

# ECOWAS Parliament sets up independent committee to investigate alleged illegal recruitment

*Speaker of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament has appointed an independent AD HOC committee to investigate allegations over recruitment malpractice at the parliament. The Speaker also directed the suspension of the ongoing recruitment exercises, pending the outcome of the investigation by the Independent Adhoc Committee.*

Nigeria had earlier threatened to withdraw its membership of ECOWAS if the regional body does not suspend the ongoing recruitment exercise as recently directed in the 2022 First Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament in Abuja. Nigerian representatives at the parliament had issued the threat when some principal officers in the regional bloc defiled the directives and embarked on the alleged illegal recruitment of their relatives and cronies.

Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Dr. Sidie Mohamed Tunis in a statement said having received written complaints from the 1st Deputy Speaker, Honorable Ahmed Idris Wase, and the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the ECOWAS Commission, Ambassador Musa Sani Nuhu, concerning the ongoing recruitment exercise at the ECOWAS Parliament, had appointed an Independent Ad Hoc Committee to investigate allegations of marginalization and malpractice against Nigerian Candidates in the ongoing recruitment process.

The action of the Honorable Speaker is in conformity to Rule Thirty-three (33) and Thirty-four (34) of the Rules of Procedures of the Parliament which provides that a Special Committee may be set up to address specific matters. The Speaker, in response to pressing emergencies, can set up an Ad Hoc Committee, in consultation with the Bureau, and inform Parliament at



*Sidie Mohamed Tunis*

its next Session. The Adhoc Committee would be headed by Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume, Chairman of the Committee on Administration, Finance, and Budget. Other Members of the Committee include: Hon. Lynda Chuba Ikpeazu – Nigeria; Hon. Fatoumata Njai – The Gambia; Hon. Amadou Djibo Ali – Niger; Hon. Kounon Nahou Agbandao -Togo

Others are, Hon. Caramo Camara - Guinea Bissau; Hon. Moussokora Chantal Fanny – Cote d' Ivoire and Mr. Arboncana Oumarou Dicko – Clerk to the Committee

The terms of Reference of the Ad Hoc Committee include: Investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct in the ongoing recruitment process at the ECOWAS Parliament; Investigate

allegations of marginalization of Nigerian Candidates in the current recruitment process; Investigate and determine if indeed the plenary adopted any Resolution concerning the subject matter (Recruitment of Staff), using normal parliamentary procedure.

“In the execution of its mandate, the Committee shall be granted access to all documents relating to the recruitment exercise and work with the Advisory Committee on Recruitment and Promotions at the ECOWAS Parliament, to under-study and review the exercise. The Adhoc Committee would be guided by the provisions of the Supplementary Act and the ECOWAS Staff Regulations.

“The work of the Ad Hoc Committee is expected to commence on 22nd August 2022 and its findings are expected to be reported to the Honorable Speaker in one week, following which a Bureau meeting will be convened to consider the report for onward submission to the Plenary.

“The ECOWAS Parliament, under the leadership of Right Honourable Dr. Sidie Mohamed Tunis, affirms its stern commitment to fair labor practices and is devoted to upholding and protecting the rights of all Citizens of the Community to aspire for positions in any Community Institution, in line with the provisions of the ECOWAS Staff Regulations and all related Protocols”.

# 'We give Nigeria delegate some concession because of the role they have played in the sub-region'

**-Snowe Jr**

Senator Edwin Melvin Snowe Junior of Liberia and a member of the Community Parliament said recruitment into any Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) institutions is **very competitive**. He wondered how and when Nigerians were shortchanged as published in some Nigeria Media platforms attributed to lawmakers at the Community Parliament regarding staff recruitment. According to him, media men have been calling him across the ECOWAS member states over the alleged threats by Nigeria to pull out of ECOWAS. "I have seen a lot of newspaper headlines coming from our colleagues from the Nigerian side of the Parliament raising a lot of issues that are creating a dark cloud over the Community parliament, and as a member of the Community Parliament I think it is high time someone gives the other side of the story which is fast becoming a monologue," he said.

He added that in a situation where the truth is not explained and one side is "giving misrepresentation of account of what is happening at the Parliament as we all know ECOWAS was founded on solidarity." "I have read so many articles coming from members of the Nigerian delegation questioning the procedure of recruitment and Nigerians' participation and involvement in the recruitment process misrepresenting decisions coming from the plenary of the parliament," Senator Melvin said.

Senator Melvin, Chairman of the ECOWAS Committee on Political Affairs, Peace, Security and African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) recounted his experience in his first four years in the Community parliament. He said as then Vice Chair of the Committee on Finance and Administration, a Senator from Nigeria was not only a chair of the committee but was a father figure who gave him a lot of insight into the day-to-day workings of the administration and that platform allowed him to understand a lot about the parliament. "I understand the issue and I can defend them better to explain with facts devoid of sentiment to put the cards on the table and understand the facts. We are all politicians and we understand the facts when the decision of the administration is being misrepresented and that of the speaker of the Parliament, it's unfair".

Senator Melvin questioned the purported resolution at the plenary of the 2022 First

Ordinary Session in Abuja, with the First Deputy Speaker in the chair which halted recruitment. "I challenge anyone to produce that it is not true, I have the recordings". He noted that he has served in the House of Representatives for three terms in his home country, then elected to the Senate currently and is not new to legislative politics when politicians want to vote when they are going for re-election we all know what it is. According to him, when the issue came on the floor, MPs saw it, they just laughed because they knew where it was going. Nigeria has elections in next year February 2023 and someone just wants to get elected and get on the ECOWAS parliament floor.

"We are fighting for Nigerian interest, it should not be at our expense and integrity, we have done enough about this matter and its time we put a stop to it". He further noted that it's a Nigeria firm that was contracted by ECOWAS to take applications from all community citizens then there is a short listing base on one's ranking, then you go for interviews and the position in question they are talking about one have to understand the subject matter to talk about it. "As I speak to you now there has not been recruitment for P5 positions; the recruitment is done at the level of the Commission, not the parliament. What has been done in the parliament is for P1 P2 P3 void of political manipulation".

He indicated that in 2016, then Speaker Rt. Hon Mustapha Cisse- Lo came and said he could not work with the Acting Secretary General John Azumah. At the time he appointed the late Dr. Nelson; Ghanaians stood up in the Session and said they were here to defend their fellow Ghanaians since he was demoted to chief account. "I was one of those who took the floor and said when we come here, we come here to defend the community. The only Liberian in the Parliament is at the Speaker's office after four years he does not have a job there".

"I am a big fan of Nigeria, I come from a country where today we enjoy peace and democracy in Liberia because of the sacrifices made by Nigerians. They came to Liberia put down their boots and brought peace to Liberia and at the parliament today as I speak to you there are 73 staff members in parliament. Out of these, 35 are Nigerians. I know what Nigeria has done. Go and read our rules of procedure, we breach the rule of procedure and supplementary Act and gave Nigeria a deserving platform in the parliament. Those

considerations made were not out of weakness, it's for the appreciation for the role that Nigeria has played in the sub-region".

In the case of the Chairman of Authority of Heads of states, it is rotational, same with the Community Parliament's Speakership. Alphabetically, Liberia was at war then so it started from M, Mali it came to Niger, Nigeria, Senegal Sierra Leone and what is interesting about the bureau membership of the parliament is that they have agreed outside their own rules that if Nigeria is not chairing as a speaker they should always serve as first deputy speaker, even though no rule says that, they had decided on their own.

And you know what that does, it disenfranchises Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia and Ghana every four years the Francophone has two members on the bureau, Portuguese has one member that comes to the bureau every four years; Cape Veda and Guinea Bissau wait to come to the bureau. But, Liberia, Ghana, Gambia, and Sierra Leone have to wait for every 16 years. They have arrogated their slot to Nigeria; it is a decision by the English-speaking countries which do not affect the Francophone and Portuguese countries. Nigeria has a permanent seat on the bureau; it is not happening anywhere in the other arms. "Go to the court of justice you do not see that, at the commission, Nigeria cannot be president of the Commission because it is host country same with the court of justice, but at the parliament, they can serve as Speaker. If they are not Speaker, they have the First deputy post".

Secondly, every country has a chairmanship on the committee currently except Guinea Bissau, because of what Nigeria has done in the sub-region they have been given two chairmanship positions, because they agreed they are a big country, it is because they respect what taxpayers in Nigeria have done for the sub-region, that is why they have two slots; they chair the Finance Committee at the parliament second committee in addition.

"There is nothing in the supplementary Act which says Nigeria should be on the bureau; when I read on the news and every day newspapers are calling back home in Liberia on this recruitment issue and it is about time the population of Nigeria gets to understand the issues better"

# Gambia's VP, Joof advocate development centred democracy for Member States

The Vice President of Gambia, Badara Joof, has charged the ECOWAS Parliamentarians to be more committed to their duties as lawmakers by ensuring they enact laws that promote good governance. Joof gave the charge at the recent Delocalized meeting of the joint committees of the ECOWAS Parliament in Banjul, Gambia. He said as the custodians of laws and representatives of the people, the legislators should be effective and vibrant in their work to promote democracy and development in the region.

He stated, "You hold every institution in a functioning democracy to account. The people depend on your effectiveness, your efficiency in execution of your duties. If the legislature functions, the democracy functions," he said. He advocated more effective legislature that will move the region from a political democracy to a development centered democracy.

He explained, "political democracy leads in ignoring the idioms of democracy but development democracy geared towards tackling poverty, conflicts, hunger and other things" While stressing the need for women inclusiveness in politics, Joof

assured that Gambia is committed to the promotion of more women participation in governance. "The government has deliberate policies on 35% affirmative action on women representative. It is just the question of sensitizing the publics who should change the mindset to appreciate the role of women. \*The man and a woman are the two sides of the same coin and minus any one of them, there



*VP of Gambia, Badara Joof*

is no value to the coin. "It is important that this affirmative action is promoted and am sure all those at the National Assemblies and all the media will promote this awareness in order to make sure that they have appreciable representation

not only in the parliament but also in the civil service and public service and so forth." "The fact that ECOWAS Parliamentarians have come together and I think it is one of the strongest regional blocks we have. We have the ECOWAS Parliament, we have the ECOMOG and we have other institutions that are coming together and I think that should be consolidated and build upon. I mean together we can make a difference in the lives of our people." Acquiring comprehensive social economic development is anchored in partnership in cooperation, in coordination and collaboration. And that is what I see in this room. ECOWAS member states cooperating, collaboration for the advancement of ECOWAS community," he said.

The Chairman, Committee on Political Affairs and Security, Hon. Edwin Snowe Junior had earlier expressed gratitude for the warm reception to the committee by the Gambian vice president.

"Mr. Vice President, we are extremely excited that you took time off to meet with us in our working session We are meeting in Gambia relating to community texts to the governance, the challenges and the implementation of our oversight roles at the ECOWAS

## Expert urges ECOWAS lawmakers to enforce domestication of anti-corruption protocol on member states

The Executive Director and Founder, Gambia Participates, Mr. Marr Nyang has tasked the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliamentarians to enforce the domestication of ECOWAS Protocol on the fight against corruption signed on 21 December 2001 in Dakar , on member states.

Nyang made the charge during his

presentation on the Implementation and Domestication of Community Texts- ECOWAS Protocol on Fight Against Corruption with Topic "Anti-Corruption, Legislation and Agency" at the recently delocalized meeting of the joint committee on Political Affairs ,Peace and Security and APRM, Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Social Affairs, Gender and Women Empowerment holding in Banjul, Gambia .

He said, "ECOWAS Parliament have ECOWAS Protocol on the fight against corruption signed on 21 December 2001 in Dakar, Republic of Senegal. Now it is incumbent on the parliamentarians to ensure that member states domesticate this ECOWAS protocol against corruption in our domestic laws and ensure the implementation.

In practice, the domestication of ECOWAS law against corruption is ineffective. So, what ECOWAS Parliament need to do is to be pushing the member states to implement these laws. When they use their powers and influence in making member states to implement it you are now addressing the root cause of corruption . it is not good for us to be reacting to the consequences of the problem rather than addressing them.”

“ECOWAS sub-region is a victim of corruption if you actually go through borders of ECOWAS states you will actually going to see massive corruption going on at this border level, ECOWAS region is a victim of

corruption.” he said.

“Corruption is also undermining security in ECOWAS member states. Most of the insurgency we have seen they are also burn out of a corruption and there are some situation whereby this insurgency is actually supported by government. They give them information and they actually give them materials like arms. These are some of the things affecting the advancement of ECOWAS as a state.

“Another things is the need to have a single unified currency that ECOWAS has talked about for years. ECOWAS has been talking about this currency since when I was very young until today they could not actually realize

this ECO currency. The European Union are using the euro and advancing their economic plans, what is wrong with us? Having one unified currency that ECOWAS citizens can use will ease free movement and services. So, without this it will actually affect the economic development of the region.”

“Until today they have not concluded the ECOWAS currency plans. What is wrong with our leader? So, I think there are so many things that the ECOWAS member states including the head of states have to do to advance the economy of ECOWAS region,” he said.

## Speaker Tunis attributes failures in Africa democracy to lack of trust, accountability

**S**peaker of the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Sidie Mohamed Tunis, has said that difficulties and failures in democracy in Africa is as a result of the lack of trust and accountability. Speaker Tunis who stated this at the delocalized meeting of the joint committee on Political Affairs, Peace and security and APRM legal and human rights Social affairs ,Gender and women empowerment in Banjul, Gambia, also condemned in its strongest terms, the act of violence in Sierra Leone which has led to loss of lives, destruction of properties and unspeakable pain in the country.

Represented by the 4th Deputy speaker of the Parliament, Adja Satu Camara Pinto, Tunis called on all sides to adhere to the rule of law, which according to him, “is the best path to channel and address grievances of every kind”. “Many democracies are having difficulties globally, in this present day, these failures are often attributed to the lack of trust and accountability. We are seeing regime change and reforms in many parts of the world.

In Africa the fragility of our democracies is caused by electoral abuse, ethnic divisions, mismanagement of natural resources, poverty, and economic insecurity. “There is a need for political

will and action to counter these problems, and these are better achieved through our institutions.

It is said that integration is about people. Indeed, it is high time our region derives the benefits”, he stated. The speaker also commended the people of Senegal for successfully conducting a peaceful parliamentary election on 31st July and congratulated all winners at the polls; and said that the parliament looks forward to working with the Membership of the new Parliament for the good of the sub region.

For the Speaker of the National Assembly of The Gambia, Hon Fabakary Tombong Jatta, the theme for the delocalised meeting, “Community Texts Relating to Peace, Security, Democracy and Good Governance: Challenges in their Implementation and the Oversight Role of ECOWAS Parliament”, could not have come at a much better time than now, when the values of democracy are being undermined in our republics. He said there is need for proactive intervention to curb insecurity on the sub-region noting that peace and security is the bed rock on which all development strive on.

“Violent extremism is threatening the very fabric of our societies and rising cost of living is posing significant challenges to safeguarding peace in virtually all our

member states. And the success of ECOWAS as a regional body in addressing issues of peace and security largely depend on the commitment of the member states. While it is on record that the regional experience yielded positive result, there is still the need for a more committed and proactive intervention.

Gambian Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr Mamadou Tangara, reiterated that member state should collectively act swiftly to address the issues of insecurity and promote in the subregion. According to Tangara, “as nations sharing the same destiny, we have a moral obligation and a collective responsibility to act swiftly to address all issues hampering the institutional advancement, the consolidation of peace, security and the empowerment of women who as the driving forces of the Region.

“Today, it is immensely gratifying to observe the overwhelming response of all partners and people of goodwill here present to affirm a faith in a common purpose, a common conviction and a common devotion in the consolidation of Peace, Security and Good Governance and other community achievements”, he asserted. the economy of ECOWAS region,” he said.

# Food Security:

## Hon. Sidie Tunis Advocates Improved Budgetary Allocation to Agric in ECOWAS Member States

The Speaker of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament, Hon. Sidie Mohamed Tunis has called for improved budgetary allocation to Agriculture, to help address the challenges of food security in the sub-region. The Speaker made the call at the opening of the Delocalised Meeting of the Parliament's Joint Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources/ Infrastructure/ Energy and Mines/ Industry and Private Sector in Bissau, Capital of Guinea Bissau, from 23 – 27 August, 2022. Hon. Tunis represented by the Second Deputy Speaker of the

stitution and the enhancement of powers of parliament has enabled to oversight on the activities of different members of the community, therefore the parliament through its joint committee is important that the understand the dynamics of agriculture and to have an annual review of agriculture produce and issues of food security in our region so that we can facilitate and improve our budget in this area.

“I called upon the joint committee to attentively listen to the presentations to be done by ECOWAS commission, the resource persons and the ministry

the focus will address major issues confronting the people of the sub-region. Represented by the Commissioner, Economic Affairs and Agriculture, Massandje TOURE-LITSE, the president said erosion is increasing in the sub-region thereby causing food insecurity among other challenges making life difficult for the populace. He implored participants to come up with workable recommendations that will help address the identified issues for a better ECOWAS. According to him, “The topic of the joint meeting of the ECOWAS commission is perfectly aligned. We will bear in mind and we want to talk to you in more details manner during this session on the environmental policies of the ECOWAS and strategies to be developed as well as the biennial review as well as food security in ECOWAS member state.

“May I remind henceforth that the climate strategy was adopted in June 22 in Accra by the Assemblies of Heads of States in addition President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo was appointed by his pairs as the champion of all the fights against climate change. “We want you to espouse the states regarding adaptation of climate change to ensure

clamouring food security. “Our vision is to construct a community of people who are fully integrated living in strategy peace and benefitting from all their fundamental rights and especially the right to clean environment and to have quantitative and qualitative good food”. The meeting has the theme: “A critical look at the ECOWAS Environmental Policy and Climate Strategy, as well as a biennial review of the agricultural production, food and nutritional security in Member States”.



parliament, Malam Sani Chaibou Boucary, said the meeting will improve food security when the budget to the sector improves. The speaker who said that terrorism in the sub-region as well as the war in Europe is negatively affecting the people of the region, wants participants to come up with recommendations to save the ECOWAS states.

He noted thus: “The implementation of the committee commitment in the area of environment is a major concern which is set in the affairs of the in

responsible for environment and agriculture issues in Guinea Bissau and that will give us an overview of the experience in total and I urge them to work in harness in order to come up with complete recommendation which we really to improve agricultural productivity in the region and to strengthened resilient of communities as they are besieged by the climate change”. In his remark, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr Omar Alicheu TOURAY who applauded the parliament for the initiative, said