

**LAS PALMAS DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION ON STRENGTHENING  
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN CRIMINAL MATTERS RELATED TO TERRORISM  
AMONG ECOWAS MEMBER STATES AND WITH THIRD PARTIES**

*Adopted by the Workshop on strengthening international cooperation in criminal matters  
related to terrorism among and with the member States of ECOWAS: Consolidating  
bilateral, regional and international instruments on extradition and mutual legal  
assistance*

**Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, 15-17 June 2009**

**Declaration**

We, the Heads of delegations of the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and the Kingdom of Spain, meeting in Las Palmas from 15 to 17 June 2009 within the framework of the United Nations;

In the presence of the following entities of the United Nations: the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); and of the following regional organizations: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) ;

1. Strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security;
2. Reaffirm our profound solidarity with victims of terrorism and their families and the need to assist and support them,
3. Recall the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the General Assembly on 8 September 2006 in the Plan of Action of which we resolved, *inter alia*, to cooperate fully in the fight against terrorism, in accordance with our obligations under international law, in order to find, deny safe haven and bring to justice, on the basis of the principle of "extradite or prosecute", any person who supports, facilitates, participates or attempts to participate in the financing, planning, preparation or perpetration of terrorist acts or provides safe haven;
4. Also recall the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism<sup>1</sup>, the Amendment to the Convention on the

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 59/290, annex.

Physical Protection of Nuclear Material<sup>2</sup>, the Protocol of 2005 to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation<sup>3</sup> and the Protocol of 2005 to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf<sup>4</sup>;

5. Express our satisfaction for the efforts made by West African countries, since the Madrid Round Table held in Madrid on 25 and 26 May 2006, to become party to the universal legal instruments against terrorism and to incorporate them in their national legislation;

6. Reaffirm that any measures taken to combat terrorism must comply with all our obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law;

7. Recognize that international cooperation is a key component in preventing and combating terrorism in accordance with the obligations under international law, notably the Charter of the United Nations and relevant international conventions and protocols;

8. Recognize also the links between transnational organized crime and terrorism and the need to develop an integrated approach to combat these phenomena;

9. Commend the international, regional and sub-regional organizations represented in the Las Palmas Workshop, the ECOWAS and the UEMOA, for their active role and commitment;

10. Invite these organizations to strengthen their cooperation and to reinforce their complementarities through the undertaking of joint activities;

11. Welcome the adoption of the Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa, as well as the Regional Action Plan 2008-2011 to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organized crimes and drug abuse in West Africa, by the 35<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS in Abuja, Nigeria, on 19 December 2008;

12. Note with satisfaction the terms of General Assembly resolution 62/71 of 6 December 2007, requesting “the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue its efforts to enhance, through its mandate, the capabilities of the United Nations in the prevention of terrorism”, and recognizing, “in

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<sup>2</sup> Adopted on 8 July 2005 by the Conference to Consider Proposed Amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

<sup>3</sup> Adopted on 14 October 2005 by the Diplomatic Conference on the Revision of the SUA Treaties (LEG/CONF.15/21).

<sup>4</sup> Adopted on 14 October 2005 by the Diplomatic Conference on the Revision of the SUA Treaties (LEG/CONF.15/22).

the context of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), its role in assisting States in becoming parties to and implementing the relevant international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, including the most recent among them, and in strengthening international cooperation mechanisms in criminal matters related to terrorism, including through national capacity-building”;

13. Express our sincere gratitude to the Kingdom of Spain for having hosted and supported the “Workshop on strengthening international cooperation in criminal matters related to terrorism among and with the member States of ECOWAS: Consolidating bilateral, regional and international instruments on extradition and mutual legal assistance”, held in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria from 15 to 17 June 2009, and to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime which jointly organized it;

14. Adopt the Las Palmas Declaration on strengthening international cooperation in criminal matters related to terrorism among and with the Member States of ECOWAS, as well as the Plan of Action set out below for its implementation and proclaim our firm determination to pursue all appropriate measures for its expeditious implementation.

#### **Plan of Action**

We, the Heads of delegations of the West African States present, commit ourselves to take the necessary steps, in accordance with the legal systems of our States, to:

1. Become party to all universal legal instruments against terrorism, submit all mandatory notifications to the depositaries of these conventions, and incorporate their relevant provisions into the national legislation in order to effectively prevent and suppress terrorism;

2. Submit appropriate instruments for registration with the Secretariat of the United Nations upon entry into force in accordance with article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations;

3. Strengthen international cooperation in criminal matters, including becoming party to international and regional instruments among the ECOWAS Member States, such as the ECOWAS Convention on Extradition, the ECOWAS Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance, the ECOWAS Agreement on Cooperation and Criminal Matters among Police Forces of Member States and the ECOWAS Convention on the Establishment of the Criminal Intelligence and Investigation Bureau and other regional instruments such as the Convention on Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance in Counter-Terrorism adopted in Rabat;

4. Encourage UNODC, the ECOWAS and WAMEU Commissions and the Member States of these organizations to seek and promote the operational synergies

leading to simultaneous progress in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime through the use of the existing legal instruments and improved judicial cooperation;

5. Encourage and support the publication of a “Compendium of bilateral, regional and international instruments on extradition and mutual legal assistance” as a useful tool to facilitate international cooperation in criminal matters related to terrorism among and with the Member States of ECOWAS;

6. Request UNODC, within the framework of its mandate, to continue to provide technical assistance for becoming party to and implementing the universal legal instruments against terrorism, especially through the preparation of technical tools and publications, the training of criminal justice officials (prosecutors, judges and law enforcement officers) and to intensify its efforts to continue to systematically develop specialized legal knowledge in the area of counter-terrorism and pertinent thematic areas;

7. Also request UNODC to finalize, upon the availability of extra-budgetary resources, the “Compendium of bilateral, regional and international instruments on extradition and mutual legal assistance” as soon as possible, with a view to its publication and wide distribution in the ECOWAS Member States.

Done in Las Palmas, 17 June 2009