ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES
REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS: A STUDY OF THE
NEW REGIONALISM PHENOMENON IN AFRICA

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THE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS) SUB-REGIONAL ORGANISATION

Source: [http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/ghana.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/ghana.html)

‘PEACE AND UNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE EVERYWHERE,
CULTURAL INTEGRATION AND LIBERTY WE DECLARE!
WOMEN AND YOUTH, ALL SHALL MAINTAIN FUTURE BRIGHT, IN HEALTH;
HUMAN AND NATURAL RESOURCES SHALL SUSTAIN OUR WEALTH’

-EXCERPT FROM ECOWAS ANTHEM
ABSTRACT

Regional cooperation and integration in the international system has taken new dimensions especially following the end of the Cold War and the example of the successful story of the European Union integration process. This new dynamism in the intra-regional cooperation, which started to emerge in the 1980’s, has been described by some scholars as ‘new regionalism’, with a view to differentiate it from the ‘old’ type of regional cooperation which was prominent from the 1950’s till the late 1970’s. This phenomenon of new regionalism is caused by a multitude of often interrelated structural transformations of the global system, and it is a comprehensive, multifaceted and multidimensional process, implying a change of a region from relative heterogeneity to increase homogeneity, and in many dimensions, the most important being culture, security, economic policies and political regimes. This study of West African States integration process is therefore limited to these parameters of new regionalism. In view of this, the New Regionalism Approach is used as the theoretical framework for this thesis. Furthermore, to offer a deeper and a better understanding of the new regionalism phenomenon in West Africa, the qualitative research method, and the case study research design are the preferred choice for the methodology and the thesis is literature-based.
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Innocent Komla Gavua
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACP  - AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC
AEC  - AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
Af DB  - AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
APRM  - AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM
AU  - AFRICAN UNION
CEC  - COMMISSION OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES.
CIDA  - CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ECOMOG  - ECOWAS CEASEFIRE MONITORING GROUP.
ECOWAS  - ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES.
EGDC  - ECOWAS GENDER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
EIA  - ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
EMCP  - ECOWAS MONETARY COOPERATION PROGRAMME
EU  - EUROPEAN UNION
IMF  - INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND
ISRT  - INTER-STATE ROAD TRANSIT
MAD  - MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ON DEFENCE
NEPAD  - NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT
OTUWA  - ORGANISATION OF TRADE UNIONS IN WEST AFRICA
UEMOA  - L’UNION ECONOMIQUE ET MONETAIRE OUEST AFRICAINE
UNCTAD  - UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT
UNDP  - UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
UNECA  - UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA.
UNESCO  - UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION
UNICEF  - UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN’S FUND
UNIDO  - UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION
UNO  - UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION
UNU/WIDER  - UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY/ WORLD INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS RESEARCH
USAID  - UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WACB  - WEST AFRICAN CENTRAL BANK
WAEMU  - WEST AFRICA ECONOMIC & MONETARY UNION
WAGP  - WEST AFRICAN GAS PIPELINE
WAMA  - WEST AFRICAN MONETARY AGENCY
WAMI  - WEST AFRICAN MONETARY INSTITUTE
WTO  - WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION
“We believe in regional cooperation with equal fervour, because it is only after developing African countries have coordinated their efforts and organized themselves at regional levels, that we can have the strength of purpose, which will make people listen to us not only in the OAU, but also at the United Nations”

(STEVENS, n.d. 8)
CHAPTER ONE

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Regional integration has been an evolving process over many decades now and different regions have embraced it. Its evolution was very much in the form of integrating actors concern with economic and security issues to the inclusion of other concerns such as social, cultural, environmental, other developmental needs. It is however, the commitment and the achievement of set goals by the member states in the various regional integrating bodies that have determined how far they have gone with the process, and have distinguished very successful regional integration organisations from others. As with many phenomena, regional integration has been given different meanings and definitions. Ernst Haas defined it as “the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new centre, where institutions possess jurisdictions over the pre-existing national states” (Haas, 1958, p 16).

Walter Mattli has outlined a set of conditions that needed to be satisfied for regional integration to be successful. In the first place, the potential for economic gains from market exchange within the region must be significant. If there is little potential for gain, perhaps because regional economies lack complementarity or because the small size of the regional market does not offer important economies of scale, the process of integration will quickly wither away (Mattli, 1999, p 42). Secondly, he pointed out that there must be a fulfilment of supply conditions. Some of these conditions include situations under which political leaders are willing and able to accommodate demands from regional institutions at each step of the integration process. Another important factor is the presence of a benevolent leading country within the region seeking integration. Such a country serves as a focal point in the co-ordination of rules, regulations and policies. It may also help to ease tensions that arise from the inequitable distribution of gains from integration (ibid).
The study of regional integration in the third world has indicated that little success has been achieved largely due to limited authority of their institutional structures. Julius Okolo pointed out that in most cases member-states retain the right to veto legislations approved by their representatives at the regional level (Okolo, 1985, p121). Joseph Nye has also argued that strong extra-regional actors have played a tremendous role to either promote or hamper progress towards integration in the third world countries (Nye, 1970), since it is a truism that third world countries are highly dependent upon industrialized states for development capital, markets for raw materials and technology. This asymmetrical relationship on the rest of the world renders third world countries particularly vulnerable to external economic influences and impedes regional cooperation (Ravenhill, 1979, p 231). These factors oftentimes provide significant impediments in the way of a successful integration process.

The international scene has witness various regional integration schemes aimed at improving the welfare and forging unity among the member states. Some of the well-known regional integration organisations around the world include the European Union that currently has a membership of twenty-seven European states. Other regional organisations include MERCOSUR in South America whose membership include countries like Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. In Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) promotes the interests of its member states. Regional integration in Africa has been a major goal of African states since they begun to attain independence in the 1950s. Apart from the continental integration body in the form of the African Union, a host of sub-regional integration bodies exist on the continent, but the prominent ones include the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern African (COMESA), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS/CEEAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU/UMA), East African Community (EAC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

This research is a case study on the regionalisation process in West Africa involving the ECOWAS group. The state of affairs in West Africa can simply be described as a
paradox, mind-boggling, and hence worth studying about in order to understand and find a solution to it. The member states are endowed with several rich natural resources like petroleum, gold, diamond, timber, rivers and so forth, and yet the member states are part of the poorest countries in the world. The vehicle through which the sub-regional leaders hope to turn this situation around is by sub-regional integration through the sub-regional organisation ECOWAS.

The member countries of ECOWAS have small economies that are highly susceptible to external economic and political influences and this situation affects their socio-economic and political development. This situation is further worsened by the current increase in the intensification of global trade, finance, technology and production, a phenomenon commonly referred to as globalisation. This phenomenon that seems irreversible, is mainly taking place among the developed countries of the world, with all its benefits accruing to them, whiles pushing developing countries like ECOWAS member states more and more to the periphery of global economic transactions, and rendering them dormant or non-participant in global affairs.

Another factor that affects the West African sub-region concerns security. Insecurity due to civil strife and unstable governments easily spreads to neighbouring states, making the entire sub-region a likely safe haven for international terror networks. Sub-regional integration has therefore been identified as a more favourable option to boost the member states chance of participation and benefiting from globalisation, promoting security and democracy within their borders as well as collaborating in other fields.

1.2 PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the activities of the various actors and aspects of the regionalisation process in West Africa. It will thus bring out the various strategies that ECOWAS member states have adopted to integrate their
economies and societies, promote security and law within the sub-region, in order to become more competitive on the international scene.

This research work is to be guided by these set of questions:

- How do member-states adopt the economic policies and programmes agreed upon at the regional level in their individual country economic programmes?

- To what degree do member states cooperate in dealing with security matters as well as implementing legal measures within the sub-region?

1.3 RESEARCH PARAMETERS

The research was categorized into two main areas to make it easy to understand and appreciate. The research was conducted under the purview of developmental regionalism and security regionalism. Discussions under developmental regionalism focused on subjects such as: the African Economic Community (AEC) Treaty and the New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) initiative, regional cooperation in trade, monetary and financial harmonisation, immigration, transport, regional water resource management, energy, and agriculture. Issues on security regionalism dealt with security measures adopted by ECOWAS to promote security, law and order in the sub-region.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

CHAPTER ONE:
This chapter began with a general outlook on what regional integration entails, especially with factors that can account for its success or failure particularly in the developing world, and why there is a need to study about the ECOWAS regionalisation process. The chapter further includes the purpose for this research work and a set of research questions
that are supposed to guide the research work. It finally ended with the research parameters of this study and the structure of the paper.

CHAPTER TWO:
This chapter dealt with a review of literature on the subject. It further looked at the concepts of a region, regionalisation, regionness and regionalism, giving a good background understanding to the New Regionalism Approach theoretical framework used for the study, which is also part of this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE:
This chapter demonstrated why the qualitative research method was the preferred research methodology used for this paper, and that it is a literature based research work. The chapter also explained the case study design, which was employed in the research, as well as how data was collected during the research and analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR:
This chapter begins with a presentation of an overview of the ECOWAS sub-regional grouping. It dealt with such issues as its formation, composition, stated objectives, and institutions. It also looked at WAEMU, a related regional organisation. The chapter further discusses empirical information on regional cooperation among the member countries of ECOWAS is in the areas of trade, monetary and financial harmonisation, regional water resource management, energy, and transport.

CHAPTER FIVE:
Chapter six deals with elements of security regionalism especially in the area of conflict resolution and peacekeeping initiatives, as well as legal steps being taken by ECOWAS to ensure law and order in the sub-region.

This chapter further looked at some aspects of the new regionalism phenomenon in the areas of private sector and civil society participation, and cultural and social integration in the ECOWAS regionalisation process.
CHAPTER SIX:
This chapter dealt with the analyses of the research work. The analyses employed the various aspects of the new regionalism approach to examine the various economic and development programmes of ECOWAS, the security mechanisms adopted in the sub-region as well as the role of civil society and private sector groups in the integration process.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
The conclusion of the paper looked at some possible measures that can be adopted to make the regionalisation process a more effective and successful one.
CHAPTER TWO

2.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In understanding the phenomenon of regionalism, we first have to look at what the concept of a region means. The word ‘region’ has been noted to be derived from the Latin word ‘regio’ which means ‘direction’ (Jonsson et al, 2000, p15), and also from the Latin verb ‘rego’ meaning ‘to steer’ or ‘to rule’. A region can therefore be said to mean a ‘border’, ‘delimited space’ or a ‘province’ (Soderbaum, 2002, p3). This elementary view of what a region means therefore gives the idea that a region is about a territorial entity and about authority or the rule of law within that entity. With this basic understanding of a region, we move on to differentiate a micro-region from a macro one. A micro region can be said to mean the division of a State or country into different parts for local administrative purposes, so that these parts form various regions of the country, whiles at the same time we have the national level authority. A macro region more often is on the supranational, regional, or global level, meaning different territorial regions of the world (Soderbaum, 2002, p3). It can therefore be appropriate to talk about a West African sub-region or African region, since this means we are dealing with two or more sovereign states coming together to form a region, especially with reference to the subject under study. This view is however subject to debate as some scholars consider a region not from a geographical point of view but rather see it as a social construction that is constantly undergoing construction through dialogue, identities, and cognitive resources (ibid). There is therefore a probability of this social project of a region to succeed or fail, depending on how the actors engaged in it undertake it. This paper will consider the various perspectives of what a region denotes as it continues with the study.

The process of regionalisation within a particular region involves the cooperation and collaboration among member countries of that region. It is the view of certain scholars that for the regionalisation process to consolidate itself in a particular region, member-states must share common cultural, economic, linguistic, or political ties. This particular position is advocated by Kym Anderson and Hege Norheim when they wrote that “while
there is no ideal definition (of a region), pragmatism would suggest basing the definition on the major continents and sub-dividing them somewhat according to a combination of cultural, language, religious, and stage of development criteria” (Anderson et al, 1993, p19). A similar view is that a region is composed of ‘states which have some common ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social, and historical bonds’ (Cantori et al, 1970). All these views demonstrate that the countries within the region must possess some common affinities in order for the regionalisation process to succeed. This conception of the need for multi-faceted factors or ingredients to exist in a region for it to be successful is consistent with the new regionalism paradigm. However as already stated in the first chapter, the success of this process demands more than the sharing of common values and historical heritage. The role of the civil society, the amount of independence granted to regional institutions, as well as the attitudes and roles of other factors in the regionalist project must be taken into cognisance if the process is to succeed, especially if the regionalisation process is taking place in the developing world.

2.2 “REGIONNESS AND REGIONALISM”

The idea of ‘regionness’ is necessary in order to define and reveal the level at which the regionalisation process has developed up to within a region. Hettne therefore came out with five elemental stages, which he enumerates as showing the degrees of regionness within a particular region.

* He first looked at a region in terms of its geographic structures such as physical and ecological features. He described this as a ‘proto-region’ or a ‘pre-regional zone’ as there is no organised society existing at this stage.

* The second stage he identified is the sociological level, and this is demonstrated by the trans-local relations between the people that make up a security complex. At this level, those making up the region are dependent on each other concerning their security affairs.

* The third stage he enumerated involves collaboration in an advanced stage and the region is organised in the field of cultural, economic, political and military matters, and this classification concerns all the members of the regional group. He
believes the region, in this organised form really makes it ‘formal’. Furthermore, the cooperation that exists among the members of the group, and the potentials that the region has, that makes it a ‘real’ region.

- Hettne further defines a region in terms of those who constitute the civil society. By this, he means the type of system adopted to promote and assist social communication and congregation of norms and values within the whole region.
- Finally, he identifies a region to be what he described as a ‘region-state’. By this, he means the region has a distinct identity, in terms of its supranational nature, potentials and authority (Hettne, 2005.p552).

Related to the process of regionalisation is the concept of regionalism which connotes the philosophies and goals that those in a particular region has, which are directed at creating and providing economic development, security, peace and political direction to that region. This normally involves the drawing of formal plans that guides the implementation of these goals, and this often results in the establishment of formal institutions (Hveem, 2000, pp 72). Regionalism to an extent represents governance at different levels at the same time, and this involves governance at the local, national and regional levels (Larner et al, 2002, p 401). In the words of Anthony Payne and Andrew Gamble, “regionalism is a state-led or states led project designed to reorganize a particular regional space along defined economic and political lines” (Payne et al, 1996, p 2). They went further to state that “regionalism is seen as something that is being constructed, and constantly reconstructed, by collective human action” (ibid, p 17). This view shows that the process is not pre-determined but has the activities of various actors in the process to drive it, which is, if it has to succeed or fail. The number and the levels of successes of regionalism projects that exist in the world today demonstrate the amount of efforts that has to be contributed by the various actors constituting it. The mere desire or elaborate documentation of aims and objectives alone will not lead to a successful regionalism development, but the adoption and implementation of concrete measures by the various stakeholders in the process.
Commenting on the features of new regionalism especially in the form in which it was manifested after the 1990’s, Mistry noted that the phenomenon became visible in the following ways; it entail more diversity among integrating countries; it now has an external direction with openness to trade, capital flow, technology, knowledge and high-level manpower; the phenomenon was also observed in the form of the liberalization of services, investment, technical and regulatory standards, and not only in the form of liberalization of goods. Mistry went further to enumerate other aspects of the arrangements as; the integrating region now had the urge to become very competitive within the world economic setting; and the new regionalism process also encouraged an increase in the relationship between the North and South in such regional arrangement, which rarely pertains in the past (Mistry, 2002, p121).

2.3 THEORETICAL APPROACH

The New Regionalism Approach is premised on the understanding that we are now dealing with a qualitatively new form of a regional integration phenomenon that is different from the ‘old’ form of regionalism that took place from the 1950s and ended in the 1970s. The ‘old’ form of regionalism was highly influenced by the bipolar Cold War power structure that existed during that period. It was also very particular to its aims and substance, such as free trade and security matters (Soderbaum, 2002, p 22).

The new regional phenomenon has been greatly shaped by a host of recent events that led to the transformations on the international political and economic scene. A number of such occurrences are identified as:

- the transformation of the bipolar Cold War structure and alliance arrangements towards a multipolar one, with a new international division of power (NIDP);

- the relative decline in American power and her support for regionalism in the world (i.e. in the form of ‘open regionalism’)

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the emergence of the three major blocs on the global political and economic scene; the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), and the Asia Pacific, all operating within the capitalist system.

the decline of the Westphalian nation-state system and the intensification in the interdependence and transnationalism of world economic, social, and political issues, which has also generated new forms of interactions among governments and non-state actors;

the current wave of ‘globalisation’ of finance, trade, production, and technology, all resulting into a new international division of labour (NIDL);

the apprehension over the stability of the multilateral trading order and the growth in the use of non-tariff barriers (NTB) to trade; and finally

the adoption of neo-liberal economic development and political systems in the developing countries (Hettne et al, 1998, p 1)

The above events reveal the forces shaping the new regionalism phenomenon, and that it is “a heterogeneous, comprehensive, multidimensional phenomenon, taking place in several sectors and often ‘pushed’ by a variety of state, market, society and external actors both within and outside formal regional organisations” (Soderbaum, 2002, p 23).

The new regionalism approach combines the three theoretical frameworks of international relations/international political economy; development theory; and regional integration theory.

The new regionalism approach sees economic globalisation as a strong force that can have some effects on the regionalisation process. The approach emphasizes not only the roles of nation-states but also that of the civil society (Mittelman, 2000). The new regionalism approach also embraces the developments that take place within the social
and cultural sectors of the region, not only limiting its scope to economic and state run regionalist projects (Hettne, 1999).

Though the New Regionalism theoretical framework may be considered loosely structured and incoherent as an analytical approach, it is being developed to make it more coherent as an analytical tool. It has however provided a good means through which the current phenomenon of regionalism can be understood.
CHAPTER THREE

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research work adopted the qualitative research method as its approach of enquiry. Qualitative research methods as explained by Bryman, is a research tool that engages ‘the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants’ (Bryman, 2001, P.264). Qualitative research is also multidimensional and pluralistic, with the result of it highlighting the political nature of social research, with the recognition that the term social is ‘human construction, framed and presented within a particular set of discourses and conducted in social context with certain sort of social arrangements, involving especially finding cognitive authority and power’ (Punch, 1999, P. 140). With these understanding of a qualitative research method, it is thus clear that this strategy is ‘more interested in deeply understanding specific cases within a particular context than hypothesing about generalisation and causes across time and space’ (Patton, 2002, p. 846). Bryman has outlined a number of important research steps that has to be followed under qualitative research methods and this is as follows:

- First there is the enumeration of general research questions;
- Then the appropriate sites and subjects or participants for the research are chosen;
- This is then followed by the collection of data. This can be achieved by ethnographic observation of the life of the society under study, or through interviews conducted.
- The next step involved the interpretation of the data collected;
- Finally, there will be the emergence of the conceptual and theoretical work (Bryman, 2001, p. 266).

The above shows that under qualitative research methods, concepts and theoretical frameworks comes out after data is collected and analysed, indicating its inductive character.
The qualitative research method has however attracted many criticisms mainly from the proponents of the quantitative research method. It has been seen as generating soft and unscientific results, and therefore difficult to evaluate and unreliable (Devine, 1995, p.141). It is further argued that a study produced through the qualitative research method is difficult to replicate due to the subjective and unstructured method usually employed. This normally makes the result produced through it to be questioned by other researchers who have achieved contrary results. Qualitative researchers have defended their approach on the basis that what matters is the quality of the theoretical inferences that have been generated from the data collected, and that this is what is crucial to the assessment of generalisation (Bryman, 2001, pp 282-283).

3.2 CASE STUDY

The case study research design was adopted for this research undertaking. Bryman defines case study as “the detailed exploration of a particular case which relate to a community, organisation, or person (Bryman, 2001, p. 29). A case study can further be understood to mean “ an empirical inquiry that investigate a contemporary phenomenon within is real life context and is based on multiple source of evidence with data needing coverage in a triangulation fashion and which benefit from deduction to guide data collection and analysis” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The main goal in using the case study model is to develop in largely an understanding of the case as possible, emphasizing its depth, natural setting, its complexity and its context. The use of the case study design also enhances the holistic focus of the phenomenon understudy, preserving and giving an understanding of the wholeness and unity of the issue (Punch, 2005, p.144).

The employment of the case study design in research however has some limitations, such as any findings from its use cannot be generalized. This is mainly because of the feature of studying the phenomena that are more contexts specific to certain community, organisation or natural setting.
3.3 COLLECTION OF DATA

In the search for relevant and genuine documentary materials for this research, the four key guidelines posited by Jupp in appraising documentary data were taken into consideration. These are:

- Its authenticity. That is whether the information is genuine or original.
- Its credibility. Whether is it accurate?
- Its representativeness. Whether it is representative of the totality of documents of its class.

In the search for research materials for the thesis, various primary and secondary sources were consulted. Materials came from various sources like official documents from the member-states and the regional organisation, such as the Treaty, Mission Statements, Protocols, Decisions, Regulations, Progress reports, Press releases, Newsletters, Research papers and academic works. The internet served as one of the main sources to gather information for the thesis due to its easily accessible nature and the difficulty in travelling to the member-states and the ECOWAS Secretariat to obtain the required information. Access to very current information on the activities of the regional organisation and its member states were hard to come by from the internet and scholarly works, and this as a result limited a far better understanding of some recent development within the sub-region.

3.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

A qualitative content analysis of the materials gathered became necessary for the thesis to achieve its purpose. Krippendorff understands content analysis to mean “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. Intuitively, it could be characterized as a method of inquiry into symbolic meaning of message” (Krippendorf, 1980, p. 21). For Bryman, “qualitative content analysis is probable the most prevalent approach to qualitative analysis of document, it comprises
searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analysed…, using a brief quotation to illustrate the relevant points” (Bryman, 2001, p. 381).

The use of content analysis demonstrates some weaknesses. In the application of content analysis in a research, it is highly likely that certain documents may not be available to the researchers to use, thus limiting their sources of information. In addition, some document may not be complete and hence the information can be bias and unreliable. However, these weaknesses did not limit a better understanding and analysis of this thesis.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 OVERVIEW OF ECOWAS

The inspiration for the creation of ECOWAS came from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), which had divided Africa earlier in the 1960s into regions for purposes of economic development. ECOWAS was founded on the 28th of May 1975, and it currently has a membership of fifteen states of the West African sub-region. They include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. The initial objective of forming ECOWAS was to achieve economic integration and development so as to form a unified economic zone in West Africa. Later on, the scope was widened to include political and security issues. The ECOWAS Treaty seeks to establish an economic and monetary union based on the removal of duties and equivalent taxes, the adoption of a common external tariff, and a harmonisation of economic and sectoral policies (ECOWAS Official website). In 1993, ECOWAS revised its Treaty to introduce among other measures, the principle of supra-nationality concerning the application of its decisions.

The institutions of ECOWAS are as follows: The Authority of Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Community Parliament, Economic and Social Council, Community Court of Justice, and the Executive Secretariat. Its financial institutions are ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development, ECOWAS Regional Investment Bank, ECOWAS Regional Development Fund. Its specialized Agencies are West African Health Organisation, West African Monetary Agency, West African Monetary Institute, Conference of Ministers of Youth and Sport, ECOWAS Gender Development Centre, Water Resources Coordination Unit, and ECOWAS BROWN CARD Secretariat. Its associated private sector organisations are ECOBANK and ECOMARINE.
ECOWAS has a total land surface area of 5,112,903 km², with a population of over 251 million (Wikipedia website, 2007). ECOWAS countries has three main official languages with French spoken in former French colonies of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. English is the official language used in Liberia and the former English colonies of Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, whiles Portuguese is spoken in the former Portuguese colonies of Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.

ECOWAS member states mainly depend on their extractive and agricultural industries for their exports to the outside world. These sectors for instance accounts for 82 per cent of the GDP in most of the ECOWAS member states. The economies of ECOWAS Member States are not so much diversified and this affects a speedy development of the regional integration process. The main export products for the region are obtained from petroleum, aluminium, gold, cocoa, coffee, wood, and cotton. Intra-regional trade within ECOWAS has not been the best as expected from countries that have been cooperating for over three decades now. ECOWAS trade amounts to 11 per cent of the sub-region’s total trade with the world. Intra-community trade was $1,813 million for total imports and $2,539 million for total exports in 1997, whiles in the same year the community’s imports and exports to Europe was $7,525 million and $8,114 million respectively. (ECOWAS, 1998). The share of industrial production among ECOWAS countries is low, averaging 21 per cent and 19 per cent in 1980 and 1995 respectively, when compared to their total production. There is however an indication of improvement in the services sector, particularly tourism in some Member States (Ogunkola, 2005, p.12).

The performance of ECOWAS from its establishment in 1975 to the late 1980s had not been excellent, and its level of regionness was very low. Many reasons have accounted for this poor performance, and Abass Bundu, a former Secretary General of ECOWAS has enumerated some of them as the absence of development and integration culture in the sub-region; priority given to national programmes following the years of independence; and differences in ideology and approach. Other factors include the fear of domination by Nigeria by some of the member countries; the burden of certain
institutional and economic structures inherited from the colonial era; economic problems that the countries face; and political instability (Bundu, 1997, p 4). There seems to be a new impetus on the part of ECOWAS countries to improve upon their performance if they are to achieve their goals, and be relevant in the ever-developing global economy. The performance of ECOWAS from the beginning of the 1990s has begun to show some signs of improvement and the following study would look at some of these new developments in ECOWAS activities.

4.2 WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION (WAEMU) 
(L’UNION ECONOMIQUE ET MONETAIRE OUEST AFRICAINE-UEMOA)

The success and the propensity of ECOWAS to improve upon its state of regionalism within the West African sub-region are somehow linked to the activities of a number of similar organisations in the sub-region. One of these is the West African Economic and monetary Union (WAEMU). WAEMU is an organisation founded by some of the Francophone countries within ECOWAS in 1994. The aim of WAEMU is to intensify and expand the level of economic cooperation and integration among the member states. WAEMU is the product of the amalgamation of the then existing West African Monetary Union (UMOA) and the Economic Community of West Africa (CEAO). The members are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. Guinea Bissau joined the membership in 1997 (Soderbaum, 2000, p124).

Since all the members of the WAEMU are also part of ECOWAS and their objectives are also almost the same, the two organisations seems to be playing the same role in the sub-region. This it must be noted however is a prevalent situation in Africa where numerous intergovernmental organisations performing similar functions exist within the same region (Mwamadzingo, 2001/2, p 7). This state of affairs has compelled UNECA to express its concern in its report about the existence of such plurality of organisations pursuing identical objectives within the same region. There is therefore a high possibility of a wasteful and dissipation of effort, leading to the confusion about the goals of integration, and counterproductive competition between countries and institutions (ECA,
The World Bank also cautioned that to attain deep integration, there is a need for such multiple organisations to be amalgamated (World Bank, 2001).

To forestall any further duplication of efforts in the integration process within the West African sub-region, there are steps in recent times to fuse the policies and structures of the two organisations together in order to achieve a maximum result. ECOWAS and WAEMU therefore signed an agreement in May 2004 to “enhance the coordination and harmonisation of their programmes” (ECOWAS, 2004). This has further led to the creation of a Joint Technical Secretariat to pursue this coordination of efforts. This new collaboration between the two organisations was recognised by ECA when it stated in its report that “the growing rapport between ECOWAS and WAEMU has borne fruit in a common programme of action on trade liberalisation and macroeconomic policy convergence. ECOWAS and WAEMU have also agreed on common rules of origin to enhance trade, and ECOWAS has agreed to adopt WAEMU’s customs declaration forms and compensation mechanisms” (ECA, 2004, p 42). As it is the aim of both organisations to promote cooperation and integration among countries of the sub-region, it would be essential if they continue to harmonize their programmes and activities in order to attain a high level of regionness in all sectors of the process.

4.3 ECONOMIC REGIONALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

The UNU/WIDER project on ‘The New Regionalism’ perceives the regionalisation process to originate from ‘within’ and ‘below’. The new regionalism approach on which this paper is based, “is founded on the close interdependence between, on one hand, politically negotiated, institutionalized, states-led, states-driven regionalisation and, on the other hand, spontaneous, ‘natural’ society and market-induced regionalisation, in analogy with the inseparable relationship between state and civil society-market at the national level” (Soderbaum, 2000, p131). The regionalisation movement in West Africa is directed toward trade integration; capital and monetary integration; and or sectoral cooperation and development (ibid).
An understanding of developmental regionalism gives a good perspective of the new regionalism paradigm. Hettne explains developmental regionalism to mean “concerted efforts from a group of countries within a geographical region to enhance the economic complementarity of the constituent political units and capacity of the total regional economy” (Hettne, 2005, p 559). The paper now takes an in depth views of some of the measures taken by ECOWAS Member States to drive its process of regionalisation and development forward.

### 4.3.1 THE AEC TREATY AND NEPAD INITIATIVE

The African Economic Communities (AEC) Treaty otherwise known as the Abuja Treaty was adopted by the then Organisation of African Union in 1991 as the Africa continent’s economic integration and development strategy. The main goal of the Treaty was to consolidate the various sub-regional schemes and later bring them together to form the Africa Economic Community, and it contains plans on how to implement the trade liberalisation scheme. The AEC Treaty makes provisions for the Africa Economic Community to be established through a gradual process, and it entails six stages through which the development process has to go through and these are:

- **Stage one (five years):** Consolidation of existing regional economic communities and creation of others where none now exist;
- **Stage two (eight years):** Stabilization of tariff and non-tariff barriers; reinforcement of sectoral integration; coordination and harmonisation of activities among existing regional economic communities;
- **Stage three (ten years):** The setting up of free trade zones and customs unions;
- **Stage four (two years):** Establishment of a customs union to cover the whole of the continent, through the coordination and harmonisation of tariff and non-tariff barriers among the regional economic communities;
- **Stage five (four years):** Establishment of an African common market, comprising of the adoption of common policies, harmonisation of monetary policies, free
movement of people, setting up of independent financial base for the community; and

- Stage six (five years): The creation of the AEC through the strengthening of the African monetary union and the establishment of a pan-African parliament (AU website, 1991).

ECOWAS is designated one of the five main building blocks of the AEC, hence its adoption of most of the programmes of the AEC Treaty.

In addition to the AEC Treaty agenda, another African Union programme that ECOWAS subscribes to is the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) initiative. ECOWAS Heads of State and Governments in an extraordinary summit in Yamoussoukro, Cote d’Ivoire in 2002 adopted the NEPAD initiative as part of their development plan. In view of this, ECOWAS and NEPAD programmes are being harmonised to adopt the same common plans and achieve the same purposes. It is the goal of NEPAD to encourage integration at both the regional and continental level. The NEPAD programme was devise to address the numerous challenges facing the African continent such as increasing poverty levels, underdevelopment and its marginalisation in global affairs. The framers of the initiative hope it will be “a holistic, comprehensive and integrated sustainable development initiative for the revival of Africa” (NEPAD Official Website, 2005).

Among the principles of NEPAD that are to propel the African Union to achieve the goals of this initiative are the ensuring of good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development. In addition, the plan aims at the promotion of the competitiveness of African countries and the continent; developing a partnership between and amongst Africans; stepping up efforts at regional and continental integration; and the creation of a new global partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed countries (ibid).
ECOWAS has thus taken the following steps to bring NEPAD objectives, which it adopted under the Yamoussoukro Plan of Action into its plans for the sub-region:

- The implementation of good governance goals in all the member states in order to create a new environment for the existence of the rule of law, peace and stability, transparency and accountability and development. In order to achieve these aims, ECOWAS has directed the member states to implement the following measures:
  
  o The ratification and application of the 1999 ECOWAS protocol on the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, prevention, peacekeeping and security;
  o The ratification and application of the 2001 protocol on democracy and good governance, in addition to the 1991 ECOWAS declaration of political principles;
  o The ratification and application of the 2001 protocol on the fight against corruption;
  o The implementation of the moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons;
  o The setting up of regional operational system for the operationalisation of the convention on mutual assistance in criminal matters and the convention on extradition;
  o The execution of the action plan on the fight against human trafficking; and
  o The implementation of the ECOWAS programme on drug control and money laundering.

- In terms of the member states adopting good economic practices in their monetary and financial transactions, ECOWAS encouraged its members to apply the eight NEPAD codes, standards and principles guiding economic good governance. ECOWAS has directed its member states to apply the following economic directives:
- ECOWAS multilateral surveillance mechanism for achieving macro-economic policy harmonisation and convergence;
- The setting up of a single West African common market;
- The liberalisation of current account transactions and a gradual liberalisation of the capital account;
- The harmonisation of regulations on the financial markets, competition and taxation;
- The introduction of a risk assessment system for the member states as well as the mobilisation of development capital, at both official development assistance level, and at the foreign direct investment level.

**ECOWAS has also fashioned its infrastructure development agenda to be in tune with that of the NEPAD initiative. The development of the energy market of West Africa such as the implementation of the West African Power Pool project and other projects in the area of renewable sources of energy have all been drawn to be as part of the West African phase of the NEPAD general programme. Other aspects of the NEPAD programme that ECOWAS has adopted are in field of transportation, telecommunication, and information and communication technology.**

**The Yamoussoukro Plan of Action adopted by ECOWAS has also put much emphasis on the promotion of development in the health and education sectors of its member states. The Plan for instance calls for the need to attain a universal primary education by 2015 by each member state, the renovation of technical and vocational institutions, and an improvement in the quality of its higher education level. ECOWAS is also expected to formulate and implement plans in the health sector for the production of essential and generic drugs, as well as traditional medicines. It is also expected as part of the Plan of Action to implement a regional programme on sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.**
ECOWAS regional programmes are to ensure the promotion of regional food security just as stated under the NEPAD initiative. Agricultural production is to be expanded and diversified as well as the development of its market sector to make it more accessible. The regional programmes are also to take care of the development of the natural resources through the improvement of the ecosystem, and further steps are to be taken in the management of regional shared water resources, maritime and fishery resources (Chambas, 2002, pp104-107).

The adoption of these African Union programmes by ECOWAS does not automatically mean their success in the West African sub-region unless the member states are willing to translate them into their national agenda and implement them. The slow process of translating sub-regional programmes in the past into country programmes has accounted for some of the reasons for ECOWAS’ dismal performance up to date. It is however hoped the current global economic competitive situation as well as excitement about regionalisation will encourage ECOWAS member states to ensure the success of their own process.

4.3.2 HARMONISATION OF MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICIES

One of the main reasons for embarking upon monetary regionalism in the world is to ensure financial stability in the participation member states so that there will be at the absence of excess liquidity. Monetary and fiscal integration of the West African economy has been one of the major goals of ECOWAS since its inception in 1975. Though the original treaty did provide some measures that should be adopted to achieve this aim, the 1993-Revised Treaty in its articles fifty-one to fifty-five really gave elaborate and concrete strategies that needed to be implemented in order to attain a monetary integration in West Africa. Some of objectives enumerated in the Revised Treaty include the following:

- The examination of monetary and financial development process within the sub-region;
- The synchronization of the monetary, financial, and payment policies of the member states;

- The facilitation of the process of the liberalisation of intra-regional payment transactions so as to promote the convertibility of their currencies;

- The promotion of the functions of commercial banks in intra-community trade financing;

- The promotion of the role of the West African Monetary Agency in order to make possible the convertibility of regional currencies and the creation of a single currency zone;

- The setting up of a regional Central Bank and a common currency zone.

The eight countries belonging to the WAEMU group and member countries of ECOWAS use the Communaute Financiere Africaine (CFA) franc as their currency, and the exchange rate is fixed to the euro. Non-WAEMU countries each have their own local currencies, and each has its own different exchange rate policies. Cape Verde uses the Escudo, The Gambia uses the Dalasi, Ghana uses the cedi, Guinea uses the Franc, Liberia uses the Liberian Dollar, Nigeria uses the Naira, and Sierra Leone uses the Leone. This lack of a common currency for the ECOWAS region has for instance compelled intra-regional traders to convert their national currencies to internationally convertible ones before changing them to the local currency of the sub-regional partner. This increases their cost of transactions as they are for example made to pay commission two times, as they exchange currency.

Monetary regionalism it must be further noted is an important element in international economic relations in finding solutions to difficulties associated with multiplicity of currencies and exchange rate regimes that prevent a smooth flow of trading activities.
among countries. Monetary convertibility ensures that there is a reduction in problems associated with currency convertibility and exchange rate. In deed, it has been identified that the lack of currency convertibility within the West African sub-region is one of the main causes of high cost of transaction as it costs a fortune to exchange one local currency for another (Ogunkola, 2005, p. 8). It was for instance noted that an impediment to a smooth intra-regional monetary transaction is exchange rate variability, as some of the countries in the sub-region have unstable exchange policies. This situation has indirectly encouraged a great deal of informal transactions within the region that is not recorded (ibid).

In a move to deepen its regionalisation process in the monetary sector, ECOWAS adopted the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme (EMCP) as one of its first measures to coordinate the activities that will promote the attainment of a single monetary zone in West Africa. Though the timetables set for the attainment of the various plans under the programme such as the custom union, and thereafter an economic and monetary union has elapse, ECOWAS is faithfully pursuing the stated measures in order to achieve them. As part of the plans of the EMCP, and a step to harmonise the monetary system of its member states, the West African Clearing House (WACH) was re-organised and renamed West African Monetary Agency (WAMA) in 1996 under the auspices of ECOWAS. WACH was established earlier in 1975 as a multilateral payment institution to facilitate regional trade using local currencies in business transactions in West Africa. WAMA is now responsible for the conducting of the Community’s monetary policies, with special emphasis on the creation of a single monetary zone for the sub-region.

As part of its functions, WAMA encourages member states to use each other’s currency in certain transactions, thus ensuring that the scarce foreign exchanges of Members are preserved. The system by which member states use each other’s currency is conducted through a clearing and settlement mechanism managed by WAMA. Since its establishment, the level of business transaction that has been conducted through WAMA has fluctuated over the years, with the level declining in recent years. This situation is mostly due to the various exchange rate regimes being employed within the sub-region.
Usually when the transaction that has been conducted through WAMA is high, it means that a high foreign exchange restriction regime was in place. The current liberalised system of foreign exchange regime that is operating in almost all the member states is partly responsible for the declining volume of transaction passing through WAMA (Ogunkola, 2005, p 9).

The use of WAMA by ECOWAS Member States to promote the use of each other’s currency and preserve foreign exchange has generally not been effective as the clearing and settlement system requires the use of foreign exchange, thus the settlement system is clearly at odds with their aim of encouraging the use of each other’s currency. Furthermore, it has been recognised that the amount of business conducted through the sub-regional agency is not a perfect indication of the level of intra-regional trade. The various structural adjustment programmes that most of the Member States have implemented over the past two decades led them to pursue such policies as the deregulation of the external sector and the devaluation of their currencies. It also enables them to have an increase access to foreign exchange and this have rendered the clearing and settlement system increasingly ineffective (WAMA, 1999, p 10).

EMCP has also introduced new payment instruments like ECOWAS Travellers Cheque and bills of exchange in 1999, and are under the management of WAMA. In furtherance to these goals, the EMCP plans to introduce medium-to long term measures like exchange rate realignment and harmonisation, the adoption of an ECOWAS exchange rate system that will set a central parity and margin of fluctuation, continuation of fiscal discipline and other necessary measures. The economic policies implemented by the member states under the Structural Adjustment Programme have added immensely to achieve a level of exchange rate equilibrium that is necessary for the convertibility of the current account operations of the member states.

ECOWAS adopted a set of criteria that member states had to follow so that it can determine their level of macroeconomic stability, especially with respect to the attainment of internal and external balance of their economies. The criteria are as follows:
- The ratio of budget deficit (excluding grants) to GDP should be computed on the basis of commitment sand and should be lower than 4% by the year 2002;

- The inflation rate by 2003 was fixed at 5%;

- It was determined that Central bank financing of budget deficit should be 10% of previous year’s tax revenue. Member states to comply by 2003;

- The gross external reserves of member states should represent not less than six months of imports by 2003.

The following measures were to help build and promote the above sets of criteria so that the convergence objectives would be easily attainable. They are as follows:

- Member states were forbidden to create new domestic arrears and were to liquidate all existing arrears;

- The tax revenue/GDP ratio was to be equal to or more than 20%;

- The wage bill/tax revenue was to be equal to or less than 35%;

- Achievement of real exchange rate stability;

- Member countries were to uphold a positive real interest rates;

- In terms of their public capital expenditures/ tax revenue ratio, it was determined that it should be equal to or more than 20% (ECOWAS Official website-Achievements)
It was agreed by ECOWAS countries that if the convergence exercise was successful, the single monetary zone should be launched by January 2004, but as was already indicated, most of these implementation dates and targets were not met, hence, the single monetary zone programme was not implemented. ECOWAS is currently adopting new additional measures in order to achieve this goal of a single monetary zone.

Because of the inability of ECOWAS to achieve the goal of a single monetary zone by the set date, five non-WAEMU countries of ECOWAS decided in April 2000 to establish a second monetary zone within the sub-region to adopt a common monetary system that will speed up the regionalisation process in West Africa. This second monetary zone known as the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) is made up of these countries: The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. The ultimate goal of WAMZ is to fulfil ECOWAS aspiration of a single monetary zone for West Africa by merging with the CFA zone. The original date set for the introduction of WAMZ was January 2003 but just as ECOWAS’ single monetary zone project, it also suffered a delay and had to be pushed forward.

WAMZ member states have adopted the following sub-regional institutional, administrative and legal frameworks in order to bring their objectives in to reality:

- The Agreement of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ)
- The Statutes of the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI)
- The Statutes of the West African Central Bank (WACB)
- The provisions on the Stabilisation and Cooperation Fund (SCF)

WAMI was set up to oversee the establishment of a common West African Central Bank and the introduction of a common currency for the WAMZ. WAMI is to play the following functions in order for the goals of WAMZ to be achieved:
Supervise the convergence process among the WAMZ group. It is to observe the status of the macroeconomic convergence of member countries in relation to the set target. The four main convergence criteria prescribed for the members are:

- Inflation should be lower than 10%; or equal to 5%,
- GDP/Deficit ratio should be lower than or equal to 5%,
- Central Bank financing of government should be lower than or equal to 10% of the previous year’s tax revenue,
- Import/reserves cover should be more than three months.

Six additional secondary convergence criteria were to be followed by the participating countries:

- Member states forbidden to stop the accumulation of domestic arrears;
- Tax revenue/ GDP ratio was to be more than, or equal to 20%;
- Wage bill/total tax was to be lower than or equal to 35%;
- Public investment/tax revenue was to be more than 20%;
- Member states should attain a positive real interest; and
- Member states should maintain a stable real exchange rate (WAMI Official Website).

The other functions of WAMI include:

- The harmonisation of regulations and the formulation of policy framework;
- Promotion of regional payment system;
- Determination of the exchange rate mechanism and conversion rate;
- Organisation of sensitisation programmes for citizens of participating countries;
- Preparation for the adoption of the new currency. Issues such as the choosing of its name, par value, and the denominations to be issued. The name Eco has been chosen for the currency to be used by the WAMZ;

- Responsible for setting up mechanisms for the establishment of a common central bank;

- It is to promote cooperation among the various central banks within the zone.

The implementation of various monetary programmes aimed at improving upon the regionalisation process in West Africa though has not been quite successful as most of the set targets are yet to be met due to delays by member states and other host of economic and security problems.

4.3.3 COOPERATION IN THE REDUCTION AND ELIMINATION OF TARIFFS AND NON-TARIFF BARRIERS TO TRADE

As part of adopting necessary regional economic policies to advance its regionalisation development ECOWAS has initiated the trade liberalisation scheme within the sub-region. An aspect of this programme is the free movement of unprocessed goods and traditional handicrafts, free from all duties and taxes; and there is a progressive elimination of duties and taxes on industrial products originating in the sub-region.

ECOWAS member states have agreed to a common procedure to which various categories of goods will benefit from the reduction and elimination of tariffs. For unprocessed goods and traditional handicrafts products to be exempted from duties and taxes having equivalent effects, they must satisfy these conditions:

- Originate in member states;
- Appear on the list of products annexed to the decisions liberalising trade in such products; and

- Be accompanied by a certificate of origin and an ECOWAS export declaration.

ECOWAS member states have agreed to a gradual phase out of customs duties and taxes on industrial products over a period. In order for industrial products to benefit from such reduction on the customs duties and taxes, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- Products must originate from member states;

- Products must be approved;

- A certificate of origin and an ECOWAS export declaration document must accompany products.

ECOWAS has further approved a number of harmonised customs documents for its members in order to deepen its integration process and coordinate their activities, thus lessening the bureaucracy that usually exists in intra-regional trade transaction among the member states. Some of these new documents introduced include the certificate of origin, customs and statistical nomenclature, and the customs declarations document. It must however be noted that not all the member states are applying these new measures currently, thus hampering an efficient implementation of the trade liberalisation scheme by ECOWAS. Indeed some member states still apply non-tariff barriers in the form of bans, and the requirement of special permits against products of ECOWAS origin. It is however good to note that some 1,500 industrial products have been approved by ECOWAS to benefit under the trade liberalisation scheme (Chambas, 2002, p 45).

Other steps adopted by ECOWAS to advance intra-regional trade include the use of the automated system of customs data (ASYCUDA), which greatly facilitates the use of the EUROTRACE software, and the development of a Trade Opportunities Management
System (SIGOA-TOPS). This involves the creation of a favourable environment for companies within the sub-region to meet for business within the framework of information exchange at the same time promoting the trade liberalisation scheme.

The convergence of policies on a number of issues at the sub-regional level will lead to increasing the level of regionness in West Africa and create the appropriate platform for its economic development. It would also enable the sub-region to have a united position with which it would interact with the rest of the world. Hettne has further noted that this convergence and homogenisation of economic policies can create the path for further regionalisation in both a formal and a spontaneous manner, and by this revealing the interlinkages between the various processes (Hettne, 1998, p 5).

4.3.4 HARMONISATION OF IMMIGRATION PROGRAMMES

The new regionalism phenomenon also involves the adoption of strategies that are directed at increasing the level of cooperation and interaction among the countries within a particular region. The issue of harmonising immigration statutes and programmes within the sub-region will lead to the increasing the level of collaboration among the ECOWAS member states. In line with this philosophy, ECOWAS has developed the necessary legal mechanism to promote the free movement of its citizens within the sub-region. Article 59 of ECOWAS Treaty entreats its member states to ensure that “citizens of the community shall have the right of entry, residence and establishment and Member States undertake to recognise these rights of Community citizens in their territories in accordance with the provisions of the Protocols relating thereto”. In furtherance to the provisions of this treaty, ECOWAS adopted the required protocol (A/P.1/5/79) relating to the free movement of persons, residence, and establishment in 1979.

The provisions in the treaty and the protocol have made it possible for citizens of the Community to travel within the sub-region and reside in any other member-state apart from their country of origin for a maximum of ninety days without the need for a visa and an entry permit. They are only required to have a valid travel document and an
international health certificate. Any citizen who desires to stay beyond the maximum ninety days will have to get the required extension to stay. The protocol also covers the movement of both private and public vehicles within the sub-region, and provisions that ensures the safety of its occupants.

ECOWAS furthermore has adopted a supplementary protocol (A/SP/.1/7/86) to the original protocol on the free movement of persons, the right of residence and establishment. This supplement specifically dealt with the right of residence and it entreats member states to grant citizens of the Community the right of residence in their countries for the purpose of seeking and carrying out income earning employment. This deals with different category of migrant workers such as border area, seasonal and itinerant workers. ECOWAS has also by a decision (A/DEC.2/5/90) introduced a Residence card for its nationals who wanted to move from their countries of origin to reside in another member state.

An ECOWAS Travel Certificate has also been adopted by the member states in order to make the crossing of their borders less cumbersome and easy for its citizens to cross freely. The Travel Certificate is valid for travel within the sub-region, and it is valid for two years from the date of issue. The ECOWAS Travel Certificate is currently in use in some of the member states, and is expected to be replaced in the long term by an ECOWAS International passport. In fact, the ECOWAS International passport is already in use in the Republics of Benin, Liberia and Senegal, and other countries are taking the necessary steps to join them promote the regionalisation process in this direction.

The adoption of various immigration programmes to improve on the regionalisation process has being achieving some amount of success but member states have to attach more importance and urgency to implementing them as some of them seems to delay the implementation of these measures. The effect of these delays may lead to further delays in the implementation of other projects, and how the member states would integrate their economies and societies for cohesiveness and development.
TABLE 1. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROTOCOL ON FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND VEHICLES WITHIN ECOWAS AS AT DECEMBER 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Abolished visa and entry permits</th>
<th>Introduced ECOWAS Travel Certificate</th>
<th>Harmonised Immigration and Emigration Forms</th>
<th>Set up National Monitoring Committee</th>
<th>Introduced Brown Card Insurance Scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BENIN</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>BURKINA FASO</td>
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<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>COTE D’IVOIRE</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>YES</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>NO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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</tr>
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<td>NO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENEGAL</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIERRA LEONE</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOGO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The implementation of ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of people and vehicle has been one of the main success stories of the sub-regional body as it easy for its citizens to move within the sub-region without obtaining visa for the first three months. However, the main problem has being crossing the national borders of the member states as people have to go through numerous border check points, and even sometimes have to undergo
harassments from some unscrupulous immigration officials at the border posts who may be either seeking ways to exploit travellers or are ignorant of the ECOWAS protocol. There is the need for national governments to educate their officials at the border posts on the provisions and importance of the protocols that they sign, and must take the necessary steps to reduce the number of checkpoints to make the goals of ECOWAS more successful.

4.3.5 COLLABORATION IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

Increasing the rate of the regionalisation process in the ECOWAS sub-region also requires the adoption and implementation of good policies in the transport and communication sectors. ECOWAS therefore made it clear in the 1975 Treaty that member states need to “undertake to evolve gradually common transport and communication policies through the improvement and expansion of their existing and communication links and the establishment of new ones as a means of furthering the physical cohesion of the member states and the promotion of greater movement of persons, goods and services within the community”. In the same vein, ECOWAS reiterated in the 1993 revised Treaty and subsequent protocols, decisions and resolutions of the need to pursue these goals. It for instance in Decision A/DEC.20/5/80, stated the need for the:

- Free movement of persons, goods and capital;
- Introduction of region-wide motor-vehicle insurance;
- Definition of inter-state road axes;
- Regulation of axle-loads on inter-state roads;
- Establishment of an inter-state road transit trade for landlocked countries;
- Setting up of autonomous funds for road maintenance.

Road transport is the main means of transport in West Africa, accounting for about 80 to 90 per cent of the sub-region’s passenger and freight transport. The paper will now shift focus to this sub-sector and examine the efforts ECOWAS is taking to promote its development and ensuring that the sub-region is well integrated. The road network in the ECOWAS sub-region in 1989 was estimated to be 431,706 kilometres. Of this figure, 164,720 kilometres was categorized as main road, 230,682 kilometres as rural roads and 36,304 kilometres as urban roads. 62,469 kilometres of the main road network, or 38 per cent are paved whiles the rest of 102,251 or 62 per cent were unpaved (ibid).

ECOWAS’ main developmental programme for the road sub-sector is the ECOWAS Priority Road Transport Programme that aims at advancing the regional economic integration process through the development of the regional intra-trade. The programme is divided into two phases, of which the first phase is clearly stated in Decision A/DEC.20/5/80. The first part of the first phase involves the facilitation of the road transport across national borders. Some of the measures adopted to achieve this goal include:

- Rules and regulations relating to technical specifications for vehicles, infrastructure, road safety, and driving standards;

- Customs and border crossing formalities such as customs inspection sealing and insurance arrangements.

The second part of the first phase deals with the development of the Trans-West African Highway networks. The first network is the Trans-coastal Highway (4,560 kilometres), and this runs from Lagos in Nigeria passing through Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia and ends at Senegal. The second network is the Trans-Sahelian Highway (4,460 kilometres), and this begins at Senegal, and passing through Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, and ends at the Chadian border (ibid).
The second phase of the Priority Road Transport programme is codified in ECOWAS Decision A/DEC/8/12/88. This project is to enable the landlocked countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger gain an easy access to the seaports through the development of the roads that link them. This programme will also help them to cut down on the costs they encounter in the transportation of their exports and import and hence assist them to boost their international trade account. This phase of the programme has further been expanded through Council Regulation C/REG.12/12/01 to include the construction and rehabilitation of roads that will advance intra-regional trade.

Because of the important role that road transport plays in the transportation sector of West African economy, ECOWAS has initiated a number of measures to make it safe for its users and lessen the amount of accidents that occur on its roads. It introduced the Community Road Safety and Accident Prevention Programme (Decision A/DEC.2/8/94) in 1994 in order to make West African roads safer. Earlier in 1991, the Community adopted road transit regulation (Decision C/DEC.7/7/91) to limit axle load to 11.5 tonnes on its inter-state roads. The Authority of Heads of State and Government of the sub-region have also agreed that: each member state should set up a body responsible for the planning and implementation of road safety policy; and for the development and maintenance of road infrastructure on a hierarchical basis. The road transport sector has really being a very effective instrument in the regionalisation process as it has made for possible for improved movement of people across the sub-region, mainly due to the less develop status of other sub-sectors of transport.

Another important initiative introduced by ECOWAS relating to the road transport sub-sector since 1982 is the ECOWAS Brown Card Scheme. This was adopted in ECOWAS Protocol A/P1/5/82 and is an additional attempt by ECOWAS member states to give a Motor Vehicle Third Party Liability insurance cover to its citizens who suffer from accidents within the boundaries of the states who have subscribed to this scheme. Currently most member states are running the scheme, and it is hoped that the smooth implementation of this initiative will helped to harmonize the various insurance laws and
compensation packages in the member states. The scheme is under the authority of the Council of Bureaux of the ECOWAS Brown Card, and it is composed of the various national bureaux of insurance companies in each member state. The effectiveness of the scheme is partly hampered by how to calculate the level of compensation to victims of accidents due to differences in the value of the currencies in the sub-region. The success of ECOWAS’ policies in its monetary regionalism will in a long way help to assuage this problem.

In terms of collaboration in the other aspects of the transport sector, ECOWAS is now taking steps to work together with the private sector so that it would assist in their development since the other sectors are woefully underdeveloped in the sub-region. ECOWAS for instance carried out a feasibility study in 2003 for its Railway Master Plan. The study assessed the economic viability of the seventeen railway interconnections identified by ECOWAS within the sub-region. ECOWAS is also looking at the area of maritime transport within the region through the harmonisation and formulation of common regulations and policies for its members. It is also encouraging the development and the setting up of coastal shipping lines by the private sector. One early success story of the ECOWAS initiative on maritime transport is the establishment of Ecomarine International, a West African regional shipping company, which has been operating since 2003 (UNCTAD, 2004).

4.3.6 COOPERATION IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

ECOWAS member states have adopted a number of measures to promote cooperation in the energy sector in order to increase the level of regionness of the sub-region as well as provide the source of power needed for its industrialisation and development projects. Article 28 of the ECOWAS Treaty entreats member states to ‘coordinate and harmonise their policies and programmes in the field of energy’ by taking steps to develop the energy resources of the sub-region; institute appropriate cooperation mechanisms with the aim of guaranteeing a constant supply of hydrocarbons; and promote an advancements of new and renewable energy particularly solar energy. Furthermore,
ECOWAS in January 2003 drew its energy protocol to “establish a legal framework in order to promote long-term cooperation in the energy field, based on complementarities and mutual benefits, with a view to achieving investment of the energy sector, and increase energy trade in the West Africa region” (ECOWAS Official website- energy protocol). The energy protocol touched on a number of subjects such as: non-derogation from World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements; Trade-Related Investment measures; Transfer of Technology; Promotion, Protection and Treatment of Investments; and Access to Capital. The protocols dealt with these issues so that it will ensure for instance a free repatriation of invested capital out of the region and a protection of foreign firms from nationalisation so as to create the right atmosphere for foreign investment.

In order to bring these goals in to reality, a number of steps are being taken in the sub-region. One of the initiatives being implemented in the sub-region is the West African Power Pool (WAPP) programme. Fourteen of the member states of ECOWAS are collaborating to create a regional market for electricity. ECOWAS Council of Ministers agreed in 1999 to an ECOWAS Master Plan for the development of energy production facilities and interconnection of the national grid of the member states (Plunkett, 2004, p 1). To boost the framework for WAPP, an ECOWAS Energy Information Observatory was set up to serve as central point for both system operation and a source of information for investors. To further deepen the level of cooperation within the WAPP system, two important Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were signed in 2001 by the participating member states. The first was the Inter-Utility MOU, which committed the electricity companies of the member states to work together to developed the interconnections. The second MOU was between the transmission system operators in the member states.

Most ECOWAS countries because of the collaboration under the WAPP programme are expected to be interconnected with electricity so that there will little bureaucratic delays in electricity trading across the borders of the member states. It is now easy to transmit electric power from for instance, Cote d’Ivoire to the Benin Republic without much problem. It is estimated that in 2002, Cote d’Ivoire exported 1,563 GWh of electricity worth about $77 million, of which 111GWh went to Burkina Faso and another 233GWh
across Ghana to Togo and Benin, all due to the relative success of the WAPP initiative. Ghana also exported an additional 170 GWh of electricity to Togo and Benin in 2002 (ibid). However, recent problems faced by some countries in the sub-region in the electricity sector have revealed that mere adoption of programmes is not enough to advance the regionalisation process, as more efforts at collaboration still needed to be taken if these programmes are to succeed.

Another project that exemplifies the high level of cooperation among ECOWAS member states in the energy sector is the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP) project. It is one of the earliest policy programmes of ECOWAS that aims at the development of a natural gas pipeline throughout West Africa. The WAGP project involves a distance of 1,033 kilometres, both on and offshore, to carry natural gas from Nigeria to markets in Benin, Togo and Ghana (EIA, 2003). The project started in 2005 and is has been completed in April 2007. As to the benefits that are likely to accrue to the participating countries, the World Bank summed it up as follows: “The proposed West African Gas Pipeline…will contribute to fostering regional economic and political integration that would support economic growth and in particular the development of the West Africa electricity market” (World Bank, 2004). The successful implementation of this particular project indicates that though the regionalisation process involves a holistic participation of all member states of ECOWAS, it is also prudent for certain projects to be carried out by just a few member states to ensure its quick and successful implementation.

4.3.7 COOPERATION IN REGIONAL WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The effective and efficient water resource management within the ECOWAS sub-region can be a source of friendly collaboration as well a means to develop the regionalisation process in West Africa. The West African sub-region abounds in a number of important rivers and lakes that can either be the source of the sub-regions development or destruction due to conflicts. ECOWAS established the Water Resources Coordination
Unit (WRCU) within its ambit so that it can help in the coordination and management of the sub-region’s water resources.

The West African sub-region has twenty-eight transboundary river basins in all and the main rivers in West Africa are the Niger, Senegal, Mano, Volta, and Benue. Apart from the fact that each of these rivers has a great prospect for it to be used as a source of hydro-electrical power for the countries through which they pass through, each of these rivers has different varieties of fishes and other marine resources. Most communities in the countries through which these river flow through also depend on them for their livelihood and industrial usage. Two important lakes also exist in the sub-region. Lake Volta is found in Ghana and it is one of the biggest artificial lakes in the world. Lake Chad is situated on the north-eastern border with Chad (Olukoshi, 2001, p 16).

The level at which countries in the sub-region depend on each other for the continuous sustenance of these water bodies can be illustrated as follows: the Niger River Basin is share between eleven countries; the Senegal River Basin is shared by four countries; the Volta River Basin is shared by six countries; the Lake Chad Basin is shared by eight countries and the Comoe River Basin is shared by four countries. The use to which each country puts it part of the resource is therefore of most concern to the others. As part of the national development programmes of some of the countries in the sub-region, a number of dams have been constructed, and others are in the process of construction, raising serious concerns from other countries since it can result into serious adverse consequences at their side of the river. Currently, there are 150 large dams in West Africa out of 1,300 dams on the continent (Niasse, 2006, p 7). Some of these adverse consequences have been identified as:

- A change in the water quality due to increased river fragmentation;

- The hydrologic regime is affected because of intra and inter-basin relocation;
- The fishery migratory cycle is affected along the river, and between the river and the sea, thus affecting the fishery resources of other countries;

- The natural habitats and the reproduction areas of some water birds are disrupted;

- There is the likelihood of the slowing down of flows such as an alteration in the sedimentary load of the water and of its temperature (Ravenga, et al, 2000).

To avert any tensions and conflicts among West African countries in the use of their common water resources, a number of organisations have been established, some under the patronage of ECOWAS to promote a more meaningful cooperation among its member states and hence further pursue its goal of integration. One of such bodies established in 2001 is the Permanent Forum for the Coordination and Monitoring of the Integrated Management of Water Resources in West Africa (CPCS-GIRE). The WRCU under ECOWAS manages the CPCS-GIRE. Other intra-regional Transboundary Watercourse Basin organisations are identified in the table below:

**Table 2. Transboundary Watercourse Basin Organisations in West Africa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>River Basin</th>
<th>Basin Agency</th>
<th>Member States</th>
<th>Establishment Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>NBA (Niger Basin Authority)</td>
<td>9 States: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea, Cote D’ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad.</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Chad</td>
<td>LCBC (Lake Chad Basin Commission)</td>
<td>5 States: Cameroon, Niger, Central African Republic, Chad.</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>OMVS (Senegal River Development Organisation)</td>
<td>4 States: Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The capability of ECOWAS to manage efficiently the use of the water resources in its sub-region through these various organisations will in the long run boost its regionalisation process as it will coordinate and harmonise the various policies of the member states with regard to this sector. It will have to develop a common regional policy in collaboration with all its member states so that unnecessary conflicts among the member states are avoided.

4.3.8 ECOWAS REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMMES

ECOWAS member states attach great importance to agricultural development and food security in their regionalisation process. The member states have decided in accordance with article 25 of the treaty to cooperate in the production of agricultural inputs, fertilisers, pesticides, selected seeds, agricultural machinery and equipment and veterinary products. Furthermore, they are to synchronise their food security policies through such measures as the reduction of losses in food production; the setting up of regional institutions for the management of natural calamities; agricultural diseases and pest control.

In a further move to develop its agricultural programmes, ECOWAS Heads of State and Government adopted a new policy for the sector in January 2005 dubbed ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP). The policy was designed to guarantee that there is a continuous development in the socio-economic field within the sub-region, the promotion of poverty reduction schemes, provision of employment for the youth, the preservation of the of human dignity, ensure regional and world peace. The vision of the policy has been stated as:
The achievement of a modern and a sustainable agriculture built on efficiency and effectiveness of family holdings;

To provide the right atmosphere for private sector investment and participation in agriculture; and

To attain a high productivity, diversification of production base and competitiveness in regional and international markets.

ECOWAS member states have coordinated their agricultural programmes in the following areas to ensure an efficient and effective use of resources:

- In the production of selected seeds in the sub-region. To this end, nine production centres have been established to promote this goal. In addition to this, WAEMU and ECOWAS countries have harmonised their national seed regulatory mechanisms with the support from Food and Agriculture Organisation, the International Centre for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development and the West Africa Seed and Planting Material Network.

- There is coordination of policies in the development and production of livestock and animal products for the Community. Accordingly, three centres have been set up in Guinea, Mali, and Cote d’Ivoire.

- There is collaboration in the fight against epizootic disease within the sub-region.

- ECOWAS has adopted the use of ECOWAS International Transhumance Certificate by member states.

- The establishment of a regional structure for the prevention of bird flu in the sub-region.
Management of networks on the use of efficient and risk-free pesticides.

It will be very important if ECOWAS sets up institutions or agencies to supervise some of the projects in which they are coordinating their efforts since such lack of institutional supervision in the regionalisation process often leads to the collapse of projects. It must also be noted that these plans of ECOWAS will only succeed if member states are ready to cooperate and implement them since as in most cases they continue to execute nationally designed programmes other than the regionally adopted ones and by this retrogressing the regionalisation efforts.

4.3.9 COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

The new regionalism phenomenon, apart from the multidimensional nature of the regionalisation process within a particular region, also involves the conduct of relations between and among different regions of the world, and the influences that regions have on each other. The new regionalism phenomenon is therefore not only exclusive to the member states of a particular region but also involves their relation to other regions and the rest of the world, and how to meet the challenges of globalisation (Hettne, 1998, p 2). ECOWAS recognises the need to cooperate with other actors on the international scene in order to achieve its goals of regional integration and development. In pursuance of this goal, Article 83 (1 & 2) of the ECOWAS Revise Treaty declares that “the community may conclude cooperation agreements with third countries” and “in pursuit of its objective, the community shall also cooperate with the Organisation of African Unity, the United Nations system, and any other international organisation.”

One of the main international organisations that ECOWAS Member States has an extensive relationship with is the European Union (EU). ECOWAS has benefited immensely from EU financial assistance to implement its various programmes both at regional level and at the national level of the individual member countries. An established ECOWAS-EU Ministerial Troika meeting takes place periodically to discuss various issues on peace and security, governance, economic integration, institutional and political
developments that are of importance to both regional bodies. A subject of special importance in this relationship is the EU-African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries agreement, of which ECOWAS Member States are a part. The current EU-ACP agreement, otherwise known as Cotonou Partnership Agreement is to undergone further negotiations into a new Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The implementation of the EPA is planned to begin from 2008 through to 2020, and it is expected to facilitate ECOWAS Member States to deepen their integration process (Alaba, 2006, p 2).

The adoption of the EPA is to lead to the following possibilities in the trade relations between ECOWAS Member States and the EU:

- A further liberalisation of trade by the ECOWAS bloc in relation to the EU countries, so that their trade relationship will be in agreement with World Trade Organisation’s rules, especially that of the Rule of Reciprocity. This is supposed to result into a reduction or elimination of tariffs on a number of products by the countries in West Africa;

- ECOWAS Member States may also obtain a further reduction in tariffs as they export into the EU market; and

- The removal of non-tariff barriers to trade and a reduction in trade-distorting policies, which will in the long run, lead to the development of the ECOWAS region (ibid).

It also of importance to note that ECOWAS has further enjoyed very valuable relationship with individual EU countries, through the provision of various forms of assistance such as expert participation in ECOWAS projects and the provision of grants on bilateral basis.

ECOWAS has also collaborated closely with the various UN organisations in the implementation of its projects. It has being working with such UN organisations as
UNECA, UNESCO, UNDP, and UNICEF, and has received assistance in the form of funding, training in the areas of Human Resource Development, Education, and Communication. Other development partners that ECOWAS has been working with are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the African Development Bank (AfDB). They have variously provided financial assistance and expert advice, and have carried out studies on which policies that are best for the ECOWAS region, and how best it can be implemented. The contributions of some other individual countries have furthermore greatly boosted the operations of ECOWAS. The United States of America, mostly through its Agency for International Development (USAID) have collaborated with ECOWAS through such areas as capacity building, provision of logistics and technical assistance, and making available to ECOWAS countries programmes that will develop their private sector and boost their exports. Norway and Canada through its development agency (CIDA) are among other countries that have also been cooperating with ECOWAS in many ways to develop its regionalisation efforts.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY

The recent security regionalism measures adopted within ECOWAS is influenced by the principle of subsidiarity that exists in international law. The principle as postulated by the Catholic Pope Pius XI states that “a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to co-ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the good” (Pius XI, 1931).

This principle is echoed in the United Nations Organisation (UNO) Charter, and encourages its members and institutions to use regional organisations to deal with certain issues before referring them to it. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter for instance specifies that ‘The Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority’ (art. 53.1). Article 52.2 of the same chapter also indicates that ‘The Members of the United Nations shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council’.

The main aim of this principle of subsidiarity as outlined above suggests that regional organisations should play an active role in attending to issues at their level before referring them to the UN, which constitutes a higher level of authority. The role of ECOWAS in trying to solve the conflicts that arise within its sub-region can therefore be seen as operating within this principle.

5.2 CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE KEEPING INITIATIVES

The subject of development cannot be discussed in isolation from that of security in the West African sub-region since both are interdependent on each other. The absence of one would ultimately not promote the needed progress in the sphere of the other. It is
therefore very essential that the issue of security regionalism be also looked at in this paper, especially the steps that ECOWAS is taking to ensure peace and security in the sub-region. Security regionalism has been explained as “attempts by states and other actors in a particular geographical area- a region in the making- to transform a security complex with conflict-generating inter-state and intra-state relations in the direction of a security community with cooperative external (inter-regional) relations and domestic (intra-regional) peace” (Hettne, 2005, p 561). It therefore means that a higher level of regionness indicates a lower level of conflict whiles a lower level of regionness results into an increase insecurity situation for the region (ibid). The relationship between security regionalism and development regionalism is reflected in Karl W. Deutsh’s concept of security communities which he explained as “the attainment of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful change among its population” (Deutsh, 1968, p 194).

The political history of West African countries since independence in the early 1960s has not been a stable one. This accounts for the reason why the issue of peace and security in the sub-region is one of prime importance to ECOWAS. It is for instance noted that ‘regionally distributed coup d’etats indexes show that between the 1970-90 period, the West African sub-region had a total of 31 successful takeovers, 21 attempted coups and 54 plots. Compared to all other African regions, the West African zone has seen 55 per cent of all coup d’etat, 33.3 per cent of all attempted coups and 50 per cent of reported plots’ (Aning, 1994, p.5). Apart from these attempts at overthrowing governments, national authorities in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger had to deal with the activities of Touareg rebel fighters in their countries (Olukoshi, 2001, p11). This atmosphere of conflict and insecurity within the sub-region impinges negatively on the ECOWAS member states determination to pursue a meaningful and peaceful integration and development of their economies.

The beginning of the 1990s saw an increase in the rise of violent intra-state conflicts in the sub-region, resulting in serious sadistic and destructive effects on people and property, leading at times to the fall of the national governments (Mazrui, 1998, pp 233-
These violent conflicts occurred in Liberia (1990-1997), Sierra Leone (1993-2000), Guinea (1998-1999) and recently in Cote d’Ivoire in 2002, a conflict which is yet to be totally resolved. ECOWAS Member States therefore saw it necessary to play an active role in ending these conflicts within their sub-region. These led ECOWAS members to form a sub-regional military alliance in 1990. The military alliance, labelled ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the first of its kind in the sub-Saharan region was to maintain the cease-fire among the warring factions in these conflicts. ECOMOG forces were subsequently deployed in the various conflict areas and their presence helped to bring some level of sanity and order within these places. This new development in ECOWAS activities reflects the multidimensional nature of new regionalism phenomenon where various elements in regional cooperation are to complement each other in other to promote the development of the regionalisation process. Walter Kennes therefore noted that “the chances of success for regional integration increase when the political and economic benefits complement each other. Regional integration can contribute to regional peace and security” (Kennes, 1999, p 31).

ECOWAS prior to the 1990s had a number of protocols that guided the security arrangement among the member-states. It immediately after its formation adopted the Non-Recourse to Aggression Treaty among the member states in 1976 and this was followed later in 1978 by the Non-Aggression Protocol. In 1981, ECOWAS member states adopted the Mutual Assistance on Defence (MAD) protocol. The afore-mentioned conflicts as well as the insufficient nature of the protocols adopted prior to 1990 compelled ECOWAS in 1993 to include in the Revised Treaty, provisions requiring it to play crisis prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security roles in the sub-region.

A new security framework, known as the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, now guides ECOWAS member-states operations. It spells out various institutional structures with defined roles and objectives to promote peace and security in the sub-region. Under the regional security structure, three main institutions made up of the Authority, Mediation and Security
Council, and the Executive Secretariat are to play major roles in achieving the security objectives of ECOWAS. The three bodies are to be supported by three other organs in the performance of their functions. These supporting organs are the Defence and Security Commission, the Council of Elders, and ECOMOG (ECOWAS Official website- security protocol). The Authority is made of Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS countries and it is at the echelon of the security structure. Its functions include attending to all issues included under the security mechanism of the Revised Treaty.

The Mediation and Security Council is structured to operate at three levels with each level made up of Head of States and Governments, Ministers, and Ambassadors. The Ministers and Ambassadors are to assist the Head of States and Governments in achieving the security objectives of ECOWAS. Military chiefs and heads of government ministries and institutions of ECOWAS member states form the membership of Defence and Security Commission. This body among other functions assists the Mediation and Security Council by studying reports brought before it from the Observations and Monitoring Centres and giving its expert advice on them.

As a measure to further strengthened the peace and security situation in the West African sub-region, ECOWAS Member States adopted an additional protocol to that of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The new protocol, known as the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (A/SP1/12/01) was adopted in 2001. This protocol has been categorized under the following themes, of which Members have been enjoined to implement in their various countries in order for peace and stability to be secured within the sub-region:

- Constitutional Convergence Principles: This particular provision lays out a number of important principles that are to promote democracy and good governance in the Member States. They include the following:
“Separation of powers: the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary. Empowerment and strengthening of parliaments and guarantee of parliamentary immunity; and independence of the judiciary.

Every accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections.

Zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means.

Popular participation in decision-making, strict adherence to democratic principles and decentralisation of power at all levels of governance.

The armed forces must be apolitical and must be under the command of a highly constituted political authority; no serving member of the armed forces may seek to run for elective political.

Secularism and neutrality of the state in all matters relating to religion; freedom for each individual to practice, within the limits of existing laws, the religion of his/her choice everywhere on the national territory.

The state and all its institutions belong to all the citizens, therefore none of their decisions and actions shall involve any form of discrimination, be it on an ethnic, racial, religious or regional basis.

Political parties shall be formed and shall have the right to carry out their activities freely, with the limits of the law.

The freedom of association and the right to meet and organize peaceful demonstrations shall also be guaranteed.

The freedom of the press shall be guaranteed.

All former heads of State shall enjoy a special status including freedom of movement.”

- Elections
- ECOWAS Election Monitoring Missions to Member States
- The role of Armed Forces, the Police and the Security Forces in Democracy
- Poverty Alleviation and Promotion of Social Dialogue
- Education, Culture and Religion
- Rule of Law, Human Rights and Good Governance
- Women, Children and the Youth (ECOWAS website).

In sum, the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance is to ensure that democratic norms and values are well developed and promoted in the sub-region through the involvement of all stakeholders in society. It identifies the various factors that have been responsible for social and political instability within the sub-region and provides the necessary mechanism through which they could be curbed in order to ensure peace and stability within the West African sub-region.

The grave security situation that the sub-region faced in the beginning of the 1990s, first from the Liberian crisis, then the Sierra Leonean one was a matter of concern to the sub-regional leaders. It clearly showed them that if they do not act as a group but continued to rely on the old principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, then these crises would soon spread to their own countries. The influx of refugees and the occasional incursion of rebel activities across national boundaries also showed them that these countries in crises do not exist alone and what affects them could ultimately spread to their doorsteps. It further indicated to the ECOWAS sub-regional grouping that they are in a better position to understand what is going on within their sub-region than the rest of the international community and be able to tackle and solve it than to continue to wait for the international community to step in.

The proactive measures that ECOWAS is taking in this area of the regionalisation process is well commended as it now sends delegations to meet government officials and other protagonists in potential conflictual situations within the sub-region to try to defuse tensions between them before it gets out of hand. An increased level of regionness in the security regionalisation process in the sub-region will also help to reduce if not totally eliminate all kinds of mistrust and suspicions among the member states and further avoid any future conflict among them. This will make it possible for the countries within the ECOWAS sub-region to attract more investment capital for their development and be
able to compete favourably than if the sub-region continuous to be unstable due to conflicts.

5.3 PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS PARTICIPATION IN ECOWAS AFFAIRS

A couple major players whose role is often overlooked, but very necessary in any regionalisation process are that of private sector and civil society groups. They play many useful roles such as serving as the link between their membership, which often comprises groups such as employers and business associations, democracy, civil and human rights campaigners on one hand, and on the other hand the regional institution and other major players at the regional level. They help to make their views and interest known at the regional level whiles at the same time educating their membership of policies and programmes proposed or adopted by the regional organisation. In addition, they take part in the implementation of regional policies and programmes in their various countries. They thus assist in bringing the regionalisation process closer to the common person in a faraway member state who is not connected to any of the regional institutions. In short, these actors assist in linking up the micro-region to the macro in the regionalisation process.

The private sector in the West African sub-region is beginning to play an important role in the regionalisation process by forming transnational associations that even cut across the Franco-Anglo divide in the sub-region. Their aim is to improve business cooperation and development at the regional level as well as influence decision-makers at both the national level and at the sub-regional level. One such private association is the West African Business Network (WABN). The WABN has an Executive Secretariat in Accra, Ghana, which co-ordinates its activities in the member states and it has a Regional Commercial Information Centre that disseminates information to its members (Thiam, 1997, pp 48-50). Some of its national chapters have been very active in influencing important decisions taken in their individual nations. The Nigerian chapter of WABN played an important part in advising the government to implement important economic
rehabilitation measures on foreign investment. In addition, The Gambian branch of WABN convinced the government of President Jammeh to accept certain important private sector proposals. Likewise, the Ghanaian, the Ivorian, and its Malian counterparts played very important roles in shaping the decision of government on the private sector. The important activities of the WABN have influenced ECOWAS to invite it to some of its deliberations on the regional economy and the private and vice versa (ibid).

The West African Private Sector Support initiative to NEPAD was established in 2002 in conjunction with ECOWAS. The aim is to play an active role in the integrative process of ECOWAS as well promote private sector initiatives within the region. One of the earliest attempts by ECOWAS to encourage private sector participation in the integration process led to the setting up of a regional investment bank, Ecobank Transnational Inc (ECOBANK) that started operating in 1988. ECOWAS has 10 per cent shareholding in the bank. Other ECOWAS initiatives include the establishment of the West African Industrial Forum (Soderbaum, 1996). ECOWAS has also established the holding of Trade Fairs within the sub-region in order to promote intra-sub-regional trade. The first of such Fairs was held in Dakar, Senegal in 1995, subsequent ones were held in Accra, Ghana in 1999; Lome, Togo in 2003; and Lagos, Nigeria in 2005.

The civil society in West Africa has not been an active participant in the regionalisation process until recently when they begun to take an active interest in what is going on within the sub-regional body. This is usually in the form of joint collaboration within or between civil society groups such as political parties, the media and other professional organisations so as to promote relevant issues such as human rights, democracy, prevention of conflicts in the sub-region, and the promotion of cooperation and integration among member-states of the sub-region. The only area in which some kind of activity has been going on formerly within civil society groups was in the promotion of their interests. Thus, for instance we have civil society groups made up of trade union workers, association of farmers groups and chambers of various business associations which exist to promote and protect their interest, (Olukoshi, 2001, p29). Perhaps these groups are realising the rising influence of ECOWAS in determining what affects them,
especially in the formulation and implementation of regional policies, hence the need to be involve in its activities.

In addition to civil society groups recognising the need to become involved in ECOWAS activities, the regional body itself has being encouraging the formation of such groups to get the Community citizenry involved in its affairs. There is now a host of civil society groups under the umbrella of West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) that have taken a great interest in the ECOWAS integration process and what affects the West African sub-region in general. The aim of WACSOF is to seek the promotion of democratic principles and institutions in the sub-region, the encouragement of civil society activities in the sub-region, and to support the process of political and socio-economic development and integration of the sub-region. WACSOF often organises consultative meetings to encourage a continuous dialogue between civil society groups in West Africa, governments, ECOWAS, and international partners on important matters affecting the populace (WACSOF Official website).

Another civil society organisation that is taking an active interest in ECOWAS issues is the Organisation of Trade Unions in West Africa (OTUWA). The Authority of Head of established OTUWA in the mid-80s as an official community organisation with the aim of giving support to the integration process and to work for the attainment of its economic, social and cultural objectives. It has however been dormant until recently when it began to be active and began to participate in regional affairs (Robert, 2004, p 27). The history of this organisation shows that it is perhaps better for such groups to be governed and managed by members of the association than being a sort of official controlled body. This will make it possible for the organisation to play an effective role in the regionalisation process.

ECOWAS has also begun to increasingly seek the views of civil society groups in its decision-making procedure. This is to ensure that policies and decisions arrived at are acceptable to the stakeholders involved. In the formulation of its agricultural policy, ECOWAP for instance, ECOWAS consulted the various regional agricultural groups
such as West African Farmer Organisations’ and Agricultural Producers’ Network (ROPPA) and Farmers Organisation Network in Ghana (FONG). Other regional civil societal groups that ECOWAS has persuaded to get involved in its affairs include the West African Banks’ Association, Union of West African Road Transporters, Federation of West African Manufacturers Association, and the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce.

5.4 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Another aspect of the new regionalism phenomenon that ECOWAS has to make concrete effort in developing is in the area of cultural and social integration of the region. In the pursuit of social and cultural integration of the West African sub-region, ECOWAS is encouraging its citizens to take an interest in its affairs, and it has introduced a number of measures to achieve this goal. Article 61 of the ECOWAS treaty enjoins its “Member States to undertake to cooperate with a view to mobilise the various sections of the population and ensuring their effective integration and involvement in the social development of the region”. To realize this aim, member states are to:

- Ensure the harmonisation of their labour laws and social security laws;

- Coordinate their policies in order to promote the formation of women’s and youth organisations and professional associations as a means of ensuring mass participation in the integration activities of ECOWAS;

- Support the exchange of experiences and information on literacy, professional training and employment;

- Cooperate in the promotion of sporting activities with a view to bringing together the youth of the region and ensuring their balanced development; and
- Continue to encourage and strengthen cooperation amongst themselves in health matters and related fields.

In line with these goals, ECOWAS helped in the setting up of a number of associations within its jurisdiction. The Organisation of Trade Unions in West Africa was set up to encourage workers within the sub-region to take an active part in ECOWAS affairs. Furthermore, ECOWAS established the West African Universities Association to promote friendly relations among the universities within the sub-region, and coordinate activities between the universities and ECOWAS. The West African Youth Association and the West African Women’s Association are also initiatives introduced by ECOWAS. The regional body also occasionally organises football competition for football clubs that emerge as runners-up in their various national leagues under the management of the West African Football Union. Additional initiatives introduced by ECOWAS to promote the above objectives within the sub-region include the following:

- The institutionalisation of a sub-regional award dubbed ECOWAS Prizes of Excellence in African Pharmacopeia and Literature;

- The setting up of Forum of Associations Recognised by ECOWAS (FARE);

- The establishment of a sporting event, ECOWAS African Wrestling Tournament, at the sub-regional level;

- The organisation of an ECOWAS Youth Forum.

In the promotion and development of cultural integration of the West African sub-region, article 62 of ECOWAS treaty enjoins, “member states undertake to pursue the objective of the Community Cultural Framework Agreement”. To this end, member states are to:

- Pursue the promotion of learning and dissemination of a West African language as a factor in Community integration and unity;
- Seek the promotion, by every means possible of all forms of cultural exchange among its people; and

- Establish where necessary, structures and mechanisms for the production, propagation and utilisation of cultural industries within the ECOWAS region.

One important aspect of the social regionalisation efforts that the study did a further research into is in the area of the role of gender, specifically women in the regionalisation process. The contribution of gender to regional integration and development is very important if the sub-region is to harness all it human resources to achieve its goals. The role allocation of gender in any society can be identified in such areas as property distribution, resource allocation and economics. Women and men play different roles in the African setting, and their needs are quite varied. Women are less often heard, do not take part in the formulation of major decisions, and less often satisfied as such (Oruwari, 2005 p.167-68). Their contributions to the development of societies are therefore also less recognised and appreciated.

It is on the above circumstances that it is necessary for those in authority in Africa in contemporary times need to recognise and support the welfare of women, especially in the regionalisation process, so that the sub-region’s development can be hastened. Alfred Latigo, a gender expert of UNECA, expresses this belief when he pointed out that “Consensus is growing that in order to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development, it is critical that both men and women are empowered to contribute to trade. Of the objectives of regional integration, the effects of trade liberalisation on different social groups including women and men are among the least understood. In particular, the contribution of cross-border trade to national and regional economic development is imperfectly understood. Cross-border trade is an informal but economically important transaction carried out mostly by women between several African countries, and it involves the production and trading in food, textiles products
and other commodities and have a potential to contribute to increase regional trade” (UNECA website).

Based on the increasing awareness of the capability and the need for the role of women to be taken into account in regional development and integration, ECOWAS has taken a number to measures to promote their involvement in the integration process from all the member countries. ECOWAS decided in article 63 of the Revised Treaty that “Member States undertake to formulate, harmonise, co-ordinate and establish appropriate policies and mechanisms for enhancement of the economic, social and cultural conditions of women”. In addition to this provision, it further entreats its Member States to adopt the following measures to promote the welfare of women:

- They are to identify and examine all factors that limit women from maximising their potentials and offering their contributions to regional developmental efforts;

- To develop a mechanism within which these limiting factors can be dealt with, and for the incorporation of women’s concerns into such plans.

Furthermore, the Treaty enjoins ECOWAS Member States to take the following actions:

- Formulate appropriate strategies and programmes that will ensure that women are included into the development and integration process of the West African society;

- Set up a mechanism for cooperation with international governmental and non-governmental organisations; and

- Develop a framework through which Member States can exchange information and their experiences on developmental issues.
One of the earliest measures taken by ECOWAS to involve women in the regionalisation process is in the establishment of the West African Women Association (WAWA) in 1983 as one of its specialized agencies. WAWA was later re-organised and renamed ECOWAS Centre for Gender Development (ECGD). Its objective is to execute ECOWAS policy on gender issues within the sub-region. Other steps that ECOWAS Member States are taking to promote women’s welfare within the sub-region involve collaborating with international organisations such as the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). One such collaborative effort is the Women and girls Education Network in ECOWAS (WENE). ECOWAS through this programme with its developmental partners aim to “facilitate country level co-ordination of activities relating to Gender Equality in Basic Education, and promote intra-and inter-regional/sub-regional exchanges of those involved in Gender Equality in Education” (UNESCO website). These efforts of ECOWAS and its development partners in the area of gender issues is well appreciated, however further steps must be taken especially in the informal sector where most women do not know about the existence or activities of ECOWAS. An improved freedom of movement along the member states borders without harassment from some immigration officials as well as providing some form of regional credit facilities to women in agriculture, trading and enterprise will bring some amount of meaning of the existence of ECOWAS to women in the sub-region.
CHAPTER SIX

6. ANALYSES

6.1 ANALYSES OF ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL INITIATIVES

The promotion of economic and developmental regionalisms, aspects of new regionalism, in fact formed the initial reason for the formation of ECOWAS. The introduction of various programmes over the years in this direction by ECOWAS is therefore aimed at achieving this goal. The history of the regionalisation process in West Africa has however shown that much importance was not given to this area by the various countries as they prefer to implement individual country programmes other than the proposed and mutually adopted regional ones (Bundu, 1997). The study therefore revealed that not much success was achieved by ECOWAS member states in their regionalisation process up to until the 1990s despite the numerous protocols adopted and economic and development plans initiated.

The new regionalism phenomenon and globalisation are interrelated in many aspects, as the latter tend to influence the development of the former in various regions of the world and the former also aids the growth of the latter on the international scene. Hettne succinctly depicts this when he wrote, “The current phenomenon of regionalism could be seen as the manifestation of the second movement, the protection of society, on the level of the macroregion, as a political reaction against the global market expansion which gained momentum in the 1980s. Thus we can speak of a ‘Second Great Transformation’” (Hettne, 1997, p 86).

The current relative seriousness attached to the regionalisation process in the sub-region from the 1990s can be attributed to the phenomenon of globalisation. This is because the small size of the economies of ECOWAS member states have made them not a favourable destinations for international capital and investments and hence will not be able to reap much from international economic transactions unless they cooperate as a
unit to gain a comparative advantage in their transactions with the rest of the world. The adoption and implementation of such programmes as Trade Liberalisation Scheme, ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme, Railway Master Plan and Industrial Master Plan must therefore be seen as ways designed to improve upon their infrastructure, open up their economies and attract investments. It is also expected that the regionalisation process among ECOWAS countries will give them some kind of collective bargaining advantage as one bloc in dealing with other regions. This will offer a far better advantage than if the individual member states were to be dealing with other regional organisations like the EU or NAFTA alone. It is this new challenge to benefit from the phenomenon of globalisation or remain marginalized that is now encouraging most of ECOWAS member states to implement regional programmes introduced by ECOWAS.

The management of regional natural resources is also an important aspect of the new regionalism phenomenon in West Africa, especially in this times where all countries in the ECOWAS region are striving to develop. The study revealed that some steps have been taken to manage the region’s water resources since most of the rivers and lake flow through many of the member states. The management of the regions water resources at the regional level, as already stated in the study, will prevent the occurrence of conflicts among the various member states depending on them for development, and ensure its effective and efficient use. Additional measures need to be taken to ensure and promote the ecological sustainability in other fields such as petroleum exploration and the mining of minerals. The current practice points to very deplorable conditions in communities in the West African regions where these economic activities are taking place, sometimes leading to violent clashes between mining companies and residents of these communities. Since development regionalism phenomenon involves making rigorous efforts by various actors in a geographical area to increase the economic development of their area and thereby becoming more competitive on the international scene (Hettne, 1998, p 9), it will be appropriate for ecological regionalism to be promoted whiles at the same time achieving the goals of developmental regionalism.
6.2 ANALYSES OF SECURITY AND LEGAL MEASURES IN ECOWAS INTEGRATION PROCESS

The importance of deepening security regionalism within the West African sub-region should not be underestimated and all efforts must always be made to ensure this. The study reveals the volatile nature of the West African sub-region especially in terms of the occurrence of civil wars and coup d’tats. Conflict situations in one ECOWAS member state easily spread to its neighbours as was witnessed in Liberia, Sierra Leone and to some extent to the border regions of Guinea in the 1990s. The adoption of a common regional security mechanism to resolve conflicts or prevent their occurrence is therefore seen as a good step other than leaving each country’s securities situation to them in the name of well-noted practice of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states.

Barry Buzan defines this relationship between conflict, security and regionalism, often referred to as ‘regional security complex’ as ‘a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently that their national security cannot realistically be considered apart from one another’ (Buzan, 1991, p 190). The decision of ECOWAS member states to coordinate their efforts in ensuring peace and security in the sub-region is very important since the civil wars that have plagued some of these countries have also shown that rebel activities have often spilled-over to neighbouring states, and the influx of refugees equally affects most of the countries in the sub-region. The need to secure regional security and peace would in a way also assist in curbing the prevalence of small arms and light weapons across the whole sub-region. ECOWAS member states by adopting such policies as the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace keeping and Security, and the Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons have formally agreed to depend on each other for the maintenance of peace and security within their sub-region, and to allow ECOMOG forces to intervene in their countries.

The introduction of further measures like the protocol on Democracy and Good Governance which enjoins member states to promote democratic principles and practices
within their countries, as well as the move by ECOWAS to establish and strengthen its legal institutions like the Community Court of Justice and the Community Parliament will lead to improving upon the security situation in the sub-region. ECOWAS must ensure that its member states uphold these democratic values so as not to give undemocratic forces the chance to cause havoc and insecurity. The practice of good governance and the presence of democratic institutions will greatly improve the security situation across the sub-region and eventually lead its current state of security complex to one of a security community. Karl Deutsch defines a security community to mean ‘a group which has become integrated, where integration is defined as the attainment of a sense of community, accompanied by formal or informal institutions or practices, sufficiently strong and widespread to assure peaceful change among members of a group with reasonable certainty over a long period of time’ (Deutsch, 1954, p 98). ECOWAS member states need to continue to cooperate in all security matters and implement all legal measures adopted at the regional level if they are to be assured of a continuance of peace and security within their region.

The involvement of civil societal organisations and the private sector groups in the regionalisation process is very important if ECOWAS is to achieve the maximum growth in its economic, social, political and cultural integration and developmental process. Some proponents of the new regionalism approach has for instance argued that civil societal groups has the ability not only to protect their memberships on economic and political grounds but would also serve as social and cultural regional networks and can initiate and develop projects more quickly than the formal states-led regionalist projects (Hettne, 1999). Mittelman advocates for civil society groups to be encouraged in the regionalisation process to serve as agents of transformation in the context of globalisation (Mittelman, 2000, p 225). He therefore describes this as ‘transformative regionalism’ referring to the alternative and bottom-up forms of cultural identity and regional self-organisation and self-protection, such as the pro-democracy forces, the women’s movement, and environmentalists (ibid). Mittelman finally argues that ‘at the end of the day, the possibilities and limitations of transformative regionalism rest on the strength of its links to civil society’ (Mittelman, 1999, p 48).
It would therefore be very imperative on ECOWAS to develop relevant procedures whereby these bodies can be consulted in the formulation and implementation of policies. This is because in the long term it is these bodies and the West African society at large that is going to bear the consequences when these programmes are implemented. The involvement of these bodies in the decision-making process will also bring ECOWAS closer to the citizens of the member states, give them a better understanding of what ECOWAS is, and further deepen the regionalisation process.

The inclusion in article 28 of ECOWAS’ protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of the need promote social dialogue and encourage the formation of various employers association and trade unions both at the national level and at the sub-regional level is in the right direction. It is only hoped that these bodies will be consulted on issues affecting them. The consultation of various agricultural producers in ECOWAS member states in the formulation of the regional agricultural policy the ECOWAP by the regional body is a positive step since their views are very important in arriving at a policy that will satisfy all the stakeholders concerned. The involvement of civil society and private sector groups in the ECOWAS regionalisation is therefore very important if the citizens of the West African community would not have to feel alienated from the process and hence see it as only one of the many state-led projects in their sub-region designed for government officials only.
CHAPTER SEVEN

7. CONCLUSION

The regionalisation process in the West African sub-region has come quite a long way and it is expected to start improving the socio-economic and political conditions of its citizenry. The study identified and analysed some of the efforts that ECOWAS has made to the present time. As stated in the introductory section of the study, the success of any regionalisation process depends mainly on the inputs and commitment of the various member countries involved. However, as also has been noted in the study, the new regionalism phenomenon is not only about the activities of state actors but must also involve the active participation of other sections of society like civil society and private sector groups. Further studies can be conducted in this area to determine how best these sections of the West African community can be involved in the regionalisation effort.

The regionalisation process must be reviewed occasionally to ensure that appropriate strategies are adopted to ensure a speedy development of the sub-region. A look at the ECOWAS strategies shows the involvement of all the member states in the implementation of the sub-regional grouping’s programmes, a situation that has led to the delay in the achievements of set targets. As has been suggested by the development partners of ECOWAS, there should be some flexibility in the implementation of programmes within the region. This will ensure that a few numbers of interested countries can pursue certain specific programmes that will ensure its speedy execution and success.

The EU taking into account relevant lessons learnt from the poor performance of integrating bodies in Africa and other parts of the Third World have proposed the concept of ‘the new regionalism’ as a better approach for pursuing regionalism within these regions. This new regionalism lays emphasis on modest initiatives and a focus on realistic, limited objectives. Drawing on its own experiences, the EU called for strong but flexible institutional arrangements, the full convertibility of national currencies, the
existence of economic and social policies to reduce regional disparities, and the opportunity for subgroups to proceed at different speeds (CEC 1992, 1993). The ‘variable geometry’ approach as advocated by the EU makes provisions for the implementation of community policies to vary by different subgroups of states within the larger sub-regional body. Moreover, this flexibility within the integration process is possible as far as there is a strong political commitment among the membership to proceed with the integration process on this basis.

For the World Bank and the IMF, due to the generally ineffective and inefficient ways through which the integration process is being conducted in Africa, with its poor outcomes, they are now advocating for the process to be conducted on short-term viability bases. This will involve the implementation of particular programmes among few countries or regional integration on project-basis. The World Bank has therefore come out with three ways through which integration and cooperation within the region should be conducted: “incremental but comprehensive approaches to regional cooperation and integration, strengthening specific functional forms of cooperation, and creating an enabling environment for the free movement of goods, services, labour and capital” (World Bank, 1989a, p 152). This perspective therefore calls for the regionalisation process to proceed through the promotion and implementation of specific projects by few countries that see it as very essential to their development.

In order for the development of democratic values, structures, and security within the sub-region, ECOWAS must encourage its member states to abide by democratic principles adopted at the regional level as well as those existing in the individual member states. The inability of ECOWAS to achieve this will eventually affect the smooth functioning of regional institutions and hence the development of the regionalisation process. This has been well noted by Professor Gambari when he wrote, “It would be unusual, although not inconceivable, and for a government that itself is not a product of the democratic process to allow democratic elections for members of community parliament. The logic would therefore seem to suggest a certain degree of symmetry between the democratic basis of the major organs of the AEC and the principal organs
which constitute the governments of the member states” (Gambari, 1992, p 7). Democratic practices at the national level will therefore be a solid platform on which to build the sub-regional democratic institutions and society.

Furthermore, it will beneficial to the sub-regional body if ECOWAS can encourage the governments of all its Member States to undergo the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The APRM is an instrument voluntarily agreed to by Member States of the African Union as part of the NEPAD initiative. The scope of authority of the APRM is to guarantee that the policies and practices of participating AU countries conform to the agreed economic, political and corporate governance ethics, codes and criteria contained in the declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. The fundamental aim of the APRM is to advance the adoption of policies, standards and practices that will result into political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration. This is to be achieved through the sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice, as well as identifying deficiencies and estimating the countries needs for capacity building (African Union Website, 2002). The entrenchment and implementations of democratic principles and ideals are therefore necessary at all levels of governance at both the national levels and at the regional level if ECOWAS is to develop a lasting and stable system of regionalism in West Africa.

It is the expectation of the citizens of West Africa that their leaders will abide by their own commitment to promote the development of the regionalisation process. And as has been noted by President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria “We must resolve…with full commitment to establishing a viable ECOWAS that will be a major plank for progress, peace, security, and development in our sub-region. Given our strong commitment to the vision and objectives of ECOWAS, we urgently need to initiate strategies aimed at accelerating the process of regional economic integration and peace consolidation” (Ayissi, 2001, p viii).
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