

West African Experts Recommend Cross-border Cooperation in the Energy Sector

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Niamey, 19 June 2012 (ECA) – Experts recommended that West African States strengthen cross-border cooperation in the energy sector to ensure that renewable energy contributes to wealth creation, economic growth, and poverty reduction during an ad hoc expert group meeting organized by the Sub-Regional Office for West Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on 7 and 8 June 2012, in Lomé, Togo.

The experts also stressed the need to update the White Paper of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to reflect developments in the renewable energy sector and climate change issues, and its translation into national energy policies, programmes and projects.

In his remarks at the official opening of the meeting, the Minister of Mines and Energy of the Republic of Togo, Mr. Damipi Noupokou, underscored that energy is a driving force in States' effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He also noted that West African countries are faced with the challenge of finding concrete ways to replace fossil energy with renewable sources largely available in the subregion.

The experts' presentations and deliberations highlighted the need for States to set binding targets for energy access, energy efficiency, and access to electricity, and develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

"The high level nature of these discussions was a testament of the resolve to promote renewable energy in West Africa," said Mr. Émile Ahohé, Director of ECA's Sub-Regional Office for West Africa. He also urged experts to continue to advocate for the promotion of renewable energy in their countries.

The outputs of the meeting and the national reports presented will be used by ECA as inputs into a technical publication on the promotion of renewable energy in West Africa.

The meeting brought together experts from Benin, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. Also in attendance were representatives from subregional institutions such as ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, WAPP, ERERA, ABREF, and ECREEE.

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P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Tel: 251 11 5445098
Fax: +251 11 5510365
E-mail: ecainfo@uneca.org
Web: www.uneca.org

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