

ECOWAS MINISTERS TO MEET IN MONROVIA ON MINERAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Regional Ministers responsible for the mineral sector in Member States will meet on Friday, 8th October 2010 in Monrovia, Liberia to consider the draft ECOWAS Mineral Development Policy as well as the Report of the Concept Committee on the ECOWAS Mining & Oil Forum (ECOMOF).

The draft Common Mining Policy (CMP) seeks to establish an efficient legislative and regulatory framework that will ensure promote the integrated and harmonized development of West Africa's mineral resources so that they can benefit from the explosion in the global demand for minerals.

Specifically, the policy aims to provide a common policy framework that will promote the emergence of a competitive and integrated national and regional mining sector which will contribute to the sustainable socioeconomic development of ECOWAS Member States.

In addition, it will help create a mining environment conducive to the sustainable macro-economic development within the region and ensure a balance between the necessity to establish incentives to attract investors and the need to protect the income base and resources of Member States in an environment conducive for attracting investments.

The ministers will also inaugurate the Ad-hoc Committee to monitor the implementation of the ECOWAS Directive on the Harmonization of Guiding Principles and Policies in the Mining Sector of May 2009 and its accompanying plan of action in order to report to the President of the ECOWAS Commission.

The 10-member Committee, to be headed by the ECOWAS Commissioner for Trade, Customs, Industry and Mines and Free Movement, will among other functions, ensure compliance with the Directive by Member States, ensure the operation of the presidential advisory body within the framework of the application of the Directive and propose pertinent recommendations for the effective application of the Directive to the President of the Commission, in addition to preparing a six-monthly report for the President of the Commission.

Members of the Committee will also ensure that the Directive is published in the National Gazettes of Member States.

The ministers, who will be treated to some presentations, including those on the Computerized Mine Cadastre Management system and the UNDP capacity development project, will also consider the report of a preceding experts meeting which will begin on Monday, 4th October 2010 in Monrovia.

The experts' report is expected to include a brief on the newly established Concept Committee, in accordance with a regional regulation to have a mining forum "as a framework for periodic meetings and exchanges among stakeholders in the mining sector".

The Concept Committee is mandated, among others, to harmonizing legal, regulatory and taxation instruments, promote and develop small-scale and craft mining, developing Community infrastructure as well as strengthening trade in mining and oil products.

CITIZENS OF REPUBLIC OF BENIN CELEBRATE COUNTRY'S 50 INDEPENDENCE

Staff of the ECOWAS Commission and the wellwishers of the Benin Republic came out in their mass to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Benin with the country's citizens working with ECOWAS in a very colourful ceremony. The celebration showcased the culture, music, dances and cuisine of the Dahomey Kingdom.



*"No matter how violent the wind may be, it can never force the river to flow backwards."
..... Zimbabwe.....*

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ECOWAS PRESIDENT CALLS FOR PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN ELECTRICITY SECTOR

Electricity demand in the 15 Member States of ECOWAS is expected to record a quantum leap to 22,000 mega watts in 2020 from 6,500 MW in 2003, a growth rate of 7.6 per cent, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Ambassador James Victor Gbeho, said on Tuesday, 28th September 2010 in Abidjan at the opening of the third ECOWAS Business Forum.

"This tremendous increase in the demand for power imposes a responsibility on both governments and the private sector to develop innovative and ambitious projects in the energy sector", he told the 450 participants at the forum which is on the theme, "Harnessing Energy Resources to enhance the competitiveness of West Africa's economy".

He attributed the demand to "industrialization and population growth", acknowledging that in spite of the phenomenal growth, less than 30 per cent of the population of the region's citizens have direct access to electricity with wide disparities between the access level between the urban and rural areas while the traditional biomass remains the main source of energy for the majority.

This deficit, he said, provides a challenge for the private sector which has the capacity to "contribute significantly to the growth of the sector" through scaling up its investment in this sector, providing financial support, leading the campaign to remove barriers and rigid regulations that discourage investment, augmenting the campaign for substantial partner support and contributing to regional initiatives that promote the convergence of policies.

"In such circumstances, what we need now is to foster private sector participation in the energy sector", he said, through the "adoption of appropriate strategies, engaging with national governments and relevant partners to invest in the energy sector".

On its part, the President said the Commission has undertaken various initiatives to stimulate investment in this sector, build synergies and improve the regulatory environment through the establishment of the West African Gas Pipeline and Power Pool projects as well as the creation of the Accra-based ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulation Authority and the Praia-based

Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.

In recognition of the strategic role of the private sector as a catalyst for growth, Ambassador Gbeho said that the Commission has, since 2007, engaged in a process of engaging this sector by reviving moribund regional structures and creating new ones so that they deploy the muscle of this sector in support of regional development.

In addition, he said that the previous fora held in Ghana and Burkina Faso provided the impetus for international engagements with China, the European Union and India, the fruits of which West Africa is beginning to reap with their involvements in infrastructure development, mostly in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Opening the five-day Forum, President Laurent Gbagbo, who was represented by the Minister of Economic Infrastructure, Mr. Banzio Dagobert, characterized the current energy situation in the region as a "crisis" that requires that the region revisits its present energy use and take various other measures to improve access.

The President who has been in the forefront of a campaign for a regional fund for the development of regional infrastructure in order to enhance its competitiveness and facilitate intra-Community trade and movement, said that in view of the emergency in the sector, there was the need to build on existing technology that would enable the region improve energy generation, distribution and availability.

Forty-five persons were honored for



Ambassador James Victor Gbeho
President of the ECOWAS Commission



A cross section of ECOWAS Officials

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“innovation and entrepreneurship” on Friday, 1st October 2010 during the award night for the Forum which came in three categories, one from each Member State for a young entrepreneur for innovation in energy and a second one for entrepreneurship.

The third award was for the most outstanding businessman from each Member State.

The best country in the implementation of the Protocol on free movement of persons was also honoured as part of the five-day Forum.

The awards are part of the efforts by the ECOWAS Commission to recognize innovation entrepreneurship as important tools for enhancing regional competitiveness and development.

The theme of the 2010 Forum comes against the backdrop of the energy crisis that rocked the region in 2008, with the participants expected to examine the ramifications of energy management, particularly the region's potentials, production, distribution, marketing and policy.

Participants were expected to agree on key structures for ensuring the full involvement of the various sectors of the Community, particularly the private sector, in tapping available resources for the benefit of the region.

Discussions during the Forum focused on three major topics - Assessment of West Africa's energy resources and implications for business operations and economic development; Investment



Mr. Jean Louis Billo, President of Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Cote d'Ivoire



Mr. Dagobert Banzio, Representative of the Ivoirian government

potential, challenges and opportunities in the energy sector in West Africa, including financing options for energy-related projects; and Harmonization of regulations and policies in the energy sector in West Africa.

The inaugural edition of the Forum was held in 2007 in Accra on the theme, “Harnessing private sector energies for the challenges of integration”, while the second edition took place in Ouagadougou on the theme, “Harnessing agricultural potentials and challenges in the agro-business in the frontline”.

BURKINA FASO WINS INAUGURAL FREE MOVEMENT EXCELLENCE AWARD AT THIRD ECOWAS BUSINESS FORUM

Burkina Faso was on Friday, 1st October 2010 named the winner of the inaugural free movement excellence award for its outstanding implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Persons.

A representative of the country received the cheque for \$10,000 and a certificate during the award night of the third ECOWAS Forum which also saw 45 other awards for ‘innovation and entrepreneurship’.

The country was cited for the elimination of harassment along the borders, removal of non trade tariffs along their border route, removal of multiple check points and the effective monitoring of their highways to ensure the security of Community citizens.

The flagship Protocol was signed in 1979 by Heads of State and Government as an instrument to facilitate the intra-Community movement of citizens so that

they can avail themselves of opportunities all over the region and boost intra-Community trade to enable it become a tool for stimulating the regional economy and promoting employment.

Two other awards, one in the Young Entrepreneur category and another, the ECOWAS Innovation Award, were also presented during the night. The Young Entrepreneurship Award was won by Mr. Alain Capochichi from Benin while Lynays SARL, a company based in Cote d'Ivoire, beat nine other contestants to win the award. Both winners received cheques for \$10,000 each and certificates.

The inaugural

awards marked the highlight of this year's annual Forum which was on the theme, “Harnessing Energy Resources to enhance the competitiveness of West Africa's economy.”

The inaugural edition of the Forum, which brings together stakeholders in the region's private sector to discuss various aspects of the region's economy, was held in Accra while the second edition was held in Ouagadougou.



A cross section of the high table



Some of the Awardees displaying their certificates



STAKEHOLDERS CALL FOR STATE OF EMERGENCY IN WEST AFRICA'S ENERGY SECTOR

The ECOWAS Commission should declare a decade of emergency sufficiency that will encourage the government of Member States to focus on the development of this sector as a strategic priority because of its catalytic role in regional development.

These were among the measures proposed by participants at the 3rd ECOWAS Business Forum which ended on Friday, 1st October 2010, in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire and which focused on the theme, “Harnessing energy resources for the competitiveness of West Africa's economy.”

These measures will enable the region address the supply-side constraints hampering energy access in the region where only 30 per cent of the population have access to energy but demand is expected to significantly grow by 7.6 per cent to 22,000 MW in 2020 from 6,500 MW in 2003.

The measures proposed by the participants will enable the region holistically address the dimensions of the challenge through initiatives that will promote energy self sufficiency, address the business and policy environment issues as well as the financing mechanism.

It calls for the expeditious implementation of the priority

projects of the West African Power Pool (WAPP) in the areas of power generation and the interconnection of grids, the adoption of a regional energy mix that exploits all the region's energy resources to meet the fast growing demand, the development of minimum renewable energy targets and the strengthening of the Centre for Renewable Energy based in Praia, Cape Verde.

Other proposals will enable the region address the business and policy environment and calls for the creation of a regional framework to guarantee private sector investment in the sector, the implementation of capacity building programmes, the development and enforcement of local environmentally-friendly and energy efficient materials, the unbundling of the energy sector to private sector investors, the strengthening of mechanisms for public private partnerships and the ratification of the ECOWAS Energy Protocol.

Among the other proposals are the provision of incentives to encourage investment in independent power projects.

The participants also made suggestions to address the fund constraints against investment in the sector, including ECOWAS facilitation of donor support for such projects, the injection of funds in the rehabilitation of maintenance of existing infrastructure, the mobilisation of local resources and the development of financing mechanisms for energy projects, particularly for rural electrification.



Mr. Bayaornibe Dabire, ECOWAS Director for Energy



Mr. Mahama Kappiah, Executive Director, ECREEE

REDUCING THE GAP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

What new avenues are there to exit the problem of underdevelopment in West Africa?

The region will have to provide an appropriate answer to the question as nearly 200 researchers, academicians, representatives of civil society organizations, the private sector, regional and international institutions partook in the opening of a three-day workshop on 3rd October 2010 in Ouagadougou.

The participants, most of whom are African experts of international renown, will brainstorm on seven major themes, namely, the history and development context of Africa, the crisis of development model application since independence, the relationship between growth and development, development and poverty reduction, integration and development, social capital and human resources as well as the different approaches to

institutional development.

Organized by the ECOWAS Commission in collaboration with the European Union, the Ouagadougou symposium will highlight the importance of research for development.

Participants will be expected to make relevant recommendations on the new approaches to development which will be presented to the President of the Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaore, on behalf of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS.

In attendance at the opening ceremony were the Vice President of the ECOWAS Commission, Mr. Jean De Dieu Somda, who chaired the meeting, the Head of the Delegation of the European Union in Burkina Faso, Mr. Amos Tincani, the ECOWAS Commissioner in charge of macroeconomic policy, Professor Lambert Bamba N'Galadjo and other prominent academics, including



Mr. Jean De Dieu Somda, Vice-President, ECOWAS Commission,

Professor Moustapha Kasse, Honorary Dean and Chairman of the Scientific Committee.