



By Atayi Babs

The President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, H.E Marcel de Souza has assured the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) of greater cooperation and collaboration in the quest to sustainably manage West Africa's abundant water resources.

Marcel De Souza made this known today while welcoming AMCOW's Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire to the ECOWAS headquarters in Abuja.

While underscoring the importance of water to human existence, the ECOWAS Commission's President regretted the prevalence of indiscriminate exploitation of gold and mercury in Burkina Faso and other parts of the sub-region which according to him, "constitutes a veritable threat to water security, human subsistence and animal life."

"ECOWAS will work more closely with AMCOW in strengthening and preserving water quality, controlling indiscriminate mineral exploitation, and managing West Africa's transboundary water resources effectively."

In his response, the AMCOW Executive Secretary thanked his host for the warm welcome and promised to deploy AMCOW's extensive experience and influence in resolving issues bordering on water quality and transboundary water resources management in the sub-region.

Recalling past successes in his previous role as Head of the Lake Victoria Commission in Kenya, Dr. Kanangire assured the ECOWAS Commission's President of AMCOW's readiness to "assist ECOWAS in improving policy, financing and monitoring of the sub-region's water resources with a view to achieving equitable access to water and sanitation."

Established since 1975 with the vision of creating a borderless region where the population has access to its abundant resources and is able to exploit same through the creation of opportunities under a sustainable environment, ECOWAS envisages an integrated sub-region where its fifteen member-states cooperate on industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial issues, social as well as cultural matters.