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RATIONALISATION OF ECONOMIC  
INTEGRATION EFFORTS IN THE  
WEST AFRICAN SUBREGION

## I - INTRODUCTION

1. While the theoretical justification of regional or subregional economic integration schemes is based on the assumption that it enables the participating member States to achieve higher rates of economic growth and development than would otherwise be attainable had each member State opted for a "go-it-alone" policy, the failure of nearly all member countries of the subregion to give priority to the integration issues in their own national development plans, and to meet the financial obligations of their memberships in these organizations have reduced the effectiveness of these institutions as instruments of economic development (1). This trend has been more marked in West Africa, where there exists over forty such intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) competing for the same limited and scarce resources. The result is that, despite the existence of such large numbers of organizations, the subregion remains a zone of poverty and underdevelopment.

2. Indeed, even though the multiplicity of IGOs may bespeak of a good measure of enthusiasm for economic cooperation, and reflect pan-african dream of a unified Africa, the existence of so many IGOs has been deemed to be detrimental to the economic integration efforts in the subregion. Hence, the concerted attempts at streamlining and rationalising these organizations within the West African Subregion.

3. The efforts to undertake such measures can be traced as far back as 1982, when the ECA Niamey-based Multinational operational Centre (MULPOC) Council of Ministers at their fifth meeting held in Banjul, the Gambia in February 1982, in its resolution 9, requested the "Executive Secretary of ECA to undertake a study on rationalization, restructuring and harmonization of the operations of all West African IGOs with a view to strengthening and accelerating economic co-operation and integration in West Africa in conformity to the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos" which provide a conceptual and planning framework for economic integration in Africa.

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(1) World Bank - Sub-Saharan Africa : From Crisis to Sustainable Growth , the World Bank, Washington DC, 1989

4. In pursuance of this resolution, ECA prepared a study entitled : Proposals for Strengthening Economic Integration in West Africa (the Adewoye Report) in 1983, which reviewed the issues affecting the existence and activities of West African IGOs, and the ways their activities could be rationalized and harmonized in order to make them effective instruments in the promotion of subregional co-operation and socio-economic development. The Adewoye Report became the subject of extensive discussion at various fora - at experts level and at the government policy levels.
5. The seventh session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS member States also considered the report and recommendations that had been made by the different preparatory meetings convened to examine the Report. The Authority of Heads of State and Government on their part requested that additional studies be carried out by the ECA and ECOWAS. In compliance with this directive, ECA and ECOWAS prepared a study entitled : Proposals for the Rationalization of West African Integration Efforts.
6. The intense interest stimulated by these two studies has kept the rationalization of IGOs debate at the fore front of the search for new integration strategy in the subregion. Furthermore, the lack of progress in reversing the deterioration of economic condition in West Africa has underlined the absolute need of pursuing with vigour, the objectives of economic integration and collective self reliance.
7. It was against this background that the ECA/MULPOC Council of Ministers for West Africa, at their 11th meeting held at Dakar, Senegal in February 1989, decided that the question of the Rationalisation of Economic Integration in the West African Subregion be revisited once again by including such a study in the ECA/MULPOC Work programme for 1990-1991 biennium. The study which remains a desk study will therefore limit itself to the review of the literature on the subject, with a view to shedding light on factors that have impeded the implementation of the various decisions and perhaps make some suggestions on what needs to be done to revitalize the process of rationalisation of economic integration in West Africa.

8. The study will be organized into various sub-headings. The first part (I) is the introduction. Part II will deal with the status of economic integration in West Africa. Part III will examine the rationale for the rationalisation of the IGOs activities, while Part IV will review the attempts made at implementation. Part V will analyse the attendant problems and difficulties. In the light of some of these difficulties, an attempt will be made in Part VI, to make some of new proposals.

## II - THE STATUS OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA

9. The West African subregion has the highest concentration of IGOs than any other subregion in Africa. The subregional average in the membership in these IGOs is not less than 12, but for the top ten countries, that average is 17, whereas for the six lower category, that average is about 5. The other striking feature is that the French speaking countries in the subregion belong to more West African IGOs than other West African countries. The paradox is that there has been no correlation between the level of development and the membership in these organizations. The trend seems to suggest that the higher the membership in these organizations, the lower the level of economic development. Hence, the very strong inclination towards the belief that economic integration or co-operation has not been a panacea for solving the development problems.

10. As argued elsewhere(2), the real danger lies not in the sheer numbers of these organizations, but in the fact that these IGOs operate at cross purposes with each and one another. In other words, the proliferation of IGOs in the subregion without clear perception of what is intended to be achieved, and the lack of strong institutional framework to support these organizations have often resulted in unhealthy rivalry and antagonism which have all combined to paralyze the effectiveness of these organizations as instruments of economic growth and development. The picture that emerges is that these organizations have been less effective in the transformation of the economies of the subregion, and the subregion remains one of the least developed in the African region, its enormous resources notwithstanding.

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(2) Report on Joint and Complementary Programme and Projects in the Field of Industry : Review of ECOWAS, CEAO and MRU Work Programmes, ECA/MULPOC/NIA/IGO/V/90/4 November, 1990.

11. If economic integration is understood as a rational linkage of a set of operations within a coherent productive process and distribution of certain goods, as well as a strategy for overcoming technological underdevelopment and attaining command over resources through planned and deliberate restructuring of the economies, then the existence of different types of IGOs within the subregion with conflicting agendas can only be defined as being inimical to the process of economic integration and collective self reliance.

12. The gains that have been made so far are modest in comparison to the resources that have been devoted to the promotion of inter-subregional co-operation. The subregion has not overcome a number of limiting factors such as : the narrow productive base, inadequate and underdeveloped physical infrastructures, high degree of dependency on a limited range of primary commodity exports and low level of industrial development. For example, out of the sixteen countries, only four can be termed "industrializing states" that is, countries that have more manufacturing activities, while the rest remain essentially non-manufacturing states. The manufacturing sector accounts on the average, for 6.5 percent of the GDP. The sub-region market remains equally small because most countries still have GNP of far less than \$ 600 which constitutes the poverty line - yet the indications were that the prospects for improving the sub-regional market looked less brighter as some countries of the subregion were being downgraded from middle income group to low income group, that is, to countries with less than \$ 400 income per annum. It was evident that the proliferation of IGOS had not provided sufficient condition to reverse the general trend in the deterioration of the economies of the subregion.

13. More recently, greater concern has been expressed with regards to the multiplicity of IGOs in the subregion. It has become increasingly recognized that such multiplicity of IGOs is having a negative effect on the promotion of economic integration in West Africa. Subsequently, concerned West Africans have voiced the urgent need to rationalize the large number of IGOs in the subregion. The issue that remain is what method is to be used to achieve this objective. This critical question has not been properly addressed.

### III - THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE RATIONALISATION OF IGOs ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE SUBREGION.

14. In spite of a near dismal record of achievement of economic integration in Africa in general, there is still a staggering unanimity on the need for closer economic integration both at the subregional and regional levels. It is felt that the transformation of the economic structures inherited from the colonial times will not succeed without economic co-operation. This preoccupation forms the spirit and body of the Lagos Plan of Action and its Final Act, which enjoins all independent African countries to take the necessary steps towards the gradual establishment of an African Common Market by the year 2000.

15. A more through-going arguments on the need to rationalize the activities of IGOs in West African have been advanced in the ECA study on the : Proposals for Strengthening Economic Integration in West Africa (3). In this regard only a very brief summary will be made under this section in order to underline some of these main arguments. The need to rationalize the activities of the IGOs is based on the principle that, besides minimizing the dissipation of scarce resources, it will also diminish the scope for persistent conflicts in the objectives and operations of these organizations that constitute major obstacles to the process of economic integration in the subregion.

16. If as argued by S.K.B. Asante that "regional integration is now designed primarily as a tool to combat and reduce external economic dependence" (4), then the multiplicity of IGOs that reflects the degree of external influence and dependence can only be deemed as a counter-strategy to collective self-reliance strategy. The need to chart a more self-reliant

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(3) For more detailed argument refer to - Proposals for Strengthening Economic Integration in West Africa.

(4) S.K.B. Asante - "Development and Regional Integration since 1980" in A. Adedeji and T.M. Shaw (eds) Economic Crisis in Africa, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. Boulder, Colorado, 1985

path to development demands the coordination of efforts. The multiplicity and dual membership in the regional economic organizations will tend to raise the problem of inefficient allocation of resource and give rise to divided loyalties, notwithstanding the fact that the Treaties allow member States to belong to more than one organizations.

17. The promotion of joint or complementary projects, the exchange of skilled professionals and managerial personnel in the operation of projects ; the training of high calibre personnel in educational and technical institutions, and the need to bring about a balanced industrial development require measures designed to accelerate the industrial integration of the economies of the subregion. The multiplicity of and dual membership in the regional economic organizations will interfere with the policy of balanced industrial development. Indeed, the lack of coordination of the industrial strategy will play into the hands of TNCs and foreigners, who through their desire to maximize profits, will normally tend to invest in countries that already have the infrastructures, thus defeating the primary objective of regional economic organizations of eliminating regional disparities by fostering the movement of goods and services within a larger market (5).

18. Since industrial development holds the key to the economic transformation, the need for industrial programming becomes an imperative in the overall economic integration strategy. The failure to harmonize the industrial programme will aggravate the structural transformation, especially within the existing economic structures characterized by extreme disparities at national levels as well as the level of competing IGOs. It is for these and other reasons that it becomes necessary to establish one super structure that would be responsible for directing and devising development policy.

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(5) Wilfred A. Ndongko, "Economic Co-operation and Inter-African Industrial Co-operation" Razvoj Development - Vol. III, Nrs 1 - 2 ; January - December 1988

#### IV - REVIEW OF ATTEMPTS AT THE RATIONALISATION EFFORTS

19. The first serious attempt at the rationalisation of the economic integration efforts in West Africa was based on resolution 9 of the fifth meeting of the Council of Ministers of the ECA MULPOC for West Africa, held at Banjul, the Gambia in February 1982. That resolution called upon the ECA to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the activities, plans and programmes of West African IGOs with a view to identifying areas of duplication as well as of neglect, and make proposals for rationalising and coordinating the activities of IGOs in order to accelerate the process of economic integration in the subregion in conformity with the LPA and the Final Act of Lagos.

20. The resulting study, popularly referred to as the Adewoye Report, noted that the many economic groupings or integration arrangements in West Africa had not led to any sustained growth and development inspite of the enormous resources devoted towards their maintenance. Several reasons were adduced for this State of affairs. The first was that the economic integration efforts in the subregion lacked an overall framework for achieving the integration objective<sup>and</sup> that even ECOWAS had no provision for such a design. The absence of a clear policy direction had resulted in the functioning of these organizations at cross-purposes while at the same time stalemating their individual efforts at promoting the economic transformation in the subregion.

21. Secondly, modelled as they are on the EEC market oriented approach, the EEC model had assumed the existence of adequate production, division of labour, suitable and adequate infrastructural facilities including payment arrangements (6). But since there exists no real productive structures to begin, no serious intra-subregional trade could occur. Dependency was therefore reinforced and most of the expected gains from the economic integration efforts accrued to the transnational oligopolies that

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(6) The Political and Socio-Cultural Factors in the Economic Integration Efforts in West Africa, ECA/MULPOC

controlled most of the productive structures. In light of the above, the study put forward a number of recommendations for a revised framework for subregional integration.

22. In essence, the key elements of this new framework would compose of four major community institutions :

- (a) The West African Economic Summit ;
- (b) The Council of Ministers ;
- (c) The Economic Integration Planning Commission and ;
- (d) Several Sectoral Commissions.

The tasks of the institutions would be the stimulation, orientation, decision on plans, policies and programmes, and the supervisions of the entire process of economic integration in the subregion. In addition, the institutions would be responsible for the coordination supervision and monitoring of the implementation of the decisions taken by such intergovernmental organizations as CEAO and MRU. At the national level a similar institutions should be established in order to assist the Community Institutions.

23. The second recommendation made in the study was that the new framework for integration should place greater emphasis on the integration through production. The restructuring of production through planned collective development, the study indicated, could be achieved on a step by step basis :

- (i) first, by taking political decision to rectify and remodel the existing framework of economic integration ;
- (ii) secondly, by reviewing the treaties of ECOWAS and other IGOs with a view to ensuring the compatibility in their new role within the new framework ;
- (iii) thirdly, by introducing new modifications in the organizational structures and management practices of these organizations ;

- (iv) fourthly, the institutionalization of the Planning Commission and the Sectoral Commissions, and
- (v) fifthly, the elaboration of the modalities for the eventual phasing out of the IGOs that would either be transformed or disbanded.

24. The third recommendation was that some of the IGOs should either be transformed into development organs with limited objectives, or into technical and services organizations, while the financial and monetary institutions were to be restructured. It was proposed therefore that the development organs that would be charged with the responsibilities of implementing specific programmes for the benefits of the member States would include : CEAD, MRU, OMVG, OMVS, NBA, Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission and the Sene-Gambia-Permanent Commission. The Technical and Services organizations would on the other hand include : WARDA, ASECNA, OCLALAV, CEBV, CIEH, OICMA, CILSS, OCGGE, WACH and WAHC, etc... It was equally envisaged that some of the research/<sup>arms</sup> of some of these organizations could also be consolidated into one organ.

25. The Adewoye Report which was a subject of extensive deliberations and discussions by the various working groups, seminars and conferences, that made certain number of suggestions and recommendations was eventually presented to the Seventh Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held in Lome in November 1984. After, the consideration of the Report and the recommendations made by the various preparatory working groups and meetings, the ECOWAS Authority requested that additional studies be carried out, and that such studies should examine :

- (i) the structures and operational mechanisms or scope of action of the existing IGOs in West Africa with a view to proposing the necessary measures that would ensure the co-operation and integration of these organizations either by elimination, merging, redistribution of tasks and functions as well as the strengthening of such organizations. Proposals for the

management, personnel, financial resources and procedures to be made on those organizations that would be retained ;

- (ii) the legal instruments of those IGOs that were to be retained with a view to proposing the necessary modifications that would lead to the realization of the objectives of the new community for the subregion.

26. In compliance with this demand a joint study by ECA and ECOWAS entitled : Proposals for the Rationalization of West African Integration Efforts was carried out. The study that modified the proposals contained in the Adewoye Report, emphasized that the new approach to be followed should be sufficiently flexible to allow for different forms of co-operation within the broad limits set by the ultimate goal of subregional integration. However, the basic role of the Community should be the conceptualization, initiation, adaptation and monitoring of the broad integration policies and development programmes, especially in the productive sectors including trade and monetary sectors.

27. In contrast to the original proposal of the four major community institutions, the additional study proposed the new structure of the Community which, would be as follows :

- (i) Authority - which would be the supreme policy making organ ;
- (ii) Council of Ministers (ministers responsible for economic co-operation and integration ) ;
- (iii) Ministerial Committees and Board of Directors (six ministerial committees in agriculture and natural resources ; transport and communications ; monetary and financial affairs ; trade ; industry and energy ; social and cultural affairs .
- (iv) Technical Commissions in the above six sectors in addition to the Technical Commissions on Administration and Budget and Development and Integration - eight in all .
- (v) Executive secretariat with eleven departments :
  - (a) Department of Economic Research and Development ;
  - (b) Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources ;
  - (c) Department of Industry and Energy ;

- (d) Department of Transport and Communications ;
- (e) Department of Trade and Customs ;
- (f) Department of Monetary and Financial Affairs ;
- (g) Department of Social and Cultural Affairs ;
- (h) Department of Administration ;
- (i) Department of Finance ;
- (j) Department of Audit ; and
- (k) Department of Legal Affairs and
- (vi) Directorates and Head Offices of specialized Agencies.

In order to accommodate the new structure, ECOWAS was to be reorganized to be able to assume the new responsibilities that were being assigned to it. The reorganization of ECOWAS would be through-going so as to increase its operational capacity to be able to cope with the new and additional functions and duties (7). In this regard, member States were called upon to re-affirm their commitment to the creation of only one economic community in West Africa, through the modification of the ECOWAS Treaty, in order to provide for the creation of sectoral ministerial committees, the re-designation of the specialized and technical commission, including the creation of four additional new commissions.

28. The creation of the specialized agencies in the eight areas, namely :

- (a) rice and other cereals ;
- (b) cattle and other livestock ;
- (c) control of locusts and other crop pests ;
- (d) ecological preservation and rural development ;
- (e) water resources development and management ;
- (f) health co-operation programmes ;
- (g) monetary issues ;
- (h) development finance matters.;

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(7) For the new structure of ECOWAS refer to Proposals

would involve the conversion of a number of IGOs either through merger or reorganization into the specialized agencies of ECOWAS. The IGOs include :

- (a) WARDA
- (b) CEBV
- (c) CILSS, AGRHYMET AND INSAH
- (d) CIEH
- (e) DICMA
- (f) OCLALAV
- (g) WAHC
- (h) OCCGE
- (i) BCEAO
- (j) BOAD
- (k) FAGACE
- (l) ENTENTE FUND.

As a matter of fact, the study proposed that the Committee of Governors of Central Banks of West Africa should set up a task force to implement the merging of the financial institutions ; as follows : the merge of BOAD, FAGACE and ENTENTE Fund into a West African Development Funds ; and the transformation of the ECOWAS Fund into the West African Investment Bank.

29. As regards the river basin development, the study proposed that NBA and Liptako Gourma Authority (ALG) could concentrate on the development of river resources, while OMVS, OMVG should focus their activities on the development of multi-purpose dam projects. Under the same programme MRU was called upon to devote its attention to the establishment of an integrated Mano River Development Scheme. On the other hand, the African Groundnut Council should have its function extended to cover other oleaginous products for the whole of West Africa.

30. While the Adewoye Report had recommendations that CEAO be transformed into one of the development organs, the additional study did not make any mention of what had to become of CEAO. Perhaps, the omission was an oversight. In our view CEAO could either be a specialized agency in the fields of trade and customs as proposed by the CEAO Secretariat itself (8), or become a specialized agency responsible for the development of human resources given the fact that it has created a number of subregional institutions whose geographical coverage could be extended to all of the sixteen countries. In any case, an examination of the proposal of the new structure reveals that this important and crucial area of development had not been given due recognition.

#### V - PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RATIONALIZATION SCHEME

31. The joint meeting of the member States and the West African IGOs on the Rationalisation of West African Integration which was held in Niamey in September 1987, argued on the need to have a more flexible and pragmatic scheme of rationalisation that would allow for gradual merging, phasing out or restructuring on the basis of the performance and achievements of the existing IGOs. To this end, the joint meeting recommended that the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS should :

- (i) reaffirm its commitment to the establishment of a single economic community in West Africa ;
- (ii) take account of the existence of IGOs in the subregion when working out the political framework for the new Community structure ; and
- (iii) commission additional studies that would take all aspects of terms of reference contained in Decision A/Dec.2/11/84 into account with a view to achieving the effective

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(8) Refer to Propositions du Secrétariat Général de la CEAO visant à une Rationalisation des Efforts d'Intégration en Afrique de l'Ouest, September 1987.

rationalisation of the integration in West Africa (9).

32. It was obvious from the experts joint meeting recommendation that more time was being bought by calling for more additional studies before positive and practical steps could be taken to put into effect the rationalisation programme. Indeed, lack of progress in the achievement of effective and tangible integration in West Africa, led some concerned West Africans to take the initiative to bring together a number of eminent West Africans in their individual capacity to constitute a "Consultative Group on the revitalization and rationalisation of the integration process in the subregion". The Consultative group in their own submission observed, inter alia that ; past decisions and studies for the rationalisation of the intergovernmental organisations had not been implemented (10), and therefore urged that urgent action be taken on the rationalisation in order not only to economise on the use of scarce resources but also at the same time remove persistent conflicts in their objectives and operations, and divided loyalty which their competitive stance entail and which constitute obstacles towards the strengthening of the economic integration process in the subregion.

33. The Authority of Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS, at their Thirteenth Session which was held in Bnajul in May 1990 reiterated the urgent need to rationalize the large numbers of Intergovernmental Organizations in West Africa in the Final Communique which they adopted at the end of their meeting. They even went further

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(9) See Report of Joint Meeting of Members States and West African Intergovernmental Organizations on Rationalisation of West African Integrations Efforts, Niamey, 22-24 September, 1987

(10) Proposals from a Consultative Group on Integration in West Africa, Memorandum by the Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS to the First Meeting of Experts of Foreign Affairs, Lagos, May 1990.

to state within the Final Communiqué that there should be a single economic Community in West Africa for the purpose of inter-regional integration and the eventual establishment of the African Economic Community envisaged in the LPA. The Communiqué equally stated that each member state should adopt and implement all necessary measures to strengthen and consolidate ECOWAS with the aim of making it the sole economic community in West Africa. To this end, the ECOWAS secretariat was requested to prepare a flexible and pragmatic scheme of rationalisation of the integration efforts in the subregion, including practical modalities and a time table for implementation.

34. The lack of total commitment and the non implementation of the decisions taken have rendered the economic integration efforts in the subregion less effective. The 1985-86 ECOWAS Annual Report confirms that much. Records also show that after certain decisions have been taken, member States themselves do introduce new obstacles in order to circumvent their own decisions. It is for this reason that it has been observed that between 1982 and 1983, the ECOWAS member States introduced over 51 trade restrictive measures (11). It is against this background that we find it difficult to believe that decisions lack legal backing, or that are stuck somewhere within the Final Communiqués will find much respect.

35. Experience shows that the issues such as the one on the rationalisation of the IGOs in the subregion should not be relegated as a footnote in the form of the Final Communiqué, but should be the subject matter of legal structure. Given the resistance likely to be mounted by those interested in maintaining the status quo, decisions that are lacking in the legal backings will obviously be overlooked. The argument that has always been advanced is that the decisions taken at the ECOWAS level are not binding on other IGOs, which have their

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(11) UNCTAD - Trade Expansion Among Developing Countries :  
Constraints and Measures to overcome them,  
TD/B/1260, 9 August 1990.

own legal structures. In this regard, the pronouncements of such decisions in the absence of any legal commitment become totally inadequate as conditions for bringing about the rationalisation of the IGOs activities in the subregion.

#### VI - WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVE MEASURES

36. While there is near total unanimity on the need to rationalise the economic integration in West Africa, the steps to bring this about remain a rather contentious issue. Some of its advocates have proposed a gradualist approach, that would arise out of the natural need for a wider integration, while others have advocated a more immediate and deliberate approach. The gradualist school have indicated the unwillingness to give up what they perceive as the "knowns" for sake of the "unknowns". In their efforts to support this approach, they have marshalled enough arguments which have been reinforced by the acute economic difficulties that tend to favour a more cautious approach than a more deliberate effort at rationalisation. The "new" school has on the other hand found their task more difficult because they cannot clearly demonstrate in more practical terms, and beyond the theoretical arguments that a wider co-operation holds out a much better hope for overcoming the immediate national problems that the countries think would be better tackled within some of these smaller groupings.

37. These two conflicting schools of thought, notwithstanding, the overriding fact is that all do recognize the need for the rationalisation of the IGOs and the coordination of the economic integration efforts in the subregion. We believe that the question of a time table can be worked out. But more fundamentally, since all IGOs were created by sovereign States with specific mandates as well as political objectives, it is the same sovereign member states that will have to take political decisions to bring about the rationalisation of the IGOs.

38. This in our view would involve seven steps :

- (i) The first step would be to institute a legal structure that would be binding on other IGOs as well; since it is the same Heads of State and Government at the ECOWAS level that are also the Authority of other IGOs. All other IGOs should amend their legal structures to reflect this new arrangement;
- (ii) For the decision taken at the ECOWAS level to be binding on other IGOs, there should be a greater coordination of the work programmes at the IGO levels that are defined to reflect the broader and common development objective at subregional level. In other words, all IGOs should gradually harmonize and coordinate their activities. When this stage is reached, the holding of mini-summits will not be necessary as all could meet within the greater context of the new ECOWAS;
- (iii) The third step which will be undertaken at the same time is that more operational studies that would enhance the merger, modifications or even disbanding of some IGOs should be carried out. This should at least be completed within five years in order to allow for a more concerted effort at the intensification of the economic integration effort in West Africa;
- (iv) The fourth step is to strengthen the Executive Secretariat by equipping it with sufficient resources in term of human (quantity and quality), finance, material and physical facilities in order to improve the delivery capacity of the new economic integration scheme. In other words, the new economic integration structure will involve far reaching and radical changes in the staffing of the new institution, where competence should take precedence over geographical distribution of jobs. Unless, this is done, the Secretariat will not be able to perform its functions of conceptualizing, initiating, coordinating, executing and monitoring the economic integration process in West Africa;

- (v) Fifth, the technical commissions which will be responsible for conception, preparation, execution and monitoring of the new community policies and programmes, should be headed by highly competent and professional men or women, as they will be the main centres for generating new ideas and proposing new framework and drawing up long-term development plans for the community .
- (vi) Sixthly, the Economic Integration and Planning Commission, whose task it will be to coordinate the community programmes, and to propose new policies on the economic integration in West Africa, should not only be staffed with top economic planners in the subregion, but should also be given the authority to call <sup>upon</sup> or coopt, from time to time, some of the best brains from the various institutions of higher learning in the subregion. This commission should be the "think tank" as it were, for the formulation of long-term economic integration policies ;
- (vii) Lastly, all the work of the various technical commissions should be closely coordinated through the Economic Integration and Planning Commission in very close collaboration with the Executive Secretariat. It is possible that working with the same objective and goals in mind, it will be feasible to achieve greater rationalisation of economic integration activities in the subregion.

39. We believe that in order not to lose the momentum and initiative towards the rationalisation of the economic integration efforts in the subregion, the urgency and speed with which these measures are undertaken cannot be over-emphasized. The economic problems facing the member States are so grave that there should be no tinkering with the strategy of economic integration as an instrument of economic development. The temptation of using economic integration strategy only as "extras" when the going is good, should totally be discounted.