

AUTORITE DU BASSIN DE LA  
VOLTA  
Direction Exécutive



VOLTA BASIN AUTHORITY  
Executive Directorate



Bénin



Burkina Faso



Côte d'Ivoire



Ghana



Mali



Togo

## 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Ministers of the Volta Basin Authority (VBA)

# Experts Committee Meeting Report



**Accra, Ghana**

**(06-09 May 2019)**

## INTRODUCTION

The 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Volta Basin Authority (VBA) Experts Committee, which preceded the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Ministers of the VBA, was held from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at the Coconut Grove Regency Hotel in Accra, Ghana.

The meeting was attended by:

- Representatives of the VBA countries – Bénin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Togo;
- the VBA Executive Directorate; and
- Technical and Financial Partners including, Global Water Partnership (GWP), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Liptako Gourma States Integrated Development Authority (ALG), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), Société Nationale d'Electricité du Burkina (SONABEL), Benin Electric Community (CEB), Volta River Authority, Bui Power Authority, CSIR-Water Research Institute, Environmental Protection Agency, Community Water and Sanitation Agency, UNECE, WASCAL, and WIN netWork.

The attendance list is presented as Annex 1.

### 1. OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony was presided over by the Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources of Ghana (Line Minister for VBA), **HON. CECILIA ABENA DAPAAH**. It was marked by three (03) statements:

- Welcome address by **Mr. Ben AMPOMAH**, National Focal Point of VBA for Ghana;
- Statement by Mr. Robert Y. Dessouassi, Executive Director of the VBA
- Opening address by **HON. CECILIA ABENA DAPAAH**, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources of Ghana.

In his address, **Mr. Ben Ampomah** welcomed the participants and expressed the honour for Ghana to host the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Experts Committee for the third time, after 2007 and 2009. He considered this session as an opportunity for the Experts Committee to formulate relevant recommendations that will strengthen the institutional capacities of VBA. He then encouraged the States to support VBA towards to effectively coordinate the actions of all the stakeholders for improved management of water resources in the basin. Finally, he wished all the participants a pleasant stay in Accra.

The Executive Director of the VBA expressed his joy for holding this 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the Experts Committee. He expressed his gratitude to all VBA Member States for the great efforts made, and the spirit of cooperation they had shown by providing the Executive Directorate with their support and expertise in the implementation of the planned activities. After listing some of the achievements of the Volta Basin Strategic Action Programme Implementation Project (VSIP), he informed the participants of some initiatives and activities undertaken by the Executive Directorate to seek funding for development projects. Finally, he paid tribute to the Republic

of Ghana for the sacrifices made and thanked the Technical and Financial Partners for their diverse support to VBA.

Following the Executive Director of the VBA, Hon. Cecilia Abena DAPAAH, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources of Ghana, in her opening speech expressed her pleasure to participate in this meeting which will reorient the VBA to better function. She mentioned the various challenges facing the basin and called for a synergy of efforts to protect and preserve its basin resources. Finally, she thanked the technical and financial partners and declared open the 9th session of the Experts Committee.

The various speeches delivered are attached as Annex 2.

## **2. Establishment of the Meeting Secretariat**

A meeting secretariat was formed as follows:

- **Chairman:** Mr Ben AMPOMAH, Executive Secretary of the Water Resources, Ghana
- **Vice-Chairman:** Mr Philippe ADJOMAYI, Director General of Water Resources, Benin
- **Rapporteurs:** (i) Mr Yaya BOUBACAR, National Director of Hydraulics, Mali;  
(ii) Mr Serge TRAORE, General Director of Water Resources, Burkina Faso;  
(iii) Staff of the VBA Executive Directorate.

## **3. - Review and Adoption of the Agenda.**

The draft agenda was adopted excluding the item on the implementation of the 1969 Agreement between Ghana, Togo and Benin on the supply of electricity from the Akosombo Hydroelectric Power Plant. This item was dealt with in camera.

The adopted draft agenda is as follows:

1. Review and adoption of the progress report 2016-2018
2. Presentation and review of the External Audit Reports for budget years 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016
3. Presentation and review of the Annual Work Plan for 2019 - 2020.
4. Presentation and review of the draft Budget for 2019 - 2020.
5. Information on the ReWarD-Volta River Basin Project "*Reversing Ecosystem and Water Degradation in the Volta River Basin*".
6. information on the "Blue Deal" project;
7. Information on PREE-PACO: Regional Partnership on Water and Environment - Central and West Africa Programme -(PREE-PACO) - (ASDI)
8. Presentation of the project "Integrating Flood, Drought and Early Warning Management for Climate Change Adaptation in the Volta Basin";
9. Presentation of the draft Water Charter for the Volta basin;

10. Status of the issue of ratification: (i) of the United Nations Convention of **1992** on the **Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes** and (ii) of the United Nations Convention of **1997** on the **Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses**.

#### **4. THE WORK SESSIONS**

##### **4.1 Progress Report for 2016, 2017 and 2018**

The Progress Report presented by the Executive Director focused on the following points:

- State of implementation of the Resolutions of the 5th and 6th Sessions of the Council of Ministers;
- Status of implementation of technical activities in 2016, 2017 and 2018;
- Summary of implementation of technical and financial reports on completed or on-going projects
- Major activities carried out from 1 January to 30 April 2019;
- Way forward and proposed recommendations

With regards to the implementation of the resolutions of the 5th Session of the Council of Ministers, out of a total of the eighteen (18) resolutions adopted, eleven (11) were implemented, six (06) partially implemented and one (01) unimplemented. For the twelve resolutions of the 6th Session of the Council of Ministers, seven (7) were fully implemented while five (5) were partially implemented.

The implementation of technical aspects of the 2016-2017 workplan focused on the following points:

- the Strategic Objectives of the VBA Strategic Plan 2015-2019 and the sources of finance, which are the contributions of the Member States and support from the Technical and Financial Partners;
- consolidating the institutional anchoring of the VBA through the involvement of national stakeholders; and
- strengthening and/or developing regional and international partnerships;

Overall, the rate of implementation of the 2016-2017 work plan activities ranged from 64.30% to 96%, and average of 84.78%.

Generally, budget implementation was relatively low at 39.7% for 2016, 43% for 2017 and 71.5% at the end of October 2018 through the Volta Basin Strategic Action Programme Implementation (VSIP) project. The low rates for the first two were justified on the one hand, due to cash flow difficulties encountered and, on the other, by the late start of activities of the VSIP.

For the 2018 financial year, disbursements improved to 71.5% due to the high execution rate of VSIP project, estimated at 85.5%. This is explained by the restructuring of component 3 (implementation of SAP priority actions), which resulted in a decrease in the initial budget presented to the Steering Committee in 2018 in Cotonou, Benin.

The Executive Director also discussed issues relating to the development of the land acquired by the ED/VBA in Ouagadougou, on 29 July 2014 for an amount of CFA 2,800,000 francs, the situation of the Executive Directorate staff, social security contributions of the expatriate staff, leave and health insurance.

## **Discussions**

The main points of the discussion following the presentation of the Executive Director are as follows:

- the need for details on why increases the amount of the States' Annual financial contributions to the operating budget of the VBA Executive Directorate;
- the proposal of a three-year planning of the contributions of each Member State;
- the identification of expenses that necessitate resorting to bank overdraft;
- the drafting of concept notes for bankable projects before the holding of the Donors' Round Table;
- the point that Member States have to bear the costs of their delegates participation in VBA statutory meetings;
- the need to prioritize the implementation of concrete actions on the field for the benefit of the basin population;
- the need to maintain the biennial meetings of the Experts Committee and the Council of Ministers;
- the necessity to adapt VBA's needs to the financial resources available;
- Status of the Executive Directorate staff
- the non-necessity for VBA to finance the operations of the National Focal Structures;
- the status of recruitment, indicating compliance with VBA organisational chart;
- the presentation of execution rates with indicators to facilitate appreciation of results;
- the relevance and implementation of the Volta Basin SDAGE by capitalizing on existing SDAGEs and development plans at the level of member countries, in order to determine priority areas for investment.

At the end of the discussions, the 2016, 2017 and 2018 progress reports were validated.

## **4.2 The 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 Audit Reports of VBA**

### **4.2.1 The VBA Audit Reports for 2013, 2014 and 2015**

The 2013, 2014 and 2015 VBA accounts were audited by PANAUDIT Burkina. The presentation of the Audit Report was done by Mr. Sani NAROUA, on behalf of the of the firm. It was mainly based on the following:

- internal control;
- findings on the accounts;
- the Basis of Audit of opinion with reservations.

#### **a. Internal Audit**

The auditor reviewed the main VBA processes which were evaluated as follows: (i) the setting of strategic and operational objectives; (ii) human, material and financial resources; (iii) basic organisation; (iv) financial and accounts management; (v) cash-flow management; (vi) budgetary management; (vii) fixed assets management.

For each point analysed, he presented following:

- the monitoring of recommendations made during previous audit and/or supervisory missions;
- methods and results of controls and the risks involved;
- recommendations and comments for the Executive Directorate.

#### **b. Findings on the accounts;**

The following weaknesses were identified:

**Concerning the audit, it is worth noting the following:** (i) lack of formal definition of roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders; (ii) the lack of code of ethics and professional conduct specific to project and programme management; (iii) the absence of staff assessment.

**Concerning risk assessment, the following were noted:** lack of risk analysis during the implementation of the three-year programme, shortcomings in the identification of objectives clear enough to enable risks detection and assessment in the achievement of the objectives.

**Concerning audit activities, the following were mentioned;** (i) the lack of an administrative, financial and accounting procedures manual; (ii) failure to impose taxes on services which constitutes a breach of tax legislation and risk of financial loss for Burkinabe Faso; (iii) the absence of a purchase order for some purchases by VBA; (iv) the absence of delivery notes for some purchases by VBA; (v) the absence of some cheque copies; (vi) splitting of some purchases (vii) the absence of competitive purchase by VBA; (viii) VAT payment on some expenses while VBA is exempt from VAT; (ix) lack of IRF receipts copies; (x) lack of checking of fund; (xi) lack of cash liquidity limit; (xii) lack of a physical inventory of supply stocks in the financial year with report; (xiii) lack of a report for supply stock inventories carried out at the end of the year; (xiv) lack of extinguishers for fire protection.

#### **c. Basis of Audit Opinion with Reservation**

The auditor specified that the basis of the audit opinion with reservations mainly concerned the points raised by the 2009 and 2010 audits which had not yet been cleared at the time of audit, thereby impacting the accounts as follows:

- lack of support documents for CFA 92 300 francs (141 Euros) for the payment of DIACFA newspaper subscription fees for the March 2009 period;
- lack of support documents for the payment of allowances amounting to CFA 5 000 000 francs (7 622 Euro) for the April 2010;
- lack of support documents for payment of telephone expenses amounting to CFA 21 600 francs (33 Euros) for the month of February 2010.

At the end of the presentation, the Experts Committee discussed the following points:

- Lack of a Manual for Administrative, Financial and Accounting Procedures;
- Accounting standards to be applied by VBA;
- The non-competitive selection of suppliers;
- Delayed presentation of the various audit reports to the Member States;
- Some payments including all-taxes
- The Audit Period.
- Compliance with accounting standards;
- Choice of financial statements to be prepared;
- Method of selecting auditors;

#### **4.2.2 The VBA Audit Report 2016**

The 2016 audited accounts of the VBA were carried out by Worldaudit Corporate S.A (Burkina Faso). The presentation of the audit report was made by Mr. Sani NAROUA, on behalf of the firm. It was mainly based on the following:

- Summary of the main weaknesses identified;
- Monitoring recommendations made by the previous auditor;
- New recommendations made;
- Basis of opinion with reservations.

##### **a. Summary of Identified Weaknesses**

The main weaknesses identified are as follows: (i) having referred to SYSCOA as the accounting framework applied by the VBA in its accounts, whereas the financial statements produced at the end of the financial years are not exactly in conformity with SYSCOA prescriptions; (ii) lack of specification in the VBA legal texts concerning accounting provisions to be applied; (iii) VBA as a corporate body, lacks a unique financial statement model for all its activities (operating budget, projects and programmes); (iv) significant amount of arrears of contribution of Member States as at 31 December 2016, were unpaid at the time of audit, thereby hindering the implementation of VBA activities; (v) most of the posts in the organizational structure have not been filled for lack of financial resources; this implies that activities are not fully implemented (very low budget implementation rate), which hinders smooth running of VBA; (vi) lack of substantial portfolio for projects and programmes at VBA that corresponds with its objectives; (vii) failure to finalize the manual for Administrative, Financial and Accounting Procedures to supplement the Financial Regulation, which is not sufficiently detailed on certain aspects of internal control; (viii) important social debts identified in the accounting books which may lead to litigation if not cleared within the required time (e.g. expatriate social security contributions); (ix) holding the Council of Ministers meetings every two years which is not conducive to the proper functioning of VBA and the yearly budget.

##### **b. Monitoring Recommendations of the 2009-2015 Audit**

Twenty (20) recommendations were made by the auditors of the 2009 to 2015 accounts. Four (4) recommendations were fully implemented. Two (2) recommendations have been partially

implemented. Two (2) recommendations are being implemented and twelve (12) not implemented.

### **c. The Basis of Opinion with Reservations.**

The auditor specified that the basis of opinion with reservation essentially concerns the fact of having referred to SYSCOA as the accounting standard applied by VBA in its accounts, whereas the financial statements produced at the end of the budget years are not exactly in conformity with the prescriptions of SYSCOA. According to SYSCOHADA accounting standards, the financial statements to be prepared are: (i) the balance sheet; (ii) the income statement; (iii) the financial table of resources and uses and (iv) the attached statement.

At the end of the presentation, the Experts Committee discussed the following points:

- the increase in operating expenses from year to year since 2013;
- the absence of budgetary analyses in the audit report;
- the lack of Administrative Financial and Accounting Procedure Manual at the VBA;
- the failure to make audit reports available to Member States in time;
- the non-implementation of all the recommendations from previous audits;
- the need to clarify the accounting framework to be used in the VBA.

The auditor clarified the lack of budgetary analysis in the audit report and the failure to make audit reports available to Member States on time. He indicated that the audit was carried out on the basis of standards and before the audit, the activity reports and budget implementation reports were submitted to them. On the second point, he stressed that the final audit reports had been sent to VBA since the third month of 2018.

### **4.3 Review and Adoption of the 2019 and 2020 Work Plans**

Mr. Dibi MILLOGO, VBA Deputy Executive Director, presented the 2019 and 2020 Work Plan. The presentation covered the following points:

- reminder of the context in which VBA's biennial Work Plan was drafted per Strategic Objective;
- the reminder of the Strategic Objectives of the VBA Strategic Plan 2015-2019;
- actions planned for the years 2019 and 2020;
- risks.

Actions planned for the two years, focus on the eight (08) Strategic Objectives, aimed to promote permanent dialogue and sustainable development of water resources of the Volta Basin. The purpose is to reduce poverty and promote socio-economic integration of VBA member countries.

There are several kinds of risks likely to hinder the Executive Directorate of the VBA from to achieving the 2019 AWP (i) lack of resources to fund the VBA operating budget due to the failure of Member States to pay their 2019 contributions on time constitutes a major risk; (ii) failure to respect commitments made by VBA technical and financial partners in the implementation of projects and programmes (on-going or in preparation) will be a handicap; (iii) socio-political instability and insecurity in the Volta Basin member states.



## **Discussions**

At the end of the presentation, the Experts Committee discussed the following points:

- the relevance of drawing up a Communication Plan for 2021-2022.
- finalization of the VBA procedure manual and the study on strengthening VBA human resources;
- autonomous and sustainable financing of VBA through the user/pay and polluter/pay taxes
- establishment and composition of the National Focal Structure (NFS);
- the problem of restructuring VBA's staff based on its financial resources;
- the drafting of project concept notes to be submitted at the Donors' Round Table;
- the request for tailor-made training to be submitted to UNECE and other partners for VBA capacity building;
- availability of Technical and Financial Partners to support VBA in the implementation of its Action Plan;
- the development of an optimal Work Plan considering the results that can be achieved within the time.

### **4.4 The 2019 and 2020 Budgets**

Mr. Jean-Marie OUYA, Director of Administration and Finance, presented the 2019 and 2020 budgets. It covered the following:

- the context in which the 2019 and 2020 budgets were prepared;
- the orientations, priorities and assumptions of the 2019-2020 budgets;
- methodology for preparing the 2019 and 2020 budgets;
- the consolidated and operating budgets for the 2019 and 2020 years.

The budgets for 2019 and 2020 Work Plans amount to CFAF 2,716,573,261 and CFAF 1,830,688,412 respectively, including VBA projects and programmes.

The operating budget of VBA amounts to CFA 887 704 705 francs for the 2019 financial year and 442,276,421 CFA francs for the 2020 financial year.

At the end of this presentation, the Experts Committee requested the Executive Directorate to conduct an organizational audit of the VBA with a view to restructuring it to boost the institution and inform the level of the increase in Member States' contributions.

The Experts Committee validated the draft 2019 and 2020 budgets.

### **4.5 Projects Under Preparation**

#### **4.5.1 REWarD Project**

The objective of the Project is to reverse trends in ecosystem and water degradation and support integrated ecosystem development in the Volta Basin by strengthening transboundary governance, ecosystem restoration and conservation for sustainable livelihoods.

The estimated cost of the project is 7 105 936 USD. The beneficiaries are the six (06) member states of the Volta Basin with the main partners being GEF, UNEP and IUCN.

The components of the project are as follows:

- Component 1. Strengthen the knowledge base and develop management tools for sound decision-making;
- Component 2. Enhanced transboundary planning, coordination and regional and national capacities, for extreme events related to climate change and variability;
- Component 3. Strengthening ecosystem resilience for sustainable livelihoods in the Volta Basin;
- Component 4. Effective knowledge management and sharing, monitoring and evaluation.

During the Ouagadougou consultation workshop held on 29 to 03 April 2019, a presentation was done by the project development team (UNEP & IUCN, regional consultants). Detailed discussions on project activities and necessary adjustments were also held, as well as the planning of activities and deliverables up to project the submission (with VBA and regional consultants) and the establishment of project coordination mechanisms and modalities.

#### **4.5.2 PREE PACO**

PREE PACO (Regional Partnership for Water and Environment in Central and West Africa) is a regional project developed by IUCN and its partners and funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). It builds on the achievements of the PAGE (Partnership for Environmental Governance in West Africa), which was implemented from 2014 to 2018 by the same financial partner.

The overall objective of PREE-PACO is to strengthen resilience of natural ecosystems and local communities in the river and lake basins of West Africa. Specifically, it aims at strengthening the implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM) and the resilience of communities and ecosystems in order to prevent and manage conflicts over the use of natural resources in transboundary river basins.

The indicative cost of the project is €13,865,000 over a four-year forecast period (2019-2022), with SIDA contributing €10 million.

The Project will be implemented in the Niger, Volta, Mono, Lake Chad and Fouta Djallon basins, through the following strategic axes: (i) integrated management of water resources and related ecosystems; (ii) management of conflicts related to water and related ecosystems; (iii) climate change; (iv) capacity building of sub-regional institutions and transboundary basin organizations.

In relation to the Volta Basin, the PREE PACO will contribute to the capacity building of countries and VBA through the actions listed below:

- establishment and operation of a regional water and environmental information system in West Africa;
- establishment or strengthening of early warning systems on floods, droughts and low water levels in the basin;

- support for the establishment and operationalization of local water committees in the Black Volta sub-basin;
- support for the establishment of the legal and institutional frameworks necessary for the operationalization of sustainable financing options;
- capacity building of countries and VBA in water data collection and processing;
- establishment and strengthening of institutions and mechanisms for prevention and management of conflicts related to water and transhumance at the transboundary sub-basins level;
- drawing up an investment climate plan on Climate for the Volta basin.

In view of the implementation of PREE PACO in the Volta Basin, a partnership agreement will be signed between IUCN and VBA in August 2019 with a detailed budget.

### **4.5.3 Blue Deal**

With a budget of 871,200 Euros, the Blue Deal Project will be implemented in the Sourou part of the Volta Basin (pilot site) to help local communities make better use of water in their activities to improve their living conditions. The experiences and lessons learnt in the Sourou basin will be replicated throughout the Volta basin.

### **4.5.4 The Project “Integrating Flood and Drought Management and Early Warning for Climate Change Adaptation in the Volta Basin”**

Integrating Flood and Drought Management and Early Warning for Climate Change Adaptation in the Volta Basin Project is funded up to 7.92 million dollars, by the Adaptation Fund under the joint initiative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the West African Regional Water Partnership (GWP-WA). The Implementing Agency of the project is WMO. The Implementing Agencies for the Project activities are VBA, WMO and GWP-WA.

The project is to develop coordinated management capacities of national and regional institutions and communities in integrated flood and drought management.

It focuses on strengthening technical, institutional and operational capacities of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) and other relevant authorities in the six (06) riparian countries and will provide the NMHS with innovative solutions and approaches for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change, including the so-called "green" solutions and gender-sensitive participatory approaches. Early warning systems will also be designed considering public security services and other private entities as well as public stakeholders.

Project’s status and way forward:

- funding approval by the Adaptation Fund in October 2018;
- recruitment of staff in progress (closing 10 May 2019);
- inception workshop on 25 and 26 June 2019 in Abidjan;
- meeting of the implementing agencies on 28 and 29 June 2019 in Abidjan;

- implementation of the project under the coordination of VBA with countries and partners from 2019 to 2023.

#### **4.6 The Water Charter of the Volta Basin**

Dr Hamidou GARANE, consultant in charge of the elaboration of the Water Charter, first addressed the general provisions of the Charter, followed by the challenges related to the quantitative management of water resources. He then mentioned the problems of navigation, fishing and transboundary transhumance and their impacts on water resources. He stressed the need to develop tools to prevent and manage these impacts.

The presentation highlighted the importance of the management and coordination of water infrastructure, drawing on the role and responsibility of stakeholders and the rights of local communities in the implementation of the Charter. It ended on aspects related to the general and final provisions and the annexes that had to be drafted.

#### **4.7 The United Nations Convention of 1992 on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and (2) of the United Nations Convention of 1997 on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses.**

The legal expert, on behalf of the Secretariat of the Water Convention, hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), presented the two United Nations conventions on transboundary waters, namely the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and the 1997 Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses (International River Convention).

He recalled the history of the adoption of the two universal conventions, the elements of complementarity between the two global conventions, the obligations and interest of VBA countries to accede and the status of ratification of the two Conventions. He also focused on the institutional framework of the Water Convention, the only permanent intergovernmental framework at the United Nations specifically dedicated to transboundary cooperation, as well as the work plan of the Convention and the activities carried out under it.

The presentation made it possible to observe the complementarity of the two conventions with the legal framework of VBA, particularly, the draft Water Charter, as well as the opportunities for the operationalization of the Charter in case of accession to the two universal conventions by all VBA States.

Benefits of accession to the Water Convention include, for example, strengthening national capacities in water resources management and protection, access to financial assistance for countries and strengthening collaboration with donors, participation in an open global platform to discuss water issues under the aegis of the United Nations.

The presentation of the status of ratification of the two conventions showed that three (3) VBA States have ratified the 1997 Watercourses Convention and the majority have expressed interest in acceding to the 1992 Water Convention.

## CONCLUSION

Following the discussions, the Experts Committee validated the following (i) the 2016 to 2018 progress report; (ii) the external audit reports for 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016; and (iii) the biennial work plan and draft budgets for 2019 and 2020.

The Experts Committee also took note of the presentation of the various projects under preparation within the VBA; the United Nations Conventions of 1992 and 1997; and the draft Water Charter of the Volta Basin. The Experts Committee encourages the VBA to continue with its involvement in the implementation of these projects.

The following recommendations were made:

1. Approve the draft VBA Water Charter at the Council of Ministers for adoption at the next Summit of Heads of State and Government;
2. Organize the third summit of VBA Heads of State and Government in 2021 for the adoption of the Water Charter in order to trigger the ratification process;
3. Finalize the development of the VBA Administrative, Financial and Accounting Procedures Manual by July 2019;
4. Apply the VBA organizational chart and update the job description and carry out periodic assessment;
5. Conduct an organisational audit by an independent consultant to facilitate decision-making on the issue of increasing Member States' contributions to the VBA operating budget;
6. Urge member states to pay their annual contributions as soon as possible (July 2019) and take the necessary measures to ensure the observance of payment latest 30 April in accordance with the VBA Financial Regulations;
7. Urge the technical and financial partners to continue their support to VBA for project development and financing as well as capacity building in project implementation;
8. Encourage VBA to diversify technical and financial partnership for better mobilization of funds and implementation of activities with direct impacts on the development of the Volta Basin;
9. Request all VBA Member States to initiate, as soon as possible, their accession to the UN Water Convention; invite the Secretariat of the Convention and VBA to assist Member States to accelerate their accession to the Water Convention; and invite Technical and Financial Partners to assist VBA Member States in their accession to the Water Convention.

Accordingly, the Experts Committee of Experts will submit to the Council of Ministers for consideration and approval:

- the 2016 to 2018 activity progress report;
- the external audit reports for 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016;
- the work plans and draft budgets for 2019-2020;

- the draft water charter of the Volta Basin; and
- the recommendations resulting from the work of the preparatory meeting.

**Accra**

**May 09, 2019**

**The Experts Committee of VBA**