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REPORT ON TRADE FACILITATION AND TRADE LIBERALISATION
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SUBREGIONAL
ECONOMIC GROUPINGS: THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF
WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS) CASE STUDY

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. During the last two decades, developing African countries have been putting much more emphasis on economic co-operation and integration as basic tools of growth and development of the African region. Needless to say, the major African reference points include the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos, the Strategies for Revitalization Recovery and Growth of Africa's Trade in the 1990s and Beyond. Both stress the need of doubling efforts towards economic co-operation in order to accelerate the process of establishing the African Economic Community by the year 2000. Actions undertaken so far to encourage facilitation include the establishment of subregional institutions. For instance the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), the Preferential Trade Area of Eastern and Southern African States (PTA) and the Maghreb Union of Arab States (MUA).

2. However, the existence of such a big number of institutions and the promise of trade potential in the region, Intra-African trade continues to remain relatively low. Perhaps it is for this reason among others, that the Heads of States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) again reiterated the need to create favourable conditions in order to promote economic co-operation in the Subregion. In particular by launching multisectoral projects whose main objective would benefit from trade liberalization. In this way, it would be possible to reactivate trade exchanges among member countries. In this connection also, various actions have been undertaken to raise the level of trade exchanges among member countries in order to intensify intra-community economic co-operation. This is part of the background against which the meeting of experts of the Niamey-based Mulpoc will be discussing this issue.

3. This paper begins with a brief evaluation of the current trade situation in the West African subregion before analyzing the results achieved by the ECOWAS member States in terms of intra-community trade liberalization and trade facilitation. The study then focuses attention on the conditions of trade development within the West African subregion before drawing relating some of solutions to the problems raised.

II. TRADE SITUATION WITHIN THE WEST AFRICAN SUBREGION

4. The share of recorded intra-African trade declined from an average of 6.1 percent during the 1960s to 5.2 percent during the 1970s and to 4.9 percent during the 1980s.^{1/} Table 1 provides a fair picture of the structure of this trade that continues to be dominated by mineral fuels and related materials (whose export represented about 29.7 percent of total African exports in 1987) and food. However, a desegregation of Intra-African trade shows on the whole, a tendency of intra-subregional trade to be highly concentrated among a few countries.

TABLE 1
STRUCTURE OF INTRA AFRICAN TRADE

	1980	1987
Food, beverages and tobacco	24.5	26.0
Crude materials, excluding fuel	9.1	10.8
Mineral fuels and related materials	41.0	29.7
Chemical	4.4	8.0
Machinery	2.9	6.3
Other manufactured goods	18.1	19.2

Source: UN, Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, May 1988 and May 1989 and ECA Secretariat

A. Level and Structure of Trade in West Africa

5. There is enough evidence to show that West African countries have made laudable efforts to promote subregional trade. The share of intra-subregional trade in the total intra-African trade reached 85 percent in 1980.^{2/} However, the percentage declined in the subsequent perhaps this trend was helped by the fact that countries

^{1/}See doc. E/ECA/CM.16/3, Economic Report on Africa, 1990

^{2/}Ibid.

of the subregion had interred with several bilateral agreements with one another at the subregion level. Statistical data provided by the various Central Bank of West African States show trends of trade flows for countries like Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo with other countries from the subregion 3/ as summarised below as follows:

(a) Burkina Faso

6. Tables 2 and 3 shows that Burkina Faso's trade is mainly with two other countries of the West African Monetary Union (WAMU) namely Côte d'Ivoire (neighbouring country) and Togo. Similarly, there was an increase in Burkina imports from Nigeria and Ghana. The Commodity composition of goods traded showed that exports were dominated by industrial products (capital goods) while imports consisted mainly of food, raw materials and manufactured goods.4/

3/ See Economic and Monetary Statistics of Central Bank of West African States (CBWAS), Report No. 397, October 1990 for Sénégal and Togo and, Report No. 398 for Burkina and Côte d'Ivoire.

4/ Ibid, see CBWAS Report No. 398, November 1990, Burkina, page 27-30.

TABLE 2.
BURKINA FASO - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EXPORTS

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
	Millions of C.f.a francs				
WORLD.....	21 712,2	34 872,4	31 157,0	28 664,7	46 593,1
AFRICA.....	5 715,9	7 124,2	7 152,1	5 968,7	12 907,6
ECOWAS.....	5 038,4	6 434,6	6 186,9	5 886,5	10 999,6
W.A.M.U.....	3 193,0	6 043,2	5 702,5	5 624,8	9 952,2
Benin.....	176,2	92,4	65,7	81,3	101,7
Côte d'Ivoire.....	1 945,1	5 149,3	4 680,6	4 336,9	6 777,2
Mali.....	////	175,9	388,9	368,0	253,2
Niger.....	512,2	269,5	213,3	435,7	434,0
Senegal.....	4,4	4,6	11,1	150,4	119,3
Togo.....	555,1	351,5	342,9	252,5	2 266,8
Other ECOWAS countries.....	1 845,4	391,4	484,4	261,7	1047,4
Chana.....	416,4	241,7	372,1	133,6	841,9
Mali.....	1 125,8	////	////	////	////
Nigeria.....	301,3	149,5	108,2	108,0	186,6

Source: Economic and monetary statistics of Central Bank of West African States: Burkina Faso, Report No 398.

TABLE 3.

BURKINA FASO - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF IMPORTS

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Millions of c.f.a. francs					
WORLD.....	109 576,1	111 263,8	146 243,3	139 639,9	130 526,6
AFRICA.....	31 527,2	33 100,2	44 654,8	39 688,5	32 779,4
ECOWAS.....	30 751,7	31 446,2	41 392,3	38 608,6	31 239,8
W.A.M.U.....	28 925,6	29 520,9	37 210,7	35 055,2	27 603,3
Benin.....	25,0	48,4	92,5	175,9	118,7
Côte d'Ivoire.....	25 810,9	24 958,6	33 269,4	29 971,3	21 329,3
Mali.....	////	522,8	637,7	307,6	412,0
Niger.....	143,5	856,0	223,4	138,7	178,9
Senegal.....	1 531,8	1 303,8	1 143,6	1 732,6	784,8
Togo.....	1 414,1	1 831,3	1 844,1	2 729,1	4 779,6
Other ECOWAS countries.....	1 826,1	1 925,3	4 181,6	3 553,4	3 636,5
Ghana.....	529,2	1 110,6	2 563,3	1 426,6	1 291,7
Mali.....	534,3	////	////	////	////
Nigeria.....	705,7	798,5	1 549,3	1 928,3	1 825,3

Source: Economic and monetary statistics of Central Bank
of West African States: Burkina Faso, Report No 398.

(b) Côte d'Ivoire

7. The trend in the case of Côte d'Ivoire's exports within ECOWAS directed towards WAMU countries also reflects more trade exchanges with Burkina Faso and Mali, perhaps because of proximity and Sénégal for reasons of history and comparable levels of development. Additional important development is in the flow of exports to Nigeria and Ghana that become quite noticeable (see Table 4). On the other hand, a major part of Côte d'Ivoire's imports are provided by Nigeria (58,993 million CFA Francs over an ECOWAS import total of 86,075 million CFA Francs). Other suppliers into the Côte d'Ivoire market include from Mauritania (Table 5). The bulk of these imports consist of food, fuels and industrial goods while exports also consist of food, raw materials and manufactures.^{5/}

^{5/} Ibid, See CBWAS Report No. 398, November 1990, Côte d'Ivoire, P31-34.

TABLE 4.
COTE D'IVOIRE - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EXPORTS

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Millions of c.f.a francs					
WORLD.....	1 184 348 1	318 060 1	160 441	929 143	826 467
AFRICA.....	160 803	188 256	180 916	173 036	179 829
ECOWAS.....	132 005	157 456	149352	151 329	154 197
W.A.M.U.....	103 724	124 409	97 548	90 068	88 661
Benin (pop.Rep).....	3 441	6 459	4 726	5 847	4 760
Burkina.....	29 285	38 121	30 716	22 295	28 909
Mali	29 254	37 975	32 082	24 036	23 273
Niger.....	8 985	10 518	8 614	8 714	7 953
Senegal.....	9 447	20 630	12 010	15 519	17 297
Togo.....	23 312	10 706	9 400	13 657	6 469
Other ECOWAS countries.....	28 281	33 047	51 804	61 261	65 536
Ghana.....	6 425	11 038	12 261	15 429	16 111
Mauritania.....	1 095	1 552	751	1 044	1 008
Nigeria.....	8 416	7 718	25 015	20 490	21 564

Source: Economic and monetary statistics of Central Bank of West African States: Côte d'Ivoire, Report No 398.

TABLE 5.
COTE D'IVOIRE - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF IMPORTS

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
	Millions of c.f.a. francs				
WORLD.....	658 569	772 988	709 044	673 898	619 920
AFRICA.....	104 974	161 950	106 329	107 330	92 591
ECOWAS.....	85 995	112 022	90 991	96 368	86 075
W.A.M.U.....	17 688	18 696	14 204	14 010	10 710
Benin (Pop Rep).....	100	192	50	52	96
Burkina.....	806	746	311	657	1 122
Mali	1 861	1 655	1 164	2 262	1 498
Niger.....	38	689	782	1 036	562
Senegal.....	12 697	15 377	11 764	9 862	7 320
Togo.....	2 186	37	133	141	52
Other ECOWAS countries.....	68 307	93 326	76 787	82 358	75 365
Mauritania.....	4 041	3 011	3 932	6 114	8 049
Nigeria.....	58 882	86 155	69 864	73 128	58 993

Source: Economic and monetary statistics of Central Bank West African States: Côte d'Ivoire, Report No 398.

(c) Sénégal

8. Sénégal exports mainly to Mali, Côte D'Ivoire and Mauritania while its imports come from Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria (Tables 6 and 7). The commodity compositions of Sénégal's imports consists of capital goods, manufactures, fuels and food products. Exports on the other hand are dominated by animal products, food items and such such raw materials as phosphates and a few industrial goods 6/.

6/ Ibid. See CBWAS Report No. 397, October 1990, Sénégal, p 28 and 30.

TABLE 6
SENEGAL - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EXPORTS

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
	Millions of c.f.a. francs				
WORLD.....	235 477	277 021	252 492	216 578	182 246
AFRICA.....	49 625	75 233	66 478	43 995	46 209
ECOWAS.....	44 990	64 910	56 258	35 411	38 633
W.A.M.U.....	15 526	36 103	36 947	20 769	24 413
Benin (Pop. Rep).....	1 620	1 899	1 124	1 583	1 026
Burkina.....	1 125	1 203	1 124	1 583	1 026
Côte d'Ivoire.....	10 339	12 672	13 200	9 218	7 387
Mali.....	////	17 719	17 646	6 451	213 637
Niger.....	1 450	1 302	1 122	727	522
Togo.....	992	1 308	1 783	1 398	806
Other ECOWAS countries	29 464	28 807	19 311	14 642	14 220
Guinea-Bissau.....	1 882	1 724	811	1 466	1 688
Mauritania.....	8 397	8 873	9 091	8 032	7 831
Nigeria.....	1 724	5 691	4 486	751	637

Source: Economic and monetary statistics of Central Bank of West African States: Senegal, Report No 397.

TABLE 7.
SENEGAL - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF IMPORTS

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
	Millions of c.f.a.francs				
WORLD.....	390 723	428 602	370 971	332 929	307 598
AFRICA.....	44 425	85 435	59 084	71 913	43 292
ECOWAS.....	26 055	30 6054	31 433	43779	29 429
W.A.M.U.....	12 687	14 823	23 197	20 820	16 543
Benin (Pop Rep)...	4	22	24	19	33
Burkina.....	-	8	1	-	7
Côte d'Ivoire.....	12 675	14 617	22 940	20 736	16 190
Mali.....	///	166	227	57	303
Niger.....	5	3	3	-	7
Togo.....	3	7	2	8	3
Other ECOWAS countries.	13 369	15 782	8 236	22 959	12 886
Nigeria.....	12 300	14 557	7 629	22 666	12 415

Source : Economic and monetary statistics of Central Bank of West African States: Senegal, Report No 397

(d) Togo

9. Togolese products are exported to Burkina Faso, Benin, Ghana, and Nigeria (Table 8). The country imports from Côte d'Ivoire, Sénégal, Ghana and Nigeria (Table 9) mainly capital goods (manufactured goods and equipments), food items and fuels, and exports raw materials, mostly phosphates and food items 7/.

7/ Ibid. See CBWAS Report No.397, October 1990, Togo. p 28 and 30".

TABLE 8.
TOGO - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EXPORTS

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
	Millions of c.f.a. francs				
WORLD.....	61 921	83 588	85 380	70 552	73 212
AFRICA.....	18 212	10 496	7 792	6 048	7 644
ECOWAS.....	15 502	7 382	4 744	4 904	6 731
W.A.M.U.....	9 807	4 428	3 715	2 992	4 839
Benin (Pop. Rep)...	382	679	351	450	1 426
Burkina.....	1 510	1 180	1 262	2 046	2 663
Côte d'Ivoire.....	7 590	1 463	490	93	182
Mali	////	583	475	167	109
Niger.....	307	504	1 130	230	459
Senegal.....	18	9	7	6	-
Other ECOWAS countries.....	5 695	2 954	1 029	1 912	1 892
Ghana.....	4 964	1 464	552	1 052	1 169
Mauritania.....	3	-	16	4	-
Nigeria.....	362	1 400	372	719	723

Source : Economic and monetary statistics of Central Bank of West African States: Togo, Report no-397.

TABLE 9.
TOGO - GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF IMPORTS

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
	Millions of C.f.a. francs				
WORLD.....	108 141	118 460	129 406	107 983	127 308
AFRICA.....	8 429	13 445	13 242	5 882	715 280
ECOWAS.....	6 831	13 022	12 499	4 947	12 691
W.A.M.U.....	5 400	11 530	10 345	4 240	9 657
Bénin (Pop Rep)...	215	679	354	61	384
Burkina.....	600	259	647	23	694
Côte d'Ivoire.....	2 710	8 403	6 862	2 433	6 953
Mali	////	797	112	-	8
Niger.....	204	291	405	-	226
Senegal.....	1 671	1 101	1 965	1 723	1 392
Other ECOWAS countries...	1 431	1 492	2 154	707	3 034
Chana.....	101	346	915	147	1 054
Mauritania.....	288	95	61	360	708
Nigeria.....	896	831	1 007	170	1 042

Source : Economic and monetary statistics of Central Bank of West African States: Togo, Report no-397.

10. These four country illustrations give a fairly clear picture of the share of intra-ECOWAS imports as relatively low both in total and amounts of about 27.5 percent in 1986 to 23.9 percent in 1987 for Burkina Faso; 14.3 percent in 1986 to 13.88 percent in 1987 for Côte d'Ivoire; 13.13 percent in 1986 to 9.56 percent in 1987 for Sénégal; and 6.9 percent in 1986 to 9.2 percent in 1987 for Togo. This weakness in the level of intra-ECOWAS trade is a results of many constraints that hinder most African economies from expanding not only the quality but also the competitiveness of their products.

B. Major Obstacles to Trade Development

11. As stated above, the volume of trade within the sub-region is relatively low in terms of the region's existing potentialities. One of the main reasons for this situation is the structure of production and the lack of diversification, in addition to weak locality to the types and brand names of produced goods. As a matter of fact, West African states have the same structure of production and trade patterns. This in itself ought not to be a very major problem, except for the absence of co-ordination in member states' planning and economic policy. Furthermore, the poor state of transport infrastructures, including the lack of storage. These combine as obstacles to the free movement of goods and to access of supply in staple crops. Moreover, the absence of a reliable information system or lack of any commercial information network in the ECOWAS has been a hindrance to businesses needing information on trade opportunities within the sub-region. There is also a lack of monetary integration coupled with tariffs and non-tariffs barriers in addition to the difficult of exchange control and payment modalities. For instance import tax (Burkina and Gambia) and export tax, consumption and production taxes (Benin) and additional fiscal charges.

12. However, there are also certain natural factors with regard to the ECOWAS states. For example regarding co-existence between landlocked countries and coastal countries on one hand, and Sahelian with forest belt countries on the other hand. To this, must be included disparities in the levels of development and natural resource endowment which should favour the promotion of intra-community trade. Against such a background, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a trade liberalization Programme aimed at reviving trade among its member states trade expansion based on increased production within West Africa.

III. TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND TRADE FACILITATION WITHIN ECOWAS

A. Trade Liberalization within ECOWAS

13. In order to mitigate some of these obstacles to trade expansion and also to promote economic development, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) elaborated a trade liberalization programme. There is a link between ECOWAS and the Communauté économique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEAO) and the Mano River Union (MRU) which consists of utilizing harmonized trade documents and similar customs tariffs and certificates. It also provides facilitating for free movement of goods, services and other factors of production. Consequently, these three sub-regional economic groupings set out a time table aimed at achieving their trade liberalization programme (Table 10). Provision has been made concerning ECOWAS to allow modification during the implementation stages.

TABLE 10
CALENDAR OF TRADE LIBERALISATION IN WEST AFRICA

Economic Programmes and Activities	ECOWAS	CEAO	Mano River Union
<u>Agricultural products and consumer goods</u>			
(i) elimination of all non-tariffs barriers	From May 1981	Already implemented	Already implemented
(ii) elimination of all tariffs barriers	From May 1981	Already implemented	Already implemented
<u>Capital goods</u>			
(i) elimination of all non-tariffs barriers	Before 28 May 1989	Already implemented	Already implemented
(ii) elimination of all tariffs barriers	Before 28 May 1989	No date for the R.C.T. elimination	Already implemented (except in Guinea)
Common External tariffs	Before 28 May 1989	Mid-1986	Already implemented (except in Guinea)

Source: CEA, Propositions visant a renforcer l'integration economique en Afrique de l'Ouest p. 56.

14. Information in Table 10 shows the absence of co-ordination of trade liberalization programmes and the delay in the implementation of ECOWAS' programme. According to the report of the Sectoral Committees meeting held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) from 23 to 24 November 1990, the liberalization scheme started only on the 1 January 1990 as stated by the ECOWAS Heads of States meeting's decision in Ouagadougou.

15. The expectation of the meeting was that scheme would lead to:

- (i) total and immediate trade liberalization of trade in raw materials between member states; and

- (ii) total but progressive trade liberalization of trade in capital goods.

Furthermore, it was decided to implement an external common tariff as a corollary to the West African Common Market and, in collaboration with CEAO and MRU. The external common tariff is needed to protect intra-community productions. In addition, according to the Report of Ouagadougou Sectoral Committee, industrial products could benefit from preferential customs regime through the introduction of tax of regional co-operation ranging from 35 to 40 percent. It is also envisaged to establish a single currency with a view to overcoming the problem of currency multiplicity and non convertibility that has also hindered enhancing trade and economic co-operation. In point of fact, harmonization of statistical and customs instruments would contribute and speed up the liberalization process as well as facilitate trade flows among member States.

16. There is an adequate framework in West Africa for establishing a customs Union leading towards the establishment of a Common Market within the subregion. It should however be admitted that the Community is hampered by various problems linked among others to:

- (i) A lack of a concerted development strategy by member States;
- (ii) A lack of simultaneous action in fulfilling obligations deriving from the Community Programmes.

B. Obstacles to trade liberalization

17. Needless to say, the Community has yet to have a definite development strategy capable of supporting the liberalization mechanism. Furthermore, member States have to work and recognize existing gaps between industrialization levels. Article 20 of the Treaty requesting the granting of the Most Favoured Nations Treatment to other member States of the Community can only be effective if the least industrialized countries are not conditioned to rely only on programmes of industrial and fiscal harmonization.

18. It would be illusory to talk about economic integration in West Africa without taking into consideration the precarious physical infrastructures especially transport and storage installations. Member States need efficient and effective infrastructures in order to facilitate the free movement of goods and people.

19. Furthermore, it is necessary for subregions to have at their disposal surplus goods and services for export. Trade between two

countries also requires different production and specialisation capabilities. In other words, member States must resolve to abandon their parallel production structures.

20. Another impediment to trade facilitation within ECOWAS relates to currency multiplicity which complicates the establishment of an adequate monetary system. This situation constitutes a source of difficulties in connection with exchange and payment arrangements with the result that the West African Clearing House is impeded in its functioning by an inadequacy of credit facilities it can make available.

21. There are also other constraints which are related to differences of development levels of member States. That is why the ECOWAS has to establish for the least favoured States some kind of compensatory mechanism.

C. Proposals of Strategy for trade expansion within the subregion

22. Against the backdrop of some of these obstacles to trade which also hamper economic co-operation, is a need to take them into consideration when designing an appropriate framework for trade promotion within ECOWAS. To this end, and given the importance of the integration process, the following measures should be taken seriously and given priority:

- (i) The need to redefine the role of monetary and financial institutions in order to harmonize and co-ordinate their monetary policies with a view to enhancing direct co-operation among banks and financing mechanisms of Community Projects;
- (ii) The setting up of adequate transport and communication infrastructures with a view to guaranteeing free movement of goods and persons;
- (iii) The adoption of measures and policies in order to change the externally-orientated nature of the economies of member States; these policies to focus on the promotion of the agricultural and related sectors; this action could be completed by the existence of industrial plants established to ensure the implementation of policies of product diversification in accordance with what the member States have adopted;
- (iv) The establishment of an information system on markets of various products as well as on opportunities of market integration.

V. CONCLUSION

23. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has adopted a series of programmes in the context of trade liberalization with a view to establishing a Common External Tariff (CET) which could constitute a basis for the establishment of the Common Market for West African countries. The liberalization scheme which come into effect on 1 January 1990 is scheduled to become operational soon. At this particular stage the Community has the following alternatives:

- (i) Adoption of a high risk strategy for excessive liberalization in the hope of getting support from existing programmes but which will rely on coherent development policies;
- (ii) Review of all programmes in order to be able to cope with economic adjust conditions of member States.

The strategy to be adopted will rely on security measures which enable the least developed countries to be sheltered during the first stage of liberalization. Furthermore, the strategy for trade liberalization must be adequately prepared in order to avoid stagnation risks.

ANNEX

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