



## **Leaders from West Africa and the Sahel Recommit to Invest more in Fertilizers and Soil Health to boost Productivity and feed the endless growing Population**

The two-day discussions have enabled participants and stakeholders to the RoundTable on fertilizers and soil health in West Africa and the Sahel to come up with a roadmap for investing in the Future by nourishing the soil. The roadmap was endorsed by the country delegations, bringing together President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé of the Republic of Togo, President Mohamed Bazoum of the Republic of Niger, President Umaro Sissoco Embaló of Guinea Bissau, the president of the ECOWAS Commission as well as ministers of agriculture and finance. Another output of the Roundtable is the Lomé Declaration highlighting the key commitments of Members States for improving soil health and soil fertility and enhancing the resilience of farmers and of production systems to climate change and other exogenous shocks.

“Without vision, without strategy, fertilizers can quickly turn from a promise of soil restoration to the cause of deterioration, » said the President of the Republic of Togo, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé. « As we need to find a proper balance, planning and state involvement are essential. I therefore support a regional approach. As exemplified by the roadmap presented today, our vision should primarily be sub-regional... We must produce more today and tomorrow as Hunger is back to our region”.

During the event, industry leaders and development partners from the Economic Community of West Africa Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) reaffirmed their commitments to the development of an innovative and integrated approach for sustainable soil fertility management.

“Together with ECOWAS member countries and development partners, the World Bank is committed to increasing financial and technical support for a resilient agriculture that promotes sustainable development and creates jobs. We are working with African institutions to promote soil health and fight food insecurity,” said Ousmane Diagana, World Bank Vice President for Western and Central Africa.

The World Bank Group announced an additional 1.5 billion dollars by 2024 – an increase from 4 billion already committed and under implementation to 5.5 billion dollars. It includes continued support for reforms needed to improve soil health and strengthening the fertilizer sector in terms of subsidy management, quality control and traceability through policy development operations and green fertilizer production projects. The Netherlands also pledged 100 million euros to support the sector in West Africa over the next decade.

"Through the adoption of a common roadmap, ECOWAS countries are committing to improve access to mineral and organic fertilizers for smallholder farmers, with a focus on crops that ensure food security and sovereignty for people and the implementation of the priority actions," highlighted Dr. Omar Aliou Touray, President of the ECOWAS Commission.

The Lomé round table brought together leaders from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Also in attendance were the President of ECOWAS, the World Bank Vice-President for West



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and Central Africa, representatives of regional development partners including the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), as well as fertilizer industry leaders among others.

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#### About ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established when the ECOWAS Treaty was signed by 15 West African Heads of State and Government on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria. The ECOWAS region spans an area of 5.2 million square kilometres. The Member States are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo.

Considered one of the pillars of the African Economic Community, ECOWAS was set up to promote co-operation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations-among Member States, and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent.

In 2007, ECOWAS Secretariat was transformed into a Commission. The Commission is headed by the President, assisted by a Vice President, and Five Commissioners, comprising experienced bureaucrats who are providing the leadership in this new orientation. As part of this renewal process, ECOWAS is implementing critical and strategic programmes that will deepen cohesion and progressively eliminate identified barriers to full integration. In this way, the estimated 300 million citizens of the community can ultimately take ownership for the realization of the new vision of moving from an ECOWAS of States to an **“ECOWAS of the People: Peace and Prosperity to All”** by 2050.