

COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

ECOWAS COMMISSION



COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO

**MEETING OF MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF YOUTH AND SPORTS OF
ECOWAS MEMBER STATES,**

Cotonou, 25 July 2008

FINAL REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Ministers in charge of Youth and Sports held a meeting in BENIN MARINA Hotel in Cotonou (BENIN), on 25 July 2008.

2. The main objectives of the meeting are to:

-Consult Ministers on draft programmes, whose implementation will require their commitment and close involvement,

- Also inform the Ministers on the programmes underway, aimed at further creating synergy and cohesion among the stakeholders at national and sub-regional levels.

3. The following Member States were represented at the meeting:

- The Republic of Benin,
- Burkina Faso
- The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
- The Republic of Ghana
- The Republic of Guinea
- The Republic of Guinea Bissau
- The Republic of Liberia
- The Republic of Mali
- The Republic of Niger
- The Federal Republic of Nigeria
- The Republic of Sierra Leone
- The Republic of Togo

4. Also represented were the ECOWAS Commission, the YSDC and the Conflict Security, and Development Research Group of King's College London.

II OPENING CEREMONY:

5. The opening ceremony was chaired His Excellency Issifou Kogui N'DOURO, Senior Minister in charge of National Defense of BENIN, representing His Excellency the President of the Republic. He was assisted by Mr. Galiou SOGLO Minister of Youth, Sports and Leisure of BENIN and Mrs. Adrienne DIOP, Commissioner in charge of Human and Gender Development, representing the President of the ECOWAS Commission.

6. The ceremony was marked by three major speeches:

- 1- The welcome address of the Minister in charge of Youth and Sports of BENIN

2 – The speech of the representative of His Excellency Dr Mohamed IBN CHAMBAS, President of the ECOWAS Commission

3 - The opening remarks of His Excellency the Senior Minister in charge of Defense.

7. In his address to his colleagues of the West African Region, Mr. Galiou SOGLO said he was particularly happy to see his country Benin hosting the sectoral meeting of Ministers of Youth and Sports of ECOWAS Member States.

8. He further thanked His Excellency Dr Boni YAYI, President of the Republic, Head of State, and Head of Government who authorized the organization of the meeting in Cotonou.

9. He also thanked the President of the ECOWAS Commission and especially the Director of the ECOWAS /YSDC for his commendable vision, sagacity and relentless efforts.

10. Mrs. Adrienne DIOP, on behalf of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr Mohamed IBN CHAMBAS, expressed her profound gratitude to His Excellency Dr Boni YAYI and to his Government for accepting to host the Cotonou meeting.

11. She recalled that by virtue of Article 62 of the ECOWAS Treaty, Member States pledged their cooperation in promoting women and youth organizations as well as professional associations in order to ensure mass participation in ECOWAS activities on the one hand, and promoting and developing the practice of sports in region, on the other.

12. She finally reminded the Ministers that in adopting ECOWAS' strategic vision, Heads of State and Government laid emphasis on the change from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of the people. Youth in our region constitute the major part of our Community's population. They build high hopes on the programmes and projects that we implement to prepare them for their role as adults. The youth of our region is the future generation of workers, entrepreneurs, family heads and community or national leaders. We should prepare them to assume the responsibilities that would be theirs in an increasingly competitive world. This means that our responsibility at the Commission will be to develop realistic regional policies while Member States' responsibility will be their effective implementation. The draft programmes submitted for your appraisal during this session shall be integrated into the Community Development Programme within the areas of Youth and Sports

13. In his opening remarks, Mr. **Issifou Kogui N'DOURO**, Senior Minister in charge National Defense first of all expressed to the Ministers of Youth and Sports the profound gratitude of the people of Benin for the choice made on BENIN to host this meeting.

14. According to the Senior Minister, this meeting constitutes a privileged opportunity to accelerate the integration of our sectoral policies and to envisage new prospects of cooperation likely to help our youths in playing their role of quality agents of change for the socioeconomic development of our respective States.

14. For the attention of the participants, he indicated that the value of the Youth, its strength and its successes do not only depend on its competences and its determination but also on the quality of its mentoring.

16. Finally, he called on Ministers in charge of Youth and sports of our community to be ready to instill a fresh impetus to any policy that will provide youths with employment opportunities, vocational training, socioeconomic integration and access facilities to all forms of youth activities notably the efficient practice of sports.

17. At the end of the speeches, the Senior Minister declared the meeting opened.

III ELECTION OF BUREAU

18. After the opening ceremony, the meeting set up its session's bureau as follows:

Chairman : Benin

Rapporteurs : - Mali

Sierra Leone

IV ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

19. The following items were on the agenda:

Election of bureau

Adoption of work programme

Consideration of meeting of Experts' report

Discussions

Any other business

Recommendations

Adoption of final report

--V OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS:

PRESENTATION OF EXPERTS' FINAL REPORT.

20 The final report of experts' proceedings was presented by Mr. Alexandre YOUNG BARE, Expert from Burkina-Faso.

21. In the course of discussions, the Ministers adopted the report of experts after making the following amendments:

Concerning the Terms of Reference of the ECOWAS Games

22. The meeting expresses the wish that the list of sporting disciplines agreed upon in the youth programme should be communicated to Member States as soon as possible.

Concerning the ECOWAS Volunteers Programme

23. The meeting included the following aspects on the list of areas of intervention:

- Culture of peace

- Education
- Major scourges especially HIV/AIDS, drugs,
- Protection of the Community's cultural Heritage

Concerning youths employment

24. The meeting seized the opportunity to urge the Ministers of Member States to participate in the meeting of the Commission for Africa slated for 5 September 2008 in ACCRA, Ghana on the theme 'Youth Employment'.

Information

25. The Commissioner in charge of Human and Gender Development informed the Ministers of :

- The organization of the next ECOWAS cultural festival (ECOFEST)
- The degrees and diplomas equivalent harmonization project within the Community
- The need to cater for youth employment in the Vision 2020 of ECOWAS

26. The delegation from GHANA informed the meeting of the forthcoming General Assembly of Ministers of Youth and Sports of the African Union from 10 to 15 October 2008 in Accra (GHANA) and subsequently invited the ECOWAS Ministers.

27. The Director of the YSDC informed the Ministers of the existence of a Charter of Good Relationships between States and national, international Sports Federations adopted in April 2005 in PARIS

RECOMMENDATIONS

28. At the end of the proceedings, the Ministers formulated the following recommendations to the ECOWAS authorities:

- The organization of the ECOWAS Games in the months of July/August 2009 in BENIN
- The setting up of an ad hoc Committee to reflect on:
 - The ideal relationships between States and national and international Sports Federations
 - The profitable returns on national sports infrastructures.
 - A fiscal incentive policy for the private sector to promote youth employment and the financing of sports.
- The increase of the level of national budgets earmarked for youth and sports while envisaging new possibilities of funding in line with the specificities of each State
- The creation of a Community fund within the ECOWAS to sustain efforts towards youth employment

- The review of partnership agreements and conventions to cover the youth and sports sectors
- The strengthening of mechanisms aimed at promoting professional exchange in favour of youths within the framework of the volunteers programme and their integration and
- The identification of Sports as a development tool.

VI. ADOPTION OF REPORT

29. This report was unanimously adopted by the Ministers after amendments.

VII. CLOSING SESSION

30. The Chairman of the session, Mr. Galiou SOGLO Minister of Youth and Sports and Leisure of the Republic of Benin thanked the participants for their fruitful contributions and for the mutual respect which enabled a smooth progress of the proceedings. He expressed the wish that problems of Youth and Sports should be paid better attention from our States. .

31. He did not fail to commend the Organizing Committee and the availability of each of its members.

32. While closing the proceedings, he wished participants a safe return to their respective countries and encouraged the continuation of exchange of views among them.

Cotonou 25 July 2008

The Meeting

Galiou D.SOGLO

Chairman