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Minister Urges Greater Synergy on Management of ECOWAS Regional Electricity Market

The Minister of Petroleum and Energy of The Gambia, Mr. Fafa Sanyang, has called for greater synergy among the ECOWAS institutions responsible for energy in order to protect the interest of Community citizens.

Mr. Sanyang stated that such synergy would be critical, especially during the first phase of the market, which will be launched on 29th June 2018 in Cotonou. In particular, he urged the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA) and the West African Power Pool (WAPP) to closely supervise and monitor bilateral contracts signed by parties during the first phase of the market.

The minister made the call on 8th May 2018 in Banjul while receiving an ECOWAS delegation to The Gambia who paid him a courtesy visit. The delegation was led by the Chairman of ERERA, Professor Honoré Bogler, and included WAPP's Director of Administration and Finance, Mr. Baba Jarjusey.

The delegation also met with high-ranking officials of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) and the National Water and Electricity Company Limited (NAWEC), as well as representatives of the World Bank on mission in Banjul.

During the meetings, the delegation gave an update on the progress so far recorded in the electricity sector in West Africa as well as the organization of the ECOWAS Electricity Market and its planned launch in June this year in Cotonou.

Following discussions, members of the delegation assured the minister and other stakeholders that adequate steps have been taken to ensure that the market is free, fair and independent market. In particular, they stated that the Information and Coordination Centre of WAPP, which will become the System and Market Operator during the second phase of the market, will ensure transparency and guarantee market stability.

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They also gave assurances that electricity would be available and affordable for citizens of the Community when the market becomes fully operational.

In addition, they assured the Gambian authorities that issues relating to open access, tariff-setting, standards, sanctions and dispute resolution are being well addressed by both ERERA and WAPP who share the same vision of a dynamic regional power market.

Members of the ECOWAS delegation who stressed the many advantages of the regional market, cautioned Member States against signing long-term, bilateral contracts. According to them, this could limit their chances of benefitting from the various opportunities which would be offered by the soon-to-launched electricity market.