INTERGOVERNMENTAL ACTION GROUP AGAINST MONEY LAUNDERING IN WEST AFRICA

PRESS RELEASE

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GIABA SENSITIZES ECOWAS ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON AML/CFT/PF COMPLIANCE

The Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) will hold an awareness-raising seminar from 15 to 16 September 2025 in Lomé, Togo, on anti-money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing (AML/CFT/PF) compliance for members of the ECOWAS Administrative and Finance Committee (AFC).

The meeting will seek, among other things, to strengthen AFC members' strategic insight into GIABA's operational mandate, achievements and financial needs, particularly in the context of the budget squeeze currently affecting ECOWAS institutions; raise awareness on the ML/TF/PF threats and compliance obligations in national, regional and international frameworks; highlight the crucial role of the AFC in the financial sustainability of GIABA; generate strong support for increased financing to GIABA in the 2026 budget cycle and beyond; promote high-level advocacy and political commitment for the sustainable funding of GIABA's technical assistance, mutual evaluation and capacity-building programmes, etc.

In 2023 and 2024, the sub-region faced different crises and challenges, which saw a decline in revenue sources, arrears in Community contributions and a reduction in the budget allocation for Community institutions, including GIABA. This situation has profoundly hampered the roll-out of GIABA's activities, hence the holding of this meeting to deepen the understanding of members of the AFC on the complexities, methodologies and operational dynamics of GIABA. It will also serve as a platform for Mr Edwin W. Harris Jr., Director General of GIABA, to make a case for an increase in his institution's budget, in line with its mission to promote AML/CFT/PF reforms, facilitate mutual evaluation processes, deliver technical assistance and strengthen national AML/CFT frameworks.

At the end of the meeting, the Committee is expected to make a clear commitment to provide long-term support for GIABA's budget allocations; broader recognition of the AFC's influence in mobilising timely financial contributions from Member States and aligning ECOWAS budget priorities with regional security imperatives; and strengthened institutional collaboration between GIABA and the AFC for sustained engagement, financial planning and monitoring of key initiatives to combat economic and financial crime, etc.

Key topics for discussion will include understanding the threats and realities of the region, strengthening implementation and regional mobilisation, etc.