

Opening Remarks

Launch of the Regulatory Database Management System (DBMS) for the Liberia
Electricity Regulatory Commission (LERC)

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By
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- **Your Excellency**, Jeremiah Kounge, Vice President of the Republic of Liberia
 - Chairman and Commissioners of LERC
 - The Director General of LERC
 - Management and Staff of **LERC**
 - Colleagues from the **African Development Bank**
 - Members of the **fourth estate**
 - Distinguished **Ladies and Gentlemen**, all protocols observed.
1. It is a great privilege for me to be present at this important event marking the launch of the Liberia Electricity Regulatory Commission's groundbreaking digitalization initiative. This endeavor will not only benefit the various stakeholders within the electricity value chain but also empower consumers across the nation.
 2. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Liberia Electricity Regulatory Commission for their innovative thinking in conceptualizing and realizing this important initiative. Their dedication and hard work have truly made a difference, and I commend them for their remarkable achievement in collaboration with the African Development Bank's project team.

3. Indeed, this project could not have come at a more opportune moment, especially considering the global shift towards smart technologies in the power sector. As the world embraces these advancements for enhanced efficiency and process integrity along the power value chain, it has become imperative for regulatory bodies to digitalize their operations to stay ahead in this evolving landscape.
4. The Regulatory Database Management System that we are unveiling today is a **USD300,000** project funded by the AfDB through our Special Initiative Budget. This system is designed to bolster the Liberia Electricity Regulatory Commission's (LERC) capabilities in monitoring, collecting, analyzing, and sharing regulatory data and information within the power sector in a more efficient and proactive manner.
5. By implementing the system, LERC will be better equipped to handle consumer complaints and facilitate dispute resolutions between consumers and utility providers seamlessly. Additionally, the RDBMS will promote increased stakeholder engagement and participation in the regulatory decision-making processes, fostering a more collaborative and transparent regulatory environment.
6. Your Excellency, it is worthy to note that, the Bank has been at the forefront of mainstreaming electricity regulatory issues within the broader power discourse of Africa. The system being unveiled today stems from the Bank's flagship Electricity Regulatory Index for Africa (ERI) report. The ERI report meticulously evaluates regulatory frameworks and the performance of regulatory bodies across Africa, highlighting any existing regulatory deficiencies and barriers, while providing actionable recommendations to overcome them.

7. The initiative underscores the Bank's efforts to support its Regional Member Countries to improve the quality and effectiveness of energy regulation using bespoke and one-stop-shop solutions to address identified regulatory bottlenecks and create an enabling environment that can attract private investment into the energy sector.
8. I am reliably informed that, in the last edition of the Electricity Regulatory Index for Africa (ERI) report of 2022, LERC was impressively ranked 10th among the over 40 regulators surveyed, and with the effective utilisation of the system being launched today, I believe LERC will further improve in the next edition of the ERI.
9. The African Development Bank has not only provided the system being launched today to LERC, but has also invested in building the capacity of LERC staff and stakeholders in utilizing and maintaining the system for long-term sustainability. Through this initiative, LERC staff and utilities have received comprehensive and hands-on training on enterprise-grade database management and security protocols, empowering them to develop necessary technical reports within the RDBMS, administer database systems, and address any potential security concerns effectively.
10. Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am delighted to note that the Bank is currently implementing similar digitalization initiatives in many other countries. In addition to this LERC project, the Bank is funding the implementation of similar initiatives in **Ghana, Tanzania, Nigeria, Uganda, and Guinea.**
11. At the regional level, the Bank is deploying similar digital platforms for regional regulatory entities in **COMESA, ECOWAS, SADC and ECCAS**, as part of a

regional electricity regulatory harmonization initiative across these regions aimed at facilitating regional electricity trade and exchanges, as envisaged by the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM) initiative of the African Union.

12. Your excellency, permit me at this stage to mention some of the key projects that the Bank is implementing in the energy sector in Liberia. Presently, the AfDB is actively involved in 3 major energy projects. Firstly, the Renewable Energy for Electrification in eastern Liberia (REEL) project is co-financed under the Scaling-Up Renewable Energy Program in Low Income Countries (SREP) which is a targeted programme of the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF). The project aims to install a Hydro Plant at Gbedin Water Falls, Nimba County, generating approximately 9MW, along with the construction of distribution networks to provide electricity to the surrounding areas. The power plant will be located on the St. John River in Nimba County and connect to the existing cross-border line between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. It is expected to electrify about 100,000 households. Additionally, through the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC), we are sponsoring two significant projects. The Liberia Energy Efficiency and Access Project (LEEAP) co-financed with the EU under the Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund. LEEAP is constructing a transmission and distribution system in the corridors of the Roberts International Airport (RIA) and Pleebo-Fish in Maryland and River Gee Counties. The project's objective is to supply power to the communities located in the RIA corridor (Monrovia-Schefflin-Roberts Field) including households, schools, health centers, commercial and industrial businesses. Secondly, the CLSG Rural Electrification project, a subcomponent of the CLSG Interconnection project, is designed to electrify about 130 communities located alongside the CLSG transmission line. It will supply power to rural communities including households, schools, health

centers, small handicrafts, and commercial and industrial businesses. At least 22,000 households will be electrified under the project.

13. I wish to conclude by reiterating and affirming the Bank's commitment to continue supporting soft infrastructure initiatives such as this project to complement the hard infrastructure in the energy sector such as power plants and transmission lines towards the attainment of the universal access to electricity in Africa, as envisaged under the Bank's New Deal on Energy for Africa (NDEA) and the SDG 7.

14. Thank you for your kind attention.