



COMMUNIQUE OF THE ECOWAS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON THE TRANSITION PROCESS IN GUINEA BISSAU

Council takes note of the gradual progress in the drive towards achieving stability in Guinea Bissau, which contributes in strengthening the transition process in the country. In particular, it notes with satisfaction the consensus reached by Guinea Bissau stakeholders on the Regime Pact adopted in April 2013 in view of the conduct of elections in November 2013. Subsequently, Council hails the formation of the broad-based inclusive transitional Government on 7 June 2013 in consonance with the letter and spirit of this Pact, whose responsibility will be to prepare and organise elections.

Council stresses that this inclusive and participatory process with all stakeholders, is indispensable for a successful transition and the consolidation of democracy and good governance in Guinea Bissau. The Council therefore encourages the transitional authorities, all political party leaders, opinion leaders and all dynamic forces of the society, military and civilian alike, to maintain this level of permanent dialogue. In particular, Council exhorts the interim President, the new transitional Government, the People's National Assembly, the civil society organisations and all other stakeholders to work assiduously and cooperatively towards the implementation of the urgent tasks of the transition, in particular the holding of elections.

Council considers that these elections will pave the way for the deepening of political, economic and security reforms required for the country's development. Council welcomes the swearing in of Augusto Mendes, the newly elected Chairman of the National Elections Commission. It urges all stakeholders in electoral process to work together, in the supreme interest of the Nation, towards setting concrete dates for elections and creating optimum conditions for successful polls.

Council expresses its sincere gratitude to H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairman of the regional Contact Group on Guinea Bissau (GCR-GB), and Member States of the Contact Group, for the

assistance afforded Guinea Bissau and for their determination to ensure a smooth and inclusive transition process.

Lastly, Council commends the on-going efforts to reach a consensus among international partners including ECOWAS, EU, AU, CPLP and the UN on the transition in Guinea Bissau. It welcomes the decision taken on 29 May 2013 by these organisations to undertake a follow-up joint mission in Bissau as soon as possible as well as their commitment to accompany the country in the electoral process. Council thanks all its partners for their involvement in the management of the Guinea Bissau crisis and their support for the transition process and the country's development.

Council reiterates the ECOWAS commitment to support Guinea Bissau at this crucial stage of consolidation of the transition and democracy, and continued structural reforms in that country.

Abidjan, 21 June 2013