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS	POSSIBLE AREAS OF INTERVENTION/PRIORITIES
Pillar 4: Transformation, Inclusive and Sustainable Development	Creating the Conditions for Economic Transformation and Sustainable well- being of the People	SOR1: Ensure human and social development	(1) Improve access to basic services (water, health, education, housing); (2) Promote health care promotion and strengthen systems and mechanisms to respond to health care crises and pandemics; (3) Maximise the benefits of the demographic dividend and promote youth; (4) Empower youth and women; (5) Develop sectoral policies; (6) Ensure social protection; (7) Reduce social inequalities; (8) Urbanization and balanced development of territories and (9) Promote inclusive growth and employment
		SOR2: Leverage human capital and skills development	(1) Promote education, (2) Promote knowledge development; (3) Promote science technology and innovation; (4) Promote entrepreneurship; (5) Promote Research and Development; (6) Promote ICT and digital economy; (7) Promote the transfer of skills and (8) Promote technology transfer and artificial intelligence.
		SOR3: Strengthen environmental sustainability and climate change	(1) Improve natural resource management; (2) Combat climate change; (3) Improve risk and disaster management; (4) Promote renewable energy; (5) Promote food and nutrition security, (6) Promote sustainable agriculture and (7) improve ocean governance and the blue economy
		SOR4: Promote sustainable economic growth and development	(1) Mobilise investments; (2) Promote Economic transformation and industrialization; (3) Promote Community enterprise development, (4) Modernise the economies and promote innovation; (5) Promote ICT and digital economy; (6) Promote good quality; (7) Promote value chain development; (8) Promote private sector development; (9) Foster public-private partnership and (10) Improve the business climate.

Table 5. BREAKDOWN OF PILLAR 5

PILLARS	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS	POSSIBLE AREAS OF INTERVENTION/PRIORITIES
Pillar 5: Social Inclusion	Making ECOWAS a Community of peoples fully inclusive of women, youth and children	SOR1: Strengthen cultural diversity to promote development and social progress	(1) Promote cultural heritage and protection of cultural rights; (2) Promote creative arts development and cultural enterprise; (3) Promote cultural diversity; (4) Promote cultural exchange frameworks; (5) Disseminate shared values; and (6) Promote sport and inter-cultural cooperation.
		SOR2: Strengthen Community citizenship and solidarity	(1) Promote Community development and cross-border cooperation; (2) Promote free movement of persons and goods and the right of establishment; (3) Strengthen Community identity; (4) Develop cross-border cooperation frameworks; and (5) Intensify intercultural dialogue.
		SOR3: Promote inclusion and strengthen social cohesion	(1) Engage in citizens' participation; (2) Prepare a dialogue framework that includes role of NSAs and the Diaspora; (3) Fight against discrimination; (4) Promote equality between men and women; (5) Provide equal opportunities for all; (6) Promote social protection; (7) Promote Decent Work and Social Policy on Employment; (8) Protect and Include Vulnerable Groups and persons living with disabilities; and (9) Promote tolerance.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS OF VISION 2050

Vision: A Community of peoples fully integrated in a peaceful region, prosperous with strong institutions and respectful of fundamental freedoms and working for inclusive and sustainable development.

Terms	Definitions
Community	A social group whose members live together, or share common resources, common interests
Fully integrated Community	A Community that has managed to overcome, by mutual agreement, the political, physical, economic and social obstacles that separate the countries that make up the region and collaborates in the management of shared regional resources.
Sustainable development	Sustainable development is "development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs", a quotation from Ms Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norwegian Prime Minister, 1987
Inclusive development	According to the UNDP, development is inclusive if all categories of the population, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, age or social status, contribute to creating opportunities, share in the benefits of development and contribute to decision making.
Institution	According to North (1991), institutions are the human-designed constraints that structure political, economic, and social interactions. They consist of both informal (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct) and formal constraints (constitution, laws, property rights). An institution is strong when it is reliable, accountable and free from corruption.
Freedom and fundamental rights	These include the set of overarching subjective rights of the individual, guaranteed in a state governed by rule of law and a democracy. They are derived mainly from the principles of equality (equality of the sexes, equality before the law, equality before the tax system, equality before justice), and freedom (freedom of opinion, expression, assembly, worship, freedom of association and the right to strike)
Peaceful region	A region that does not make war and/or engage in conflict; one which aspires to peace and possesses effective institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts in order to guarantee a lasting environment of peace to all its citizens.

SUMMARY OF THE THREE ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

Scenarios & Underlying Assumptions	Narratives
<p><i>“A Community making timid strides”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An ECOWAS of wavering welfare and competence; - Faltering institutions; - An environment of terrorism, insecurity and instability that is not well controlled; and - ECOWAS is still in search of integration and competitiveness on the world stage. 	<p>The process of consolidating democracy is moving slowly due to the poor implementation of the principles of democratic governance, independence, and separation of powers. Financial governance has improved but needs to be strengthened in order to consolidate the rule of law. Despite the proliferation of schools and universities and the concession to the private sector of entire sections of the public education service, the human capital of the countries in the region has not experienced a significant qualitative leap due to the lack of in-depth reforms. Health systems are still plagued by numerous problems. The capacity of countries to deal with health crises and to improve access to health for their populations is deteriorating. Sub-regional infrastructure and efforts to harmonise economies are not yet sufficient to build a fully-fledged Community. Intra-regional trade is stagnating, and the region’s productive systems remain poorly integrated. Labour productivity is stagnating, as is business competitiveness and poverty. On the contrary, income inequality is increasing because public policies are not very inclusive and are marked by corruption. People blame the imperialist powers for the difficulties they are experiencing by imposing on them rulers that they can manipulate to their liking. This idea, which is increasingly shared, leads to a withdrawal into one’s identity and is a source of insecurity and social instability. The steps taken by ECOWAS Member States are not sufficient to bring about the changes desired by the people.</p>
<p><i>“Walking backwards”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An ECOWAS with declining productive capacity and unsatisfactory social conditions; - A collapse of institutions; - An environment of terrorism, insecurity and instability that is not well controlled; and - A region still in search of integration and competitiveness on the world stage. 	<p>The desired changes for an institutionally stronger, democratic, and financially self-sustaining ECOWAS are blocked by weak institutions. Corruption is becoming widespread and a cancer on the business environment. FDI into the Community is falling, especially in the non-extractive sector. The structural transformation process is stalling. With the downward trend in commodity prices, governments have no choice but to cut back on resources for economic and social infrastructure, which is declining, limiting trade between countries and participation in international trade. Educational facilities in the Region are not improving. The supervision of students is inadequate. As a result, labour productivity is falling in all sectors, especially in agriculture and services. Health systems are also continuously deteriorating and access to health is difficult for a significant proportion of the population. Regional surveillance and epidemic prevention systems are not sufficiently prepared to contain epidemics and other emerging diseases. The population lives in bad conditions, which fuels social instability. In the face of these injustices, strikes become recurrent. The dynamics of structural and social transformation of ECOWAS is leading to its backward movement from the ECOWAS of the peoples to the ECOWAS of States.</p>

<p>«Le suicide communautaire d'un géant»</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Une CEDEAO aux capacités productives en déclin et vivant dans des conditions insatisfaisantes au niveau social - Un effondrement des institutions ; non-respect des droits humains et des libertés fondamentales, absence d'Etat de droit ; - Une sécurité en décadence et une instabilité totale ; - Une région fortement désintégérée et en voie de dislocation. 	<p>Within the framework of regional policies, governments show no willingness to undertake the structural reforms necessary for the emergence of a dynamic and competitive regional economy. The principles of good governance are flouted in favour of nepotism and corruption. There is a lack of democratic culture and a breakdown of institutions.</p> <p>Due to multifaceted difficulties, the sub-region is unable to reinvent its education system and meet the challenges it faces. The private sector fails to have the quality of human resources required for its growth and development. Member states' resources are reduced due to the lack of economic growth, high fertility rates and the reduction in labour productivity. In this context, the health and education systems continue to deteriorate. The region no longer attracts investors due to a poor and unattractive business climate. The region is further marginalised in international trade. The Community is becoming almost exclusively dependent on Official Development Assistance. This situation contributes to making the region more fragile and reduces its capacity to manage public affairs. The population is experiencing a social malaise, which is not conducive to growth, and it is one that gives rise to instability and social conflicts, thereby aggravating the insecurity of property and persons in the Community. This decadence worsens the economic and social situation of the region. The ECOWAS of 2050, initially projected as a strong Community in Africa and in the world, is self-destructing.</p>
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