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ECOWAS Delegation Visits Senegal, Says All Is Set for Launch of Regional Electricity Market

A high-level ECOWAS delegation on 3rd May 2018 ended its mission to Senegal where it met with key stakeholders in the country's capital city of Dakar with the message: "We are ready for the take-off of the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market!"

Members of the delegation, which was led by the ECOWAS Commissioner for Energy and Mines, Mr. Sédiko Douka, included the Chairman of ERERA, Professor Honoré Bogler, the Secretary General of the West African Power Pool (WAPP), Mr. Apollinaire Siengui Ki, the Systems Operations Manager of WAPP, Mr. Honoré Sanou as well as ERERA's Regulatory Council Member, Mr. Aly Mar Ndiaye.

The delegation met with the Chairman and staff of Senegal's national electricity regulator (CRSE), the leaderships of Senegal's national electricity operator, SENELEC and the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum.

Similarly, they held talks with the heads of The Gambia River Basin Development Organization (OMVG) which members are The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Senegal, and the Senegal River Basin Development Organization (OMVS), comprising Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal.

Members of the delegation also made presentations at an international conference on "Energy for Development in Africa" in Dakar on 3rd May 2018. In all, they held fruitful interactive sessions with the representatives of the various institutions.

Commissioner Douka explained the rationale behind the development and implementation of ECOWAS' policies on energy. He stressed the need to harness the vast energy resources in the region and enable Community citizens access to energy with its attendant benefits, for the improvement of the living standard of the people.

He said ECOWAS was doing exactly that through its dedicated energy institutions.

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ERERA, WAPP and the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) based in Praia, Cape Verde, are some of ECOWAS' institutions created to tackle the energy challenge in West Africa.

Professor Bogler explained at the various meetings that ERERA has met the conditions necessary for the launch of the market, which is designed in three phases. The first phase is transitional and is expected to end in 2020 with the commencement of the second phase.

According to him, ERERA has, among other documents critical to the launch of the market, approved market rules, a transmission tariff methodology and model cross-border standard contracts for the use of regional transmission networks.

The first phase of the market is contingent on the commissioning most of the regional transmission infrastructure.

WAPP's Secretary General, Mr. Apollinaire Ki, stated that his institution is in charge of market operator functions through its Information and Coordination Centre (ICC) based in Calavi, near Cotonou in Benin. The ICC is crucial to competitive trade in electricity.

Mr. Ki explained that beside the competitive trade awaited in the second phase, the regional electricity market rules also allow, among many others, the continued bilateral agreements on cross-border electricity sales between participating entities with direct payments between parties.

While WAPP is responsible for developing and implementing the regional power market and for coordinating related activities, ERERA is to regulate cross-border electricity trading, create an appropriate regulatory and economic environment for the development of the market as well as monitor its operations.

The delegation will next visit Guinea Bissau and The Gambia in the following days. It had earlier visited Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Togo.