

COURT PRESIDENT RECEIVES MALI'S AMBASSADOR TO NIGERIA AND ECOWAS

The ECOWAS Court plans to launch a major campaign in 2019 to enlighten ECOWAS citizens about the Court in continuation of its programme to improve citizen awareness and access to the Court, the President of the Court, Honourable Justice Edward Asante has said.

Exchanging views with Mali's Ambassador to Nigeria and ECOWAS, His Excellency Moustapha Traore in Abuja, the President said the enhanced campaign will not only educate the citizens about the Court's mission and activities, but also help bring the Court closer to the citizens in the spirit of the ECOWAS vision of a citizen driven Community.

In addition, he said the campaign will enable the Court engage with Member States, particularly on the issue of the designation of their national authority for the enforcement of the decisions of the Court as stipulated under Article 24 (4) of the 2005 Protocol on the Court as well as the need to enforce its decisions.

Justice Asante said the first part of this campaign, the Court's inaugural outreach programme, will take place in three Member States during the first quarter of 2019 as a complement to the Court's existing sensitization campaigns including its external court sessions under which Court sessions are held in Member States outside the seat of the Court.

He also identified the other challenges facing the Court to include reduction in the number of judges from seven to five which could hamper its effectiveness and the unsuitability of its office building based on present realities, saying that this is the subject of an ongoing engagement with the host government which has responsibility under the headquarters agreement to provide a suitable accommodation for the Court's operations.

The Ambassador, who is also Mali's Permanent Representative to ECOWAS, had said that the 13th November 2018 visit was to acquaint him with the new President of the Court, its activities and challenges to enable the country and how Mali could contribute to their resolution.

He acknowledged the important role of the Court in the region's integration, particularly its role as the Community Court with responsibility for the interpretation of Community texts

The Ambassador expressed support for the approaches being pursued by the Court to improve citizen awareness and access to the Court and urged the Court to also avail itself of the opportunity afforded by the Embassies of ECOWAS Member States in the country to build synergy in resolving the problem of low enforcement of its decisions.