

**Joint Statement of Recommendations and Conclusions
adopted by the Participants at the
ECOWAS/UN Regional Capacity-Building Workshop on Treaty Law and Practice
and the Domestic Implementation of Treaty Obligations
held in Accra on 9-12 June 2008**

We, the participants from the following Member States of ECOWAS - Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo – hereby adopt the following recommendations and conclusions towards the implementation of a plan of action for the effective implementation of treaty obligations.

The participants at the workshop hereby agree to:

- Take a more proactive approach to the adoption and implementation of treaties and act as a coordinating body within the ECOWAS region for follow up action including ensuring that necessary action is taken by other ministries and that parliamentarians are given the appropriate information and tools to enact required legislation;
- Request and obtain certified true copies of treaties from the ECOWAS Commission and/or from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs;
- Translate ECOWAS treaties into all official languages of ECOWAS to facilitate the submission to parliament for either ratification or the passage of implementing legislation;
- Ensure the adoption of implementing legislation in our respective countries including requesting technical assistance where necessary and obtaining model implementing legislation or legislative guides and advice on legislative drafting from the organizations represented at this meeting;
- Advise parliamentarians on the passage of implementing legislation for treaties on, for example, transnational organized crime, corruption, cross-border trade, human rights and the environment;
- Initiate appropriate administrative, legislative and judicial reform to harmonize domestic laws with treaty obligations. Draft and adopt required legislation;
- Work closely with parliamentary committee members in building national capacity in the area of treaty law and implementation as well as advocate and/or lead necessary reforms;
- Increase coordination within our countries between all stakeholders in the ratification and implementation of treaties;

- Contribute to the timely submission of required reports to the human rights committees under those multilateral treaties to which we our governments are party. Build the capacity of relevant officials to collect and analyze data; set-up coordination committees. Obtain assistance for governmental representatives to go to the committee to present the reports and to initiate follow-up actions to implement the recommendations of the relevant treaty bodies and Special Procedures;
- Prepare for the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council;
- Train judges, police, prosecutors and others in international law and the domestic implementation and application of treaties to which our governments are party. Provide necessary technical and capacity building support to operationalize the standards;
- Review multilateral and bilateral treaties currently in force for our governments and analyse the different obligations against existing legislation;
- Create standing committees on the domestic and regional levels to address sector-specific issues (such as human rights, extradite or prosecute laws, cross-border issues such as trafficking of arms, drugs and human beings and other areas);
- Collaborate in enhancing the capacity of officials Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice/Attorney-General's Departments and other relevant governmental agencies in the negotiation and drafting of treaties and other international agreements;
- Conduct public information campaigns to keep the public adequately informed about the purposes and objectives of treaties and other international agreements.
- Mobilise support for law faculties and law schools in our respective countries. This may include, but is not limited to, providing materials on treaty law, including texts of treaties and examples of implementing legislation from other countries;
- Establish or develop additional cross-border cooperation and collaboration on specific issues (organized crime, trafficking of human beings, trafficking of firearms, drugs, financing of terrorism, trade, etc.);
- Work on the training of national and private banking institutions and their management so that they meet their obligations under international conventions; adopt good practices in the prevention of money laundering;
- Focus on prison reform. Facilitate training of staff and long-term improvement of prison facilities;

- Urge our governments to sign, ratify and accede to treaties, in particular those discussed at this workshop which may be deemed to be in the interest of our respective countries and sub-region;
- Urge our governments to attend and actively participate in meetings of States Parties to treaties including the next meeting of the States Parties of the UN Convention Against Corruption and the Convention against Organized Crimes and its Protocols; provide legal, technical and financial support to the States to attend negotiating conferences and meetings of States Parties to multilateral treaties;
- Request the ECOWAS Commission to endeavour to transmit simultaneously copies of the texts of all ECOWAS Treaties and Protocols to ECOWAS National Focal Points, as well as to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice/Attorneys-General Departments. Encourage the ECOWAS Commission to transmit informally, electronic copies of the texts of treaties and protocols to the experts identified at this workshop, and in other relevant government agencies to facilitate follow-up action in the ratification and implementation of treaties;
- Create new or improve upon existing treaty offices in Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Justice or other relevant Ministries and governmental agencies in our respective countries. This treaty office should be fully equipped to set up a database including scanning and saving electronic copies of the texts of treaties;
- Establish a working group on treaty participation and implementation made up of the participants to this workshop forming a nucleus, to exchange ideas on the signing and ratifying of treaties, as well as the implementation of treaties at the domestic, regional and international levels to promote and protect the interests of our peoples in whose name treaties, protocols and other international agreements are concluded;
- Request the ECOWAS Commission to organize a follow-up meeting to review the outcome and impact of this workshop, and to make budgetary provision to institute regular meetings of treaty experts to review the ratification and implementation of ECOWAS, UN and other international treaty obligations within Member States of ECOWAS, and to promote regional cooperation to this end;
- Request, where necessary, from the organizations represented at this meeting technical, legal and financial assistance that may be needed to implement the above actions both in the short and long term;
- Express appreciation to all resource persons/speakers from UN Treaty Section, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Office for Drugs and Crimes, the Secretariat of the UN Commission for International Trade Law,

World Wildlife Fund as well as to our collaborators and partners including the UN Office of Legal Affairs, the ECOWAS Commission and the UNDP for contributing in various ways to ensure the success of the workshop; and

- Further express appreciation to the Government of Ghana, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and NEPAD and the Ministry of Justice/Attorney-General's Department, for accepting to host this workshop and for the generous hospitality and courtesies extended to all participants.

Finally, we, the participants, request that these recommendations and conclusions be brought to the attention of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, who initiated this workshop and invited the Member States of ECOWAS to participate.