President of Senegal Urges ECOWAS Parliament to Deepen Citizen Integration

President of Senegal and Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Bassirou Diomaye Faye, has called for a stronger role for the ECOWAS Parliament in deepening regional integration and promoting greater citizen participation in the affairs of the Community.

Faye made the call in Abuja when he paid an official visit to the ECOWAS Parliament, where he was received by the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Mémounatou Ibrahima, principal officers and other members of the regional legislature. Describing the Parliament as the "hub of regional dialogue," the Senegalese president said the institution was critical to strengthening cooperation among Community institutions and ensuring that citizens were actively involved in the regional integration process. Faye said the visit provided an opportunity to engage directly with the leadership and members of the Parliament and reaffirm his commitment to supporting the institution in advancing the objectives of ECOWAS. He stressed that regional integration must go beyond political and economic cooperation among member states to include practical measures to prevent conflicts, support mediation, raise public awareness and promote peace and stability across West Africa. The Senegalese leader also urged the staff of the Parliament to remain committed to serving the Community and its citizens.



Welcoming Faye, Speaker Ibrahima described his presence in the parliamentary chamber as a significant moment in the history of the institution. She said Senegal's tradition of dialogue, public debate and political participation was aligned with the core mandate of the ECOWAS Parliament. Ibrahima stressed that regional integration "should not remain merely a project of States, but should become a work of citizens and for citizens." She reaffirmed the Parliament's commitment to representative democracy, human rights, peace and security, while advocating stronger legislative and oversight powers for the regional legislature. According to her, strengthening the Parliament would make it a more representative and impactful institution capable of better connecting ECOWAS with its citizens. In his vote of thanks, First Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament and Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate, Jibrin Barau, said regular engagement between the regional Parliament and the Authority of Heads of State and Government would help translate the aspirations of West Africans into concrete action. Barau assured Faye of the Parliament's full cooperation during his tenure as ECOWAS chairman, describing the visit as a demonstration of the importance he attaches to dialogue among Community institutions. "We greatly appreciated the attention you devoted to our Institution, your Institution," Barau said. He added that the visit reinforced the Parliament's conviction that sustained interaction between the regional legislature and the Authority would strengthen the coherence of ECOWAS action, improve representation of citizens' aspirations and promote public ownership of the integration process. "We also regard this visit as an encouragement to pursue, with realism and responsibility, our reflection on the progressive strengthening of Parliament's role and on the conditions required to forge closer ties between our institution and the citizens of the Community," he said.

ECOWAS Parliament Concludes Second 2026 Seminar, Calls for Concerted Regional Action on Climate Change

The ECOWAS Parliament has concluded its Second 2026 Parliamentary Seminar in Accra, Republic of Ghana, following three days of deliberations on climate change as driver of environmental degradation, population displacement and growing insecurity in the region. Accra, Ghana, 23 September 2026 – The seminar, held on the theme, "Climate Change as a Driver of Environmental Degradation, Population Displacement and Growing Insecurity in the ECOWAS Region," ended with call for urgent and concerted regional action. The final day featured a documentary examining impact of climate change across different sectors, followed by country reports from five ECOWAS Member States: Côte d'Ivoire, Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Togo and Nigeria. The presentations provided national perspectives on climate-related challenges and responses, enriching discussions on environmental, humanitarian, development and security implications of climate change in West Africa.

Delivering her closing remarks, Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, H.E. Hadja Mémounatou Ibrahima, underscored urgency of climate challenge facing the region, citing intensifying droughts and floods, receding coastlines and disproportionate effects on vulnerable populations. She noted that national experiences shared during seminar demonstrated how political will, innovation and regional cooperation could help transform challenges into opportunities. Among recommendations emerging from deliberations were establishment of a Regional Climate Resilience Fund, strengthening of early-warning systems, and promotion of agroforestry and renewable energy. The Speaker also called for inclusive climate policies, equitable access to climate finance and stronger parliamentary oversight of implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions and regional commitments. "The time has come for action," H.E. Hadja Mémounatou Ibrahima declared, urging Members of Parliament to take lessons and recommendations of seminar back to their respective Member States and advocate for implementation. Reaffirming ECOWAS Parliament's commitment to regional integration, climate resilience and collective security, the Speaker assured participants that seminar's conclusions would be transmitted to competent authorities and subjected to rigorous follow-up. She formally declared the Second 2026 Parliamentary Seminar closed, calling for sustained regional cooperation to build a peaceful, resilient and prosperous West Africa, in line with aspirations of ECOWAS Vision 2050



Climate Crisis Now a Security Time Bomb, ECOWAS Parliamentarians Warn as Land, Water Shrink



West Africa is facing a climate-driven crisis in which shrinking water, degraded farmland and erratic rainfall are fueling competition for land, worsening farmer-herder conflicts, displacing communities and deepening poverty, parliamentarians have warned. The warning came at the Second 2026 Parliamentary Seminar of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, in Accra, Ghana, where lawmakers examined the nexus between climate change, livelihoods, migration and regional security. The seminar marked a shift from treating climate change as an environmental issue to recognizing it as a governance, humanitarian and security threat requiring coordinated legislative action. For Nigeria, the implications are stark. Nigeria's presentation showed how environmental pressures are intersecting with population growth, agricultural expansion, land degradation and changing migration patterns to intensify farmer-herder competition. It noted that disputes over crop destruction, land and water, encroachment on grazing routes, cattle theft and altered seasonal migration have fueled persistent tensions, but cautioned that the crisis goes beyond farmers versus herders. Communal tensions, banditry, organized crime, climate stress and weak conflict-resolution mechanisms are also driving violence.

The impact is evident in displacement figures. “In Nigeria, internal displacement has been linked to armed conflict, communal violence, farmer-herder conflict, banditry, terrorism, flooding and other disasters,” the Nigerian delegation stated. Citing 2025 assessments by the International Organization for Migration, IOM, it said more than 2.2 million people were internally displaced in the North-East, while over 1.3 million were displaced across the North-Central and North-West. The figures, lawmakers said, show a crisis that has moved beyond humanitarian relief into food security, environmental management and national security. At the center is a tightening resource equation: less predictable rainfall, declining water and growing populations competing for the same land. For farming and pastoral communities, land and water are survival assets. As grazing routes are blocked, farmland expands and water sources dry up, pastoralists are forced to change movement patterns while farmers struggle to protect crops.

Without dialogue and resource governance, the pressures turn violent. Togo's presentation illustrated the challenge. The country set up its National Transhumance Committee in 1995 to monitor livestock movement and disputes, but changing climate and security realities have forced a new 2026-2030 plan to address farmer-herder conflict, land pressure and weak enforcement. Cabo Verde also warned that water scarcity triggers a chain reaction: reduced water hurts agriculture, which destroys livelihoods, which drives migration. When migrants meet host communities already competing for scarce resources, tensions escalate.

Nigeria stressed that durable solutions require more than emergency relief. It listed safe and voluntary return, local integration or relocation, access to land and housing, restoration of property rights, livelihoods, education, healthcare and documentation as critical. The seminar placed new responsibility on parliaments to move from reactive laws to preventive governance — including early-warning systems, mediation mechanisms, climate-adapted agriculture, protection of livestock routes and sustainable rural livelihoods.

The Gambia called for climate resilience and food security to be prioritized in legislative agendas and budgets, citing its Participatory Integrated Platform for Resilience and Food Security Phase II, which targets small-scale producers and agro-pastoralists across 19 districts with climate-smart agriculture, irrigation and livestock support. Lawmakers agreed that military operations alone cannot resolve underlying causes. Communities also need effective institutions, dialogue platforms and economic opportunities, with women and young people recognized as key resilience actors. The consensus in Accra was that climate-induced instability does not respect borders — pastoralists, displaced populations and extreme weather cross them. The message, parliamentarians said, is clear: where water disappears, livelihoods collapse; where livelihoods collapse, migration rises; where migrants and hosts compete for scarce resources, conflict risk grows. For ECOWAS, the task is to break that chain before climate pressures create more displacement and insecurity.

ECOFEPA Urges Women to Tap Regional, Global Markets

The Female Parliamentarians' Association of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOFEPA) has urged women across the region to explore regional and global markets using necessary skills and technology. The call was made Friday at the Executive Masterclass titled, 'Advancing Women's Participation in Global Trade for Political Readiness and Export Opportunities' in ECOWAS Region". The programme, which brought together, women parliamentarians, entrepreneurs, exporters and other stakeholders to examine ways of increasing women's participation in trade and strengthen their readiness for leadership and decision-making, also harped on access to finance and availability of markets within and beyond the region. Delivering the welcome address on behalf of the ECOFEPA President, the First Vice-President, Honourable Zainab Gimba, stated that women should move beyond acting as participants in economic activities to becoming major drivers of trade, investment and innovation. She said: "We must move beyond conversations about empowering women to creating the knowledge systems, networks and opportunities that enable women to compete successfully in local, regional and international markets."

According to the Gimba, the objective should be to equip women not only to participate in trade but also to lead it, thereby strengthening their economic and political influence. Gimba added that women entrepreneurs have continued to face barriers including limited access to finance, market information, technology, business networks as well as inadequate representation in decision-making. She said these challenges were particularly significant for women seeking to transform small-scale businesses into formal, competitive and export-oriented enterprises.

The parliamentarian also linked economic success with political participation, stressing that successful businesses will give women greater confidence, networks and leadership experience. "We need women who are not only prepared to enter the marketplace but also prepared to sit at the tables, where decisions about trade, investment, finance, industry and regional integration are made", she said. She further urged governments, financial institutions, development partners and businesses to provide accessible financing, better trade infrastructure, reliable market information, mentorship and stronger networks for women entrepreneurs in the region. To be adequately equipped for business expansion, Gimba held that women must possess practical knowledge of standards, certification, packaging, branding, logistics, digital commerce, customs procedures and the requirements of international buyers. She therefore tasked female parliamentarians on practical support for women entrepreneurs. Representing Ghana's Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, the ministry's Legal Adviser, Ms Nnali Bennis-Wallace, was elated that women are already making significant contributions to the economic development of the region.

She said women were active as farmers, processors, manufacturers, traders, service providers, exporters and entrepreneurs, contributing to employment, household incomes, food security and economic growth. She however lamented that many women-owned businesses remained concentrated in the informal economy as they struggle with access to finance, technology, market information, business networks and larger markets. "Therefore, we must move beyond seeing women primarily as beneficiaries of economic programmes to deliberately position them as producers, exporters, investors, innovators and decision-makers", she said. Bennis-Wallace said that regional and continental trade frameworks could provide opportunities for women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and participate more actively in intra-African and global trade. She informed that initiatives such as the masterclass were important because they could provide women with the practical knowledge and tools required to move beyond local markets.



The Ghanaian government, she said, recognized women's economic empowerment as an important component of national development. She cited the National Gender Policy 2025-2034 as a framework for advancing gender-responsive development, women's economic empowerment and participation in decision-making, and called for stronger collaboration among government institutions, trade and economic bodies, parliaments, financial institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, private-sector actors and women's business associations. Bennis-Wallace also stressed the importance of reliable data in understanding women's participation in trade and designing policies that respond to the barriers they face. She proposed strengthening the capacity of women-owned businesses to become export-ready, expanding access to finance, technology, market information and digital platforms, and creating stronger and more sustainable markets.