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ERERA LAUDS WORKSHOP ON CLEAN ENERGY TO ADDRESS DEFICIT IN REGIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

A member of the Regulatory Council of the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA), Mr. Alagi Basiru Gaye, has described as timely the organization of a two-day technical workshop on 'Using the Principles of Regulating Clean Energy to Advance renewable energy in the ECOWAS region'.

The workshop, being jointly organized by ERERA, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), Ghana's Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC) and the Energy Commission of Ghana, began on 24th April 2014 in Accra.

It seeks to provide advanced training on the regulatory treatment of clean energy, specifically on instruments for renewable energy incentive and the tools for implementation and managing the stakeholder process.

In addition, participants are reviewing the status of clean energy regulation in ECOWAS Member States, as well as increasing their understanding of the role of regulators in developing national renewable energy action plans.

The workshop is based on a document on principles of regulation to promote a harmonized growth of clean energy policy framework in West Africa. The document is designed to serve as a practical guide for regulators and policy decision-makers, providing an inventory of fundamental assumptions, approaches, mechanisms, tools, best practices and national experiences on key issues in the field of clean energy.

The principles reflect best practices based on local context and were collaboratively drafted as a resource for the ECOWAS region, taking into account energy markets, natural resources, social and environmental priorities, among others.

While addressing the opening of the workshop, Mr. Alagi Gaye said the development of the principles document was important as renewable energy technologies are 'becoming more

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competitive compared to conventional technologies as the global competition for the development of such technologies is making them more viable’.

Moreover, he said African countries, including ECOWAS Member States, are generally grappling with the development of regulatory frameworks to facilitate the development of a renewable energy market.

In addition to a deficit in power supply, Mr. Gaye said underdeveloped regulatory frameworks in most ECOWAS Member States posed a challenge to ERERA, which is mandated to develop and regulate the regional electricity market.

In this regard, he lauded ECOWAS’ partnership with NARUC and USAID, saying it ‘continues to be instrumental in developing the regional regulatory framework’.

‘Within the partnership, several capacity building activities have been carried out in the past three years to support regulatory authorities in West Africa in the topical areas of tariff and quality of service regulation, among other regulatory issues’, Mr. Gaye stated.

This workshop is sequel to that held in October 2013, also in Accra.