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DA AFRICA OCIDENTAL

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF  
WEST AFRICAN STATES



COMMUNAUTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE

DES ÉTATS DE L'AFRIQUE

DE L'OUEST

***OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE SECOND AFRICAN UNION REFLECTION  
FORUM ON UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT  
IN AFRICA (ACCRA II)***

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**Goodwill Message:**

**H.E. Madam Damtien L. TCHINTCHIBIDJA**

**Vice-President of the ECOWAS Commission**

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***ACCRA, GHANA***

**18-19 March 2024**

***Your Excellencies,***

***Esteemed Invited Guests,***

***Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,***

It is my pleasure and honour to deliver this Goodwill Message on this auspicious occasion of the ***2nd Edition of the Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa.***

I would like to start by expressing the appreciation of the ECOWAS Commission and that of the African Union Commission, for inviting us to co-organise this event. Together, we would like to sincerely thank the Government and the people of Ghana for hosting this event for the second time, which demonstrates unflinching support to the tenets of liberal democracy and good governance in Africa.

Permit me to also express the profound gratitude of the ECOWAS Commission to the President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo for the remarkable leadership during his tenure as Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, and particularly during the trying times occasioned by the coups d'états in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso, and for his tireless efforts in making sure that we address the challenge of **Unconstitutional Changes of Government in the ECOWAS Region.**

Though the ECOWAS region is presently going through a difficult period due to recent political dynamics in the region, we remain resolute and confident that with collaborative efforts, we will work through the challenges and emerge as a stronger and more cohesive region.

***Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen***

Despite the fact that West Africa was the first region on the continent to democratize after the end of the Cold War, setting the stage for two decades of enduring stability and growing prosperity, the recent coups d'état in some of our member States are a clear indication that we must renew our social contract, strengthen our democratic institutions and re-focus on delivery-oriented governance.

Of the 9 coups experienced in Africa between 2020 and 2023, 6 took place in West Africa alone. In addition to these coups, there have been other attempted coups within the same time in several Member States.

The resurgence of coups d'état is perceived largely to be attributable to concerns around lack of inclusivity and accountability in governance and decision-making processes. The strain in the social contract between the governed and the government, appear to be the reason why the recent coups did not elicit widespread visible public opposition. Rather, citizens in the affected Member States welcomed the military leaders with jubilation, believing that the change may usher in better conditions than those experienced under the democratically elected governments.

There is need therefore for the relationship between citizens and governing bodies to be strengthened. It is interesting to note that **Afrobarometer** reports have shown year after year, for the past two decades, that an overwhelming majority of West Africans favour democracy to any other form of governance.

***Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen***

**Unconstitutional Change of Government** is not only limited to coups d'état. It encompasses any manoeuvre geared towards the manipulation of constitutional norms and instrumentalization of the judiciary and legislature.

This is in conformity with the principle of **zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means** enshrined in the **2001 ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance**.

A key endeavour of the ECOWAS Commission is to strengthen our regional normative framework to be responsive to the realities of the region. Currently, the Commission is working to finalize the review of the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance with the intention to safeguarding constitutionalism, democratic values, as well as capacitating the ECOWAS Commission to respond appropriately and proactively to address Unconstitutional Change of Government in all its manifestations.

***Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen***

It is my hope that our deliberations at this Forum will explore innovative approaches that will chart the path towards renewing the consolidation of democracy and good governance in our region.

**I thank you for your kind attention.**

**Je vous remercie de votre aimable attention**

**Muito Obrigada**