



PRESS RELEASE

Abuja, Nigeria, March 26, 2026

Directorate of Communication

Page 1 / 3

**ECOWAS AND INDIA CONSOLIDATE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO ADVANCE
TRADE, DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AND REGIONAL STABILITY**

The President of the ECOWAS Commission, H.E. Dr. Omar Alieu Touray, received H.E. Mr. Abhishek Singh, High Commissioner of India to the Federal Republic of Nigeria and India's concurrently accredited Permanent Representative to ECOWAS, on 26 March 2026 at the ECOWAS Commission Headquarters in Abuja, for high-level consultations aimed at deepening the longstanding partnership between ECOWAS and India.

The meeting provided a strategic platform to review the evolution of ECOWAS-India cooperation and to identify priority areas for enhanced engagement in line with ECOWAS Vision 2050 and the broader continental development agenda. Discussions reaffirmed the importance of a partnership anchored in mutual respect, shared priorities and a common commitment to sustainable development, regional integration and stability across West Africa.

H.E. Mr. Abhishek Singh reiterated India's strong interest in expanding its cooperation with ECOWAS, particularly in the areas of trade and investment, development finance, capacity-building and technology transfer. He highlighted India's continued support through the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), including six lines of credit amounting to approximately US\$1.14 billion, which have contributed to financing key development projects across ECOWAS Member States. He further conveyed India's readiness to broaden this cooperation to strategic sectors such as digital public infrastructure, agriculture, defence and security.

The High Commissioner also emphasized the importance of renewing the Memorandum of Understanding between ECOWAS and India, originally signed in 2011, to provide a modernized and comprehensive framework for cooperation. In this regard, both sides expressed interest in advancing preparations for a structured ECOWAS-India strategic dialogue, including at the level of Foreign Ministers, to ensure greater coherence, visibility and impact of the partnership.

In his remarks, H.E. Dr. Omar Alieu Touray welcomed India's sustained engagement with the region and underscored the relevance of strengthening cooperation that supports productive



PRESS RELEASE

Abuja, Nigeria, March 26, 2026

Page 2 / 3

Directorate of Communication

capacity, value addition and economic transformation within ECOWAS Member States. He noted that while expanded market access remains important, the ability of the region to effectively leverage such opportunities depends on strengthened industrial capacity, infrastructure development and coordinated policy frameworks.

The President of the Commission further highlighted the importance of aligning cooperation with ongoing regional priorities, including the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the consolidation of regional peace and security mechanisms, and the strengthening of institutional frameworks to support economic integration.

Discussions also explored opportunities for enhanced collaboration in addressing emerging challenges, including food security and public health. India expressed its readiness to support ECOWAS initiatives in these areas, including through the provision of essential commodities such as rice and wheat, as well as through strengthened cooperation with regional institutions such as the West African Health Organization (WAHO).

The meeting further provided an opportunity to exchange views on recent developments in the region, including the evolving dynamics with the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) and ongoing efforts to preserve the gains of regional integration, particularly in the areas of trade, free movement and security cooperation. In this context, ECOWAS reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining dialogue and advancing structured frameworks to ensure stability and continuity for citizens across the region.

Both parties also underlined the importance of enhanced coordination in addressing transnational challenges, including drug trafficking and security threats, recognizing the need for collective and coordinated responses involving regional and international partners.

This high-level engagement reflects a shared commitment to elevating the ECOWAS-India partnership to a more strategic and results-oriented level, anchored in practical cooperation, institutional alignment and a common vision for a stable, prosperous and integrated West Africa.

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PRESS RELEASE

Abuja, Nigeria, March 26, 2026

Page 3 / 3

Directorate of Communication

About ECOWAS

The Heads of State and Government of fifteen West African Countries established the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) when they signed the ECOWAS Treaty on the 28th of May 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria.

The Treaty of Lagos was signed by the 15 Heads of State and government of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sénégal and Togo, with its stated mission to promote economic integration across the region. The Senegalese President was represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Cabo Verde joined the union in 1977. The only Arabic-speaking Member Mauritania withdrew in December 2000. Mauritania recently signed a new associate-membership agreement in August 2017. On January 29, 2025, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger officially withdrew from ECOWAS.

The current Member States of ECOWAS are Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sénégal and Togo.

Considered one of the pillars of the African Economic Community, ECOWAS was set up to foster the ideal of collective self-sufficiency for its member states. As a trading union, it is also meant to create a single, large trading bloc through economic cooperation.

Integrated economic activities as envisaged in the area that has a combined GDP of \$734.8 billion, revolve around but are not limited to industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial issues, social as well as cultural matters.

In 2007, ECOWAS Secretariat was transformed into a Commission. The Commission headed by the President, assisted by a Vice President, five Commissioners and the Auditor-General of ECOWAS Institutions, comprising experienced bureaucrats who are providing the leadership in this new orientation.

The ECOWAS budget is essentially financed by revenue collected through the Community tax. The tax was introduced to finance its activities. The rate of the Community levy is set at 0.5% of the CIF value of goods imported from non-ECOWAS countries.

As part of this renewal process, ECOWAS is implementing critical and strategic programmes that will deepen cohesion and progressively eliminate identified barriers to full integration. In this way, the estimated 300 million citizens of the community can ultimately take ownership for the realization of the new vision of moving from an ECOWAS of States to an "ECOWAS of the People: Peace and Prosperity to All". by 2050.