

**PRESS
RELEASE**



**COMMUNIQUE
DE PRESSE**

No.002 – 30th April 2021 – Accra, Ghana

We Are Committed to the Vision of ECOWAS, Says President

The President of the ECOWAS Commission, Mr. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, has reiterated the commitment of the ECOWAS leadership to improving the welfare of Community citizens despite the many challenges facing the institution.

The challenges, he said, include security issues, especially in the Sahel, the Lake Chad region and the Gulf of Guinea. According to him, the decisions of two ECOWAS extra-ordinary summits are being implemented to address these security challenges.

He also identified the COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant consequences, including the lockdown last year in the region and globally, as a major challenge, as he addressed staff of the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA) on 29th April 2021 at their new office annex in Accra, Ghana.

President Kassi Brou expressed the hope that the production of vaccines and their administration would help bring a solution to the pandemic. “ECOWAS countries are on course in the vaccination programme, and with support from ECOWAS through the West African Health Organization (WAHO), we are helping to procure more vaccines”, he told the staff.

He stressed the importance of ERERA, the West African Power Pool (WAPP) and the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), noting their contribution to ensuring energy access to the people of the region.

Mr. Kassi Brou recalled some of the major on-going activities of ECOWAS in the areas of transportation, telecommunications, agriculture, education and energy, among others. “We will continue to support growth and development and social welfare for all the people of ECOWAS,” he said, adding: “All these activities are in the ECOWAS DNA”.

**Published by: Department of Communication, ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority
Publié par: Le Département de la Communication, Autorité de Régulation Régionale du Secteur de
l'Électricité de la CEDEAO**

**Energy Commission Building, Ghana Airways Avenue, Airport Residential Area,
PMB 76 Ministries Post Office, Accra, Ghana**

Tel: (233) 0302 817 049 Fax: (233) 0302 817 050 E-mail: info@erera.arrec.org

He reassured the ERERA staff that ECOWAS will continue to focus on its core activities of developing trade and ensuring infrastructural development in West Africa, in line with the vision of ECOWAS' Founding Fathers.

"I'm glad you are part of this important journey so we can continue to work hand-in-hand to achieve our objectives", President Kassi Brou said. He congratulated the staff on their efforts and urged them to make sacrifices, when required, in their service to the ECOWAS Community.

In an interaction with journalists during his visit to the ERERA premises, Mr. Kassi Brou spoke on some topical issues including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of ECOWAS Member States and the health systems in those countries.

He said the pandemic has had a strong impact on the economy, noting that COVID-19 arrested the average annual growth rate of 3% to 3.5 % in Member States. "Now we are not talking about growth; we are talking about recession of about 2%", he said.

"In 2021, we hope that things will get better, but it will depend heavily on our ability to slow down the virus. That's why the vaccine programme is very important. Whatever growth rate we project in 2021 will depend on how much we are able to mitigate the effect of COVID-19", he explained.

Mr. Kassi Brou said there are lessons ECOWAS needs to learn and steps to take so that the economies of Member States can be "rapidly relaunched so we can have development for our people".

On the health, he said a pandemic such as the COVID-19 would severely affect all health systems globally and many developed countries have had their health systems pushed to the limit, compelling them to take unprecedented measures to address it.

The President congratulated Ghana on the bold steps taken to contain the spread of the virus. He disclosed that ECOWAS extra-ordinary summits strongly recommended that other Member States should copy the Ghana example. He further lauded Ghana on its efforts on its vaccination programme.

He said the West African Health Organization (WAHO) was working very closely with all the ministers of health of Member States based on lessons drawn from the COVID-19 experience.

"We need to strengthen our health systems, to train more people, to be able to put mechanisms to identify threats before they develop, reinforce the capacities of various

institutions and also reinforce their capabilities in terms of equipment to be able to respond when we have those threats”, he said.

“We also have to invest in research to develop our capacity as a region to be able to have laboratories that can produce vaccines for the people of our region whenever there are specific threats. Those are new challenges that we all have to address collectively because together we have a better chance to succeed in doing so”, he noted.

Mr. Kassi Brou therefore emphasized the need to pool resources to ensure better management of any threats. “That is the *raison d’être* of ECOWAS – to encourage the working together of Member States to address specific issues that face all of us”, he concluded.

The ECOWAS President who was on an official mission to the Ghana authorities was received by the Chairman of ERETA, Professor Honoré Bogler, ERETA Regulatory Council Members, Dr. Haliru Dikko and Mr. Aly Mar Ndiaye, as well as the ECOWAS Resident Representative to Ghana, Ambassador Baba Gana Wakil, at the new ERETA Office Annex at the Airport Residential Area in Accra.

At the staff briefing session with President Kassi Brou, Professor Bogler thanked the ECOWAS authorities for their assistance in providing additional office space for a more conducive working environment for ERETA staff, while waiting for the Government of Ghana to secure a permanent office accommodation for ERETA, in line with the Headquarters Agreement it signed with the ECOWAS Commission in 2010.