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COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES

PARLEMENT DE LA COMMUNAUTE
ECONOMIQUE DES ETATS DE
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PARLAMENTO DA COMUNIDADE
ECONÓMICA DOS ESTADOS
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COTE D'IVOIRE'S COUNTRY REPORT – November 2019

By the Ivorian delegation comprising Honourables:

-  Mrs. KAMARA Aminata Epse TOUNGARA;
-  M. SALE Poli
-  Mrs TRAORE Adjaratou;
-  M. AKA Hervé;
-  M. DJOHORE GBAKAYORO Abel; and
-  M. TOURE Yah.

I. INTRODUCTION

Excellency Mr Moustapha Cissé LO, Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament,
Honourable Members of the ECOWAS Parliament,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

It is an honour for me to take the floor this morning, on behalf of the Ivorian delegation, on the occasion of this 2nd Ordinary Session of the year 2019. First of all, I would like us to pay tribute to our late colleague, ZAN BI GOHI FERFINAND, who passed away on September 5th 2019. I would like to invite you, with your permission, Mr Speaker, to observe a minute's silence in his memory.

I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank the ECOWAS Parliament, represented at the funeral of our late colleague by a high powered delegation, for the support and solidarity extended to our Parliament during this painful moment of separation.

I would also like to express my thanks to the Nigerian authorities for all the efforts made over the last few years to ensure that our sessions are held in the best of conditions.

I thank all my fellow parliamentarians for the spirit of integration and family they have shown each time we have had the opportunity to meet. I cannot forget the ECOWAS staff, who constantly assist us, thank you, everybody.

Mr Speaker,
Dear Colleagues,

II. PRESENTATION

This report revolves around nine (09) areas, namely:

- I. POLITICAL SITUATION**
- II. SECURITY SITUATION**
- III. HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION**
- IV. STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY TEXTS**
- V. STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS**
- VI. ÉCONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION**
- VII. STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MACRO ECONOMIC CONVERGENCE CRITERIA**
- VIII. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**
- IX. PAYMENT OF PROCEEDS FROM THE COMMUNITY LEVY**

I. POLITICAL SITUATION

Ivory Coast displays the reassuring image of a newfound stability. A stability made possible thanks to the combination of the efforts of all the Ivorian political class, with the President of the Republic, H.E. Alassane Ouattara in the forefront.

- As part of the reconciliation process, President Alassane Ouattara is pursuing actions to promote peace and social cohesion. The government has been working hard on the effective implementation of the plan for the integration of exiles as a result of the post-electoral crisis, which includes their socio-professional integration, their children's education and the reparation of the damage caused. Thus, on September 26, 2019, 187 Ivorian refugees (92 women and 95 men) returned to Côte d'Ivoire, from Ghana, where they had spent eight years in exile. That convoy is the largest since the beginning of the year from Ghana.
- The recomposition of the Independent Electoral Commission recommended by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights was finalized after the discussions between the government, political parties and civil society, by a bill that was considered and adopted by parliament. Law No. 2019-708 of 05 August 2019 on the recomposition of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has already been promulgated and the central bodies of the new IEC have been set up.

The ruling party believes that this recomposition respects the recommendation of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). The government spokesman declared: "Henceforth, the State and the ruling party represent one-third: two-thirds for civil society organizations and opposition parties". According to the Ivorian government, the bill adopted is "consensual", but the Ivorian opposition rejects that, and calls for the withdrawal of the bill and a thorough reform of the institution including all political actors.

On this issue, on August 19, 2019, the African Union, through a statement from its President, welcomed the law on the recomposition of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in Côte d'Ivoire, saying it took into account the judgment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The President of the Commission of the African Union "renews the commitment" of his organization to accompany the electoral process in Côte d'Ivoire, whereby in October 2020, the Constitution provides for the holding of the presidential election.

II. SECURITY SITUATION

- The National Security Council notes with satisfaction the decline of the General Security Index, which has stabilized at 1.1 since April 2019. This improvement in the security environment is the result of multiple security operations conducted by all the Defence and Security Forces.

A new border security scheme has been established to prevent terrorist threats and incursions at our borders. The President of the Republic ensures the provision of the necessary resources for the implementation of this new security scheme.

- The phenomenon of children in conflict with the law, commonly known as "microbes" is almost eradicated thanks to the re-socialization policy advocated and implemented by the Government, the "initial operations of which involved about 774 children at an overall cost of FCFA 2.5 billion.

- On child labour, from 2012 to 2019, 8,000 children were rescued plantations. According to a statement made by the Minister of Family, Women and Children, Bakayoko-Ly Ramata, on November 7, 2019 at the Ivorian Press Agency platform, the children were handed over to their families and the government arranged for them to go to school. She explained that this was made possible because of Côte d'Ivoire's fight against child labour. Sensitisation campaigns on the prohibition of child labour and the need for children to go to school have reached 2 million people in cocoa-growing areas.

III. HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

It should be noted that progress has been made on the Human Rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire. It is essentially, at the institutional level, the establishment of the National Council on Human Rights (CNDH) in accordance with law n ° 2018-900 of November 30, 2018 on the establishment, attributions, organization and operations of the National Council on Human Rights, abbreviated as CNDH. In addition, several international conventions and commitments of Côte d'Ivoire have been signed. These include:

- the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted on 18 December 2018 in New York (United States of America);
- the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, adopted on 24 June 1995 in Rome, Italy;
- Law No. 2019-676 of 23 July 2019 on tobacco control in Côte d'Ivoire; and
- Law No. 2019-574 of June 26, 2019 on the Penal Code.

Progress has also been made in various areas. These include freedom of the press where from 2011 to 2019, Côte d'Ivoire went up by 88 places in the world rankings of Reporters without Borders, from the 159th to the 71st place. In addition, the National Press Authority (ANP), ensures the strengthening of the economic regulation of companies, in order to extend the application of the collective agreement governing the press and to pursue the advocacy for a continuous increase of public aid to the media.

Gender was improved with the adoption by parliament in July 2019 of a law favouring the representation of women in elected assemblies with a quota of 30%.

IV. STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY TEXTS

a) Ratification of Community Protocols and Conventions

- Côte d'Ivoire plays a major role in the process of regional integration with the appointment of our compatriot, Jean-Claude BROU, to the Presidency of the ECOWAS Commission. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire recently ratified the agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (CAFTA), which will allow Ivorian companies to benefit from market access throughout the African continent, which has 1.2 billion consumers.
- In November 2019, the National Assembly adopted:
 - ✓ Supplementary Protocol A / SP.2 / 12/01 amending the Protocol for the Creation of an ECOWAS Brown Card, relating to Motor Third Party Liability Insurance;
 - ✓ The draft law authorizing the President of the Republic to ratify Supplementary Protocol A / SA.3 / 6/16 amending the Protocol for the creation of an ECOWAS Brown Card, relating to third party liability insurance.
- The Council of Ministers, on 13 November 2019, adopted a bill that will be submitted to Parliament (Senate and National Assembly). This bill reorganizes, at best, the National Order of Doctors of Côte d'Ivoire while integrating the community requirements of UEMOA and ECOWAS. It offers, on condition of reciprocity, the opportunity for West African doctors from UEMOA and ECOWAS countries to move freely and settle in our country registering with the Association of Physicians.

V. STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

- In a bid to strengthen free movement of goods and merchandise in the ECOWAS region, Abidjan served as a framework for the launch of the

interconnected system for the management of goods in transit (SIGMAT) e.g. ALISA of the Member States of the Community of West African States (CEDAO). This system offers enormous benefits to state institutions, financial institutions and the private sector by enabling real-time sharing of information and data, improving waiting time, and increasing revenue through reduction of transit and transport costs.

- While ensuring the preservation of its economic and monetary stability, Côte d'Ivoire is ready to make every effort to achieve the implementation of a common currency in the ECOWAS region, the ECO. The Ivorian President, H.E. Mr Alassane Ouattara, in his capacity as sitting President of UEMOA Heads of State, announced that the countries that are ready, such as those in the West African Monetary Union (WAMU) zone, and that have made significant efforts in terms of proper management, good governance, control of deficits, debt control, will obviously be ready in 2020. It will be up to the Heads of State of that zone to make a decision.

VI. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION

- **Economic activity** shows good performance with a growth rate of 7.4% in 2018 and a macro economic framework that remains robust and is projected at 7.5% in 2019. The stability of the macro economic framework was reaffirmed by the IMF mission that stayed in Côte d'Ivoire from 14 to 27 March 2019. This rate is above that of all UEMOA countries and above the EU average of 6.6. %.
- **Inflation** remained low with an average annual rate of 0.4%; that of 2017 was 0.5%, a decrease of 0.1%. The Community standard is 3%. A good result possibly thanks to the work of the gallant farmers, coupled with the actions to combat the high cost of living by the government which stemmed the inflationary impulses. Namely the fixing of the prices of essential products and reducing the cost of electricity for moderate households.
- **The budget deficit**, for 2018, a deficit 4% of GDP had been agreed with the IMF; which has been respected as was the case in previous years, with UEMOA's regional standard being 3% of GDP. For 2019, the government's strategy aims to achieve strong, sustained and inclusive growth with the objective of preserving domestic and foreign balances in order to achieve the government's social policy.
- Regarding taxation, the government intends to bring innovations through a new tax policy that takes into account four main areas, i.e. encourage research and development as well as technological innovation; foster innovation in the

processing of agricultural and mining products; set up new economic and special zones; and make national regulations consistent with Community provisions.

- **The Ivorian banking sector** is doing well with a total balance sheet up by 15%, standing at FCFA 12,695 billion at the end of December 2018, with a bank rate estimated at 19.7%, a growth of 2%. The strong growth in bank assets can be explained by the strong economic growth recorded in Côte d'Ivoire.

The assets of banks operating in Côte d'Ivoire reached 12,760 billion CFA francs (\$ 21.84 billion) as of December 31, 2018, up by 15% compared to December 31, 2017. Bank deposits reached \$ 8,350 billion CFA francs in 2018, compared to 7,480 billion in 2017. The loans disbursed by Ivorian banks amounted to 7,006 billion CFA francs in 2018, compared to 6,280 billion in 2017, which represents an average annual growth rate of 18%. For the 2019 financial year, the banking sector will maintain its support to the agricultural sector, to SMEs, and will be able to conclude discussions with the Public Treasury on the financing of public procurement in the execution of public contracts.

- **With regard to the Ivorian State's public debt**, the outstanding public debt, which reached 11,536.0 billion in 2018, is projected at 12,572.0 billion in 2019 and 13,520.7 billion in 2020. The profile outstanding public debt from 2018 to 2020 would show an upward trend.

Côte d'Ivoire belongs to UEMOA, in which the ratio of debt to GDP has a maximum limit of 70%. Côte d'Ivoire now stands at a ratio of 43.2% and therefore has a lot of room for this criterion, which shows that the country's debt policy is under control.

- **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** Côte d'Ivoire, the world's largest producer of cocoa, recorded a rise of 7.7% in 2018, unlike that of 2017 which was 7.6%.
- **In terms of social policy and jobs**, the Ivorian government is continuing its efforts to improve the living conditions of the population. Hence the setting up of the "government's 2019-2020 social programme" of an amount of 727,500 billion FCFA.
- The programme aims to strengthen social action through a variety of social sectors including electricity, youth employment, education, health, and potable water and will help reduce social inequalities. The programme will benefit from AfDB support amounting to FCFA 283 billion.

- In implementing the free policy, the Ivorian government has so far mobilized CFA francs 94 billion for the purchase and distribution of textbooks and school kits.
- **The economic outlook** remains favourable, with real GDP growth of 7.0% in 2019 and 6.9% in 2020. A good performance in the agricultural sector will keep inflation below the convergence threshold of 3% for the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). The current account deficit is expected to stabilize at 2.8% in 2019, thanks to sustained imports of capital goods related to infrastructure projects.
- However, the economy remains vulnerable to external shocks that may result from unfavourable changes in commodity prices (mainly cocoa and oil) and adverse weather conditions. Another pressing challenge is to sustain economic growth and achieve a more balanced distribution across sectors, with a view to achieving a structural transformation of the economy. In this regard, there is the need to improve the quality of agricultural products, their processing and modernize the industrial sector with a view to undertaking activities with higher added value and strong job creation.

VII. STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MACROECONOMIC CONVERGENCE CRITERIA

Primary Criteria

- **The ratio of the overall fiscal balance, including grants, to nominal GDP** in 2018 was -4.0% against -4.5% in 2017. It was expected to be -3.7% in the 2018-2022 Programme.
- **The average annual inflation rate** would be 0.5% in 2018 compared to 0.7% 2017.
- **The ratio of outstanding total public debt to nominal GDP** in 2018 stands at 48.2% compared to 45.3% in 2017. The target was 42.6% in the 2018-2022 Programme.

Secondary criteria

- **The ratio of the wage bill to tax revenue** was 41.4% compared to 41.5% in 2017, with a target of 38.6% in the 2018-2022 Programme;

- **The fiscal pressure rate** was 16.5% as in 2017. The target was 15.6% in the 2018-2022 Programme.

Table 1.2: Evolution of Convergence Indicators for Côte d'Ivoire

	2017	2018		2019
Primary Criteria				
Overall balance/GDP ($\geq -3\%$)	-4.5	-3.7	-4.0	-3.0
Inflation rate ($\leq 3\%$)	0.7	≤ 3.0	0.5	3.0
Outstanding public debt/GDP ($\leq 70\%$)	45.3	42.6	48.2	48.3
Secondary criteria				
Wage bill/Tax revenue ($\leq 35\%$)	41.5	40.5	41.4	39.0
Fiscal pressure rate ($\geq 20\%$)	16.5	15.6	16.5	17.0
GDP Growth rate (%)	7.7	8.3	7.7	7.8
Source : UEMOA Commission, CNPE-Côte d'Ivoire (IP: Initial projections; RP: Revised projections)				

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VIII ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, has, twenty (27) years later, sharply exposed the severe degradation of the environment, the interconnection between sustainable development and environmental protection and highlighted the need to advance countries' environmental rights and responsibilities. The trade-off between developed and developing countries boosted the negotiations that followed until the conclusion of the Paris Agreement (binding universal agreement) in 2015 (COP 21).
- Côte d'Ivoire, a party to these different agreements, has legislated in terms of protection and preservation of the environment, thereby meeting the standards of the said treaties, not without taking into account its peculiarities. The different Conferences of the Parties offer an opportunity where each country, each group should fight for its needs, concerns and peculiarities to be taken into account for the implementation of the Paris Agreement ". COP 21 22, 23 and 24 saw the participation of Côte d'Ivoire. Political commitment is evident in the ratification of various international agreements and conventions, the establishment of political, institutional and legal frameworks and government support for the private sector. Plans and strategies are implemented as indicated above either for the preservation of biodiversity, sustainable agricultural development programme, management of the coastal zone with the inclusion of Côte d'Ivoire in the West Africa Coastal Areas

(WACA) investment project for resilient coastal management in 2016; Actions are being taken to improve the quality of life in our country.

The creation of environment, health and sustainable development ministries and a ministry in charge of renewable energies; the renewal of the 2014 Forest Code by the adoption of Law No. 2019-675 of 23 July 2019 on the Forest Code, which promotes agro-forestry by redefining forests classified in three categories according to the level of degradation, with multi-stakeholder participation actors, the involvement of chocolatiers to reduce the accelerated destruction of forest cover. In addition, our country has set up a national environmental policy and is making efforts to honour the commitments made at international fora by creating the institutional framework for implementing the recommendations formulated at the end of the meetings (National Strategy for Sustainable Development, National Commission for Sustainable Development, REDD + mechanism, Project Management of obsolete pesticides and other associated waste, etc.).

- The Ivorian government places a special emphasis on the protection of the environment. To this end, on April 17, 2019, the Ivorian Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, in the presence of the President of the AfDB, inaugurated the African Centre of Excellence on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Agriculture (CCBAD). The centre aims to contribute to the protection of the environment, the enhancement of biodiversity and sustainable agricultural production, in the current context of climate change, by strengthening the capacities of teachers and researchers, administrative staff as well as the training of students in the field.
- Like many other countries in Africa and around the world, Côte d'Ivoire is suffering from the negative effects of climate change with adverse consequences in the forestry, agricultural and food security sectors. This is why the Ivorian State has, for several years, taken note of the issue of climate change. To this end, the country has made commitments in a policy to mitigate the effects of the phenomenon on its development.
- These commitments are aimed primarily at reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 28% by 2030. Then increase the share of renewable energies in the energy mix with a target of 16% by 2030. And ultimately reduce deforestation and forest degradation.

IX. PAYMENT OF PROCEEDS FROM THE COMMUNITY LEVY

- On the instigation of Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara, sitting Chairman of the UEMOA Conference of Heads of State and Government, during the meeting of the 20th Summit of the Institution, held on July 30th 2018 in Lome,

Togo, the Heads of State and Government decided to maintain the Community Solidarity Levy (PCS) at 0.8% from 1 January 2019.

Rt. Hon. Speaker,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Cherished Fellow Parliamentarians,

Long live ECOWAS!

Thank you