

**Economic Community  
Of West African States**

**Communauté Economique  
des Etats de l'Afrique  
de l'Ouest**

**ECOWAS Initial Plan of Action against  
Trafficking in Persons (2002-2003)**

**Executive Secretariat  
Dakar, December 2001**

## ECOWAS PLAN OF ACTION AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (2002-2003)

This document outlines the most urgent actions against trafficking in persons to be taken by ECOWAS Member States within the years 2002 – 2003, with a focus on criminal justice responses. A more detailed and far-reaching action plan should be developed in the year 2003 on the basis of an in-depth evaluation of the implementation of the Initial Plan of Action.

### Legal Framework and Policy Development

1. States who have not yet done so, shall ratify forthwith and fully implement *ECOWAS Convention A/P1/7/92 on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters* and *ECOWAS Convention A/P1/8/94 on Extradition*.

Input:	National Government
Success indicator:	Conventions ratified
To be completed by:	as soon as possible, but not later than December 2002

2. States who have not yet done so, shall sign, ratify, and fully implement the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*.

Input:	National Government
Success indicator:	Charter ratified
To be completed by:	as soon as possible, but not later than December 2002

3. States who have not yet done so, shall sign, ratify, and fully implement the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention*.

Input:	National Government, ODCCP/CICP
Success indicator:	Convention and Protocol ratified
To be completed by:	as soon as possible, but not later than December 2002

4. States shall adopt laws criminalizing trafficking in human beings in line with the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children* thereto.

Input:	National Government
Success indicator:	Criminal Code amended
To be completed by:	December 2003

5. States shall adopt and implement the laws and administrative structures needed to support the provisions of *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*, supplementing the Convention, governing international co-operation and assistance in preventing, investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking by organized criminal groups.

Input: National Government  
 Success indicator: Criminal Code amended  
 To be completed by: December 2003

6. States shall adopt legal provisions for the protection of victims of trafficking, and ensure that their domestic legal systems contain measures that offer victims of trafficking in persons the possibility of obtaining compensation for damage suffered.

Input: National Government  
 Success indicator: Criminal and/or Civil Code and Procedures amended as appropriate  
 To be completed by: December 2003

7. States shall ensure that their laws and administrative practices provide information to victims about the status of relevant criminal and other legal proceedings and an opportunity to voice their views and concerns in a manner not prejudicial to the rights of the defense and that the status of any such proceedings are considered prior to any repatriation of the victim.

Input: National Government  
 Success indicator: Criminal and/or Civil Code and Procedures amended as appropriate  
 To be completed by: December 2003

8. States shall consider adopting legislative or other appropriate measures that permit victims of trafficking in persons to remain in their territory, temporarily or permanently, in appropriate cases; and shall give appropriate consideration to humanitarian and compassionate factors in the consideration of permitting victims of trafficking to remain in their territory.

Input: National Government  
 Success indicator: Immigration code and regulations amended  
 To be completed by: December 2003

9. States shall take responsibility for victims of trafficking in persons, who are their nationals, or persons with the right of permanent residence in their territory at the time of entry into the territory of the receiving State by facilitating and accepting, with due regard for the safety of such persons, the return of such persons without undue or unreasonable delay.

Input: National Government  
 Success indicator: Immigration and emigration regulations amended, system of repatriation established  
 To be completed by: December 2003

10. States shall take measures that permit the denial of entry into the country and/or the revocation of visas of persons wanted for the commission of crimes related to the trafficking in persons.

Input: National Government  
 Success indicator: Immigration and emigration regulations amended  
 To be completed by: December 2003

11. States shall establish a National Task Force on Trafficking in Persons that will bring together relevant Ministries and Agencies in developing policy and taking action against trafficking in persons, and calling on Inter-Governmental Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and other representatives of civil society, as necessary.

Input: National Government, Inter-Governmental Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and other representatives of civil society  
 Success indicator: National Task Force designated and operating  
 To be completed by: June 2002

12. The National Task Force designated by each State shall develop recommendations for a national plan of action against trafficking in persons. The National Task Force should also monitor and report through their government to the ECOWAS Secretariat on the progress of the implementation of this Initial Plan of Action.

Input: National Government, IGOs, NGOs and other groups  
 Success indicator: National Task Force completes preliminary draft of the national plan of action in 2002 and reports regularly to ECOWAS  
 To be completed by: December 2002 / ongoing

13. A Unit for the co-ordination of the efforts to combat trafficking in persons shall be established within the ECOWAS Secretariat. Pending the establishment of this Unit, the Legal Department of ECOWAS Executive Secretariat shall co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of this Plan of Action and follow-up on other related developments in Member States in the fight against trafficking in persons.

Input: ECOWAS Secretariat and ECOWAS Member States  
 Success indicator: Office staffed, equipped and funded  
 To be completed by: Unit to be operational by December 2002

### **Protection and Support of Victims of Trafficking in Persons**

1. States, in co-operation with NGOs and other representatives of civil society as appropriate, shall take measures to create or develop the capacity of the reception centres where victims of trafficking in persons can be sheltered. These centres shall provide physical security, basic material assistance, medical care, and counseling and information to victims of trafficking, particularly on legal assistance, and reporting and filing complaints, taking into account the special needs and legal status of children.

Input: National Government (Ministries of Justice /Social Affairs), and local NGOs; IGOs and NGOs for material support and expertise, as required.  
 Success indicator: Reception centres open and receiving clients  
 To be completed by: At least one centre open in each country by June 2003

2. States shall encourage victims of trafficking to testify in the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking in persons, by giving due consideration to the safety and security of victims and witnesses at all stages of legal proceedings, permitting them to remain in their territory.

Input: National Government (Ministries of Justice /Social Affairs), NGOs, and other civil society groups  
 Success indicator: Relevant codes amended, Victim/witness protection available  
 To be completed by: Victim/witness support program operational by June 2003.

3. ECOWAS shall establish a fund for victims of trafficking. The fund shall be used in particular to provide support to States for the repatriation of victims of trafficking.

Input: ECOWAS Secretariat and National Government  
 Success indicator: ECOWAS fund for victims of trafficking established and minimum funding provided  
 To be completed by: December 2003

## Prevention and Awareness Raising

1. States, in partnership with NGOs, other civil society groups, and public and private media, shall develop and disseminate public awareness materials focusing on (a) raising public understanding that trafficking in persons is a crime, and (b) discouraging the demand that leads to trafficking, particularly by addressing those who might exploit victims of trafficking, for example as child domestics or farm labourers.

Input: Government social service agencies; Government media and public education agencies, media outlets, local NGOs, international NGOs and IGOs, particularly IOM, ILO and UNICEF.

Success indicator: Various types of awareness raising undertaken, including radio spots, broadcasts, newspaper advertisements. Material support and expertise provided.

To be completed by: December 2002

2. States, in partnership with NGOs, other civil society groups, and public and private media, shall develop and implement public awareness campaigns aimed at potential victims of trafficking, using both traditional channels of information as well as the mass media. Such materials and activities should aim to raise the awareness of potential victims to the types of enticements and recruitment methods used by traffickers. Awareness campaigns should reflect local cultures and traditions and offer information in local languages. Initially, such campaigns should target vulnerable groups, particularly children likely to be trafficked within the sub-region for labour exploitation, and women and children likely to be trafficked for sexual exploitation internationally.

Input: Government social service agencies; Government media and public education agencies; Government and private education systems, media outlets, NGOs and IGOs, particularly IOM, ILO and UNICEF

Success indicator: Radio spots broadcast, leaflets distributed in majority of schools, as well as information campaigns addressing local communities and community leaders undertaken. Material support and expertise provided.

To be completed by: December 2003

3. States, NGOs and other civil society groups, in consultation with the ECOWAS, shall prepare information materials concerning the practice and risks of trafficking in persons. Such materials shall, where appropriate, be disseminated to visa applicants, and distributed to any other part of the travelling public at international borders and on public transportation and carriers.

Input:	Government diplomatic services, other relevant Government agencies, media and public education agencies, Government and private education systems, NGOs, IGOs particularly IOM, ILO and UNICEF.
Success indicator:	Materials available at embassies and consulates for distribution to visa applicants and others. Materials available for distribution at ports of entry and on carriers
To be completed by:	December 2002

### **Collection, Exchange and Analysis of Information**

1. States shall establish direct channels of communication between their border control agencies. They shall initiate or expand efforts to gather and analyze data on trafficking in persons, including on the means and methods used, on the situation, magnitude, nature, and economics of trafficking in persons, particularly of women and children. States shall share such information, as appropriate, within ECOWAS, and with law enforcement agencies and other agencies of countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as with the United Nations Center for International Crime Prevention and other relevant international organizations.

Input:	National Government (Passport Offices and Immigration Agencies, Law Enforcement Agencies, Border Control Agencies, Social Service Agencies, National Statistical Offices), ODCCP/CICP, Interpol, and other relevant IGOs.
Success indicator:	Standardized formats for collection of information agreed and data collection procedures in place. Material support and data available.
To be completed by:	December 2002

2. States with shared borders shall establish joint border patrols trained in the prevention of trafficking in persons. The ECOWAS Unit for the co-ordination of the efforts to combat trafficking in persons should facilitate, upon request, such coordination efforts.

Input:	ECOWAS Secretariat, Government immigration and border control agencies.
Success indicator:	Joint border control established and staff trained.
To be completed by:	December 2002

### **Specialization and Training**

1. States shall create special units, within existing law enforcement structures, with a specific mandate to develop and effectively target operational activities to combat trafficking of persons. States shall also consider the establishment of joint investigation units.

Input:	Government law enforcement agencies; Government personnel and training agencies, ODCCP/CICP, Interpol
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and other law enforcement agencies to provide material support and expertise.  
 Success indicator: Specialized units created and operational  
 To be completed by: December 2003

2. States shall provide and strengthen training for law enforcement personnel, customs and immigration officials, prosecutors and judges, and other relevant officials, on the prevention of trafficking in persons. The training should focus on the methods used in preventing such trafficking, prosecuting the traffickers, and protecting the rights of victims, including protecting the victims from the traffickers. This training should also take into account the need to consider human rights and child- and gender-sensitive issues, and it should encourage co-operation with non-governmental organizations and other elements of civil society

Input: Relevant government agencies, including their training centers; including ODCCP/CICP, relevant IGOs, Interpol, bilateral support and relevant NGOs.

Success indicator: Training curricula formulated, training materials prepared and training sessions held.  
 To be completed by: December 2003.

3. States shall prepare training materials concerning trafficking in persons for embassy and consulate staff who deal with immigration and visa services. Materials will be developed in consultation with the ECOWAS Unit for the coordination of the efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

Input: Government diplomatic services and other relevant Government agencies

Success indicator: Training materials completed and training sessions underway.

To be completed by: June 2002

### **Travel and Identity Documents**

1. States shall establish procedures to verify whether a person who is the victim of trafficking in persons is a national or has the right of permanent residence in the State of origin, and to provide such travel documents or other authorization as may be necessary to enable a victim of trafficking in persons who is without proper documentation to travel to and re-enter its territory, on the request of a receiving State.

Input: National Government Passport Offices and Immigration Agencies

Success indicator: Immigration regulations and code amended, procedures in place.

To be completed by: December 2002

2. States, at the request of another State, when presented with suspected cases of trafficking in persons, shall verify, within a reasonable time, the validity of travel and identity documents issued or purported to have been issued in their name and suspected of being used for trafficking of persons.



Input: National Government (Passport Offices and Immigration Agencies)  
 Success indicator: Immigration codes and regulations amended, procedures in place  
 To be completed by: December 2002

3. States shall take such measures as may be necessary, within available means: (a) to ensure that the birth certificates, and travel and identity documents, they issue are of such quality that they cannot easily be misused and cannot readily be falsified or unlawfully altered, replicated, or issued; and (b) to ensure the integrity and security of travel or identity documents they issue, and to prevent their unlawful creation, issuance, and use. In this regard, States shall implement Decision C/DEC.1 /5/2000 signed in Abuja on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2000 relating to the Adoption of an ECOWAS Passport.

Input: Government immigration services and document services, consular services, health services, law enforcement agencies, the agencies and services of other States, IGOs, ODCCP/CICP, particularly Interpol and law enforcement and other relevant agencies of third countries.  
 Success indicator: ECOWAS sub-regional meeting with relevant officials and experts held on ways to improve integrity and security of identity and travel documents.  
 Implementation of Decision C/DEC.1 /5/2000 relating to the Adoption of an ECOWAS Passport  
 To be completed by: December 2002

4. States shall encourage commercial carriers to take precautions against their means of transport being used in the trafficking of persons, and require, where appropriate and without prejudice to applicable international conventions, such carriers to ascertain that all passengers are in possession of travel documents required for entry into the receiving State. States shall further adopt provisions requiring that all documents for minors travelling alone be held for them by the carrier until they have reached their destination.

Input: Government transport regulation agencies, immigration services, border control agencies, law enforcement agencies, international IGOs, particularly Interpol and ODCCP/ CICP; other law enforcement agencies to provide material support and expertise.  
 Success indicator: Amendment of relevant transport regulations.  
 To be completed by: December, 2002

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of the Initial Plan of Action**

1. States, through their Task Force on Trafficking in Persons, shall coordinate and monitor the ongoing implementation of this Initial Plan of Action at the national level and report, on a bi-annual basis, to the ECOWAS Secretariat.

Input: Government agencies, reporting to the Government Task Force

Success indicator: Progress reports on the Initial Plan of Action provided to relevant Ministries, and to ECOWAS every 6 months  
To be completed by: Every six months (June and December 2002 and 2003)

2. The ECOWAS Secretariat shall coordinate and monitor the implementation of this Initial Plan of Action and report on the progress achieved every 6 months to the Ministerial Meeting of the Mediation and Security Council.

Input: Government Task Force reporting through their State to the ECOWAS Unit for the co-ordination of the efforts to combat trafficking in persons

Success indicator: Annual reports prepared by Ministerial Meeting of the Mediation and Security Council and submitted to the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government  
To be completed by: Every six months (June and December 2002 and 2003)

3. The ECOWAS Secretariat shall organize an Expert Group Meeting for 2003 that shall evaluate the implementation of this Initial Action Plan, and make recommendations for further actions to be taken against trafficking in persons.

Input: ECOWAS Secretariat and the ECOWAS Member States  
Success indicator: Expert Group Meeting held in 2003  
To be completed by: 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2003