



Terms of Reference:

Special Plenary Session C

What regional integration to support Cape Verde's transformation effort?

The West African population is growing at an extremely rapid pace, with about 400 million people between 2020 and 2025 and over 500 million people between 2030 and 2035. This population growth is currently one of the main challenges in the region in terms of social infrastructure (work, food and housing). Coupled with the rising middle class, this growth is also a business opportunity.

The structure of this population shows a high percentage of young people under 20 and over 50% of people aged 20-60 years (working-age population). The preponderance of young people has become a major challenge, as it involves large investments in terms of social services, health, education, transportation and employment. Currently the most popular solution these young people have found to these challenges is to emigrate to Europe.

Another challenge in the region has to do with the economic structures of the ECOWAS member states being inconsistent with the requirements for economic integration:

- Monetary System and economic structure largely dependent on former metropolis;
- Similarity of economies marked by mono-production, compromising the production complementarity needed for the regional market's proper functioning;
- Dualistic economies, between a modern and well-structured sector that allows trade and a traditional sector that somehow perpetuates the old liberal economic structures of the pre-colonial period, where borders were not important.

To meet these challenges, the ECOWAS adopted a vision for 2020: "a borderless, peaceful, prosperous and cohesive sub-region, built on good governance, where all people are able to access and enjoy the regions' abundant resources, by creating equal opportunities for sustainable development and environmental preservation."

Taking into account this vision and the different challenges, the Session will analyze and answer the following questions, with a view to building a genuine regional integration, which facilitates Cape Verde's transformation:

- How to ensure democratic governance of regional integration to take into account Cape Verde's specificity and the interests of small states?
- How to involve the private sector in the integration agenda?
- How to integrate the West African market, establishing, for example, common licensing and regulatory procedures to allow companies to operate without regard to borders?
- How to make it easier for West African companies to work together regardless of borders?
- How to encourage partnerships and joint ventures to operate in all ECOWAS countries?

- How to build and strengthen regional institutions and link them to the sub-region's economy?
- How to invest in regional universities and science and technology institutes that serve as centers of excellence and that meet the challenges of development and building more competitive economies, through research and knowledge application?
- How to make sure our sub-region begins to look at innovation from a regional perspective?