Research Paper   Open Access

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Maintenance of Peace and Security of West-African Countries: Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which comprise of Sixteen (16) West African States by its declaration is committed to the total maintenance of peace and order as well as integration of all West African States and unity of action based in common values, goals, interest and development. The ECOWAS is noted for articulating and promoting the political, socio-economic, peace and security interests of their member states in the dynamic global scenario The West African States are plagued by communal and ethnic conflicts and armed violence, political instability, refugees, Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) and fragile civil institutions. Premised on this assertion, this paper is set to discuss the historical background, evolution, and emergence or formation of ECOWAS as well as examine the mandates of establishing the ECOWAS and functions of the organization. This paper focuses attention on examine the roles of ECOWAS in maintenance of law, order, peace and security in members states. The paper also investigates achievements and challenges confronting ECOWAS in maintaining peace and security in the region. In addition, the study explores how ECOWAS can learn from the past experience in order to pursuing its interest. The data for this study were collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through interview of stakeholder's networking on peace and security of West Africa State. The secondary data were retrieved from textbooks, journals, newspapers, internet materials and literatures from academic journals in relation to the subject studied. The paper concludes that ECOWAS has been noted for its successful political, security and community engagements with a creditable showing in the management of regional order and as an economic vibrant region, ECOWAS is described as a successful sub-regional experiment in Africa based on its utilization of its multilateral armed force Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in containing conflicts, armed violence, wars and restoring democracy in many West-African States turn apart by coup d'état and civil wars. The study recommended inter alia that ECOWAS make peace and security a priority and harmonize general policies and infrastructure development in the region.

Keywords: Peace, Security, Maintenance, Community, Economic, Political, Development

I.   Introduction

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is an economic union comprising of Fifteen (15) West African countries. The Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) was a regional organization with the aims to facilitate peace, security, economic growth and development in the West Africa State (Adetula, 2009). These countries in 2015 were estimated to have a population of over 349 million people. ECOWAS was established on the 28th of May 1975 with the signing of the treaty of Lagos. As captured in the 1975 Treaty, the mandate of ECOWAS was to promote peace, security and economic integration in all activities of these member countries. These economic activities include; industry, energy, telecommunications, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, social and cultural issues, transport, monetary and financial matters.
ECOWAS is governed in accordance with the principles of democracy and the rule of law. The treaty of Lagos was revised and signed on the 24th of July, 1993 in Contonou. ECOWAS is one of the regional blocs of the African Economic Community (AEC). Member countries that make up ECOWAS are The Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo (Afolabi, 2012).

Subsequently, in the early 1990s witnessed an increase in socio-economic instability, violent conflicts and state failure in West Africa. States such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, and Guinea Bissau were the harmfully affected. The distressing and disturbing effects of the circumstances led to a shift in the centre of attention of ECOWAS from economic development to peace, security and stability. The involvement of ECOWAS in these countries opened a new panorama for the organization as a essential means for accomplishing and attaining regional peace and security (Golwa, 2009).

Since its creation, ECOWAS has been promoting the idea of collective self- sufficiency among the states. As a trading union, it is also meant to create a single, large trading bloc through economic cooperation among the member states. ECOWAS joint military force has been intervening in a bloc's member at times of political unrest. Such include interventions in Ivory Coast, and Liberia in 2003, Guinea- Bissau in 2012, Mali in 2013 and Gambia in 2017. The community has created a borderless region where the population across its member's state have access to resources and opportunities across the countries. Such access includes free movement, access to efficient education, health system and trading while maintaining peace and security. Today, the union (ECOWAS) is recognized as a successful one that has fostered peaceful integration amongst its member states (Ibenegbu, 2017).

From the perspective of ECOWAS intervention in West Africa States, the notion of peacebuilding, peacekeeping, security, stability and conflict management in this paper attributes to the economic, social and economic revolution of the West African society. In which, the importance is placed on laying the groundwork for durable peace, security, stability and development. In most cases, ECOWAS took the lead in make it possible for the initiation, execution and implementation of programmes and policies supported by its Fifteen (15) member states, development partners, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and so on. Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) laid the foundation for the participation of ECOWAS in peace, security and conflict management in West Africa States. The ECOWAS Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) played a significant and strategic role in maintaining peace and order in various West African conflict zones with the establishment and deployment of an ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) (Boutellis, 2011).

Therefore, the study aims at examined the evolution, and emergence or formation of ECOWAS as well as examine the mandates of establishing the ECOWAS and functions of the organization; the roles of ECOWAS in maintenance of law, order, peace and security in members states; investigates achievements and challenges confronting ECOWAS in maintaining peace and security in the region. In addition, the study explores how ECOWAS can learn from the past experience in order to pursuing its interest.

II.   Literature Review
ECOWAS Mandates and Promotion of Peace and Security in West Africa States

According ECOWAS Chapter II, the mandates of establishing ECOWAS was to promote cooperation and integration. It aims to establish an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among member's states, and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent. While its objectives were initially limited to economic cooperation, emerging political events led to the revision and expansion of the African Union's (AU's) scope of cooperation to include the maintenance of regional peace, stability, and security through promoting and strengthening good neighbourliness.

Other objectives are as follows;
a. Promotion of Cooperation and Development: This is an important objective for the countries that are in the ECOWAS system. The development is not limited by the economic abilities of the region. It also includes social contacts between the representatives of various nation, religious, groups and so on. They cooperate to foster development in these states.
b. Harmonization of Agricultural Economic, Monetary and Industrial Policies: ECOWAS was established with the aim to create a united policy which can satisfy the unique needs of every country member. It eliminates misunderstanding between country-members. At the same time, it provides the general requirements and standards for policies in industrial, monetary, economic and agricultural areas.
c. Implementation of Infrastructural Schemes: The joint development means joint infrastructure schemes, like communication, transport, energy, etc. Therefore, the development of standards of all country-members in the community can be realized.
d. Establishment of Common Fund: This is another great opportunity offered by ECOWAS. A common fund provides better security options for countries within the union. It also helps facilitate the cooperation between the countries. In addition, it serves as a security measure or compensation to help any of the countries that needs assistance.

e. Abolition of Trade Restrictions and Customs Duties: One of the greatest objectives of ECOWAS is destroy boundaries to assist in the development to the countries within the zone. It creates additional protection for goods which are created within this zone.

Overview of ECOWAS and Conflict Intervention in West Africa States

The unwillingness of the United Nations and western countries to demonstrate a dedication and commitment towards the situation in West Africa created a situation and condition ECOWAS had to resort to West Africa solution to a West African peace and security problem. This was experimented using ECOMOG as a launching pad (Ero, 2000). The fact that ECOWAS undertook such initiative represented a significant shift in the involvement of regional organizations in peace security and stability issues. This was underscored by an earlier call by Boutros Boutros Ghali, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, to the effect that regional organizations should reduce the pressure faced by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in peacekeeping.

He argued that:

> Regional action, however, could lighten the burden of the Council and contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs. Consultations between the United Nations and regional arrangements or agencies could do much to build international consensus on the nature of a problem and the measures required to address it (Ghali, 1992).

The international community demonstration little or no concern over the situation in violent-conflict in West Africa, ECOWAS rose to the challenge. Hence, a peace enforcement force under the auspices of the ECOMOG was established. It was the Liberian conflict that led to the establishment of ECOMOG as the first peacekeeping and peace enforcement mission set up a regional economic body in the world (Galadima, 2006; Golwa, 2009). In August 1990, an ECOMOG force with membership drawn from Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone were put in place, thereby making it a primary source of security and stability in Liberia (Aning, 1994).

The emergence of ECOMOG as a regional strategy for reacting to the multifaceted emergency in West Africa States was premised on the notion that regional peace, security, stability, unity, mutual relation and trust and good neighbourliness were necessary for achieving the ultimate aims and objectives of ECOWAS (Nwankwo, 2010). The establishment of ECOMOG laid the foundation for peace, stabilization, reconciliation and rehabilitation, which in turn led to the design of other post-conflict initiatives by ECOWAS.

ECOMOG Roles in Conflict Management, Peace Building Process and Stabilization of West Africa States

The emergence of ECOMOG and the role played in conflict management, peace building process and stabilization in West Africa States, made it to be considered a model for conflict management, peace building process and stabilization in the West African region and beyond. It was used to contain conflicts in Gambia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire among others. Therefore, ECOWAS decided to make it a permanent feature of its conflict management and resolution framework, as contained in the 1999 Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and Security (Sessay, 2002).

The ECOWAS experience with the establishment of ECOMOG as a tool for stabilization was quite significant against the backdrop of the fact that the decision to establish ECOMOG was a rational one in the light of the growing refusal or reluctance by the international community to get involve in peacekeeping activities in the African continent. On their part, Member states of ECOWAS viewed ECOMOG more as a vehicle for defining their security apparatus (Ero, 2000), which can also serve as a model for other regional organizations.

ECOWAS Partnership with Civil Society for Peace and Security in West Africa Region

The ECOWAS collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) has been a core component of the ECOWAS strategy for conflict management, peace building and peacekeeping process. The critical role played by civil society during and in the aftermath of various violent conflict in West Africa States, laid the foundation for a strategic partnership between ECOWAS and civil society on issues related to peace, security and stability in West Africa States. Some of them included the West African Network for Peace building (WANEP), West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA), as well as the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF). The establishment of Elections Unit by ECOWAS created an opportunity for more robust partnership between ECOWAS and civil societies in the region, through the WACSOF (Adebajo, 2004).

In concert with ECOWAS, WACSOF played a critical role in election observation, conflict management and peace building, as well as democratic process and good governance. The partnership between ECOWAS and civil society was anchored on the fact that civil society possesses the ability and capacity to make informed input into ECOWAS peace building initiatives in the West African region (Opoku, 2007).

III. Methodology

The data for this study were collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through the: Interview with Key Informants (KIIs), includes Security experts, Conflict managers, officers of Nigeria Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Members of ECOWAS mission in Nigeria, members of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) networking on West Africa region peace, security, stability and development among others were interviewed. The respondents have good knowledge of the conflict management, regional integration, ECOWAS operations and mandates. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the respondents who were knowledgeable in the study
The secondary sources include archives, books, media journal articles, magazines, and other publications relevant to the study. The secondary data were used to complement primary data to strengthen the findings of the study. The data were analyzed using qualitative approach. The data was analysed using excerpts, paraphrasing and direct quotation.

IV. Theoretical Framework

This aspect of the study discusses the theory that forms the framework with which the research works is built. For the purpose of this study and logical aptness, this study is adopting on Structural Functionalist Theory. The basic assumption of these theories is that the society is structured in conjunction with different groups and organizations affiliation and connection.

Structural Functionalist Theory: Structural Functionalist theory sees society as complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. The theory was propounded by French Sociologists, Emile Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, Parsons and colleagues; they originally wanted to explain social institutions as a shared way for individuals in society to meet their own needs. The focus for structural functionalism changed to be more about the ways that social institutions in society meet the needs of individuals within the society. The theory serves a purpose and that all aspects of the society such as institutions, roles, norms are indispensable for the long-term survival of the society. It focuses attention on the social structures that shape society as a whole in terms of the function of its elements and functions performed in society by social structures such as institutions, groups, organizations, class and so on. Each aspect of society depends on each other and each contributes to the overall stability and functioning of the society. The theory advocates that no segment or section of the society should be neglect, deprived, and marginalized.

By application, all the structures put in place by ECOWAS in the West Africa region are crucial in facilitating and fast-tracking peacebuilding initiatives and process, conflict management, peacekeeping, security and socio-economic stability in the region. The ECOMOG and other bodies such as West African Network for Peace building (WANEP), West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA), as well as the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) and others are working towards the Peace-building process and initiatives, conflict management, security and stability in the West Africa Region therefore, there is need for them to function optimally and work together in order to achieve overall stability and functioning of the region.

The Role of ECOWAS in Maintenance of Peace, Order, Law and Security in West Africa States
ECOWAS Intervention in the Gambia Political Crises

The brief period of open conflict at the beginning of the mission was precipitated by the refusal to step down from power of Yahya Jammah, the long-standing president of the Gambia, after the disputed the victory of Adama Barrow in the 2016 presidential election.

The Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS) decided to intervene militarily in the Gambian constitutional crisis that occurred as a result of Gambian president Yahya Jammah refusing to step down after losing the December 2016 presidential election and set 19th of January 2017 as the date the troops would move into the Gambia of Jammah continued to refuse to step down. The operation was named "Operation Restore Democracy".

ECOWAS forces were amassed around the borders of the Gambia, and Marcel Alain de Souza, the president of ECOWAS, said, "By land, sea and air, Gambia, is surrounded. A total of 7,000 men Gambia, in contrast, the entire armed force of the Gambia numbered only about 2,500 troops. Gambia's army Chief General Ousman Badjie meanwhile pledge allegiance to Barrow and stated that the Gambian Army would not fight ECOWAS. Barrow and a Senegalese official later stated that Jammah had agreed to step down. Diplomats, meanwhile stated Senegalese troops would remain deployed at the border in case he reneged on the deal. A deal was later announced for him to leave the country for exile and a short time later announced on state television that he was stepping down.

After Jammah went into exile on 21 January (initially going to Guinea and then to equatorial Guinea). ECOWAS announced that about 4,000 of its troops would remain stationed in the country for ensuring security. On 26th of January 2017, Barrow returned to the Gambia, while about 2,500 ECOWAS troops remained in the country to stabilize it. He requested the troops to remain in the country for an additional six months. The troops remained in Banjul and at the main crossing points to Senegal.

ECOWAS forces were still providing security service in the country in April 2020 while local forces were being trained and readied. Despite polls showing over 50% of the Gambian public want them to leave, Presidential Adama Barrow has asked for an extension on the mission through 2021.

ECOWAS Intervention in the Liberian Civil War

The first Liberian civil war was an internal conflict in Liberia from 1989 until 1997. Samuel Doe had led a rebellion that overthrew the elected government in 1980, and in 1985 held elections that were widely considered fraudulent there had been one unsuccessful coup by a former military leader. In December 1989, the former government minister Charles Taylor moved into the country from neighboring Ivory Coast to start an uprising meant to tipple the Doe government. Talyor's force the National group, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) a faction of NPFL for control in Monrovia. In 1990, Johnson seized the capital of Monrovia and executed doe brutally. The conflict killed around 200,000 people and eventually led to the involvement of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations (International Crises Group, 2009).

In august 1990, the 16-Members Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreed to deploy a joint military intervention force, the economic community group (ECOMOG), and place it under Nigeria leadership. The mission later included troops from non-ECOWAS countries, including Uganda and Tanzania. ECOMOG'S objectives were to impose a ceasefire, help Liberians establish an interim government until election could be held, stop killing of innocent civilians, and ensure the safe evacuation of foreign national among others. ECOMOG also sought to prevent the conflict from spreading into neighbouring states, which share a complex history of state, economic and ethno-linguistic social relation with Liberia. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) attempted to persuade Doe to resign and go into exile but despite his weak position besieged in his mansion, he refused. ECOMOG, an ECOWAS intervention force, arrived at the Freeport of Monrovia on August 24, 1990.

A series of peacemaking conferences in regional capital followed. There meetings in Bamako in November 1990, Lome in January 1991, and Yamoussoukro in June-October 1991. But the first seven peace conferences including the Yamoussoukro I-IV processes failed. In November 1990, ECOWAS invited the principal Liberian players to meet in Banjul, Gambia to form government of national unity. The negotiated statement establish the interim government of national unity (IGNU), led by DR. Amos Sawyer, leader of the LPP, Bishop Ronald Diggs of the Liberian council of churches became vice president (Ebo, 2005).

The second Liberian civil war began 1999 and ended in October 2003, By the end of the war, more than 250,000 people had been killed and nearly 1 million displaced. Half of that number remain and nearly to be repatriated in 2005, at the election of Liberian's first democratic president since the initial 1980 coup elected of Samuel Doe. ECOWAS intervention stopped the rebel siege on Monrovia and exile Charles Taylor to Nigeria until he was arrested in 2006 and taken to the Hague for his trial (Afolabi, 2012).

Former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who initially was strong supporter of Charles Taylor, was inaugurated in January 2006 and the national transitional government of Liberian terminated its power. Charles Taylor was sentences to a trial in 2003, after being accused of rape and acts of sexual violence, promoting child soldiers, and an illegal ownership of weapon (International Crises Group, 2009).

ECOWAS Intervention in Cote d' Ivoire Political and Post-Electoral Crises

The conflict that engulfed Côte d'Ivoire in 2002 divided the country for eight years, with the south controlled by the Government and the north by rebel forces. The violence and divisions in the country were responsible for the reversal of major economic gains that had been made since independence, and the political uncertainties threatened regional stability. Between 2002 and 2010, Côte d'Ivoire experienced ethnic-related tensions, with the rebels running a parallel government. Elections were postponed repeatedly despite diplomatic interventions by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The role played by the ECOWAS in the Ivorian crisis increasingly came under scrutiny, the peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts of ECOWAS were praised for preventing further atrocities.

From independence in 1960 until the early 1990s, Côte d'Ivoire was regarded as an island of peace in the otherwise troubled West African region. In 1999 soldiers led by Ivorian General Robert Gueï organised a mutiny and overthrew Henri Konan Bédié. With the onset of violence in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002 following the attempted coup d'état, ECOWAS was better prepared to intervene than it had been in previous conflicts in the region. Its immediate reaction to the crisis was premised on the fact that the coup attempt violated the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance against unconstitutional changes of government. Wary of the fact that the conflict could spread to other countries in the region, ECOWAS Executive Secretary General Mohammed Ibn Chambas publicly condemned the rebels. Furthermore, a group of West African leaders from Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo formed a contact group to find a solution to the crisis.

The Lomé Ceasefire Agreement that followed was initiated on 24 October 2002 under the auspices of the ECOWAS contact group, which gave the Togolese President, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, a mandate to lead negotiations aimed at resolving the political differences between the government and the MPCI. The warring

parties declared that they were committed to the ceasefire agreement and promised to end human rights abuses and respect Ivorian institutions (Musah 2011).

On 19 December 2006 President Gbagbo announced another peace plan and called on the Chair of ECOWAS, Burkinabe President Blaise Compaoré, to directly mediate peace talks between Gbagbo and the belligerents. The parties met in Ouagadougou from March to February 2007 and made commitments to successfully resolve the conflict, restore peace and security and the free movement of people throughout the national territory and signed what became known as the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement.

On 31 October 2010, for the first time in about 10 years and after several postponements, Ivorians went to the polls. The elections were observed by representatives from the ECOWAS in addition to others from international organizations. On 4 November 2010 the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) announced that Gbagbo had received 38.04 per cent of the votes, against 32.07 per cent for Ouattara and 25.24 per cent for Henri Konan Bédié (HRW 2011). This required a run-off by the first two candidates, in line with constitutional provisions.

The run-off was held on 28 November 2010 and the Chair of the IEC, Youssouf Bakayoko, announced that Alasane Ouattara had won 54 per cent of the vote to Gbagbo's 46 per cent. Nevertheless, Gbagbo's supporters rejected the results (ICRtoP 2011). Paul Yao N'Dré of Côte d'Ivoire's Constitutional Council criticized the manner in which the IEC announced the results and indicated that the results were not released within the stipulated time frame. The Constitutional Council then went ahead and annulled the results, discarding more than 660,000 votes in seven departments (mostly in Ouattara strongholds) even though Gbagbo had complained of irregularities in only three departments (HRW 2011). This action was quickly condemned by ECOWAS, which urged the Ivorian authorities to accept the results released by the IEC.

ECOWAS Intervention in 2012 Malian Conflict

In March 2012, Mali's government was overthrown in a military coup. Insurgents, capitalizing on ensuring power vacuum, seized much of the country's vest and sparsely populated Northern territory. As of early January 2013, there lousily connected Islamist extremist groups known as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (NQIM), a U.S designated foreign terrorist organization reportedly controlled all major towns in the North. Mali leaders also face stack economic constraints amid a national recession and revenue crisis, a regional food security crisis, exacerbated by population displacement from Northern Mali, also continuous to cause suffering, leading to both security and humanitarian crises.

The West African sub-region has witnessed a number of post-independence violence that has led to civil wars and rude interruption of democratic process by the military and other groups struggling for political power. As became a norm with military intervention in politics in virtually all the countries in the sub-region. This situation worsened the situation challenges in the sub-region. ECOWAS intervention in the 2012 Malian conflict was necessitated by its various protocols on peace and security agreed upon by all the member of the organization (Afolabi, 2012).

Achievements of ECOWAS in Promoting Peace, Security and Development in the West Africa States

a. Consolidation of Peace and Security in Member States: The ECOWAS has achieved the consolidation of peace and security in conflict-affected countries in the ECOWAS Region. The states includes Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Gambia, Niger, Cote d'Ivoire where preventive diplomacy and mediation missions were deployed, electoral processes were supported, and various assistance modules have been operationalized. In an attempt to address these challenges and stabilize the sub-region, the Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS) which was formed in 1975 for the purpose of promoting economic integration of its members, was compelled to adopt promotion of peace and security among its members as a cardinal objective. This was first demonstrated with ECOWAS intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone on the 1990s Non-Aggression (1978) and the protocol on mutual assistance on defense(1981). These protocols mark the beginning of realization by West African leaders that security is linked to economic integration. If there is no security, ECOWAS cannot achieve its aim of regional integration.

b. Humanitarian Assistance and Socio-Economic Recovery and Reintegration: The ECOWAS mission has provided humanitarian assistance to and powered the socio-economy recovery and reintegration of vulnerable and less privilege groups (Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees, returnees) in Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Mali, Guinea Bissau and so on. Health facilities, housing, equipment for agriculture, water and sanitation, education, income generating activities were also provided to more 51,000 people in the region. Also, capacity building projects were undertaken in which government agencies, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local stakeholders benefited in order to facilitate the delivery of support and assistance to the targeted groups.

c. Rehabilitation and Equipping of Prosthetic/Handicap Center: The ECOWAS has successfully rehabilitated and equipped the prosthetic/handicap center in Guinea Bissau. The facility is currently providing artificial

limbs to maimed people from across the country and beyond, thus restoring their dignity and healing process.

d. Establishment of ECOWAS Commission for Capacity Building: As part of the ECOWAS support for capacity building, the ECOWAS has provide support to ECOWAS Commission Capacity Building, the consolidation of ECOWAS and African Union Peace and Security Architecture in West Africa, as well as assistance to training institution, training centers of excellence on peace and security, and early warning schemes , prevention of violent-conflict, reduction in proliferation of small arms and light weapons within the ECOWAS Region.

e. ECOWAS Deployments on Peace Support Operations: The ECOWAS has successfully deployed Peace Support Operations to various West Africa States such as Mali, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire and other states.

f. Establishment of Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance: The ECOWAS member states adopted the supplementary protocol on democracy and good governance in 2001 as an instrument to promote peace and security in West Africa States.

g. Establishment of Single West African Currency: In recent years, ECOWAS has made significant progress in easing travelling restrictions in West Africa, and has started the process of establishing a Singe West African Currency (UNDP, 2001)

The Prospects of ECOWAS as a Regional Organisation in the New World Order

The prospect of ECOWAS in terms of achievement and success should include concessionary trade and custom duties, common monetary policy, integrated systems of transportation, agriculture industry, free immigration process, telecommunication and culture. They include policy harmonization on peace, security and stability, environment, drug control and Information Communication Technology (ICT). Fundamentally, the ECOWAS is West Africa's response to the blueprint of the New World Order. It is understandable that world is in the age in which integration has become essential, national boundaries and their attendant barriers are collapsing. Presently, common markets and common currencies rule is the order of the New World. The motive behind the open up the economies of the world; West Africa cannot but be a partaker of the global interdependence.

The ECOWAS will make it possible for West Africans countries to jointly build integrative infrastructure, which would otherwise be too costly for individuals, diminutive and fragmented countries. To this end, the ECOWAS gives the West African countries the chance to be relevant and to speak with one voice in international community negotiations.

West Africa is expected to experience improved political and socio-economic integration. It is a custom unification, which will compel the Fifteen (15) member states to eliminate tariff barrier, open their markets and allow for free movement of goods and services in the region. With the ECOWAS protocols, barriers that hindered investment among West African states must be ignored and give way. It was in the light of this that the Common Investment Code which we providers the legal framework for treatment and operation of investment in the ECOWAS Common Investment Market (ECIM) and ECOWAS Investment Policy (ECOWIP) must be fast-track in order to meet the objectives.   The ECOWAS Investment Policy contextualizes the ECOWAS investment climate realities in global best practice viewpoints and provides the regional investment climate and its competitiveness (ECOWAS Trade Information System).

The West African Common Industrial Policy (WACIP) which was put in place and adopted by member states in 2010 with the objective to "maintain a solid industrial structure" The overall objective is to facilitate the industrialization and the promotion of Quality standards in the region. Also ECOWAS Agricultural Policy and the Quest for Food Security, ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration, ECOWAS Humanitarian Policy and others must be improved on.

It is imperative to accept the reality that we live in a global village where power and might, wealth and technology continue to determine who get what, when and how. What the circumstances displays is that in this New World Order, West Africa is at the cross-road, trying to survive in a world that is largely redefined by economic power and globalization. The prerequisites for the success of the ECOWAS programme are embedded in the peace and security initiative, the regional approaches to development.

Challenges Confronting ECOWAS in maintaining Peace, Security and Stability in the Region

According to respondents, the major challenges confronting ECOWAS in maintaining peace, security and socio-economic stability in the region is political instability. The Economic Community of West Africa State (ECOWAS) is always confronted with the challenges of political instability arising from election crises, constant change of government by usurpers. This bad and endemic challenge has always made West Africa States the ridicule of other people of the world, and it is on record that the ECOWAS never applied sanctions against state members who were involved in such retarding actions. Today, the ECOWAS will have its strengthen its mechanisms for sanctions to bring its members to comply with the rules for the organization. For

instance, Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea are now governed by military leaders and ECOWAS has for the last two years been searching for a sustainable solution to the political impasses in the countries.

Majority of the respondents also agreed that obstacle caused trade link with colonial masters were encountered by ECOWAS in discharging their duties. The biggest obstacle to the ECOWAS is that many Africa West States still conduct more trade with their former colonial masters than with other West African state. For example, the Francophone countries like Cameroon and The Republic of Benin are practically still tied to France's apron strings. The ECOWAS in an attempt to end this situation is making trade within West Africa easier by reducing bureaucratic obstacles. The idea is to first build regional blocs in West Africa and then ultimately merge these into one big economy together is easier than negotiating with 15 countries at the same time. In the long run, a common West African currency is envisaged. Most Francophone countries already have one, the CFA France, which is guaranteed by the French treasury, it would be an arduous task for the ECOWAS to break this French connection, although it must be broken if the ECOWAS is to achieve its set objectives.

Respondents also averred that Intra and Inter State Violent Conflicts played crucial challenges to ECOWAS in West Africa States. The ECOWAS is facing is that of intra and inter-state violent-conflicts. The end of the cold war era, which was regarded as reason for the persistence of conflicts in Africa, has not ushered in peace. Rather, violent-conflicts in West Africa have increased with the secessionist struggle in Nigeria; Election crises in Gambia, Coup d'etat in Mali. The recent upheavals and confrontation in Mali and Liberia have accentuated the fact that all is not well in the West Africa States. These definitely are challenges that the ECOWAS is facing among others. Hence, the need to work towards resolving the challenges of indemnity for the stability of the West Africa States as a foundation for rapid development in the region.

It was also gathered that poverty is one of the greatest challenges facing most West African countries. Today, two-third of these countries depends on foreign aids. The report of West Africa Sub-Regional Office for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), indicates that the proportion of people in the region living with less than $1.90 a day increased from 2.3 percent in 2020 to 2.9 percent in 2021. Poverty has resulted into violent-conflict, war and impoverishment of most states in West Africa. This deteriorating economic situation has adversely affected the security of the people in the region. More than 25million people in West Africa are unable to meet their basic needs in the region, an increase of 34% compared to 2020. Until such situations are taken care of the idea of establishing ECOWAS will become a mirage.

It is also agreed by respondents that bad leadership and power struggle among leaders in West African countries contributes to instability in the region. The region has been a flourishing ground for unconstitutional transfers of power, melting pot for insecurity and flashpoint for democratic decline in recent years. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is threatened with legitimacy and governance crises, these impacts on its ability to deliver on its mandate and enforce its protocols (Thisday Newspaper, 2021). The dictatorial natures by political leaders have made many citizens lose faith in democracy. In Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso citizens trooped out of the street to celebrate when democratic governments were overthrown.

In addition, respondents also posited that decays in physical infrastructure. The position of infrastructure in West Africa States has been correctly described by Aribisola (2011) who says that the poor infrastructure access and services leave the whole of West Africa at a greater disadvantage by hampering efforts of the region to attract new foreign investment and by limiting domestic investment owing to high costs of doing business. It is well acknowledges that the development of physical infrastructure requires huge financial investments. The poor situation is further exacerbated by the poverty level of most West Africa States that have been bedevilled by the consideration of national sovereignty and egoism. In the main, the system of physical infrastructure includes energy, aviation, water supply, telecommunication, transportation (roads, railways and sea) and so on.

V.   Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper concludes that ECOWAS has been noted for its successful political, security and community engagements with a creditable showing in the management of regional order and as an economic vibrant region, ECOWAS is described as a successful sub-regional experiment in Africa based on its utilization of its multilateral armed force Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in containing conflicts, armed violence, wars and restoring democracy in many West-African States turn apart by coup d'état and civil wars.

The study described the level of poverty of West Africa. The scenario of the physical endowment of West Africa portrays the continent as one blessed with abundant resources which comprise minerals, soil, landforms, rivers, vegetation, and climatic variations. However, a searchlight is turned on the harmonization and exploitation of these resources, underdevelopment seems to be apparent. The magnitude of the challenges posed by poverty to the peace and security in West African states, and the volume of its social, political and socio-economic demand, calls for the mobilization of a lot of resources within the region. The West African predicament can therefore be described as being in abject poverty in the midst of plenty.

It has become intrinsic to note that the journey to achieve peace, security, stability and development by ECOWAS is prospective and equally a challenging one. The integration is expected to move the West Africa States to a greater height in a world that is fast globalizing. Currently, globalization is one of the greatest challenges facing the West African States. Its consequences if not collectively confronted will be devastating. The West African position should not be as an aid seeker, but as a regional force, which deserve respect, understanding from and cooperation with the rest of the world. The ECOWAS has been seen as an essential instrument for faster collective growth and prosperity for the countries and peoples of the West Africa States it is the hope and indeed the shared aspiration of the West African leaders to create a large economic entity and market place.

The intervention by ECOWAS in various conflict and disputes in West Africa States highlighted the linkage between regional security and regional economic development. Therefore, in advancing its goal of integrating the West African region economically, the issue of peace, security and stability had to be placed on the front burner of the ECOWAS agenda. This is emphasized by the fact that in the absence of peace and security, the goal of economic growth and development cannot be easily actualized.

The ECOWAS will make it possible for West African States to collectively build integrative infrastructure, which would otherwise be too costly for individuals, small and fragmented states. In addition, the ECOWAS offers the West African States the chance to be relevant and to speak with one voice in international negotiations.

The study recommended inter alia that ECOWAS make peace and security a priority and harmonize general policies and infrastructure development in the region. In view of this paradoxical reality of the West African circumstances, the recommendation offered should assist the ECOWAS, to facilitate the regional stability and development by turning around its dwindling fortunes.

The ECOWAS must create workable structures, policies and formative processes to coordinate and support the execution and implementation of decisions made on resolving conflict and disputes and the effective carrying out of protocols adopted to guarantee peace, security and stability and the respect for democratic processes and standards. ECOWAS need to ensure that the diplomatic and standing military positions and decisions taken and adopted by regional organizations have the backing, consent and political will of members to be effectively executed.

In the Future, decisions taken by ECOWAS aimed at resolving any forms of disputes and conflicts should be done with the support of all member states and a united approach should be adopted by those involved in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts when adopting sanctions against those who violate democratic principles and processes.

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