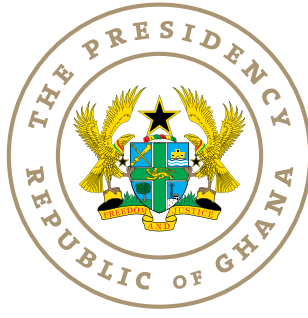




**HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA
AND
CHAIRMAN, ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

**SPEECH
HANDING OVER CEREMONY TO
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. MICHEL KAFANDO
AS THE INTERIM PRESIDENT OF BURKINA FASO**

**OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO
FRIDAY, 21ST NOVEMBER, 2014**

Your Excellency the Transition President and Head of State of Burkina Faso,
Excellencies, ECOWAS Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Prime Minister of Burkina Faso,
Distinguished Representative of the United Nations Secretary General,
Distinguished Representative of the President of the African Union Commission,
Distinguished President of the ECOWAS Commission,
Excellencies members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Heads of Political Parties
Distinguished Heads of Military Institutions and other Security Agencies,
Revered Religious and Traditional leaders,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me, on behalf of ECOWAS, to congratulate the good people of Burkina Faso, for witnessing this day that marks the end of a period of uncertainty over the past few weeks, which had raised anxiety and shaken the hope of stable democracy and stability in our region.

While my warmest felicitations on this day go to H.E. Michel Kafando, the Interim President and Head of State of Burkina Faso, I would also like to pay tribute to Lieutenant-Colonel Isaac Zida, and all members of the Armed Forces of Burkina Faso for their patriotism and efforts in continuing to safeguard the territorial integrity of the country and the security of its citizens during this difficult period you have just been through.



I also wish to congratulate the people of Burkina Faso and their leaders on the signing of a Charter that will guide the transition to a democratically elected government.

I also wish to salute the steadfastness and commitment of all stakeholders, including the leaders of the political parties of the opposition and the former majority, representatives of civil society organisations, religious and traditional groups, as well as the President and members of the Constitutional Council.

In the same vein, I congratulate the Chairman of the Regional Contact Group, His Excellency Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal. I wish to congratulate the President of the ECOWAS Commission. I congratulate the ECOWAS Special Envoy to Burkina Faso, His Excellency Prof. Ibrahima Fall, the Special Envoy of the African Union in Burkina Faso, His Excellency Edem Kodjo, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa, Dr. Mohamed ibn Chambas, as well as the other partners and friends of Burkina Faso, for their support and contributions over the last few days, towards finding a peaceful resolution to the crisis you went through.

It is important to highlight the significant role ECOWAS has played in the mediating and facilitating the transition process since 31 October 2014, when the crisis started. These have included the facilitation of the high level ECOWAS-AU-UN Joint Mission which I dispatched to Ouagadougou on 31 October 2014 and they held extensive consultations with all stakeholders culminating in the formation of a Regional Contact Group.

More importantly, in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the ECOWAS Protocol on democracy and good governance, I, as ECOWAS Chairman, His Excellency Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, were in Ouagadougou on 5 November 2014 in order to assist in the facilitation of political dialogue, which paved the way for the successful resolution of the impasse. The ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit of 6th November endorsed the conclusions of this visit.

Having taken note of the views expressed by all the stakeholders during the various dialogues that were held, I want to reassure all Burkinabes that ECOWAS, as a community, will keep close engagement with the interim administration, to make sure that these views and interests that were expressed during the dialogue are taken into consideration by the government and channeled to benefit of the citizens of this great country.



To this end, ECOWAS will remain focused on supporting the people of Burkina Faso in sustaining the momentum of restoring democracy and stability in the country.

Our support programmes in electoral assistance, which were instrumental to the success of the transition in countries like Niger, Guinea, Mali and Guinea Bissau, shall be made available to the people of Burkina Faso in this transitional period and during the run-up to the elections in 2015.

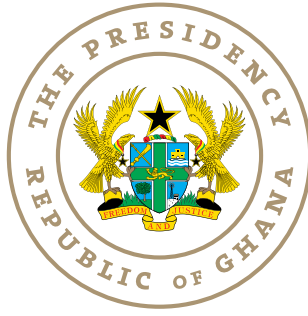
I wish to encourage the in-coming transitional administration to build on the momentum of the past two weeks, to make inclusiveness a priority item by selecting competent individuals, who are firmly committed to a democratic civilian government, to serve in the transitional government.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
To the in-coming transitional government, I pledge, on behalf of ECOWAS, our continued commitment to the process of stability and development, as well as the nurturing of democratic institutions in order to prevent any further cycles of political reversals. In this regard, we are ready to cooperate with the Government and coordinate with other bilateral and multilateral partners in ensuring enhanced assistance to increase the state's capacity in the economic, social and political sectors. I therefore call on the international community to facilitate robust development assistance for Burkina Faso to consolidate the process of return to full democratic governance.

ECOWAS is highly involved in working towards achieving a consensus on a civilian transition because of the conviction that it is only the strict adherence to the democratic principles set out in our Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance can lead to sustainable peace in Burkina Faso. Consequently, it is important for the transitional bodies to conform to these principles.

In particular, I wish to reiterate paragraph (d) of Article 1 which states and I quote: *"the army is apolitical and shall submit to the duly-constituted political authority. No military personnel in active service may seek election to a political position"*, end of quote. This means that military personnel who take on elective political positions must sever their ties with the military.

I cannot conclude this address without stressing that ECOWAS remains resolute in affirming the supremacy of its guiding Protocols on Democracy and Good Governance and enjoins Member States and all citizens to respect the letter and spirit of these protocols, by ensuring that constitutional provisions are adhered to. Citizens must be given the right to express their



wishes in a stable democratic manner, and no change of power is initiated or maintained outside democratic norms and principles as enshrined in our various protocols and charters.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am therefore using this opportunity to reiterate that the role of this civilian transitional government is to ensure effective preparation for the national elections in November 2015, as called for by the Charter that was endorsed.

I am sure that in this, you can count on the continued support of ECOWAS and on the support of the citizens of Burkina Faso.

I thank you for your kind attention.

END