

## Speaker Tunis calls for more Women on Nigeria's Delegation to ECOWAS Parliament



Nigeria has 35 representatives at the ECOWAS Parliament, the highest number. However, there are only two women, which according to Hon. Sidie Mohamed Tunis, Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament "is really, really not good". In an interview with the ECOParl Press Corp in Freetown, Sierra Leone, at the end of the two-day symposium on women proportional representation in politics, organised by the ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians Association (ECOFEPA), Speaker Tunis expressed his plans to continue engaging the leadership of Nigeria on the change of status quo.

"I am hoping to engage the next Speaker of the Nigerian National Assembly and the President of the Senate to encourage them to have more women in the ECOWAS Parliament. We also want to have a special programme just for Nigeria to encourage the stakeholders and the political leadership to ensure that they have more women on their tickets, not just for the National

Assembly but for even Local Government.

Speaker Tunis further stated that the Community Parliament has a whole year Programme, and the symposium in Sierra Leone is just the beginning of many to follow, to popularise the idea of 30 percent affirmative action for women.

"We are also going to have another programme [a TownHall Meeting] in Abuja before the next Ordinary Session, where we are even inviting MPs from Rwanda to come and share their experiences with us [ECOWAS Parliament]. We will also have workshops in Member States to ensure that we do not just pass laws, but to see action." He believes the advocacy campaign in Freetown can be organised across the sub-region to have a minimum of 30 percent quota for women. Last year, through a conversation between the Speaker and the ECOWAS Commission, the Parliament was able to secure funding for ECOFEPA's activities.

# Insecurity and Funding affects Inter-connectivity of Power Grids in West Africa

Incessant cases of insecurity and lack of funds have been attributed to some of the challenges hindering the progress of grid interconnectivity across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. The Project Coordinator for West African Power Pool (WAPP), Dr Mawufemo Modjinou, disclosed this during a presentation on the theme *"Mobilization and Securing of financing for the Realisation of Regional Infrastructures for the Production and Transmission of Electricity,"* at a five-day delocalised joint committee meeting of ECOWAS Parliament in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Dr Modjinou explained that the interconnection of power grids will help diversify the imported sources of energy to hinterland countries in the region. "This will have a major impact on the quality of service provided by utilities", Dr Modjinou added.

The WAPP Coordinator further submitted that the ECOWAS region and West Africa at large have a population of 400 million people and therefore has the potential to generate energy for the exchange market.

According to him "West Africa has one of the highest differentials of electricity costs in the world, but vast geographical distances and limited infrastructure does not permit countries to trade electricity to meet demand at economically efficient prices.

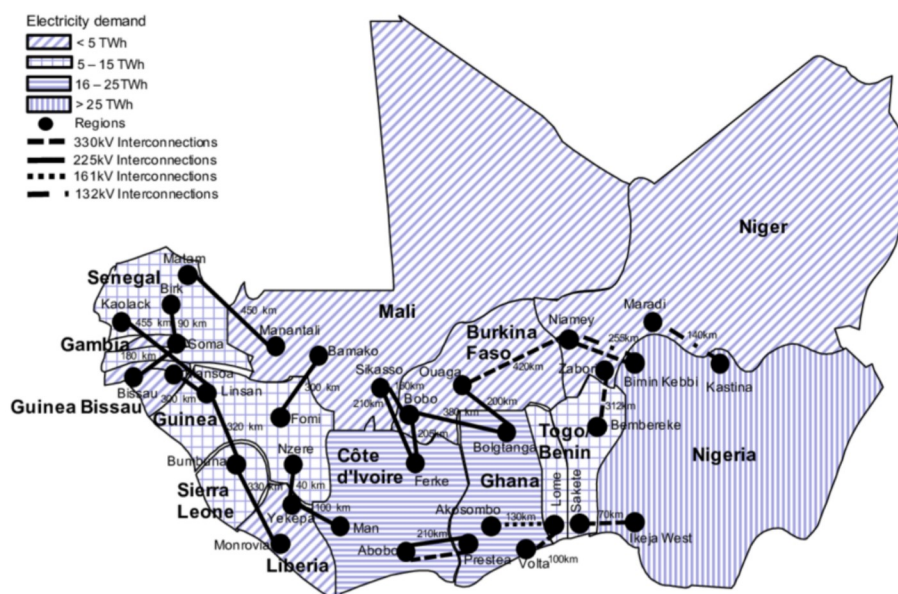
"It also includes some of the most poverty-stricken countries in the world, which could benefit from abundant and realisable electricity.

Speaking on the importance and benefits of the WAPP Project, he said since the commencement of the project a decade ago, many ECOWAS Member States have been able to link up with transmission infrastructure.

"Since the creation of the west African Power Pool (WAPP), in just a decade, all ECOWAS Member countries are now linked with transmission infrastructure and many are exchanging power with their neighbours. "Bilateral trade has increased significantly since the formation of WAPP, albeit unevenly and with continuous financial and operational challenges".

In reaction to the submission made by WAPP, Emmanuel Egoh Ogene, a member of the Community Parliament from Nigeria, said that not much impact has been felt because the people live in perpetual darkness and use of generator sets has become the order of the day.

A lot of other MPs from other ECOWAS member countries corroborated with the position of Honourable Ogene as Bida



Existing-and-Proposed-Interconnections-in-West-Africa-by-2025

Nouhoume, a Parliamentarian from Benin Republic and Co-chair of the Committee, said that a lot of money has gone into the project with little or nothing to show for it.

According to Honourable Ogene, "WAPP needs to look into the Nigeria power issue carefully because less than 50 per cent of Nigerians run generators on daily bases. Also Nigeria needs about 30 thousand megawatts to be able to have stable electricity. Nigerians enjoy less than one hour of power in a day, so I do not know how you were able to arrive at such an arrangement."

Earlier, WAPP in their presentation said, "judicious implementation of the priority projects listed in the master plan has resulted in interconnection of 13 of the 14 continental ECOWAS countries and work is underway to interconnect the remaining country, Guinea Bissau, by the end of 2023.

"Other important power transmission projects totalling 1, 873 kilometers of high voltage lines are being implemented to reinforce the exchange of power and reliability of the regional network, namely the North Core HV Interconnection Project between Nigeria, the Niger, Benin and Burkina Faso of about 900 Kilometers, the Guinea-Mali HV Interconnection project of about 714 Kilometers and the Manantali-Bamako line project (279KM) of high voltage in Mali."

The WAPP infrastructure programme is derived from the ECOWAS Master Plan for the Development of Regional Power Generation and Transmission Infrastructure.

The current plan covers the period of 2019-2033 and was adopted by ECOWAS Heads of States and government in December 2018.