



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

Press Release

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MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AMBASSADOR SOLA ENIKANOLAIYE ATTENDS 96TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ECOWAS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

The Honourable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye, led the Nigerian delegation to participate in the 96th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on Thursday, 16 July 2026.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, while contributing to the President's 2026 Interim Report on the State of the ECOWAS Community, appreciated the President of the Commission for the comprehensive presentation of the Interim Report of the State of the Community and called for his Council colleagues to join in commending the outgoing president for his dedication to advancing the Community's strategic objectives throughout his tenure.

Speaking on the Financial situation of the Community, Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye commended the improvement in revenue mobilisation during the first half of 2026 and encouraged the Commission and all Community Institutions to enhance budget implementation, strengthen financial management and accountability, and ensure the timely and efficient utilisation of available resources in delivering measurable results for the citizens of our region. The Minister also emphasized the necessity for ECOWAS management to prioritize cost-saving measures amidst rising operational expenses, inflation, and economic challenges faced by Member States, and called for the need to adopt stringent measures to curtail its operational costs and avoid wastage of resources of the community.

Ambassador Enikanolaiye further applauded the ongoing efforts to recover and preserve Africa's cultural heritage and encouraged Member States to strengthen cooperation on the return and documentation of cultural property. He informed that Nigeria currently has a National framework whereby cultural property (artefacts) are being returned from foreign countries, citing the recent

experience whereby Switzerland officially handed over twenty-three (23) artefacts to Nigerian authorities.

Nigeria supported the adoption of the Action Plan as a strategic framework for the restitution and protection of cultural property within the region and stressed the need for ECOWAS to continue to include this as a crucial discussion point in every engagement. And also emphasized the need to strengthen national legal and institutional frameworks to support the return and safeguarding of cultural heritage.

On the Institutionalization of the West Africa Integration and Investment Summit as a flagship ECOWAS Forum, the Minister of State thanked the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the ECOWAS Commission for the initiative to promote regional investment and economic integration through the West Africa Integration and Investment Summit (WAIS-2026). He therefore reaffirmed Nigeria's support for initiatives that mobilise private capital, strengthen regional value chains, and promote investment in priority sectors of the Community, and stressed the need for it to be private sector-led.

Signed:

**Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebienfa, anipr
Spokesperson
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja
Friday 17, July 2026**