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## **ECOWAS President, Minister Laud Progress on Regional Electricity Sector**

The progress recorded in the electricity sector in West Africa, especially regarding the readiness for the launch of the Regional Electricity Market in June 2018 has been highly praised by the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Mr. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou and the Minister of Power, Works and Housing of Nigeria, Mr. Babatunde Fashola.

The commendations were made at separate meetings on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 in Abuja with an ECOWAS delegation which included the ECOWAS Commissioner for Energy and Mines, Mr. Sediko Douka, the Chairman of ERERA, Professor Honoré Bogler, the Secretary General of the West African Power Pool (WAPP), Mr. Siengui Apollinaire Ki, ERERA's Council Member, Dr. Haliru Dikko as well as the Managing Director of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), Mr. Usman Gur Mohammed.

Discussions between President Kassi Brou and members of the delegation included issues concerning investments in the power sector, in particular as it relates to electricity distribution companies to help curb technical and commercial losses, infrastructural development, tariff setting and payment systems.

The delegation assured President Kassi Brou on concrete measures being taken to address tariff-related issues, payment guarantees and a planned study on the mitigation of losses by market participants.

Describing the talks as “very encouraging news”, President Brou expressed delight over the progress made, considering the direct relationship between poverty and the supply of electricity.

He also called for greater information to Community citizens on the progress made so far in the electricity sector.

For his part, Nigeria's Power, Works and Housing Minister, Mr. Babatunde Fashola, said the Regional Electricity Market offers big opportunities to bridge the gap in power supply to Member States, adding that it also "provides a leap forward to solving electricity problems for the region".

He expressed satisfaction over the scale of interconnectivity of ECOWAS countries, as well as the plans for interconnectivity of power lines between West and Central Africa. He said these efforts would help improve the lives of the populations as electricity supply, access and costs would be in favour of the people.

In a presentation, the ECOWAS delegation explained the three phases planned for the market, including maintaining the current bilateral arrangements in the first phase and the introduction of market competition in the second phase.

Mr. Fashola called on ERERA to help ensure compliance with contractual agreements and that rights of participating parties are protected in the first phase.

Referring to the global standards in operating regional power markets and the status of preparedness of the ECOWAS electricity market, the minister urged the delegation to "continue to propagate the story that we are not any significant way left behind".

The delegation had on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2018 in Abuja held talks with the Managing Director and top management of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Power as well as Commissioners of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC).

Members of the delegation also held an interactive session with the electricity sector stakeholders, including representatives of power generation and distribution companies in Nigeria.