

Nigeria minister sees emergency OPEC meeting in March

ABU DHABI: Nigerian oil minister Emmanuel Ibe Kachikwu said on Tuesday, 12 January, that he expects an extraordinary meeting of the OPEC oil cartel in "early March" to address nosediving crude prices.



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"We did say that if it (the price) hits the 35 (dollar per barrel), we will begin to look (at)... an extraordinary meeting," said Kachikwu.

The prices have hit levels that necessitate a meeting, he told an energy forum in Abu Dhabi.

The US crude oil price tumbled below \$31 a barrel on Tuesday, extending a sell-off that has pushed it to more than 12-year lows amid a global supply glut, a strong dollar and tepid demand.

Saudi-led Gulf exporters within OPEC have so far refused to cut production to curb sliding prices, seeking to protect their market share despite a heavy blow to their revenues.

Kachikwu, who was president of OPEC until the end of December, said that member states differ on the issue of intervention.

"One group feels there is a need to intervene. The other group feels even if we did, we are only 30-35% of the producers

really," as 65% of supply comes from non-OPEC countries, he said at the Gulf Intelligence UAE Energy Forum.

"Unless you have this 65% (of) producers coming back to the table you really won't make any dramatic difference," he added.

US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) for February delivery was down around 2.8%, at \$30.54 per barrel, in Asian trade on Tuesday.

European benchmark Brent North Sea crude fell 3.1%, to \$30.57.

The last time prices were so low for WTI was in December 2003 and in April 2004 for Brent.

Prices plummeted 10% last week on fears about the global supply glut and weakness in China, the world's biggest energy user.

Source: AFP

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