

NEWS PLATFORM

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**Our mandate is to make
Rivers State University World Class**

... Prof. Blessing C. Didia

**Wahote Receives Global Award
for Local Content Advocacy**

**NDDC Collaborates with EU
for Sustainable Water Projects**



NEWS PLATFORM

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To be a leading news magazine in Nigeria and indeed in Africa

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Our mission include to inform, Educate, Entertain and serve as status conferral to Personalities, issues and events across the globe with special emphasis on development in Nigeria and indeed Africa. Keeping to the ethics of the Media Profession and Social Responsibility Theory of the Press.

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Onne Customs impounds bales of military wares

Nigerian Customs, Area 11, Onne, Rivers State said it has impounded a 40ft container comprising 600 pairs of military camouflage uniforms, 600 pairs of military caps and 600 pairs of military jungle boots.

The Area Comptroller of the Nigerian Customs, Area 11 Onne, Rivers State, Aliyu Galadima Saidu who disclosed this to Journalists at Onne said that the military wares were concealed in a 40ft container.

He said the military wears were prohibited items and has no monetary value as regards duty payment.

Saidu said that the Command impounded fifty-five 20ft container of foreign rice which he said contained 510 (50kg) bags of rice, 1040 (25kg) bags of rice, 19680 (10kg) bags of rice with total Duty Paid Value of N364,746,762. He said that 15 bales of new 80 rolls of water hose, 10 cartons of singlet, 50 cartons of shoes, 207 cartons of

tiles, bales of socks with DPV of N4.6m were impounded by the Command.

He said "the Comptroller-General of Customs has zero tolerance for smuggling and the Nigerian Customs Service will do everything in its capacity to sustain the tempo. Over time, the Customs Area 11 Command, Onne, has bemoaned the incessant activities of smugglers within the territories, an activity which has wreaked so much havoc on the nation's economy" " Fifty-five 20ft container of foreign rice which contained 510 (50kg), 1040 (25kg), bags of rice, 19680 (10kg), bags of rice with a total DPV of N364,746,762 were impounded. A 40ft container comprising of 600 pairs of military camouflage uniforms, 600 pairs of military caps, 600 pairs of military jungle boots were impounded and all are total prohibited items, therefore has no monetary value as regards duty payment"

"Found in the same 40ft container were 15 bales of new, 80 rolls of water hose, 10 cartons of singlet, 50 cartons of shoes, 207 cartons of tiles, 15 bales of socks and other items with DPV of 4.6m and were used to conceal the military uniform"

"Also impounded were six 20ft container with total of 13,560 cartons of tomatoes paste with DPV of N70.5m. A container load of 575 machetes with DPV of N21.2m and a container load of 1070 jerry-cans of cooking oil with DPV were also impounded."

He put Duty Paid Value of all the impounded items to N543,953,740. Saidu said that the Command generated a total revenue of N26,388,754,244m from duty paid on imported goods and recorded 10 seizures prohibited items. He said that smuggling pose a threat to both the economy and security of the country saying that those involved in the act are branded economic saboteurs.

Abe loses out as INEC displays Wike, Cole's names

Senator Magnus Abe's governorship ambition in Rivers State seems to have been laid to rest with his name conspicuously missing in Independent National Electoral Commission's list of gubernatorial candidates displayed at Port Harcourt/Aba road office of INEC.

INEC had published Arch. Tonye Dele Cole's name, his credentials and that of his running mate, Victor Giadom.

The name of Abe was not displayed at the Commission's notice board as indication that he has lost out in the governorship race.

The name of Governor Nyesom Wike, his qualifications and that of his deputy, Dr Ipalibo Harry were also displayed.

Abe had gone to court to challenge the conduct of the APC ward congresses in the State. The Senator representing Rivers south east in Senate had alleged that his supporters were disenfranchised during the congresses.

He had pursued his case from the State high court to Supreme court where both courts ruled in his favour that APC aired in the conduct of the party congresses in the State.

In the display notice board Arch Tonye Dele Cole presented B.sc degrees in Environmental studies and Architecture obtained respectively in 1990 from University of Lagos.

He also attended Harvard Business School in 2013.

Governor Wike who was born in 1963 obtained a B.sc degree in political science from University of Port Harcourt in 1990.

He thereafter proceeded to the Rivers State University where he graduated with LLB in Law in 1997. He obtained BL from the Nigeria Law School in 1998.

Governor Wike's running mate, Dr Ipalibo Harry flunts intimidating credentials.

She obtained MBBS, FSLC, HSC, MPH and MSC respectively between 1963 to 2007 from University of Ibadan, University of London and Harvard University.

FRSC 'can no longer' fine motorists... court rules

A federal high court in Lagos has declared void powers of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) to impose fines on motorists for traffic offences.

John Tsoho, a judge, held that the commission could not turn itself into a court of law by punishing those who commit traffic offences.

Tope Alabi, a lawyer, had approached the court to declare that only a court of competent jurisdiction could pronounce a person guilty under section 10 (4) and 28 (2) of the FRSC Act 2007.

Other defendant in the suit was the Attorney-General of the Federation. The judge also awarded N1million damages in favour of the plaintiff because officials of the FRSC had confiscated his vehicle and driver's licence.

Tosho said while FRSC was statutorily empowered to arrest and fine traffic offenders, a closer look at the definition of the word "fine" meant a pecuniary criminal punishment or civil penalty payable to the public treasury.

"In the instant case, however, the involvement of the element of arrest takes the imposition of fine by the

FRSC to the realm of criminal punishment," he said.

"From these definitions, it is obvious that the act of sentencing is a judicial action or exercise, and imposition of fine connotes conviction for an alleged offence.

"It is, thus, very clear that the FRSC, not being a court of law, cannot impose fine, especially as it has no powers to conduct trial.

"Hence, the exercise of the statutory powers given to the defendant under the Act as pertain to imposition of fine is clearly a usurpation of judicial powers exclusively vested in the courts.

"In the circumstances, I endorse the plaintiff's submission that by virtue of section 1(3) of the constitution, the power to impose fine conferred on FRSC by the enabling act is null and void to the extent of its inconsistency with the constitution."

Tsoho held that the FRSC resorted to "legislative absurdity" when it imposed a fine of 3,000 on the plaintiff, rather than the N2,000 statutorily prescribed.

"FRSC's function should not go beyond issuance of mere notices of

offence," he ruled.

"It is a cardinal principle of natural justice that no person can be condemned without being heard. "It is in observance of this that a person alleged to have committed an offence has to respond to such allegation before a court of law during trial."

According to the judge, the plaintiff was issued a notice of offence Sheet on April 4, 2013, but FRSC did not take him to court for five months before the plaintiff filed his suit on September 9, 2013.

"The vital question to ask is how long would it take the FRSC to reasonably commence prosecution of a traffic offence?" he asked.

"The plaintiff was not under obligation to wait indefinitely for redress due to FRSC's inaction or laxity.

"I hold the view that the confiscation of the vehicle was unnecessary in the first place, though the FRSC spiritedly sought to justify it."

The judge then granted 11 of the 14 reliefs sought by the plaintiff, awarding N1million in his favour instead of the N10million prayed for.

Take interest in your child's education, Obaseki tells Women

The Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, has charged Edo women to complement the effort of the state government by taking interest in their children's education, especially at the primary level for the benefit of the state. Obaseki gave the charged in Benin during the Edo Women's Summit as part of activities marking the second-year anniversary of the administration of Godwin Obaseki.

"All the women here, pay attention in the education of our children.

We are doing Edo best, by the time we finish, education in Edo state will be the best in Nigeria.

"Henceforth, take an interest in the training and in the education of our children particularly, in the primary school, ask that child what they have learnt at school to know how he or she is coping," he said.

Why assuring the women of adequate support, he said his administration has trained over 7,000 teachers digital teachers to change the narrative of

basic education in the state.

On her part, the wife of the state governor, Mrs. Betsy Obaseki, called on the women to make themselves relevant politically and seek elective offices rather taking the back seat.

According to her he era of sitting, clapping and taking the back seat in the nation's politics is over, stressing that they must make

themselves relevant politically in order to contribute meaningfully to the development of the nation.

\$1.3bn withholding tax: MTN's suit against AGF fixed for Dec. 3

Justice Chukwujekwu Aneke, sitting at a Federal High Court, Lagos, fixed Dec. 3 for hearing a suit by MTN Nigeria Communication Ltd against the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) challenging the legality of N242 billion and 1.3 billion dollars import duties and withholding tax assessment.

The court fixed the date for hearing of all pending applications after counsel representing both parties had informed the court of their various applications filed and served.

On Thursday, Chief Wole Olanipekun (SAN) with other senior lawyers, appeared for MTN, while Mr T.A. Gazali, a Chief State Counsel from the Federal Ministry of Justice, appeared for the AGF.

Counsel informed the court of the various processes filed before the court and served on respective parties to the suit.

Following this development, Justice Aneke

set Dec. 3 for hearing of all pending applications before the court. MTN instituted the suit by a writ dated Sept. 10, challenging mainly, the legality of the AGF's assessment of its import duties, withholding tax and value added tax in the sums of N242 billion and 1.3 billion dollars.

In its writ of summons, MTN is seeking declaratory reliefs on the following grounds:

That the purported "Revenue assets investigation" allegedly carried out by the Federal Government on MTN, for the period of 2007 – 2017, and its decision conveyed through the office of the AGF by a letter dated Aug. 20, violates the provisions of Section 36 of the constitution, a declaration that the AGF acted in excess of its powers, by purporting to direct through its letter of May 10, a "self assessment exercise" which usurps the powers of the Nigerian Customs Service to demand payment of import duties on importation of

physical goods, a declaration that the AGF acted illegally, by usurping the powers of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, to audit and demand remittance of withholding tax and value added tax, a declaration that the purported "self assessment" exercise instituted by the AGF via its letter of May 10, is unknown to law, null and void and of no effect whatsoever, a declaration that the AGF's demand of the sums of N242 billion and 1.3 billion dollars from MTN, is premised on a process which is malicious, unreasonable and made on incorrect legal basis.

In addition, the plaintiff wants a court order, vacating the AGF's demand letter dated Aug. 20, for the sums of N242 billion and 1.3 billion dollars from MTN Nigeria Communications Ltd.

Besides, MTN is claiming a total sum of N3 billion in damages against the defendant, which covers General damages, exemplary damages, and Legal costs.

Council set to invest \$350m in sugar production in Kogi

The National Sugar Development Council (NSDC) in partnership with Kogi State Government is set to invest the sum of \$350m into sugar production in the State.

Leader of the delegation from NSDC, Alhaji Salihu Bkeke made this known when he led a team of some foreign investors to Governor Bello in Government House, Lokoja. Alhaji Bkeke said the National Sugar Development Council was saddled with the responsibility of making Nigeria self sufficient in sugar production and has discovered the great potentials in the sugarcane

production in Oguma, a community in Bassa Local Government Area.

"Kogi state government I must say is agricultural friendly. We have a masterplan with a roadmap on possible ways of achieving this fit. Based on the roadmap we have in place, we looked for potential sugar growing states, and Kogi State is one of the best states so far with such opportunities from the feasibility studies done", he said.

According to him, the Council having discovered Kogi State as one of the states with such potentials, took it upon itself to seek investors who could come invest in the state and make the dream project a reality.

Speaking further, he said the Council already has two investors- BUA Group and CONTEC Global-who are willing to invest into the project, adding that the investors will be needing large portion of land where the projects will be sited.

"As a Council, we will assist in every way possible to see that the project take off. On the part of the government, land will be needed, access roads, compensation will be given where

necessary.

The investors are willing to invest and community social responsibility will be accorded priority" he added. Speaking, the Project Director of CONTEC Global, Dr. Sashi Mozumder said his team was in Dekina and Bassa two years ago to collect samples which was studied and turned out to be suitable for the project adding that the opportunity will assist the state in the production of Bio fertiliser, animal feed, petro chemical production and others.

"If the state is ready to add any other projects, we are willing and open for discussions. We will ensure a win win for everyone involved, the government, the groups and the host communities", he said.

In his remarks, Governor Yahaya Bello said his administration since assumption in office keyed into the three cardinal points of President Muhammadu Buhari in the areas of security, fighting corruption, reviving and revamping the economy through agricultural revolution.

Governor Bello said any serious government will do everything possible to secure lives, and create job opportunities, adding that the state was blessed with vast and fertile land for various agricultural produce.

"Kogi is fast becoming a hub for investment. We have a deliberate policy here, we ensure we learn from previous mistakes. Your invest will be safe in our state, fill free, because Kogi is safe from criminals. With the various efforts my administration is putting in place, Kogi will soon begin to export all forms of agricultural products and I assure of huge returns in few years from your investment" he said.

NIGERIAN ARMY REDEPLOYS SENIOR OFFICERS

1. The Nigerian Army has redeployed some of its officers from Operation LAFIYA DOLE, Operation DELTA SAFE, as well as over stayed officers from the THEATRE as part of routine posting. Also, a Deputy Vice Chancellor is appointed for the newly established Nigerian Army University Biu (NAUB). The posting that affected 103 officers including Majors and Captains is aimed at injecting new hands to further actualize the vision of the Chief of Army Staff, COAS), Lieutenant General Tukur Yusufu Buratai which is, "To have a professionally responsive Nigerian Army in the discharge of it's constitutional roles". It Will be recalled that before this redeployment, the Chief of Army Staff had this week sent goodwill message to the troops congratulating them for their bravery, alertness and doggedness in the ongoing fight against Boko Haram Terrorists (BHTs).

2. Those affected in the redeployment include; The Commander Headquarters Theatre Command Operation LAFIYA DOLE Major General Abba Dikko who moves to the Department of Civil Military Affairs as the Chief of Civil Military Affairs, Major General Jamil Sarham to remain in Headquarters 6 Division as the General Officer Commanding/Land Component Commander, Major General Nuhu Angbazo now moves to Headquarters 3 Division as the General Officer Commanding while Major General Benson Akinroluyo redeployed from Headquarters 3 Division to Headquarters Theatre Command Operation LAFIYA DOLE as Commander.

3. Others are Major General Victor Ezugwu from Depot Nigerian Army to Nigerian Army Vehicle Manufacturing Company as Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO), Major General Adeyemi Adetayo from Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) to Department of Army Standard and Evaluation as Director Procurement and Projects and Brigadier General Ifio Obot redeployed from Headquarters Operation DELTA SAFE to Nigerian Army University Biu as Deputy Vice Chancellor (Military).

4. Also affected in the redeployment are Brigadier General Olufemi Dada from Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) to Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) as Director Combat Development, Brigadier General Solomon Udounwa redeployed to Defence Headquarters as Deputy Director Campaign planning, Brigadier General Adekunle Adesope from Department of Army Standard and Evaluation to the Office of the Chief of Army Staff as Acting Director in the Directorate of Audit and Financial Management, Brigadier General Caleb Dalhatu moves from Headquarters Infantry Corps Centre to Headquarters 81 Division Garrison as Commander, Brigadier General Abdu Hassan redeployed from Headquarters 2 Brigade to Headquarters Infantry Corps Centre as Chief of Staff (COS), Brigadier General Kabir Mukhtar from Headquarters 81 Division Garrison to Headquarters Department of Army Administration as Acting Director Manpower, Brigadier General



Lt Gen. Buratai

Nasiru Jega redeployed to Headquarters 2 Brigade as Commander, Brigadier General Sani Mohammed moves from Department of Administration to Depo Nigerian Army as Acting Commandant, Brigadier General Kevin Aligbe is to remain in Headquarters 16 Brigade as Commander, Colonel Adamu Nura from Headquarters 21 Special Armour Brigade to Nigerian Army Armour School as Chief Instructor, Colonel Louis Lepdung redeployed from Headquarters 25 Task Force Brigade to Headquarters Infantry Corps Centre as Deputy Director Research and Development, Colonel Kingsley Umoh from Administration Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) to Defence Headquarters as Assistant Director Defence Information and Colonel Kayode Ogunsanya moves from Headquarters 3 Division Army Public Relations to Defence Headquarters Garrison Army Public Relations as Deputy Director Army Public Relations.

5. In view of the above, you are please requested to disseminate this information to the general public through your reputable medium.

6. Thank you for your kind cooperation.

TEXAS CHUKWU
Brigadier General
Director Army Public Relations



PETER OBI MEETS EU LEADERS

Vice Presidential collaboration. candidate of the Obi who represented the Peoples Democratic Party, Mr. Peter Obi in Abuja recently met with President of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar at the Economic Forum (WEF) to discuss the need to conduct free and fair elections in 2019 and how to grow the nation's economy through

collaboration. He said that the EU should insist on a level playing field for all candidates and parties during elections in Nigeria because "there is a need to get the country back to its feet and make it better for our children". He said that campaigns should be based on issues so that the electorate and the

international community can come to grasp with the problems of the country as well as the solutions being proffered by each of the political parties and their candidates.

Obi also said that there was need for agencies like the EU to strengthen and support the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The former Anambra Governor said that judging from what happened during gubernatorial elections in Ekiti and Osun states, INEC needs to show that it remains an unbiased umpire in future elections in the country.

On the issue of vote buying, Obi described the incidence as a new phenomenon and which must be stopped.

"I contested and won elections when I was in a smaller party. Where would I have gotten the money to buy votes if it was the case then and how would I have gotten back the money especially when I am going to serve the people," he said.

On the unity of PDP, he said there was no doubt about that and the evidence could be seen from the outcome of

the free and fair presidential primary election conducted in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State on October 13, 2018 where all the presidential candidates agreed that it was the best so far.

On whether there was need for a fresh EU election observer group following the impending expiration of the tenure of the present group, Obi said that Nigeria

deserved a replacement based on the role EU would play in ensuring free and fair elections in Nigeria in 2019. In his comments, the head of the EU delegation, Ketil Karlsens said that the election observer group has been consulting stakeholders in

Nigeria to ascertain whether or not it would be necessary for the union to send a new EU election observer mission.

He said that the EU mission had been operating in Nigeria since 1999 and that the union had invested over 100 million Euros in Nigeria's election process since then.

Speaking at the meeting with officials of WEF, Obi emphasized the need for closer working relationship with African countries especially Nigeria because

most governments in the continent do not want to work with the forum for fear of being criticized.

He said that many governments in Africa implement activities that are "transactional instead of transformational" and therefore needed help to shape their policies.

"A lot of work needs to be done in Africa because things are tough, he said, adding that Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates of the PDP "have a clear picture of what the economic priorities are and what the international community feels about the country.

"Nigeria needs to do something immediately for its economy to be put back on track and something has to be done immediately", he said.

Leader of the WEF delegation, Nontle Kabanyane said that the forum was ready to strengthen relationships and to implement more activities in Nigeria through a collaboration that would lead to national transformation.

Peter Obi: I Neither Demolished Mosques Nor Sent Hausa out of Anambra



The former Governor of not visit schools in the North. of the people.
 Anambra State and Vice- Responding to journalists' Recalling the circumstances
 Presidential candidate questions at Southern Sun, under which he became
 of the People's Democratic Lagos, Obi regretted that Governor in 2006, Obi revealed
 Party, Mr. Peter Obi has rather than some political elite that he never had malicious
 described as sheer fabrication, focusing on resolving the plight relationship with any group
 wicked and inhuman, the of several millions of Nigerians resident in Anambra State nor
 allegation being circulated by without livelihood, over 10 demolished any mosque in the
 the opposition that he million of out-of-school State as alleged. As a matter of
 demolished mosques as the children and many more of fact, he went on, the mosque
 Governor of Anambra State, unemployed youths, they are at Onitsha was destroyed
 snubbed the Sultan, Alhaji busily engaged in emitting hate before he became Governor.
 Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar speeches and spreading During that crisis, many
 III, drove Hausas away from concocted falsehoods in their groups, including Northerners,
 Anambra State and shunned desperation to be elected into took shelter in the Army
 the then Minister of Finance, public office so that they will Barracks. Indeed, some of the
 Dr. Shamsuddeen Usman's continue with impoverishing first measures he took on
 attempt at mediation and did the nation and the generality assumption of office was to

visit those displaced persons, shortly after the visit to the all commuters, vehicle owners restore normalcy and Hausa community, he and transporters. encouraged everybody to accompany the Sultan to the return to their normal, State-owned Chukwuemeka peaceful life in the State. Odumegwu-Ojukwu University

Describing the allegation that he snubbed the Sultan of Sokoto, who was in the State as ridiculous, Obi asserted that irresponsibility and disrespect for elders and leaders were not in his character. According to him, "The irony of this concoction is that I have been a friend of His Eminence, the Sultan right from my first year at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1980 through his tenure as Nigeria's Defence Attaché in Pakistan till the present. The fact is that the visit of his Eminence, during which I was alleged to have snubbed him was purely a courtesy call after which I personally accompanied him to see the Obi of Onitsha, Obi Alfred Achebe with whom he had a meeting. On the allegation of having driven away Hausas from the State, Obi asserted that the only group which could have run away from Anambra State during his tenure as Governor were kidnappers, armed robbers and predators on the State Treasury. He said that the Head-Bridge Dual Carriageway the wicked liars were referring to was merely cleared of several groups of squatters and illegal markets that occupied three of the 4-lane carriageway. He revealed that the clearance was done without any recourse to ethnicity or religion at a time his Government was collaborating with the Federal Government to expand the road to 6 lanes, which has solved the traffic gridlock in that area to the admiration of

As for not visiting schools in the North, Obi said it was unfortunate trying to politicise the visit to school he was just engaged in as a passion borne out of his love for education. "In any case", Obi said, "I have visited schools in all the states of Nigeria. Last year, I visited two schools in Sokoto State, the seat of the Caliphate. " Answering a question on how he had a disagreement with the then Minister of Finance, Dr. Shamsuddeen Usman, Obi said he had known the gentleman before he became Governor, when he was the CEO of one of the commercial banks and thereafter as the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank and since then, they had remained friends and had not had any reason to disagree on any issue.

I also requested His Eminence to visit the Hausa community in the State; and in their interaction, the Hausas complained about the destruction of their mosque before I became Governor, which I offered to rebuild and subsequently gave them the funds for that purpose. Thank God, the Sultan and the Obi of Onitsha are still alive and available to confirm my submission". Ending on an advisory note, Obi called on all hands to be on deck to save the country from collapse rather than engage in idle talk and fabrication of tales as a substitute for State Policy. "What we need now", he said, "is building a society and a bright future for millions of poor Nigerians all over the country. That should occupy and agitate us unceasingly rather than how to run others down through lies and character assassination".

Additionally, Obi revealed that

Profile Of

Professor Blessing Chimezie Didia



Vice Chancellor, Rivers State University
Prof. Blessing .C. Didia

The man, Professor Blessing Chimezie Didia, was born on April 20, 1952. He hails from Omugwere-Omopi, Omerelu in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. He started his educational sojourn at the Saint Stephen's State School, Omerelu, from 1956-1963 where he obtained his First School Leaving Certificate. He proceeded to the famous County Grammar School, Ikwerre-Etche, for his secondary education from 1964-1971 and obtained the West African Ordinary School Certificate.

Not deterred by the Nigeria civil war that raged from 1967-1970, he went on to the then College of Science and

Technology, now Rivers State University of Science and Technology. He earned an advanced Level General Certificate of Education. He continued in this light to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1974-1976), University of Benin, Benin City (1976-1979), where he obtained MB, BS and finally University of Port Harcourt, Choba (1997-2003) where he crowned his educational achievements with a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree.

He is a fellow of the Dentist Society of Nigeria and Society of Experimental and Clinical Anatomists of Nigeria. He is also a member, Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research, USA;

Anatomical Society of Nigeria, Nigeria Medical Association and Applied Research Ethics National Association in the USA.

He had worked briefly as a tutor in County Grammar School, Ikwerre-Etche in 1972, he was also a House Officer in the then Port Harcourt General Hospital from 1979-1980. He was a Senior House Officer in Surgery at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and was later appointed Lecturer II in the Department of Anatomy in 1981 where he works till date as a professor of clinical anatomy. He has over ninety (90) publications in Learned Journals, over forty (40) Conference papers national and international and about eleven (11) Researches that are ongoing.

Prof. Blessing Chimezie Didia has held several positions both within and outside the University and has been external examiner to eleven (11) Universities. He was acting Head, Department of Human Anatomy, College of Health Sciences in the University of Port Harcourt from 1995-2005, Member of Council of the same University (Representing Congregation), Dean, Faculty of Basic Sciences, University of Port Harcourt (2007), Provost, College of Health Sciences and Member of Board, University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, 2007-2011.

He has also been Executive Chairman, Ikwerre Local Government Area from 1991-1993, Member, Ikwerre Local Government Community Development Committee, (CDC) 1990-1991 and Chairman of Nigerian Red Cross Society, Rivers State Branch.

He has supervised five Masters' thesis and nine Doctoral dissertation and belongs to several professional bodies both in Nigeria and the United States of America. He is also a member of Editorial Board of Medical Journals in both Nigeria and other countries.

Prof. Blessing Chimezie Didia, is not only a Medical Doctor but also a sports personality. In recognition of his interest in sports, he was the Team Manager of the University of Port Harcourt Football Team for the Nigerian University Games, NUGA, for 1988, Match Commissioner for the Nigerian Football Federation since 1986, Chairman, Rivers State Football Association (1993-1995), Member, Local Organising committee for Junior World Cup in Nigeria (Nigeria '99), Member, Marketing Committee, Nigeria Football Association 1996-1997 and Member, Sharks' Football Management Committee 2002-2003.

Prof. Didia is happily married to Mrs. Priscilla C. Didia and has four children-two males and two females. He is presently the acting Vice Chancellor of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpoku Okwotukwo, Port Harcourt, a position he assumed on Monday, August 3, 2015, following the expiration of the tenure of the then Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. B. B. Fakae on Friday, July, 31, 2015.

Our Target Is To Make Rivers State University The Best ...Vice Chancellor



Professor Blessing Chimezie Didia

How has it been sir as the Vice Chancellor of the University.

Its been quite good but quite challenging , the University has been moving on very well, we are realizing the dream of setting up this university, all of us are proud of having this University.

what will you say have been the achievements recorded so far since you came on Board.

There has been lots of achievements both at the Academic angle and everywhere, we have established new departments, new faculties, we have been able to establish School of Medicine , we have been able to accredit all our faculties and faculty buildings and we have been able to achieve peace, Academic calendar running according to plan, we have not had any

disturbance of our academic calendar, so far so good.

How have you been able to handle issues such as cultism etc at least for other Universities to copy.

I don't know what they would like to copy, I will only implore them to copy good things , everything about this University is good, on the issue of cultism, the University is run by so many unions, one of them is the students union, when you have constant interaction with them such things don't usually happen , we try to re orient them , bring them back in the line of progress, we have been talking with them trying to make policies along with them and make them to concentrate on their academic work



just that we have been able to manage our resources well and I think we are going on well.

How are you also handling the issue of the accreditation of your courses.

All our courses are accredited, what is happening now is reaccréditation, so far we are doing very well with accreditations.

You are a medical Doctor, how can we resolve the crisis or dichotomy in the health sector.

Everybody working in health facility is a health worker, even if you are a midwife, even if you are a maternity attendant, even if you are carrying stretcher to the theatre, you are a health worker. In every health worker there must be a leader that is where we have the problem, the problem is who is the head of the Medical team, that is why most of them quarrel, globally its been accepted, any medical team is led by a Medical Doctor and once that is accepted by everybody there will be no problem. if you go overseas all the health workers are not paid the same amount of money, even in the University people negotiate their salary, the problem here is that everybody want to be put on the same grade level.

A lab scientist notices that a pharmacist is taking more than him, he will begin to ask why, afterwards we spend the same four years in the University, when we begin to place value on individuals and what they are worth instead of placing value on profession most of these problems will be solved.

instead of unnecessary things. They must concentrate on their academic because our target is that if you are coming for a four year course there should be no disruption. You finish and graduate.

to visit Nigeria very well, we will have foreign students and once we begin to have foreign students, then we begin to look at it as a global university, but as peace gradually begin to return to Nigeria we will achieve it.

How can we make Rivers State University a global brand.

Already Rivers State University is a global University by all standards, its one of the best Universities in the country, there are so many things that make people judge University of being global, when people begin

How have you been managing the issue of funding.

Rivers State University cannot be different from what is happening in Nigeria the good thing is that we have a listening governor, we have somebody who can bail us out from time to time, we are not worse off, its



Achievements of Professor Blessing Chimezie Didia



The current relationships among the administration of the academic and non academic community. Vice Chancellor of the Rivers State University Professor Blessing Didia has been a great blessing to the institution in particular and the state in general. On his assumption of office in August 2015 the Vice Chancellor gave himself a target, which is to make the state University his Alma Mater a global brand and make it one of the best in the world. He has remained focused on this mandate. He has been able to establish peace on campus creating an excellent kind to lecturers to pass their examinations adding that they should abstain from cult related activities as this may attract suspension or expulsion from the university, noting that the right approach to graduate at the right time and with excellent grades is for them to attend classes regularly, sit for their tests and read their books. 'There has been lots of achievements both at the Academic angle and everywhere, we have established new departments, new faculties, we have been able to establish School of Medicine, we have been able



to accredit all our faculties and faculty buildings and we have been able to achieve peace, Academic calendar running according to plan, we have not have any disturbance of our academic calendar, so far so good.'

The Institution has also achieved a lot on Research which is the core aspect of the University. Speaking during the inaugural lecture of the University that took place in

May 2018 the Vice Chancellor noted that when he assumed duty in 2015, the University which was 35 years old as at 2015, had held just 37 Inaugural Lectures but stated that 'with 19 series of the Inaugural lectures delivered by erudite scholars within three years of his administration demonstrate the importance of Research in the University.'

The Rivers State University has remained a





College of Medical Sciences



Faculty of Management Sciences

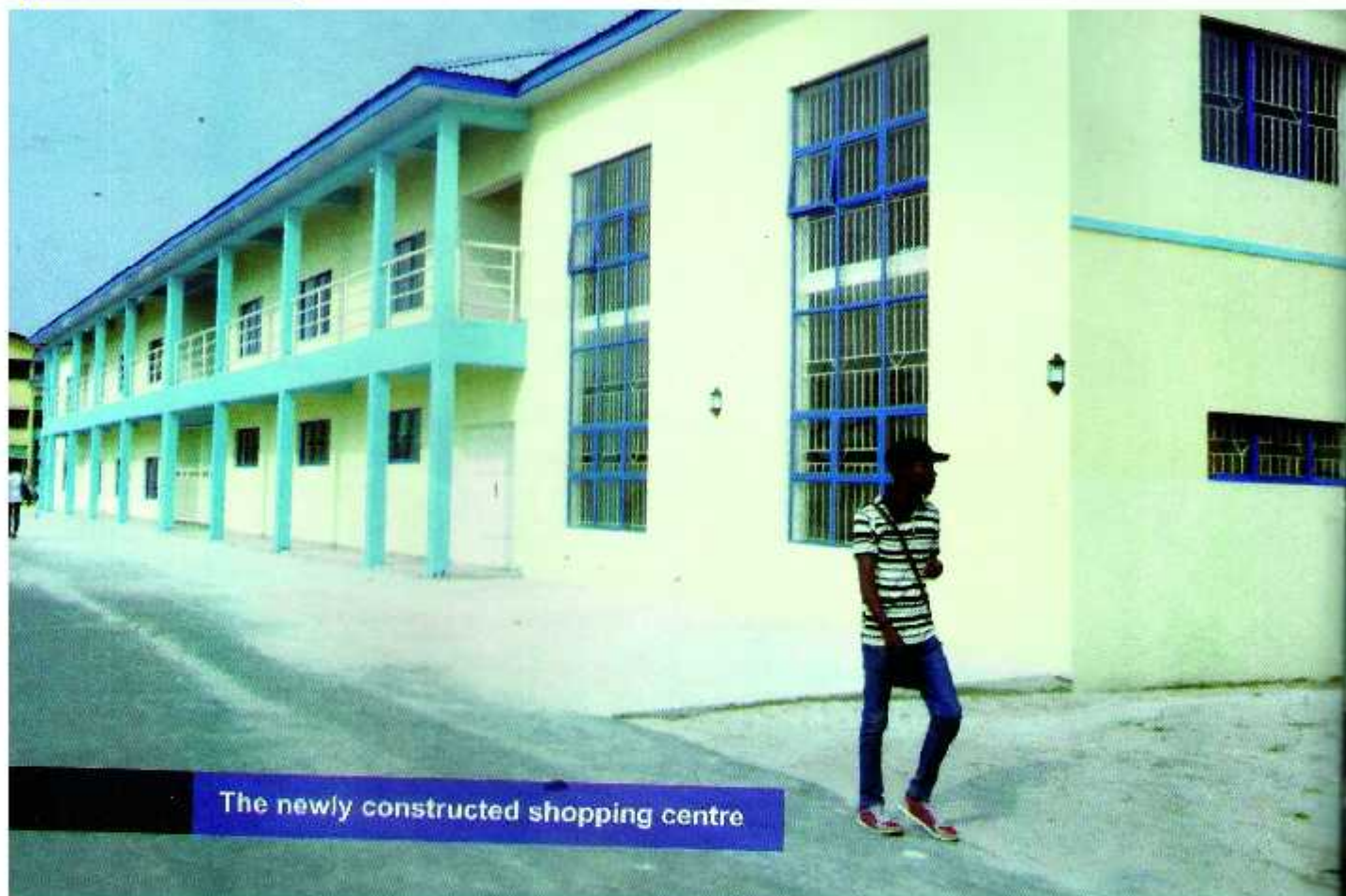


centre of excellence recording of special Doctors, theatre first major surgery in its 37 nurses and other ancillary years of existence. The surgery staff, which was an Abdominal Hysterectomy was done on November 3rd 2017 by a team

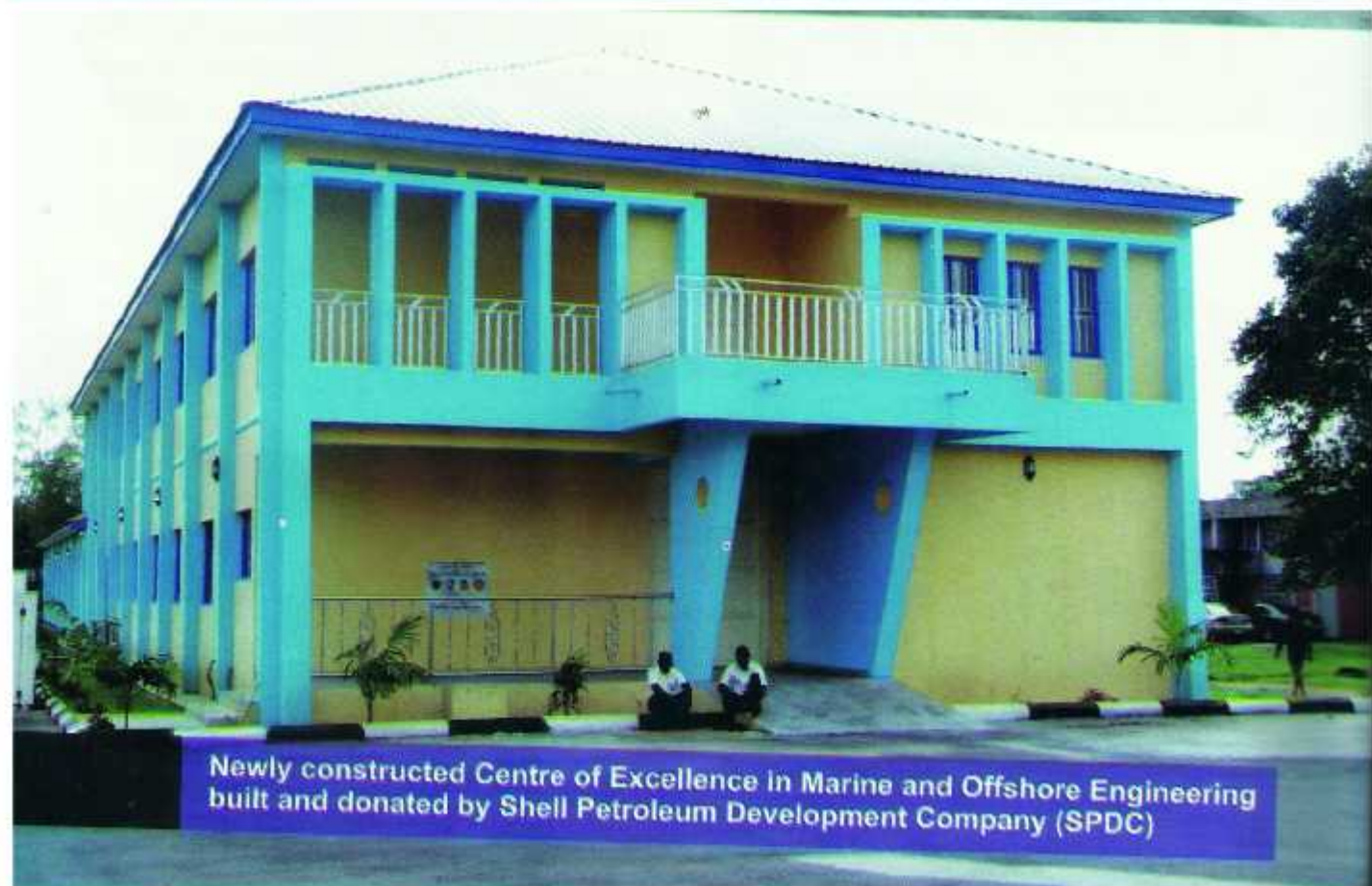
Gynecologist Dr. (Mrs) Sapira Ordu described the surgery as very successful, nothing that the facilities and personnel contributed to the feat. She said the Abdominal Hysterectomy was as a result of symptomatic multiple fibroids in a middle aged woman.



The good work and dedication to duty of the Vice Chancellor has been on the lips of many and with these came several awards of recognition from individuals, corporate bodies, Associations, and International organizations.. Worthy of mention is the fact that the Vice Chancellor usually dedicates all the awards to the performing governor of the state His Excellency Nyesom Ezenwo Wike aka Mr Project.



The newly constructed shopping centre



Newly constructed Centre of Excellence in Marine and Offshore Engineering built and donated by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC)

▶ INTERVIEW WITH ◀ PROF JASPER JUMBO



Prof. Jasper Jumbo

despite a little problems they had in their Economy, Brazil is far, far above us, almost everybody is trained to produce, I passed through one of their institutions in RIO , sinai THAT TRAINED ABOUT 2.5 MILLION PEOPLE EVERY YEAR in about 28 skill areas from scratch, you have that technological capacity to produce , there is that urge for you, you want to produce something so its totally

Sir how do you see Nigeria at 58 that no our people are not thinking how do we from everbody think about the Nigeria has made some inside, from various home country but here we are tremendous strides in its various local government thinking about self , nobody is advancements towards areas, various states various thinking about human nationhood , I will like to Regions to participate in this capacity building , even the commend all the past leaders nation from the sense of youths themselves they are who within the limits of their poverty, servitude and non not thinking about themselves vision and manhood have led productiveness, how do everbody is thinking cut Nigeria to where we are today people in government corners, get rich quickly and there is something most empower our people to march on others, such lifestyle Nigerians had been forgetting produce look at Brazil , I was in is not self sustaining that is the nation must Brazil about 10 years ago,

necessarily pass through a spent about three weeks **Do you believe there is any cause for celebration of Nigeria at 58** process of deprivation that is a looked round , what I saw blew my mind, because Brazil was We Thank God that we have inward to develop from within within the same Economic breath, we thank God that the , we have vast resources, we basket with Nigeria in the country has not disintegrated, have not even learnt our world bank scale of values in we thank God that ther is still a leadership and that there is lessons , all that we are years past but today Brazil is a hope there is cause for shouting Buhari this Buhari far cry to what Nigeria is

celebration

How will you rate Buhari's administration in the last three years.

Well am not in the National Assembly I don't have the competence to rate them . let me say this frankly, Buhari mean well but some of the people around him are not helping him , Buhari is a man like any of us, he cannot be omnipresent , He cannot be in Bwari in Abuja, be in Bonny my own town , be in Port Harcourt, be in Eket etc at the same time, he does the much he can others are been entrusted with some responsibilities many of them are not doing what they should do , many of them have not even caught up with his vision, call it Developmental Buharism . The vision he is trying to sell is okay. Many of the people with integrity should be able to do certain things in the interest of Nigeria.

You were a member of the 2005 constitutional conference.

I submitted documents at the constitutional conference on oil terminal dues and all that

Has any of those things in that document been followed in Nigeria Well they took certain decisions but implementation is another thing as for the oil terminal dues I remember we

worked on the Inland water ways, the Inland waterways Authority, Ilokoja is operational , it was part of what we worked on through , I was the chairman of the Inter Ministerial committee on oil terminal and Maritime Policy formulation dues for Nigeria when Major General Ibrahim Gumel was transport Minister , that was during Abacha regime in 1995 we did some splendid work

How do you see the role of the oil companies in the development of the Niger Delta.

To some degree they tried their little bit but many of them play divide and rule they leave the real land owners and and they are dealing with others. this casue a lot of problems. Like in Bonny now , we have some big problems which government should look into quickly before it snowballs into something very serious . A situation where the King and the Bonny chiefs council they will leave the two key Landlord families JUMBO MAJOR HOUSE made up of 24 villages and fishing ponds which I currently head as the traditional head and the BROWN Major house BONNY HOUSE family . we are the ones that signed agreement in 1958 to bring in Shell to

BONNY ISALND , with the entire Bonny community as witnesses consenters, so a situation where they will leave us and the joint industries corporation that paid 3billion dollars and go and sign a fraudulent and go and sign a fraudulent Memorandum of Understanding worth over three billion dollars without any Jumbo family been part of it. A situation where they went to go and set up a foundation in the Corporate Affairs Commission, every year to spend the three billion to these people without including the real landlord , SHELL NLNG a JOINT Industry corporation , is pure madness, it cant work , so we stopped them right now we virtually stopped NLNG TO BRING 3PERCENT OF THEIR ANNUAL RECEIPT PAY into NDDC COFFERS they agreed to bring part of the money for road and bridges project and between the King and some people the court had barred from parading themselves as Bonny chiefs said JUMBO shouldn't be represented , their youths shouldn't be employed etc is all pure madness, they need to call them to order. The Minister of Power works and Housing to look into this, security Agencies should look into it, Julius Berger should look into this.

Inside **Niger Delta**



OBA OF BENIN PLAYED HOST TO TRADITIONAL RULERS, CHARGES THEM TO PROVIDE LEVEL PLAYING GROUND FOR POLITICIANS

By: Desmond Agbama, CPS to Oba of Benin



His Royal Majesty Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Ewuare II, Oba of Benin has called on Traditional Rulers not to involve in party politics to the detriment of the people and the tradition.

Oba Ewuare II who made the call when traditional rulers from south-south, south-west and south-east paid him a royal visit in his palace in Benin City however charged them to provide level playing ground for all politicians irrespective of political party.

The Benin Monarch also tasked the traditional rulers to pray for God to provide the right leaders for the states and the nation, while admonishing them to pray for the success of government at all levels.

His Royal Majesty told the traditional rulers to uphold high

level of peace, integrity and harmony ahead of the 2019 election, as peace, integrity and harmony were panacea for speedy economic growth and development in the society.

The Omo N'Oba called on the traditional rulers to pray for God to avert violence and blood-shed before, during and after the 2019 general elections.

The Oba of Benin told the royal fathers that there was need for them to hold on to their tradition very firmly, and should not allow external influence to corrupt our culture and tradition.

His Royal Majesty says he will do his best to support the activities of the Traditional Rulers Forum.

Earlier, the leader of the traditional rulers and the Amayanabor of Nembe, His Royal Majesty King

Edmund Dakoru said they were in Benin City for their conference, which among others is to deliberate on electoral violence, especially as the 2019 general elections draws near.

King Dakoru said they also considered how traditional rulers could do what they can without waiting for government, pointing out that they needed to be self-supporting.

The Amayanabor of Nembe said as traditional rulers they are proud of the Oba of Benin, as many of them have links with the Great Benin Empire.

He congratulated the Oba for his second coronation anniversary and for the launch of the Red Book, adding that Oba Ewuare II has been able to blend the ancient with the modern.

NDDC

Speeds up Work on Permanent Headquarters



He declared: "In terms of quality and safety, I am satisfied. But in terms of progress, we need to do more. We ought to have gone very far in the project by now were it not for financial constraints.

"Most of the equipment have been acquired and delivered to site waiting for installation. We are encouraging the contractor to go into day and night duty shifts to enable us record more progress."

The Executive Director Projects said that when the current NDDC board took over in November 2016, it decided to fast-track the project, hence, the injection of a new lease of life into the project.

Adjogbe assured that the NDDC would provide all the necessary support to ensure that the project was completed expeditiously, stating that the Commission would not compromise on both the quality and approved designs.

The Project Coordinator, Architect Felix Darko, promised to achieve the targets set for the completion of the building once funds were released as and when necessary.

Work on the 13-floor permanent headquarters

complex of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, at the Eastern Bypass, Port Harcourt, has reached an advanced stage. This followed the recent transfer of the project to a new contractor.

The Commission's Executive Director, Projects, Engr. Dr Samuel Adjogbe, who inspected work on the new headquarters, said work on the project was delayed due to slow cash flow which had affected the pace of work by

the contractors. He said, however, that the funding challenge had been addressed with the recent release of money for the project. He affirmed: "We were able to pay some money to the contractors and hopefully by next week we will release more funds for the project."

Adjogbe expressed satisfaction with the quality of work on the main building and other ancillary structures, comprising facilities such as a medical centre, restaurant, bank, car parks, among others.

Buhari, NDDC Focus on Project Completion - Adjogbe

The Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, has re-affirmed the determination of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration and the Commission to step up the completion of quality projects in the Niger Delta region.

The NDDC Executive Director Projects, Engr. Dr Samuel Adjogbe, FNSE, said this in an interview in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, after being honoured for 'Outstanding Performance in Leading Change' at the Garden City Advancement Award.

He said President Buhari's commitment to infrastructural

development was visible in the Niger Delta region and the nation at large, especially with the recent commissioning of the Port Harcourt International Airport Terminal by the Federal Government.



Adjogbe who was represented by his Technical Assistant, Mr Nelson Onwo, noted that "with the spate of completed projects so far, one will agree that such commitment to infrastructural project development has never been demonstrated before now."

"Just like the newly commissioned Port Harcourt International Airport Terminal and several other mega projects by the Federal Government, NDDC will continue to deliver impactful projects such as the now completed Ogbia-Nembe road."

Presenting the Award, Keynote Speaker at the event, Prof. Isaac Zeb-Obipi said the award was recognition of the NDDC Executive Director's continual support and exceptional contributions

to the advancement of the nation.

He noted that Dr Adjogbe had demonstrated exemplary leadership in the performance of his job at the NDDC, adding that such attributes were worthy of emulation.

NDDC Chairman Mourns 'Father of Emergency Medicine in Nigeria'



The Chairman of the Governing Board of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba, SAN, (right) condoles with the Representative of Imo State on the board of the Commission, Hon. Chuka Ama-Nwauw during the burial of Late Dr. Nnamdi Nwauwa, at Izombe in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State.

The Chairman of the Governing Board of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba, SAN, has described the Late Dr. Nnamdi Nwauwa, as a trail blazer in emergency medical services in Nigeria.

The NDDC Chairman, who spoke during the burial ceremony of Dr Nwauwa at his country home in Izombe, Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State, remarked that his successes in the field of emergency medicine should be celebrated.

Senator Ndoma-Egba, conveyed his condolences on behalf of the Board and Management of the NDDC to the family of the deceased which included the Representative of Imo State on the board of the Commission, Hon. Chuka Ama-Nwauwa

and a former Director of Legal Services of the Commission, Hon Eze Ama-Nwauwa.

He noted that Dr Nwauwa's death was a loss to Nigeria because among his several contributions in the field of emergency medicine, he introduced the International Trauma Life Support in the country.

The NDDC Chairman said: "Indeed, passages like this remind us how fragile life is. We must always strive to build a good heritage with our deeds, the kind that Nnamdi built as a distinguished medical doctor, and as Chairman of Society of Emergency Medicine Practitioners of Nigeria, Research Fellow of Harvard University and American Heart Association of Nigeria. That way, humanity will always remember us, ensuring that our lives are

immortalised, however brief."

Senator Ndoma-Egba urged the family to be comforted that their patriarch lived a good and fulfilled life, adding: "His precepts will continue to inspire his family, friends and associates to aspire to accomplish greatness and establish a worthy legacy too."

Responding on behalf of the family, Hon. Chuka Ama-Nwauwa thanked the NDDC for coming to comfort them as they grieved over the loss of their leading light. According to him, Dr Nwauwa touched many lives and achieved remarkable milestones in the field of medicine. "In addition to his rich medical background, he also had a strong spiritual foundation which he used for the benefit of humanity," he said.



Wabote Receives Global Award for Local Content Advocacy

Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board, Tuesday 6th November in Cape Town, South African received a global award of excellence for outstanding contributions to sustainable local content development in Nigeria and across Africa's Oil and Gas Industry.

The award was announced by the organizers of African Oil Week (AOW), the ITE Group Plc with the approval of the AOW Advisory Board at the

PetroAfricanus Dinner, which held inside the Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town as part of the events marking AOW's 25th anniversary celebration.

Reading the citation for the award, Paul Sinclair Conference Director, Africa Oil Week on behalf of ITE Group Plc, highlighted the considerations for Engr. Wabote's selection and suitability for the award, which include his ongoing unprecedented contributions to localization of industry knowledge and expertise, monumental capacity development programs in Nigeria with cross border impacts, trenchant advocacy

of the imperatives of local content practice and benefits, smart regulations and rare leadership capacity to balance dialogue between international commercial ventures and national interest. He stated that in the 25 years history of AOW, this is the first time an award was given for Local Content excellence by ITE Group.

In his acceptance speech, Wabote expressed delight at the honour and recognition by AOW/ITE Group, noting that the award was significant as "it communicates AOW's acknowledgment of the Board's programs and strategies for localizing industry knowledge and capacity development". He paid glowing tribute to President Muhammadu Buhari for giving him the opportunity to serve his country and to

champion national economic interest through local content advocacy and implementation under NCDMB banner.

He therefore dedicated the award to the entire staff and management of NCDMB for their high sense of duty, patriotism and absolute commitment to local content regime, noting "this award would not have been possible with their constant support for me".

Other recipients of the AOW Silver Jubilee Celebration awards include to Mr. Conrad Gerber (a posthumous award received by his daughter, Laura), Barbette van Gessel, South African, Chief Executive Officer of Global Pacific & Partners, Founder and President of Global Women Petroleum and Energy Club, Duncan Clarke, Zimbabwean,

author, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Global Pacific & Partners, a private advisory firm based in London and Mr. Samuel Dossou-Aworet, Benin Republic national, a Pan-African Businessman, Founder and Chairman of Petrolin Group recognized for his strategic and pioneering role in the promotion and development of major oil companies and African companies in several African countries including Seplat in Nigeria.

It was a night of glitz and glory, well attended by dignitaries Honorable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Dr. Emmanuel IbeKachikwu, Dr. ABC Nwosu, Chairman Seplat, Austin Avuru, Luca Rigo de Righi (Chevron, Houston) and representatives of other major oil and gas companies from various parts of the world.



Group advocates participation of Niger Delta youths in NLNG Train-7

By Gladys Nweke

Port Harcourt — A group known as Niger Delta Youths Coalition for Peace and Progress, NDYCPP, says it is working on a bottom-top approach, to ensure active participation of Niger Delta youths in the upcoming Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas, NLNG, Train 7 project.

The NLNG Train 7 project, which aims to increase the company's gas production capacity from 22 million tonnes to 30 million tonnes per annum, at an estimated cost of \$4.3billion, according to the company, would provide at least 78,000 jobs.

Leader of the group, Mr. Kennedy West, said that NDYCPP was building the capacity of the host communities to benefit from the project, in order to create harmony amongst actors towards achieving a win-win situation.

West explained that the group would liaise with young entrepreneurs as well as the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board, NCDMB, in sensitizing the youths of the region on the opportunities in the project.

He said that the involvement of the host communities in the project would further

enhance peace and security as anybody with business ties to it would do everything to ensure its survival. According to him, "We have been making efforts to sensitize our people who have expertise in several aspects of the oil and gas sector on the big opportunity before us in the NLNG's Train-7 project.

There are so many opportunities and for those who already have the capacity we are linking them up. For those who lack the capacity, we have built up their



skill base so that they can fit in.

"We are collaborating with the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board and the NLNG Limited to host a business opportunity roundtable for stakeholders in the NLNG Train-7.

The Managing Director of NLNG will be leading other Managing Directors of many international oil companies participating in the project to the summit to be held in Bonny Island.

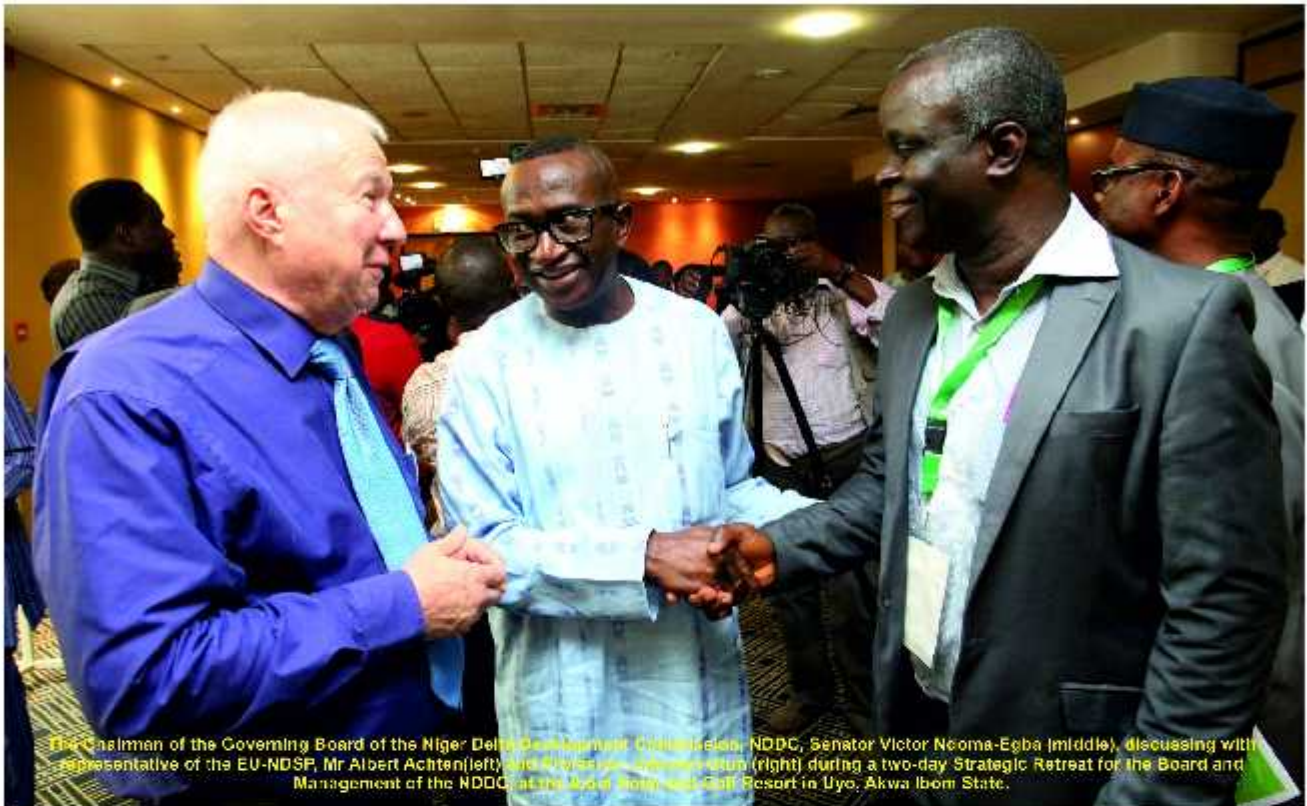
This is the first time a bottom-top approach will be applied to create harmony amongst actors in the field towards achieving a win-win situation in a project like this.

West, who is also the Special Assistant to the Bayelsa State

Governor on Niger Delta Youth Matters, expressed optimism that the project would boost the local content drive of the Federal Government, especially if the host communities were factored into the project at the planning stage.

We are encouraged by the stand of the Executive Secretary of NCDMB that there must be significant level of Nigerian content in this huge project.

This feat is achievable if we harness the existing capacity and match it with opportunities. So in working closely with NCDMB, we will showcase what we have to ensure that whatever can be done in Nigeria is given to Nigerians. In so doing, Nigerian businesses will be given opportunities to reduce the dominance of foreigners in the Nigerian oil and gas industry space.



The Chairman of the Governing Board of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba (middle), discussing with representative of the EU-NDSP, Mr Albert Achten (left) and Professor Johnson Otun (right) during a two-day Strategic Retreat for the Board and Management of the NDDC at the Ibbom Hotel and Golf Resort in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

NDDC Collaborates with EU for Sustainable Water Projects

The Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, says it is collaborating with the European Union, EU, through Niger Delta Support Programme, NDSP, to resuscitate dysfunctional and abandoned water infrastructure across the nine Niger Delta states.

This was stated by the Chairman of the NDDC Governing Board, Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba (SAN), at a two-day Strategic Retreat for the Board and Management of the NDDC, held at the Ibbom Hotel and Golf Resort in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

The retreat was organized under the auspices of the synergy programme for the implementation of pilot projects in the oil-rich region.

Senator Ndoma-Egba underlined the importance of addressing the problem of abandoned water infrastructure and regretted that the Niger Delta region was being described "rightly or wrongly as a graveyard of abandoned projects."

He said that the retreat was part of the efforts to develop workable

models for guaranteeing sustainability in NDDC water projects. According to him, "we inspected two water schemes in Akwa Ibom State that were based on different models. One is the NDSP-sponsored model, using the community-based management experience, while the other is a direct NDDC water scheme which worked for some time and was abandoned."

"Two lessons were drawn from the water schemes inspected. One shows how a scheme can work, while the other shows how a scheme will certainly not work. Going forward, we will adopt the model that works to ensure that there is ownership by the communities to guarantee sustainability."

The NDDC Chairman remarked that the retreat provided a basis for the Commission to revisit the Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan. He said: "We must decide whether to develop a new master plan or update the existing one which is based on outdated indices." In his presentation, the facilitator of the retreat, Professor

Johnson Otun, said that it was necessary to encourage advocacy for the adoption of relevant mechanisms for improving ownership and management of infrastructures provided by interventionist agencies.

He said that the meeting was aimed at raising the awareness of participants on key issues and factors that contributed to ailing or dysfunctional basic infrastructure in the Niger Delta region and fashion out strategies to improve sustainable development.

A communiqué issued at the end of the two-day meeting, resolved "that the institutionalization and operationalization of community-based management structure for the improvement and sustainability of basic infrastructure within the Niger Delta region be adopted and strategically implemented by NDDC."

It called for the establishment of clear policy statements that would embed and institutionalize community-based management approach into its infrastructural development process, as well as set up imprecise account to facilitate effective and timely implementation of NDDC-NDSP3 pilot project.

The communiqué resolved that there should be "a memorandum of understanding with NDDC to establish and operationalize a community-based management structure as a prequalification condition for any community to be a beneficiary of NDDC water infrastructure."

It further stated: "NDDC understands that this initial collaborative efforts with EU-NDSP3 is remarkably going to help to build their institutional capacity and provide greater opportunity to show their strong commitments for partnership and solicitation for future ways of accessing more fund from next EDF for further infrastructural development of the Niger Delta region."

Leave NDDC Alone to Work for the Niger Delta Region



The attention of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, has just been brought to a spurious, unfounded and irresponsible news story making the rounds online, titled "N21.9b Akwa Ibom NDDC Office Fund Disappears, Project Abandoned", written by a faceless hack in the obvious employment of mischievous, dubious characters. The fabricated story alleges, among many fabrications, that the foundation stone of the project was laid "two years" ago, that reptiles have taken over the site, as well as the actionable, criminal lie that the Managing Director/CEO of the Commission, Mr. Nsima Ekere,

allegedly "diverted" the funds to his "governorship election" in Akwa Ibom State.

While it is not our usual practice to dignify irresponsible and fraudulent journalism with a response, we believe it is important to set the facts straight, so that the public will know the truth and understand that in this day of politicking, people who sit in otherwise noble and responsible positions, compelled by desperate efforts to demonise their opponents, resort to blackmail, lies, dubious shenanigans and questionable tactics to deceive the people and divert their attention from their own failings.

It bears restating here that the Niger

Delta Development Commission is a responsible and responsive organisation, under a Governing Board peopled by very responsible Nigerians, with clear protocols for the administration and implementation of projects and programmes. It is not a one-man show and cannot, therefore, experience any diversion of funds, as the story alleges.

Now the facts:

1. The foundation laying ceremony for this project, as accompanying photograph shows, was laid only on July 20, 2018, and not two years ago;
2. The project was awarded to



Messrs Brett Integrated Investment Limited (and not Brett Nigeria Limited) at the contract value of N1,061,012,796.22, and not at N21.9bn, as falsely reported. But it is very clear that this faceless reporter was neither concerned about his/her reputation nor facts;

3. The contractors has been at site working. A visit to the site will reveal, as these pictures reveal, will show that materials are on site, iron works fabricated and over 10,000 blocks moulded, which would take the project to its first milestone within one month, as assured by the contractors. Only last week, more materials were deposited at site.

4. That the account for the project, opened by the contractors with First Bank of Nigeria Plc, is secured by an Advance Payment Guarantee (APG) where all monies are deposited. It cannot be possible therefore within law to divert the funds as fraudulently reported. This can be easily verified with the bank.

5. It is indeed important to note that

the Commission, desirous to see the judicious and expeditious completion of this project, as it is our practice with all our projects and programmes, on August 20, 2018, wrote a letter, signed by the Commission's Director, Project Monitoring and Supervision, Engr (Dr.) Emmanuel Audu-Ohwavorua, directing First Bank to release funds to the contractors to enable them discharge their duties to the project and the Commission;

6. The Letter (a copy of which is attached) reads in part: "Please note that your continuous denial of the contractor access to funds deposited in your bank by the Commission will be seen as a deliberate effort to frustrate our project..."

The Niger Delta Development Commission will no longer sit back and watch criminal journalism as attempts to tarnish its corporate image and attempts to detract us from the onerous task of developing the Niger Delta region. All too often, we have been exposed to constant,

vicious and virulent attacks, deliberate distortions, falsehood and open confrontation, driven by political scheming, and it often comes from a certain section of the region.

As the Commission has often stated, NDDC, as an intervention agency, is not in competition with any of the nine state governments of the Niger Delta region. Our mandates are different, but equally important and desperately urgent. We ask that the Commission and its representatives be allowed to focus on our duty to develop the region. We believe that there is no reason to poison the chalice, because our people drink from it.

The entire Niger Delta region is in dire need of rapid, even and sustainable development. That is our core Mandate. That is our primary focus. That is why we are more concerned about governance, which impacts positively on the people, than divisive and fraudulent politicking. Through our structures, we have extended our hands of cooperation and partnership to all the nine Niger Delta States.

Our footprints in Akwa Ibom State are obvious in keeping with the mandate of the current Board to ensure that the state enjoys the largest share of NDDC projects as the leading oil producing state in Nigeria.

We have extended our hand of friendship to the State Government on many occasions, as we have done with other State Governments. Indeed, our partnership with the State Governments has yielded important projects, such as the construction of the 50-kilometre Akodo-Araromi/Ibeju-Lekki Road, connecting Ondo and Lagos States, being funded by the Commission and Ondo State Government. We do hope that Akwa Ibom Government will see reason why it must open the door to NDDC as a credible development partner, rather than continue to demonize it.



Bola Tinubu



Yinka Odumakin

Fasanmi-led Afenifere slams Fasoranti faction for attacking Buhari's govt

A national leader of the Yoruba, socio-cultural and political organization, the Afenifere, Senator Ayo Fasanmi has condemned the Reuben Fasoranti-led faction of the group for its persistent criticism of the President Muhammadu Buhari-led government and not seeing anything good in the administration.

Fasoranti noted that the Yoruba race had benefited from the Buhari-led government in terms of key appointments, influence and execution of key projects. The senior citizen also condemned the suspension of former Deputy Governor of Osun State, Otunba Iyiola Omisore by the Reuben Fasoranti-led faction for working for the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the last governorship election in Osun state won by the APC saying it was laughable for the Fasoranti-led faction to slam suspension on Omisore.

He described Omisore's purported suspension as "the most embarrassing action taken by anyone or group since the death of the late sage, " Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

In statement on Wednesday by the Publicity Secretary of the group in Ekiti, Chief Biodun Akin-Fasae, Fasanmi berated the Fasoranti group for speaking for the Yoruba race, saying it lacked the moral rectitude to do so having allegedly derailed from the progressive ideology of the late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The nationalist is believed to be the oldest survivor of the Chief Obafemi Awolowo political legacy.

Fasanmi said it was disappointing for anyone to

"desecrate the hallowed name of Awolowo with conservative political tendency as being espoused by the Fasoranti and Ayo Adebajo group." While regretting that the Fasoranti-led group had "crossed the redline" with its action, Fasanmi stressed that the spirit of Awolowo will never forgive whoever must have taken steps to bastardize the legacies he fought for all his life.

Fasanmi said: "The Fasoranti/Adebajo group must henceforth stop talking on behalf of the Yoruba race because they have derailed. I am warning them that they should not put the Yoruba race on sale.

"The Yoruba race is comfortable with the progressives as being represented by the All Progressives Congress (APC), where the Yoruba is having the chunk of appointments.

"This has never happened even when Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was President. I wonder what Fasoranti and his group wanted by their anti-Buhari posture except they want to tell us they are now against Chief Awolowo's legacies which all Yorubas are still proud to associate with.

"Anyway, many of those working for PDP within Afenifere never stood for any election all through their political life."

Pa Fasanmi, however, congratulated Omisore and former Minister of State for Works, Prince Dayo Adeyeye, on their return to the progressives fold wishing them well in their future endeavours.

NIGERIAN MARITIME ADMINISTRATION AND SAFETY AGENCY (NIMASA)

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION: Nimsa To Enforce 0.5% Sulphur Limit On Bunker Fuel – Dakuku



The Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) Dr. Dakuku Peterside has stated that the Agency will enforce strict compliance to the International Maritime Organisation regulation which puts a maximum of 0.5% sulphur cap on all fuel used by vessels by the year 2020.

Dr. Dakuku who made this known during an interactive session with journalists at the ongoing maritime week in Dubai said that part of the requirements adopted at the 73rd meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the United Nations maritime organ was to reduce the sulphur content permitted in Ships' fuel oil globally to 0.5% with effect from 1st January 2020. According to him "the 2020 fuel challenge is geared towards energy efficiency, environmental pollution control, health as well as core regulatory enforcement issues. As a maritime nation, we cannot afford not to comply with the IMO standard which will also do

a lot in mitigating global warming and other related environmental issues" Dr. Dakuku said.

Speaking further, the NIMASA DG said that the IMO ban which relates to fuel intended for combustion, propulsion and operation purposes on board ships will enter into force on March 1st 2020, adding that all member states are expected to comply with the stated standards by this date.

He said it was in the best interest of Africa to ensure compliance considering the fact that majority of the countries on the continent do not have the technology to mitigate harmful effects of high sulphur fuel on the environment, ocean life and human life.

The NIMASA boss enumerated some of the steps the agency plans to take to manage the transition and ensure compliance. He noted that NIMASA will embark on massive enlightenment, stakeholders' engagement and liaison as well as collaboration with fuel refiners

and suppliers. He also said that the Agency would have a schedule for Pre-enforcement information before the commencement of the proper enforcement.

Commenting on the best way to enforce compliance, Dr Peterside said that ship owners, classification societies, NGOs, fuel storage facilities, and other stakeholders will all play a part in determining modalities of ensuring compliance.

It is worthy of note that the IMO has been working to reduce harmful effects of shipping on environment since 1960. The Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of pollution from ships (MARPOL) was adopted in 1997 to address air pollution from shipping.

The regulation 14.1.3 of Annex VI of the Convention seeks to control airborne emissions of compounds such as sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxides and other ozone depleting substances arising from shipping activities in order to mitigate its



Nigerians Need Professional Trainings To Take Over Sea Farers Activities Across The World - CEO

By Gladys Nweke

The Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Charkin Maritime and Offshore Safety Centre, Ozuoba Port Harcourt, Sir Charles Wami has reiterated the centre's determination to provide Nigerians the needed professional trainings to take over sea farers activities across the World. The CEO/MD stated this at the flag off of a one year mandatory vessels training on foreign trips for twenty marine cadets.

He said the Charkin Maritime Offshore and Safety Centre is there to provide requisite professional training opportunities for Nigerians to get the needed competence in seafaring Activities to enable them

handle the medium and large vessels across the continent.

Sir Wami also disclosed that the flag off will go extra mile to ensure the aim and the dream of the centre to come through by projecting both men and women who are marine engineers and nautical, also maintained that the opportunity for cadets as the real one.

The CEO at the same time admonished that the cadets are not to be afraid of who they will meet at the training institution abroad but must be bold and focus as good ambassadors of the centre in character and learning to minimize foreign domination in the industry

the found themselves.

In his part, the executive secretary of Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board, Simbi Wabote represented by the general manager in Capacity Building Division of the Board commended Charkin Maritime Offshore and Safety Centre for its capacity to deliver professional trainings across the Nation.

At the same vein, the provost of Charkin Maritime Academy, Dr Uchenna Okerie noted that the academy has qualified instructors and learning facilities for marine training and advised the cadets to be committed and be the pride of the academy, he stressed.

Tension at Benin Psychiatric Hospital over Resumption of 10 Sacked Staff

A mild drama played out recently at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Uselu, Benin City, when 10 staff of the hospital who were on suspension and dismissal since 2014 stormed the hospital armed with a letter reinstating them from the presidency.

The affected workers arrived the premises of the hospital at about 9:20 am and went into the premises where they held consultation among themselves, before going into the office of the Secretary of Head of Department where they were told that management of the hospital was not aware of such letter.

Spokesman of the 10, Dr. Ambrose Lawani, said they decided to go and resume after waiting for over one month since the directive was given.

This however generated fisticuffs as a private cameraman who was there to record the event was prevented from doing so and in the melee, one of the affected staff, Dr. Charles Ikeji, sustained some injuries.

The presidency sometime in November last year, directed that 10 staff who were either dismissed or suspended should be recalled to the service of the hospital.

The letter which was dated November 24th 2017, with reference number LA/80/15/T1/62 and addressed to the Medical Director, Dr. Sunday Olotu, of the hospital was signed by Director, Human Resource Management, Halad Keana for the Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Health.

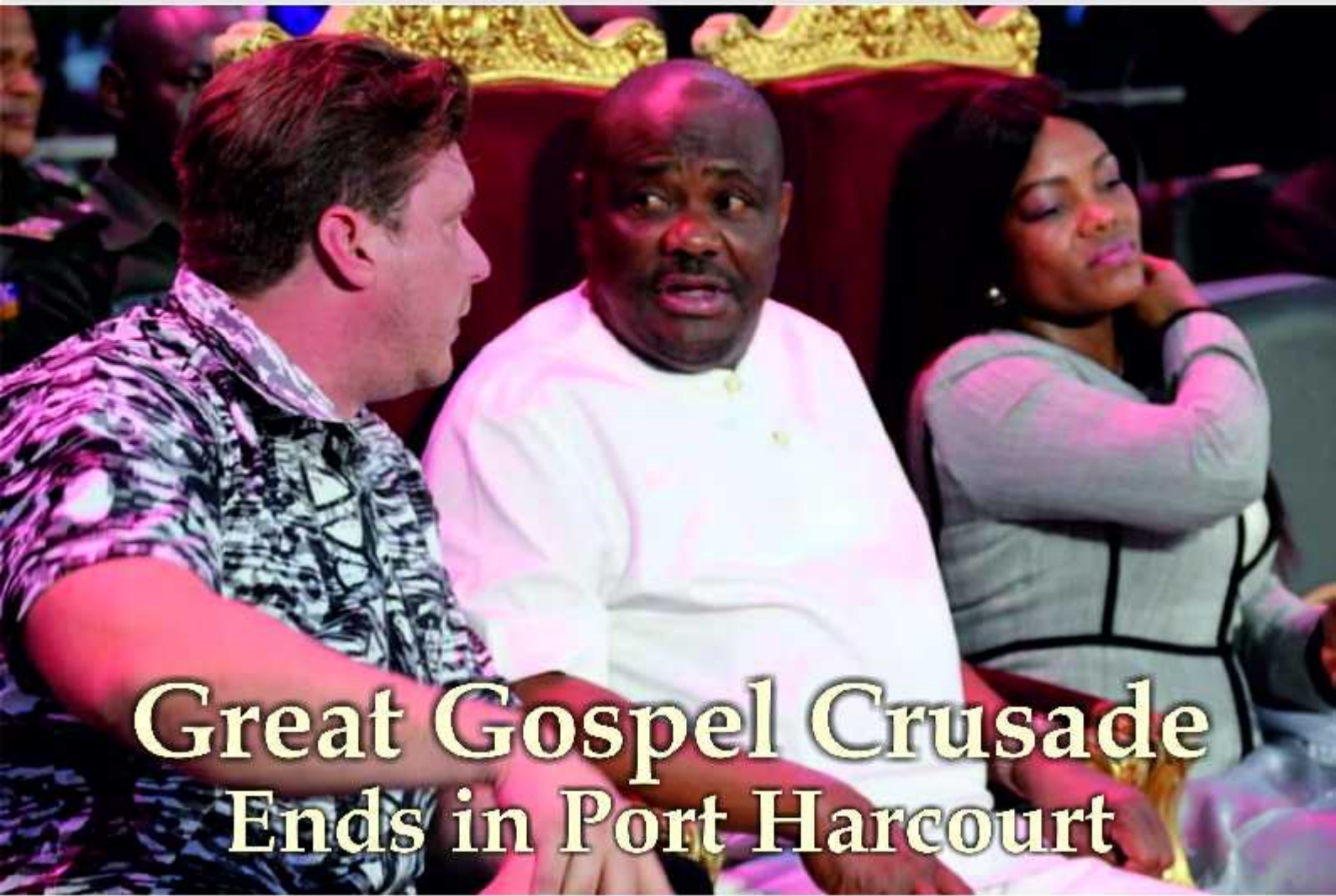
The letter titled, Re: Plea for our immediate reinstatement reads; "I am directed to refer to

the letter from the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Vice President, Ref No SH/OVP/DCOS/LGR&C/FMOH/208 dated 28th August, 2017 on the above subject and to convey the Ministry's approval to the immediate reinstatement of Dr. A.O. Lawan and 10 others, who were suspended/dismissed from the services of the hospital on 11th November 2014.

"You are also directed to restore the following benefits: The prompt payment of their outstanding 2013 promotion arrears, arrears of relativity and their withheld salaries up to date by virtue of Public Service Rules (PSR) 030404 (iv) which states that if confirmed that an officer is not guilty of the charge made against him/her, the affected officer shall immediately be reinstated and shall receive the full amount of his/her emoluments denied him/her while he/she was interdicted or suspended.

When contacted however, the Public Relations Officer of the hospital, Efe Stewart, said the hospital was not aware of any such letter.

He said: "Their claim is unfounded because they are people that have criminal cases in court. One of them was very recently arraigned for fraud. For embezzling money belonging to the Psychiatric Hospital Cooperative. A child that has been put to birth, can you abort it? As I speak with you, I am not aware of any letter. if the ministry directed that they should be reinstated, then who is Psychiatric hospital to say no, so they should go back and complain to the same ministry and not coming to enter the hospital to foment trouble."



Great Gospel Crusade Ends in Port Harcourt

Thousands of Christian worshippers recently gathered at the NLNG Sandfill in Port Harcourt for the opening night of Great Gospel Crusade of the Christ for All Nations (CFAN).

Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, his wife, Justice Eberechi Suzzette Nyesom-Wike and top government officials were among the congregation. President of CFAN, Evangelist Daniel Kolenda said that power of the Holy Spirit will manifest all through the crusade.

He said that this is the appointed time for God to bless the people of Port Harcourt. He urged the people to place their hope in Jesus Christ who has paid the price for the redemption of their souls.

In his welcome address, Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike reiterated that Rivers State is a Christian State that has been committed to God.

He expressed happiness that God used him to reclaim the land where the crusade was held. He noted that the



Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike addressing Christian worshippers during the Great Gospel Crusade of the Christ for All Nations (CFAN) in Port Harcourt.

NLNG sandfill use to be a den of robbers, now turned into a place for God's blessing.

Evangelist Daniel Kolenda later led hundreds of people to God and there were several testimonies of sick persons who received their healing from God.

The opening day of the Crusade also witnessed praise and worship by Chioma Jesus and a visiting gospel artiste from the United States.

Simeon Nwakaudu, Special Assistant to the Rivers State Governor, Electronic Media, 8th November, 2018



ATIKU ABUBAKAR

WITH THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

1. Restructuring Of Nigeria.
2. Job Creation
3. Industrialization
4. Youth Empowerment
5. Women Empowerment
6. Economic And Political Restructuring
7. Total Security Reform.
8. Protection Of Human Rights.
9. Diversification of Nigeria's Economy.

10. Adherence To Rule Of Law.
Nigerians Please Vote For PDP
Vote For Peace
Vote For Posterity
Vote For Atiku & Obi 2019.

Signed:

Atiku Campaign Organisation



EDO STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC STAFF VACANCIES

The Edo University Iyamho, Etsako West LGA, Edo State, invites

applications from suitably qualified candidates to fill Academic Staff vacancies in the Institution.

A. ACADEMIC STAFF POSITIONS

a) Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers and Lecturer I in the following Departments of the University

S/N DEPARTMENT

DESIGNATIONS QUALIFICATION

1. Morbid Anatomy/ Histopathology
Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader /Professor

FWACP (Lab Med)/ FMCPPath

2. Pharmacology
Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader /Professor

FMCP/FWACP/Ph.D

3. Community Medicine
Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader /Professor

FMCPCH/ FWACP

4. Anatomy

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader /Professor

MB;BS+Ph.D or B.Sc +M.Sc+Ph.D

5. Physiology

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader /Professor

MB;BS+Ph.D or B.Sc +M.Sc+Ph.D

6. Internal Medicine

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader /Professor

FWACP/ FMCP

7. General Surgery

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader /Professor

FWACS/FMCS

8. Orthopaedic Surgery

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader /Professor

FWACS, FMCS

9. Paediatrics

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader /Professor

FMCPaed/FWACP

10. O & G

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader
/Professor

FMCOG/FWCOG

11. Nursing

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer

B.NSc+ M.Sc +Ph.D (Nursing Science)

12. Medical Microbiology

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader
/Professor

FWACP (Lab Med)/ FMCPPath

13. Radiology

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader
/Professor

FWACS / FMCR

14. Medical Laboratory Science

Lecturer I/ Senior Lecturer/ Reader
/Professor

AIMLT or BMLS., + M.Sc., + PhD

(Chemical pathology; Haematology and
Histopathology)

QUALIFICATIONS**(i) Professor**

Candidates should possess a Ph.D degree in the discipline applied for from a recognised University with at least ten (10) years teaching and research experience in a University, with at least two (2) years as an Associate Professor. Candidates must possess scholarly publications in both local and international journals as proof of specialisation in core areas of departmental fields of study. Candidates must also have sufficient administrative experience.

(ii) Associate Professor

As in (i) above, but with eight (8) years teaching and research experience in a University, with at least two (2) years as a Senior Lecturer. Candidate must also have sufficient administrative experience.

(iii) Senior Lecturer

As in (i) above, but with five (5) years teaching and research experience in a University, with at least two (2) years as a Lecturer

I. Candidate must also have sufficient administrative experience.

(iv) Lecturer I

As in (i) above, but with three (3) years teaching and research experience in a University, with at least two (2) years as a Lecturer

II. Computer literacy and ability to teach using Multimedia technology is mandatory.

C. SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES:

Salaries and allowances are as obtainable in Nigerian Public Universities.

An enhanced welfare package is also in place to attract the best in the education sector.

D. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

As contained in the approved conditions governing the service of Senior Staff in Nigerian Universities.

E. METHOD OF APPLICATION

Visit the University website at www.edouniversity.edu.ng/vacancy and fill an application form. In addition to stating the names and addresses of the referees, applicants should request their referees to forward reference on their behalf directly to: The Registrar, Edo University, Iyamho, Etsako West LGA, Edo State.

NB: Applicants for the posts of Professor and Associate Professor should forward three (3) bound copies of their publications to the Registrar.

Signed:

Dr. (Mrs.) Isoken Ogboro, FNIM
Registrar



From fourth generation to new arrivals, Lebanese Nigerians describe their connection to the country

'We feel Nigerian': Inside Nigeria's Lebanese community

IJEOMA Ndukwe Aljezeera

Multiple generations of Lebanese have made their home in [Nigeria](#). Some are the descendants of migrants who arrived in West Africa as early as the 19th century, leaving behind their small Middle Eastern nation in search of opportunities elsewhere.

Members of this Lebanese diaspora - from fourth-generation Nigerian nationals to recent arrivals - share their experiences of

life in Africa's most populous nation. Tatiana Mousalli Nouri, 38, is fourth-generation Lebanese, raised in Nigeria. She is the deputy group managing director for Aim Group, a family-run conglomerate with offices across the country, which includes broadcasters Cool FM and Wazobia FM. She also heads Wazobia TV, which is the only Nigerian channel to broadcast exclusively in pidgin English. Tatiana is married with three children. I was born in London, in the UK, but was conceived and raised in Nigeria. I have been here all of my life because my mum's family has been in Nigeria for a very long time, since 1886. My great grandfather,

Michael Lelias, left Lebanon in 1886 on his way to Brazil.

The boat stopped by Nigeria before heading to Brazil. Back then I think it was fashionable to go to Brazil.

The story goes that he did not have enough money to make the trip to Brazil, so he basically stopped in Nigeria and made it home. He worked for many years as a cattle trader. Then he went back to Lebanon, got married and brought back his wife. That's how my grandfather was born here.

My grandmother on my mother's side of the family was born in the Republic of Benin, in Porto-Novo. My mother grew up here when she was a child as well, left for

secondary school and then came back. My father always says that we are civilised nomads because of his and my mother's heritage. We've always been nomads, going from one place to another. I'm Lebanese maybe by blood, if I can use that word. When people ask me, "Where are you from?" I will say Nigerian, because this is what I know, this is where I grew up, this is where my memories are. We are not "real" Nigerians, according to some people. When people tell me, "No, you are not

Nigerian," I can defend my Nigerian roots more than everyone. But we're usually embraced.

In Nigeria there is a code that says all media owners must be Nigerian. We are Nigerian, meaning my parents are Nigerian, my sister and I are Nigerian. My brother-in-law is Nigerian - he was born and raised in Kano, a city in the north of the country. We feel very much Nigerian. However, the colour of our skin is very different.

When we launched Wazobia FM, in 2007,

and it was in pidgin English, no presenter out there wanted to audition to be a pidgin English presenter, because it was not done in Nigeria. We used cleaners and cooks from our cafe, Chocolat Royal. We said, "Just go and talk."

We still have some of the cleaners that have grown with the station. It's gone further than we expected.

Everybody has embraced it. Even though we still get some criticism, by a small amount of people that tell us that we are teaching pidgin English to the future



Loubna Fakhri-Baker, 32, is the executive chef of the Lagos-based restaurant Craft Gourmet, which she co-founded with her husband, Anu Baker. Loubna was born and raised in Senegal but moved to Nigeria in 2008. She has a daughter.

generations. If you want to be educated, put your kids in school. Wazobia is really a medium, it's just a language that we use to communicate a message.

Nigeria has this vibe, this thing that when you come here there is something that hooks you to the country. I don't know what it is. A lot of my friends that live here feel the same way. The potential that there is in this country, there is nowhere else. There is this dynamism, and there is hope. There is a very bright future for the generations ahead.

In 1939 my grandfather moved to Senegal along with a big community of Lebanese people. My father told me that they were supposed to go to South America, but the boat stopped in Senegal and they started doing business there and stayed.

Senegal is a very nice country to live in and the population there is very welcoming.

I was born and raised in Dakar. We consider ourselves Senegalese. Every Friday or Saturday the family would sit around a thiebou jen (a spicy stuffed fish served with rice), which is the national dish. We cook yassa (a spicy chicken or fish dish) every day. We speak Senegalese, we eat Senegalese, I travel with the Senegalese passport, and we bury our dead in Senegal. We became Senegalese.

French is my mother tongue. I also speak English, Wolof, and Spanish. I don't speak Arabic well. When I go to Lebanon and I open my mouth and say "Bonjour" or "Marhaba", people say, "Oh, she's from Africa" because of my accent.



Loubna Fakhri-Baker is the executive chef of Lagos-based restaurant Craft Gourmet [Andrew Esiebo/Al Jazeera]

I want to go back to Lebanon to live - go back to my roots. Whether it's a good or bad experience I don't care. I want to understand where I'm from.

I'm Lebanese by blood but I sometimes feel closer to my Senegalese friends than my Lebanese friends from around the world. However, there's still something that doesn't make me feel completely Senegalese. I had a complex about it. When I talk to Lebanese people I'm not Lebanese, but when I talk to Senegalese, I'm not quite Senegalese for them. I'm still "the white girl" in their country.

I met my husband in Lebanon when I went there for holidays. He was living in Lagos and then he moved to Abuja. When he moved to Abuja we got married and I followed him. After I got pregnant, Boko Haram attacks started to happen in Abuja so when I wanted to deliver we went back to Senegal. We stayed a bit, but we were missing the energy of Nigeria.

When we first came to Lagos my husband was working as a financial controller and I was thinking about what I wanted to do in the food industry because I have a diploma from Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (a Swiss hospitality management school). I knew that I wanted to work in that field.

Craft Gourmet was a concept made by me, but then I felt it was too hard to do it alone and my husband decided to quit his

job to join me. He takes care of purchasing and financial control and I'm the executive chef.

It's not easy to live in Nigeria. You are outside your comfort zone every day, fighting and struggling. What I love the most about Nigeria is that I became an adult in Nigeria. In Senegal I was not. Life was too easy. Here I've been challenged. Everyone is hustling here. Here, if you don't do something, you feel like a loser. For me there's this energy of feeling alive, of getting something fixed every day. Eddie Bahnam

I was born and raised in Lebanon. I practically lived there all my life except during the civil war when we had to go to Paris for three years because we couldn't even go to school in Lebanon. After that I returned to Beirut.

After my Masters in Business Administration in Lebanon I was on my way to a job in Switzerland but coincidence led me to my future boss in Nigeria. I thought to hell with Europe. I didn't want to work for a big corporation. I wanted a much more flexible structure where you can make an impact.

I didn't know anyone in Nigeria. I remember vividly, from the airport all the way to Apapa (a neighbourhood in Lagos) I saw people walking. Whether on a bridge, or on a street or on a major road, you had a lot of people everywhere.

I never had the intention to stay. I said, "Let me come here for three years." Then, it was very difficult for me to leave because at that time Nigeria was

booming. Then I met my wife who was also working on a project in Lagos and here I am 15 years later. Three years became 15. I don't regret that decision.

In the beginning there was a lot of frustration because you're not used to taking care of your own power supply, providing your own water. When I first came there were absolutely no malls or cinemas. There were probably three or four major clubs that people would go to and the roads were tiny. Now, there's an abundance of malls everywhere. Shoprite (a supermarket chain) is everywhere, in every mall there's a movie theatre and there's a list of restaurants popping up every month.

There are clichés. Nigeria has the tag of being corrupt or unsafe but this is just because of mass media. I feel much safer here than in Paris after 10 o'clock at night. I don't care how foreigners or the media depicts Nigeria or generally West Africa. People are super-friendly. The sense of community is much stronger here. You will get help if you encounter trouble on the street, whereas in Europe nobody will care. Corruption - I think it's blown out of proportion.

I would say I sometimes look at how I lived my childhood and I compare it to what my children are going through. Nigeria is a great place to raise children; however, the most basic things are lacking. I remember when I was four years old, I could go with my friends down the street and maybe go buy a chocolate or walk to my neighbour's house. These are the things you can't do here. Any time you want to step out of the gates of the compound, you have to be escorted.

I've managed to integrate into the social fabric of at least Lagos. I have a lot of Nigerian friends and that might make me different from others within the Lebanese community. Some Lebanese choose to stay within the Lebanese community but these are a minority.

Most Lebanese are well integrated into Nigerian society. I feel I'm welcome in every house, in every party, in every event.

Culled from BBC

Fashola blames past govts for failed roads with \$100/barrel oil revenue

Buhari awarded 121 road contracts in just 3yrs - Scribe

The Minister of Power, Works and Housing, Mr Babatunde Fashola has blamed past governments for not effectively utilising earned crude oil revenue to develop road and other infrastructures in the country.

The minister said this in Abuja while presenting a three year scorecard of his ministry. Fielding questions on the poor road networks, Fashola admitted it saying, "Yes, we know they are bad. There is no magic to it. If those who came before us had done their work, we won't meet bad road. That is the simple truth. We earned \$100 per barrel of crude oil for about five years.

"We knew what other countries like Abu Dhabi (UAE), Saudi Arabia did with their own, what did we do with ours? So this is a President and a government that is now trying to do more with less that it has. So give us some time, we will get there," Fashola said.

The minister said the federal government is executing road projects across every state especially abandoned projects like the Lagos – Ibadan expressway, the second Niger bridge, Enugu- Port Harcourt road, Jebba-Mokwa way among others that have drastically cut down travel time.

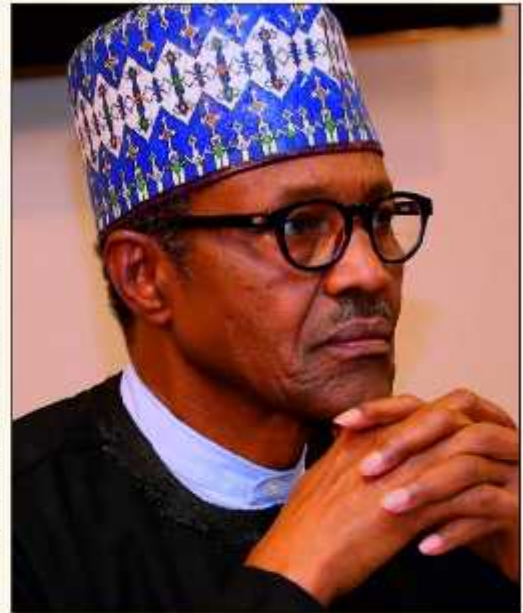
The ministry also gave statistics of road projects in the last three years. It said in 2016, 277

kilometres of road was constructed, 345km was rehabilitated and 17,749 people were employed in the process.

For 2017, the federal government constructed 488 roads, rehabilitated 256 others and engaged 31,227 persons. For 2018 till November, 497km of road has been constructed, 284 rehabilitated and 30,402 persons employed; the figure could rise during December due to more rehabilitation projects nationwide, officials said.

Expanding on this, the Permanent Secretary (Works and Housing), Mr Mohammed Bukar said there have been award of 365 roads for construction since 2001. He said the Buhari government awarded 121 of these in three years while the previous government awarded 144 others in the whole of 17 years. "You will see that out of the 365 roads, 144 were awarded in the period of 17 years while in just three years, we awarded 121 roads, just within three years and we are still counting because the 2018 procurement is on going," Bukar noted.

On the N206bn 2nd Niger Bridge being funded by the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), the ministry said about N31bn has been given to Julius Berger as advance which resulted in the significant record of pillars erected on site as the



project is expected to be completed in 36 months.

To ease traffic during the yuletide, Fashola said the ministry has identified 59 routes where construction works are ongoing and is drafting key officials along with men of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) to tackle that as he harped on safe road practices.



FG delivers on power sector, raises transmission to 8,000MW - Fashola

The Minister of Power, Works and Housing, Mr Babatunde Fashola said the federal government has delivered on raising capacity and infrastructure in the power sector, as transmission wheeling capacity among others has reached 8,000 megawatts (MW).

Mr Fashola disclosed this while marking the third anniversary in office as a minister in Abuja on Monday. The Daily Trust in this piece dissects the strategies, the minister adopted to justify his scorecard.

The third year ministerial anniversary came after President Muhammadu Buhari inaugurated his Federal Executive Council (FEC) on November 10, 2015, and announced a merge of the Ministry of Power, that Works, and Housing on November 11, 2015.

Fashola assumed office immediately and by December 8, 2015, he called a briefing and promised to clear the over N100 billion debts owed by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), increase transmission capacity, improve liquidity for the Generation Companies (GenCos) to get more gas for power generation, and facilitate incremental to stable power supply.

While insisting yesterday that a significant milestone of these has been met, Fashola said: "I am proud and happy to report that we have walked that talk and we have delivered visible results and recorded qualitative progress.

Validating his claims on the sector improvement, he said: "Generation has increased from 4,000MW in 10 7,000MW; transmission was 5,000MW, am told that the last simulation is around 8,000MW in transmission. Distribution has improved to 5,000MW."

The Minister said more generation capacity will be delivered soon to include 215MW from Kaduna Plant, 240MW from Afam IV in few months 40MW from Kashimbilla, 30MW from Gurara and 29MW from Dadin Kowa plant.

He noted that power generation projects are ongoing across nine universities, power supply projects across major markets and the execution of two large hydropower projects – the 700MW Zungeru and 3050MW Mambilla projects Fashola who spoke on the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), a non-privatised public utility said the firm has reached a level where between a 60 day cycle, it delivers more projects within the last one year.

"We are also planning to deliver additional transmission capacity from 90 projects



nationwide with Apo, Mayo Be wa, Maiduguri, Odugunyan and Ejigbo being examples of recently completed ones.

Fashola however acknowledged issues in the power sector like access to power, metering among others as he assured that they are being addressed. Citing the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Q2 report, the minister said there was 7.5% growth in electricity sector which was better than the -11% rate recorded in the same quarter of 2015.

"The report of our survey and feedback mechanism confirms that many of you now have public power for longer hours compared to 2015 and that you now run generators for shorter period compared to 2015; and also, you now spend less money on diesel to power your generators," the minister said.

Fielding questions from newsmen, Fashola said there are ongoing interventions to raise distribution capacity especially through the Distribution Expansion Programme. Permanent Secretary (power), Engr. Louis Edozien urged the Distribution Companies (DisCos) to invest in infrastructures to get the power to the consumers and that the ministry has brought the Mini Grid and Eligible Customer policies to provide choices to consumers who are not satisfied with DisCos' services.

"We are confident that with the distribution expansion, the implementation of these policies and the cooperation of the DisCos, the constituencies that you mention will be promptly solved and there will be progress on uninterrupted power supply," Edozien noted.

Expect Meter Providers before Q1 - NERC

Addressing questions on metering, the Chairman, Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), Prof. James Momoh said before the first quarter of 2019, consumers will start seeing the Meter Assets Providers (MAP) in business to install meters nationwide Momoh said 108 MAP have been granted no objection by NERC. He said, "Before the first quarter, you will begin to see several providers in business. We are also putting in order, a capping in terms of the maximum for which a customer who has not obtained a meter will pay.

The DisCos are also working with us to make sure this is done." 'Works may begin at 3,050MW Mambilla hydropower this year' Mr Fashola who also gave an update on the 3050MW Mambilla hydropower project in Taraba state said preparatory works may begin on site before the year as President Buhari has approved such barring any delay in funding.

He said the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) for the project has been signed for \$5.72bn, the first time after 40 years of the project being on the drawing board.

While the federal government will provide 15% counterpart funding, China will provide 85% of the loan and the manpower because of their experience in building the Three Gorges Dam in China that generates about 20,000MW.

He said the project which has a 60 months execution timeline has had 116 local firms submitting expression of interest to the ministry to be engaged to provide finance consultancy, logistics and security.

Also demonstrating the positive economic impact of the project once it kicks off, Fashola said it will require 31,240 million bags of cement, 18,921million metric tonnes of aggregates like granite and stones to mix the cement and 42,000 tonnes of steel for the strength work. "So this is what lies ahead of us in the six years of the construction. So we must choose whether to go back, to remain where the project is or to move it forward," he said.



Wabote Receives Global Award for Local Content Advocacy

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