



ecocourt newsletter

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HON. JUSTICE EDWARD AMOAKO ASANTE ELECTED NEW PRESIDENT OF ECOWAS COURT



Hon. Justice Edward Amoako Asante

Honorable Justice Edward Amoako Asante from Ghana was on Monday, 27th August 2018 elected the President of the Community Court of Justice for a two year tenure by the five newly appointed judges of the Court.

Justice Asante, replaces Honorable Justice Jérôme Traoré from Burkina Faso, who just completed his two year tenure and who along with the other former six judges of the Court, have completed their four year term.

The 54- year old Justice Asante was until his appointment to the ECOWAS Court, a Judge of the High Court in Sekondi, the capital of Sekondi – Takoradi Metropolitan District in Ghana's Western Region and Supervising Judge of the Region.

Also elected was Honorable Justice Gberi-Be Ouattara from Côte d'Ivoire as the Vice President.



Hon. Justice Gberi-Be Ouattara

Until his appointment to the ECOWAS Court, the 57-year old Vice President, was the Solicitor General in the office of the Public Prosecutor at the country's Supreme Court.

Both elections took place few hours after the assumption of office of the new Judges following their 31st July 2018 swearing in by the former Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, President Faure Gnassingbe of Togo.

The other three judges of the Court who were also sworn in include Honorable Justices Dupe Atoki (Nigeria), Keikura Bangura (Sierra Leone) and Januaria Tavares Silva Moreira Costa from Cape Verde.

Honorable Justice Atoki was a former Director General of the Consumer Protection Council of Nigeria while Honorable Justice Bangura was a Judge of the High Court of Sierra Leone. The fifth member of the college of the judges of the Court, Honorable Justice Costa was a judge of the High Court of Cape Verde and member of the Supervisory Council of Magistrates.



Hon. Justice Dupe Atoki



Hon. Justice Keikura Bangura



Hon. Justice Januaria Tavares Silva Moreira Costa

At the handing over ceremony, Justice Asante characterised the human rights mandate of the court as 'delicate' that would require the commitment and collaboration of the stakeholder's to effectively discharge. He also spoke of the 'onerous' challenges posed to the new judges by the reduction in the number of judges from seven to five, the number of cases inherited and the translation challenges identified by the outgoing President in his valedictory speech.



Hon. Justice Jérôme Traoré delivering his valedictory speech

Despite these, he assured that with unity of purpose by the Judges and the staff, the court would overcome these challenges and sustain its tradition of a rigorous jurisprudence through which it has become an exemplar among Africa's Regional Courts.

In his address the outgoing President, Justice Traoré enumerated some of the achievements of the Court during their tenure to include the revision of the texts of the Court for improved justice delivery and engaging with the host government for the provision of a suitable accommodation for the Court. Moreover, he said 352 court hearings were held while 127 judgments were delivered.

He expressed confidence in the capability of the new judges to discharge the mandate of the Court, given their qualification and experience and solicited for collaboration between the President of the ECOWAS Commission and the Court for the successful conclusion of the projects initiated during their tenure.



The Chief Registrar of the Court delivering his welcome address

In an earlier address, the Chief Registrar of the Court, Mr. Tony Anene-Maidoh paid tribute to the former judges for their contribution to enriching the juris

prudence of the court by bequeathing a legacy of a virile and independent court that serves as guarantor of the human rights of West Africa's citizens.'

'We cannot achieve our community objective of economic integration without a solid legal framework and a virile and independent regional Court,' he said in his welcome address at the ceremony, the first in the history of the Court to be attended by the President of the ECOWAS Commission.

He said the reduction of the number of judges from seven to five imposes a huge difficulty in the composition of panels to hear cases, an issue that also goes to the root of the competence of the Court whose Protocol clearly provides that the Court shall consist of Seven Members.

He listed the other constraints confronting the Court to include inadequate translators, whose numbers were reduced from nine to six in the new organogram of the Court instead of the 12 needed for effectiveness and the dearth of office accommodation.

ECOWAS COMMISSION PRESIDENT ASSURES NEW JUDGES OF SUPPORT TOWARDS THE REALISATION OF THEIR MANDATE

The new Judges of the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice have been enjoined to demonstrate 'the highest level of consciousness and probity' in the handling of cases brought before them in order to ensure fidelity with their oath of office.

At the handover ceremony to the new President of the Court, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, His Excellency Jean-Claude Brou, said as one of the institutions created under the founding Treaty, the Court by its mandate has a responsibility to ensure respect for Community texts, the rule of law and equity.



President of ECOWAS Commission delivering his speech

In this way, the President said the Court will be contributing to reinforcing citizen and stakeholder confidence in Community institutions, a precondition for the realisation of the economic and social progress that motivated the founding fathers of the Community.

The five new judges were sworn in on the margins of the 53rd Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government for a four year non-renewable tenure on 31st July 2018 by the former Chairman of the Authority, President Faure Gnassingbe of Togo.

They include Honorable Justice Edward Amoako Asante, (Ghana), Honorable Justice Gberi-Be Ouattara (Côte d'Ivoire), Honorable Justice Dupe Atoki (Nigeria), Honorable Justice Keikura Bangura (Sierra Leone) and Honorable Justice Januaria Tavares Silva Moreira Costa (Cape Verde).

The President, the first President of the Commission to attend the Court's handing over ceremony, pledged support to the judges to enable them fully fulfill their mission, which include the promotion of respect for Community texts and to ensure the rule of law and equity in the region.

He praised the seven outgoing judges, especially the outgoing President, for their contributions to strengthening the confidence of all stakeholders in the court and expressed the hope that the new judges will continue on the tradition for the benefit of Community citizens.

Prior to the ceremony, the judges elected Honorable Justice Edward Amoako Asante from Ghana as the President of the Court for a two year tenure while Honorable Gberi-Be Ouattara from Côte d'Ivoire was elected the Vice President for the same two years.



Hon. Justice Asante giving his first speech as President of the Court

Photo Gallery of the handing over ceremony



Outgoing President (left) welcoming President of ECOWAS Commission (right)



Hon. Justice Traoré (right) exchanging the hand over note with the new President



R - L : Hon. Justices Yussif D. Kaba, former Vice President; Hamèye Founé Mahalmdane, former Doyen; Yaya Boiro, former Member and Friday Chijioke Nwoke, a former Vice President of the Court.



Also in attendance, Hon. Justice Maria Do Ceu Silva Monteiro, past President of the Court (in red) with other guests



Dr Alfred Braimah, Auditor General of ECOWAS Institutions (left) with Ambassador Babatunde Nurudeen, Nigeria Special Representative to ECOWAS



Staff of the Court attended in numbers, eager to know the new judges



Guests and Staff of the Court listening attentively at the ceremony



Some members of the press, guests and staff



Hon. Justice Dupe Atoki being interviewed by the press



Hon. Justices Silva Monteiro (right) and Moreira Costa (left)



President Asante (right) discussing with the Chief Registrar after the ceremony



Group picture of the outgoing and incoming judges of the court with the President of ECOWAS Commission (5th left)



H.E. Jean Claude Kassi Brou, President of the ECOWAS Commission (center) flanked with President Asante (3rd left), Justice Gberi-Be, Vice president (2nd right), other Justices and the Chief Registrar



The new college of judges: Hon. Justice Asante, President of the Court (center), Justice Gberi-Be, Vice president (right), Hon. Justice Atoki (2nd right), Hon. Justice Bangura (left) and Hon. Justice Moreira Costa (2nd left)