



REPUBLIC OF BENIN



ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST  
AFRICAN STATES

## **ECOWAS PARLIAMENT**

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**2021 SECOND ORDINARY SESSION  
ABUJA FROM 27 May TO 12 June 2021**

### **BENIN COUNTRY REPORT**

#### **BENINESE DELEGATION**

**Honourable Sèdami R. MEDEGAN FAGLA**

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***May 2021***

## **INTRODUCTION**

Rt. Hon. Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament,

Honourable Members of the Bureau of the ECOWAS Parliament,

Dear Colleague MPs,

This report forms part of the ECOWAS Parliament's First Ordinary Session for year 2021, which holds from May 27 to June 12, 2021 in Abuja, Nigeria.

Indeed, one of the essential items on the agenda of the said Session is the presentation of country reports.

This report, written in accordance with the outline indicated, will give the regional representation an image of the activities in the various countries.

## **POLITICAL SITUATION**

### **1.1. Political Reforms in Benin**

If it does not mark the advent of a "new Republic", the constitutional review includes profound modifications. After two unsuccessful attempts in the first two years, a major constitutional review was passed by the National Assembly on November 1, 2019 and promulgated by the Head of State.

The main items of the various reforms are summarized as follows:

- organisation of general elections from 2026;
- review of the number of seats in the National Assembly from 83 to 107 for a population of nearly 14 million;
- increase in women representation in the Assembly;
- limiting the number of terms of MPs which should no longer exceed 3;
- specifying the two terms of the President of the Republic (two terms maximum in the life of a President);
- creation of the position of Vice-President of the Republic;
- endorsement for presidential candidates;

- strengthening of the status of the opposition and increasing State financing of Political Parties;
- abolition of the death penalty;
- establishment of the Court of Auditors; and
- relaxation of the charter of political parties.

Of the said reforms, we must welcome the birth of unpublished legal texts in the Republic of Benin, including Law 2019-44 on public financing of political parties in the Republic of Benin and Law 2019-45 on the status of the opposition. These two texts bring to a close the arsenal of laws necessary for the finalization of the political reforms undertaken in Benin, the main objective of which is to put political parties back as the main actors in the animation of Benin's political life.

## **1.2. Local Elections**

The May 17, 2020 local elections which took place in a particular context of the pandemic with firm instructions on taking measures to protect the populations, however ended on a pleasant note. They took place on May 17, 2020 and were patronised by five political parties, namely: l'Union Progressiste (UN), le Bloc Républicain (BR), le Parti pour un Renouveau Démocratique (PRD), les FCBE (Forces Cauris pour un Bénin Émergeant), l'UDBN (Union Démocratique pour un Bénin Nouveau).

Under Articles 184, 185 and 187 of the electoral code, 1,815 councilors are elected in the 546 districts of the 77 localities of Benin according to a multi-member proportional voting system with a double electoral threshold: to be able to obtain seats in a constituency, a party must obtain at least 10% of the votes cast at the constituency level as well as at the national level.

### **a- Declaration of the Results**

As a prelude to the election results, the CENA, through its Vice-Chairperson, Geneviève BOKO NADJO, shed light on the application of the provision governing the allocation of seats to political parties on obtaining at minus 10% of the votes cast nationally. For the CENA, in accordance with current law, the rule of 10% representativeness remains in force.

In this regard, the issue of the distribution of seats following the elections was discussed at a working session between the CENA and the political parties in contention.

At the end of the elections, 1,815 seats were distributed among the 546 districts of the 77 localities of Benin. Three political parties won the said seats: l'Union Progressiste, le Bloc Républicain and les Forces Cauris pour un Bénin Émergeant.

According to the Independent National Electoral Commission, of the 5,190,235 voters registered on the voters' register for the Sunday, May 17, 2020 poll, 2,550,335 voted, i.e. a turnout of 49.14%, far exceeding the low rate of 27.12% recorded in the legislative elections of April 2019. The votes cast stood at 2,448,326 with 61,059 spoiled ballots. Table 1 below shows the distribution of votes cast.

**Table 1: Distribution of Votes Cast per Political Party**

<b>Political Parties</b>	<b>Votes Cast</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Eligible</b>
UNION PROGRESSISTE	994,602	39.97	Yes
BLOC REPUBLICAIN	930,247	37.38	Yes
FORCES CAURIS POUR UN BENIN EMERGENT	372,818	14.98	Yes
PARTI DU RENOUVEAU DEMOCRATIQUE	136,581	05.49	No
UNION DEMOCRATIQUE POUR UN BENIN NOUVEAU	54,066	02.17	No
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,488,314</b>	<b>99.99</b>	

Source: Decision N°060/CENA/PT/VP/CB/SEP/SP declaring the results of the May 17, 2020 local elections

The distribution of the 1,815 seats to be filled at the end of the election on Sunday, May 17, 2020 made l'Union Progressiste to win 820 seats, le Bloc Républicain, 735 seats and les Forces Cauris pour un Bénin Emergeant, 260 seats. The PRD and the UDBN, having obtained 05.49% and 02.17% of the votes cast respectively, have no seats due to their poor performance for not getting the minimum threshold of 10% of representativeness entitling them to the allocation of seats (see Table 2).

b- Analysis of the results

The results are analyzed using various criteria, namely the distribution of seats per political party, the geographical distribution of seats, etc.

**Table 2: Distribution of Seats per Political Party**

<b>Political Party</b>	<b>Number of Seats Won (Counsellors)</b>	<b>Rate (%)</b>
UP	820	45.15
BR	735	40.49
FCBE	260	14.32
PRD	00	0
UDBN	00	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,815</b>	<b>99.96</b>

Source: Conducted by the Brainstorming Committee from Decision N ° 060 / CENA / PT / VP / CB / SEP / SP declaring the results of the May 17, 2020 local elections

## **1.3. Presidential Elections**

### **1.3.1. Election Period**

The implementation of the so-called reforms, aimed at avoiding less serious and numerous candidates, was resisted by certain political actors who claim to be radical opposition. Although the law was clear on the conditions for participation in the presidential election, some political actors opted to file without endorsement as enshrined in the electoral code. After the files were submitted to the CENA, only three pairs of candidates, including the one led by the outgoing President and two from the opposition, who were able to obtain the required endorsement, had their applications validated by the constitutional court.

With the vile aim of sabotaging the electoral process in order to discredit Benin in the eyes of the international community, the said radical opposition actors armed compatriots to burn public buildings, confront the security and defence forces, under the false pretence of a peaceful demonstration. Targeted assassinations were also scheduled. But for the bravery and patriotism of the security forces, Benin would have, today, experienced an uprising, i.e. a total chaos.

Despite all these acts that undermine peace and social cohesion, the presidential election went very well with an estimated turnout of over 50%. The election saw a first round victory by the duo of Patrice TALATA and Mariam ZIME CHABI TALATA, elected with over 86% of the votes cast.

### **1.3.2. Post-election Situation**

Some political actors were uncomfortable with the re-election of President Patrice Talon. Aggressive declarations and open demonstrations were organized in certain localities of the country, creating malaise among the population. Weapons and ammunition were found with some actors and cartridges were intercepted.

In the aftermath of the presidential election, the Beninese justice system arrested certain people involved in these various acts of aggression and destabilization.

Investigations are still underway to get to the roots of the matter.

Benin, in its new march, counts on the continued support of sub-regional institutions like ECOWAS to achieve even greater exploits.

#### **1.4. Appointment of Opposition Leader**

In accordance with Law 2019-45 on the status of the opposition, the National Executive Secretary of les Forces Cauris pour un Bénin Emergeant (FCBE) party, Paul Hounkpê, was entrusted with this task by decree n ° 2021-183 taken in the Council of Ministers meeting on April 28, 2021.

## **2. SECURITY SITUATION**

The sub-regional security situation continues to witness terrorism, coupled with the activities of transnational criminal organizations, inter-community conflicts and trafficking of all kinds.

In recent months, there has been a strong south-ward spread, of the influence of terrorist groups that are rife in the front-line countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger). This constitutes a serious threat for the coastal countries and denotes the precariousness of sub-regional security, even if the situation still appears to be under control.

The internal security of Benin is logically dependent on the regional situation and the country is also exposed to the terrorist threat and other related forms of crime. That is why the Government of Benin is taking measures to prevent, but also to react to all these threats in a strategic approach that relies on cooperation in matters of intelligence and security.

### **2.1. Threats**

#### a- Terrorism

In a context where no country is immune, Benin, by virtue of its geographical position, appears even more exposed. Indeed, the presence of suspicious, and sometimes armed people, who could well be elements of terrorist groups or at least, members of criminal networks established in the Department of Fada-Ngourma (Burkina Faso), is often reported by the populations of the northern border areas of the country, mainly in the border region with Burkina Faso.

It is strongly feared that the border dispute between the two countries in the village of Kourou Koualou is a factor in worsening security in the said area. Indeed, criminal groups take advantage of the absence of security control by either country to make it a comfort zone and a haven for a variety of trafficking.

#### b- Kidnapping with Demand for Ransom

This is a criminal phenomenon that took worrying proportions between 2019 and 2020. The Security Forces recorded around 40 cases in 2019; but in 2020, there were over 50 cases. Fortunately, the urgent measures taken by the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security resulted in substantially reducing the phenomenon to less than ten since January 2021.

The specificity of this phenomenon is that it is intra-community. It is within the pastoralist community that it manifests itself where perpetrators and victims all come from the same Peuhl (or Fulani) ethnic group. Very often it is within the same family circle that the crime is committed or committed with the complicity of a member of the victim's family.

This situation is quite worrying, because from what we can see in countries totally entangled today in the torments of terrorist violence, the phenomenon of kidnapping contributes to the financing of terrorist groups or constitutes an activity of choice for organized transnational criminal groups.

#### c- Transhumance

This is a phenomenon that has long impacted the country's internal security. Indeed, this activity has always given rise to clashes between farmers and herders, very often with heavy loss of human life, apart from the significant material damage recorded. It was imperative to stop this spiral of intercommunal violence, a potential breeding ground for violent extremism since the phenomenon creates a nest for stigma and frustration.



#### d- Maritime Piracy

It is a reality that the Gulf of Guinea is today the most dangerous maritime area in the world. This insecurity is very often due to the logistical difficulties of the national navies of the countries of the region which do not have navigation vectors capable of controlling their entire EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone).

In Benin, since March 2020, no more ships have been attacked neither in the territorial sea (up to 22 km from the coast), nor in the contiguous zone (up to 44 km from the coast). The rare cases recorded have been committed in the EEZ, beyond 200km from the coast and the capabilities of the National Navy are unfortunately too limited to intervene in this area.

### **2.2. Measures Taken and Prospects**

Mindful of the current security challenges, the government has taken strong measures to prevent any form of stagnation that could jeopardize the security of the populations and their property and compromise the country's development efforts.

Thus, as part of the **fight against violent extremism and terrorism**, the Defence and Security Forces have reorganized the deployment of operational units according to the assessment of the most exposed areas, in order to ensure an appropriate response when necessary. In this dynamic, several Special Border Surveillance Units (USSF) have been activated in border areas with a better professionalization of personnel serving in territorial units whose activities fall under the concept of neighbourhood or community police, for a true joint production of security. In terms of capacity building of human resources, the government has for the past year, on behalf of the Republican Police, recruited one thousand one hundred (1,100) police officers. Another recruitment of 500 new officers is expected in 2021. The Armies witnessed almost the same number of new recruits.

In addition, many sensitisation activities are carried out in the field, on the one hand, by the National Commission to Combat Radicalization, Violent Extremism and Terrorism (CNLCREVT) and on the other, by the Beninese Agency for Integrated management of border areas (ABeGIEF) which multiplies the construction of socio-community infrastructure as well as the promotion of income-generating activities for the benefit of communities, with the aim of strengthening the population's feeling of belonging to the Nation.

Moreover, thanks to the financial support of the UNDP, the Ministry of the Interior, through the National Commission to Combat Radicalization, Violent Extremism and Terrorism (CNLCREVT), is finalizing the process of validation of the strategic document for the prevention of violent extremism with the participation of all national and local entities concerned and state and non-state actors contributing to the joint production of security. This means that in the coming months, thanks to this important document, all our partners will be able to support us in the implementation of action plans and activities aimed at protecting the country from the dangers of violent extremism and terrorism.

Beside these measures, the government pays attention to the development of all sectors which will serve as levers in the preventive combat of violent extremism and terrorism.

With regard to combating the phenomenon of **kidnappings of people with demand for ransom**, a special unit of the Republican Police has specifically been set up. Thanks to a strategy directly involving the Peuhl community for the eradication of this criminal activity, almost all the cases recorded in 2020 resulted in the release of the victims without the payment of ransoms. In addition, nearly fifty perpetrators and accomplices were brought before the Court for the Repression of Economic Infractions and Terrorism (CRIET); and since December 2020, the phenomenon has been on the decline. Also, none of the investigations opened revealed any connection with the financing of terrorist actions in the sub-region or any connection with criminal groups in neighbouring countries. Rather, everything points to a criminal phenomenon in which disoriented young delinquents indulge, driven mainly by the greed for easy gain. Nevertheless, this constitutes a major concern to which the Government, through its Ministry of the Interior and Public Security, attaches great interest.

To prevent intercommunal violence between pastoralists and peasants, the government decided in 2019 to ban cross-border transhumance. A national committee was established to manage grazing in Benin. A policy is being put in place aimed at the gradual sedentarization of national breeders. This could promote better organization of national transhumance.

Moreover, effecting the ban has led to a substantial drop in the number of clashes between the two communities during the past two rainy seasons (2019 and 2020).

With regard to the **fight against maritime piracy**, the Government, in May 2020, took the radical decision to impose an **armed on-board protection team (EAPE)** on any ship bound for the ports of Benin. This may explain why the attack attempts have moved away from the coast, into the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), sometimes more than 300 km.

### **2.3. Cooperation in the Areas of Internal Security and Defence**

The best response to threats to internal security is through anticipation. The response must be prevention and this is why the government places great interest in bilateral and regional security cooperation. The security and defence intelligence services have strengthened their cooperation with their counterparts in neighbouring countries, through the Accra Initiative, which is a melting pot for intelligence-sharing and direct contacts between service and intelligence Heads, or the " UEMOA intelligence and security cooperation framework agreement, or the mechanism of the countries of the Conseil de l'Entente.

## **3. HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION**

### **3.1. State of Operations of the National Commission / Agency on Human Rights**

The Beninese Human Rights Commission, established by Law No. 2012-36, adopted by the National Assembly in its December 17, 2012 sitting, operates normally apart from the management difficulties common to any structure.

As part of the renewal of the members of the commission for a new mandate; Parliament to appoint its members to sit on the said committee.

Members of the said committee have already taken the oath.

### **3.2. Specific Situation/Mesures relating to:**

#### **a- Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disability**

The rights of persons with disabilities are a priority, not only for the government, but for the entire nation. This national priority was expressed by the unanimous vote by MPs present on the law on the protection and promotion of persons with disability in the Republic of Benin. The presence of a large number of persons with disability in the administration of Benin should be noted.

#### **b- Protection of Women's Rights**

The protection of women's rights is a reality in management practices in Benin. Several laws have also been passed in this direction. The law on the representability of women in political and administrative bodies has currently been tabled for adoption. The said law will impose 35% representation of women in the various bodies.

Several workshops have been organized by the IPU, the Government and Parliament to define the legal means allowing for greater participation of women in Parliament and in other constitutional institutions.

The constitutional review to allow for greater involvement of women failed.

#### **c- Situation of Refugees and Stateless Persons**

The situation of refugees and stateless persons is of paramount importance to Benin. This is reflected in the presence of numerous sites intended for refugees on Beninese territory and the healthy collaboration between the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the Council of Beninese in the Disapora.

## **4. HEALTH SITUATION**

Benin, open to the world, like all countries in the world today, experienced its first case on March 16, 2020. As of May 17, 2021, Benin has a positivity index of 1.3% which can be explained as follows:

- Reported : 33,075;

- Confirmed : 8,025;
- Recovered: 7,893 (98.4%);
- Deaths: 101 (1.3 %);
- Undergoing Treatment: 3;
- Number of PCRs conducted: 604,310 i.e. 4.9% of the population tested.

## 4.2. Measures Taken

Since the detection of the first case of COVID-19 in our country, on March 16, 2020, the Government has taken strong restrictive measures to limit its spread.

### 4.2. Status of the Vaccination Campaign in Benin

The Minister of Health, Benjamin HOUNKPATIN, launched the national vaccination campaign against Covid-19. The official ceremony took place on Monday, March 29, 2021 at the Palais des Congrès in Cotonou. In total, 78 vaccination centres have been prepared to receive the target people. These are front-line health workers, people over the age of 60 and people living with co-morbidities such as diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, sickle cell disease, etc. Thus, the vaccination campaign continues as follows:

- Vaccinated: 1<sup>st</sup> dose 13,085, Sinovac (6513) Astra (6475), others (97). 2<sup>nd</sup> dose: 2,222.
- Distribution of vaccinees: According to target: Comorbidities (22%), over 60 years (20%), health workers (21%). F (30%), M (70%).

## 5. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION

### 5.1. Economic Growth

According to IMF estimates, the world economy would experience a contraction in 2020 with a growth rate of -3.5% against + 2.8% recorded in 2019, due to the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and response measures taken by all countries.

The economies of ECOWAS have also suffered the repercussions of this pandemic, recording a general decline in activity, particularly in the manufacturing, tourism, hotel and restaurant sectors.

At the national level, the economic situation was mainly marked by the COVID-19 pandemic as in other countries. This pandemic has had a very negative impact on all sectors of economic activity. Thus, the growth rate is expected to

stand at 3.8% in 2020, against an initial forecast of 7.6% and an estimate of 6.9% in 2019.

The national inflation rate in December 2020, according to the definition adopted in the UEMOA region, is + 3.0%, against -0.9% the previous year. This level is just at the limit of the threshold set as part of the exercise of the multilateral surveillance mechanism within UEMOA Member States.

The execution of the State's financial operations at the end of December 2020 was marked by a deterioration in the budget deficit. In fact, total receipts and grants stood at CFAF 1,294.3 billion and total expenditure and net loans at CFAF 1,719.9 billion. This results in an overall deficit (authorization basis) excluding grants of CFAF 577.8 billion at the end of December 2020. As for the overall deficit (authorization basis) including grants, it stood at CFAF 425.6 billion at the end of December 2020. Relative to nominal GDP, the overall deficit, including grants, would stand at 4.8% in 2020 for an initial projection of 5.1% and against an achievement of 0.5% a year earlier, thus reflecting the effects of the health crisis linked to COVID-19 on the management of public finances. This level of deficit comprised by domestic and external financing of CFAF 158.4 billion and CFAF 370.7 billion respectively. The ratio of outstanding public debt to nominal GDP would stand at 48.1% in 2020.

Regarding the Balance of Payments, the BCEAO estimates for the year 2020 would expect a current account deficit of CFAF 353.5 billion (4.0% of GDP) against a deficit of 340.2 billion in 2019, an increase of 13.3 billion FCFA.

In 2020, the monetary situation was characterized by an increase in the money supply of 15.8% compared to its level the previous year. This increase in the money supply is mainly driven by not only net foreign assets, but also domestic claims which recorded increases of 13.8% and 27.4% respectively compared to their 2019 level despite the slowdown in economic activity in 2020 related to COVID-19.

## 5.2. Other Major Economic Aspects

The other facts are linked to the numerous reforms implemented by the Government. We can cite in particular:

1. In the **agricultural** sector, the State has endowed the sector with a new administrative and support system for its actors with the aim of

separating the sovereign functions from the support functions for the development of the agricultural sectors. The system relates to the creation of seven (07) agricultural development sectors (PDA). The administration of each PDA is operationalized by a Territorial Agency for Agricultural Development (ATDA) for the promotion of priority sectors by sector, the creation of twelve (12) Departmental Directorates of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (DDAEP) for the control and application of regulations and standards, and the creation of regional agricultural development sectors to promote key agricultural sectors. Thus, the following actions have been initiated and are underway. These are: (1) support for pineapple exporters for access to the European Union market (9 companies, 54 valid health certificates issued, 1,020 tonnes exported to European Union markets); (2) production and distribution of certified seeds to producers in the rice, maize, market gardening, cashew seeds / grafted plants, vitro-plants and pineapple shoots; (3) establishment of the Revolving Fund by certain projects (case of PAIA-VO) to support seed farmers in production and facilitate access to producers; (4) development of high value-added sectors (pineapple, cashew nuts, market garden products) and conventional sectors (maize, rice, cassava, milk, meat, table eggs, fish); (5) availability and accessibility of quality seeds and inputs; (6) support for structural investments (agricultural development, mechanization and rural roads); (7) strengthening of the institutional framework for the development of the agricultural sector.

**2. On the digital economy**, the actions concern, among others: (1) rehabilitation and extension of the national transport network with 2,000 kilometres of fiber through 67 municipalities with 47 points of presence; (2) the construction of metropolitan networks in Cotonou, Porto-Novo, Abomey-Calavi, through metropolitan optical fiber loops (approximately 220 kilometres of optical fiber); (3) construction of DTT-related infrastructure (technical building, pylon construction) on the various sites in the northern part, namely: Parakou, Kandi, Malanville, Boukoumbé, Kouandé, Djougou, Tchaourou, etc.; (4) activation of TNT in the southern sub-plate made up of Porto-Novo, Gbéhoué, Abomey-Calavi and Cotonou; (5) establishment and operationalization of the e-visa; (6)

construction of the building to house the National Data Centre and (7) establishment of "e-identity" and completion of the first phase of RAVIP;

**3.** In the field of **industry and trade**, economic policy is geared towards establishing a framework conducive to the development of a private sector that is productive of quality and competitive goods and services. The priorities for 2021, for example, are as follows: a) strengthening the competitiveness of industrial companies by, in particular, the establishment of support infrastructure for industrial companies; b) strengthening consumer safety and protection; c) promotion of commercial activities by, inter alia, managing market infrastructure and building the capacity of economic actors on international trade preferences; etc.

**4.** In the field of **transport infrastructure**, public policy has focused on improving the mobility of persons and goods in conditions of safety and comfort. Specifically, the priorities concern, among others, the development, rehabilitation and construction of the road network including: a) construction of the road bypass north-east of the city of Cotonou; b) construction of specific works including an interchange at the Védoko intersection and construction of a second crossing of the Womey lowlands (Womey 2 bridge); c) development of port infrastructure; d) development of air transport infrastructure including the construction of Glo-Djigbé airport and development of domestic air transport; etc.



5. In the **tourism, culture and arts** sectors, state policy is geared towards improving performance. To this end, the priorities include: a) improving the tourism statistical system and setting up the tourism satellite account; b) promotion of the “Benin destination” on the main tourist source markets; c) development of domestic tourism; d) continuation of the programme for the preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage and the natural heritage of a cultural nature; e) continued construction of cultural arenas; f) continuation and completion of rehabilitation works on the buildings of the National Library, departmental libraries and public reading centres; g) continued operationalization of cultural classes; h) promotion of cultural enterprises and industries and dissemination of artistic and cultural products and works on the national, regional and international markets; i) promotion of talents in the field of culture.
6. In the field of **health**, the orientation of state policy will aim to guarantee everyone good health for the promotion of the well-being of the populations according to the life cycle. In this context, the State will give priority to: i) strengthening the management of epidemics and other emergencies and health crisis situations; ii) scaling up of the Health Insurance component of the ARCH project; (iii) recruiting new health workers, including community workers; iv) continuing to strengthen the technical platform of hospitals and health facilities; v) strengthening and bringing health infrastructure up to standard, including continued construction of the Abomey-Calavi regional referral hospital; etc.
7. In terms of **small and medium-scale enterprises and the promotion of employment**, economic policy will focus on the one hand, on increasing the productivity of the economy and on the other, on promoting sustainable employment. More specifically, there will be the need to: i) strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs through, especially upgrading them, establishing a diversified, integrated financing mechanism, adapted to the needs of SMEs and supporting informal units’ formalization; ii) implement new employability enhancement programmes; iii) improve governance of the craft sector, etc.

8. In the field of **energy**, public action will focus on the provision of quality energy services, in sufficient quantity and at optimal cost conditions. To this end, the priorities will be: i) increasing the populations' secure access to electricity; ii) promoting the diversification of energy sources and the rational use of energy; iii) improving the management of the sector; iv) increasing national capacities for the production and transmission of electrical energy through, inter alia: the construction of a 136 MW IPP thermal power plant in Maria Gléta; the construction of a 25 MW GENESIS IPP thermal power plant; construction of a 10 MW GREEN HEART POWER AFRICA IPP solar power plant; the construction of a 50 MW IPP solar power plant in Natitingou, Djougou, Parakou, Bohicon (with the support of MCA-Benin II); the construction of a Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU).

In terms of **water and mines**, the policy will target access to drinking water, sanitation and the development of water, land and related resources. The priority will be to: i) contribute to improving the performance of the water and mining sector; ii) promote the rational and sustainable management of water resources; iii) ensure equitable and sustainable access to drinking water for populations in urban areas and universal, equitable and affordable access in rural areas; iv) improve knowledge and develop geological and mining resources; v) intensify oil exploration and activities downstream.

### **5.3. STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MACROECONOMIC CONVERGENCE CRITERIA**

Pursuant to the letter ECW / COMMEP / DMS / L-045/15 / skh of July 13, 2015, the ECOWAS Commission adopted new streamlined macroeconomic convergence criteria for the Multilateral Surveillance Mechanism. Thus, from eleven (11) convergence criteria, six (06) were selected, including four (04) primary and two (02) secondary. For year 2018, Benin met all the other criteria except the one relating to the budget deficit ratio including grants based on pledges to nominal GDP.

- **Primary Criteria**

- ❖ **Ratio of the overall budget balance including grants to nominal GDP.** This ratio would stand at -4.8% of GDP in 2020 against -

0.5% as of December 31, 2019, thus reflecting the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on public finances.

- ❖ **Average annual inflation rate** would be + 3.0% in 2020 below the community standard adopted as part of the exercise of the multilateral surveillance mechanism.
- ❖ **Financing of the budget deficit by the Central Bank** as a percentage of tax revenue for the previous year is zero in accordance with the UEMOA Directives suspending statutory advances.
- ❖ **Gross import reserves**, estimated at 5.9 at the end of December 2020 in compliance with Community standards.
  - **Secondary Criteria**
- ❖ **Public debt / nominal GDP ratio** would represent 46.1% of GDP in 2020 against 41.4% in 2019, i.e. an increase of 4.7 percentage points, but still falling below the Community threshold of 70% at maximum maintained in the Union.
- ❖ **Nominal Exchange Rate Variation.** This ratio was not yet available at the end of December 2020.

**Table:** State of Convergence as at December 2020

Ratios	ECOWAS Standards	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Observations
<b>Primary Criteria</b>							
Budget deficit including grants (based on pledges) / GDP (%)	≤ 3%	-4.4	-4.3	-2.9	-0.5	-4.8	Not met
Average annual inflation rate	≤ 5%	-0.8	0.1	-0.8	-0.9	+3.0	Met
Financing of budget deficit by the Central Bank / tax revenue from the previous year	≤ 10%	0	0	0	0	0	Met
Gross Reserves: In months of imports <sup>1</sup>	≥ 3	4.4	4.3	4.6	-	5.9	Met
<b>Secondary Criteria</b>							

<sup>1</sup> The value of this indicator for 2017 will be determined by BCEAO Headquarters for all UEMOA countries.

Ratios	ECOWAS Standards	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Observations
Public debt / GDP ratio	≤ 70%	35.9	39.6	41.0	41.4	46.1	Met
Variation in nominal exchange rate	± 10%	4.1	2.1	2.6	5.4	nd	Met

Source : CSIR/MF

## 6.STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ECOWAS COMMUNITY TEXTS

### 6.1. Payment of Proceeds from the ECOWAS Community Levy (CL)

- State of payments into the Community Levy Account

Benin applies the Community Levy (PC) on customs procedures in accordance with the provisions of the said Protocol.

The Ministry of Economy and Finance has taken measures to ensure that CL revenues collected by customs units are directly transferred to the ECOWAS accounts opened with the BCEAO since February 2018.

According to data from the last ECOWAS mission on monitoring the application of the protocol relating to Community Levy (CL) in Benin, during which the summary statements of the CL produced by the General Directorate of Customs and Indirect Rights (DGDDI), the statement of the General Directorate of the Treasury and Public Accounting (DGTCP), the statement of the Management Company of the Single Window of Benin (SEGUB) and the Monitoring table of the CL of the ECOWAS Commission have faced, the amount of the Community Levy collected and returned on behalf of ECOWAS from July 2003 to May 2018 stands at CFAF 54,313,083,727.

The amount of assessments over the same period amounted to CFAF 56,654,421,602. These data reveal an amount of unpaid CL of FCFA 2,341,337,875. But it should be noted that in the books of the DGTCP, an amount of FCFA 281,565,053 has also not been paid back to ECOWAS.

In addition, an amount of 8,259,191,489 FCFA not paid back to ECOWAS is currently in the account of the Single Window Operation Company (SEGUB) from November 14, 2019 to May 10, 2021.

**It therefore emerges that the total amount of CL arrears amounts to FCFA 10,792,398,878 from July 2003 to May 10, 2021. However, due diligence is underway to clear these arrears.**

- Measures Taken to Settle Arrears

Benin has made commendable efforts with regard to the implementation of protocol A / P1 / 7/96 relating to the conditions of application of the Community Levy. Thus, arrangements are being made to gradually clear the arrears.

- Challenges in the Implementation of the Community Levy

The main challenge is the direct repayment of CL proceeds into the ECOWAS accounts opened at the BCEAO. Benin met this requirement since February 2018 when all PC proceeds collected by customs are paid directly into the ECOWAS accounts at the BCEAO. This practice has been the norm to date.

The tables appended to this note show the details of CL assessments and repayments.

## **6.2. Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods**

The latest report of the ECOWAS Task Force indicates that Benin has outclassed all the other Member States of the ECOWAS region with regard to free movement of persons and goods, making it the best student in the Community in this regard. This performance earned the Head of State of Benin, President Patrice TALON, congratulations and recognition from the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

In addition, to facilitate free movement of persons and goods in the sub-region, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has initiated, for the benefit of Member States, a regional programme to facilitate transport and inter-state road transit. Among the achievements of this programme is the construction of the Joint Check Points (PCJ) of Sèmè-Kraké on the border between Benin and Nigeria.

Benin applies:

- Protocol A / SP.1 / 1/05/79 of June 25, 1979 on the movement of persons, the right of residence and establishment;

- Protocol A / SP.1 / 1/03 of January 31, 2003 relating to the definition of the concept of “products originating” from ECOWAS Member States;
- the Convention on the Inter-State Road Transit (ISRT) of 1982 relating to the creation of a customs road transit regime between ECOWAS Member States to facilitate the movement of goods;
- the Convention on the regulation of the ECOWAS Inter-State Road Transport, known as the 1982 ISRT Convention, defining the conditions under which road transport must be conducted between ECOWAS Member States (technical standards for vehicles, routes, etc.);
- the Accra Memorandum of Understanding of September 11, 2007 between ECOWAS, the Member States of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor (Benin, Togo, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Ghana) and the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Organization (OCAL), relating to the facilitation of transport and road transit on the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor.

### **6.3. Supplementary Act relating to Equal Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region**

a- Inventory in Benin on Supplementary Act A / Sa.02 / 05/15 Relating to Equal Rights Between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region

1- Supplementary Act A / SA.02 / 05/15 relating to Equal Rights between Women and Men for sustainable development in the ECOWAS region was adopted by the 47<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government held in Accra Ghana on May 19, 2015.

2- Its adoption aims to contribute to the resolution of the difficulties observed in the definition and implementation of strategies for the promotion of gender and the women empowerment in the ECOWAS region. These include, among others:

- the ineffectiveness of women's rights despite the existence of legal instruments at all levels;
- the difficulty in ensuring effective and real monitoring of the commitments made by governments through legal instruments due to the lack of measurement indicators;
- the emergence of new issues and challenges in countries that do not always take into account the rights of African women;

- the need to revitalize the women's association movement in Africa through the involvement of the young generation ...

3- Far from constituting one more document for ECOWAS Member States, the Act proposes accompanying measures to remedy the difficulties in the implementation of approaches to resolving inequalities. Its objectives are to:

- have a binding instrument for the harmonization of national legislations with regional and international instruments for the protection and promotion of women's rights in West Africa for their effective implementation;

- harmonize throughout the ECOWAS region, the texts and policies already in place in several Member States in a single document;

- put in place a time-bound planning mechanism at the national level;

- periodically monitor and report on the progress of the implementation of actions relating to Equal Rights between Women and Men for development in the ECOWAS Region in each Member State;

- set up an operational monitoring and alert mechanism that would bring together all the players in the ECOWAS region;

- take into account emerging issues and strengthen the integration of gender in the development policies and programmes of the ECOWAS Community.

4- More concretely, the Act aims to guarantee rights such as economic, social and cultural rights, access to justice, matrimonial and family rights, social protection of people living with a disability , protection of the rights of widows and widowers, child protection, participation in electoral processes, access to education, training, strengthening of women's economic power, participation in the formulation of economic and social policies, equal access to employment and related benefits, repression of Gender-Based Violence and care for victims, equal rights between women and men in media content etc ...

5- The Act embodies the people-centered legitimacy of the ECOWAS Vision 2020 and is indicative of the priority that ECOWAS leaders place on gender equality and women empowerment as part of the regional integration process. Its effective implementation will add substantial value to the regional integration process and will accelerate the achievement of ECOWAS Vision 2020.

6- Supplementary Act A / SA.02 / 05/15 relating to Equal Rights between Women and Men for sustainable development in the ECOWAS region was drawn up for all the fifteen (15 ) Member States. It is therefore necessary to underscore the crucial role that West African civil society organizations have to play in achieving the goals and objectives of this instrument.

7-The final provisions of the Act recommend that States:

- provide in their legalizations, appropriate corrective measures for any person whose rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Supplementary Act have been violated and ensure that such

measures are determined by the competent judicial, administrative or legislative authorities or by any other competent authority prescribed by law;

- ensure the integration of the gender equality dimension in planning and resource allocation exercises, as well as the empowerment of women and girls;
- mobilize and allocate the human, technical and financial resources necessary for the success of its implementation.

#### b- Inventory of the Implementation of Recommendations of the Supplementary Act

Benin's achievements in meeting the objectives of the Supplementary Act five (05) years after its entry into force are manifold. The Government of Benin has introduced reforms that have made it possible to achieve the objectives set by the Act.

- ✓ adoption of Law No. 2015-08 December 2015 on the Children's Code in the Republic of Benin, which protects children from various abuses and exploitations;
- ✓ vote and promulgation of law n ° 2019-40 of November 7, 2019 reviewing law n ° 90-32 of December 11, 1990 on the Constitution of the Republic of Benin which provides in its Article 26 paragraph 2: "**Man and woman are equal before the law. However, the law may lay down special provisions for improving the representation of the people by women**". Through this provision, Benin shall undertake to increase, in future, the number of women in the major political and administrative decision-making bodies,
- ✓ viability and revitalization of listening and legal assistance services for victims of GBV in 85 Social promotion centres in the 77 communes of Benin;
- ✓ revitalization and strengthening of the human, material and financial capacities of the Integrated Support Centres for Victims of Gender-based Violence which provide holistic support for victims: health, social, psychological, legal.
- ✓ adoption of the national action plan of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for the promotion of the participation of women in the process of peacekeeping in times of conflict;
- ✓ development of the benchmark for gender-sensitive budgeting in Benin;
- ✓ granting of a quota of 15% to women in recruitments within the Beninese army; and a quota of 50% for the children of troops;
- ✓ granting of production and processing materials and equipment to women's groups. From 2016 to 2020, 472 women's groups or 7,025 women were supported with materials for a total cost of CFAF 2,406,952,000;
- ✓ progressive free health care for vulnerable women and their children through the ARCH project (Insurance for the Strengthening Human Capital);
- ✓ establishment of "Alafia Microcredit", for rapid access by women to financing. The Government in partnership with Microfinance Institutions, makes microcredit available to these women at a very low interest rate. At the end of 2020, an amount of CFAF 10 billion had been made available to this project.
- ✓ exemption from school fees for girls in secondary schools and public high schools;
- ✓ setting up of the "50 million African Women Have the Floor" regional project. The aim is to contribute to the economic empowerment of women by providing a networking platform that would allow them to access information on financial and non-financial services. The project aims more specifically to create a platform for improving the capacity of women entrepreneurs to network and share information, and to access financial services;



- ✓ establishment in Benin of the Regional Project for the Empowerment of Women and Demographic Dividend in the Sahel (SWEDD) implemented by several African countries including Benin. For Benin, this project aims to accelerate the realization of the rights and the full potential of 3,302,000 young people of both sexes to trigger the benefits of the dividend;
- ✓ establishment in Benin of the African Women Leaders Network which is a movement of African women in leadership positions and serves as a vector for increased mobilization of women from various sectors to truly influence decisions and development from the African continent.

**APPENDIX:****STATE OF THE ECOWAS COMMUNITY LEVY FROM JULY 2003 TO MAY  
2018 IN BENIN**

<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>DEPOSITS AT BCEAO</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>
	CFAF	CFAF	CFAF
<b>2003</b>	1,063,042,561	-	1,063,042,561
<b>2004</b>	1,923,892,196	700,000,000	1,223,892,196
<b>2005</b>	2,169,257,978	1,700,000,000	469,257,978
<b>2006</b>	2,403,515,695		2,403,515,695
<b>2007</b>	3,057,823,206	2,000,000,000	1,057,823,206
<b>2008</b>	3,284,815,781	2,500,000,000	784,815,781
<b>2009</b>	3,551,357,283	6,495,956,563	(2,944,599,280)
<b>2010</b>	3,871,260,632	3,705,569,928	165,690,704
<b>2011</b>	3,360,115,688	4,003,040,099	(642,924,411)
<b>2011 ADJ Amount of compensations owed Benin</b>	-	3,440,987,813	(3,440,987,813)
<b>2012</b>	3,962,880,714	3745,555,241	217,325,477
<b>2013</b>	4,684,449,575	1,308,737,176	3,375,712,399
<b>2014</b>	5,419,976,386	5,199,942,395	220,033,991
<b>2015</b>	5,146,366,775	7,313,417,592	(2,167,050,817)
<b>2016</b>	5,097,744,899	4,871,664,609	226,168,100
<b>2017</b>	5,412,511,874	5,188,343,766	224,168,108
<b>Total (2003- 2017)</b>	<b>54,409,011,243</b>	<b>52 173 215 182</b>	<b>2 235 796 061</b>
<b>2018 (May)</b>	2,245,410,359	2,139,868,545	105,541,814

<b>TOTAL July 2003 to March 2018</b>	<b>56,654,421,602</b>	<b>54,313,083,727</b>	<b>2,341,337,875</b>
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<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ASSESSMENTS</b>	<b>DEPOSITS</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>
July 2003 to May 2018	56,654,421,602	54,313,083,727	2,341,337,875
Public Treasury Bill	281,565,053	0	281,565,053
<b>Total CFAF</b>	<b>56,935,986,655</b>	<b>54,313,083,727</b>	<b>2,622,902,928</b>