

## **DECISION A/DEC. 11/7/96 RELATING TO THE ADOPTION OF AN ECOWAS STATISTICS POLICY**

### **THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT,**

MINDFUL of Article 7 of the Revised Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) establishing the Authority of Heads of State and Government and defining its composition and functions;

CONVINCED of the importance of statistical information in the development and integration of the West African region;

AWARE of the inadequacies of the existing national statistical systems with regard to the production of accurate and up-to-date statistics on Member States;

DETERMINED to put in place a regional mechanism for the harmonious development of statistics in the region which would ensure the efficient collection, analysis, compilation and dissemination of data at both national and regional levels;

ON THE RECOMMENDATION of the thirty-ninth session of the Council of Ministers held in Abuja from 22nd to 25th July, 1996;

### **DECIDES**

#### **Article 1**

##### **Adoption of ECOWAS Statistics Policy**

There is hereby adopted the ECOWAS Statistics Policy for the development of statistics in West Africa.

#### **Article 2**

##### **Objectives of the Policy**

The objectives of the Policy mentioned in Article 1 above shall be to:

- a) employ standards, methods and organisational structures for

producing comparable, reliable, and good quality statistics throughout the Community:

- b) develop the requisite capacity to achieve regional self-sufficiency in the production of statistical information needed to implement, monitor and evaluate Community policies and programmes;
- c) promote constant interaction between producers and users of statistics;
- d) improve the dissemination of statistical information to government agencies, the business communities and the general public in all ECOWAS Member States;
- e) achieve increased public awareness of the importance of statistics in the region;
- f) facilitate the development of the statistical systems of the Member States.

### **Article 3**

#### **Establishment of ECOWAS Statistical System**

- 1) The Community shall ensure the establishment of an ECOWAS Statistical System as the basis for the implementation of the said policy.
- 2) This regional system shall be under the auspices of the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to ensure the harmony needed to enhance the usefulness of statistics generated by individual Member States.
- 3) The ECOWAS Statistical System shall therefore consist, at the primary level, of the government coordinating agency in each Member State responsible for collecting, processing,

analysing and disseminating the statistical information needed for managing the economic and social life of Member States.

- 4) the focal point of the system shall be the statistics service of the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat. This shall receive on a regular basis, basic statistical information from Member States and duly authenticated supplementary data from external sources for analysis, processing and dissemination.
- 5) The system shall develop close collaboration and working relations with the appropriate international statistical organisations in order to ensure that data produced are consistent and of international standard.

#### Article 4

##### Institutional Structure

The system shall have the following institutional structure

- a) *National Statistical System of each Member State* (consisting of the Central Statistics Office and its units located in government ministries and departments, statistical units of other establishments, etc.);
- b) *ECOWAS Secretariat Statistical Service* (consisting of the Statistics Division, Community Computer Centre, data banks and information centres of the Technical Departments); and
- c) *Regional Statistics Coordination Organs* (consisting of the Meeting of ECOWAS Directors of Statistics; 2 Regional Steering Committees — for the two sections: Economic Statistics,

and Social and Demographic Statistics; and Standing Committees — for each of the main subsections of statistics).

#### Article 5

##### Functions of the System

The system shall perform the following functions:

- (a) develop and adapt common concepts, definitions, classifications and methods, directly applicable in the Member States, consistent with international standards and backed by Community legislation;
- (b) promote statistical training and research;
- (c) conduct statistical surveys through collaboration between the Member States and with the Community institutions on a harmonised methodological basis;
- (d) compile, analyse and disseminate the results of surveys jointly conducted by the Secretariat and Member States and make inter-country comparisons;
- (e) promote convergence and uniformity in national statistical practices through coordination and joint training schemes;
- (f) develop common negotiating positions for the region at international fora;
- (g) coordinate the adaptation and adoption of international statistical standards and programmes.

## Article 6

### Scope of Statistical Activities

The following shall be the major areas of coverage of the system:

- a) economic and financial statistics (such as national accounts, foreign trade, industrial, agricultural, financial and transport statistics);
- b) social and demographic statistics (such as education, health, employment, housing, crime, population and other demographic statistics);
- c) other areas such as environmental statistics and statistics on children, gender and development.

## Article 7

### Basic Principles of the System

- 1) The functioning of the system shall be based on the principles of objectivity, reliability, confidentiality, effectiveness and relevance.
- 2) The system shall operate on the basis of well-defined relationships. In the Member States, the system shall depend on national legislation on statistics which defines and governs the work of the National Statistical System (the organisation and coordination between the central and peripheral bodies, the government authorities and the general public, relations of the central body with other public bodies which collect and process statistical data, its right to act on its own initiative in conducting surveys, its relations with international organisations, etc.).
- 3) The ECOWAS Executive Secretariat shall evolve an appropriate regional mechanism for the establishment of

a cohesive, flexible and efficient regional statistical system, in line with the basic principles adopted in Member States. To facilitate this process the Executive Secretariat shall take necessary steps to ensure the harmonisation of the relevant national legislations.

## Article 8

### Resources requirements

- 1) Member States shall give priority attention to the development of statistics.
- 2) There shall be adequate and timely provision of the resources required by the Community statistics cooperation programme and the functioning of the ECOWAS Statistics System, at both national and regional levels, particularly concerning the modernisation, up-grading and general enhancement of the operations of the statistical services in the region. To this end, Member States shall grant the requisite autonomy to the national statistical services.
- 3) In order to develop and enhance the human resource capacity of national statistical services, Member States shall adopt appropriate staff training and remuneration policies.
- 4) The ECOWAS Executive Secretariat shall take all possible measures to mobilise financial, technical and material assistance from external sources, to complement the support of Member States.

## Article 9

### Implementation of the Policy

The Executive Secretariat shall have the overall responsibility for the implementation of the ECOWAS Statistics Policy and shall ensure an

effective coordination of all the related activities to be undertaken.

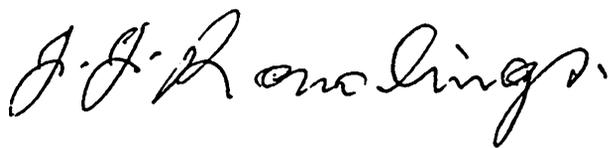
#### **Article 10**

##### **Publication**

This Decision shall be published in the Official Journal of the Community by the Executive Secretariat within thirty (30) days of its signature by the Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

It shall also be published within the same time-frame in the National Gazette of each Member State.

**DONE AT ABUJA,  
THIS 27TH DAY OF JULY, 1996**



**H.E. JERRY JOHN RAWLINGS  
CHAIRMAN  
FOR THE AUTHORITY**