

Nigeria, Morocco mull gas pipeline mega-project

Nigeria and Morocco are in talks over a huge project to extend a West African gas pipeline to stretch up towards Europe, officials say.



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Nigerian Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama said in a government video posted on Twitter on Friday, 2 December, that the pipeline would "go along the coast from West Africa - Nigeria - all the way up to Morocco and into Europe eventually".

"That's a very big and important project for us," Onyeama added, without giving further details.

The construction of west Africa's biggest gas pipeline, linking Nigeria's energy-rich south to consumer markets on the region's coast - Benin, Togo and Ghana - began in 2005, with deliveries starting five years later.

Onyeama's comments came as Morocco's King Mohammed VI wrapped up a two-day visit to Abuja, where he met with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari.

Moroccan media reported that the pipeline extension topped the agenda in the talks, with the *Economie-Enterprise* website reporting that the two countries would sign a memorandum of understanding shortly for the "highly ambitious project estimated at several billion dollars".

The Telquel.ma website said the work would see the pipeline extended "towards Morocco, passing through Dakar".

Algeria held talks with Nigeria as far back as 2002 for a similar pipeline crossing the Sahel region, but ultimately the Algerian government was unable to finance the project.

Major oil exporter Nigeria also has huge untapped gas resources - the largest proven reserves in Africa and the seventh largest globally.

But its energy-rich Niger Delta area is frequently hit by attacks by militants seeking a fairer distribution of the nation's resource wealth, including assaults on pipelines that seriously dented oil and gas production in 2016.

Source: AFP

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