



**STATEMENT BY**

**H.E. DR. AISHA ABDULLAHI,  
COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS  
AND AG. CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**DURING ECOWAS DAY  
28 MAY 2014**

Your Excellency

Ambassador of Ghana as Chair of ECOWAS

Your Excellency's

Ambassadors of ECOWAS Region,

Distinguished representative of the UN Office to the AU

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I bring you greetings from H.E Dr. Nkosazanna Dlamini Nzuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission who would have loved to share with you in this celebrations of this ECOWAS Day, but could not be with us due to exigencies of duty.

Allow me therefore on her behalf and on my own behalf as a daughter from the region to take this opportunity to

Congratulate ECOWAS for the celebrations on this very important ECOWAS Day. ECOWAS, being one of the eight Regional Economic Communities in Africa and one of the strong pillars of the African Union has continued to uphold its strong and long standing position as the AU partners at the regional level. It has remained a partner that successfully takes responsibilities and provides sound leadership in the political, peace and security arena as well as provides economic development and integration in the region.

As we all know, from the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, our founding leaders identified the need for the economic integration of the continent as a prerequisite for economic development. It is this need that led to the OAU Summit in Lusaka from 9 to 11 July 2001 reaffirmed the status of the RECs namely: AMU/UMA, CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, CEEAC-ECCAS, CEDEAO-ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC within the African Union and the need for their close involvement in the

formulation and implementation of all programmes of the Union and I must state that ECOWAS among other RECs has continued to cooperate closely with the African Union.

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we all know, since its establishment on May 28, 1975, ECOWAS has continued to strengthen the economic integration of its members, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Its main objective of promoting cooperation and integration in the context of an economic union of West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its people, to maintain and increase economic stability, to strengthen relations among the Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent are laudable. I also want to highlight that if the initial objectives were essentially economic, the Community however took on political and security issues well. In 1990, it established a peacekeeping force (ECOMOG) to help deal with various conflicts in the region.

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Being an important engine of regional integration on the African continent, ECOWAS has Brokered peace process in the Region including Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone. I wish to take as pose at this juncture and condemn the inhuman killings, looting and suffering imposed on the people of northern Nigeria and parts of Mali by belligerent and the terrorist groups in these countries while sending our heartfelt sympathies and support to the affected families. ECOWAS has also widened the scope of participation of the ECOWAS peoples through its collaboration with the civil society and the bringing on board of many Non-Governmental Organizations and Community-Based Organizations, a very focal point and nexus of democratic integration process. ECOWAS has also been critically engaged in election monitoring in many countries of the region like Nigeria, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra-Leone, Liberia, Guinea,

Togo, the Gambia, Ghana etc. It has continued to advance the cause of democracy and good governance through its support, mediation, and diplomatic shuttles and peace missions to conflict zones in the region and has successfully partnered, collaborated and shared experiences with the African Union Commission, NEPAD Secretariat, the UN Agencies, the European Union, the African-Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Secretariat, etc. to draw support for the region's integration and development process; and has maintained surveillance on the economic and political developments within the region and provided intervention at appropriate times. ECOWAS Early warning and proactive measures to forestall full blown crises through its shuttle diplomacy and country-specific collaboration cannot be ignored and its contribution to the processes of Trade Liberalization, Macroeconomic convergence, creation of customs union and free movement of persons, goods, services and investment across the borders are some of the pragmatic inputs that makes the African Union proud is having ECOWAS as one of its pillars. The African Union will continue to collaborate with ECOWAS in the development and implementation of the Agenda 2063; in the silencing of the guns by 2020 so that Africa can stop being a continent mired with conflicts but one of prosperity and development. We will also continue collaborating with ECOWAS in the promotion of Intra Africa Trade and in establishing Africa as the food basket for its people in the globe especially this year as the AU has declared it a year of Agriculture!

The African Union therefore joins ECOWAS in celebrating ECOWAS Day and in congratulating the governments and the people of the Economic Community of West African States on this Day! It is also our hope and prayer that as we celebrate this day again next year, we will be taking stock of further successes from this region.

I thank you for your attention