

# Perception, Impact and Challenges of Ecowas Protocol on free Movement of Persons, Goods, Residence and Establishment

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**Abstract**

*The study assessed the Perception, Impact and Challenges of ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement. Cross-Sectional research design with the aid of descriptive statistical method was adopted. The study population was made up of security agents of Nigeria and Benin Republic. Traders, Transporters and Residents of the Seme border community. Purposive Sampling method was adopted for sampling the population. Seme-Krake border was selected as the major study area because of its peculiarity to the research topic. The research involved administration of questionnaires, interviews, and observations that are vital to the research. Data Analytical technique was the adopted descriptive statistical approach. The study revealed that the implementation of the protocol, has produced mixed results. It also revealed the level of perception of the protocol among border officials and other critical stakeholders, and the emerging challenges facing the free trade program of ECOWAS Furthermore it was recommended that the ECOWAS protocol should be promoted by member States via conferences, seminars, campaigns and the use of electronic and print media, as this would achieve a high level of awareness, and in the long run enhance economic and security growth of the sub region.*

**Keywords:** ECOWAS, Border Security, Protocol and Integration

**Background to the Study**

In West Africa, the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 was patterned along the aforementioned lines of regional integration. One of the objectives of the ECOWAS is to promote trade and commerce among member countries. Undoubtedly, there have being both institutional and non-institutional barriers to the free movement of people and goods (including excess customs checks, immigration procedures, entry restrictions and so on).

After some forty-five years of existence, ECOWAS has thrived more in the informal trade sector, where small time entrepreneurs do brisk business across borders in the most unorganized manner, and with scant compliance to the trade policies and regulations spelt out by the Community. The border routes have become notorious for criminal activities like smuggling and cross border armed banditry, with attendant losses to goods in transit and sometimes, lives [1].

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has undoubtedly remained the most viable integration framework among the countries of West Africa sub-region. ECOWAS was

founded as an umbrella organization for integration without tampering with the common historical bonds among the Nation States within the sub-region. The organization is primarily charged with the responsibility of ensuring transformation of the sub-region into a more viable economic community. This is evident in the various treaties and protocols adopted by the community which provides for elimination of all the barriers to mutual economic development and regional peace. In order to maintain traditional identities, cultures, traditions and religions of the diverse groups within the sub-region, removal of barriers to free movement of citizens of these States, was significantly advocated; hence, the signing of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, and the Right of Residence and Establishment in 1979 [2]. Article 27 of the ECOWAS Treaty makes provision for freedom of movement and residence. The Article's Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, and the Right of Residence and Establishment is one that the community has implemented and achieved results. This protocol affords citizens of the Community the right of residence and establishment anywhere within the territory of member States [3].

Since the inception of ECOWAS, the regional community has been making giant strides in the area of community integrative schemes

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to enhance the integration of West African States. Current integration schemes include liberalisation of regional trade, liberalisation of movement of persons, goods and services, harmonization of monetary and fiscal policies, harmonization of business law, development of transport, communication and energy networks and involvement of the private sectors in the overall regional integration process. Factors put into consideration in all of these integration initiatives include their relevance to national economic interests of member States and contribution to the ultimate economic union goals [4]. Compared to other regional arrangements on the African continents, ECOWAS is arguably the most advanced, although still miles away from the achievements of its European Union counterpart. The ECOWAS Protocol on free movement however is considered very germane to the overall objective of the ECOWAS integration policies. This is so because, there cannot be any genuine integration, if free movement of the community's citizens who are considered as agents of integration is hampered [5, 6]. Thus, the Protocol is at the heart of the organizations' objective .

Furthermore, it is argued that the unregulated free movement along the Nigeria-Benin border has brought about security threat to the cooperate existence of both Nations. Worries of border porosity and fears of criminal activities spilling-over from Nigeria to Benin are increasing daily. This is due to the potential spread of threats related to international terrorism and cross-border crime in the Sahel region to the coastal States, especially linked to the growing power of Boko Haram in the Northern parts of Nigeria. Since the ECOWAS free trade protocol has been in operation, its achievements so far has remained a matter of contention. While the various governments of member-nations, especially that of Nigeria, have claimed near total removal of physical restrictions to movement of goods and people across the border, operators at the border - traders, transporters, importers and exporters, and other trip makers to the border have continued to argue otherwise. They cite the problems of extortion by government agencies, payment of arbitrary levies on goods in transit, suffocating police and other security agencies check points road blocks and surprise attacks by criminals as still prevalent. So whose claim could be said to be correct?

Despite the vulnerability to shocks in Nigeria and the questionable sustainability of informal trade, Benin's heavy dependence on this trade for a large percentage of its revenues and the numerous beneficiaries among both formal and informal operators explains the government's reluctance to crack down on smuggling. Furthermore, even if the government were determined to shut down informal cross border trade with Nigeria, it would be difficult to do so as long as the underlying incentives created by Nigeria's distortions remain. Large price differences between the adjacent countries with porous borders are an invitation to smuggling that ingenious traders are bound to exploit.

### Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's pronouncement before the 2019 COVID 19 pandemic that it was once more closing its land borders to prevent movement

of all goods has been met with harsh criticism from her neighbors and regional integration advocates. The Muhammadu Buhari administration has justified the decision as a tactic to curb smuggling of goods of which the country wants to internally increase production, such agricultural produce as rice and poultry are cited as examples also address the flagrant abuse by neighbouring States of

Article 35 of the ECOWAS Trade and Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) protocol which Benin Republic is also a signatory.

The increasing incidence of trafficking in persons and illegal arms; trans-border crimes across and within the West African sub region has contributed in undermining Nigeria's security and also hindered effective implementation of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement. Crimes that are often perpetuated in a particular region usually have linkages with another country outside. Trans-border crime rate is rising in modern time, especially with porous borders and unpatriotic activities of security agencies, and this has become a major problem to security to the countries in relation to each other. The seriousness of the problem lies in the complexity of these criminal organizations and their nefarious activities, their global penetration and the threat they pose to nationhood and legitimate states economic development.

Empirical findings show that, Nigeria has been the new hub for most forms of trans-border crimes ranging from women and child trafficking, internet fraud smuggling, among others. These activities tend to affect the security measures already being put in place by the various security agencies of the State. The porous border, for instance, has been an easy route for criminals to easily ply their trade with little hindrance/challenge. The quest for survival has led many into smuggling various goods from Benin Republic into Nigeria, while the Beninose Government tends to turn blind eyes to the smuggling of mainly petroleum product from Nigeria.

It is against these backdrop that the study seeks to examine the Perception, Impact and challenges of ECOWAS Protocol on Free movement.

### Objectives of the Study

- Examine the perception on the level of understanding/awareness of the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement among border officials and other stakeholders.
- Elucidate on the impact and challenges of the implementation of the free trade program of ECOWAS to Economic growth and security in Nigeria

### Research Questions

- To what extent is the perception on the level of understanding/awareness of the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement among border officials and other stakeholders?
- How does the implementation of the ECOWAS free trade program impact and create challenges for Economic Growth and Security in Nigeria?

## Theoretical Framework

### Theory of Neo functionalism

This study adopts the neo-functionalism theoretical approach. Major proponents of this theory include Keohane, Nye, Ernst B Haas and Lindberg. Neo-functionalism, was proposed to find a common ground between the Federalism and the Functionalism theories of integration. It is a hybrid of both the Federalist and the Functionalist approaches. It describes the Federalist approach as being a greedy approach by asking for too much too hurriedly and the Functionalist as appearing to be evasive and lackadaisical. Hence, there was the need for the proposition of a common ground in the name of the neo-functionalism was born. This study agrees largely with the position of neo-functionalism that the best way to achieve an effective regional integration is the formation of administrative institutions at the transnational level, which are specialized and have the potential of demonstrating the significance and vitality of regional integration to member states. This study is also in agreement with the key position of the neo-functionalism approach that, “no state is capable of maintaining its economic growth and its existing economic structures and be capable of satisfying the economic needs of its people, if it does not cooperate with other countries. The research acknowledges the imperfect nature of the neo-Functionalist approach to regional integration as there are many criticisms against it with one of them being its stress on the supranational aspects of regional integration.

Moravesik suggests that much significance must be offered to the nation-state. He notes that, neo-functionalism theorist place too much emphasis on supranational officials at the expense of national leaders, arguing that the nation state remains the core element in understanding international relations, including regional integration. Again, neo-functionalism’s assumption that the cooperation of political and administrative elites would lead to the cooperation of the population has been described by critics as flawed by the experience of ‘no’ votes in the European Union treaties. This is

a fundamental weakness of the neo-functionalism theory. For instance, although the Lisbon treaty was agreed upon by political and administrative elites, it did not mean that the ordinary voter endorsed/approved it. For this, it can be said that neo-functionalism as a theoretical tradition has a weakness in its lack of appreciation of the need to institute legitimacy among citizens. However, despite the numerous criticisms of neo-functionalism, this study is very much convinced that, it still stands tall in the midst of the other approaches as far as the topic under study is concerned. Neo-functionalism approach perfectly suits the theoretical underpinning of this study, since this study recognizes the fact that, nations are not the only crucial players in international affairs, especially in trade, as the role of supranational institutions and non-state actors in international trade cannot be underestimated. The research also adopts the neo-functionalism approach because of its relevance in providing a much clearer path where the integrated body would be more competent through the support of member States. This appropriately explains why member States of ECOWAS cooperate with each other as well as with countries outside its catchment area for a profitable economic integration. Again, the neo-functionalism theory best suits this study because of its proposition for free trade barriers among integrated states. This theory is also suitable for this Study, since it would ensure that ECOWAS member States operate borderless-trade system where there are no bottlenecks or obstacles in the way of member States in their bid to trade with one another. It is therefore clear that the neo-functionalism theory of integration is the most suitable theory in which this study is theoretically framed.

### Methodology

#### Population of the Study

The population for the survey component of this study is made up of security agents of Nigeria and Benin Republic (Police, Immigration, and Customs), Traders, Cargo Transporters, Residents, and Relevant stakeholders as seen in Table 6.1:

**Table 6.1: Population of Study**

Category	(Nigeria) Population	Source	Category	(Benin) Population	Source
Nigeria Police Force	68	PPRO Seme Border,2021	Gendarmerie	46	RDRP,Krake Border 2021
Nigeria Custom Service	92	CPRO Seme Border 2021	Douanes	69	RDRP,Krake Border 2021
Nigeria Immigration Service	125	IPRO,Seme Border 2021	Agent de controle de frontier	73	RDRP,Krake Border 2021
Traders	256	TBTAN,2021			
Transporters	132	ATTAN,2021			
Residents NIIA	993 4	NPC,2006 Authour,2021	Residents	701	Okonkwo,2021
TOTAL	1670			889	
GRAND TOTAL	2,559	GRAND TOTAL 2,559			

Source: Author’s Compilation 2021

### Sample and Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study. Inclusive criterion of area proximity to the Seme-Krake border, security agencies (police, immigration, and customs) operating within the confines of the Seme-Krake border, traders, transporters, residents, and

four senior research fellows of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) formed the sampling frame of this study. For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted the formula provided by Taro Yamane (1967) to generate the sample size (n) as follows:

$$N$$

$$1 + N(e)^2$$

Where n = Sample Size  
 N = Population Size  
 e = level of precision = 0.05 at 95% confidence level.  
 Therefore,  $n = \frac{2,559}{1 + 2,559(0.05)^2}$   
 = 399.48  
 Therefore, sample size is 400.

### Population Distribution and Sample Size

Questionnaires were distributed in proportion to the sample pop-

ulation as stated below. On the Nigerian side with a cumulative population of 1,670 (See Table 6.2) was divided by the total population of the study area (2,559) which was then multiplied by the total number of sample size (400). Benin Republic with a cumulative population (Police, Customs, Immigration, and Residents) of 889 was divided by the total population of the study area (2,559) which was then multiplied by the total number of sample size (400). See computations below:

$$\text{Nigeria} = 1670/2559 * 2559 = 261 \text{ questionnaire}$$

$$\text{Benin Republic} = 889/2559 * 2559 = 139 \text{ questionnaire}$$

Proportional allotment was used to distribute questionnaires amongst the various elements (Police, Customs, Immigration, Traders, Transporters, and Residents) while in-depth interview was carried on with the Nigeria Institute of International affairs (NIIA) Officials. An inclusive criterion of 1km proximity to the land border formed the sampling frame for residents of the study area.

Find below questionnaire proportional allocations to the various elements of the sampled population.

**Table 6.2: Questionnaire Allotment**

Population	Nigeria	Nigeria-Alloted	Benin Population	Benin-Alloted
Police	68	$\frac{68}{1670} \times 261 = 11$	46	$\frac{46}{889} \times 139 = 7$
Immigration	125	$\frac{125}{1670} \times 261 = 20$	73	$\frac{73}{889} \times 139 = 11$
Customs	92	$\frac{92}{1670} \times 261 = 14$	69	$\frac{69}{889} \times 139 = 11$
Traders	256	$\frac{256}{1670} \times 261 = 40$	-	-
Transporters	136	$\frac{136}{1670} \times 261 = 21$	-	-
Residents	993	$\frac{993}{1670} \times 261 = 155$	701	$\frac{701}{889} \times 139 = 110$
TOTAL	1,670	261	Total 889	139

Source: Author's compilation 2021

### Nature/Source of Data

#### Primary Data

Information from this source includes the administration of questionnaires, granting of interviews, and recording of certain phenomena (observations) that was considered relevant to the study.

#### Secondary Data

These included published and unpublished materials such as books, journals, newspaper articles and bulletins, and the various

ECOWAS publications including the compendium of ECOWAS Treaties, Protocols, and decisions made since ECOWAS inception. Unpublished materials such as extracts from the records of the security agencies of both countries at the border on the volume of cargo transported across the border, and the records of criminal activities around the border were also used.

### Method of Data Analysis

Different statistical techniques were used to analyze the data.

### Examine the Perception on the Level of Understanding/Awareness of the ECOWAS Protocol on free Movement Among Border Officials and Other Stakeholders.

The objective was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables and percentages.

### Elucidate on the Impact and Challenges of the Implementation of the free Trade Program of ECOWAS to Economic Growth and Security in Nigeria

The objective was analyzed using In-depth Interview. The outcome of the interview of the four senior research fellows of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) Victoria Island formed the fulcrum of this objective.

## Results and Discussion

### Objective One: Respondents Perception of the ECOWAS Protocol on free

#### Movement Among Border Officials and Other Stakeholders

The Researcher's careful observation reveals that all participants under survey had a high level of awareness of the border being an ECOWAS free trade zone thus this correlated with the data result as seen in Table 7.1 as it reveals that 86% (246) respondents are fully aware of the Border being an ECOWAS Free trade zone while 14% (41) are not aware.

On Respondents perception on their opinion on whether the ECOWAS Protocol has fully achieved its result, data analysis as seen in Table 7.1 reveals that majority 85% (245) respondents were of the opinion that the protocol is yet to attain its objectives. Observation carefully reveals that the participants under survey had the notion that albeit ECOWAS was aimed at promoting peace and political stability with a view to creating the best conditions

for the development of the region, however since the protocol was yet to be effectively implemented its makes it difficult for people to

move freely and settle in different ECOWAS countries and hence realize the potential of migration for the socio economic development in the region as envisioned by the protocol.

Furthermore data analysis shows that 84% (240) had the opinion that the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol is yet to bring about a positive impact on the economy, while 16% (47) which formed the least had a contradicting opinion of the impact on the economy

On their opinion on if a well-coordinated security, Economic and Political Policies may facilitate the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of goods and services the results shows that 66% (189) and 34% (98) respondents respectively strongly agreed based on the question posed.

Although there is a heated debate among scholars and members of the public on the security consequence of the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of citizens, scholars have revealed that the protocol cannot be held accountable for existing ferocious and despicable activities such as smuggling in contraband goods, human trafficking, movement of small arms and light weapons (SALW) [2].

Preserving cultural identities, tradition and religions of diverse group within the sub region, of impediments to free trade and movements of citizens of these states was a drive towards the endorsement of the protocol by member states, thus, this correlates to a major factor of why 82% (236) respondents had the opinion that the ECOWAS protocol is not inadequate to promote economic development, 14% (40) of respondents had opinion that its inadequate and 4%(11) respondents are indifferent to the question posed. Furthermore, it can be clearly seen that the economic activities along the boundaries of Nigeria and Benin have continued to expand in size and volume over time.

**Table 7.1: Respondents Perception of the ECOWAS Protocol on free Movement Among Border Officials and Other Stakeholders**

Questionnaire Item	Frequency	%
Are you aware of the Border being an ECOWAS FREE TRADE ZONE		
YES	246	86
NO	41	14
Do you think the ECOWAS Protocol has achieved its main objective		
Yes	42	15
No	245	85
Do you think the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol has a positive impact on the economies of Nigeria and Benin		
Yes	47	16
No	240	84
Do you think a well-coordinated Security, Economic and Political policies may facilitate the implementation of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons		
Strongly Agree	189	66
Agree	98	34

Strongly Disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
The ECOWAS Protocol is inadequate to engender economic development between Nigeria and Benin Republic		
Yes	40	14
No	236	82
Indifferent	11	4

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2021

### Objective two: Impact and Challenges of the Implementation of the free Trade Program of ECOWAS

The Key Informant in depth interviews thematically analyzed the following issues:

- a) Impact of the ECOWAS free trade program
- b) Challenges of the Free trade program

This is followed by an expanded description of the respondent's narrative about their perception. Excerpts from in depth Interview and the actual words used by participants are integrated into these narratives to provide a greater understanding and appreciation of the issues under study.

It is important to emphasize that when a direct quote from an in-depth interview participant is used, this is not a random choice. Quotes selected represent the views expressed by majority of participants. So, while in depth Interview participants may have stated their experiences and opinions in different words, the excerpts used to illustrate the point best represents the experiences by many or all participants.

### Key Findings on the Impact and Challenges of the -Implementation ECOWAS Free Trade Program

In-depth interview Participants were asked questions on the impact of the free trade program. Almost all participants analyzed the impact of the ECOWAS free trade program, however one of the participants offered a statement that was cogent and serious. This statement sums up and was a true reflection of other participant's opinion on the Impact of the ECOWAS free trade program.

“Let me say that before identifying the impact, it is important we know the factors responsible for the success or failure which includes strong political will to make improvements, information dissemination to both public and private sector, and effective coordination of ECOWAS implementing agencies in member states. However, its impact has been a negative one as traders when moving goods across the border in the region still encounter tariff and non-tariff barriers that increase the cost of doing business. Also we have heard that transporters face similar hurdles in their operation as different vehicle standards, inspection requirements and axle weight limits all of which were to be harmonized under the protocol has not being done. Thus, this has created opportunities for corruption as many transport operators do not have the capacity or choose not to comply with a complex web of conflicting rules Furthermore a major challenge is the Thelack of a functioning pre-

ferred trader scheme which is further hindering the free flow of processed goods in the region. This is an area where the ECOWAS Commission and donors can support Member States in establishing the systems for registering preferred traders, maintaining up-to-date lists of firms participating in the scheme, and publicizing the benefits of becoming a preferred trader amongst firms in their jurisdictions (DrEfem Director of Research, interviewed 9th April 2021 at the Nigeria Institute of International affairs, Lagos).

An In-depth interview conducted with Barrister Kenneth Ukaoha (Senior Research Fellow at the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, Victoria Island, Lagos) was asked questions on the impact of the free trade program.

The weak understanding of regional framework, bribery and corruption, delays of transit goods and un-receipted charges are among the reasons why the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) trade and economic integration protocols fail years after their enactment and adoption. Since 1975 formation of ECOWAS key instruments and protocols seeking to position cross border trade as a tool for wealth creation and poverty reduction including ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), the Free Movement Protocol (supported with the Rights of Establishment and Rights of Residence), Common Industrial Policy, Supplementary Protocol on Competition and the Common External Tariff (CET) among others. Despite all the above efforts at building a regional market and full trade and economic integration through the existence of these requisite trade protocols and instruments, attainment of full integration in ECOWAS still appears to be a mirage. The trade and integration process in West Africa had suffered this noticeable setback largely owing to the poor implementation of these policy instruments put together and adopted by the regional leaders. The ETLS which was the first trade instrument on custom union and common market was obeyed and implemented in breaches, Nigeria sitting on the fence is untenable and must stand up to her responsibility as the political and economic leader of the region to fast-track full integration by among others deploying trade as instrument for growth and development and identifying the challenges and solving them. Though the governments of the region signed the agreements, the impact and implementation fall more on the private sector and the populace hence the need for sustained harmonious relationship.

This interview showed that the non-implementation of the ECOWAS free trade program has largely been as a result of weak understanding of regional framework, bribery and corruption, delays of

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transit goods, un-receipted charges, and the poor implementation of the various ECOWAS integration policies.

An In-depth interview conducted with Mr. Samuel Amadi (Senior Research Fellow at the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, Victoria Island, Lagos) NIIA, was asked questions on the impact of the free trade program: Since its inception in 1975, ECOWAS as a regional integration organization have suffered many institutional setbacks, which have endangered or put its continuous relevance at risk. However, despite the fact that ECOWAS have been able to survive the stumbling blocks forty-six years, it has not been able to practicalize most of the documents produced from seminars and workshops by its intelligentsia community. In many cases, most of these documents can be considered, or referred to as “academicals or scholarly speechifying”. At the end of very beautiful speeches, it becomes very difficult for policy makers within the ECOWAS team, to put into practicality what has been highly eulogized as being the solution to the problems of member States of the region. ECOWAS as a regional organization lacks the political will and motivational force which helps to generate a very viable political action. ECOWAS is also suffering from problems related to social and cultural factors. The continuance of these threats, and the inability of ECOWAS to deal decisively with them, has turned or made ECOWAS a laughing stock among other global regional bodies. ECOWAS is therefore seen as a very unreliable and faulty regional organization. Another of the great challenge posing a very serious threat towards the successful implementation of the ECOWAS protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods is that, the customs of member states are very corrupt. Majority of the member States of ECOWAS generates revenue in regards to exporting of commodities. These commodities in most of cases are not man-made or technological, as they remain solely mineral or natural commodities. This simply translates to the fact that, ECOWAS as a community of different countries is not developing, but rather sliding more and more into abject poverty. It is on record that even the hierarchy of ECOWAS had stated in the past, that the economy of the countries within the ECOWAS fold are all import driven. What this simply means is that, ECOWAS member countries are regarded as “consuming societies and not producing societies”.

An In-depth interview conducted with Mr. Urbain Adjanon (Senior Lecturer at the Department of International Affairs, Pinnacle African University, Port Novo, Benin Republic):

ECOWAS have developed comprehensive trade policy frameworks aimed at improving coordination and increasing trade integration between her member States. While regional leaders have been active in signing up to these intra-regional agreements and protocols, implementation at the national level has been slower. A striking example here is the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), the main framework for developing the region into a free trade area. Particularly the comprehensive gap analysis of the ETLS by USAID’s West Africa Trade Hub has found substantial disparities between legislation and implementation, lim-

ited private sector knowledge of protocols, and lack of clarity of the protocol among citizens. In Benin, for example, private sector traders reported having limited detailed information on ETLS protocols, their rights, and where to find information and documents needed for transit. In Benin Republic, the private sector was found to be aware of protocols but dissatisfied with its pace of implementation, thus, left with the feeling that resort to informality may be less costly than strict adherence to the rules. However, this is not unique to the ETLS –there is a relatively frequent gap between agreement and implementation for regional rules as they apply to a number of trade-related areas with regionally agreed policy frameworks often incongruous with national policies. In the case of West Africa, regional agricultural trade policy in is often just ‘a patchwork of rules implemented unevenly and enforced inconsistently, leading to an opaque business environment that severely limits the economic growth potential that agriculture possesses and significantly affects competitive access to food.’

This discourse acknowledged that the impact of the implementation of the ECOWAS free trade program had led to continuous negative consequences for businessmen and other stakeholders in both countries[7-8].

### Conclusion

The implementation of the ECOWAS free trade program has created a negative impact on both Nigeria and Benin Republic security and Economic well-being. Multiple tariffs, extortions by both state and non- state actors security and non-security agents, officials and non-official barriers, and the deplorable road conditions (particularly along the Nigeria side) increases the cost of doing business which ultimately hinder economic growth. Also, the proliferation of Small Arms and light weapons, Drug and Human Trafficking, corruption are also some of the negative outcome of the low implementation of the ECOWAS free trade program.

### Recommendations

In the light of the study findings, the following recommendations are made;

Adoption of effective mechanism of dealing with migrant rights and the political will to implement the ECOWAS protocol against the National interests of both countries, Furthermore the ECOWAS protocol should be promoted by member States via conferences, seminars, campaigns and the use of electronic and print media, as this would achieve a high level of awareness, and in the long run enhance economic and security growth of the sub region.

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