

NEWS PLATFORM

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Buhari Urged To Save **NDDC**

**NCDMB, Notore Explore
Investment Opportunities**

**Persecution of Prof. Maurice Iwu
Former INEC Boss**



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Our mission include to inform, Educate,
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conferral to Personalities, issues and
events across the globe with special
emphasis on development in Nigeria
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Buhari Urged **To** Save NDDC



There has been complaints and petitions flying around by some stakeholders against the activities of the Board of the commission. This has led to the Economic And Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) storming the place and investigate its activities

An appeal has gone to President Muhammadu Buhari to take over the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and save the commission as well as the Region from another rounds of crisis.

This appeal has become necessary as some All Progressives Party (APC) party leaders are trying to hijack the commission for selfish interests.

A visit to the media team of the commission confirmed that anti graft agency had invited principal officers of the commission for interrogation on some of the petitions against it. The Media officer who spoke on condition of anonymity confirmed to Newsplatform Magazine that EFCC actually interrogated some officials of the commission but that there was nothing wrong with that. He said it was normal.

We gathered that the crisis in the NDDC may not be unconnected with plans by Leadership of APC to take over the commission. This is due to the huge amount of money in the commission.

The current leadership is loyal to Transport Minister Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi. Other party Leaders like Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the National Chairman of the party Adams Oshiomhole are also

interested in controlling the Commission. This is because of their perceived 2023 Presidential ambition and their control of the commission will give them huge funding at their disposal.

All these is going on at the expense of development programmes of the Niger Delta Region for which the Commission was created.

In a recent interview the former acting Managing Director of NDDC Professor Brambaifa said "We are incapacitated by the current financial state of the commission. The Federal Government is owing NDDC about N1.9 trillion and that is slowing the pace of the ongoing infrastructural development in the area. We appeal to the Federal Government to release part of the fund so that we can accomplish our set-out goals and fulfill our obligations to the Niger Delta people, which we believe will go a long way to achieve a whole lot in reducing the poverty rate in the region.'

A question was asked on the pressing challenges facing the commission and how he intend to solve them?

He said 'Poor exploitation of agriculture/Aquaculture for economic gains, socio-political challenge, and environmental degradation due to oil spillage; these are some of the challenges facing the Niger Delta. After years of oil exploration and exploitation, the environment has witnessed pollution and consequent degradation.

Besides pollution occasioned by oil and gas business, we also face seasonal and constant erosion, silting, and flooding, as well as poor control of refuse, sewage and municipal solid waste. These





challenges have combined to make the Niger Delta a very poor region. '

Despite all these problems, politicians especially outside the Region continue to feed fat on the commission rendering the people poorer.

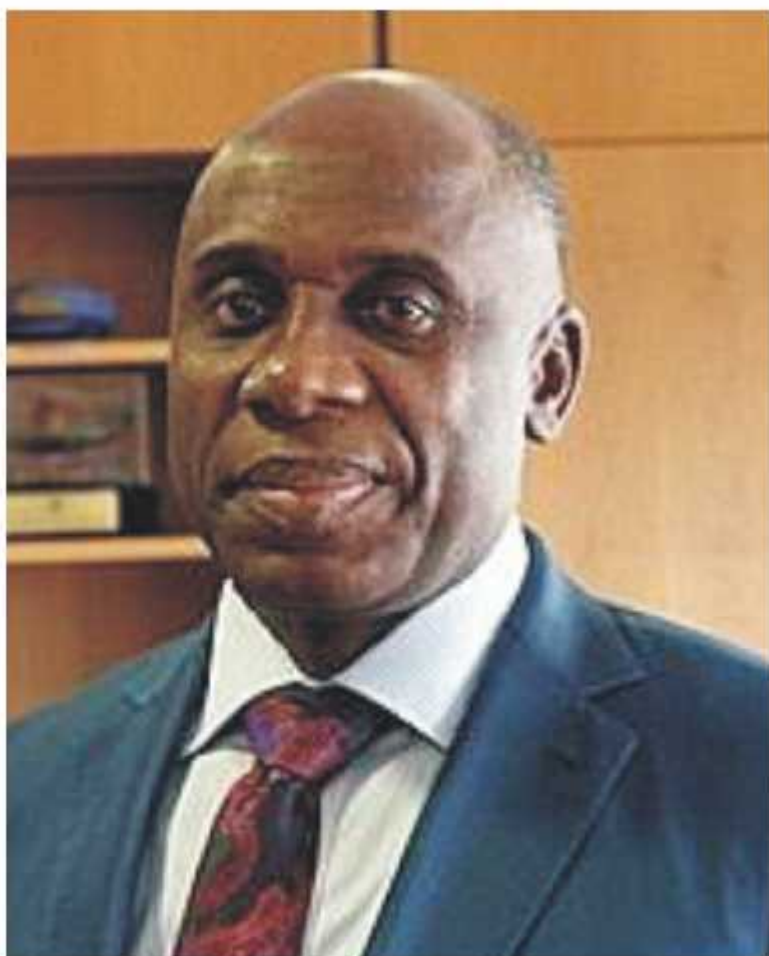
It will be recalled that the then acting Managing Director of NDDC Professor Nelson Bambaifa had earlier this year few months after his appointment said President Muhammadu Buhari mean well for the people of the Niger Delta ' Professor Bambaifa commended President Muhammadu Buhari for demonstrating an enduring love for the people of the Niger Delta Region '

The former Chief Executive Officer of the interventionist Agency who spoke during the inaugural meeting of the new management, Directors and staff of the commission at the commission's headquarter in Port Harcourt noted the Federal Government had 'indeed begun refunding over N1.3 TRILLION owed the commission since inception'.

It is believed that the appointment of senator Godswill Akpabio as the Minister of Niger Delta, Festus Keyamu Minister of State and Senator Ita Enang as the SA to the president on Niger Delta, the commission will be alive to it's responsibilities again.



He said that the President also ensured that all other statutory contributors to the funding of the NDDC met their obligations. So why is the Board complaining now.



PROFILE OF **BERNARD OKUMAGBA:** The New MD Of NDDC

President Muhammadu Buhari on Tuesday appointed Olorogun Bernard Okumagba as the new Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). Below is the profile of the new NDDC MD:

Bernard Oboatarhieyeren Okumagba hails from the influential Okumagba family of Okere-Urhobo Kingdom in Warri South Local Government Area of the Delta South Senatorial District of Delta State.

He attended Government College Ughelli from 1977 to 1983 and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka from 1983 to 1987 where he graduated with a B.Sc degree in Accountancy (2nd Class Honours Upper Division). Bernard also qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1991 and he is presently a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (FCA). The financial expert started his working career at the International financial services firm Arthur Andersen & Co (now KPMG) in 1988. He later worked in several banks from 1991 to 2007.

His banking career commenced at Oceanic Bank Plc in the Financial Control/Strategy as well as the Corporate Banking Divisions from 1991 to 1994. Thereafter, he worked in Crystal Bank, Fidelity Bank Plc, First Atlantic Bank Plc and United Bank for Africa Plc from 1994 to 2007.

He held several positions at these



Olorogun Bernard Okumagba

banks including Senior Manager, Corporate Banking Division, Head of Internal Control/Audit Division, Bank Chief Inspector and Principal Manager, Consumer and Commercial Banking Division amongst others.

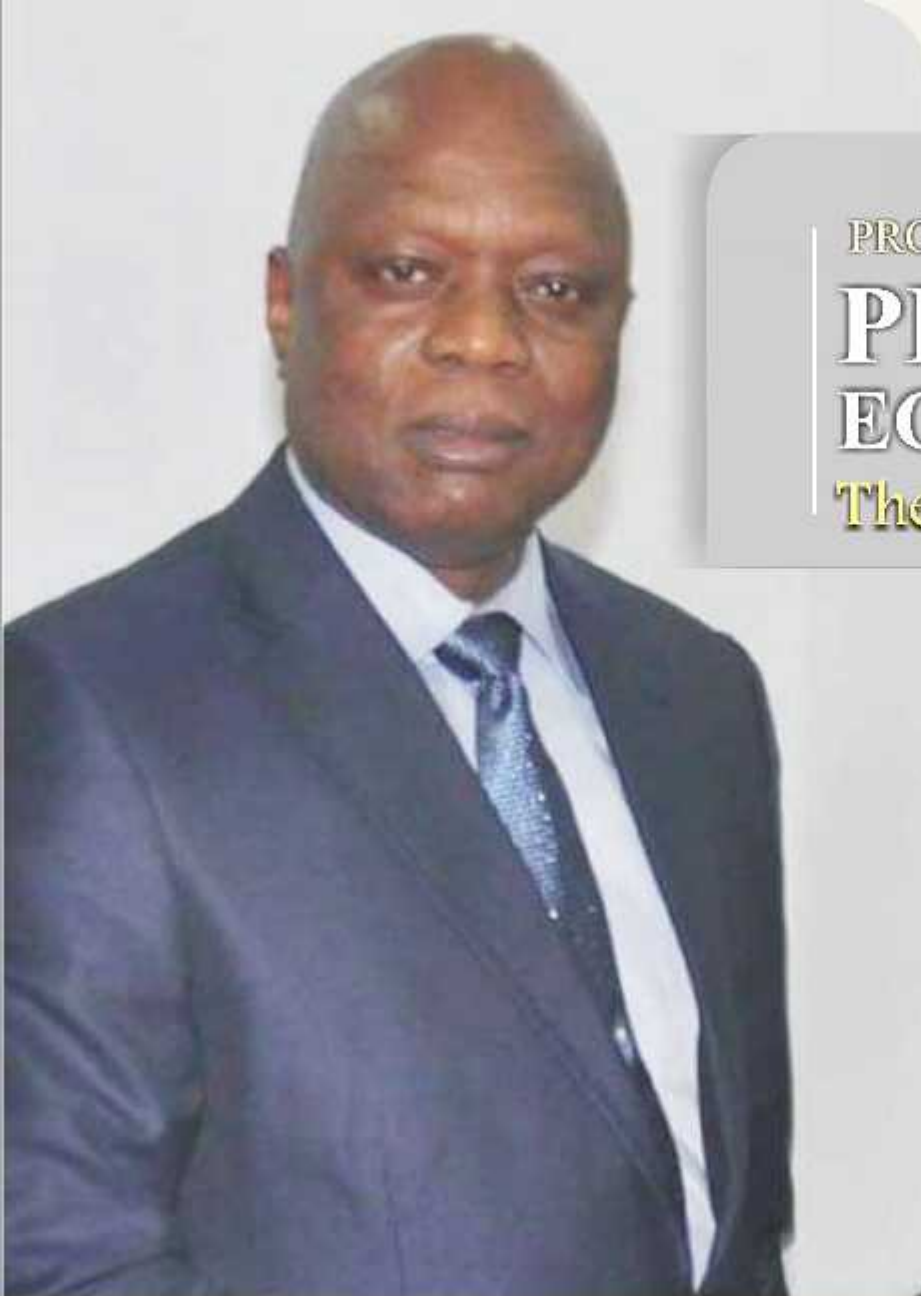
He left United Bank for Africa Plc in August 2007 following his appointment as Delta State Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget. He served as Delta State Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget from August 2007 to November 2010 and was subsequently appointed Commissioner for Finance and served in that capacity from November 2010 to May 2011. Owing to his diligent performance, Bernard was reappointed Delta State Commissioner for Finance in July 2011 and held this position until July 2013.

Until his appointment, Olorogun Bernard Oboatarhieyeren Okumagba holds the position of Chairman of Regents Consults Ltd. and Chairman at Noly Insurance Brokers Ltd.

Bernard Oboatarhieyeren Okumagba is a Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC) from Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State.

He was appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari as the Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) on Tuesday.

His appointment is subject to the confirmation of the Senate.



PROFILE OF PIUS ODUBU EGBERANMWUN The Chairman Of NDDC

1. Rt. Hon. (Dr) Pius Egberanmwun Odubu (B.L.) is 62 years old, born on July 13, 1957.
2. He is a former Deputy Governor of Edo State (2012-2016) under the leadership of Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, national chairman of the APC.
3. Dr. Odubu is a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, having been called to the bar in October 1986.
4. He hails from Urhometo in Ughelli North Ward, Orhionmwon Local Government Area of Edo State.
5. He studied extensively in the United States of America before returning to Nigeria. While, in the U.S.A., he attended:
 1. Philander Smith College, Little Rock Arkansas
 2. Southern University, Baton Rouge Louisiana
 3. Southern University School of Law, Baton Rouge Louisiana
 4. Georgetown University Law Centre, Washington D.C.
6. He holds a B.A. (Hons) in Political Science, Doctor of Jurisprudence Degree in Law, Master of Law in International and Comparative Law.
7. Dr. Odubu is a recipient of several Honour and scholarship awards among which are:
 1. National Dean's List (U.S.A)
 2. Member - Who is Who in American Universities
 3. College Marshal (Best Student) - College of Arts and humanities, Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, U.S.A. May, 1980;
 4. Member - Board of Editors, Southern University Law Review. The first non-American to hold the said position.
 5. Member, Southern University School of Law Moot Court Board - The first non-American to belong to Same.
 6. Managing Editor, Southern University Law Review. Also the first non-American to hold Same.
 7. Certificate of Award and Merit from the Southern University School of Law Court Board;

7. Certificate of Academic Excellence from Southern University;
8. Academic Scholarship for all three years of the Juris Doctorate Programme;
9. Representative of Southern University Law School at the National Conference of Law Review in California, U.S.A., and;
10. Certificate of honour from the Federal House of Representatives, Abuja.

8. He was a member of the House of Representatives (1999-2007) and represented Orhionmwon/Urhonwode Federal Constituency of Edo State.

He was a Member of the following House Committees (first term):-

1. Appropriation
2. Federal Capital Territory and
3. Labour.

In his second coming, he was a member of the following committees:-

- (a) Works
- (b) Marine Transport
- (c) Commerce
- (d) Navy
- (e) Anti-Corruption and
- (f) Public Account.

Indeed, he was the Deputy Chairman of the commerce committee.

9. He was the only member of the National Assembly from Edo State who was a member of the Appropriation Committee between the year 1999 - 2003.

10. He contributed immensely in the provision of fund for the expeditious execution of:

1. Benin Bye-Pass
2. Benin-Onitsha Road Dualization and
3. Benin-Warri Road Dualization projects.

In addition to these, he attracted several projects to his Federal Constituency viz:-

1. Abudu Erosion Control Project
2. Urhometo Erosion Control Project
3. Federal Comprehensive Health Care Centre at Urhometo
4. Construction of Primary School Building at Urhometo
5. Federal Borehole at Urhometo
6. Rehabilitation of Benin-Abraka-Agbor-Sokponba-Ugharefe Road.
7. Electricity to several communities
8. Giving employment to several persons from his Federal Constituency
9. Provision of financial assistance to law students at the Nigeria law school, Abuja who are from his Federal Constituency, and;
10. Borehole in several communities.

Declare State Of Emergency On 'Niger Delta Infrastructure', King Ayemi-Botu Tells FG





A National Chairman of Association of Traditional Rulers of Oil and Gas Producing States of Nigeria (TROMPCON) and Paramount Ruler of Seimbiri Kingdom in Burutu local government area of Delta State, King Charles Ayemi- Botu has appealed to the federal government to declare a 'state emergency' on infrastructural development in the Niger Delta region. The revered monarch noted that the intervention agencies including the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has failed to meet the developmental yearning of the region thus the President Muhammadu Buhari should quickly declare a 'state of emergency' to address the lopsided development against the region. King Ayemi-Botu stated this in separate remarks when he paid thank-you visit to some communities in Delta and Bayelsa States over their active participation in his 25th coronation anniversary and launch of his biography. A statement issued by his media office, said much was expected from the government towards fast-tracking the development of the oil-rich region which he described as the livewire of the nation's economy. The Monarch said urgent steps were needed to address the absence of basic infrastructure such

as roads, bridges, shore protection and reclamation as well as tackle the perennial flooding in the Niger Delta region, particularly in Ijaw communities to avoid looming natural disasters. According to the Ijaw monarch, "Nature has been very benevolent to the oil bearing coastal communities which invariably is the economic live-wire of the country, from extinction as a result of age long neglect by successive governments. "The development has exposed the communities to untold hardships such as floods, acid rains from perpetual gas flaring, water and airborne diseases, deaths through oil exploitation and exploration by insensitive multinationals whose stock-in-trade is to cart away our wealth without plunging back part of it to develop the affected communities. "The duo of federal government and the oil majors should act with urgent dispatch to address these anomalies in order to forestall avoidable tension in the Niger Delta Region." On the alleged failure of NDDC and other developmental agencies in the region, he added, "It is highly regrettable and indeed a sad commentary to note that the efforts and sacrifices



Niger Delta Governors Meet, Rejects New NDDC Board

Governors from the oil producing states in the Niger Delta have protested and rejected President Muhammadu Buhari's nominees into the board of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

Rising from a meeting Thursday night in Abuja, the governors expressed concerns over the way and manner the appointments were made, saying it did not reflect effective governance mechanism.

The meeting had in attendance the Governor Seriake Dickson (Bayelsa), Rotimi Akeredolu (Ondo); Godwin Obaseki (Edo); Udom Ekanmanuel (Akwa Ibom); and representatives of two other states.

However, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State where the new NDDC board Managing Director, Olorogun Bernard Okumagba, has hailed from was absent at the meeting.

It was also not clear if Governor Okowa sent a representative to the meeting where the

governors promised to protest before President Muhammadu Buhari upon his return from Japan.

Addressing journalists shortly after the meeting, the governor of Bayelsa State, Mr Dickson, said aggrieved governors would seek audience with President Buhari with the view to addressing the imbalance in the appointments.

According to a report, Dickson said their concerns arose from protests being staged by people and stakeholders across the nine member states of the NDDC.

The governors however urged calm and restraint in the states, promising ensure that the grievances of the people in the affected states were addressed.

Dickson said, "We are going to meet with President Buhari to discuss the issues", adding however that they governors would not discuss the specifics until they meet with the President.

Akwagaga Takes Over At NDDC, Pledges Positive Change



The new Acting Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Dr. Akwagaga Lelegima Enyia, has promised to bring positive change to the Commission.

Akwagaga made the pledge during a press briefing shortly after her arrival at the NDDC headquarters in Port Harcourt to assume duties as the new Chief Executive Officer of the interventionist

agency.

She stated: "I have been charged to do things right and we will start to do things right by the grace of God. By the time I am through with my assignment, there will be a positive change in NDDC. I believe God will help me."

Akwagaga took over the leadership of the NDDC from Prof Nelson Bambaifa, who led an interim management that

was dissolved on August 27, 2019.

The new Chief Executive Officer said: "I have a mandate to oversee the smooth running of the NDDC until the substantive board is cleared to assume office. I believe that if we work together, we will achieve the objectives for which the NDDC was set up.

"To see that this foremost interventionist agency will progress and prosper during this short period, I appeal to the press to cooperate with us to see that the goals of setting up this commission is achieved."

The Acting Managing Director also addressed management and staff of the Commission, urging them to play their own parts in facilitating the rapid development of the Niger Delta region. She noted: "If everyone does his or her bit, we will succeed in turning things around for good in NDDC."

She promised to sanitize the commission and restore it to its former glory, stating that if everyone discharged their duties diligently, the negative image of the Commission would be corrected and people would want to be associated with it.

Akwagaga, a specialist in marine biology, became a substantive Director in NDDC in April 2010 and was in charge of the Agriculture and Fisheries Directorate.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from the University of Port Harcourt in 1983 and has Master of Philosophy and a PhD in Marine Biology from the River State University.

Akwagaga, who was born on February 2, 1962 in Port Harcourt to parents from Tombia Ekpetiama town in Bayelsa State is from Rivers State by marriage. She joined the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission,





LAST INTERVIEW **WITH** Prof.

NELSON BRAMBAIFA

FORMER NDDC MD

Before he was sacked

You assumed office in February this year as the Acting Managing Director of the NDDC, what is your vision as it concerns the Niger Delta region?

To answer this question, we must first look at the principles, objectives, definition and imperatives of sustainable development and offer an equally credible vision for necessary intervention and regional development. In so doing, we will arrive at two very important truths which are; to make the Niger Delta a better place, we must be willing and brave to foster a new narrative and support the change agenda enunciated by the Federal Government, and this is the essence of my mandate.

The sum of my vision is for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta region. We must do all that we must to work within the prescriptions and with appropriate strategies for the effectiveness of NDDC to give the Niger Delta a lift.

As a commission, we intend to harness the goodwill, cooperation and partnership with the people to build a better region that will bring about true and sustainable development, which I define as one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. We cannot afford to fail the Niger Delta.

The security issues in the country and oil bunkering have no doubt affected oil companies in the Niger Delta. How is NDDC contributing to abate these issues?

Just to take you down memory lane, after the report of the commission that identified the Niger Delta as a special area, the Federal Government decided to start curbing the security challenges by collaborating with intervention and security agencies which was not



Commission (NDDC) has expressed determination to turn the commission around but says that they are incapacitated by the commission's current financial state due to the N1.9 trillion owed by the Federal Government.

enough, but was increased to a maximum number. I am a classroom lecturer, but I have left lecturing to come here by virtue of my appointment to ensure that mandate is fulfilled. We have started in the area of infrastructural development and the commission is doing its best with the resources they have. Since we came on board, we have improved on the road network within this short space of time. We have more mega-projects and we hope we will be given enough time to continue the work we have started and accomplish our goals. We have embarked on a massive renovation of rural roads in the area, and we are very sure that with these improved road networks, there will be no hiding place for these criminals.

Some communities in the Niger Delta still complain about neglect in terms of job employment and rural development, do you think NNDC has done enough in these areas?

We have procedures of employment in NNDC, we do not just employ anyhow. There must be vacancy before you employ, there must be a reason and need for an employment. Part of my vision is wealth creation and poverty reduction, which we must achieve.

Job creation is a paramount necessity in Niger Delta. When adequate jobs are created, of course poverty would be reduced and that would also lead to reduction of hunger. It is said that 'a hungry man is an angry man,' and crimes are reduced at least to a minimal level too. There is no way you cannot find crime, but it will be reduced. It is only an idle man that becomes the devil's tool. When people are busy with their jobs, there won't be any reason to be involved in crime, so our goal is to do what we can.

As a Professor of Pharmacology who has achieved numerous international merit awards, what are your thoughts about the health sector in Niger Delta and what better ways will you recommend to achieve and improve health care services?

The major basics of any concerned administration should be primary health care, which means taking health care to the grassroots and this should be one of the topmost priorities of the government. The health condition of the Niger Delta is a pathetic situation. The government and ministry of health need to improve on health care delivery as it will get to the people. Taking patients to the maternity wards in the region is a major challenge; we have cottage hospitals all over the place, yet they are inaccessible by those at the grassroots.

In the meantime, we are trying to get centers, we just had an MOU with the center in Cross-River State, and we intend to take it to all nine states of the Niger Delta. We have referrals where we could carry patients from the cottage hospitals that are in the grassroots. We have begun renovating the hospitals in these rural areas and equipping them with drugs and medical facilities.

We have doctors who go there to carry out minor surgeries and we have optometrists who specialise in performing eye surgeries and we give out prescribed free glasses. It is my duty to ensure that the services are strictly given out free of charge.

Given the capacity of funding in recent times, would you say you have enough finance to execute key projects?

We are incapacitated by the current financial state of the commission. The Federal Government is owing NNDC about N1.9 trillion and that is slowing the pace of the ongoing infrastructural development in the area. We appeal to the

Federal Government to release part of the fund so that we can accomplish our set-out goals and fulfill our obligations to the Niger Delta people, which we believe will go a long way to achieve a whole lot in reducing the poverty rate in the region.

What are those key projects that would be regarded as legacies by the commission?

I call it capacity building, in other words the scholarship scheme. We recently launched one. We signed Memorandums of Understanding with some international universities and right now, we only offer post graduate scholarships to designated universities in Europe, America and Canada. Based on our budget, we have given scholarships to 200 and 55 million in the areas of engineering, and medicine.

Again, it's not all about giving scholarships; we also provide them job placements when they return. In my short stay of six months, I have gone to the universities in person and interacted with the students who expressed happiness. The second batch will be leaving by September this year which we just concluded the admission exercise. So when I talk about human capacity, this will be one of the key projects which will be considered legacy projects in generations to come due to its impact.

What are the pressing challenges facing the commission and how do you intend to solve them?

Poor exploitation of agriculture/Aquaculture for economic gains, socio-political challenge, and environmental degradation due to oil spillage; these are some of the challenges facing the Niger Delta. After years of oil exploration and exploitation, the environment has witnessed pollution and consequent degradation.

Besides pollution occasioned by oil and gas business, we also face seasonal and constant erosion, silting, and flooding, as well as poor control of refuse, sewage and municipal solid waste. These challenges have combined to make the Niger Delta a very poor region. We are currently working according to the master plan and in synergy with consultants and stakeholders to achieve the mandate of a sustainable development in Niger Delta.

Apart from the stated goals, what are other priorities of the NNDC and how does it foster development in the rural area?

NNDC is so committed to doing more to revive not just socio-economic activities and improve the livelihoods of the people, but we are determined to revive the hopes of the people in our capacity and willingness to intervene in their lives. Our objectives have remained the same, which is to bridge the gap in the management of the oil and gas sector of the Niger Delta region, to prepare our youths for leadership and management positions in the oil and gas sector, and to produce skilled graduate beneficiaries who can match international standards and take over the leadership of the oil and gas sector in the nearest future.

As an academic, do you have any future political ambition and are you confident that you have the competence to run for political office?

Yes I do and that is based on my academic achievements as a Professor and my leadership contributions to the society which also earned me global merit awards and international recognition. I desire to serve and advocate for the people, especially in furtherance with my mandate which is based on human development.

THE PERSECUTION OF *Prof.* MAURICE IWU

**Ex INEC Chair IWU under trail
over N1.2b 2015 Poll fraud in election won
by Buhari**



Former Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Professor Maurice Iwu has said his trail by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) over alleged bribe of over one billion naira to rig the 2015 General Election was an act of intimidation and victimization. Professor disclosed before his arraignment at the Federal High Court that he had done nothing wrong.

He said there is a calculated attempt by those in Authority to punish him unjustly because of the way they lost the 2007 Presidential election which he conducted.

It will be recalled that Professor IWU is facing trial over his involvement in the N23.29 billion poll bribery scandal which characterized the 2015 polls.

IWU is alleged to have between December 2014 and March 2015 aided the concealment of the sum of N1,203,000,000 (One billion, two hundred and three million Naira.

The said sum was in the bank

account of Bio resources Institute of Nigeria limited domiciled in the United Bank for Africa, UBA PLC.

According to Nation Newspaper report 'a reliable source who gave insight into the investigation of IWU SAID THE CASH IN QUESTION WAS ABOUT THE POLL BRIBERY SCANDAL OF 2015.'

HE SAID 'Iwu has been implicated in the N23,29b poll bribery scam perpetrated by a former Minister of Petroleum Resources Mrs. Diezani Alison Madueke. He was accused of allegedly using an NGO, West African Network of Electoral observers in the facility of the bribery to top officials of the Electoral Commission. The case has been on since 2016'.

Reports had it that the EFCC has been investigating the bribery scandal which was allegedly facilitated by Mrs Alison Madueke. About four oil firms, some Directors of some oil companies, two banks and some politicians more than 283 staff of INEC are under probe.

Also about 205 INEC staff members are on trial in connection with the biggest electoral fraud in the country.

According to reports apart from the EFCC'S findings, INEC panel headed by a National Commissioner Baba Arfo Shettima made shocking discoveries. These include:

- (1) An NGO, West African Network of Election observers was used to share the bribe to INEC.
- (2) A former INEC Chairman coordinated the bribery scandal
- (3) Many former Residents Electoral commissioners and Retired Administrated Secretaries were used to penetrated INEC in all the 36 states for the bribery to alter poll results.
- (4) Some serving Resident Electoral Commissioners and Directors benefitted from the bribery scandal as confirmed by EFCC investigations.

What is curious is that while Professor Maurice Iwu who was not a staff or Commissioner of INEC as at the time of the

2015 election is being tried for election bribery scandal while principal officers of the Commission like Chairman Professor Attahiru Jega etc were not tried. To the EFCC only those who wanted former President Goodluck Jonathan to win the elections rigged. Those who wanted Buhari to win did not rig.

It would be recalled that in his remark recently The Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission Prof Yacoub stated categorically that that the 2015 election conducted by Professor Jega recorded the highest number of annulled polls. At the meeting with Residents Electoral Commission [REC] He stated that there were 20 annulled elections in 2015. These figures did not include those in which the courts upturned the elections and ordered for issuance of Certificate of Returns to a different candidate

Even recently The Human Rights Commission election reports on election offences 2007 to 2015 condemned the 2015 elections and threatened to prosecute those they termed rigged the election. Their target was Maurice Iwu. The report however is inhuman, lazy and uncerebral exercise.

Mr. Wale Fapohunda who masterminded the project served under governor Fayemi first tenure as governor of Ekiti state as Commissioner of Justice. Before then he was a member of the Commission and after Fayemi was voted out of office, he came back to the commission through the back door. Some civil Society Organisations who observed these elections along with Gani Fawehinmi led National Conscience Party are ready to also let the world know what went right under Professor Iwu leadership of INEC. Why the Commission silent on whole sale election offences committed in 2011 and 2015 by those who are in power now. Over 500 people including youth corps members were killed by protesters not happy with the outcome of the 2011 general elections conducted by Professor Attahiru Jega that brought in Dr Goodluck Jonathan.

INEC

The Journey before Iwu



It is important to state here that the collapse of past Republics was due largely to the controversies and rejection to the outcome of election results at various levels during the period.

The Electoral Commission of Nigeria [ECN] conducted the election in the first Republic 1960 to 1966. The elections was marred by series of malpractices which included ballot box snuffing, ballot box snatching, kidnaping of opponents, denying opponents electoral materials etc. the ethnic leanings of the political parties made matters worse as crisis among political parties led to ethnic crisis.

Political Parties and their ethnic supporters rejected the outcome of the 1964/65 general elections. There was near anarchy in the land.

The situation was so bad that the leader of Action Group [AG] who was leader of opposition Chief Obafemi Awolowo was quoted to have said he had lost confidence in the electoral system.

Instead of the government at that time trying to reform the electoral system and restore confidence, Chief Awolowo and some of his supporters were sent to jail. This was the situation in the country until the military struck in 1966.

Nigeria made another attempt at Democracy in 1979/83 known as the second Republic. The electoral system then produced lots of malpractices and the legal interpretations of what is the 2/3 of 19 states.

The case got to the supreme court without resolutions. The 1983 elections was not better off. All oppositions candidates that contested the elections Dr Nnamdi Azikwe of the Nigeria Peoples Party [NPP], Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Unity Party Of Nigeria [UPN], Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri of Great Nigeria

Peoples Party [GNPP], Mallam Aminu Kano of Peoples Redemption Party [PRP] opposed the results of the elections while Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria [NPN] went away with claims of landslide victory.

The landslide victory was short-lived as the military struck again three months after later Dec 31 1983 bringing the second Republic to an end. Many people in Nigeria particularly the vocal minority regarded the 1993 general elections in the country as the freest and fairest in the country, there was however a departure from the past as it introduced an option A4 into elections in Nigeria. It was introduced by the government of General Ibrahim Babangida as head of state and Professor Humphery Nwosu, a Professor of Political Science as the Chairman of National Electoral Commission [NEC].

Because of its perceived success many called for the adoption of option A4 for future elections in Nigeria. What propenements of option A4 failed to realize was that the outcome of that elections which included its annulments led to the death of the perceived winner

of that election Chief Moshood Abiola, his wife Kudirat, a former Head of state Sani Abacha and hundreds of Nigerians killed on the streets of Lagos.

It also brought with it lack of trust and harmony among neighbours and friends.

The 1999 which was conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC] elections had its own problems but was overlooked because Nigerians were tired of the military and wanted them to go immediately.

The 2003 general elections was regarded as the worst



It is important to state here that the collapse of past Republics was due largely to the controversies and rejection to the outcome of election results at various levels during the period.

election in Nigeria especially by both local and International observers. Among the observers that rejected the outcome of the 2003 general elections included the Transition Monitoring Group [TMG] and the European Union.

The 2003 Presidential election was said to have been won by the candidate of the PDP Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. There were series of streets protest by Buhari to protest the results of the election using the platform of the Conference of Nigeria's Political Party [CNPP].

Those who led the street protest included Muhammadu Buhari, Chief Odimegwu Ojukwu who was then candidate of APGA, Chief Tunji Braithwaite, Alhaji Balarabe Musa, Barrister Maxi Okwu who was the secretary of CNPP among others, police used tear gas to disperse these eminent Nigerians.

There was also a follow up protest in Kano where the Police used poisoned gas to disperse the protesters.

Buhari's Running mate at the 2003 election and former Senate President Dr. Chuba Okadigbo did not survive from the poisoned gas until he died.

This was the electoral situation in Nigeria before Professor Maurice Iwu became the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC].

What Professor Iwu did was first to ensure that we didn't go back to the mistakes of the past, 'if we must save the country and sustain out nascent democracy. He introduced some reforms into our electoral systems. Some of the reforms we are still following till today.

Among the reforms introduced by Professor Iwu was the stakeholders forum with Political Parties, this was done both at the National, State and Local Government levels. The stakeholder's forum is made up of representatives of Political Parties, Civil Society Organisations and Development partners. INEC under Professor Iwu also launched the Political Party finances' manual.

The 1999 constitution of Nigeria and the Electoral Act 2002 vested on INEC the responsibilities of overseeing the general activities and management of Political Party Finances. In carrying out this responsibility a brand new Political Party Finance manual accompanied by a handbook was launched. The Political Party Finance manual has provided a system for capturing, documenting, controlling and reporting on the financial activities of Political Parties. The emphasis is on the disclosure of Information on Political Parties Finances with the understanding that the disclosure will curb Political corruption, prevent inflow of funds from undesirable sources and enable the public to know more about the sources of funds into the coffers of parties and candidates. If this aspect of the reforms as proposed by Professor Iwu was continued after he left office, this issue of probing campaign funds or using Arms money for election would have been avoided. The last American Presidential election just ended the whole world knew that Hilary Clinton was able to raise about \$500m for her campaign while the winner of the Presidential Election Donald Trump raised about \$300m. but nobody not even INEC knew how much the Peoples Democratic Party [PDP] or the All Progressives Congress [APC] raised for their campaign in the 2015 general election.

Many Nigerians who are probable happy with the Permanent Voters Card and the Card Reader or who are the direct beneficiaries of the PVC have forgotten that the system was actually introduced by Professor Iwu in 2004 when he introduced the Electronic Voting System. The system consisted of four components. They include the Electronic Voters Register, Eligible Voters Authentication, Electronic Balloting, and the Electronic Transmission of Results.

The Electronic Voting System are automated voting methods which employ computing technology to improve several aspects of the electoral process. It incorporates paperless voting methods, increase efficiency, stability, speed, audit and accuracy. It's main features is that it is easy to operate, easy to adapt, ensure integrity of the voting data, portable and battery powered.

The Independent National Electoral Commission under Professor Maurice Iwu conducted the 2007 general elections. It was the elections that brought in Alhaji Umar YarAdua to power as the President of Nigeria.

This election was widely condemned by Nigerians and the International Community which included the National Democratic Institute, [NDI] the International Federation on Electoral System [IFES], The International Republican Institute [IRI], THE Commonwealth Observer Group among others. Even the main beneficiary of the election Umar YarAdua himself said the election that brought him to office lacked credibility

Tony Elumelu, The President Africa Needs Desperately

By Dele Momodu



Fellow Africans, I have chosen to address many of you gathered in Abuja today, at the instance and invitation of the Tony Elumelu Foundation. My sincere welcome and gratitude goes especially to the several African Presidents who have chosen to identify with the young entrepreneurs who are the future of our continent. By coming to support the enigmatic founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation, you have all made a most powerful move towards empowering many of our brightest souls who wish to make meaningful impact in their societies but are incapacitated by lack of funding and a myriad of other challenges. Your support is as much an inspiration for them as the endowment, assistance and mentorship they receive from Tony Elumelu and his foundation.

The infrastructure deficits alone are so daunting that it is virtually impossible to have enough resources to tackle the suffocating burden of unemployment all over Africa. Indeed, there is nowhere in the world, other than the wealthy communist and socialist countries, that the largest number of the employed legion actually work for government and its agencies. However, we find that in Africa we almost expect this to be the case despite the paucity and impoverishment of most of our governments. Not just that, African governments are generally not equipped to create and distribute wealth. Where they possess the wherewithal, issues of corruption make it difficult to empower majority of those who need jobs desperately. There are other major afflictions militating against our young ones. The quality of education has dropped dangerously in many of our countries. Therefore, even if the jobs are available, many of our graduates are not employable. Those who have studied hard in our higher institutions opted for wrong subjects that may not readily offer them opportunities. They have not marched with the times and still study subjects suited for the 20th century when the rest of the world is already looking towards the 22nd century. The

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Let me confess that I had always been of the firm belief and conviction that govt. alone cannot solve the problems of Africa.

technologies of the 20th century have become poor and distant relations of that which is necessary to survive and excel in the 21st century, but we remain firmly rooted to those, archaic systems and technologies. Furthermore, even our artisans, who do not need university training but learn on the job as apprentices and interns are usually poorly trained and miserably equipped, because those they learn from are themselves poorly trained and ill-equipped.

African leaders need a quick rethink about the way forward for African youths. Tony Elumelu has offered the veritable template for them to follow. Just a few years ago, he established one of the most ambitious charities in the world by pledging the sum of \$100m spread over 10 years to offer \$10m per annum towards empowering 1,000 entrepreneurs. Tony was not seeking to be a Santa Claus, but a Good Samaritan with a conscience who thought and knew that the spread of poverty would always constitute a major threat to all. He has made good his promise by continuing his annual pledge. We are witnessing today the launching into orbit of another group of direct beneficiaries of the Foundation and look forward to seeing the thousands more indirect beneficiaries of this worthy and noble cause. The seeds planted by Tony are already bearing fruits, not just for the entrepreneurs he has mercifully empowered, but also his own foundation, with several international donors, including UNDP, the Red Cross, AFD, Benin Republic and others queuing up to partner with one of the most reputable charities in Africa. Tony has even reached out to Washington and he is hopeful for a partnership with the White House in his bid to change the narrative about how to rescue Africa from the vestiges of poverty, wars and diseases. The best approach is to turn our huge and fast growing populations into successful entrepreneurs.

Poverty alleviation is a necessity in Africa today if we truly want to live in peace and prosperity. Those of us who can, must strive to emulate the Tony Elumelu Foundation and create many more entrepreneurs who will themselves become mass employers of labour. For Africa to become great we must get our youths gainfully employed in 21st century activities and projects.

THE TONY ELUMELU FOUNDATION ENTREPRENEURSHIP FORUM



African Leaders Proffer Solutions To Continent's Industrialisation Challenge

President Muhammadu Buhari in Abuja, said that Nigeria had liberalised its energy policy on power generation and distribution to allow investors generate power and sell to willing buyers, as opposed to the old, centralised practice where energy generators were obliged to produce and pool energy in the national grid for distribution nationwide. He said the latest development was aimed at attracting investment to the sector and encourage industrialisation in the country, noting that African youths possessed enormous talents and strength to

transform the continent.

Buhari made the disclosure through Vice President Yemi Osinbajo at the 2019 edition of the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Forum where African leaders in politics and business, as well as captains of industry, gathered to discuss and provide workable solutions to the continent's industrialisation challenge.

In attendance were Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, Presidents Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Macky Sall of Senegal, Felix Tshisekedi of

FOUNDATION FORUM 2019



the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Prime Minister of Uganda, Ruhakana Ruganda.

They were joined by notable leaders in business, such as the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Prof. Akinwumi Adesina; the Deputy Director-General, European Commission, Koens Doens; President of the Afreximbank Bank, Prof. Benedict Oramah; and President of Arab Bank for Development, Sidi Ould Tah, among others.

Osinbajo said the new policy was part of measures by the Nigerian government to upgrade her energy supply requirements.

The Vice President hailed the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) for establishing TEF, saying that the lives and countries of thousands of beneficiaries have been touched in various positive ways.

He described Africa as a landscape, emboldened by multitudes of young people who are refusing to wallow in self-pity or frustration but have realised that conquering the challenges of their environments was the milestone for outstanding success.

But our continent continues to be defined by unsavoury and unwholesome stories, which do not often accurately represent the reality of life and opportunity. The people in this room are the perfect and long-awaited counterpoints to those one-dimensional narratives of Africa that have sadly gained ground over the years.

"Outside on the streets of every village, town and city are many more individual embodiments of the potential of Africa. But to

change the story, we must fund young entrepreneurs and provide opportunities for capacity building. Our school curriculums must emphasise not just STEM but critical thinking and entrepreneurship. And the promise of entrepreneurship banks must be kept."

Also speaking at the event, the President of Rwanda, Kagame shared his country's experience, saying that the first major steps into placing Africa at the top echelon of global business was to positively change the mindset of the younger generation, just as his government has done and got higher rank than Japan in the World Bank's ease of doing business categorisation.

He said: "The first thing is to deal with the minds of the people. People will sit back and expect things to happen. It won't happen. You must work for it. In Rwanda, we looked for ways of doing things differently. We focused on making people understand that development and prosperity are things we must achieve together."

"So, how much time do we take to do things we must do? If you've invested in infrastructure, what follows? That's why there must be a robust planning and excellent execution of programmes. Remember our country was torn apart by political unrest. But we ensured we saved it, we got united and now, we are moving on the path of progress."

President Sall of Senegal said there was an urgent need to counter the perception that the risk level in doing business in Africa is very high in order for the continent to attract relevant offshore investments.

In his remarks, the President of African Development Bank, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina advocated for the establishment of investment banks by African countries specifically to address youth unemployment and job creation and advised that emphasis should be on investments rather than youth empowerment as is currently the case.

Adesina said banks should see potentials in youth rather than risk by granting them credit to enable them to invest and turn the fortunes of Africa around.

He lamented that the poverty level was still high but said the continent possessed what it takes to change the narrative.

"Look at the young people; we can't keep postponing their future into the future. Everybody sees risks among young people. We must change that. We have a growth rate that does not create jobs. Governments are not playing their roles. Poverty is not an asset."

Sidi Ould Tah, President, Arab Bank for Development said the focus for African leaders should be youth empowerment and evolving enduring partnerships across the continent.

"No country alone can fight poverty in youth and women. It's about partnership. We should be working on capacity building. It's paramount," he said.

Koens Doens, Deputy Director-General, European Commission said Africans have young entrepreneurial spirit that should be well harnessed.

"We want to support this enormous spirit with expertise. We're looking at partnerships for job creation. We want to heavily invest in vocational programmes and skill development," he said.

He assured that the Commission would earmark huge funds for TEF to scale up its business and scale-up entrepreneurs.

The President of Afreximbank Bank, Prof. Benedict Oramah lauded on establishing and sustaining different levels of cooperation across Africa.

He called for robust investment in infrastructure and the reorientation of African youths to reflect the realities of the 21st century.

He assured that the Commission would earmark huge funds for TEF to scale up this business and scale-up entrepreneurs.

Since 2015, the TEF has committed \$100 million to identify, train, mentor and fund 10,000 African entrepreneurs over 10 years.

The entrepreneurship programme aligns with the goals of the African Development Bank, whose Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy aims to support African countries to create 25 million jobs and empower 50 million young people by 2025.

How Aregbesola Will Be Remembered In Osun State



Governor Rauf Aregbesola has demonstrated that human beings can make impact in any given society, not necessarily because of wealth but because of ideas and it has since been said that ideas ruled the world. Aregbesola has something in common with Fidel Castro, the late leader of Cuba. Castro was criticised by the West, but at the end of the day, Cuba was the only country in the Americas with no single record of child malnourishment, declared an "International Paradise" by UNICEF, the country has the lowest child death rate in the two continents of America. Boasting some of the best human development indices in the world, particularly in education and health.

It is not an exaggeration that what Castro did in Cuba, Aregbesola has done the same in the State of Osun.

A song writer penned this song "We shall be remembered, we shall be remembered by what we have done". One of the founding fathers of Newswatch magazine, Ray Epku recently asked in his article in The Guardian, if Aregbesola will be remembered by his state. We know that history is written by a Victor. Every public office holder starts writing his story from the moment he is elected. Aregbesola will certainly be remembered for his numerous unforgettable good deeds. The Philosopher states: "the best way to live is to live in the present and not attempt to shape the future."

There are many people like Epku living in Osun, and others outside the state who might have heard about Aregbesola and possibly out of curiosity, eager to find out what he has done the last eight years. It is obvious that a leader must be represented by what he stands for either for good or for evil. As far as history of the tenure of the outgoing governor is concerned, he will surely be remembered for his several unforgettable good deeds. A one time PDP gubernatorial candidate in the state, once stated that the state has nothing to show as an achievement for the past six years. Just as it is often said that when lies is allowed to prevail for long it might be taken for the truth. There were three groups of men in the state who nursed defeat they suffered as a result of Aregbesola's victory at the polls. The first group was those who held on to power due to Electoral manipulation for three and a half years before they were sacked by the Court of Appeal. Some have since joined the APC. The second group were the men that were counting on the time that the gubernatorial election will come to their zones, but the court verdict blew off their chance. This second group are much more desperate. One of them vowed in 2014 that he must win the election at all costs, failure which he was ready to die. He tried but failed but has since refused to die. The third group consists of political hangers-on. They benefit from the power that be. The change of power has since rendered them beggars and haters of Aregbesola's administration. Initially, they falsely alleged that the incumbent governor suffered from cancer, but when that kite failed to fly, they took to criticising him that he was doing nothing in the state. Later when Aregbesola turned the whole state to one great construction site, they were dumbfounded and started saying that the state indebtedness was beyond redemption. So far, there is no local government council area that have not seen the impact of Aregbesola's administration. The six-point integral Action plan: Banish Poverty, Banish Hunger, Banish Unemployment, Restore Healthy living, Promote Functional Education, and Enhance Communal Peace and Progress continue as the guiding principles till date. Will Aregbesola be remembered? Yes, he would be remembered as the man who whose mandate was stolen by the then incumbent but fought a legal battle for three and half years to regain it to the extent that the then Federal Government was much more concerned that the Electoral Law was amended to ensure that future Electoral litigation do not exceed six months. Aregbesola would be remembered as the first governor in Nigeria that employed 20,000 youths under the Osun Youths Employment Scheme (OYES) within his first 100 days in office. If his critics forget and go ahead that the man has done nothing in the past eight years in office, the youths in their various wards and local governments areas will stand to counter their negative comments that they were the beneficiaries of Aregbesola's empowerment policies. Their parents and relations will speak to the electorate that

they have become employers of labour through the OYES SCHEME. About 40 of the former beneficiaries of the scheme will mobilise their households that they became landlords through the OYES Scheme, and that if the scheme has not been on the ground they might still be wandering about seeking for jobs that are not available. Just few weeks ago another batch of the OYES Scheme has commenced the service despite the lean purse of the state. If political opponents failed to see what the man Aregbesola has done in the state for the past eight years, the students that were formerly learning in poultry sheds will celebrate the icon of modern innovator of Oponlmo, a learning device that contains over 64 text books, past questions and answers in WAEC EXAMINATION NECO and JAMB. A device that was acknowledged by UNESCO and even WAEC. An educational device that made Osun and the helmsman to receive several awards across the globe. The over 20 newly-constructed High Schools, 22 Elementary Schools are enough cynosure for those with eyes, irrespective of tribes, colour or religion. It is no more news that President Muhammadu Buhari was dumbfounded as to how the governor was able to fund such facilities despite the economic downturn. Apart from the modern facilities that were provided in these new schools, the schools were given befitting school buses to transport students to and from schools. We may forget that the man provides free school uniforms for over 75,000 students across the state, but would the parents and pupils forget? But in case they do, in the future when it shall be asked who introduced the same uniforms for all the pupils in primary and secondary schools, whose name would they mention? Free meals are daily being served across the state to the extent that the state experienced geometrical increase in school enrolment in the primary schools above any other states in Nigeria. The free meals scheme has also provided markets for both farmers and poultry farmers beyond the state. The eggs consumption by the pupils went beyond the supply of the local farmers to the extent that farmers in Kwara State now sells for the state cooks. As if that was all the state need to serve as a model to the Federal government who has since adopted the free schools meal. The United Kingdom was highly impressed by the school meal programme that the governor was invited to address the UK parliament over it. On the introduction of free schools meal in UK, each parent was projected to save about £50,000 annually. A prophet they said has no respect except in his own home, while our people fail to see that healthy and well-fed children will learn better and perform excellently well, a foreign country saw the importance. The Primary school enrolment rose from 40% to 80% in 2014, the highest in Nigeria. The 2017 West African Examination Council (WAEC) was the best so far in the history of the state as the students' results rose from 49.5% to 70%. The Americans do say "aren't seen nothing yet". In case those who claimed the man cannot be remembered for anything, maybe they are always lying to and from the state otherwise they are likely to have passed through the trumpet bridge that is under construction at Gbongan. They are likely to have been to Orilecowu or to Osogbo, Ilesa, Ikinu Ile Ife, but in case they have not, let them ask from anybody from any of the 30 local government areas and the newly established Developmental areas if they have experienced any road construction, the answer would likely be positive. The health sector and those that have been saved due to the nearest of hospitals and maternity centres would remember that a man was in-charge of the state for eight years. The accident victims that were saved through the prompt response of the O Ambulances will remember that Aregbesola saved them from death. The REHAB, the agency that picks and rehabilitate the mentally-challenged people across the state will forever be grateful for the man that rescued and rehabilitated them and gave them a new life to live.

On the security, the state has never had it so good as it is today under the leadership of Aregbesola. Prior to his advent, armed robbers were ractling communities so terribly to the extent that banks in Ijigbo, Ikinu and other places had to be closed down. This government invested heavily both in men and security gadgets including armoured vehicles. Aregbesola is leaving the state as one of the safest states in Nigeria Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android



NCDMB, Notore Explore Investment Opportunities

The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), has pledged its support to Notore Chemical Industries Plc to fully develop its industrial complex so it could offer integrated services to oil and gas companies and increase its contributions to the agricultural and infrastructural sectors.

The Executive Secretary NCDMB, Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote visited the company in Elemo, Rivers State recently and took extensive ground and aerial tour of the facilities.

He stated that the agro-allied, petrochemicals and power company had bigger potentials for industrialization, notably because it has natural gas resources, generates its own electricity and had recently been granted free trade zone status by the Federal Government. He added that the ample land mass and other natural assets also positioned the complex perfectly for hosting allied industries and serving as logistics base for key oil and gas operations.

There is vast land here, so you can also have accommodation for projects. This location could



This facility is just 15 kilometres to NLNG in Bonny, so there is potential to participate in the NLNG Train 7 project.

become a staging ground for most of the NLNG construction that would happen."

Wabote suggested that the Notore's facility could also be considered for the execution of SNEPCo's Bonga-South West Aparo's deep water project. "That project would also happen and we are looking for draft and you have it here. There are potentials for ancillary factories that support the oil and gas sector."

Recalling that the complex suffered poor management when it operated as National Fertilizer Company of Nigeria (NAFCON), Wabote commended the current management for revitalizing the assets and expressed delight that key operations of the fertilizer plant were being run by Nigerians. He said: "All the people manning the operations are Nigerians."

The feeling is unbelievable and this is what we talk about in NCDMB in terms of industrialization and the synergy we must build across sectors. This is one of those companies that are changing the face of Nigeria in terms of agriculture. What the company does and the impact to our economy is unbelievable."

In his comments, the Group Chairman of Notore Chemical Plc, Mr. Onajite Paul Okoloko thanked the Executive Secretary for the visit and appreciation of the potentials that exists in the facility.

He explained that Notore's assets straddled across the agricultural, oil and gas and infrastructural sectors and the management was working to build a second

plant fertilizer plant, which would facilitate increased support to farmers with high yield fertilizers and best practices for more agricultural production.

Okoloko said the company was determined to build an industrial city and commercialize some of its assets, which includes the 560 hectares of land and two kilometres of water front.

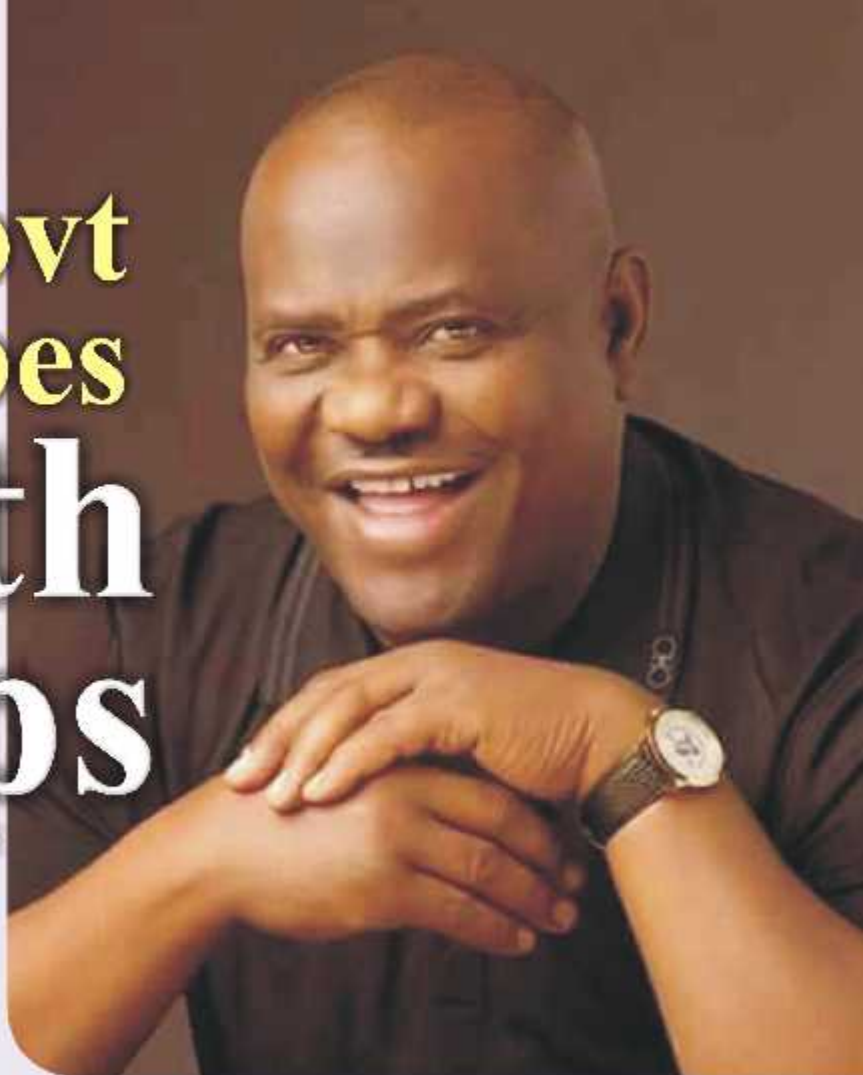
According to him, "the larger picture from one of our subsidiaries, Notore Industrial City is to create an industrial chemical estate. Our free trade zone is rated number 1 by PricewaterhouseCoopers in the sense that it has a deep river port, 10.5 meters of tradable draft, with direct access to the ocean. We also have 560 hectares of land and is the only free trade zone in the country that has gas and power."

"In our estate you can have fertilizer plants and petrochemicals because we have the gas infrastructure so you can use that as raw material. At the same time we have a logistics base that can support the oil and gas industry. So we have the logistics on one hand and the commercialization of gas which is being flared in the country, so this becomes a gas hub."

He stated that the company would work with various stakeholders to "optimize the location to create significant amount of industrialization which is key to the economic growth of the country and at the same time employ a huge amount of local skills to support the facility we have here'.



Rivers Govt proscribes youth groups



The Rivers State
Government
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saying the groups
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by cultists.

The Rivers State Government has proscribed all youth groups operating in the state, saying the groups have been hijacked by cultists.

Governor Nyesom Wike spoke on Thursday when he handed over 40 patrol vans fitted with communication gadgets to the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS), Sec 4 Lye, Police Anti-Kidnapping Unit, Police Anti-Cultism Unit, Federal Road Safety Corps and Eagle Crime at the Government House in Port Harcourt.

"Rivers State Government is fully prepared and will do everything required to protect lives and property. Without the protection of lives and property, there will be no governance and development.

"Anybody operating under a youth body henceforth will be arrested by security agencies. Before you contest for any youth body's leadership, you must send the names to the DSS and Police for screening. If they are cultists, we will not allow them to operate," he said. The governor said that he resolved to increase the support to the security agencies because of the successes recorded by Operation Sting. He lamented that cultists have taken over youth groups across the state, necessitating the state government to proscribe all youth groups. Governor Wike said that the vehicles and gunboats donated to the security agencies must be deployed to secure Rivers state. In his remarks, the Rivers state Commissioner of Police, Mustapha Dandaura, said the security agencies will use the new security vans to tackle criminals across the state.

NSCDC Parades 12 Suspects In Rivers

The Rivers State Command of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC on Monday paraded 12 suspects involved in oil bunkering and illegal diversion of petroleum products.

Parading the suspects the new Commandant of NSCDC, Mr. Muktar Lawal said the suspects were arrested in various parts of the State for offences ranging from stealing of petroleum products to diversion of the products.

He said trucks and vehicles used in conveying stolen petroleum products were also impounded by men of the Command. Muktar said as soon as he assumed office in July he constituted an anti-vandal team of trained officers who specialized in spotting vehicles and trucks with adulterated and stolen petroleum products. He said that the team was also trained on how to identify illegal dump sites in the State.

He said "on 31st July, 2019 a 14000 liters trucks conveying products suspected to be

illegally refined AGO was apprehended at Abonnima Jetty in Akuku-toru Local Government Area of the State. On 1st August 2019 at about 600hrs a short truck conveying products suspected to be adulterated AGO was also arrested at Abonnima Jetty in Akuku-toru Local Government Area of the State"

"On 1st August 2019, 4 suspects were arrested with unquantifiable bags filled with crude oil stacked in an open-bodied long lorry at GIRA junction in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of the State. On 2nd August an open van loaded with suspected crude oil was also arrested at Macoba by Ibeto Cement Industry road"

"On the same date at 1200hrs a truck fully loaded with suspected crude oil in a 24,000 liters tank specially constructed within the truck was also arrested at SPDC pipeline Aluu Shell right of way in Port Harcourt. Other arrests made include 8 suspects, 3 long trucks fully loaded with suspected illegally refined AGO were also arrested."

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He warned those involved in stealing and diversion of petroleum products to turn to new leave saying that the Command will go all out to put them out of business.

COMMUNIQUE

The Igbo Farmers Progressive Union (IPFU), on Sunday 19th August met at Hill Top Ngwo, Enugu, Enugu state to review its activities. After extensive deliberations. We resolved as follows;

1. It is no longer news that our farmlands have been under siege by terrorists masquerading as cattle herders. It is equally worrisome that our lives, ancestral lands, and communities are under threat of being overrun if we fold our hands and do nothing.
2. As the face of the New Farmer and modern farming methods in Igboland, we are committed to improvements in agricultural production and thereby ensuring better yield in produce and protection of our numerous subsistence farmers, the silent and dominant workforce of Igboland. IFPU is not out to lament, we are not out to plead, we know where it pinches and we are determined to ensure that our land is protected.
3. We are encouraged by the words of the South East Governors Forum that they would not allow RUGA, NLTP or any other acronym the FGN chooses to adopt to sell their duplicitous agenda. We are equally heartened to hear the SE governor's forum pledge to encourage Igbo farmers and entrepreneurs who want to go into ranching of our delicious efi igbo
4. We are deeply concerned that the nefarious activities of the Cattle Herdsmen has wrought havoc on our farmlands. This, juxtaposed with wanton terror and intimidation has made the ordinary farmer very cautious in tilling his land for farming

purposes, to the point of abandonment.

5. We are totally dismayed by the fact that the security agencies seem not to have recorded much success in arresting this ugly development, which has now snowballed to include murder, kidnapping and rape.

6. We are gladdened by the pro-active measures adopted by the SE Governors Forum at their meeting of 28th July 2019, to curb this menace. We would wish to suggest that the Forest Ranger initiative be backed up by legislation proscribing open grazing on our farmlands, thereby giving legal muscle to the operations of the Forest Rangers.

7. IFPU acting as a pressure group, will hold the feet of our political leaders and stakeholders to the fire, and ensure this lofty goal is achieved. We would also interface with other igbo leaders and pressure groups to ensure the voice and the will of the farmers never gets suppressed in this struggle.

Comrades our faith is in our own hands. We cannot fold our hands. Let's engage, let's encourage, let's make our voices heard and ensure that the right steps and actions are taken to protect our people.

Join IFPU today, let's secure igboland for our children and the generations unborn.

Chief Maxi Okwu
Ikenecheoha II
Protem National Chairman

Comrade Uchenna Nnadi
Protem National Secretary

Expatriates in Nigerian's oil, gas sector drop by 80%.... NCDMB

The Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Mr. Simbi Wabote, says that the number of expatriates working in the Nigerian oil and gas sector has been reduced by 80 per cent. Wabote disclosed this on Monday in Abuja at the NCDMB's third quarter engagement with the media, which focused on the major achievements of the board. "From 2010 till date, the board has reduced the number of expatriates in the Nigerian petroleum industry by 80 per cent. The executive secretary said that before the implementation of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act, oil welding activities were done outside Nigeria because of lack of world-class welding facilities. "Today, we are fabricating about 60,000 metric tonnes per annum in Nigeria, which never existed before.

"We have about five world-class welding yards as we speak today. These welding facilities can compete with any of their peers outside the country.

"Today, 95 per cent of service companies in the oil and gas sector, be it onshore and swamp drilling activities, well intervention facilities, well stimulation activities and others, are being done by Nigerians.

"These used to be the exclusive preserve of multinational companies like Schlumberger, Halliburton and others; but Nigerians have taken all those responsibilities in the land and swamp areas, especially in the area of drilling," he said.



Engr. Simbi Wabote

On the operations of the upstream sector, Wabote noted that in the past, it was the multinationals that were operating all the existing fields.

He, however, said that Nigerians were now operating those fields which accounted for between 25 percent and 30 percent of oil production in the country, aside domestic gas production.

The executive secretary also said that margin fields were currently being produced by Nigerian companies, adding molecules to oil production.

“Nigerians now occupy key positions and deliver critical services in the industry.”

NCDMB to train 1,000 Kano youths on Phone repairs, software installation

...As CEO roll out Plans



The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) said it would launch a training scheme for 1,000 youths in Kano on phone hardware repairs, software installations and Entrepreneurship development.

The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) said it would launch a training scheme for 1,000 youths in Kano on phone hardware repairs, software installations and Entrepreneurship development.

The Executive Secretary of NCDMB Engr. Simbi Kesiye Webote who stated this in Abuja recently at a Media engagement said the programme will develop a pool of local talents for the Assembly of GSM phones and development of software application that are currently largely imported.

He said the training was part of the Agency's continued advocacy to extent the Nigerian Content Act to other critical sectors of the Economy.

He said the NCDMB was also supporting the rebuilding of the North East Region, which had been impacted negatively by insurgency.

'In July we completed the training of 107 Internally Displaced persons under the Fair

Chance Initiative. The beneficiaries were selected from Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states and were trained on Plumbing, Electrical, Carpentry, GSM phone repairs, digital soft skills, soap making and bead making.'

'We are partnering with the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) and other bodies to attach the trainees to establish companies to enable them perfect their craft, learn the business side of their trades and undergo mentoring.'

Meanwhile the Executive Secretary also used the occasion to reel out some of the achievements recorded in office.

Part of the achievements is the progress so far on discussions with investors on the establishment of LPG (cooking gas), Cylinders manufacturing plants, LPG depots and Gas processing facilities.

'We are particularly interested in the establishment of an inland LPG depots in Abuja to complement Federal Government

PH-Refinery Graduates 80 Youths in Skills Acquisition from Its Host Communities



Sofowora explained that the company had earlier trained 155 youths in various areas of trade in its first and second editions and the recent edition has brought the number of beneficiaries to 235.

As part of its corporate social responsibility, the Port Harcourt Refining Company Limited, PHRC, at the weekend graduated 80 youths from its host communities who were trained on its third edition of Youth Empowerment and Skills Acquisition Programme, YESAP.

The beneficiaries drawn from Eleme and Okrika were trained in welding and fabrication, information and communication technology, food processing, catering, hairdressing, fashion design, interlocking stones, and block molding.

Starter packs such as sewing machines, power generating sets, hairdryers, and washers, welding machines, welding inverters, gas cookers, cooking pots were presented to them according to the skills they acquired.

Speaking at the event, Managing Director of PHRC, Abba Buka, who

presented the beneficiaries with Certificates of Completion and the starter packs, charged the participants not to sell the packs, but use them and be economically empowered with their acquired skills.

Buka explained that the company is a commitment to its corporate social responsibility and sustenance of its community relations, invested in the skills acquisition training for the youth of its host communities of Eleme and Okrika.

He further tasked members of the host communities, to continue on the part of peace and negotiation, using the Joint Community Relations Committee platform set up by the company, to resolve any disagreements that they may have. According to him, Skills acquisition and youth empowerment are no doubt a proven route to economic prosperity for any community.

It affords the youths the opportunity to explore inner creative talents in them,

build confidence and explore channels for useful economic involvement. It is my hope and belief that the youth empowerment and skills acquisition programme will divert the attention of the youth from crimes and criminality as they would be economically preoccupied. And therefore reduce cases of strife, apprehension and youth restiveness in the communities.

Port Harcourt Refining Company MD also assured members of the host communities that they would be carried along in the different phases of the company's planned rehabilitation, adding that the company was committed to maintaining the cordial relationship with the communities. At the same vein, PHRC Executive Director, Services, Mr. Babatunde Sofowora, said that the graduation of the 3rd edition of YESAP was a testament to the commitment of the company and NNPC to foster mutual and symbiotic relationship with the host communities.



OGONI CLEAN UP:

YOUTH ACCUSE HYPREP OF SABOTAGE

A Pan Ogoni Youth Organisation known as Ogoni Youth Federation (OYF), has accused the management of the Hydrocarbons Pollution Remediation Project, (HYPREP) of using the Federal Government as a cover up to sabotage the Ogoni clean-up process.

The group which expressed this in a petition to the Office of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, said what is on ground in Ogoni regarding the cleanup process was a complete deviation of the UNEP report recommendation on the clean-up of the polluted environment.

The petition which was signed by the president of the body, Comrade Legbonsi Yaamabana read in part; "During the flag-off event, of the Ogoni clean-up, the Federal Government stated that: the implementation of the Report will be done holistically and in a manner that ensures transparency, accountability, genuine partnership and proper representation

of the people at the grassroots as well as guarantee job creation for young people and that Anglo-allied industries required for processing agricultural Produce will be put in place."

"More than three years after the flag-off and the laudable assurances given, we regret to state that the manner and processes for the implementation of the recommendations of the UNEP Report run completely against the assurances given by the Federal Government and more importantly, the very recommendations of the UNEP Report."

The group regretted that the palliative measures identified by UNEP in their recommendations to alleviate the plight of the Ogoni people have been flawed which includes, Provision of adequate sources of drinking water to the affected people, posting signs, in areas where hydrocarbons were observed on surface water, warning people not to fish, swim or bathe in those areas, ensuring that everyone who has consumed water from contaminated sources undertakes a comprehensive medical examination by physicians knowledgeable about the possible adverse effects of the hydrocarbons detected.

Comprehensive decommissioning of oil facilities that fail an Asset Integrity Management Plan for Ogoni, setting up of an Integrated Contaminated Soil Management Centre comprising an Incinerator, Thermal Unit, Soil Washing Unit and a Contaminated Water Treatment Unit.

The centre, which should drive the clean-up, is expected to be a modern industrial enterprise in Ogoniland that would employ hundreds of people bringing all sources of ongoing contamination, including artisanal refining, to a swift end before the clean-up, and for the purpose, the sum of \$10 million is recommended for the provision of alternative employment for those in artisanal refining, among others.

The body, in the petition also said: "We consider it very sad and barbaric that, as we speak, not only has nothing being done about any of these emergency measures but also the national and international visibility of the Ogoni issue have been fraudulently exploited to score cheap political points at every opportunity."

The body frowned against what it described as, the "complete alienation of the Ogonis indigenes in the participation of the clean-up exercise, which sends a dangerous signal to the world that the cleanup process is another gimmick designed to frustrate the Ogoni clean-up and send Ogoni to economic extinction.

While expressing confidence in the commitment of the Federal Government to implement the Ogoni clean-up to specification, the group called on the Federal Government to investigate the activities of HYPREP and save the Ogoni people from institutional sabotage by HYPREP.

FG to Build 4 Million Houses By 2023



The Federal Government has promised to address housing deficit by delivering one million houses per year to close the 17 million shortfall by the year 2023.

The Minister of State, Works and Housing, Mr Abubakar Aliyu, disclosed this in Abuja during an inspection of the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) mass housing project in Zuba, Federal Capital Territory.

Aliyu said the government had decided to improve on current construction of 100,000 houses per years in order to meet the basic needs of the people.

"The production now is low; we are constructing 100,000 houses per year and we hope to improve it by constructing one million houses per year in order to close the gap of 17 million to 20 million housing deficit by the year 2023.

"That is the target of government, we are

committed to doing that and to ensure that the programmes, policies are accomplished

"We will provide enabling environment to attract investors into the sector to help solve the problem of housing deficit in the country and to achieve the government's goal by 2023," he said.

Aliyu also said that the problems associated with acquisition of lands would be addressed.

Speaking on the Zuba project, the minister said it was designed specifically to address the huge housing deficit for the middle and low income earners.

He said the project which was to be completed by August was delayed because of the rainy season.

The minister gave assurance that the government would deliver the project as soon as possible.

"We will ensure that the project is completed soon, because it is one of our

primary focuses.

"That is why it is our first point of call after inauguration," he said.

Mr Umar Gonto, Acting Managing Director, FHA reiterated government's commitment to ensuring that the common Nigerians have access to affordable housing

He said that the project was among many others spread across the country by the federal government.

Gonto said that the houses were designed for low-income earners both in the public and private sector and the self-employed, once they meet up with the criteria.

Mr Ibrahim Shuaibu, the Project Manager, who took the minister round the site, said the 764 housing units were at 75 per cent completion stage.

The housing project is located near the Zuba Model Market, the Zuba Spare Parts Market and the FCT College of Education. (NAN).

Igbo summit calls for plebiscite on future of South East region

Igbo people of south eastern region of Nigeria have expressed regret that what was envisaged as the binding principles of the Nigerian nation state no longer exist. They therefore called for a plebiscite to determine the future of the region.

The people noted that the Federal Republic of Nigeria as it exists today is a phantom political state which has lost all the basic principles of rule of law, justice, equity and humane values; anarchy now prevails in all spheres of the society.

In a communiqué at the end of the 2019 Igbo National Summit, presided over by the Chairman, Enugu State Council of Traditional Rulers His Royal Majesty, Igwe Amb. Lawrence Agubuzu, the participants noted that "The Republic has been seized by one ethnic nationality, namely, the minority Fulani who do not hide their intentions to wipe out the indigenous populations and their religions and turn the territory into an Islamic State as has been arrogantly stated by the Fulani Nationality Movement (FUNAM)."

The communiqué of the first ever Igbo National Summit with the theme 'Peace, Security and Development of Alaigbo and Her Neighbours', which was signed by Chairman, Alaigbo Development Foundation, Prof.



Uzodinma Nwala, Chairman of the Organising Committee, Prof. Ukachukwu Awuzie, Chairman of the Association of South East Town Unions, Emeka Diwe and 21 others, noted that Ndigbo have continued to be marginalised in the scheme of things with key appointments going to the North.

In the communiqué, entitled 'The Owerri Declaration,' the participants noted that the endemic instability in the Federation has been due to an inherent incompatibility of values between the dominant religions, traditions and cultures of its indigenous ethnic nationalities, stressing that this has been made worse by the deliberate act of manipulation by the British colonial authorities who, through manipulation of the Federal structure and census, left power in the hands of the Fulani minority.

The participants therefore "Urge

all Pan-Igbo Organizations, including the Alaigbo Development Foundation (ADF), Association of South-East Town Unions (ASETU), World Igbo Congress (WIC), concerned Christian Clergy and Representative Organizations, particularly the Christian Association of Nigeria South-East (CAN-SE), from our contiguous Neighbors including the Coalition of all Pro-Biafra Groups, and the vindictively proscribed non-violent Organization, IPOB, to collectively work in political synergy for our collective aspiration for self-determination, to ensure our survival and lead the pursuit of the realization of our collective security, destiny and development as a free, prosperous peace loving People bound together by the principles of Self determination and freedom.



“

The camp of former president, Goodluck Jonathan has accused Buhari administration of trying to make a case against former President Goodluck Jonathan by claiming that he is responsible for the \$9 billion judgment against Nigeria in the United Kingdom in a case brought against the nation by Messrs P & ID.

Jonathan Camp Speaks On \$9bn Judgment Against Nigeria, Makes Revelations Against **Buhari**, Cabal

Former presidential aide, Reno Omokri, in a statement on Saturday, said the attempt to rewrite history will backfire.

Omokri said part of the filings regarding the case read: "P&ID submits that it entered a gas supply and processing agreement with Nigeria's Ministry of Petroleum Resources in January 2010. Pursuant to the agreement, P&ID claims that it would build the necessary facilities and then refine natural gas into non associated natural gas for a period of 20 years."

According to him: "Now, Nigerians should stop there and ponder. This transaction occurred in January of 2010. Former President Jonathan was not President in January 2010. During that time, he was completely shut out of power by an unelected cabal that ran Nigeria during the period of the ill health of the late President Yar'adua, before the National Assembly courageously intervened on February 9, 2010.

"That cabal not only fought against the ascension of then Vice President Jonathan to the office of acting President, but went beyond that to take documents, including budgets and contracts, to Saudi Arabia, and claimed that the then ailing President Umaru Musa Yar'adua had signed them.

"Nigerians may recall that the cabal announced on December 28, 2009 that the ailing President Yar'adua had signed a supplementary budget and other documents from his sick bed in Saudi Arabia, without the foreknowledge or acquiescence of then Vice President Jonathan or the Executive Council of the Federation.

"In fact, a week later, the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) came out with an exposé alleging that the signatures on the documents were forged and Femi Falana (SAN) took up the case in court.

"The man who packaged and arranged the signing of the contract with P & ID was a member of the cabal and Yar'adua's minister for petroleum, the late Rilwanu Lukman.

"Mr. Lukman and other members of the cabal treated then Vice President Jonathan with disdain and kept him in the dark about their actions because he had no executive authority, as the then President was unable to hand over to him as constitutionally stipulated due to the suddenness of his ill health.

"That same cabal has resurrected and has now coalesced around President Muhammadu Buhari, with some of them being made either ministers, or formal and informal advisers. As a matter of fact, the main man behind that cabal is now one of the closest persons to General Buhari.

"Nigerians may want to note that while this controversial contract was signed in January of 2010, former President Jonathan only became acting President on February 9, 2010.

"So, if the Buhari administration is looking for someone to blame for this judgment against Nigeria, it should look at its own cabal."

Let me summarize, for those too lazy do small research.

After Yaradua's death, the cabal took over government for close to 6 months, completely shutting GEJ out of government. Within this time, Late Rilwane Lukman who was the petroleum minister at the time quickly packaged a fraudulent deal with P & ID and signed Nigeria's future away.

When GEJ finally took over, the deal was reviewed and found to be bad market for Nigeria, so he insisted that the deal be renegotiated. P&ID refused, knowing fully well what they got from Rilwane and instead took Nigeria to arbitration. In 2013, they won the arbitration and were awarded about \$6 billion, being the money they would have earned if the deal had gone ahead, whereas, Nigeria would have earned next to nothing.

GEJ, the diplomatic man that he is sent Diezani, Okonjo Iweala and some other guys to Ireland to negotiate an out of court settlement with P&ID. Finally, early 2015, P&ID agreed to take \$850 million instead of \$6 billion.

But GEJ then handed over to Buhari who first wasted 6 months before facing governance. Then he made himself petroleum minister and without even understanding the details of the deal and subsequent arbitration and out of court settlement, and in a bid to vilify his predecessor, Buhari refused to pay the \$850 million and went back to court. Ultimately, he lost the case, as expected and because it's been 6 years since the original arbitration, the money plus interest accrued is now \$8.9 billion.

P&ID are no longer interested in the out of court settlement and have now been given authority to take over all of Nigeria's assets in the UK to the tune of \$8.9 billion. If they don't get up to that amount in the UK, they will also take their case to the EU and US until every penny is paid. Worse, every day that passes, the money continues to yield interest.

In conclusion, a criminal cabal created this mess for us, GEJ did his best to minimize the effect of the mess, but Buhari, in a bid to spite GEJ spoiled everything. Now here we are....

What the people of Nigeria need is a referendum to end this evil contraption called Nigeria and an emergence of the stifled nations within.

We CANNOT be silent about it. He that is silent in the days of the adversity of the oppressed, is more guilty and has taken the side of the oppressor.

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