



HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE SYNOPSIS REPORT

From Lungi to Action: Translating ECOWAS' Renewed Compact
into Implementation Synopsis of the
High-Level Policy Dialogue – 25 August 2026

*A comparative reflection on the 69th ECOWAS Summit commitments
and stakeholder perspectives on peace, governance and regional integration*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Acknowledgements:	1
1. Background and Context:	2
2. Purpose of the High-Level Policy Dialogue:	3
3. Key Takeaways from the High-Level Policy Dialogue:	3
3.1 From Declarations to Implementation and Measurable Results.....	3
3.2 Rebuilding Confidence in ECOWAS and Regional Institutions.....	3
3.3 ECOWAS-AES Engagement: Preventing Political Rupture from Becoming Societal Fracture	3
3.4 Protecting Free Movement While Managing Insecurity and Cross-Border Crime.....	3
3.5 Strengthening Preventive Diplomacy, Democratic Protection and Early Warning.....	4
3.6 Making ECOWAS Citizen-Centred: The “ECOWAS of the People” Test.....	4
3.7 The Compact’s Silence on Youth: A Notable Asymmetry with Its Gender Commitments.....	4
3.8 Institutional Accountability and the Case for a Compact Delivery Framework.....	4
4. ECOWAS “Lungi” Compact and the High-Level Dialogue: Areas of Convergence:	5
5. What the High-Level Policy Dialogue Adds to the Lungi Compact:	7
6. Emerging Issues and Implementation Questions for Reflection:	7
7. Priority Recommendations:	7
ECOWAS Commission.....	7
ECOWAS Member States.....	8
ECOWAS Political Leadership.....	8
Civil Society, Academia, Media and Other Stakeholders.....	8
Conclusion:	8

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), we write to formally convey our sincere appreciation to all who contributed to the success of the High-Level Policy Dialogue held on 25 August 2026, themed “From Lungi to Action: Making Good on ECOWAS’ Renewed Compact for Peace, Governance and Regional Integration.” The Dialogue brought together 73 participants online, drawn from civil society, academia, and regional and continental institutions, for a conversation to translate the outcomes of the 69th ECOWAS Summit into a practical agenda for delivery.

We extend particular thanks to our Executive Director, Mrs. Levinia Addae-Mensah, for hosting and framing the Dialogue with such clarity and purpose, and to Professor Isaac Albert for moderating the session with skill and rigour, guiding a wide-ranging discussion toward genuinely actionable conclusions. We are equally grateful to our distinguished panellists - Dr. Luqman Saka, Ms. Valnora Edwin, Mr. Mahamady Togola, and Dr. Chukwuemeka Eze - for the depth and practical insight they brought to their reflections. Their contributions, ranging from concrete proposals on ECOWAS-AES cooperation and border management to searching questions about the Community’s relevance to the citizens it serves, have substantially enriched our understanding of what implementing the Lungi Compact will require.

We also wish to record our appreciation to the ECOWAS Commission, the African Union, and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) for the institutional perspectives their representatives shared. Their willingness to engage candidly, including on questions that are not always easy to address in a public forum, reflects a shared commitment to transparency and mutual accountability that we hope will continue to characterise our collaboration.

Finally, to every participant who joined us – thank you for the quality of engagement, questions and interventions you brought to this dialogue. A conversation of this kind is only as valuable as the perspectives brought into the room, and yours added considerably to it.

The synopsis report captures the Dialogue’s key takeaways, areas of convergence with the Lungi Compact, and priority recommendations. WANEP remains committed to working with each of you - as institutional partners, as fellow civil society actors, and as citizens of this region - to help ensure that the commitments made at Lungi are translated into tangible outcomes for the people of West Africa.

We look forward to our continued partnership.

HOST



MRS. LEVINIA ADDAE-MENSAH
(Executive Director, WANEP)

MODERATOR



ISAAC OLAWALE ALBERT
(Professor of African History, Peace and Conflict Studies and pioneer Dean of the Faculty of Multidisciplinary Studies at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria)

SPEAKERS



DR. CHUKWUEMEKA EZE
(Director, Democratic Futures in Africa at the Open Society Foundations)



VALNORA EDWIN
(Gender Equality & Governance Specialist | Policy Analyst)



PROF. LUQMAN SAKA
(Professor of Political Science, University of Ilorin, Nigeria & Political Science Unit, University of The Gambia)



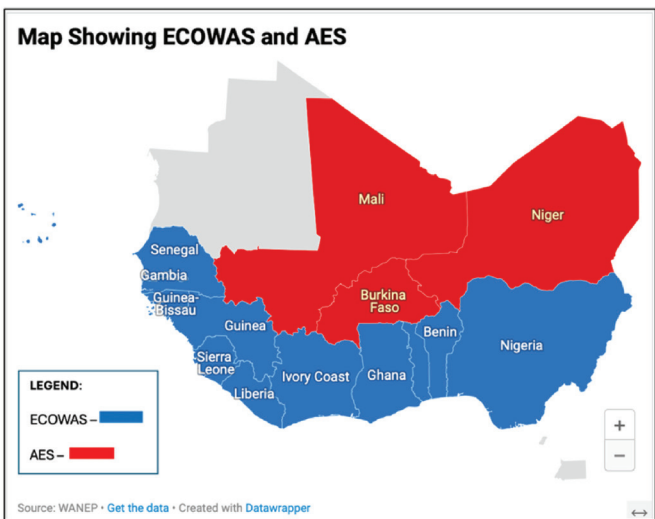
MAHAMADY TOGOLA
(National Coordinator, WANEP Mail)

1. Background and Context

The 69th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, held in Lungi, Sierra Leone on 19 July 2026 alongside the Summit on the Future of Regional Integration in West Africa, produced a Declaration of Commitment to the Compact on the Future of Regional Integration,¹ placing peace and security, democratic governance, economic transformation, institutional effectiveness, regional solidarity and measurable results at the centre of the Community’s next charter. The Summit also marked a leadership transition, with a new Authority Chair and a new Commission President taking office for the 2026-2030 term.²

The Summit convened against a consequential regional backdrop, on several interlocking fronts.

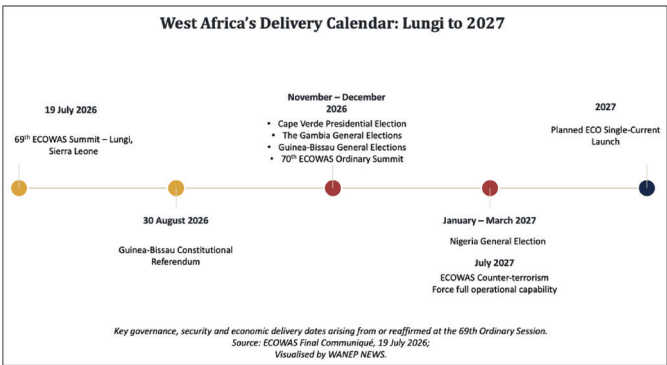
On **the ECOWAS-AES rupture**: Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger remain outside the Community, having formalised their withdrawal under the Alliance of Sahel States. The Compact commits to a unified-bloc negotiating posture, a pragmatic security cooperation mechanism, and an extended mandate for the Community’s Chief Negotiator to December 2026,³ while acknowledging that the AES states account for a disproportionate share of the Community’s pre-withdrawal territory and population relative to their share of its combined economic output, a structural asymmetry that shapes the strategic calculus on both sides of the split.



On **terrorism and violent extremism**: the Compact records deep concern over deteriorating security across the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, characterised by attacks, kidnapping and mass displacement, and sets out a roadmap for a regional Counter-terrorism Force targeting full operational capability by July 2027,⁴ while noting that Member States have yet to fully redeem the Community Levy arrears earmarked to finance it, and that the Force’s Headquarters location remains undecided among Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria.⁵

On **democratic transitions**: Guinea-Bissau is navigating a constitutional referendum (30 August 2026) and general elections (6 December 2026), with the Compact calling for the release of detained political figures and appointing Senegal as facilitator;⁶ Sierra Leone is consolidating its own Agreement for National Unity ahead of 2028 elections;⁷ The Gambia and Cabo Verde prepare for elections in 2026,⁸ alongside Nigeria’s consequential national elections scheduled for January - February 2027. A dense calendar that will test the Community’s Constitutional Convergence Principles⁹ repeatedly over the coming eighteen months.

On **regional integration and mobility**: the Compact reaffirms the Free Movement Protocol as one of the Community’s most significant achievements and commits to safeguarding regional mobility even amid the AES standoff,¹⁰ while separately reaffirming a 2027 target for the launch of the ECO single currency, to begin with Member States that meet convergence criteria.¹¹



¹ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 6.
² ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 67-72.
³ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 24, 58, 65.
⁴ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 54-56, 61.
⁵ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 57, 61.
⁶ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 37-41.
⁷ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 42-43.
⁸ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 47.
⁹ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 44.
¹⁰ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 22-24.
¹¹ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 13.

Beneath these headline commitments sits a further, less visible pressure: rising public debt, inflation and youth unemployment across parts of the region, which shape whether citizens experience regional integration as a source of opportunity or as a distant institutional process.¹² Against this backdrop, WANEP convened the High-Level Policy Dialogue on 25 August 2026, not to relitigate what was agreed at Lungi, but to interrogate what its delivery will actually require.

2. Purpose of the High-Level Policy Dialogue

The Dialogue was convened to reflect on Lungi's outcomes; examine how the renewed Compact can move from declaration to implementation; identify practical priorities for the new ECOWAS leadership; surface implementation gaps and risks; explore the role of civil society, academia, media, women and youth; consider how ECOWAS can rebuild confidence and regional cohesion; and generate practical, actionable recommendations for the next phase of regional integration. Participants were explicitly encouraged to engage not as external evaluators of ECOWAS, but as stakeholders with a shared responsibility for the Community's future direction. The session brought together 73 online participants, including representatives of civil society, academia, and regional and continental institutions.

3. Key Takeaways from the High-Level Policy Dialogue

3.1 From Declarations to Implementation and Measurable Results

Across the Dialogue, the recurring framing was that ECOWAS' core challenge is delivery, not the content of what was agreed at Lungi. Participants argued that the Community's institutional architecture is normatively strong and advanced in protocols, declarations and frameworks, but tends to become most decisive only after a crisis has already matured, rather than while it is still forming. This matters because it reframes the real test of Lungi: not what was signed in July, but what gets measured, timetabled and publicly reported between now and the 70th Ordinary Session. For the Compact's implementation, the implication is direct - without a visible tracking mechanism, the distance between

commitment and outcome will remain a matter of assertion rather than evidence.

3.2 Rebuilding Confidence in ECOWAS and Regional Institutions

Discussion linked institutional performance directly to the character of leadership and management appointments across the Community's history, contrasting periods in which technically independent leadership was seen to strengthen ECOWAS' credibility with more recent patterns in which appointments have been perceived as more politically determined. This is relevant because Lungi's own leadership transition, as a new Authority Chair and Commission President, is an opportunity either to reset that pattern or entrench it further. The implication for implementation is that confidence in the Compact will be shaped as much by how the new leadership is seen to govern ECOWAS itself as by any single policy commitment it pursues.

3.3 ECOWAS-AES Engagement: Preventing Political Rupture from Becoming Societal Fracture

A central and recurring argument was that the ECOWAS-AES institutional rupture must not be allowed to deepen into an economic, security or humanitarian rupture. Participants cited concrete, material costs already visible: regional women's networks convening without AES-state representation for the first time in their history, and a weakening of coordination capacity in precisely the sub-region, the Sahel, where much of the Community's insecurity originates. This matters because it tests whether Lungi's "unified-bloc" posture toward the AES can be sustained without ordinary citizens absorbing the practical cost of the political standoff. For implementation, participants argued this requires distinguishing between what must wait for political reconciliation and what can and should be preserved regardless of it.

3.4 Protecting Free Movement While Managing Insecurity and Cross-Border Crime

Discussion identified specific, granular implementation gaps in the Free Movement Protocol: inconsistent national immigration laws,

¹² Regional commentary published ahead of the ECOWAS leadership transition, cited for context; see also the Compact's own emphasis on 'measurable results' for citizens.

harassment and delay at border posts, a persistent awareness gap between what protocols promise at the policy level and what citizens experience at the point of crossing, and a security spillover risk as instability moves from the Sahel toward coastal states. A first-hand account of a border official disclaiming responsibility for national-level protocol commitments, stating that such guidance “stays” at the capital, illustrated the same structural gap from a citizen’s vantage point. This shows precisely where a headline Compact commitment breaks down between policy text and lived practice, and points toward specific, technical remedies, including digital identity, interoperable databases, harmonised border governance rather than only renewed political pronouncements.

3.5 Strengthening Preventive Diplomacy, Democratic Protection and Early Warning

The sharpest structural critique to emerge was that ECOWAS’ early warning systems are built to detect violent conflict, not democratic erosion, leaving the Community positioned to act decisively only after a constitutional rupture has already occurred, rather than while warning signs are still accumulating. This was reinforced from a continental vantage point, where the persistent challenge was described as translating early warning information into preventive political decisions, not generating the information itself. This points to a structural blind spot in the Community’s preventive architecture, rather than a one-off implementation challenge specific to any single country case.

3.6 Making ECOWAS Citizen-Centred: The “ECOWAS of the People” Test

This framing recurred independently across the session – different speakers, at different points, invoked the idea of an “ECOWAS of the People” rather than an “ECOWAS of the States” without apparently prompting one another. One especially sharp illustration contrasted near-universal public recognition of ECOWAS’ peacekeeping mechanism (ECOMOG) with widespread unfamiliarity with the parent institution itself. This demonstrates gaps in

ECOWAS’ communication strategy and in delivering on its mandates.

3.7 The Compact’s Silence on Youth: A Notable Asymmetry with Its Gender Commitments

A specific and consequential asymmetry emerged from close reading of the Compact alongside the Dialogue’s discussion. The Compact adopts an explicit, named commitment on gender (the Presidential Declaration on Advancing Gender Parity in Political Representation),¹³ but contains no equivalent, explicit provision on youth in governance or socio-economic empowerment. This is not a matter of interpretation: the word “youth” does not appear in the Communiqué, despite young people constituting the majority of the region’s population. During the Dialogue, this gap surfaced repeatedly – in a call for youth participation to be tracked as a measurable indicator alongside border and security data, in a proposal that any future citizen-engagement mechanism define youth engagement deliberately and distinctly from formal civil society consultation, and in the moderator’s explicit appeal that all panellists inject youth considerations into their presentations.

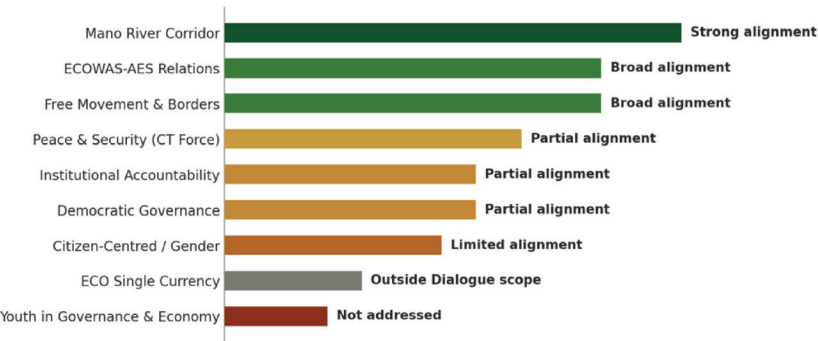
3.8 Institutional Accountability and the Case for a Compact Delivery Framework

Discussion called for translating the Compact into assigned responsibilities, timelines and transparent public reporting, and separately proposed a joint monitoring mechanism, involving continental partners, to measure Lungi’s implementation and its actual impact on citizens. This matters because the Compact, as adopted, distributes implementation directives across dozens of individual paragraphs, each addressed to the Commission or Member States in isolation, without one consolidated accountability instrument that lets any external stakeholder track cumulative progress. That this structural gap was identified independently from both a civil society and a continental institutional vantage point strengthens, rather than weakens, the case for addressing it.

¹³ ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 34-35.

4. ECOWAS “Lungi” Compact and the High-Level Dialogue: Areas of Convergence

Areas of Alignment: The Lungi Compact and the High-Level Policy Dialogue



Relative alignment between Compact commitments and Dialogue emphasis, by theme.

Theme	Lungi Compact Commits To	High-Level Policy Dialogue Emphasised	Assessment
Peace and Security (CT Force)	CT Force roadmap; full operational capability targeted July 2027; HQ decision pending among Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria (paras. 54, 56, 61).	Peace should increasingly be assessed through human security and citizens' well-being, while democratic legitimacy must be measured not only through elections but also through dignity, opportunity, justice and accountable governance. Counter-terrorism Force deployment risks failing without prior confidence-building between neighbouring states.	Partial alignment - Dialogue flags an implementation risk not addressed in the Compact's design.
Democratic Governance	Constitutional Convergence Principles reaffirmed; Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone-specific measures, Also directed the commission to continue to support for transparent and inclusive elections in The Gambia, Cape Verde and Nigeria in 2026 and 2027, respectively (paras. 37-48).	Architecture reacts after democratic collapse; no democratic-erosion-specific early warning indicators. ECOWAS to move from democratic crisis response to democratic protection.	Partial alignment - addressed for named cases, not as a general preventive framework.
Democratic Governance	ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 37-44.	Rebuild political trust and regional cohesion. Create sustained channels of dialogue across political divides, including with the AES, while protecting the practical gains of regional integration for citizens. Prioritise Track 1.5 platforms and engagements	Partial alignment - addressed for named cases, not as a general preventive framework.
ECOWAS-AES Relations	Unified-bloc negotiation; pragmatic security cooperation mechanism; Chief Negotiator's mandate extended to Dec. 2026 (paras. 24, 58, 65).	Rebuild political trust and regional cohesion. Create sustained channels of dialogue across political divides, including with the AES, while protecting the practical gains of regional integration for citizens. Prioritise Track 1.5 platforms and engagements	Broad alignment - Dialogue substantially elaborates implementation mechanisms.
Free Movement and Borders	Protocol reaffirmed; encouraged continued trade and economic cooperation; gains to be preserved amid AES engagement (paras. 22-24).	Detailed implementation gaps including challenges of biometric ID, the West Africa Police Information System (WAPIS) interoperability at all levels, and harmonised border governance.	Broad alignment - Dialogue supplies operational specificity the Compact lacks including pathways to enhance biometric ID, WAPIS interoperability and .

Theme	Lungi Compact Commits To	High-Level Policy Dialogue Emphasised	Assessment
Institutional Accountability	Numerous individual “directs the Commission to...” provisions; no single accountability instrument was referenced.	Call for one consolidated implementation framework with timelines and public reporting on the compact.	Partial alignment – addressed piecemeal, not operationalised as a system.
Citizen-Centred Integration / Gender	Gender Parity Declaration adopted as a flagship commitment (paras. 34-35).	“ECOWAS of the People” raised as a cross-cutting demand across the session; call for protocols to be domesticated into citizens' daily experience. The creation of the ECOWAS ECOSOCC is long overdue, but participants suggested that the structure must be deliberate in its definition of citizens engagement different from CSOs or formal organization to organization engagement	Limited / unclear alignment – strong, explicit commitment on gender; general citizen-participation architecture remains underdeveloped.
ECO Single Currency / Monetary Integration¹⁴	Firm commitment to a 2027 launch, on a phased basis beginning with Member States that meet convergence criteria; Presidential Task Force directed to convene before the 70th Ordinary Session (paras. 13-17).	Not raised as a discussion focus during the High-Level Policy Dialogue. It was reserved for dedicated regional conversation.	Outside this Dialogue's scope – the Compact addresses this substantively; the Dialogue did not engage it, by design, and it is earmarked as the focus of the next High-Level Dialogue (see footnote below).
Youth in Governance and Economy	No explicit provision anywhere in the Communiqué; also, the term ‘youth’ does not appear in the text.	Young people should not be treated as representational additions. Youth participation needs to be integrated into mediation, diplomacy, peacebuilding, border governance and regional decision-making.	Not addressed – the clearest and most unambiguous gap identified in this report, in direct contrast to the explicit Gender Parity Declaration.
Mano River Corridor – borderland disputes and efforts to de-escalate rising tensions	Partial Yenga reopening commended; full troop withdrawal from Yenga and Lofa urged; technical assessment directed and stressed the need to continue to work with MRU Secretariat, AU and UNOWAS for sustainable solution to all border disputes (paras. 52-53).	Underlying boundary issues persist. Guinea's full withdrawal from Yenga and Lofa, per the March 2026 Tripartite Communiqué, is the concrete, already-negotiated first step. Delay here undermines every other confidence-building measure.	Strong alignment – Dialogue reinforces the urgency of an already-acknowledged commitment.

¹⁴ Read the full text of the Communiqué cited throughout this table: ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session (ecowas.int)

A scoping note on the ECO Single Currency: unlike every other theme in the table above, the ECO Single Currency is not a gap in either document – the Compact addresses it substantively, reaffirming a 2027 target, a phased launch sequence and a Presidential Taskforce, but this Dialogue did not take it up as a discussion focus. This was a deliberate scoping choice rather than an oversight: monetary integration warrants dedicated treatment in its own right, and has been earmarked as the focus of the next High-Level Dialogue. In that forthcoming session, civil society organisations are expected to provide a comprehensive assessment of ECOWAS's readiness for monetary integration, and to identify the policy, institutional and economic measures required to support the successful introduction of the ECO Single Currency.

5. What the High-Level Policy Dialogue Adds to the Lungi Compact

Rather than contradicting the Compact, the Dialogue's principal value lies in operationalising it. Participants consistently translated broad commitments into concrete mechanisms with plausible institutional homes: a protocol of continuity and a Track 1.5 platform for ECOWAS-AES relations; a biometric-identity and database-interoperability pathway for free movement; a proposed citizen-engagement mechanism with distinct tracks for women and youth; and a monitoring dashboard tracking border incidents alongside women's and youth participation.

6. Emerging Issues and Implementation Questions for Reflection

Six issues raised during the Dialogue merit direct reflection by ECOWAS, distinguished carefully by whether each represents an omission, an implementation gap, or an emerging issue the Compact did not anticipate.

- **Youth in governance and socio-economic empowerment** – verified directly against the Communiqué text: no paragraph addresses youth governance or economic empowerment, and the term 'youth' does not appear anywhere in the document, in contrast to the explicit, named Gender Parity Declaration. Question for consideration by ECOWAS: Could a Presidential Declaration or equivalent flagship instrument on youth in governance and economic empowerment be developed, using the Gender Parity Declaration's structure as a direct model, for consideration at the 70th Ordinary Session?

- **Democratic erosion and early warning** – the Compact's early warning references remain conflict-focused, with no equivalent indicator system for institutional or civic-space erosion. Question: Should ECOWAS's early warning architecture be formally extended to track institutional and civic-space indicators, not violence indicators alone?

- **Citizen-centred participation mechanism** – the Compact's only explicit citizen-facing commitment is the Gender Parity Declaration; a broader citizen engagement mechanism, distinct

from formal civil society consultation, was proposed but does not currently exist. Question: What would a deliberately youth and women-distinct citizen engagement mechanism look like in practice, and on what timeline could it be piloted?

- **Protocol of continuity for citizens amid ECOWAS-AES separation** – the Compact commits to preserving mobility and exchange in general terms but proposes no specific continuity instrument. This was addressed in the Compact but insufficiently explained its operationalisation. Question: Could such a protocol be negotiated as a discrete, citizen-facing instrument, decoupled from the pace of political reconciliation between ECOWAS and the AES?

- **Track 1.5 mechanism linking negotiators and civil society** – the Compact references only the official Chief Negotiator track. Question: Which credible, community-embedded civil society actors could be formally linked to the negotiation track, and through what accreditation process?

- **Merit-based ECOWAS leadership appointments** – the Compact announces specific appointments but does not address appointment criteria or process reform. In this context, the emerging issues were not fully anticipated by the Compact. Question: Is there institutional appetite, including within the Commission itself, to formalise technical-merit criteria for future senior appointments?

7. Priority Recommendations

ECOWAS Commission

- Develop a Presidential Declaration on Youth in Governance and Socio-Economic Empowerment, mirroring the structure and political weight of the existing Gender Parity Declaration, for the Council of Ministers to table ahead of the 70th Ordinary Session.

- Publish a consolidated Compact implementation and accountability framework: Translate the Lungi Compact into responsibilities, timelines, measurable commitments and transparent reporting, while strengthening coordination across ECOWAS institutions.

- Connect security to governance and human security: Ensure that the proposed Counter-terrorism Force sits within a wider political strategy addressing weak institutions, marginalisation, local grievances, unemployment, illicit economies, service delivery and community resilience.
- Commission an internal review, through the Council of Ministers, of technical-merit criteria for senior leadership and management appointments.

ECOWAS Member States

- Member states are encouraged to redeem outstanding Community Levy arrears earmarked for the Counter-terrorism Force before end-2026, as already directed by the Authority.¹⁴
- Extend Free Movement Protocol training beyond national policy level to border and immigration personnel directly, through national immigration, academics, and citizen awareness-raising events so that citizens' documented rights and responsibilities are recognised at the point of crossing rather than only in national legislation.
- Advance direct, bilateral diplomatic engagement to resolve outstanding Mano River Corridor boundary questions, in support of, and on a timeline aligned with, the Commission's ongoing technical assessment.¹⁵
- Nominate national youth and women's focal points to any citizen engagement mechanism the Commission establishes, ensuring the mechanism has functioning national-level entry points, not only a regional secretariat.
ECOWAS Political Leadership

ECOWAS Political Leadership

- Encourage the Chief Negotiator of ECOWAS-AES dialogue to sequence security and confidence-building measures alongside, not after, economic and free-movement discussions, given the interdependence participants identified between the two tracks.
- Mandate the negotiation of a protocol of continuity safeguarding citizens' free movement, trade and documentation rights independent of ECOWAS-AES institutional status, as a confidence-

building measure that does not require the underlying political dispute to be resolved.

Civil Society, Academia, Media and Other Stakeholders

- WANE and partner CSOs should pilot a joint monitoring dashboard tracking border incidents, youth and women's participation, using existing early warning systems, youth and women's networks, and share the resulting dataset with the Commission as a model for formal adoption.
- Civil society networks should formalise a Track 1.5 platform linking credible, community-embedded actors to the official ECOWAS-AES negotiation track, with an accreditation process agreed jointly with the Chief Negotiator's office.
- CSOs, academic and research institutions should develop and pilot indicators for democratic erosion, policy analysis, and citizen feedback to inform regional decision-making while enhancing community-based early warning and responses mechanism to identify and mitigate imaging conflicts and governance risks.
- Civil society and academic partners should jointly draft a model Youth in Governance and Economic Empowerment framework, for the Commission's consideration alongside its own Presidential Declaration process, to ensure the instrument reflects youth perspectives from the outset rather than being finalised without them.

Conclusion

Lungi provided renewed political intent. The High-Level Policy Dialogue provided the collective stakeholder perspective on what turning that intent into implementation, accountability and tangible benefit will actually require. The credibility of the Compact will ultimately be judged not by its text, but by whether citizens experience greater peace and security, meaningful democratic participation, improved mobility, economic opportunity, stronger accountability, greater regional solidarity, and renewed confidence in ECOWAS's institutions. As this report has shown, the Compact and the High-Level Policy Dialogue converge more often than they diverge, with one notable exception: youth in governance and socio-economic empowerment, absent from the Compact's text, deserves the same explicit, named commitment the Community has already extended to gender. Beyond that gap, the task ahead is less about resolving disagreement

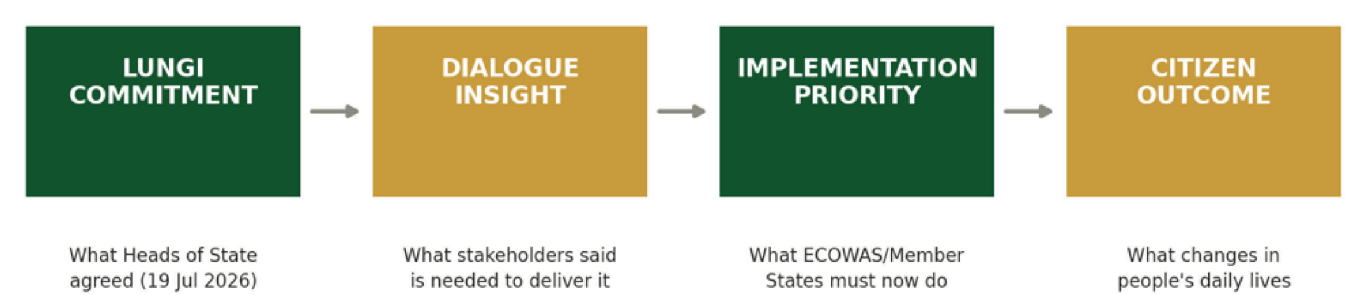
¹⁴. ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 57.

¹⁵. ECOWAS Final Communiqué, 69th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Lungi, 19 July 2026, para. 53.

than about resourcing implementation. That task is a shared responsibility across ECOWAS institutions, Member States, civil society, academia, media, the private sector, and women and youth alike.

As ECOWAS enters its second fifty-year life cycle, the central choice is whether we continue to organise the Community primarily around states and institutions

or finally make the transition towards the ECOWAS of Peoples. Therefore, if Lungi is to become more than another declaration, that transition from reaction to prevention, from institutional distance to citizen agency, from fragmentation to bridge-building, and from commitments to accountable implementation should be the measure of moving from Lungi to action.



From Lungi’s commitment to citizen outcomes – the implementation chain this report argues for.

Disclaimer: This publication is made possible by the generous support of the Austrian Development Cooperation and the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa. The contents are the sole responsibility of WANEP and do not necessarily reflect the views of the aforementioned partners.



Sweden
Sverige

With funding from



Austrian
Development
Cooperation

WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING (WANEP)

Trinity Avenue, Off Mile 7 Road, Achimota, Accra

P. O. Box CT4434, Cantonments, Accra-Ghana

Tel: +233 302 411638 | 302 406340 | 302 426004 | 302 408224

Email: wanep@wanep.org | Website: www.wanep.org

