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PRESS RELEASE

ECOWAS PARLIAMENT ADOPTS RECOMMENDATIONS ON COMMUNITY LEVY

Following the conclusive outcome of a three-day seminar organized by ECOWAS Parliament in Freetown, from the 23rd to 25th March 2021, Members of ECOWAS Parliament have voted and adopted several recommendations aimed at improving and collecting arrears of contributions by Member States regarding the Community Levy.

The Report of the seminar on the involvement of ECOWAS Members of Parliament in monitoring the implementation of the Protocol on the Community Levy has been unanimously adopted in Freetown on Thursday 25th March 2021, with some amendments by Members of the ECOWAS Parliament.

The aforesaid levy is intended to generate much needed revenue in order to enable ECOWAS to sufficiently finance its institutions and projects targeted at fostering the integration process by improving the socio-economic livelihoods of the people in the subregion.

In his concluding remarks, prior to the closure of the first parliamentary seminar in 2021, Speaker of ECOWAS Parliament, Hon. Sidie Mohamed Tunis thanked the Speaker of Sierra Leone Parliament, Ministers of Government, Members of Sierra Leone and ECOWAS Parliaments, Commissioner of Finance, ECOWAS Commission, the press, ECOWAS Secretariat and other support staff for gracing the occasion to its logical conclusion.

He also said that in light of hours of deliberations led by seasoned facilitators, "the benefits derived are enormous and that the seminar has achieved its

objectives", aimed at improving and collecting arrears of contributions from Member States regarding the Community Levy.

He said, the seminar was intended to give Members of ECOWAS Parliament a clear role relating to the monitoring and implementation of the dictates of the Protocol relevant to the Community Levy regarding the collection of 0.5 percent of import duty from third countries outside the subregion.

He said, the ECOWAS Parliament, following the status of the implementation of the Community Levy by Member States would do follow-up to countries in arrears of contributions and encourage others to improve on collection and remittance to the ECOWAS Commission so as to enable ECOWAS to effectively and efficiently finance its institutions and projects within the subregion.

The conclusion and recommendations adopted include the challenges arising from COVID-19 have impacted mobilization rate negatively to about 30 percent over the past two years; the collection of revenue from the Community Levy and cognizant of the need to mobilize resources required to finance the Community Budget, Members of Parliament recognized the urgent need for each national delegation to be involved in the effective implementation relating to the Protocol; Members of ECOWAS Parliament who are nationals of Member States must capitalize on the provision of the rules of procedure at the national level to engage the Ministries in charge of Community Levy in order to discuss not only recoveries, but also effective implementation of the said protocol; raising awareness and advocacy should be undertaken by Members of ECOWAS Parliament in their respective States; and national delegations should monitor the recovery of the products and actual disbursement of the amounts recovered in their countries and report to Parliament when country reports are presented at the next Session of ECOWAS Parliament.

However, issues around sanctions for non-compliance are left to be determined by the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

Regarding the close of the seminar on Community Levy, the ECOWAS Parliament is now set to hold its First Extraordinary Session in Freetown for the first time

commencing Monday 29th March to 2nd April 2021 at the Bintumani Conference Center.

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