
Addis Ababa, 1 August 2018: The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, welcomes the outcome of the Joint Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), held in Lomé on 30 July 2018. This Summit, in which he participated, marked a new and important step in the efforts to meet the challenge of peace and security within both Communities, including through greater synergy of efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

The Chairperson of the Commission expresses the full support of the African Union for the measures agreed to by ECOWAS and ECCAS to bring their efforts closer together. In this regard, the African Union will identify practical arrangements to enhance its contribution to the fight against terrorism and organized crime, through its relevant structures, including the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism, the African Police Cooperation Mechanism and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa. The African Union will also endeavor to better support environmental conservation efforts, particularly in view of the negative impact of climate change on the livelihoods of local people and on regional security. In this regard, special emphasis will be placed on the issue of Lake Chad, through increased African Union involvement in advocacy, technical support and resource mobilization both at the continental and international levels.

The Chairperson of the Commission also welcomes the conclusions of the 53rd Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS held in Lomé on 31 July 2018. He notes with satisfaction the ongoing efforts to strengthen regional integration, including through the creation of a single currency, and welcomes the renewed commitment of ECOWAS to the African Continental Free Trade Area. The Chairperson of the Commission notes with satisfaction that the ECOWAS Summit has also made further progress on peace and security. From this point of view, he notes the progress made in resolving the political crisis in Guinea Bissau, and expresses the commitment of the African Union to continue to accompany the ongoing process, including through the Peace Council and Security Council, which has just concluded a visit to this country, and a strengthened contribution to supporting legislative elections. He welcomes the sustained efforts of ECOWAS in the socio-political situation in Togo. He expresses the AU's support for the recommendations agreed to by the Summit,
including the invitation to Togolese actors to organize parliamentary elections on 20 December 2018 and the adoption of constitutional reforms to strengthen democracy.

The Chairperson of the Commission reaffirms the commitment of the African Union to continue working to strengthen relations with the Regional Economic Communities, which are the pillars of the Union. It should be noted that the ongoing institutional reform of the African Union aims, among other objectives, to enhance this link, and that within this framework the June/July Summit of the African Union will be, as of next year, replaced a coordination meeting between the Union and the Regional Economic Communities.