

Final communiqué of the joint Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)/Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) consultative meeting on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, held at Praia, Cape Verde, on 25 and 26 August 1998

1. A joint meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Member States of the ECOWAS Committee of Seven on Guinea-Bissau and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) Contact Group was held at Praia, Republic of Cape Verde, on 25 [and 26] August 1998, under the joint chairmanship of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire and Cape Verde, Messrs. Amara Essy and José Luis Jesus. The aim of the meeting was to coordinate their mediation efforts, within the framework of ECOWAS, aimed at restoring peace in Guinea-Bissau.
2. The following member States were present at the meeting:
ECOWAS member States
 - Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
 - Republic of The Gambia
 - Republic of Guinea
 - Federal Republic of Nigeria
 - Republic of Senegal
CPLP member States
 - Republic of Angola
 - Federative Republic of Brazil
 - Republic of Cape Verde
 - Republic of Mozambique
 - Republic of Portugal
 - Republic of Sao Tome and Principe
3. Representatives of the ECOWAS and CPLP secretariats also participated in the meeting.
4. The representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations was present at the meeting, on special invitation.
5. Also present at the meeting were representatives of the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and the Self-denominated Military Junta.
6. The participants exchanged views and held frank and constructive discussions with regard to their joint mediation efforts of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau.
7. During the meeting, the ECOWAS Committee of Seven and the CPLP Contact Group agreed on a common strategy to be adopted during the negotiations.
8. The participants exchanged views on political and military matters as well as issues relating to regional security.
9. The meeting sought the views of the parties to the conflict on the proposed agenda. No amendments were made.
10. The meeting noted with satisfaction that the parties to the conflict had agreed to a truce, brokered by CPLP, and commended CPLP for its efforts.

11. In order to consolidate the fragile peace now holding in Guinea-Bissau and ensure that it is not short-lived, the parties to the conflict, encouraged by the ECOWAS Committee of Seven and the CPLP Contact Group, agreed to transform the current truce into a ceasefire.
12. The representatives of the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Self- denominated Military Junta then proceeded to sign the ceasefire agreement.
13. The meeting also agreed on the need to put in place a mechanism to supervise and monitor the ceasefire. The modalities for its implementation will be finalized during the next meeting.
14. The Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Self-denominated Military Junta considered the issue of the Osvaldo Vieira airport which remained closed and agreed on the need to reopen it in order to:
 - Ease the movement of humanitarian aid;
 - Provide the logistic support for the ceasefire observer team;
 - Facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons.
15. The meeting called on the international community to assist the people of Guinea-Bissau.
16. The ECOWAS Committee of Seven and the CPLP Contact Group agreed that their next meeting will be hold in Côte d'Ivoire on 12 September 1998.
17. This will be preceded by a meeting of Chiefs of Staff or military experts of States members of the Committee of Seven and the CPLP Contact Group which will be held on 10 September to consider the technical, logistic and operational aspects of the observer team for the monitoring of the ceasefire and the interposition forces with respect to the establishment of a buffer zone along the Senegal/Guinea-Bissau borders.
18. The ministerial meeting will consider:
 - The continuation of discussions on the issues under negotiation;
 - The establishment of an observer team; and
 - The composition and all other aspects relative to the deployment of the interposition forces under the framework of the establishment of a buffer zone along the Senegal/Guinea-Bissau borders.
19. The ECOWAS Committee of Seven and the CPLP Contact Group expressed their profound gratitude to His Excellency, Mr. António Mascarenhas Monteiro, president of the Republic, the Government and the people of Cape Verde for the kind hospitality extended to them and for the excellent facilities put at their disposal to ensure the success of their meeting.

DONE at Praia this 25th day of August 1998.