

Comparing and Contrasting the Challenges and Successes of Ecowas as It Also Relates to the Challenges and Successes of Asean (Association of South-East Asian Nations)

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Abstract

This research study examines the challenges facing ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), as to governmental instability and the threat to national security among its member states since the beginning of the twenty-first century. ECOWAS which was formed about forty-two years ago, and its goal and objective was to represent the interest of some of the world's most dictatorial and tyrannical governments, which were then, and still among today's world's most impoverished nations. However, ECOWAS since its formation have had so many challenges, and have not been able to booster regional and economic cooperation among its member states. Right from the year of its formation, ECOWAS have always found it very difficult to achieving political stability, and also protecting the integrity of its member states. Though it must be noted that issues related to coup d'état within the West Africa region has seriously declined, but some member states of ECOWAS still feel threatened by its various military institutions with coup scare, and in some cases, a coups d'état taking place. There is also the challenges of cross-border terrorism and insurgencies, which end up threatening the foundation, peace, and authority of member states. The inability of some member states of ECOWAS to economically empower their citizens have also been a serious challenge to ECOWAS. The lack of economic power have therefore made impoverished citizens of these affected member states of ECOWAS to indulge or engage in unchecked and unobstructed movements, seeking for opportunities that will economically empower them and their families. Comparisons will also be studied in this research paper, as regarding to the challenges of ECOWAS, and also the challenges of ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations). This research paper will also delve into the success achieved by ECOWAS since its formation, as well as the success recorded so far by ASEAN since its inception as a regional organization. In the midst of these challenges facing ECOWAS, the blames must also be shifted or shared with member states, as some of these member states are very recalcitrant towards accountability, probity, integrity, and good governance. Despite its challenges, and the uncooperative stance from some of its member states, it must be noted that ECOWAS was able to achieve an outstanding success in January 2017, with the ousting of Yahya Jammeh of Gambia, who lost the Gambian presidential election to Adama Barrow, but refused to transfer power. Prominent member states of ECOWAS like Nigeria and Senegal were able to organize its army, and subsequently, Yahya Jammeh was deposed, and forced to hand over power to Adama Barrow, and thereafter, he fled Gambia. This research study is basically about the comparisons between ECOWAS and ASEAN. That despite the long existence of ECOWAS, it is still struggling to survive. Compared to the giant economic successes recorded so far by ASEAN and its member states.

Keywords: Ecowas, Asean, Political, Economic, Challenges, Successes.

1. INTRODUCTION

ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) as a regional organization of fifteen West African member countries was formed on the 28th May, 1975. Its main objective and goal is geared towards the economic integration of its member states, political stability among its member states, and also monetary union for promoting economic growth and development within the West African regional bloc. There are fifteen founding members of ECOWAS, and they are namely: Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Liberia, Niger, Togo, Burkina Faso (originally joined ECOWAS with the name "Upper Volta"), and Mauritania (which left ECOWAS in 2000). It must be noted that, Nigeria played a very key role in the formation and establishment of ECOWAS, with its treaty signed in Lagos, Nigeria. And also moving the regional organization forward at its very early formation years. ¹ Though, Mauritania left ECOWAS to be a member of the Maghreb Union, which has other members like Algeria, Libya, and Morocco, it still has bilateral relations with member states of ECOWAS. In May 2017, Mauritania and other member countries of ECOWAS signed a new cooperation agreement, which was geared towards improving economic and security circumstances and conditions in the West African region. Marcel Alain de Souza, who is the President of ECOWAS commission, and also the Minister of Commerce of Mauritania, Naha Mint Mouknass, both reached an agreement, which henceforth allows the free flow of goods and people, and also strengthening

the fight against terrorism, insurgency, and cross-border banditry within the ECOWAS region. It was also agreed by both parties (ECOWAS and Mauritania) to have a single tariff policy, which will be applicable to all goods moving across the West African region. It was also discussed by both parties, that the new bilateral agreement will enhance and confirm both economic and relations between Mauritania and all members of ECOWAS.² However, since its formation, ECOWAS has faced various impediments, which are namely: economic, political, security, and integrity challenges among members of the regional organization, and it has always been very difficult for ECOWAS to solve its own problems. This has of course led to the high spread of poverty among member states of ECOWAS, which stands as the highest globally. ECOWAS has also been seriously bedeviled by very weak state institutions, even when democracy exists in such countries. Very weak state and democratic institutions have often led to military coups. The main objective behind the formation of ECOWAS was the economic "compatibility, harmonization, accommodation, agreement, and coordination of the national policies of member states". However, the various member states that signed the treaty for the formation of ECOWAS promised to stick-to, abide by, and comply with the principles of ECOWAS, which include "solidarity and collective self-reliance, stability and security, maintenance of regional peace among member states, and non-aggression between member states". Within the principles of ECOWAS, and which must be adhered to among member states, is the "promotion, recognition, and the protection of human and people's rights, which is in accordance with provisions made available in the Charter on Human and People's Rights". However, it has been very difficult for ECOWAS member states to strictly adhere to issues related to security and the protection of human and people's rights.³

At the signing of the ECOWAS treaty in 1975, the promotion and protection of human rights, which is seen as close ally of good governance, was very rare among members of the ECOWAS organization. Various signatories to the ECOWAS treaty as well as member states were operating an autocratic and dictatorial system of governance. At that time also, there was rampant coup plots among member states. Governments like Dawda Jawara of the Gambia, William Tolbert of Liberia, Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire; Sekou Toure of Guinea, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, and Mathieu Kerekou of Benin were all dictators operating an authoritarian and dictatorial system of governance, and as well hounding down oppositional and progressive voices, and other vibrant party political systems. Oppositional voices were totally shut down. Some other sovereign countries that took part in the signing of the ECOWAS treaty in 1975, such as Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, and Niger were all operating a military rule style of government, which is the same as autocracy and dictatorship. At its inception in 1975, it was very difficult for ECOWAS as a regional body to protect and keep member nations safe from domestic insurrections, and internal strife. This was because some of the countries within its fold were already deeply engulfed with ethnic politics that often lead to conflict. Such countries were Mali and Senegal. In the case of Nigeria, it had just come out of a very brutal civil war, which happened between the federal government of Nigeria and the Biafra (South-East) forces. About one million people died in the war. By the time ECOWAS was established in the year 1975, most of its member states were experiencing dysfunctionalities which were normally experienced by new independent nations on their way to nation-building process. This research paper and study therefore evaluates and assesses if since its establishment and formation about forty-two years ago, ECOWAS has been able to achieve its main objectives of ensuring political stability, the securing and integrity of its member states, and also, the economic empowerment of ECOWAS member countries. It is of note, that countries within the West African sub-region have been deeply affected by under-development and poverty, which remains one of the world's most highest. This of course is a dent and has greatly diminished the status of ECOWAS. In assessing or evaluating the performance of ECOWAS on issues related to political stability and national security, it must be noted that, the various stumbling blocks which have greatly affected the performance of ECOWAS came be summed up as "political corruption among member states; very high levels of illiteracy among member states; non-performing and very corrupt bureaucracies among member states; and lastly, very clumsy, hopeless, unskilled, and incompetent political leadership". ECOWAS as regional organization, which was established to resolve problems and issues within the West African region, either political or economic, have actually not lived up to the expectations of all. ECOWAS has over decades suffered from a myriad of problems, which has seriously dealt with the foundation, integrity, and image of the organization, and has made it so difficult for it to be duly recognized and well respected among the comity of nations.⁴ Notwithstanding the challenges of ECOWAS, ECOWAS has also been able to succeed in some other aspects. ECOWAS was able to achieve the "single passport". The ECOWAS "single passport" was created to facilitate the easy intra-regional travel of member states citizens for periods of a maximum of 90 days. On May 17, 2007, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria launched the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) passport, which is to be carried by citizens of member countries. During the launching ceremony of the new passport in Abuja, Nigeria, President Obasanjo said the need for a common passport for ECOWAS countries was initiated to pave way for easy transit and movement of people and goods across borders the various West African borders of member states.⁵ In January, 2017, ECOWAS was able to force out to exile the civilian dictator of Gambia named Yahya Jammeh, after he lost the election, and refused to transfer power to the

winner named Adama Barrow. Yahya Jammeh is currently in exile in Equatorial-Guinea. ⁶ This research paper and study will also go deep in discussing the success recorded by ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations). ASEAN is also a regional body like ECOWAS, and it was officially established on the 8th of August, 1967, with the signing of the ASEAN-Bangkok Declaration. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is an organization of countries domiciled in South-East Asia, and it was set up to promote cultural, economic, and political development in the region. Currently, ASEAN is made up of ten member countries, but it was originally formed by five member countries, which are namely: Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. The five foreign ministers who signed the ASEAN declaration are: S. Rajaratnam of Singapore, Tun Abdul Razak of Malaysia, Narciso R. Ramos of the Philippines, Adam Malik of Indonesia, and Thanat Khoman of Thailand. However, other countries within the region later joined the regional organization. They are: Brunei Darussalam which joined ASEAN on the 8th of January, 1984. Vietnam joined ASEAN on the 28th July, 1995. Laos and Myanmar became members of ASEAN on the 23rd July, 1997. Lastly, Cambodia joined ASEAN on the 30th of April, 1999. Further discussions will be made on the challenges and successes of ASEAN, and how far it has fared. ⁷

2. CHALLENGES OF ECOWAS (ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES)

Since its inception on the 28th May, 1975, ECOWAS as a regional West African organization have always suffered many setbacks, which have always endangered or put its existence at risk. However, despite the fact that ECOWAS have been able to survive the stumbling blocks for forty-two years, it has actually not been able to practicalize most of the documents produced from seminars and workshops by its intelligentsia community. In many cases, most of these documents can be considered, or referred to as "academicals or scholarly speechifying". At the end of very beautiful speeches, it becomes very difficult for policy makers within the ECOWAS team, to put into practicality what has been highly eulogized as been the solution to the problems of member's states of the ECOWAS region. ECOWAS as a regional organization lacks the political will and motivational force which helps to generate a very viable political action. ECOWAS is also very much suffering from problems related to social and cultural factors. The continuance of these threats, and the inability of ECOWAS to deal decisively with them, has turned or made ECOWAS a laughing stock among other global regional bodies. ECOWAS is therefore seen as a very unreliable and faulty regional organization.

2.1 These Threats are therefore Examined and Enlarged Below;

1. Non-Existence of Political Will Among the Various Member Countries of ECOWAS

The non-existence of political will and deliverables attached to good governance within and among the various member states of ECOWAS community has totally made it impossible for the West African region to achieve or accomplish an economic community, which is favoured with free trade area. In other that ECOWAS as a regional organization to become very viable and active and for the member states of ECOWAS to succeed in their various developmental goals and objectives, political will is highly needed and very necessary. Political will can be explained as the apparition who is imbibed in the machinery of politics, and as the purpose or motivational force that creates or produces political action. For ECOWAS and its member states to achieve success, there is the need for political will, in other that its various policies can be domesticated among its member states, and do not just end up as "seminar jamborees", but more as active dynamic policies that will end up transforming its member states. For decades since after its formation, so many member states of ECOWAS have totally refused to execute or put into effect the various Acts and Decisions of the regional organization. This is because they lack the political will to pull through in carrying out or putting into operation the Acts and Protocols which they have signatories appended to. Due to lack of political will, most of the policies adopted by ECOWAS gets stucked and are not implemented. Compared to the successes achieved by other regional integration organizations like ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), member states of ECOWAS needs to collectively build a very strong political will, a collective economic blue-print, and also, needs to have a collective vision, opinion, assessment, and understanding of issues on the global terrain, in other that its development will spur up speedily. ⁸ For West Africa to be able to achieve or accomplish integration among its member states there is the importance that its member states must have a common political and economic viewpoint. One of the major setbacks that have seriously affected the development machinery of ECOWAS is that its member states totally have conflicting and different foreign policy goals. This of course seriously affects the dedication, loyalty, devotion, and allegiance of member states of ECOWAS regarding to ECOWAS's policies on integration. During the administration of Late President Musa Yar'Adua, Nigeria shifted its foreign policy from "afro centric" to "Citizenship diplomacy". This of course seriously affected the policies of ECOWAS as regards to regional integration, being that Nigeria is a major power bloc within the region. In terms of finance, so many of ECOWAS member states have refused to meet up with their own financial levies, which is needed for the operations of the various structures of ECOWAS, its secretariat, as well as putting on ground its policies. ⁹

2. Weak or Deficient Payment System and Monetary Zone Differences

The gap among the member states of ECOWAS in terms of its monetary sector or zone is very wide. For example, countries like Nigeria have large capitals to boost its capital base within its banking sector. This of course cannot be said of other ECOWAS member states with very low capital base. This simply means that poorer countries who are members of ECOWAS are unable to survive, as the monetary zone of the regional organization is not yet uniform. The monetary zone of the ECOWAS community can be said to still be very primitive and undeveloped.¹⁰ Members of ECOWAS community still lack very much a uniform monitoring and regulative guidelines that will help and assist in speeding up funds transfer within the ECOWAS region. This is due to very weak and deficient payment system among member states, the interruption and setback among the various banks of member states due to the mismatch and unsuitability of its "Information Technology platforms. Another major setback is the contradictory and incompatible national policies of member countries of ECOWAS as regarding to supervisory and monitoring legislations. In the situation of Nigeria, this is very much uncontrolled. Nevertheless, Nigerians banks have been able to spread widely into territories of other member states of ECOWAS. The intrusion of Nigeria banks into the territories of other member states of ECOWAS has of course helped in reducing the challenges faced, but to a very little level. This has made the banking correspondence within the ECOWAS region and among its member states very low and slow, which had therefore led to a very high cost when transacting. The West African Monetary Agency (WAMA) which is an autonomous and specialized agency of ECOWAS was established in 1996. WAMA was established as a result of the transformation of the West African Clearing House (WACH). The responsibility of WAMA is monitoring, coordinating, and implementing the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme (EMCP), which is equipped and prepared towards the adoption and creation of a single currency within the ECOWAS region. However, and even in the year 2017, WAMA has not been able to achieve its goals as at when it was established. WAMA has not been able to establish or create a successful, helpful, or efficient payments system that will effectively take care of the demands of the ECOWAS region. Within the ECOWAS region still exist a very problematic and complex payment system, due to the fact that most of the currencies been used by member states of ECOWAS are not exchangeable, and the various member states of ECOWAS also having different exchange regulations, which of course obstruct and hinder the movement of funds and financial assets within the ECOWAS region.¹¹

3. Political Uncertainty and Confrontations of Graft and Bribery

Among most of the member states of ECOWAS, politics is seen and viewed as a "do or die affair". It is mainly embarked upon for personal or self aggrandizement, as most of the political leaders get involved in politicking to enrich themselves, members of their family, and as well their cronies. Politics among member states of ECOWAS is a personalized enterprise, as it is never intended for the public good. This of course has led to massive underdevelopment, corruption in high and low places of authority, looting of the people's commonwealth, as well as electoral fraud in the ECOWAS region. When member states of other regional organizations in the world, like ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), are building and struggling with policies that would help in giving a speedy and long lasting development to every member of ASEAN, majority of the countries in Africa are so deeply enmeshed in corruption, and have sunk very deep into it. Political uncertainty is also a major factor that causes underdevelopment within the ECOWAS region, as the military institution which is meant to protect the territorial integrity of its nation, gets itself distracted by venturing into politics, which in most cases is totally against the interest of the public. Within the ECOWAS region are various degrees of social and political turmoil or mayhem, which often times leads to brutal and deadly wars. This was the reason why member states of ECOWAS in 1978 and 1981 subsequently, signed and adopted the Protocol on Non-Aggression and the Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defense. Though, most member states of ECOWAS are currently practicing a democratic system of governance, but it still poses a serious threat to the wellbeing and development of their societies. This is due to the fact that, most of these so-called democratic nations operate very sick or illegitimate type of democracy. A type of democracy where elections are always held but with no democratic institutions. A type of democracy with very strong individuals, but weak democratic institutions. This is the type of democracy currently been practiced in Rwanda, with President Paul Kagame at the helm of affairs since the year 2000. Due to lengthy and elongated military rule and military involvement in politics within the ECOWAS region, this has resulted in political uncertainty for some of its member states, as it has been characterized by a lifestyle of aggressiveness and hostility. This of course have led to a prolonged economic decline within the ECOWAS region, as it has also leads to massive unemployment among the youths, who often because of unemployment become very docile and answerable to political money bags, and therefore have all the time and space available to be problematic and engage in fighting wars, or get seriously involved in political upheavals. ECOWAS member countries like Liberia and Sierra-Leone suffered a lot from this same route. In the case of Guinea Bissau, where the military got the President killed, after successfully assassinating the Chief of Staff to the President in 2009, a powerful civil unrest took center stage, though there was an intervention from the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), but even to presently, Guinea Bissau is yet to totally recover from that violence. Togo experienced a situation whereby the seat of

power (Presidency) was turned or converted into a family empire by the Eyadema's. It was a transition of power from father to son after long years of military rule by Gnassingbe Eyadema. When Late President Gnassingbe Eyadema died in 2005, within few hours after his death, his son Faure Eyadema was immediately sworn in as the new President of Togo. Ghana also witnessed massive corruption before the coming on board of Jerry John Rawlings, who came to salvage the almost wrecked ship of Ghana. During these turbulent years, corruption choked and suffocated the progress and development of Ghana. This led to massive poverty, as well as underdevelopment. But at the moment, and after the coming of Jerry John Rawlings, and his ability to transform and salvage Ghana, Ghana is gradually getting itself back on track as one of the most democratic and liberalized countries within the ECOWAS region. Ivory Coast has still not recovered from the power tussle between former President Laurent Gbagbo and incumbent President Alassane Ouattara. Nigeria, which happens to be the most populous black nation in the world, and is regarded as the giant of Africa, is unable to wipe out corruption from its very poor and underdeveloped society. This is because its anti-corruption agency named EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission), which was established by former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2003, remains a toothless bulldog, because its structures and operations have been politicized and turned into a witch hunting agency against perceived political opponents of any government in power. Uncompromising and determined policies instituted by successive administrations in Nigeria, which is to assist in rapid development of the country, have not been fruitful due to massive corruption, both in the private and public sectors. The issue of Boko Haram cannot also be undermined as a major setback towards the development of Nigeria, and northern Nigeria especially. The current agitation by the Igbo's of South-Eastern Nigeria, who are demanding for their own independent and sovereign nation named Biafra. A course been championed by Nnamdi Kanu of IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra). Whatever affects Nigeria, either positively or negatively, affects not only other member states of ECOWAS, but also the entire Africa. This is due to the fact that Nigeria has a very high population, and a massive deposit of crude oil and other natural resources. However, Nigeria has really not shown positive examples to other member states of ECOWAS, and including other African countries who are not members of the ECOWAS regional bloc. Political uncertainty from successive military rule, and also that of Late President Umaru Yar'adua, when power was just delayed to been transferred to former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. Summarily, most of West African leaders have held their citizens hostage either with guns, or very repressive policies that tends to strangulate and throttle the economic and political freedom of their citizens.

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The devastating effect is that corruptions have become an institution within the ECOWAS region, as clearly instituted by the political elites, and it has spread down the ladder. As the mass looting of the people's commonwealth rages on like a wide fire, which is often preserved, spread, and prolonged by both the politicians and those of the civil service. The bastardization of the ECOWAS region and the African continent at large cuts across all sectors of the society. Politics has now been made so attractive and lucrative, that it becomes a thing of entrepreneurship. A politician makes investments by massively paying for and buying their way through, or having to invest in other cronies of theirs, who when they get into positions of authority, must have to pay back through the looting of the states treasury. In doing or engaging in this, which often compromises the structures and other institutions of the state, as well as the law enforcement agents, it now becomes a competition between the politicians and other public officers, as they all try to outdo themselves to know who have actually stolen more from the government treasury. So therefore, the after effects of all these is a very porous border, while those in the academics gets very frustrated as quality is no longer regarded for supremacy within the rank and file. These are all to the detriment of the wellbeing of the citizens of the member states of ECOWAS, and including other African countries who are not members of the ECOWAS organization. Attitudes of such among politicians and policy makers stifle development, and breeds poverty. It becomes very disastrous and devastating when there are no countries within the fold of ECOWAS with moral uprightness or financial weight to arrest the situation. However, the continued deficiency and absence to continuing vibrant policies, and also military rule and intervention in political affairs among some member states, have also in so many instances acted as a setback towards the development of the ECOWAS region. Each civilian administration among member states always wants to come up with its own new policies, discarding the old policies of the previous administrations, even when such policies seems to be people oriented. This of course is another major setback among member states of ECOWAS. This of course brings back the various states to the take-off point each time a new administration is elected to govern. This of course stifles development, and also encourages wastage of financial resources that are very scarce. It works against sustainable development, planning, and implementation of policies that are meant to change for the better the lives of the citizens.¹³

4. Economy of ECOWAS and Issues of Trade

One of the biggest and greatest challenges towards the integration of ECOWAS is issues related to economy of its member states. Issues and factors related to economy have posed serious challenges towards the intention of ECOWAS member states, to establish and operate an integrated market system under the umbrella of a Common External Tariff (CET). The economy of the member states of ECOWAS is in total shambles and disarray, and

has therefore always posed serious threats and challenges towards the goals and objectives of the regional organization. It is on record with statistics, that most member states of ECOWAS are regarded as the poorest and most impoverished nations on earth, as they also remain highly indebted to various international financial institutions like World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund). The rural economies of most member states of ECOWAS are in tatters as poverty and underdevelopment continue to spread like wide fire. The market system of member states of ECOWAS is very thin and narrow, and so therefore, it has always posed a very serious threat towards the development of the economy of member states within the ECOWAS region, as the amount of trade among member states of ECOWAS is also very tiny. Among other member states of other regional organizations, trade and the market system have always acted as one of the best tool or strategy in making out for a successful integration. Constant trade and an open market system within member states of other regional organizations like ASEAN have always been used in the measurement of performance. However, ECOWAS have totally failed in this regard, as intra-regional trade looks very thin, or even non-existent.¹⁴ Trade as well as the market system within the ECOWAS region is monopolized, as there are no competitions among the member states of ECOWAS in either its market system or its economy. Most market and trade assets within the borders of member states of ECOWAS are yet to be privatized, as they still remain under the firm control of the government forces. Another of the very great challenge posing a very serious threat towards the successful integration of ECOWAS member states is that, the customs of member states are very corrupt. Majority of the member states of ECOWAS generates revenue in regards to exporting of commodities. These commodities in most of cases are not manmade or technological, as they remain solely mineral or natural commodities. This simply translates to the fact that, ECOWAS as a community of different countries is not developing, but rather sliding more and more into abject poverty. It is on record that even the hierarchy of ECOWAS had stated in the past, that the economy of the countries within the ECOWAS fold are all import driven. What this simply means is that, ECOWAS member countries are regarded as "consuming societies and not producing societies". ECOWAS member states operate on the same line in regards to been so homogenous in the products its exports, as they all remain the same in terms of mineral and natural resources. The only very few differences in its products of exports is in mineral resources. This of course cannot be made use of to measuring the fact that the region is developing, as it remains below bottom. The best tool or strategy to measuring a very successful integration is diverseness and how heterogeneous the economies of the regional organizations are. Among the various ECOWAS member states, each of the countries needs to be dependent on each other in terms of trade and commodities. Diverseness of trade and commodity of course can also attract countries from outside the ECOWAS bloc to be interested in business investments with member states of ECOWAS. It is on record that in a study conducted by the World Bank in 2006, countries in the entire sub-Saharan African region were regarded as the poorest and most impoverished globally. In 1981, the populations of the region were in the figure of 164 million, and in 2006, it moved upwards to 314 million. However, and as the figures of the population continue to soar higher, most of the countries within the ECOWAS bloc have little or no savings at all. In 2000, four countries within the ECOWAS bloc were rated the most poor and impoverished countries globally, as they were ranked among the bottom-10 countries globally. This rating was in regards to total wealth, and the countries and their rankings are namely: Nigeria in the ninth position, Chad in second position, Niger in sixth position, and Guinea-Bissau was ranked fourth. In 2010, a study was conducted, and eleven out of the fifteen countries within the ECOWAS bloc was placed and identified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This was in regards to the estimate of their wealth. In 2012, another study was conducted by ECA (Economic Commission for Africa), and the study confirmed that the growth witnessed in African countries fell by nearly half in 2011.¹⁵

5. Disputes from Battles, Politics, Administration, and Socio-culture

It should be noted that, it is the responsibility of the governments of the various countries that makes up the ECOWAS bloc to push for developments in their various countries, in other to attaining integration with other ECOWAS member states. Also, it is the constitutional rights of the governments of the various ECOWAS member states to support or give a stamp of approval to, or having to withhold decisions on policies related to Conventions or Protocols, as well as also making purposeful policies towards executing them. The governments of the individual member states of ECOWAS are regarded as the steering of the integrative progression, towards giving a better life to its own citizens and nationals. They are regarded as the mechanism in a vehicle (integrative process), which makes it possible to steer it in different directions. In otherworld's, it is the responsibility and mandate of the government of the individual member states of ECOWAS, to either choose to succeed or fail woefully. It is very possible for the government to succeed in the integrative process, when they come up with policies that can be easily merged together with other members of the ECOWAS community, in as much as there is no political uncertainty, wars, battles, and terrorism.¹⁶

6. Issues Related to Deceit, and Deception of REC's Among Member States of ECOWAS Community

It is on record that a good number of member states of ECOWAS also belong to other Regional Economic Communities (REC). Some of these individual member states of ECOWAS actually belong to one or more Regional Economic Communities outside that of ECOWAS. This of course leads to replacement, reproduction,

and replication against the struggle and determination of ECOWAS towards the integration of the ECOWAS regional communities. For example, the Mano River Union (MRU) is a host to three member states of ECOWAS, and they are namely: **Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia**. It is also to be noted, that some other ECOWAS member states belong to West African Economic and Monetary Union (also known by its French shortening or abbreviation as: UEMOA). These countries are namely: Togo, Benin, Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, and Guinea-Bissau. Of note worthy is Guinea-Bissau, which belongs to three different regional organizations, which are namely: ECOWAS, MRU, and UEMOA. West African Economic and Monetary Union (also known by its French abbreviation as: UEMOA) is a francophone reproduction or replication of the exact same role as that of ECOWAS. Nevertheless, UEMOA has more higher, sophisticated, and developed regional cooperating system. Members of uses the same currency, which is called FCFA. The FCFA is one amongst two of the currencies which are used in Africa, and are guaranteed by the French treasury. UEMOA also boasts of a monetary union, which is called WAEMU. UEMOA also operates a common exterior tax and duty systems, as well as a mutual and shared business rules and regulations. The bottom line is that, UEMOA as a francophone version of ECOWAS was established, to work towards greater regional integration, and with unified external tariffs system. That of course, they are already achieving. However, and nevertheless, the contention and competition between regional organizations like ECOWAS and UEMOA from the same regional bloc of West Africa, often leads to a situation whereby scarce chance or prospect and possibilities are destabilized and weakened by lack of cooperation. This of course, acts against the spirit of brotherhood of a pan-West African integration plan and blueprint.¹⁷

7. Supervisory Government Encounters and Infrastructure

Countries that have no strong economic structure, base or foundation, automatically translates to having very weak, or even non-existent infrastructures which are needed to speedy up development. This can be said to be the situation among member states of the ECOWAS community. Among member states of ECOWAS community, there exist no regional rails networks that are supposed to ease transportation among the citizens of various member states. Also, good road networks are very scarce, as well as twenty-first century telecommunication infrastructures. Both of good road networks and twenty-first century telecommunication infrastructures are in dilapidated conditions. Since its formation, ECOWAS and its member states have not been able to work out on a fused telecom network. A fused telecom network will be able to link the entire ECOWAS community, and therefore make telecommunications cheaper and easily accessible by its citizens. Presently, regional calls within and among ECOWAS member states, are charged at international rates, which makes it become too expensive for the most impoverished citizens of the region. It is very important that the ECOWAS community build up a twenty-first century expanded telecommunication network infrastructure, which will at the end promote business activities, trade, and social communications among citizens of member states. The West African Gas-pipeline which was proposed, built, and completed by ECOWAS, and has a route of connecting lines between Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana, has not been able to totally take care of the shortage in that very sector, as it comes with a less than optimal output or efficiency. It is also of noteworthy that, most member states of ECOWAS do not really contribute towards the development of the regional organization, which will in turn help to make ECOWAS a very formidable organization. Only a small number of ECOWAS member states actually participate in any developmental projects within the region. They participate only when they have something of great interest to maximize from it. Also, not many member states of ECOWAS are interested in investing their time and resources in developmental projects that has to do with long term benefit. They are only interested in investing their time and resources in very short term benefits as it relates to or affects the region's integrated market system. Also, the resolve, determination, and firmness at which the various countries that make up the ECOWAS community protects, defends, shields, and watch-over their various border points with quadruplicated frontier-post and barrier is very much at an alarming state. This is due to the fact that, even citizens of member states of ECOWAS find it very difficult to migrate from their own country, to another member state of ECOWAS. This of course leads to the fact that the bottom-line or basis of market integration within the ECOWAS community remains a concept and theory, as it is yet to be absolved into practicality by majority of the member states of the ECOWAS community. Most developmental concepts and theories propagated by member states of ECOWAS are simply just mere academic jamborees, which start and end on paper, and have never had any physical or practical bearing on the lives of the citizens of member states of ECOWAS.¹⁸

"In a study conducted by ECOWAS, it was categorically stated that, there are two frontier-posts or more on every 100 km bounded-by between Accra and Ouagadougou. So also it applies to the fact that, in every 100 km on the road bounded-by Lagos and Abidjan, exists seven frontier-posts. The consequence of these behaviours, attitudes, and processes, is that, it has actually given support and strength to the various corrupt, tainted, and polluted governments of the ECOWAS region, whose security and law enforcement agents, continue without end, to threaten, bully and extract money from innocent citizens of the ECOWAS community. This therefore dwindles and weakens the efforts of ECOWAS towards an integrated regional economic structure".¹⁹

It must therefore be noted that, the deceitfulness, deception, and criminality which exists among the law enforcements agents of these frontier-posts is very alarming and shaming for ECOWAS as a regulatory regional organization, as it has created and established its own regime of dictatorship outside of their various central government. This has seriously affected trade and businesses within the various countries of the ECOWAS region. Free flow of humans, goods, services, and capital are very important towards ECOWAS's visualization for a borderless community among ECOWAS member states, and to be associated with well monitored economic system structure which has the size and proportion to accommodating the social, cultural, and technological ambition or appetite of member states of the ECOWAS community. Because of its affordability, the road network system of transportation remains the best link within the various member states of ECOWAS community. Due to this, the various member states of ECOWAS came up with policies that were ratified to that effect. One of such ratified policy is "Protocol A/P.1/5/79". This very policy and act was established to promote the use of road network as a means of migration, which helps in the speedy development of the ECOWAS region. Another of such established policy and act is the "Convention A/P.2/5/85". This was done in other to piloting a robust territorial or regional road network transport system. This protocol also supports and promotes unhindered flow of humans, goods, services, and capitals through the modification and adjustment of the transport policies of member states of ECOWAS. However, it remains very pathetic and in a very sorry state, that despite all the numerous acts, laws, and protocols, free flow of humans, goods, services, and capitals within the ECOWAS region remains a mirage, as they only exist in very bogus papers and files. What the member states of ECOWAS community do not know, or are not aware of, is that, once there is free flow of persons, goods, services, and capitals, within the ECOWAS region, it will definitely spur and continue to encourage and support development and competition, among member states of ECOWAS. This can also lead to competition in industrial happenings and undertakings among the member states of the ECOWAS region, as it also helps in building a very strong and virile economic structure, which can lead to industrial revolution among member states of the ECOWAS community. So therefore, it is very pertinent to state that, the criminalities, intimidation, persuasion, deceitfulness, graft, corruption, and coercion, which often takes place at the various existing frontier-points, must be discouraged, and must cease to exist, as practices of these types undermines development. These frequent and very corrupt law enforcement agents on the various checkpoints at various ECOWAS community highways can be classified as cruel, brutal, ruthless, merciless, and barbaric law enforcement officers, as they continue to harass and forcefully collect money from the various users of the highway. Summarily, on these ECOWAS community highways, the various law enforcement officers, even go to the extent of using autocratic and dictatorial power of the gun to imposing charges for stamping the international passport of the various citizens of ECOWAS member states.²⁰

8. The Lack or Deficiency in Unifying and Assimilating the Society

It is important to note here that member states of ECOWAS community have found it very difficult and impossible to integrate and unify the various ethnic, tribal, and religions groups into a single entity, which will at the end enhance a peaceful cohabitation among everyone. Unification or integration is a very necessary element towards the process of nation-building and development. The various member states of ECOWAS lack a proper and practical integration strategy, as all its seminar papers are mainly theoretically based. In other to achieve a harmonious society among the various member states of ECOWAS, the governments of the various member states, as well as the citizens, must see and view integration as an unavoidable tool that can be used to fostering peace and stability. The government and its people in Africa are mostly interested in short term goals, which often results in immediate needs and satisfaction. Member states of ECOWAS and ECOWAS needs to be very responsible by embracing and drawing up developmental blue-prints that are very practical, and can assist in effectively tackling issues related to poverty among its citizens. It could therefore be said that, since the formation of ECOWAS in 1975 by different countries, with which they had their various economies as a focal point of concentration, none of the government of these member states of ECOWAS, has ever deemed it fit, or put it into consideration to drawing up a plan or strategy from its own national frontier, of which the ECOWAS regional economy and market will be the main focus and target, to achieving regional economic and political successes. It is important to note that, pan-Africanism or pan-ECOWAS only exist on papers been delivered by various scholars in various seminars. In the actual sense, it does not exist practically. Governments of the various member states of ECOWAS are not interested in coming up with various types of enticement, motivation, and encouragement for the citizens of other member states, who indulge in intra-West African business and trade outside their own country of birth or origin. Giving out incentives to them encourages trade and business, as it also gives them the thought to begin to think and behave the pan-ECOWAS way, where they begin to see everyone and each other as just mere neighbours, and no longer demarcated by boundaries, languages, ethnic, tribe, and religion. Despite its regional single passport usage, ECOWAS and its member states do not have any regional unification or assimilation culture, which is highly needed for both national and regional economic development.²¹

3. CHALLENGES OF ASEAN (ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH-EAST ASIAN NATIONS)

Since the formation of ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) on the 8th of August, 1967, as a regional organization, it has experienced so many setbacks, and also still suffering from so many setbacks. However, unlike ECOWAS, and despite its challenges and setbacks, ASEAN has been able to carve a niche for itself among the world's most known and vibrant regional organizations. As at presently, ASEAN consists of ten member countries, which are namely: Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, and Laos. However, there is currently one country on an "observer status", and it is Papua New Guinea (PNG).²² ASEAN has had so much challenges and setbacks despite its economic successes. It can be explained further that, due to rapid economic successes, member states of ASEAN is currently experiencing the availability of trained and very skillful manpower. Also, due to this, there is the regular and steady inflow of FDIs (Foreign Direct Investment) to the ASEAN region. This have therefore placed huge and enormous burden on the various countries that make up the ASEAN regional organization. Member states of ASEAN, is also currently facing enormous tasks. This is due to the fact that ASEAN member states is taking precaution, not to allowing the free movement of labour and migrants, just as it is been practiced among the member states of European Union (EU). For that of the European Union, labours and migrants are allowed to move freely within the various countries of EU, even if they do not possess skills or qualifications. Citizens of countries that make up the European Union are freely employed in other EU member countries. ASEAN and its member states at the moment are very much scared to adopt such a policy among ASEAN member states. Another setback is the fact that, ASEAN member states uses MRAs (Mutual Recognition Arrangement). MRA is an arrangement among the various member states of ASEAN, which is devised and planned to facilitate the easy movement of skilled manpower and professionals among and within the various member states of ASEAN. However, and despite the existence of MRA (Mutual Recognition Arrangement), the various member states of ASEAN also have their own domestic labour policy, which often clashes with that of the ASEAN designed MRA (Mutual Recognition Arrangement). Also, there is the lack of infrastructure and facilities among and within ASEAN member states, which would help or assist in the growth and development of the existing AEC (ASEAN Economic Community). Infrastructure and facilities of these kinds which are supposed to support the AEC policies are; building of very strong and physical connecting network which of course requires enormous and extremely large funding of facilities and infrastructures, such as airports, modernization and reconstruction of airports, massive road networks, and rail lines. It can also be said that, ASEAN and its member states lacks "Public Private Sector Partnership". Public Private Sector Partnership is highly needed among the various member states of ASEAN, as it helps and assists in developing infrastructures and facilities in the entire ASEAN region. It is also very important and necessary, that the various competing interests should be balanced, so that it works along with the ASEAN internal integration policies, and the integration of all the partners of ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA).²³

It can also be said that South-East Asian nations boasts of tremendous, superb, and excellent religion, language, ethnicity, tradition, and culture. The various South-East Asian nations also have various forms and types of government, and governance, as there also is the issue of the various member states of ASEAN having to interpret issues related human rights in different ways, as it soothes their own country's interest. Among the various member states of ASEAN also exist different interpretations as regarding to the appropriate or suitable connection and affiliation between the state and the individual citizen. Comparing the diversiveness and lack of cooperation and coordination among the various member states of ECOWAS, it is remarkable and praise worthy, that despite the huge and enormous differences among the various member states of ASEAN, they have still been able to achieve all that they have done economically, and within five decades. However, ASEAN and its member states can move further higher in every aspect, when they are able to understand their differences better and therefore achieve a system with a much lessened differences among member states, but with an existing diversity. ASEAN and its member states also need to achieve broader commonality that applies to the sharing of features and attributes. It is very important to note that, any inability to achieving this, will seriously undermine its diversity, as it will go further to making it very weak, and not strong. Going further, ASEAN and its member states also have serious problems as regarding to implementation of agreements reached during regional meetings. In most instances, and between ASEAN and its member states, only about 30 percent of agreements and commitments made, are ever implemented. This of course seriously undermines the developmental process of ASEAN as a regional organization. ASEAN also lacks central structure and device, which could have helped the regional organization in its drive for compliance among member states. Added is the problem of lack of "dispute settlement structure". This is both in the economic and political front. The ASEAN headquartered secretariat which is located in Jakarta, Indonesia, is yet to become, or have a very powerful influence that goes beyond the national boundaries or governments of member states of ASEAN. If such persists, then the various meetings, rulings, proposals, decisions, and declarations of ASEAN will become, or be seen as a pawn been used against one another by the various member states of ASEAN. ASEAN and its member states have not been able to dedicate greater attention and focus to citizens who engage in small and medium-sized enterprise. So also less

attention have also been dedicated to small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs. This of course, gives negativity and also weakens the strength and policies of AEC (ASEAN Economic Community). These categories of citizens, who engage in legitimate means of livelihood within the ASEAN community, should be given and provided with modernized information, technical and financial assistance, in order to continue to proclaiming and propagating the policies of AEC (ASEAN Economic Community). There is a disconnection between the AEC (ASEAN Economic Community) and the other two pillars within the ASEAN community, and those two pillars are "Political-Security Community and Socio-Cultural Community". ASEAN and its member states have focused too much on AEC (ASEAN Economic Community), of which there can really be no successful economy without a balanced, continuous, strong, and very robust political-security structure and plan. So also it applies to the fact that, a balanced and stable economy must also go along with a very strong and healthy socio-cultural footing and supporting structure. At the moment and currently, ASEAN as a regional organization has a setback. In that, most citizens of member states of ASEAN do not identify with ASEAN, as they prefer to identify with their various countries of origin. This is the exact opposite of what entails in Europe, as citizens of member states of European Union (EU) prefer to identify themselves first as Europeans, before moving further to identify themselves with their various countries of origin. Most citizens of member states of ASEAN still do not believe that they have a voice in the decision-making process of ASEAN, as they regard ASEAN as an organization or forum strictly made for policy-makers, strategists, administrators, and bureaucrats. Just like ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), it can also be added that ASEAN as a regional organization, lacks a common foreign policy, a common security policy or network, and also a common economic policy. However, it can also be stated that, it will be very difficult for ASEAN and its member states to achieve such fit, simply on the reason that member states of ASEAN operates on the terrain of different political culture. One of the weakest and greatest challenges of ASEAN is that, it has no "collective identity" among its members. Although, the issue of ASEAN not having or sharing a "common identity", can be viewed from the angle that the regional organization operates on the terrain of non-rigid policies. However, it remains a setback and a very great challenge for ASEAN and its member states, in that, the principles and policies of ASEAN are secondary, compared to the principles and policies of member states of ASEAN, which always comes first in the agenda and policies of member states of ASEAN, even in their relationships. Citizens of ASEAN still do not align with ASEAN, as they align more with their respective countries of origin. This of course gives credence to the fact that, most citizens among the member states of ASEAN knows the name of the President of The United States of America, but they find it very difficult to be able to know the name of the President or Prime Minister of a neighbouring country, who happens to also be a fellow member of ASEAN. For example, an Indonesian knows the name of the President of the United States, but do not know the name of the Prime Minister of Malaysia. Another great challenge within the ASEAN organization is that, most member states of ASEAN relies more on the international media, to knowing the happenings inside other member states of ASEAN. The inability of citizens of member states of ASEAN to knowing about the cultures and traditions of fellow member states of ASEAN is a serious setback, and also an obstacle for ASEAN, as it tries to build a formidable and community-based ASEAN region. Most member states of ASEAN are still very much angry against each other. This is due to past happenings of so many years and decades, which have eventually led to bitterness, resentment, hatred, dislike, hard feelings, and enmity against each other, and some member states of ASEAN. These old prejudices have of course led to suspicion and mistrust among some member's states of ASEAN, and it definitely leads to a disunited and divided ASEAN. ASEAN's greatest challenge and deficiency is the lack of physical infrastructures, such as; interconnecting bridges, road networks, and rail lines. These are very necessary and urgent, as it helps to moving goods, services, and humans through the entire region, as it remains easily affordable than air transport.²⁴ ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has been unable to achieve a "single currency" for its member states, unlike European Economic Community (EEC) which have been able to achieve such fit. Also, ASEAN and its member states have not been able to tackle issues related to borderless communities and monetary union. However, these are gradual processes for ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), as ASEAN and its member states have been able to achieve giant strides in its five decades of existence.²⁵

4. SUCCESS ACHIEVED BY ECOWAS (ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES)

Despite its very slow pace towards regional development and advancement, ECOWAS can also be given some accolades for some successes and achievements since its establishment in 1975. ECOWAS has always taken into serious consideration, the issue of regional peace and security. This led to the formation of Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in 1990. However, the formation and establishment of ECOMOG was highly influenced by Anglophone (English speaking) ECOWAS members. This was in response to the civil war in Liberia, which spanned between 1989 to 1996. ECOMOG has also helped to providing peace and security in ECOWAS member states that are experiencing war. Furthermore, another achievement of ECOWAS is on road projects. ECOWAS as a regional organization have been able to construct and rehabilitate various road networks within the ECOWAS region. One of such gigantic achievement of

ECOWAS on road network is the Abidjan-Lagos High Way, which commences from Elubo, and stretches through Aflao to Lagos, Nigeria. That of Lagos-Nouakchott High way is also a plus for ECOWAS's achievements on road networking within the West African region. In terms of communication, ECOWAS has recorded some achievements. This is due to the fact that, there is a direct telecommunication network among ECOWAS member states. However, citizens of ECOWAS member states have to pay a very high tariff for making use of such telephone communication. This can however be recorded as an achievement for ECOWAS, because previously, and before the emergence of direct telecommunication network among ECOWAS member states, direct telecommunication was channeled through Europe, before been re-routed to any other West African country. There have also been a lot of achievements on the free movement of humans. ECOWAS has achieved a lot on the free movement of humans, services, and goods, without any hindrance, obstruction, barrier, and impediment within the ECOWAS region. This has been a successful and continuous process, as citizens of ECOWAS member states do not need a visa to travel within the ECOWAS region. Also, citizens of ECOWAS member states can move freely within the ECOWAS region, in as much as they have a valid "ECOWAS International Passport". Citizens of ECOWAS member states can also reside in any other ECOWAS member states, outside of their own country of origin, and this of course does not exceed more than ninety days. Despite the fact that it still exist, ECOWAS has been able to drastically reduce the suspicion and mistrust between ECOWAS member states of the Anglophone (English speaking) bloc, and ECOWAS member states of the Francophone (French speaking) bloc. This is due to the fact that, ECOWAS as a regional body for all, irrespective of ethnicity or tribe, has been able to provide an official and united platform for both bloc.²⁶

With the formation and establishment of ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) in 1979, ECOWAS and its member states have been able to engage in trade, within the West Africa region. In 1979, when ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) was established, the concentration was solely on agricultural, and other crude products. However, and in 1990, industrial products were concluded. The ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) was basically established to meet the needs of a common market within the West Africa region, and among its member states. This was done to liberalize trade, and also, the elimination and eradication of customs duties, which was levy to be paid by both importers and exporters. Also, the elimination of non-tariff barriers, in other that a free trade zone be created among member states of ECOWAS. The ETLS also sought to boost and strengthen entrepreneurial advancement within the ECOWAS region, as it also made it as part of its agenda, to intensify competition of ECOWAS member states within the global market. The various summits been organized by ECOWAS, and which are always been attended by ECOWAS Heads of Member States, acts as an "advisory body" to ECOWAS. This is because in these summits been organized by ECOWAS, various difficulties and drawbacks associated with the ECOWAS region are tabled, and thereafter, dialogue and debates are engaged in, and a quick-fix or way-out is proposed, suggested, and approved. Furthermore, been that the "Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of West African countries is very low, ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) was established to increasing the GDP's of ECOWAS member states, which thus translates to mean that, the citizens and people of ECOWAS member states will experience better well-being, happiness, progress, abundance, and prosperity. These trade policies undertaken by ECOWAS has somewhat advanced and contributed towards the economic advancement of the West African region.²⁷

ECOWAS have also been able to upgrade its responsibility towards the citizens and member states of ECOWAS, by the establishment of the ECOWAS Monetary Institute (EMI). Also, ECOWAS has gone further towards concluding the assessment and evaluation of its action plan, which is meant to increase regional security. It was tagged "Sahel Strategy Document". It can also be noted that thirteen member states of ECOWAS have been able to append their various signatures, towards the completion of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). ECOWAS and it member states are also planning towards the establishment of a single customs union within the West African region. This process is made possible with the implementation of the CET (Common External Tariff) by Eight Member states of ECOWAS. Furthermore, ECOWAS and its member states have been able to advance, with the launching of the ECOLINK Scheme. The ECOLINK Scheme is meant to reconstruct, remodel, and thereafter perfect vital operations among member's states of the ECOWAS community. ECOWAS and its member states have also gone further to re-awarding the construction of the Seme-Krake Joint Border Post, which is a link between Benin and Nigeria. There is also the Supplementary Act on Dakar-Abidjan Corridor, which has been signed, and it is meant towards regional electricity scheme. The scheme cuts along and across four member states of ECOWAS, and they are namely: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Cote d'Ivoire.²⁸

4.1 The Role of ECOWAS in Yahya Jammeh's Outster

The role of ECOWAS in the forceful removal of Yahya Jammeh as President of Gambia can also be applauded. When Yahya Jammeh lost the Presidential election to his main rival, Adama Barrow, in December 2016, he totally refused to transfer political power to the winner Adama Barrow by January 2017. However, ECOWAS was able to raise troops from a bloc of West African countries, with Nigerian and Senegalese troops at the forefront. Ghana, Togo, and Mali also had supporting troops. On the 15th of January, 2017, Adama Barrow,

(then President-Elect of Gambia), fled to Senegal for the safety of his life. With the assistance of Senegal, and on the 19th of January, 2017, Adama Barrow was sworn in as the new President of Gambia, in Gambia's embassy in Dakar (Federal Capital of Senegal). For the fear of ECOWAS troops taking over the security of Gambia, and having him arrested and tried for crimes against humanity, Yahya Jammeh had to quickly rescind his decision of holding onto political power, by fleeing to exile in Equatorial Guinea.²⁹ On the 26th January, 2017, and with the support of ECOWAS troops on ground, Adama Barrow arrived Gambia and took over as the new President of Gambia. The return of Adama Barrow to Gambia marked Gambia's first democratic transfer of political power. This would have been totally impossible, if not for the force applied by ECOWAS member states and its troops.

4.2 Brief Overview of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Member States of ECOWAS Region

Despite the perceived successes of ECOWAS in some areas and sectors since its establishment in 1975, the table below clearly shows that the regional organization and its member states still needs to work harder, in other to be able to make a resounding success. ECOWAS must therefore move away from mere rhetoric's in its seminar papers, and has the responsibility to transform those words into practicality.

Table 2
 Brief Overview of the ECOWAS Region¹¹

COUNTRY	ESTIMATED POPULATION (million)					EST. NO. OF ETHNIC GROUPS	EST. NO. OF LOCAL DIALECTS	MOST POPULAR DIALECT(S)	OFFICIAL LANGUAGE	~ GDP PER CAPITA (US \$)	EST. LITERACY RATE (%)
	0-14 yrs.	15-24 yrs.	25-54 yrs.	55-64 yrs.	>65 yrs.						
Benin	4.5	2	3	0.3	0.3	20	50	Fon, Yoruba	French	1,600	42.4
Burkina Faso	8.4	3.7	5.3	0.5	0.5	20	60	Moore, Dyuala	French	1,500	28.7
Cape Verde	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.03	0.03	-	1	Crioulo	Portuguese	4,400	84.9
Cote d'Ivoire	8.8	4.4	7.6	1	0.8	-	60	Dioula	French	1,800	56.9
Gambia	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.08	0.06	-	-	-	English	2,000	51.1
Ghana	9.9	4.8	8.7	1.2	1	48	81	Ashante	English	3,500	71.5
Guinea	4.4	2.2	3.4	0.5	0.4	-	-	-	French	1,100	41
Guinea-Bissau	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.08	0.05	-	-	Crioulo	Portuguese	1,200	68.9
Liberia	1.8	0.8	1.2	0.03	0.02	-	20	-	English	700	64.8
Mali	7.8	2.8	4.3	0.6	0.4	-	13	Bambara	French	1,100	43.1
Niger	8.7	3.2	4.6	0.6	0.4	-	2	Hausa, Djerma	French	800	42.9
Nigeria	76.4	34.2	54.2	7	5.5	89	500	Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo	English	2,800	72.1
Senegal	5.8	2.8	4.2	0.5	0.4	-	4	Wolof	French	2,100	61.8
Sierra Leone	2.4	1.1	1.8	0.2	0.3	-	-	Mende, Temne	English	1,400	54.7
Togo	3	1.4	2.4	0.3	0.2	-	-	Ewe, Kabye	French	1,100	74.1

Note. Data in table was gathered from the ECOWAS Commission and the Central Intelligence Agency

¹¹ Reproduced from ECOWAS, 2013, n.p [online]; CIA, 2014, n.p. [online].

5. SUCCESS ACHIEVED BY ASEAN (ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH-EAST ASIAN NATIONS)

5.1 Food and Agriculture

Despite its challenges and setbacks, ASEAN and its member states have been able to handle issues related to food security. Knowing very well the importance of food for its citizens, ASEAN member states came together in 1979 and signed an agreement, which is today known as ASEAN Food Security Reserve (AFSRB). Under the 1979 agreement, member states of ASEAN came to the conclusion that, every member state of ASEAN must institute and create an ASEAN Emergency Rice Reserve (AERR), and that this must be done within the national border of every member state of ASEAN. This is because rice is the basic food stock among member states of the ASEAN community. Currently, the total amount and quantity of rice designated for the ASEAN Emergency Rice Reserve (AERR) stands at 87,000 metric tons. Also, ASEAN has gone further by embarking on two other programs, which is currently been implemented. These schemes are been implemented under the AMAF+3 mechanism and they are namely: ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), and also, East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve (EAERR). On 23rd October, 2008, ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) held its thirtieth (30th) meeting in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. The meeting was held to handle the crisis in relation to the high cost of food prices, and also the global financial crisis. The food and financial crisis was a threat to the peaceful existence of the citizens of the member states of ASEAN. At that very meeting held by AMAF, the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) and Strategic Plan of Action on ASEAN Food Security (SPA-FS) were both endorsed. The endorsement of these two schemes was to improve and ensure long term

food security, and also to further enrich the farmers within the ASEAN region. Furthermore, at the ASEAN fourteenth (14th) summit, the AIFS Framework and SPA-FS were both adopted. This very summit was held in Cha-am, Thailand, from February 26th, to March 1st, 2009. At this summit, ASEAN leaders pledged to make sure food security remains a permanent agenda on their various governments plan. ASEAN and its member states have also gone further to working on food safety within the ASEAN region. It was due to these efforts that ASEAN went further to advancing and creating the ASEAN Food Safety Network website, which is known as www.aseanfoodsafetynetwork.net. The role and function of the ASEAN Food Safety Network website is to offer and make available helpful, effective, valuable, beneficial, and effective news reporting's, statistics, facts, and figures on food safety. These statistics and facts are done through the SPS measures of various countries. ASEAN has also achieved a lot of success on agriculture. On issues related to "Agricultural Cooperatives", ASEAN have been able to implement various "Strategic Alliances (SA)" schemes. These schemes have been implemented in the following initiatives and innovativeness, and they are namely: data and information, coconut-by-product, beef farming, agro-ecotourism, agricultural production and marketing, carrageenan, and marketing beans and pulses. ASEAN went further to achieving a resounding success on the "Strategic Alliances (SA)" schemes, with focus on "Beef Farming". This had led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). A MoU is an agreement between two or more parties. This very Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Johor State Farmers Organization of Malaysia, and the Krida Satwa Cooperative of Indonesia. The objective and aim towards signing the MoU is on the trading of goats of Ettawa (Jamnapari). The Ettawa goats are regarded as the best dairy goats. There is also the ASEAN Cooperative Business Forum (ACBF), which was initiated and founded in 2006. The aim, purpose, goal, and intention that led to the formation of ASEAN Cooperative Business Forum (ACBF), is to advance and put forward commercial and corporative connections, and also transactions among the likely and possible agricultural cooperatives domiciled within and among member states of ASEAN. Furthermore, among its objectives is also to authorize and legitimize farmers, farmers associations, and Farmer Corporation or union. ASEAN and its member states have also done extremely well in the areas related to "Agricultural Training and Extension". These enables farmers within the ASEAN region to select, adapt, and make application of various technologies, as it greatly assists in the increment of agricultural production. ASEAN and its member states went further to establishing the Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The IPM is meant to educate farmers within the ASEAN region, on agricultural products related to fruits and vegetables. This was initiated as a wide-ranging and all-inclusive methodology, which is meant to improving the quality of crops, as well as to reducing the losses of crops. ASEAN and its member states have been able to draw up a program and scheme through the Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which is meant to develop and train its "agricultural extension officers" on areas related to fruits and vegetables. ASEAN and its member states, through the Integrated Pest Management (IPM), came up with the idea of "Think IPM and Take Action". Under the "Think IPM and Take Action" platform, vital and important data's and figures are made available. This is meant to help the "agricultural extension officers" build-up and also make-stronger their grasp and ability, which is very important in their routing to assisting the farmers. Also not left out in ASEAN's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) trainings are durian, rice, shallots, soybean, corn, pabelo, mango, and vegetable (cabbage and potato). ASEAN and its various member states, have also been able to monitor very effectively, the application and putting into practice of its national IPM programme. This was done to assist the various national governments and non-governments organizations within the ASEAN region. The result of the assistance from ASEAN, led to the establishment of the ASEAN IPM Knowledge Network, which can be found here: <http://ASEAN-IPM.searca.org>. The main objective of ASEAN and its member states behind the IPM Knowledge Network is to share knowledge, information, facts, and data, which can be used by other member states to improving and upgrading their own national IPM program. In other to achieve this, ASEAN and its member states through the ASEAN IPM, founded and created an electronic IPM Knowledge Management Facility. The electronic IPM Knowledge Management Facility was established to making sure that IPM knowledge is always on hand, obtainable, and accessible to the various strategists, policy makers, and also those are responsible for implementing programs. Currently, and at the moment, the ASEAN Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is headquartered in the Philippines, as it functions as the region's Database and Network Administrator on issues related to such. However, every member state of ASEAN have its own Integrated Pest Management (IPM) centre, but they are all associated and connected to the ASEAN Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which is headquartered in the Philippines. ASEAN and its member states have also recorded giant strides in the area of "Research and Development in Agriculture". Member states of ASEAN engage in deep rooted cooperation on issues related to "Research and Development in Agriculture", and this very cooperation was established in 2005. From this cooperation on "Research and Development in Agriculture", ASEAN and its member states have achieved a lot, as different program and schemes have been established. These include the formation and creation of ASEAN Agricultural Research and Development Information System (ASEAN ARDIS), the enhancement and advancement of ASEAN Directory of Agricultural Research and Development Centre's within and among member states of ASEAN, and the recommendations, instructions,

rules, directions, and standards towards the use of the ASEAN Digital Information System.³²

5.2 ASEAN's Successful Economic Accomplishment

On the economic front, ASEAN has achieved a lot of successes. This is due to the economic revolution experienced by ASEAN and its member states, and this has of course led to greater peace and stability within the ASEAN region. ASEAN and its member states have been able to achieve rapid growth of its GDP (Gross Domestic Product), and also steady economic advancement. Currently, and at the global stage, most developing and underdeveloped countries are scrambling to copycat ASEAN's model of economic revolution. ASEAN and its member states were able to achieve a yearly growth of its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) at a rate of 7.0 percent. That was for a stretch of 25 years, from 1970 to 1995. Currently, with a joint and merged GDP, ASEAN and its member states are worth more than US\$ 700 billion, and also with a combined population of approximately 625 million people, which is 8.8% of the world's population. Between 1967 and 1970, ASEAN's general trade grew from US\$ 10 billion to US\$ 14 billion. In 1980, it grew to an amount of US\$ 134 billion, and in 1990, it grew to US\$ 302 billion. ASEAN and its member states achieved a lot further as its GDP grew further to US\$ 650 billion in 1995. Currently, with its joint and unified trade worth, ASEAN and its member states remains the fourth biggest and larger trading individual globally. That is after the European Union (EU), the United States of America, and Japan. Currently, ASEAN and its member states economy is coming closer to equality, sameness, and consistency with the economy of North America region, and even that of the European Union. In 1960, the conjoined GDP of East Asian countries stood at four percent of global GDP. In 1992, it went upwards to 25 percent. In the year 2010, it was forecasted and predicted to be 33 percent. However, and currently, central banks in East Asia are in grip of about 45 percent of the foreign reserves of the global community. ASEAN and its member states have been able to transform, upgrade, innovate, reconstruct, rebuild, and develop the region's makeup and configuration of invention and manufacturing. The share of ASEAN's primary sector reduced from 27 percent to 20 percent, and that was between 1970 and 1993. However, ASEAN's secondary sector went higher from 26 percent to 33 percent. ASEAN's tertiary sector remained in its original form of share at 47 percent. ASEAN and its member states also witnessed some decrement in its labour force employed and involved in agriculture, as there was a decline from 63 percent in the mid-70s to 53 percent in 1990. ASEAN and its member states also witnessed a rapid and steady growth in its industrial and service sectors. This therefore made these very industrial and service sectors to become the ASEAN major source of employment. Due to these advancement in the industrial and service sectors of ASEAN and its member states, the ASEAN region is now been considered as a hub for newly-industrializing economies. ASEAN and its member states recorded its landmark breakthrough towards economic revolution and advancement in its first ASEAN Economic Cooperation Summit, which was held in Bali (an Indonesian island), in 1976. At this very economic summit, ASEAN and its member states signed an accord, which is today regarded as the "Declaration of ASEAN Concord of 1976". The "Declaration of ASEAN Concord of 1976" came up with two historic official papers and documents. One among the two historic documents was the "Program of Action that created the avenue for three other significant medium and mechanism of ASEAN economic cooperation. These are: the Preferential Trading Arrangements (PTA), the ASEAN Industrial Projects (AIP), and the ASEAN Industrial Cooperation (AIC) stratagems. However, and later on, the ASEAN Industrial Cooperation (AIC) received a boost with the formation and establishment of the ASEAN Industrial Joint Ventures (AIJV). It was during this era and episode, that the leaders of the member states that makeup ASEAN, also came together and decided to initiate and commence combined determination on areas related to food, energy, and also cooperation to developing and advancing ASEAN's access to markets outside the ASEAN region. In 1977, and in Kuala Lumpur (capital of Malaysia), a summit was held by ASEAN and its member states. The summit was basically on economic cooperation with other countries outside of the ASEAN region. Such countries are Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. It was a dialogue on economic cooperation, as these three more advanced countries were ASEAN's trading partners. This summit set forth the advancement for ASEAN's wide-ranging dialogue with its trading partners, as they were the region's key sources of development assistance, technology, trade, and capital. It was in 1992 that ASEAN and its member states, took their economic cooperation to a new and higher level. This was perfected in the Singapore Summit Declaration. During the Singapore Summit Declaration, Ministers of Economy from the various member states of ASEAN signed an agreement on the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) program. This was done to approve and propagate the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA). It was a landmark decision, as it remained qualitative in supportive of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), towards the economic advancement and modernization of the region. In other to widen and enlarge the possibility and capacity of ASEAN's road-map towards an industrialized region, which was a fall-out from the carrying-out and putting into practice of the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) program, the Economic Ministers of the member states of ASEAN endorsed a new ASEAN Industrial Cooperation (AICO) program in 1996. The AICO program was inaugurated and established to advance and further the combined manufacturing and industrial goings-on among companies and industries domiciled within member states of

ASEAN. The aim and goal of this program, is that, products within AICO production, and after it must have been approved, will automatically be favoured as to the rate of tariffs, which will be plugged at 0-5 percent.

This scheme was established to further advance, broaden, and elevate the status of ASEAN and its member states, on areas related to investment and business. ASEAN and its member states have also gone further to engaging in both bilateral and regional economic cooperation with its immediate neighbouring countries. In June 1996, ASEAN went further to adopting an essential and key framework for the ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation. This was done due to the economic capacity of the Mekong Basin. The Mekong Basin scheme is a supplement to other cooperative programs and schemes which has been launched and embarked upon. Just like there are donors countries like Japan and South Korea, as well as other multilateral organizations like the Asian Development Bank. ASEAN and its member states also engage in various cooperation's at the sub-regional level. This can be likened to be ASEAN's encouragement towards the development and operation of areas that are tagged as "natural growth". This cooperation often involves adjoining areas or connecting states. Currently, ASEAN can boast of having been able to establish three forceful and determined growth areas, and they are namely: the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), and the Singapore-Johor-Riau Growth Triangle (SIJORI). ASEAN and its member states have also recorded giant strides in the area of cooperation. Areas such as trade and investment, which led to establishing the ASEAN Preferential Tariff Arrangement (PTA) in 1977, and which will also reach its climax with the achievement of an ASEAN Free Trade Area. ASEAN has also come out with a master plan that will culminate in the free flow of investment by 2020. ASEAN has also achieved a lot in the area of industry, in regards to cooperation. This commenced with the application and putting into practice of the ASEAN Industrial Projects (AIP) in 1976. A follow up was also initiated in 1983, and this led to establishing the ASEAN Industrial Joint Venture (AIJV) Program. In 1988, the Brand-to-Brand Complementation (BBC) program was also introduced. ASEAN Industrial Cooperation Scheme was approved in 1996, and this was done to substitute the previous and already existing schemes. ASEAN and its member states have also achieved a lot in the areas of cooperation in the finance and banking sectors respectively. This was proposed and embarked upon in other to advancing development of the capital markets of member states of ASEAN. Also, the free flow of capital and other financial resources. This also includes an extended relaxation and loosening up of the ASEAN legal tender, as it relates to both trade and investments. The ASEAN Ministerial Understanding on Finance Cooperation also relates to areas such as public finance, banking, insurance matters, taxation, human resource development (HRD), and monetary policy cooperation. ASEAN and its member states have also achieved cooperation in areas of food, agriculture, and forestry. In 1968, this led to the formation of a Committee on Food Production and Supply and Fisheries cooperation. In 1979, ASEAN went further to establish a Food Security Reserve and ASEAN Emergency Rice Reserve. There is also the implementation and putting into practice of the ASEAN Quarantine Ring, and also, the splitting of instructing and coaching of agricultural extension workers, and extension resources. In the area of forestry, ASEAN and its member states have also engaged in cooperation. This was done in other that ASEAN and its member states are able to administer and supervise, preserve and safeguard, and thereafter upgrade and market forest resources. ASEAN and its member states have also engaged in cooperation on areas of minerals and energy. This led to establishing of the ASEAN-EC Energy Management Training and Research Center in 1988, which is been partially funded, both in finance and technical by the European Union (EU). ASEAN and its member states embarked on this, in other to encourage the industrialization, manufacturing, and construction sectors of member states. The ASEAN-EC Energy Management Training and Research Center was established to support and encourage ASEAN's member states on areas related to "combined energy studies", and also, collaborative business enterprises among the various member states of ASEAN, and also, between the ASEAN and the European Union (EU). There is also ASEAN's cooperation in both the communications and transportation sectors. This has been carried out with the application and putting into practice of a Plan of Action in Communications and Transport. It is been done to advance and improve a transportation scheme, that will be able to connect ASEAN as a local community. Also, to attain and accomplish inter-connectivity in the telecommunication sectors of all member states of ASEAN. The cooperation among member states of ASEAN on areas related to communications and transportation, led to ASEAN establishing the ASEAN Optical Fibre Submarine Cable Network and Satellite Communication Development. Subsequently, and in other to join-together, blend, and put-together the ASEAN region more effectively and efficiently, ASEAN and its member states came up with a blueprint and a roadmap, towards the construction of a rail line, linking Singapore to Kunming in southern China. The said rail line will also pass through Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Malaysia. Tourism is also not left out within the cooperation schemes among member states of ASEAN, as this was one of the earliest programs embarked upon by the ASEAN community immediately after its formation. The aim of ASEAN's cooperation on tourism was to promote ASEAN and its member countries as a resting-place for tourists from all over the world. This also leads to the preservation of ASEAN's environmental and cultural heritages, as it sets to promote travel and human resource development within the

tourism zone, and among member states of ASEAN. It must be noted also, that ASEAN's Structural Agreement on Services included tourism as a very important sector, which must be developed and invested in. So therefore, and within a few decades, ASEAN and its member states have been able to record and attract the growth of tourist influx at an average of eight percent per year. This has therefore ranked ASEAN from the previous 12th position, to a new top 5th position, on the world's top 15 tourist destinations. ASEAN and its member states were able to record an amount of 30 million tourists in 1995. ASEAN and its member states have also gone ahead to engage in cooperation within the Private Sector. This is because; ASEAN's policy reaffirms the role of the private sector towards the development and growth of the economy. This has therefore led to various programs been initiated by ASEAN and its member states, under the control and representatives of ASEAN Senior Economic Officials and ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI). The ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI), have been able to move further by developing and establishing "Joint Business Councils" involving ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners. Agents and delegates of these "Joint Business Councils" frequently deal with the regular Dialogue sessions. ASEAN and its member states have also made it a priority, towards the development of External Economic Relations. This had therefore led to establishing connecting links, and also various meetings towards economic consultations with other developed economies of the world. It was Brunei Darussalam and other early founding members of ASEAN, which founded and established the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1989. This was done due to the developing and expansion of reliance and interdependence between the economies of Asia-Pacific. Currently, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has as its members, the dominant and large-scale economies, and also, economies in the world that are regarded as the fastest in terms of growth and development. About a fraction and part of global total annual output is been controlled by Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and its eighteen member economies. This is due to the fact that it has a Gross National Product (GNP) which exceeds US\$ 13 trillion. This has therefore made APEC and its member economies, to be in total control of about a fraction of global trade on commodities and products. To further extend its cooperation and influence globally, ASEAN and its member states has gone further to establishing a connecting-link, between ASEAN and Europe. This has led to the establishment of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). The first debut meeting of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was held in Bangkok in March 1996. In attendance, were 10 Asian nations Heads of State and Government, and also 15 European nations, as well as the President of the European Commission. At the ASEM meeting in Bangkok, a broad and all-inclusive Asia-Europe association and cooperation was built and formed, towards a higher and outstanding advancement. One of the earliest successes and accomplishment of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), was the formation and founding of the Asia-Europe Foundation. The Asia-Europe Foundation is headquartered in Singapore, and it was established towards the upgrade and advancement, that will lead to exchange of ideas among the various experts from both sides, and also, the people, and the various cultural associations. There is also the existence of Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF). The Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF) is a meeting of business leaders from Asia and Europe, and it was established by the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). In other to further build-up and consolidate the harmonious and coordinated relationship between East Asian economies, ASEAN went further by coming up with an idea, which therefore led to the establishment of East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC). The East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) is an unofficial forum, which is meant for consultations. It is also meant to make available space and moments for dialogue on issues related to economy between already existing members and soon-to-be members. Summarily, it can then be deduced, that ASEAN economic cooperation experienced or endured at two phases. One of such phase is ASEAN's first 25 years of survival. This was an era when ASEAN and its member states came together with the initiative, and established groundwork for simple and unassuming economic cooperation schemes, and thereafter became accustomed to each other. The second phase of ASEAN's existence started or kicked-off during the Singapore Summit of 1992. This was when ASEAN inaugurated the CEPT and AFTA schemes, which therefore kick started the promotion of ASEAN and its member states, as a regional destination that is very competitive in terms of international production for both foreign and local stockholders and business minded tourists. This era also witnessed the rise of initiatives, programs and schemes from ASEAN and its member states, which thereafter gave rise to regional economic connections and interdependence. This period also saw ASEAN and its member states having to link up with the major and most effective and productive economies globally.³³

ASEAN and its member states have also gone further to establishing the Asian Capital Markets Forum (ACMF). The ACMF is a partnership and joint effort between seven stock exchanges of Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam (two exchanges), Philippines, and Indonesia. The aspiration and purpose of ASEAN and some of its member states, for having to establish the Asian Capital Markets Forum, is for assimilation and alliance of ASEAN stock exchanges, in other that they be able to contend favourably, efficaciously, and excellently, at the global exchange market. The Asian Capital Markets Forum (ACMF) also went further by establishing the ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard. This was done, in other that the "publicly listed companies within the ASEAN region", can have the wherewithal on areas related to "Corporate Governance

Standards and Practices". On Free Trade Agreements, and in 2010, ASEAN and its member states have also collaboratively gone further to signing free trade agreements with China. This was done with the intention and likelihood that bilateral trade would get to the amount of US\$ 500 billion by 2015. In 2012, ASEAN-India bilateral trade climbed further to US\$70 billion. Currently, and at the moment, the European Union (EU) is ASEAN's third greatest and biggest business ally. That is after China and Japan. Also, the European Union remains the biggest shareholder or stockholder in member states of ASEAN. This is due to the fact that, corporations and multinationals from European Union have a yearly investment worth €13.6 billion in ASEAN countries. President (now former) Barack Obama of the United States of America in 2016, went further by hosting a meeting of the first ever "US-ASEAN Summit". The summit was held at Sunnylands, in California. The aim of the summit was to engage ASEAN and its member countries, in other to achieving a close US-ASEAN relationship.³⁴

5.3 ASEAN's Successful Political Attainment

In 1967, ASEAN and its member states came up with a declaration which is today known as the "ASEAN Declaration of 1967". The aim and purpose of this declaration was to make it known to all member states of ASEAN, that ASEAN and its member states will be able to succeed economically, socially, and culturally, only when there is total cooperation, collaborative efforts, and mutual respect between ASEAN and all member states of the regional organization. Despite the collaborative efforts of ASEAN and its member states, on areas related to economy, social, and cultural, it can also be said that there is not much cooperation between ASEAN and its member states on issues related to political objectives. Though, there exists collaboration on areas related to "respect for justice and the rule of law" and "adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter". However, issues on human rights among member states of ASEAN remain a mere paper seminar, as there exist large abuses and infringement of human rights among the citizens of some member states of ASEAN. On the 27th of November, 1971, Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) were formed. The declaration that led to the formation of ZOPFAN was signed by five ASEAN Foreign Ministers in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). It is currently known as the "Kuala Lumpur Declaration of 1971". The aim and purpose towards the formation of the ZOPFAN declaration, was for ASEAN and its member states to be able to achieve success by having to collaborate in developing both national and regional structures, through various cooperative programs and schemes. It became the responsibility of the ZOPFAN Declaration to making sure that all member states of ASEAN were loyal, steadfast, faithful, devoted, and dedicated towards the principles and objectives of ZOPFAN. Among the principles and objectives of ZOPFAN was that, all member countries of ASEAN must make sure that, through their foreign policies and relationship with other countries outside South-East Asia, they must promote and propagate the idea that South-East Asia is a region of peace, freedom, and neutrality. And also that, South-East Asia as a regional bloc, was totally free from interference by foreign powers. The ZOPFAN Declaration also made efforts to making sure that member states of ASEAN engaged themselves on areas related to cooperation and collaboration. This is in other that they could contribute towards the growth of their various economies, which will therefore translate to power and stability among the various member states of ASEAN. In February 1976, ASEAN and its member states took a step further with its political cooperation, when the first ever ASEAN Summit took place in Bali (an Indonesian island). It was during the ASEAN Political Summit of 1976, that ASEAN leaders were able to sign three notable documents. These are: "the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN Secretariat, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord. It was the ASEAN Concord which declared that, from henceforth, ASEAN and its member states will harmonize their various political views, in other to support themselves politically, and also, having to embark on collaborative political actions. The aim and objective of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, was to make sure that all countries who signed-on to the treaty, must engage in these: "effective cooperation among signatory states, mutual respect and benefit, non-interference in internal affairs of other member states, and the peaceful settlement of intra-regional bickering and disagreements. Currently, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, is the only domestic regional diplomatic tool that can be made use of in settling disagreements and bickering within the pacific region. In 1977, ASEAN leaders held a meeting in Kuala Lumpur. The regional meeting was held to honour and celebrate the tenth year anniversary and existence of ASEAN. ASEAN and its leaders also went further to reevaluate and appraise the advancement and development of the various schemes and programs adopted by ASEAN leaders at the Bali Summit in Indonesia. The Kuala Lumpur Summit also provided the opportunity for ASEAN leaders to deliberate on areas related to both economic and political matters. This was in relation to external relations with countries who are not members of ASEAN. It must also be noted that, ASEAN and its member states have taken joint decisions on global matters in the past. One of such is ASEAN's reprobation and disapproval of the Apartheid system in South Africa. Also, the occupation of Namibia was jointly and out rightly condemned by ASEAN leaders. Others include Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan, support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, expression of grave concern on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, support

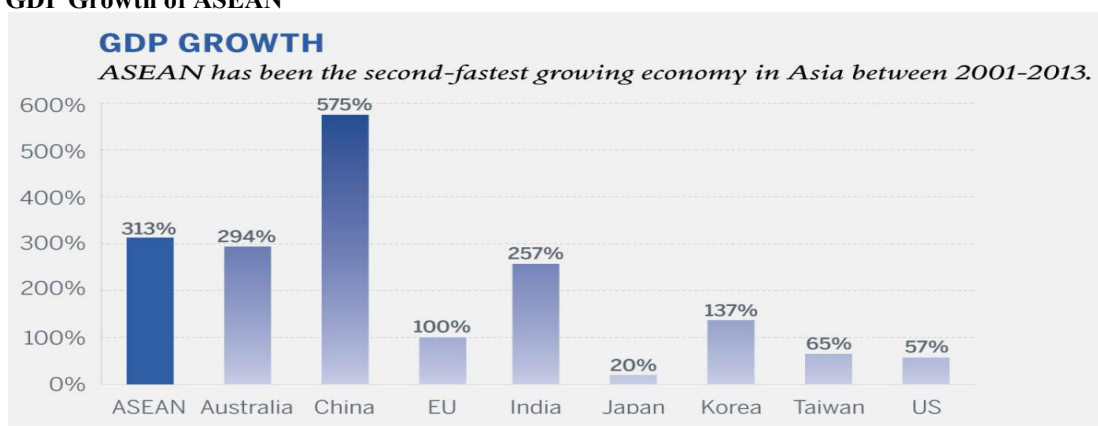
for the PLO-Israeli Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government, and ASEAN's call for a resumption of political dialogue in the Korean Peninsula. It was ASEAN in 1992, who meddled in the dispute at the South China Sea. This was because a dispute at the South China Sea will affect peace and stability in the ASEAN region. ASEAN went further to issues a declaration, advising all parties involved in the dispute, to follow the process, or make them available through resolving the disputes via peaceful mechanisms. The peaceful campaign and resolution embarked upon by ASEAN as regarding to the disputes in the South China sea, gave birth to the "Manila Declaration of 1992". This has demonstrated the collaborative efforts and cooperation among ASEAN and its member states on issues related to their peaceful co-existence. ASEAN went further to admit a new member into its fold in 1984. It was at ASEAN's 17th Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, that Brunei Darussalam was officially admitted as a member of ASEAN, been that it just gained independence. With the admittance of Brunei Darussalam into its fold, the number of countries within ASEAN's fold moved up to six. After the admittance of Brunei Darussalam into ASEAN, the Foreign Minister of Brunei Darussalam, H.R.H. Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, had this to say: *"ASEAN is very important to us. Like any small country, we have special concerns. Economic ones, we need to find markets, and political ones, small countries sometimes get overlooked. So being in ASEAN definitely helps us. We can work closely with our neighbors, share ideas and resources, learn about each other and try to solve problems together. On top of that, we have a stronger voice internationally. We can be more effective than we could be on our own. As far as our foreign policy goes, I'd say, ASEAN has given us confidence. Lastly, I think, being in ASEAN give us a sense of direction. Any policy we adopt is not only for our own people, but for the region as a whole. So all in all, we see ASEAN as extremely valuable, both nationally and regionally, and we're very pleased indeed to become a member"*. ASEAN's Third Summit was held in Manila, Philippines, in 1987. This was to celebrate and appraise the two decade existence of ASEAN. It is today known as the "The Manila Declaration of 1987". It was during the Manila Summit (The Manila Declaration of 1987) that ASEAN leaders came together to have the Protocol amending the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) signed. This was done in other that countries who are not members of ASEAN, can also consent to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). It was also at the ASEAN's Third Summit in Manila, that ASEAN leaders agreed that, both the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), and the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) should be upgraded from being a mere paper work, into reality. ASEAN leaders also went further to signing the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate and Short-range Nuclear Missiles by the United States of America, and the then U.S.S.R (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). The summit was concluded, with ASEAN leaders coming to agreement that, meetings should be held often, and between every three to five years. ASEAN leaders came together and held a summit in 1992. It is today called "The Singapore Summit of 1992". This was the first meeting of ASEAN leaders, after the end of cold war. It was at the "The Singapore Summit of 1992" that ASEAN leaders declared that from henceforth, member states of ASEAN shall work cooperatively to achieving both political and economic success, as well as cooperatively securing regional peace, stability, progress, and prosperity. It was at the "The Singapore Summit of 1992" that ASEAN leaders came up with the initiative to establish the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The aim and objectives of the ARF is to act as an all-party advisory meeting, which is geared towards developing assurance, conviction, and trust, among the various countries that is committed towards security in the Asia-Pacific region. Going further, it was in July 1994, that the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held its maiden meeting in Bangkok (Thailand's capital). The ARF had its mandate spread around three different stages, aims and objectives, and these are: "Findings way to managing and resolving conflicts and wars within the ASEAN region, advancement and endorsement of developing trust among member states of ASEAN, and lastly, advancement of diplomatic schemes and programs within and among member states of ASEAN". In July 1995, Vietnam became a member of ASEAN. This made Vietnam the seventh member of ASEAN. The admittance of Vietnam into ASEAN, established a roadmap towards the alliance and unification of the entire South-East Asia into ASEAN. It was in December 1995, that ASEAN witnessed a breakthrough. This was due to the fact that a milestone was achieved, with the ASEAN Summit held in Bangkok, Thailand. All ten Heads of Government of all South-East Asia countries were present at the ASEAN Summit of 1995. I was at this summit, that the leaders of the entire ten South-East countries signed the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). However, the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) took effect on the 27th of March, 1997. The signing of this treaty was a major achievement for ASEAN and its member states, been that it was ASEAN's main significant addition towards wide-ranging and outright demilitarization and disarmament of nuclear weapons and capabilities. In July 1997, Laos and Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) were officially admitted into the fold of ASEAN. This was at the 30th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in Subang Jaya, Malaysia. As at this time when Laos and Myanmar were been admitted as members of ASEAN, Cambodia was on an "observer status". However, Cambodia was officially admitted into the ASEAN fold on the 30th of April, 1999. This made Cambodia the tenth member of ASEAN. Currently, all the countries in South-East Asia are now associated with a communal way of life, as they work collaboratively and in unison, towards attaining and accomplishing the direction, aspiration, and ambitions, which are all imprinted and engraved in the

ASEAN Declaration, that was signed in Bangkok, Thailand. Currently, ASEAN has achieved a lot politically, by being a watchdog and mediator for all member states in the South-East Asia region, as it has been able to maintain peace and stability. Prior to the formation of ASEAN, the South-East Asia region experienced wars and conflicts, and a lot of bickering. ASEAN with collaboration from its member states, have been able to develop a structure and a linkage for the Asia-Pacific region. This is done towards achieving peace in the region, by engaging in agreements, developing and advancing mechanisms, actions and activities, that will assist in achieving both economic and political cooperation. At the moment, and at the global stage, ASEAN is been accorded its due respect, as most developing and underdeveloped nations are currently studying the "economic blueprints", that has led to the success of ASEAN and its member states.³⁵


5.4 Brief Overview of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Member States of ASEAN

It must be said that despite the challenges of ASEAN and its member states, ASEAN have been able to succeed economically. The successes recorded by ASEAN and its member states, clearly shows in the Gross Domestic Product of the economy of the various countries that makes up ASEAN.

5.5 GDP Growth of ASEAN



5.6 Key Indicators of ASEAN Member States

KEY INDICATORS OF ASEAN MEMBER STATES 									
Country	Populations (million)	Country	GDP (million\$)	Country	GDP per Capita (\$)	Country	Export (million\$)	Country	FDI (million\$)
1.Indonesia	231,4	1.Indonesia	546,527	1. Singapore	36,631	1.Singapore	269,832	1.Singapore	16,809
2.Philippines	92,2	2.Thailand	264,230	2. Brunei	26,486	2. Malaysia	156,891	2. Vietnam	7,600
3.Vietnam	86.0	3.Malaysia	191,618	3. Malaysia	6,822	3. Thailand	152,497	3. Thailand	4,976
4.Thailand	66.9	4.Singapore	177,569	4. Thailand	3,951	4. Indonesia	116,510	4. Indonesia	4,877
5.Myanmar	59.5	5.Philippines	161,357	5. Indonesia	2,364	5. Vietnam	56,691	5.Philippines	1,948
6.Malaysia	28.3	6.Vietnam	96,317	6.Philippines	1,750	6 Philippines	38,335	6. Malaysia	1,381
7.Cambodia	14.9	7.Myanmar	24,024	7. Vietnam	1,120	7. Brunei	7,169	7. Myanmar	579
8.Singapore	6.1	8.Brunei	14,147	8. Lao PDR	910	8. Myanmar	6,341	8. Cambodia	530
9.Lao PDR	5.0	9.Cambodia	10,368	9. Cambodia	693	9. Cambodia	4,986	9. Brunei	370
10.Brunei	0.4	10.Lao PDR	5,742	10.Myanmar	419	10. Lao PDR	1,237	10. Lao PDR	319

GDP: Gross Domestic Productions / FDI : Foreign Direct Investment
 Source: ASEAN Secretariat, Statistics of Year 2009

5.7 ASIA-Pacific Economic Forecasts

Country (%)	Baseline		Downside		Upside	
	2013f	2014f	2013f	2014f	2013f	2014f
Australia	2.5	2.9	2.3	2.1	2.6	3.3
China	7.3	7.3	6.8	6.8	7.6	7.9
India*	5.5	6.5	6.8	6.8	7.6	7.9
Japan	1.6	1.6	1.3	1	1.7	2
South Korea	2.5	3.9	2.1	2.9	2.8	4.5
Hong Kong	2.7	3.6	1.7	1.3	3	4.4
Indonesia	6.1	6.2	5.5	5	6.4	6.7
Malaysia	5.3	5.6	4.5	4.7	5.7	6.3
Philippines	6.9	6.1	6.1	5.1	7.2	6.5
Singapore	3.2	3.8	2.1	2.5	3.5	4.2
Taiwan	2.8	4.3	1.9	2.4	3	4.8
Thailand	3.9	4.1	2.3	2.5	4.4	5.2
Vietnam	5.3	5.5	4.5	4.6	6.3	6.5
New Zealand	2.5	3.1	1.8	2	2.9	3.5
Asia-Pacific	5.3	5.6	4.7	4.8	5.7	6.1
Emerging Asia	6.1	6.5	5.4	5.6	6.5	7.1
Newly industrialised economies	2.7	4	2	2.5	3	4.5
Asean	5.5	5.6	4.6	4.4	6	6.3

* = fiscal year ending March f: forecasts

Source: Standard & Poor's

NATION GRAPHICS³⁸

6. CONCLUSION

This research study has therefore been able to state categorically the challenges and successes of ECOWAS. Also, the challenges and successes of ASEAN. However, it is noted that ECOWAS have not been able to surmount its challenges. The success and challenges of both regional organizations were in comparison to see and view how both regional organizations have fared so far. From the statistics of the "Gross Domestic Product" of the member countries of both regional organizations, it is clearly seen that that ASEAN and its member states are distance away at the forefront, compared to member states of ECOWAS which are still battling with deep rooted poverty, economic disempowerment, and in some cases, political instability. Though ECOWAS have recorded some few successes, but its citizens are still very much impoverished, as they are not economically empowered. Also, member states of ECOWAS lack facilities and structures that are meant to allow its citizens live a decent and quality life. One of the major challenges of ECOWAS, which the regional association have been unable to move away from, is the challenges or its inability to translate its theories and seminar into practicality and reality. So therefore, policy makers within the ECOWAS team ought to begin to study the economic model of ASEAN and its member states. ECOWAS and its member states should also begin to diversify its economy in terms of production, in other that there will be competition within the region. Another major problem stifling the progress of ECOWAS is that member states are not committed to the policies and treaties of ECOWAS, as they simply view them as mere jamborees or paper work. It is widely believed that, countries with closed or very secretive political processes are often at economy disadvantage. However, member states of ASEAN have totally proved this assertion wrong. So therefore, ECOWAS and its member states must work collaboratively, in other to achieving economic stability within the region. The BLAME-GAME tactics often applied by ECOWAS leaders should be totally deleted from its tactics. The colonial masters have come and gone. Just like ECOWAS countries, various ASEAN countries were also colonized, but the ASEAN countries have long moved away from been dependent on their colonial masters for survival. So therefore, ECOWAS leaders should invest more on researches that leads to "decolonization". In other to move goods and

people freely, ECOWAS countries must also come together to build new international standard roads, and also railway lines. Just like ASEAN did, and it is currently paying-off, the leaders of ECOWAS countries should design their own economic blueprint, as it soothes the culture and tradition of the people. ECOWAS leaders should work with home grown economic policies and experts. It is recommended that strong cooperation should be developed, between the customs of various ECOWAS countries, as this is essential for the production of timely and good quality trade. There is also the issue of relations among member states of ECOWAS. To transact business with a European Bank from the shores of West Africa, does not take more than 24 hours. However, it is very sad, that to transact business through the bank of one ECOWAS country, with another bank in another ECOWAS country, often takes three to four weeks. Just like EU (European Union), ECOWAS should work towards a single currency for the region. This is in other that trade and businesses can be easily facilitated. It can therefore be seen how ASEAN have been able to successfully collaborate with its member states, to bringing and driving the South-East Asia region towards economic development. Despite the fact that ASEAN and its member states still have more tasks to be done, however, ASEAN has fared really well, with its own home grown economic blueprint, that is now been adored by the international community. Lastly, there should be a massive campaign, as to informing the citizens of the various ECOWAS countries on the existence of an organization called ECOWAS. This is because, majority of the citizens of the region do not know, and are not aware about the existence of an organization called ECOWAS.

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