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146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Related Meetings, Manama, Bahrain, 11-15 March 2023

The ECOWAS Parliament recognizes that the following are key drivers of intolerance and exclusion:

1. **Religious Fundamentalism-** which leads to Religious Intolerance, violent extremism and conflict in some cases. Classical example include the Boko Haram in Nigeria.
2. **The Enduring Traditional Practices of Social Placement:** This is a key driver of youth and female marginalization and exclusion in governance and political participation.
3. **Military Juntas:** These provide an avenue for repressive rule, disregard for human rights, intolerance, exclusion and marginalization.
4. **Weak State Institutions:** Allows bad governance and corruption to fester, which then leads to socio-economic exclusion and marginalization.
5. **Hate Speech and Incitement:** Populist, radical rhetoric and intolerant discourse and acts to promote, strengthen and entrench some political

establishments and segments of society intensify ethnicity. Leads to marginalization and exclusion, and causes intolerance against other/opposing ethnic groups and may lead to violence in the extreme

To address these, the ECOWAS Parliament has:

- Been active in using parliamentary diplomacy and official engagement and through its Delocalized Meetings to stress the importance of dialogue and the creation of an active intra and inter-faith communication system, and the use of news media and other traditional media to preach inter-religious peace and tolerance, and fight against religious extremism.
- Has a Gender Committee that mobilizes around issues of women empowerment in collaboration with the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre to ensure their active participation in the integration process, and to mainstream gender in ECOWAS Institutions and members states.
- Parliament has also established the ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians (ECOFEPA) to enhance the development of women

and children in the sub-region and advocate for the formulation of gender-friendly policies on inclusion and participation.

- Using parliamentary diplomacy and lobbying, two member states, Sierra Leone and Senegal have passed Affirmative Action Laws that grant women vast representational and participatory roles in the governance and political architecture.
- The ECOWAS Parliament conducts election-monitoring missions and extends assistance to member states to ensure the credibility and reliability of the process, and to attain a free, fair and transparent process. Observation missions were deployed in Benin and Nigeria in January and February, whilst Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Liberia will have their turns in May, June and October this year.
- The Parliament's mechanism for ensuring the effective and efficient implementation of the sub-regional Mechanism Relating to Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security through oversight missions to the National Early Warning and Response Centers has helped to mitigate some near violent conflicts in the sub-region.

Thank you!