



Memorandum of Understanding between the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) and the Ministry of Foreign affairs, European Union and Cooperation on the Programme "Women, Peace and Security"

Rationale

The relationship between Spain and Africa is longstanding and fruitful. Since the first Spanish Plan Africa, launched in 2006, Spain has been working to consolidate and deepen ties with the African continent. In this context, developing closer relations with the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) has been a major goal for the Spanish foreign policy in Africa. The relationship between Spain and ECOWAS is solid and enduring, as reflected in the extensive cooperation carried out in many different fields through the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency (AECID), in particular Migration and Development, Gender and Agriculture. More recently, Spain and ECOWAS have collaborated in the launching of the first program for young ECOWAS diplomats, which has allowed 18 diplomats from different ECOWAS member States to join the Masters on International Relations of the Spanish Diplomatic Academy in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years.

This MOU is agreed between the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as MAUC) and the Economic Community of Western African States (hereinafter referred to as ECOWAS) in order to support the implementation of the Supplementary Act on Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region 2015, adopted by the Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs' in January, 2015 in Dakar, and subsequently by the Heads of State and Government in June, 2015; as well as the Women, Peace and Security Action Plan of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) 2018-2020, adopted by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers of 31st May to 2nd June, 2017 held in Monrovia, Liberia in line with UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2242.

ECOWAS is a regional intergovernmental organization which holds as members 15 western African nations and that has as its main goal to achieve greater economic integration, prosperity and stability among its member countries. In order to support a climate of peace and security in the region, one of the fundamental principles of the ECOWAS is the establishment of peaceful settlement of disputes between Member States, the active Co-operation between neighbouring countries and the promotion of a peaceful environment as a prerequisite for economic development.

On the other hand, Spain's III Plan Africa establishes among its strategic goals the following: contributing to peace and security in Africa, promoting inclusive sustainable growth and resilience, supporting the strengthening of institutions and political openness. Furthermore, the Plan sets out as a specific goal in the axis concerning "Peace and Security", "to empower and defend the role of women and youth in conflict resolution and peacebuilding". Spain has played a key role in the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2242 in 2015, and since then

Spain has become a member of the UNSC Informal Group of Experts on Women, Peace and Security.

Within the African context, Spain has supported the creation of the Women Platform within the G5 Sahel Initiative, with the financial support of 100.000€ by the MAUC. Three ECOWAS Member States take part in this Women Platform, namely Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

In this context, the ECOWAS and the MAUC consider this MOU a step forward in the continuous support by Spain of gender initiatives within the wider Peace and Security efforts envisaged in the ECOWAS' policies.

The Signatories have reached the following Understanding:

General object of the MOU:

1. To enhance ECOWAS' regional conflict prevention capacity, through projects addressed to increase the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and peacekeeping.
2. To achieve this goal, MAUC is committed to finance the ECOWAS Commission with a total voluntary contribution of 400.000€, that will be destined to the implementation of the main lines of action on Women, Peace and Security as adopted by the ECOWAS Ministers of Women and Gender Affairs in Abidjan in 2017, and including 100.000€ for the implementation of joint projects with the G5 Sahel women's platform.

Specific goals of the MOU:

1. To achieve the general objective, ECOWAS with the support of Spain will design and implement projects in the area of women empowerment, through women's entrepreneurship, technical education programs (technical and vocational education), culture of peace, mediation and conflicts prevention, using the Spanish experience in terms of innovation and technology.
2. Specifically to support the implementation by ECOWAS of the following projects:
 - i. Projects to enhance the empowerment and leadership role of women
 - ii. Projects to strengthen gender mainstreaming in ECOWAS mediation, elections and peace support operations notably during conflict prevention, management and resolution processes.
 - iii. Projects addressed to protect women and girls from gender based violence
 - iv. Projects to promote culture of peace and to enhance post-conflict economic recovery.
 - v. Joint projects with the G5 Sahel Women's Platform.

Management

The management of the arrangements concerning the implementation of this program will be addressed by Points of Contact (POC). Each party shall appoint a (POC), which in the case of Spain will be the Embassy of Spain in Abuja.

