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Directorate of Communication

**ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE MINISTERS FROM COTE D'IVOIRE, GHANA, NIGERIA AND
TOGO RECOMMIT TO ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF A
6-LANE DUAL CARRIAGE HIGHWAY FROM ABIDJAN TO LAGOS AS AGREED BY THE
PRESIDENTS OF THE FIVE COUNTRIES**

Abidjan, March 17, 2023 – The ECOWAS Commission, the Implementing Agency for the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Project, on March 17, 2023, organized the eighteenth (18th) Project Ministerial Steering Committee Meeting in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire to assess the progress made in the project implementation and agree on the actions to fast-track the implementation of the project.

The Meeting focused on the progress made regarding the Feasibility and detailed Design studies, Spatial Development Initiatives Study, Trade and Transport Facilitation, scope and financing of the Accra bypass Tunnel, Project Communication and visibility and of the Operationalization of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Management Authority (ALCoMA). The meeting was attended by the Ministers in charge of Works and Road Infrastructure from Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo.

Welcoming Ministers and participants to the meeting, the **ECOWAS Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy and Digitalization of the ECOWAS Commission, Mr. Sediko DOUKA**, thanked Honorable Ministers on the Steering Committee for the consistent dedication to advancing the technical and project preparatory studies for the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Project. He highlighted the progress made by the ECOWAS Commission to implement all tasks assigned by the 17th Steering Committee Meeting as well as the measures to fast-track the technical studies to enable the construction of the corridor commence.

Mr. DOUKA further highlighted the key areas of focused on by the Experts meeting which preceded the Ministers Steering Committee meeting. He stressed that there is a renewed commitment by all Partners on the project to fast tracking the completion of the project study phase. He informed Honourable Ministers that, the three (3) consultants implementing the feasibility and detailed engineering design studies have been steady on implementation and will submit the draft reports as expected by April 2023.

Finally, the Commissioner urged the Honorable Ministers to support ECOWAS and Development Partners to mobilize the needed financing to construct the road. He intimated that one of such innovative sources is the proposed ECOWAS Fund for the Development of Energy and Transport Projects (FODETE), an internally generated finance made up of contributions from revenues generated from natural resources, exported from ECOWAS Member States. The Feasibility Studies conducted on this fund showed the ability to raise over US\$300 million per annum from internal sources. This, the Commission said, could be used to leverage other investment from the Private Sector and Development Finance Institutions.

In his opening speech, the **Chairperson of the Ministerial Steering Committee** and Minister of Works and Housing of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, **Honorable Babatunde Raji Fashola**, acknowledged the solidarity messages from Honorable Ministers and their representatives which showed the united commitment in implementing the project. He recounted the very critical attainments made since the beginning of the Project. Honorable Fashola indicated inevitable challenges for an infrastructure project which crosses the jurisdictions of five (5) sovereign Countries, with different political calendars and tribal and religious differences.



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He therefore urged stakeholders to see the seeming delays as necessary for the proper preparation for better implementation of the project. He enjoined all Project Countries and Partners to adhere to the Project Treaty, Intergovernmental Agreement and the legal regime established by the Presidents, which is critical in exhibiting the credibility and investor confidence.

The Chairman urged colleague Ministers on the Steering Committee to keep the spirit of togetherness based on trust among each other, which are essential to the success of this novel cross-border highway project. Taking turns to give their solidarity messages, **the Honorable Minister of Roads and Highways of Ghana, Mr. Kwasi Amoako-Attah, and Honorable Zourehatou Kassa-Traore Minister of Public Works of Togo** extended their countries continues commitment and high-level willingness to see to the successful end of the project. The African Development Bank on behalf of the Development Partners, reaffirmed their resolve to accompany the Member States and ECOWAS to complete the financing studies and raise the needed financing for the construction of the highway. While urging ECOWAS to ensure the timely completion of the studies, the Bank intimated of plans underway to raise Sovereign Wealth financing for sections of the highway to serve as proof of concept for potential investors.

Based on the recommendations of the Experts Committee meeting, the 18th Steering Committee took important decisions on proactive measures by Countries to secure the Right of Way for the Corridor Highway, Finalization of Technical Studies and mobilization of project financing for the construction of the highway, as well as the endorsement of the proposed tunnel on the Accra Bypass option, and increased Communications & Visibility around the project.

In maintaining the spirit of togetherness and inclusiveness in all stages of the Project, the Steering Committee underscored the need to ensure the regular participation of Ministers and Experts from all Corridor Member States, while respecting the principles of the Intergovernmental Agreement including equal treatment and transparency. The Steering Committee also adopted all the recommendations of the Experts Committee for Member States to support ECOWAS in monitoring the technical investigations and surveys by the consultants during the ongoing detailed design phase.

Finally, the Honorable Ministers affirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Project demonstrated by the high priority accorded to the development of the corridor by their respective Governments through different interventions on the corridor without prejudice to the ongoing development process and encouraged partners to reinforce their efforts to overcome project challenges and the implementation of critical project activities.