

NEWS PLATFORM

Vol. 12 No 9. September 2018, A Publication of News Platform Media Ltd ₦ 500 — \$ 2



**NIGERIA WASTED ONE TRILLION DOLLARS
IN 24 YEARS ...Prof Osinbajo**

**NDDC CHARGES NIGER DELTA
YOUTHS TO EMBRACE PEACE**

OKOWA HAS DONE WELL ... Dr. Nwabuokeyi



NEWS PLATFORM

OUR VISION

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

OUR MISSION

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.

PUBLISHER/EDITOR IN CHIEF

Vincent Egunyanga

Managing Editor

John Paul Joseph

Editor

Francis Odozi

Reporters

Monday Osadume

Joseph Madu

Elvis Osarenren

Rose Ngagwaonye

SECRETARY

Etienne Inyang

Computer Consultant

Sunday Sylvanus Mark

COMPANY SECRETARY/LEGAL ADVISER

Ngozi Egwunyenge

NEWSPLATFORM MAGAZINE

is a publication of Newsplatform Media Ltd,
EPE CLOSE, AREA 1, SECTION 1, GARKI ABUJA.

PORT HARCOURT ADDRESS:

45 Ohia Street, Amadi, Old GRA

Email: newsplatformmedia@yahoo.com

newsplatform.media@yahoo.co.uk

newsplatformngr.com

09063832208, 08138094905

NEWS PLATFORM

ADVERT RATES

Double Page	700,000
Full Page	300,000
Half Page	150,000
Quarter Page	100,000
Cover Back Page	400,000

NOTE

...All artwork for advert placement should be on flash drive or CD

...We can help create designs for advert placement

...All bookings for adverts placement must be pre-paid and receipt issued

SUBSCRIPTIONS/ ADVERT HOTLINES

09063832208, 08138094905

Email:

Newsplatformmedia@yahoo.com

newsplatform.media@yahoo.co.uk

NEWS PLATFORM

TABLE OF CONTENT

**Nigeria wasted \$1 trillion in 24 years from oil alone
...Prof Osinbajo**

Page 5

**Create room for credible polls in rivers state, european
ambassadors tell FG**

Page 8

**Interview with the sa to gov. Okowa on special duties
Dr Awele Nwabuokey**

Page 9

2019: Buhari'll win even with 48 hours notice

Page 12

Inside niger delta

Page 16

Why nigeria needs to be structured

PAGE 34

**Issele-Uku Agog As Obi Nduka Performs 'Izu Afiachi' In Afor
Market**

PAGE 35

2019 elections set to be nigeria's most expensive

PAGE 37

Kano: the battle ahead for ganduje, kwankwaso, shekarau

PAGE 44

**African Senior Athletics Championships: Athletes Depart
Asaba After Big Show**

PAGE 52



Nigeria wasted \$1 trillion in 24 years from oil alone... Prof Osinbajo



Vice President Prof Osinbajo

The Vice President Professor Yemi Osinbajo said oil revenue accruable to Nigeria under successive administrations between 1990 and 2014 is about one trillion dollars.

Relying on the statistics of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), THE Vice President said despite the huge earnings not much was done in infrastructural development in spite of the huge oil revenue earned.

The Vice President made this disclosure while fielding questions from a cross section of Nigerians at a town hall meeting in Minnesota, USA recently.

A statement signed by the Senior Special Assistant to the Vice President on Media and Publicity Mr Laolu Akande made available to NEWSPLATFORM MEDIA, Professor Osinbajo said under the Babangida/ Abacha administration (1990-1998) Nigeria realized USD199.8 billion.

Under the Obasanjo/ YarAdua

government (1999-- 2009) the country got USD 401.1 billion, and during the Jonathan's administration (2000---2014) Nigeria got USD 381.9 billion from oil alone.

He said 'the question that we must ask all is that what exactly happened to the resources, the question is where are the infrastructures?'

HE said "one of the critical things that we must bear in mind and see is that this (Buhari) government despite earning USD94 billion up to 2017, we are spending more on infrastructure and capital than any previous governments, so we are spending N1.5 trillion on capital, that is the highest we have spent since 1990"

According to the Vice President 'the problem with Nigeria is not a matter of restructuring.'

He said Nigeria must not allow themselves to be drawn into the argument that Nigeria's problem stemmed from some geographical restructuring pointing out that the issue is about managing the

resources properly.

He said he has always believed in fiscal federalism, state Police and stronger states, 'I serve for eight years as Attorney General of Lagos state and one of the chief issues that we fought for in Lagos state was you will call fiscal federalism, we felt that there was need for the states to be stronger, for states to more or less determine their fortunes, for example we went to court to contest the idea that that every state should control, to a certain extent its own resources, we went to court at that time, up to the supreme court and the court ruled that oil producing states should continue to get 13 percent derivation, while we were at the supreme court only the oil producing states and Lagos were interested in resource control for obvious reasons

'Now, that is the way the argument has always gone, those who have the resources want to take all of it, while those who do not have want to share from others.'

The 25th Annual LAPO Development Forum Communique

A communiqué issued at the end of the 25th Annual LAPO Development Forum held at the Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos State on Friday, August 24th 2018, under the theme: Towards Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation of Nigeria: Options for Non-State Intervention.

PREAMBLE

The 24th Annual LAPO Development Forum of the Lift Above Poverty Organisation (LAPO), a frontline development organization, was chaired by Chief Philip C. Asiodu, Diplomat and former Permanent Secretary and Petroleum Minister.

Stakeholders within the public and private sector including members of the civil society, government representatives, entrepreneurs, policymakers and regulatory agencies, key players in the financial sector, trade groups and professional associations, academic institutions and the media, converged to discuss the keynote paper delivered by Prof. Mike Obadan, a renowned Professor of Economics and Non-Executive Director of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). After a diligent deliberation of the keynote paper, the Forum came up with the following 11-point communiqué as follows:

1. The participants congratulated LAPO for sustaining the Annual LAPO Development Forum since 1994, addressing human development challenges with a range of financial, health and social empowerment products and services and for providing 9,159 Nigerians with gainful employment.
2. The Forum averred that Non-state actors are fundamental agents in helping to achieve both national and international development goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and those around climate change. It therefore recommended synergy between the public and private sector in the pursuit of national development.
3. The Forum expressed concern that no meaningful efforts has been made to diversify the economy despite successive governments' promises to that end.
4. NSAs should be vibrant and active in the promotion

of human rights, democracy and good governance, especially in the fight against corruption which has underdeveloped Nigeria.

5. The participants affirmed that there can be no socio-economic transformation in Nigeria and indeed in any developing nation without the active participation of non-state actors such as business leaders, scholars, labour, and civil society organizations.

6. The LAPO Forum enjoined government to create social safety nets and enabling environment for peace; security and stability, just as it canvassed the formulation of a new National Vision and Agenda 2040 that would gravitate Nigeria out of poverty and engender progress, unity and greatness.

7. Government should create a conducive environment for the private sector to thrive and participate in the policy and development process and complement the state in its quest to achieve socio-economic transformation of the country.

8. Government at all levels should change their adversarial perception of NSAs and rather see them as partners in progress.

9. On their part, Non-State Actors/Civil Society Organizations should make conscious efforts to address issues affecting their credibility and acceptability as partners in development such as weak institutional capacity, lack of internal democracy, non-collaboration among themselves, limited transparency and accountability in their operations. They should forge alliances and common front to attract better funding to implement developmental activities.

10. Non-state security actors should complement the formal security agencies towards addressing the current challenging security situation in the country. They should however be well trained and regulated so that they operate within the ambits of the law.

11. The private sector should key into the Global Compact, launched by the United Nations Secretary-General at the 1999 annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, which challenges individual corporations and representative business associations to support the nine principles which relate to human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

GOVERNMENT OF IMO STATE

SUBJECT: WITH THE FREE EDUCATION PROGRAMME & MORE THAN 1000 VERIFIABLE PROJECTS, IMO PEOPLE WILL DEFINITELY MISS OWELLE ROCHAS OKOROCHA WHEN HE LEAVES AS GOVERNOR

AND THE FATE OF THE FREE EDUCATION PROGRAMME & THESE PROJECTS IS ONE OF THE REASONS HE SUPPORTS THE POPULAR CALL ON UCHE NWOSU TO RUN FOR THE 2019 GUBER

With the free and qualitative education programme in the State and more than One thousand verifiable projects of the Rescue Mission Government in the State, Imo people will definitely miss Owelle Rochas Okorocha when he leaves as the governor of the State.

The free education programme in the State which some opponents of the government had tried to discredit when it was introduced has yielded obvious remarkable results. And aside the School enrolment in the State snowballing from 381,000 in 2011 to more than One million in 2017, the State has continued to lead in JAMB applications for the Seventh time now.

The State has also Continued to do very well in WAEC Exams. For instance, in the 2018 Senior School Certificate Exam (SSCE), the State came fifth out of the Thirty-Six States in the Country and the Federal Capital Territory.

The government also has more than One thousand verifiable projects to its Credit and we have been making this Claim and nobody has said it is not true because the projects are visible with locations and can easily be verified.

We have also been Claiming and indeed, truthfully that what Governor Okorocha's administration has achieved in less than eight years have gone beyond all that those who had governed the State before him had achieved, when you put them together. Nobody had also Challenged us or tried to fault our Claims.



Rochas Okorocha

And we have equally gone extra-mile to say that anybody who feels that he has a Contrary Claim to ours should indicate. And the best way to deal with such claim and counter-claim is for those Concerned to itemize their Claims, publish them for public Consumption, while we also publish ours, for comparative analysis.

Those who had abused Governor Okorocha over the urban renewal programme have today regretted their action because they have seen the goodness of the Programme. All the major roads in Owerri, the State Capital have now been transformed from one lane to eight or twelve lanes including Bank Road, Amakohia road, Okigwe road, Wethedral road, with that of Douglas road on-going. Owerri is now a remodeled State Capital.

Some people have also talked about Chief Sam Mbakwe. Chief Mbakwe was a Hero. Imo people would Continue to Celebrate him. One had

wished that those who had governed the State after him would have Continued from where he stopped, but they rather sold some of the things he did for the State like the Resin Paint Industry Mbaize and Owerri Fbeiri Paper Industry.

But Rochas Okorocha came and repurchased those Companies from the buyers, and rehabilitated them for operations. He even handed over the Resin Paint Industry to a foreign firm, the SkyRun Industry and the Company is doing very well.

Imo people know these facts and even the opposition. But the opposition in the State tries to run down these projects because they want Power. They want Political Power to take over the governorship of the State, but Imo people would not want to come down from the standard Rochas Okorocha has set in the State.

It is also what becomes the fate of the free education programme that has stopped hawking in the State and these projects that propelled Governor Okorocha to subscribe to the Clarion call of Imo people on Uche Nwosu to run for the governorship of the State in 2019.

The worry is that if someone who does not know the "magic" behind all that Rochas Okorocha has achieved or who does not have a similar Spirit, could destroy all these without minding the implications.

But the truth of the matter is that the people of the State will definitely miss Rochas Okorocha when he departs as their governor.



CREATE ROOM FOR CREDIBLE POLLS IN RIVERS STATE, EUROPEAN AMBASSADORS TELL FG

Worried by the violence that marred the Port Harcourt State Constituency Three Election, Ambassador of Ireland to Nigeria, Sean Hoy has called on the Federal Government to take steps to ensure that elections are conducted within the ambit of the rule of law.

Similarly, the European Union Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr Ketil Karlson declared measures must be placed on ground by the relevant authorities to check a repeat of the electoral violence on August 18, 2018 at the Port Harcourt State Constituency Three.

Both ambassadors spoke on Monday at the Government House Port Harcourt after a meeting with the Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike.

Ambassador of Ireland to Nigeria, Sean Hoy said: "We must always follow the rule of law. Because election without the rule of law is not good.

"And it is not good for good governance". The Irish Ambassador noted that they were in Rivers State to participate in a programme

organised by INEC to improve youth participation in elections.

He said: "We emphasised that the youths must register to exercise their right to vote".

The European Union Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr Ketil Karlson commended INEC for the action it took after the violence during the Port Harcourt State Constituency Three Election.

"We have commended the work of INEC. They have taken an important step and stance on the Port Harcourt State Constituency Three Election.

"Measures should be taken so that we don't see similar events in the future elections coming up in February and March next year", the European Union Ambassador said.

He expressed concern about the violence during the Bye-Election.

Responding, Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike said it was embarrassing that elections could not be conducted in just 8 wards, saying nobody prays for a repeat of the ugly situation.

He said: "It is so embarrassing that the police cannot secure eight wards and 142 Polling Units. What will happen when elections will be conducted in 4442 Polling Units. Violence will not help.

"I have told the international community that we want free and fair elections. Anybody who watched what happened on 18th August, 2018 will know that if we had retaliated or told our people to come out, it would have been worse".

He stated that the entire world saw the purveyors of violence, saying that Nigerians know the real promoters of violence.

"We said, let the system play out so that we know what they intend to do in 2019. For us as a government and as a people, we will continue to support free and fair elections".

While urging the international community to prevail on the security agencies to promote the enabling environment for credible elections, he noted that only credible polls will enhance the interest of the people.

INTERVIEW WITH THE SA TO GOV. OKOWA ON SPECIAL DUTIES DR AWELE NWABUOKEI

YOUR PROFILE SIR

MY name is Dr Awele Nwabuokeyi. Am a sociologist and a rural development agent, I worked with the Federal Government of Nigeria for 35 years, retired in May 2018, I started work in 1983, I worked in Ministry of Labour, Defence, I was assigned to go for committee work on Petroleum pricing, PPPRC as it was called then, I retired from the Agency having added to my years in service, prior to that, I had 35 years in service when I disengaged in May this year the governor deemed it fit to get me close to his government and appointed me Special Assistant to his office on Special duties, that the assignment I have now we want to see what we can do to add value to his Excellency the Governor of Delta state Senator Dr Ifeanyi Authur Okowa who has been a marvelous person to work with

What would you say has been the achievements of the Governor so far

As I said I got into the administration of Delta state in June 2018, this is August, I just has barely two months in service, am still trying to acquaint myself with the work but so far within my environment I rate the governor 95 percent, he has done so much well, I attribute the ratings to the number of roads especially in Delta North, In as much as some of them are being ascribed to NDDC, EVEN before now NDDC has existed, if NDDC had been existing before now, those roads would have done they were not done then, why are they been done now, so the governor could also have influenced bringing the job to the Region, We also

have a Senator who is in NDDC committee, a lot of roads are being opened, developments coming, but there are also challenges, Salaries are not been paid or not fully paid, the question is are we moving forward, if we are

moving forward can we encourage the governor to do better, that is why I subscribe my personality to assist him to encourage him to do better, he has shown vision, he has shown commitment, he has shown desire and he has shown that zeal to get things done.

what would you advise him to do differently now, that you are on Board

WHAT I WOULD WANT TO ADVISE HIM TO DO DIFFERENTLY IS like he is doing opening the political sphere because definitely a number of intellect are never taking politics seriously and that created a big gap between the people and the led, so I think we need to really get involved with politics, then narratives will begin to change, personalities will begin to decide the events

and that comes. If I have left a service and I have a earning of over two million naira every month, why will I be going to a meeting to fight for two hundred thousand or five hundred thousand naira that comes a month, I should be able to say no, this is not what my value is. Thanking all the political structures because if they were not in existence, we will not be able to be absolved, however we were absolved be they want us to see how I can assist them to dot the 'i' and cross the 't' so that development will be easier for our people. We are talking with the governor, I know that he is a taking note and a lot



Continued from page 9

of things will really be on the table during his second term. He need a lot of resources a lot of Energy to be able to get all these ideas on board because he need time to do that. That's why he told me look Awele I just want you to be in the government, I may not be given you a befitting appointment now but please hang around me lets see how we can cross the bridge. When we cross the bridge we will do better in the second term.

What will you be advising the people of Delta state in choosing the next governor come 2019.

I THINK I want to tell our people to look back to where we are coming from, if within three years someone has done over 260 roads what do you think he will do in the next additional your years, if within three years we have a state capital development Agency which never existed since the creation of the state, why cant we now

empower the state capital to be well developed, if we are seeing what the drainage master plan is all about why wont we be grateful to say look this man yes, you are given us a place in the committee of Nations on state development, I don't think we have had it good this way, YES we may have it better because there is room for improvement, but so far so good. He Has been able to show the masterpiece, he has been able to show leadership, he has been able to show vision, courage and knowing fully well of how he got through to be able to become the governor of the state, I think yea some people may not like him because they felt power would have changed from a particular block but the block that has the governorship now should be grateful to God because we wouldn't have been having it this way and am sure that the next election we would do better, the state would have better recognition out of good leadership

Okowa Salutes Deltans at 27th Anniversary ...ROLL OUT ACHIEVEMENTS

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa has said the success of his administration has been from the support and peaceful disposition of Deltans in the various communities in the state. Gov. Okowa in a congratulatory message to Deltans by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Charles Aniagwu noted that, "despite the challenges the state grappled with over the years since creation, we have remained one indivisible state bound by love and brotherhood".

According to Aniagwu, "the fact that we are still one is enough reason to celebrate and it is our hope that we will leapfrog from where we are to where we want to be in the nearest future." "Our administration's investments in meaningful peace building have yielded so much gain which has impacted positively on not just the economy of the State but the entire country".

"We have kept faith with our SMART

Agenda as can be seen from the recent completion and ongoing construction of over 300 urban and rural roads that traverses across the three senatorial districts in the state". Aniagwu quotes the Governor as saying that "besides the many number of roads constructed and rehabilitated, we have completed construction, rehabilitation and furnishing of over 3,500 classrooms in our primary and secondary schools across the state. Some of our hospitals have also undergone facelift", under the SMART Administration "In the last three years, we have embarked on serious urban renewal programmes geared towards giving our cities a "SMART" look and this we have demonstrated by the storm drainage projects we are constructing in Asaba and environs to check the effects of flooding in the state capital territory and we have carried out a comprehensive sturdy to enable us tackle the flood

challenge in our commercial city of Warri as from 2019". "As an administration, we are mindful of the growing unemployment rate in the country, hence we launched a number of initiatives targeted at expanding the economic opportunities available to young Deltans.

Our YAGEP, STEP, GEEP, PPSP and WESAP programmes have created no less than 20,000 direct and indirect jobs for our youths".

"This year's anniversary provides an opportunity for the people of Delta State to reflect on the vision of the state's founding fathers and celebrate the progress achieved over the years," Governor Okowa said. The Governor acknowledged the support the government has enjoyed from the people of the state and urged Deltans to continue to support his administration as he continues to make Delta State an enviable state in the nation.



GOVERNOR OKOWA'S SMART AGENDA

S	Strategic Wealth Creation Projects and Provision of Jobs for all Deltans	M	Meaningful Peace Building Platforms aimed at Political and Social Harmony
A	Agricultural Reforms and Accelerated Industrialization	R	Relevant Health and Education Policies
T	Transformed Environment Through Urban Renewal		



DELTA STATE
The Big Heart

2019: Buhari'll win even with 48 hours notice

-Senator Alimikhena

SENATE Deputy Whip, Senator Francis Alimikhena, has expressed confidence that President Muhammadu Buhari will win any election in Nigeria even with 48 hours notification. He said that Buhari's performance in office was a sufficient campaign to guarantee his victory at any poll even with a short notice. Alimikhena, in a statement by his aide, Benjamin Atu, in Benin City, Edo State, yesterday said: "The Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, would have auctioned Nigeria if given the opportunity. "The high level fraud and abuse that characterized the privatization exercise during the PDP administration would have continued and the country would have

been left as a barren nation if not the emergence of President Buhari who terminated their plans of making Nigeria a miserable place. "The massive privatization that the PDP era embarked upon cannot be justified because even those government agencies that were booming were also privatized due to corruption. PDP sold our national assets among themselves." According to Alimikhena, President Buhari is not a vain glorious president, saying that he has proved that he was a better and more capable president by strengthening various governmental institutions under his administration.

Gov Dickson Receives Plaudits Over Plan To Establish Cancer Centre In Memory of Late Mother

Bayelsa State Governor, Honourable Henry Seriake Dickson has been commended for his proposed plan to establish a cancer foundation in honour of his late mother, Mrs. Goldcoast Dickson, who died of the ailment at the University of Texas M.D Anderson Cancer Centre, Houston, Texas, in the United States at the age of 72. A press statement by the Governor's Chief Press Secretary, Francis Ottah Ago noted that the commendation was handed down by Professor Barclays Ayakoromo and others when they spoke with Government House Correspondents, after paying condolence visits on the Governor at his Toru-Orua country home. Professor Ayakoromo said, it was a humanitarian gesture and a welcome development, as the cancer foundation would help enlighten the people on early detection and treatment of cancer. He said, the death of Mama Gogo as Governor Dickson's mother was fondly called is unfortunate, sad and shocking, stressing that, the sad incident has created a greater awareness on cancer.

On his part, the Chairman, Board of Trustees of The People's Democratic Party, PDP, Senator Walid Jibrin, who was on the entourage of the National Chairman of the PDP, Prince Uche Secondus, said the idea was a noble one, adding that, the party would give the needed support to the foundation.

Senator Jibrin, who eulogised Mama Gogo, described her as a good woman, who inculcated the the right values on her children and this is evident in Governor Dickson. Similarly, PDP BOT member, Chief Remi Kuku, who revealed that, her mother was a victim of the cancer scourge, expressed support towards the establishment of the Cancer Centre, saying she would lead campaigns for people, especially women to be aware of the ailment.

Chief Kuku also advised people in their 40's to go for regular medical checkup, including screening for cancer.

Also speaking, elder statesmen, Professor Turner Isoun and Chief Joshua Fumudoh, who also paid a condolence visit to Governor

Dickson, stressed the importance of regular medical checkups as a reliable way to stay healthy.

They noted that, early detection of cancer is important for a longer and healthy life, while emphasising that the establishment of the Cancer Centre would save a lot of people within and outside the state, who would be needing the services of the facility.

Expressing sadness over the death of Governor Dickson's mother, Senator Emmanuel Pulker said, he shares in the grief of the Kpadia family of Toru Orua and Governor Dickson, adding that Bayelsans are in a state of mourning. He explained that the incident has created a vacuum in the life of the governor, which would be difficult to fill and prayed God to give the family the fortitude to bear the loss. Governor Dickson also received in audience, the Yenagoa Restoration Caucus led by its Chairman, Chief Godwin Odumgba, Civil Service Commission, Southern Ijaw PDP Caucus, NGO's, among others.

FG IS REPOSITIONING MARITIME SECTOR FOR LEADERSHIP...BUHARI



As part of its resolve to continuously diversify the Nigerian economy, President Muhammadu Buhari has stated that the Federal Government is repositioning the maritime sector to take a leading position as one of the viable alternate sources of revenue.

The President who was the Special Guest of Honour at a public book presentation titled: *Harnessing Nigeria's Maritime Assets – Past, Present and Future*, authored by the Executive Director, Finance and Administration of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Mr. Bashir Jamoh, said that there is no change without pain; hence the need for Nigerians to keep faith with the Federal Government's determination of rejuvenating the Nigerian economy.

President Buhari who was represented by the Minister of Transportation, Rt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi noted that Nigeria has relied so much on the crude oil economy saying it is time to focus on other sources particularly the Blue Economy which covers both aquatic and marine spaces including oceans, seas, coasts, lakes, rivers and underground waters.

He said the Blue Economy also encompasses a range of productive sectors; Fisheries, Aquaculture, Tourism, Transport, Ship building, energy, bio-prospecting, under-water mining and

related activities, all pointing towards economic prosperity, when adequately harnessed.

"We know that the maritime sector has so much to offer the economy in terms of jobs and wealth creation and also contribution to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). On our part as a government, we are determined to walk the talk so that our economic diversification initiative will be fully achieved for the benefit of all Nigerians", the President said.

He commended the Dr. Dakuku Peterside led Management of NIMASA for its efforts in repositioning the maritime sector and for its huge contributions to the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) of the Federal Government. The Rt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi stated further that there is a new NIMASA, stating that the Agency has been transformed to being alive to its maritime regulatory and promotional mandates.

Commenting on the book, he noted that it is a document that should be given adequate consideration as it speaks to the Authority and other Stakeholders in the maritime sector.

Speaking further he said the Federal Ministry of Transportation understands Stakeholders' yearnings for the urgent review on the guidelines of the disbursement of the Cabotage Vessel

Financing Funds (CVFF), and called for an immediate meeting in his office to find a lasting solution to it.

The event also had in attendance, the Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, who buttressed the Federal Government's quest for diversification, adding that the government is willing to implement any new idea that will bring about a boost to the Nigerian economy.

The Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Tukur Buratai, also joined his counterparts in Government to assure that the military will continue to provide necessary security for the protection of the nation's economy, including the maritime sector where the Army, Navy and Air Force are currently playing major roles in protecting our assets.

On his part, the author of the book, Mr. Bashir Jamoh noted that the book was borne out of his passion for the development of the maritime sector, adding that this is just the beginning for Nigeria as the intention of the book is to expose the vast opportunities in the maritime sector to equally do well as oil and agriculture have done to the economy.

The NIMASA Executive Director who is a seasoned administrator with over 25 years' experience in the maritime sector is

GOVERNMENT OF IMO STATE

**SUBJECT: ALHAJI ATIKU ABUBAKAR SHOULD
LEAVE IMO & GOV. OKOROCHA ALONE & FACE HIS CHALLENGES**

**HE CAN'T RETURN IMO TO PDP IN 2019
-GOVERNOR OKOROCHA'S ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE KILLED PDP IN THE STATE**



The Former Vice-President Alhaji Atiku Abubakar was in Owerri for a meeting with the stakeholders of the PDP in the State over his presidential ambition. While meeting with the PDP Stakeholders in the State, he was reported to have told them that he would lead the struggle for the PDP to take over Imo and Nigeria in 2019. He also tried to run down the governor, Owerre Rochas Okorocha and his government.

What we do not take from anybody is blackmail against the government of Rochas Okorocha. We would do our best to set the record straight. The former Vice-President would have done his meeting without scratching the governor and the government he heads in the State. And that is where we come in.

The former Vice-President therefore leave Imo and Governor Rochas Okorocha alone and face his worrisome challenges. And if he does not know, Governor Rochas Okorocha will defeat him in any part of the Country including his

Adamawa State in any election involving two of them. He does not therefore have what it takes to lead any struggle that will return the PDP to power in the State or the Country in 2019. That promise was a false one.

To say the least, that promise of returning Imo to PDP was very deceitful knowing full well that in 2011 Rochas ran on the ticket of APGA that had no structure on ground and defeated an incumbent PDP governor with a very wide margin. In 2015, he took the soul of APGA to merge with other parties to form APC and defeated two powerful Candidates of PDP and APGA, even with the PDP Candidate having the Federal might behind him. Interestingly Alhaji Atiku Abubakar was not in exile when all these happened.

Imo PDP is dead. The monumental achievements of Governor Okorocha in less than eight years have destroyed the Imo PDP because the Party has no claim again to make before Imo people.

When PDP was in power in the State the Imo Airport was an eyesore, but today it has become an International Cargo Airport with all the facilities available and Courtesy of Rochas Okorocha's administration. The former Vice-President would have demonstrated statesmanship by commending Rochas Okorocha for that feat.

Again, all the flyovers and tunnels Alhaji Atiku passed through in Owerri were not there when the PDP was in power for twelve years.

The twelve and eight – lane roads the former Vice-President saw in Owerri when he came were not there when the PDP held sway. The free education that has raised the school population of the State from 381,000 in 2011 to over one million in 2017, was not also there under the PDP.

Beyond the noise of few power seekers in the State, Imo people are on the side of Governor Okorocha because of the large extent he has developed the State. The projects are available for verification. Let Atiku ask the PDP in the State to publish their achievements for the twelve years they governed the State and let Rochas publish his achievements for the less than eight years he has been on seat, and the former VP will discover that PDP in the State is a goner.

And that is the reason all those who made the Party thick in the State have all left to join either APGA or APC. Today, all the former guber aspirants in the PDP are doing so in APGA including Chief Ikedi Ohakim. They have left the PDP for two people. So, the former Vice-President should have told the remnants of the PDP in the State to bear with the situation they have seen themselves instead of raising their hope by promising them that he would lead the struggle that will return the Party to power in the State. And on our part, we do not need to struggle for APC to sustain its hold on Imo since Imo people shall Continue to vote for the party.

THE DIRECTOR OF BRITISH MUSEUM OFFERS TO ASSIST IN DEVELOPING WORLD CLASS MUSEUM IN OBA PALACE, BENIN CITY.

BY: Desmond Agbama CPS To Oba of Benin

His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Ewuare II, Oba of Benin has welcomed the idea of the British Museum to collaborate with the Palace of the Oba of Benin to develop a World Class Museum to accommodate stolen artefact from Benin Kingdom.

The Benin Monarch who spoke when the Director of the British Museum, Hartwig Fischer paid him a courtesy visit in the Palace said the museum would not only be of benefit to Edo people, but to Nigerians and tourists from all over the world.

casting guild responsible for culture is far from being extinct producing the art works in as erroneously believed by some historians, and academics order to keep it alive.

The Omo N'Oba commended in some part of the globe.

Earlier, the Director of the British Museum, Hartwig Fischer told His Royal Majesty that he was in the Palace to inquire into the possibility of the British Museum offering assistance in terms of fund raising and training of personnel for the proposed museum in the Oba Palace, Benin City.



facilitating the visit of the The Oba of Benin reiterated the Director of the British Museum need to return the stolen towards the return of Benin artefact from the various artefact in British Museum, museums across the world, saying that he look forward to pointing out that the Benin visiting the British Museum. people are emotionally attached to it, even though it has been speaking for Benin of **"THE RED BOOK"**, His Royal Kingdom wherever they are in Majesty said invitation would the world.

His Royal Majesty told the government and other private Director of British Museum that collectors of works of art across the Palace is reviving the bronze the world, adding that Benin

Mr. Fischer also expressed the desire of the British Museum to offer assistance to the Oba Ewuare II Foundation, pointing out that they want to interphase with other museums in the world and be the driving force to the realization of these noble ideas.

The Director of the British Museum also indicated interest to support **"THE RED BOOK, The Benin Monarch: An Anthology of Benin History"** in any way they can.

INSIDE NIGER DELTA





NIGERIAN CONTENT DEVELOPMENT CHEVRON'S SUCCESS STORY

Before the enactment of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act in 2010, only a few International Oil Companies (IOCs) had deliberately put in place policies to build, enhance and sustain the capacity of indigenous companies and contractors to enable them to fully participate in Nigeria's oil and gas industry.

Eight years after the Act was enacted, the situation has changed significantly as recently emphasized by Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, the Executive Secretary, the Nigerian Content Development Monitoring Board (NCDMB). According to him, "Before the NOGICD Act, only 3 per cent of the marine vessels used in the industry belonged to Nigerians, but today, Nigerians control and own 36 per cent of vessels. From a zero active dry-dock facilities for vessels, the country now has four active dry-docking

facilities and over 35,000 jobs have been created as a result of the NOGICD Act." Also, local businesses have been empowered to handle fabrication of more than 60,000 tons; manufacturing of cables bolts, nuts and flanges and assembling of offshore Christmas trees as well as infrastructure for integration of Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) facilities.

Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), with its affiliates in the country, is one of the IOCs that had a pre-NOGICD policy in place and has in the post-NOGICD era remained committed to Nigerian Content Development (NCD) by partnering with the NCDMB to significantly grow Nigerian Content in the oil and gas industry. In its 2017 Corporate Responsibility Report, CNL states that the company's investment in

NC was approximately US\$2 billion local contractors; facilitation of Chevron Nigeria Limited, we while procurement of materials partnerships and alliances demonstrate our commitment to through Local Community between indigenous companies the socio-economic development Contractors (LCC) and cost of and foreign firms; capacity of Nigeria by building mutually-services provided by indigenous building; and development of local beneficial partnerships, and companies were \$74 million and competencies. supporting the policies of \$284 million respectively. CNL's Chairman/Managing Director, government on Nigerian Content four-prong approach to NCD CNL, Jeff Ewing, explains the Development. We have helped in includes: selection of qualified company's stance on NCD thus: "At building the capacities of several



Nigerian businesses by allocating substantial scopes of our major capital projects to Nigerian companies. Chevron is also helping to grow the Nigerian economy by contributing to the development of communities in the areas of our operation. We do all this, not just because it is required by the law, but because it is the right thing to do." The various areas in which Chevron implements the NOGICD Act in Nigeria include human capacity development, facility fabrication, construction and

installation. Others include support for facility acquisition, facilitation of partnerships between local and foreign contractors, and provision of opportunities for local community contractors through work scope allocation in Chevron's major capital projects in Nigeria. Some of the highlights of CNL's Nigerian Content success stories include the patronage of Oando Energy Services (OES) Limited and SOWSCO Well Services Nigeria Limited for cementing and pumping services for well drilling contracts. The company also supported Jerntech Global Engineering Services Limited, a local community contractor to fabricate the wellhead jacket for the Abiteye Non-Associated Gas (NAG) Development Project and procured locally assembled desktops and laptops worth millions of Naira from Task Systems Ltd and Zinox Systems.

On human capacity development, the company in partnership with the Nigerian Content Human Capacity Development Initiative (NCHCDI) has continued to train and equip Nigerians to deliver value through executive and management training, technical and professional skills training, and on-the-job training during project execution. CNL in partnership with NCDMB and Idmon Engineering Services Ltd trained 26 Nigerians on its Sonam – Okan Pipeline Pig Receiver Fabrication Project. The 12-month classroom and on-the-job training covered Health, Environment and Safety (HES); Information and Communication Technology; Project Management; Quality Management; Fabrication and Assembly processes; Fabrication Engineering; Welding/Fitting/Rigging/Scaffolding processes; Entrepreneurship; and Material Management. In addition, CNL awarded a contract to local consulting firm, Lonadek, to develop and pilot a Human Capacity Development Initiative training plan for CNL's Drilling and Completions Unit. Chevron supported Marine Platforms Limited (MPL), to become a major player in the Subsea industry, an area previously dominated by international

companies. MPL handled the Subsea Installation of flowlines, umbilical's and jumpers on Agbami Phase 3 project. On fabrication, construction and installation, Chevron facilitated the delivery by FMC Technologies of the first assembled-in-Nigeria Subsea Horizontal Xmas Tree, and the fabrication in Nigeria of Agbami production manifolds for the Agbami Phase 3 Project by FMC Technologies/Aveon Offshore Nigeria Limited. Chevron also facilitated the safe, timely and successful installation of subsea equipment such as flexible flowlines, umbilicals and jumpers on the Agbami Phase 3 project by a Nigerian Contractor – Marine Platforms Limited. CNL also facilitated the fabrication and load out of the Offshore Platform Topsides and Bridge Connection for the Sonam Non-Associated Gas Well Platform (NWP) by Nigerdock Plc; the fabrication and load-out of the Okan PRP Topsides; Bridge Fabrication of Okan PRP jacket by Globestar in partnership with Idmon Engineering and Construction Co. Limited; Installation of the 32km and 24" Sonam to Okan NWP pipeline by West African Ventures Limited; and the coating of the pipes used for the Sonam Development Project and Escravos Export System Project (EESP) by Pipe Coaters Nigeria Limited.

The Executive Secretary, NCDMB, highlighted Chevron's NCD achievements in 2017, during the passing out ceremony of earth science graduate-interns that were trained by Chevron. He stated: "In terms of fabrication, Chevron has done a lot. I am sure you heard about the Sonam project which was done in Nigeria. A lot of the fabrication happened here, a lot of the engineers that were on that project are Nigerians. You also heard about the pipeline project Chevron is currently executing – the contractors are Nigerians and most of the vessels that are deployed for that project are owned by Nigerians.

So, I think in human capacity, development-wise, they (CNL) have done a lot on fabrication as well as

logistic services and trickling that the project awarded huge sub- and Gas Tungsten Arc Welding down to community participation contracts to local community (GTAW) processes. in their operations.”

contractors, sent 234 Nigerians on CNL demonstrated unprecedented Chevron's commitment to a 30-month training program in support for the local barite mining Nigerian Content development did South Africa at the Synthetic Fuel industry by donating barite mining not start today. The Agbami Facilities of Sasol and trained over equipment worth \$1.4 million and project set industry standards by 7,000 Nigerians in Technical Skill training to the Association of fabricating more than 10,000 Crafts, Plant Operation and Miners and Producers of Barite tonnes of steel with Nigerian Maintenance, Business and (AMAPOB) to boost the supply and fabrication companies, the highest Project Management, Logistics quality of local barite, reduce ever recorded in Nigeria. Chevron and Supply Chain Management importation of barite and create jobs for the local communities.

For CNL's MD, Chevron will continue to “empower Nigerian service providers and suppliers through: human and business capacity development; local patronage and work scope allocation; fostering of business partnerships and sponsorship of research and development programmes to enhance the capacity of indigenous companies to participate in the oil and gas industry.”



also trained 105 Nigerian engineers from 21 engineering companies in South Korea. The Escravos Gas Project (EGP) has employed over 1,800 Nigerians and sourced millions of Dollars' worth of services (engineering, procurement, fabrication, marine etc.) locally.

Also, the Escravos Gas-to-Liquids (EGTL) project provided employment to more than 15,000 Nigerians during the construction phase of the project. In addition,



NCDMB REJECTS AND REFUTES SENSATIONAL NEWS REPORT ABOUT STEEL INDUSTRY AND PIGB

The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) has debunked the sensational headlines reported in some newspapers last week to the effect that the Board has queried the infrastructural development in the rail sector and delayed passage of the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill (PIGB). The Board's General Manager, Corporate Communications, Dr. Ginah O. Ginah who represented the Executive Secretary at a one-day sensitization seminar on "Local Content Development in Shipping, Oil and Gas Logistics Operation in Nigeria," organized by Maritime Reporters Association of Nigeria (MARAN) recently in Lagos, said it is absurd to

ascribe such story to an agency of government established by law to be at the forefront of local content development.

Dr. Ginah said he was shocked and embarrassed by the publication and wishes to categorically reject and refute the story as complete misrepresentation. He declared the entire reportage as replete in inaccuracies and conjectures. Specifically, the GM Corporate Communications said that the Federal Government's focus on rail projects abandoned for three decades are impactful and will catalyze commerce across the country and enhance the revamping of the steel industry, which will in turn accelerate local content performance in the oil and gas industry and linkage sectors.

He said that participants at the seminar agree that there is need for all to quicken the passage of all the Petroleum Industry Bills, not just the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill (PIGB) as to spur more investments.

He reiterated that NCDMB is determined to collaborate with other stakeholders, including NIMASA to implement and enforce the provisions of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act for the benefit of Nigeria and all Nigerians. He affirmed that the Board has continued to enjoy excellent support from the highest level of government under President Mohammadu Buhari, which has enabled the agency to discharge of its mandate.





Dr. Ibitoye Abosede

NDDC CHARGES NIGER DELTA YOUTHS TO EMBRACE PEACE

The Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, has charged youths in Nigeria's oil-producing communities to join in campaigning for peace and security in the Niger Delta region.

Speaking after receiving an award for excellence from the Niger Delta Youth Forum, the NDDC Director Corporate Affairs, Dr. Ibitoye Abosede, stated that development can only take place in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.

Abosede, who received leaders of the Youth Forum in his office at the NDDC headquarters in Port Harcourt, stressed the need to create the right environment for development to flourish.

He thanked the youth group for finding him worthy of the award of "Excellence in Good Leadership," noting that all stakeholders should join in the effort to sanitize the Niger Delta to make it attractive to investors.

Abosede advised the youths to be focused so as to put their God-given talents to good use, adding that they should not be discouraged by temporary setbacks.

The Director stressed the importance of sensitizing youths in the Niger Delta on the dangers of militancy and other social vices, stating that violence begets

violence.

He remarked that promoting awareness campaigns within the Niger Delta region remained a viable tool for development agencies that need peace and security to deliver on their mandates, adding that "as an interventionist agency, the NDDC needs the cooperation of all stakeholders to perform optimally."

Abosede said that youths of the Niger Delta region have a crucial role to play in enthroning peace. He declared: "We don't want protests and agitations in the Niger Delta anymore. Dialogue is the way to go."

Earlier, the President of Niger Delta Youth Forum, Comrade Emmanuel Ekine, said that the body was organising awareness campaigns in the region to sensitize the youths on the need to shun violence and criminality.

Ekine said: "The youth forum has observed that restiveness; violent agitations and criminal tendencies are the prevalent challenges confronting the region."

He commended the NDDC director, explaining that his nomination for recognition came after a careful consideration of his contributions to youth development, especially his outstanding leadership qualities and transparent service to the Niger Delta region.

NCDMB TO COMMENCE FORENSIC AUDIT INTO \$200M NCDF CONTRIBUTION

The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), is set to commence a forensic audit into its \$200 million Nigerian Content Development Fund (NCDF).

Executive Secretary, NCDMB, Mr. Simbi Wabote, gave the hint while speaking on the theme "Driving Nigeria's Oil & Gas Industry towards Sustained Economic Development & Growth at the Nigerian Oil and Gas (NOG) Conference, Nigerian Content Seminar which opened in Abuja yesterday.

NOGICD Act of 2010 gave the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), the mandate to manage the Nigerian Content Development fund (NCDF) and deploy it for projects, programmes and activities directed at increasing Nigerian content in the oil and gas industry.

The Act equally provides that one percent of every contract in the upstream sector of the Nigerian oil and gas industry shall be deducted at source and paid into the fund.

Speaking at the forum, Wabote warned that if the Board discovers any sabotage in the remittance of the one percent NCDF charge, it will not hesitate to hand over the defaulting company to the EFCC.

He regretted that despite efforts of the Board to ensure the success of the local content in the country, some international Oil Companies were in the habit of coming up with excuses why the local content cannot be achieved.

'All forms of sabotage are being brought against us, we will stand our ground to ensure that local content is achieved at all cost,' he said operating companies under its joint Qualification Scheme (JQS) are 46 companies in all, while the service companies are 7,184 with individual registrations at 114,743.

Wabote while highlighting the 10 strategies which he promised to work on to increase national capacity over a 5-year period, said the Board was making progress in that regard.

"Today, I want to provide progress status of those strategies in line with my conviction that yearly seminars and conferences like this should also

be used to provide and receive feedback on actions taken or promises made to make the events worthwhile. Permit me to provide very brief highlights on the status as follows."

On stakeholders' collaboration to overcome key challenges on skills gap, weak sectoral linkages, policy inconsistency and other issues, Wabote said the Board had engaged Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) and Petroleum Training Institute (PTI) to streamline its areas of intervention in human capacity building.

We have engaged NNPC-NAPIMS on in-country capacity utilization. Other stakeholders engaged by the Board include; NEPZA, NCAA, OPTS, IPPG, DPR, and others.

"Strategy No.2 was to fast track the establishment of 5 oil and gas parks. We have commenced site developments works on two of the parks in Bayelsa and Cross River states. Architectural and detailed engineering design works are on going for the parks in the Akwa-Ibom and Imo States. Land acquisition are in progress for the ones in Delta and Edo states. In line with the directive of the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, we are looking at the establishment of similar parks in other geo-political zones of the country.

For the third strategy on Nigerian Content Opportunities Fair (NOGOF), we held the maiden edition in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state and we have published the compendium of opportunities in the oil and gas industry as promised.

On Strategy No.4, we promised to hold the R&D Fair. This was done in September 2017 in Lagos with a very resounding success. Some of the actions from the Fair are being implemented as I speak.



Engr. Simbi Wabote



Seven Modular Refineries Boost Nigeria's Self-sufficiency Drive NCDMB Invests \$10m In Waltersmith's 5000 Bpd Modular Refinery

Seven licensed refineries with the ability to process 181,000 barrels of crude oil per day (bpd) have progressed towards completion stage in their attempt to contribute to Nigeria's self sufficiency in petroleum refining.

For example, the 5,000 bpd Waltersmith Refining & Petrochemical Company Limited's modular plant, which is capable of producing naphtha, kerosene, diesel, and low pour fuel oil has made significant progress the Company's Approval To Construct (ATC) has been granted by the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) while Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract terms have been agreed with VIELM.

The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) review session with DPR has been conducted and the company is closing out funding with Africa Finance Corporation. Also the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) on Friday in Lagos signed a \$10 million equity investment agreement with Waltersmith Refining & Petrochemical Company Limited for the construction of 5,000 barrels per day modular refinery to be located at Ibigwe, Imo State.

Other companies, which have made similar progress are Clairgold Oil & Gas Engineering Limited, Niger Delta Petroleum Resources, Dee Jones, Energia Limited, Southfield Petrochemical & Refinery Limited, and Starex Petroleum Refinery Limited.

The Executive Secretary of NCDMB, Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote and the Director of Finance and Personnel Management, Mr. Isaac Yalah signed on behalf of the Board while the Chairman of Waltersmith, Mr. Abdulrasaq Isah and the Executive Vice Chairman, Mr. Danjuma sale signed for the company.

Under the share holders Agreement and the Share Subscription Agreement, the Board took 30 percent equity in the modular refinery.

The Executive Secretary of NCDMB, Engr. Simbi Wabote said the investment decision was in line with the Board's vision to be the catalyst for the industrialization of the Nigerian oil and gas industry and its linkage sectors. The Board was also keen, he added, to support the Federal Government's policy on modular refineries and meet the key objectives of the Petroleum Industry's seven Big Wins launched by President Mohammed Buhari in October 2016 and the Economic Recovery and Growth Program (EGRP).

According to him, "we have our exit strategy in place to ensure that the refinery reverts back as a fully owned, privately run modular refinery as our role is clearly defined as a catalyst."

He also commended Waltersmith for developing a bankable proposition, stating that "they sorted out the project feasibility, regulatory approvals, and other pertinent details before reaching out to the Board with the value they are bringing to the table and a clear definition of the support they seek."



The Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC Has conducted Computer-Based Test for 2,835 Candidates

The Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, has ICT Centre, venue of the aptitude test, conducted Computer-Based the Director, Education, Health and Tests for 2,835 candidates out of the Social Services, *Mr* *Goshua* over 4,000 that applied for the *Okejoto*, explained that the choice Commission's Post Graduate Foreign of electronic examination was to Scholarship Scheme for 2018. enable the Commission shortlist the right candidates to be selected for the

scholarship scheme. scholarship programme He said that some new The NDDC Director stated was designed to programmes had been that the Foreign Post-encourage excellence added to the scholarship Graduate Scholarship, and debunk the myth that scheme to help which was started in the Niger Delta was the universities in the Niger 2010, was meant to equip bedrock of militancy. Delta to engage high

Niger Delta graduates with relevant training and skills for effective participation in the local content programme of the Federal Government. He explained that only candidates who had finished the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, and secured admission into foreign universities were eligible to participate in the scholarship award process.

Okejoto said that after the aptitude test, 1,500 candidates would be selected for oral interview.

He noted: "The process is very transparent as the candidates see their scores immediately after the test. That is the beauty of the computer-based test."

According to him, the region.

He added: "The MD is very passionate about the programme because he wants the NDDC to continue to build the capacity of graduates from the Niger Delta region."

Okejoto said that the NDDC Managing Director, Mr Nsima Ekere, was committed to the success of the programme and had directed that the process should be completed by September 21, 2018 with the presentation of award letters to the successful candidates.

He observed that the candidates, comprising those for Masters and Doctorate degrees, were examined primarily in their core area of study, noting that the exercise was not only fair but gave the applicants equal opportunity to compete.

Modular refineries: FG secures N179.9bn loan from China, eyes 100,000 jobs

The Federal Government has secured a \$500 million (about N179.9 billion) facility from the Export Import Bank of China (CEXIM) through the Bank of Industry (BOI) for the establishment of modular refineries and the Flare Gas recovery Programme in Nigeria.

Speaking at the signing ceremony in Beijing, BOI's Managing Director, Mr. Olukayode Pitan, emphasized the job creation potential of the partnership saying, "I am delighted to begin the next chapter of a long term trading relationship with China through CEXIM."

"This agreement is set to create over 100,000 jobs in Nigeria's Oil and Gas sector- a decisive move that will advance the Federal Government's Modular Refineries and Flare Gas Recovery Programme," he said.

As part of the MoU between BOI and CEXIM, the facility will be utilized to finance the purchase of equipment and machinery from China by investors and project owners of modular refineries in Nigeria.

The BOI boss said the aim is to ensure availability of refined petroleum product within the country, monetize gas flare, reduce cost of products in the mid-term and provide employment for Nigerians.

He said establishment of modular refineries is part of the FG's plan to end importation of petroleum products and to discourage illegal oil bunkering activities in the Niger Delta region.

A total of 38 operating have already been granted by the Federal Government to establish modular refineries in the Niger Delta.

BOI stated that the facility can be accessed via letters of credit issued for the delivery of specified modular refineries and gas processing equipment to qualified Nigerian companies establishing petrochemical facilities under the Modular Refineries and Gas Flare Recovery Programme.

A modular refinery refers to a mini refinery which is easier and relatively more cost-effective to build in terms of capital and time than the traditional refinery. According to Cenam Energy Partners, modular refineries are usually available in units from 4,000 to 30,000 barrels per day (bpd), and having lower output capacity than the traditional refineries.

A modular refinery's equipment are manufactured in controlled conditions, fully assembled and tested prior to overseas shipment, and installed at a client's site in much less time than a traditional refinery.

Data obtained from the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) showed that 22 modular refineries were licensed in the first quarter of 2017 with about 1.429m barrels daily crude oil refining capacity. Another 10 licenses were granted in the second quarter of last year bringing the figure to 32 licensed firms.

At \$50,000 per license for modular refinery, a total sum of \$1.6m has been generated from the licensing by DPR within the last three years.

In February 2018, the Federal Government at the Nigeria International Petroleum summit (NIPS) in Abuja revealed plans to provide incentives for investors in modular refineries.

Such incentives include granting duty waivers and tax holidays to investors but its implementation strategies was not immediately clear.

Mr. Rabi'u Suleiman, the Senior Technical Adviser to the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Dr. Ibe Kachikwu, at the summit said the discussion on the incentives had reached comfortable stage.

He said in addition to tax and custom duties waivers, government would also guarantee the investors regular crude oil supply.

He explained that the Federal Government was in talks with a number of potential financiers like the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) amongst others to provide contributory funding to investors in modular refineries in the Niger Delta region.

Suleiman had noted that the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and some state governments have equally indicated their willingness to invest in the refineries and gain equity share in them.

In April, Mr. Kachikwu said two of the licensed modular refineries would be completed and ready for inauguration by December 2018.

Speaking when he led a joint team from the ministry, office of the Vice President and the DPR to inspect a modular refinery in Kwale, Delta State, he said the Federal Government's resolve to establish modular refineries was part of the long-term plan to end importation of petroleum products and to discourage illegal oil bunkering activities in the region.

A lecturer at the federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE), Effurun, Prof. Ogborode Ogbon, said Nigerian will need 75 modular refineries with capacity of about 10,000 bpd by 2020 if the problem of fuel shortage is to end.

Senator Akpabio Commends NDDC, Ekere



The former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Senator Godswill Akpabio, has given kudos to the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, and its Managing Director, Mr Nsima Ekere, for fast-tracking the development of the Niger Delta region.

Akpabio spoke at the solidarity rally in honour of President Muhammadu Buhari and reception for Nsima Ekere, by the people of Akwa Ibom South (Eket) Senatorial District at the Qua Iboe Church Primary

School, Eket.

The former Senate Minority Leader said that the numerous NDDC projects spread across the Niger Delta demonstrated that the Commission had changed for the better. He declared: "Everyone can attest to the fact that NDDC is now working."

"Ekere has shown that NDDC can work. Before he became the NDDC Managing Director, the interventionist agency was not living up to expectations. Today, we are seeing many programmes and projects being executed all over the Niger Delta."

Akpabio noted that even the

International Oil Companies, IOCs, were now meeting their statutory financial obligations to the NDDC because they were seeing the physical transformation being carried out by the Commission. According to him, the changes were possible because of the managerial abilities of Ekere.

He said: "I do hope that those who will take over from Ekere will continue to perform well. I have thrown my weight behind Ekere because he has pedigree, humility, wisdom and intellect."

Akpabio said further: "Ekere has shown capacity to perform and I

believe in performance. He was part and parcel of the uncommon transformation that took place in Akwa Ibom State between 2007 and 2015.

"Because of that, I know that he is well schooled in the process of good governance. I am confident that he will bring the state back into the trajectory of progress and development. We all belong to the progressives' camp and we want a quantum leap in Akwa Ibom State. We don't want the state to be moving backwards. That is why we are supporting Ekere to be the next governor of Akwa Ibom State."

Speaking at the reception, Ekere lamented that there were no good roads in Eket except those constructed by NDDC. He advised

Governor Udom Emmanuel to stop deceiving Akwa Ibom people, stating that the state deserved better.

He remarked: "I thank the people of Eket Senatorial District. You have shown love. You have shown that you appreciate hard work. I was part of the Government in 2010 - 2015. I was part of the decision making that the governorship should rotate between Senatorial Districts.

"I was the arrow head of the fight in 2015 for the governorship to come to Eket senatorial district and because of the agitation Senator Godswill Akpabio, standing here who was the governor then, agreed and Akwa Ibom people agreed for the governorship to come to Eket Senatorial district.

The NDDC Managing Director stated that anyone wishing to represent the Senatorial District must run on the basis of performance. He observed: "We

are here in this primary school because the stadium has been under renovation. Do you need three years to renovate a stadium? Here in Eket, there is no road except NDDC roads. This Governor must stop deceiving Akwa Ibom people. Weep no more. Go and get your PVC. That is your power. That is your strength."

Leaders of the party across the three senatorial districts of Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket had bought and presented the nomination and expression of interest form to the NDDC boss at the reception.

The leader of the party in the state and national caucus member, Chief Don Etiebet, who presented the forms to Ekere, said elders of the party across the state decided to purchase the forms for the NDDC boss because they wanted him to replicate his sterling performance in the commission when he becomes governor in 2019.

We Will Commence Ogoni Clean-Up In October-FG

Gladys Nweke

field, he said.

The Federal Government has actual commencement of the said that Ogoni Clean-Up remediation would be achieved, would be fully commence in October this year.

The minister of Environment Mr Ibrahim Jubril who was represented by the senior technical assistant to the minister of Environment, Dr Ishayaku Mohammed made this known in documents to bid for the contract. PortHarcourt at a pre-contract

awarding meeting organized by Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project, (IYPREP). Mr Ibrahim Jubril in speech, said that Ogoni land had polluted with oil spills, insisting that October deadline will be for the

The minister also stressed that the stage that We are now is part of the procurement process and we have 138 companies that have pre-qualified and had been asked to submit their bids for the contract.

Meanwhile, Head of the Project Coordination, IYPREP, Dr Marvin Dekil said that the contractors for the project must have technical and financial competencies before being allowed to participate in the process.

Also noted that Ogoni clean-Up project like the minister said is going to be a template for the rest of the region, it is an important project to Ogoni people, Niger Delta People and Nigerians, including government of Nigeria,

Don't Resume Hostilities, Pengassan To Niger Delta Militants

Gladys Nweke

Following the threats by Niger Delta militants to end their ceasefire, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria has called on the agitators to embrace dialogue than to resume hostilities over the inability of international oil companies to relocate their headquarters to the oil-rich region.

PENGASSAN also expressed the need for stakeholders in the oil and gas sector to meet and deliberate with a view of meeting the demands of the Niger Delta region. PENGASSAN'S call is coming on the heels of the threat by the Coalition of Niger Delta Agitators, a frontline militant group in the region, that IOCs should stay away from oil platforms and other installations from December 2018 should they fail to relocate their headquarters to the Niger Delta.

The militants had also vowed to begin attacks on oil facilities over the refusal of President Buhari to give assent to the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill.

This was made known to Journalists, during the ground-breaking ceremony of PENGASSAN's multipurpose, learning, event and resource centre in Rumu odumaya, in Obio/Akpor Local government area of Rivers State. The National President of PENGASSAN, Comrade Francis Olabode Johnson, urged the Federal Government to address the issues raised by the militants for peace to strive, as to create enabling environment for the investors and exprotrait.

All IOCs operating in this country have an office here (Niger Delta), but relocating their corporate headquarters also depends on the collaboration of the government because definitely, they need land, they need resources and they need some waivers to do that.

So, everybody must work together, but not by threat. For the agitators, we want to appeal to them that they should not return to the creeks. For now, oil is our only major source of revenue.

We also need to appeal to the government that whatever that is demand of the region, whatever they can do to make the place conducive and ensure that the relocation should be successeful one, they should please help and do so for the benefit of the region. Also speaking at the event, the zonal chairman of Port Harcourt zone, comrade Azubuike M. Azubuike, in his opening remark, said that another milestone in the history of the association and the significance of the association is the ability of the association's leadership to forecast the future of the association and prepare for it, and one of such preparations is the investment infrastructural facilities. He also insisted that the chioce of venue stems from the fact that Port Harcourt is the hub of oil and gas activities, the land is easily accessible from all parts of Rivers State, the environment is serene and inhabitants are very friendly. The Zonal chairman stressed that the leadership association has embarked on the Herculean project, noting that the Learning/Event Centre shall comprise of Offices for Zonal Secretariat, a well-equipped learning Holl and Event Hall with the capacity of over 200 persons. And also expected that it can be used for weddings, trainings, seminars, meetings, traditional events and also a great alternative source of income for the association.

Comrade Azubuike stressed the need and the influence of the association cuts across all sectors of economy and can be felt in the enforcement and implementation of local content laws, minimum wage passages of Petroleum Industrial Bill (PIB), stabilization of oil prices, construction of better roads, and environmental protection, and these an achieve through comradeship, pragmatism, courage, resilience and altruism. The zonal chiarman also stressed that PENGASSAN has built virile Association that they can be proud of. He also thanked the chief of staff of government house, Hon Emeka Woke, chairman of Obio/Akpo Local who's the local government happens to be the gracious host our Learning/Event Centre. Also appreciate the leaders of PENGASSAN, NUPENG, TUC and NLC.

PRESIDENTIAL AMNESTY PROGRAMME

PROF. CHARLES DOKUBO'S 100 DAYS ON THE SADDLE THE FACTS AND THE FIGURES

On assumption of office after his appointment as Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta and Coordinator, Amnesty Programme by President Muhammadu Buhari on March 13, 2018, Charles Quaker Dokubo, an erudite Professor and nuclear scientist had a clear mandate: to retool the Programme to make it more robust and impactful for the enlisted ex-agitators in the Niger Delta with the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable peace and development in all facets of the region.

"I believe we should train people and train them in such a way that they should have qualifications that will give them jobs, and that is the direction I am going to adopt.

We must have the capacity to give beneficiaries of the Amnesty Programme some qualification that will enable them to work wherever they could. It's not only about mass education; it's qualitative education. Let our people have quality education that will make them stand tall; that is what to do", he said on his vision and mission.

Barely three months on, precisely in 100 days, leaders and stakeholders in the Niger

Delta, are convinced of President Muhammadu Buhari's quest to transform the region through the instrumentality of the Amnesty Programme with the appointment of Prof. Dokubo who they describe as a messiah that has come to chart a new path for the Programme. Their conviction is apparently based on his sterling performance and achievements within a short period.

Towards deepening peace

The meeting with Niger Delta leaders and stakeholder in Lagos was the hallmark of his desire to deepen peace for stability and development in the hitherto restive region. It was the first of its kind since the inception of the Amnesty Programme and preceded four others with critical stakeholder.

A pragmatic, humble and visionary administrator, Dokubo commenced his consultative drive by successfully hosting earlier in Lagos, key leaders of various camps of ex-agitators in the Niger Delta who, at the end of the novel meeting, pledged to work assiduously with the Federal Government towards deepening peace and stability in the oil-rich region to pave way for hitch free

elections in 2018 and beyond. The leaders included Chief Bibopre Ajube, aka General Shoot-at-Sight; Dr. Ebikabowei Victor Ben, Alias Boyloaf, and HRH Ateke Tom.

Representatives of other frontline leaders of ex-agitators in the Niger Delta including Chief Government Ikpenunpolo alias Tompol, attended the meeting.

On June 7, he met with over 30 Phase One leaders of Niger Delta ex-agitators at the Abuja Sheraton Hotels and Towers in furtherance of his peace efforts, and parleyed 70 phase Two and Three leaders the next day at the same venue. He had earlier hosted the leadership of the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDOF), and visited a former Federal Commissioner for information and respected Ijaw leader, Chief Edwin Clark, in his determination to deepen peace in



Prof. Charles Dokubo

the Niger Delta.

Vocational training

As a first step after mounting the saddle Dokubo constituted a committee headed by a university teacher, Prof. Ayibaemi Spiff, to review operations of the Amnesty Programme. Part of the findings of the committee was that while the Amnesty Office had undertaken the construction of five Vocational Training/Reintegration Centres across states in the Niger Delta, however, even two of the centre (in Ondo and Bayelsa States) have been largely completed, none has been activated for the training of thousands of persons enrolled on the Programme that are yet to be skilled due to the failure of the Amnesty Office to pay in full the contract sums, lack of proper supervision and demand for variation by some of the contractors. Interestingly, of the 30,000 persons enlisted in the Presidential Amnesty Programme, 11,297 persons are yet to be placed in either vocational training facilities or deployed for formal education as of when Dokubo assumed office.

Consequently, besides ensuring a smooth sail for 200 delegates of the Amnesty Programme currently undergoing training in automobile at Innoson Kiara Academy, Nnewi, Anambra State, and about 559 training in agriculture at other facilities, he has put measures in place for the completion and activation of all the Vocational Training Centres under construction to fast track the training of the several beneficiaries awaiting skills acquisition. These include the Maritime Vocational Training Centre at Oboama, Rivers State; Basic Skills Vocational Training Centre in Boro Town, Kaiama, Bayelsa State, Power and Energy Vocational Training Centre in Bomadi, Delta State; Oil and Gas Vocational Training Centre, Agadagba-Obon, Ondo State, and the Agricultural Vocational Training Centre in Gelegele, Edo State. The vocational centres at Agadagba and kaiama are expected to come on stream soon, to empower ex-agitators with viable skills to become economically independent and relevant to themselves, families, communities and the nation.

Offshore/Onshore education

Top on the priorities of Dokubo, a scholar of international repute, is the welfare of beneficiaries of the Amnesty Programme undergoing educational programmes in various tertiary institutions within and outside the country. 20 students spread across 66 institutions in 20 countries are currently studying various courses. On Thursday, July 19, he visited students sponsored by the Amnesty Programme in London and met with 47 students and recent graduates from 25 institutions in the UK at the Nigeria High Commission.

The objective of the visit is to enable him evaluate the students' academic progress, celebrate those completing their programmes and charge the

remaining ones to be good ambassadors of the Programmes. He also wanted to hear directly from the students, progression in their academics and general well-being, as well as interact with the Nigeria High Commission representatives.

The meeting had in attendance, the Nigeria High Commissioner, Ambassador George Adesola Oguntade; Deputy High Commissioner, Ambassador Kahiri Bala, and a representative from the Office of the Vice President of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo.

Review of Onshore/Offshore Education Policies

Following appeals from students for the amendment of educational policies particularly for offshore education some of which had severe negative impact on them Dokubo constituted a Policy Review Committee to undertake the assignment with a view to ensure that students under the Amnesty Programme successfully graduate, and for the federal Government to reap its investment. While the Offshore Education Unit had in the past five years implemented eleven key operational policies to guide deployment and management of offshore students, committee reports indicated there were no set policies as of May, 2018 to guide operations of the Onshore Education Unit.

Dokubo has also set the ball rolling in this regard with the drafting of new policies which have been adopted. Effective monitoring of offshore students by relationship Managers under his watch has reduced agitation of students since he assumed office, just as he directed the Onshore Education Unit to develop a sustainable plan for the next two years. This included the preparation of students' allowances on a quarterly basis to ensure deadlines were strictly met and to avoid unforeseen circumstances that could warrant last disbursement of funds by the Federal Government. A verification exercise to ascertain the actual number of students who are beneficiaries of the Amnesty Programme at various universities across the country will soon commence to check misappropriation of government funds. Plans are also at advanced stage for deployment of fresh delegates educational programmes.

Restoring Amnesty Database

In furtherance of President Muhammadu Buhari's anti-corruption crusade, Dokubo has maintained zero tolerance for corruption, and remarkably succeeded in cleaning up the mess at the Amnesty Office. Apart from putting strong measures in place to deter and forestall future breaches, he has taken steps to restore the certainty and sanctity of the database of the Presidential Amnesty Programme.

Sequel to alarming invoices sent by some universities in the country to the Amnesty Office for payment of tuition fees and allowances for students purportedly deployed to the institutions to undergo various educational programmes for the 2017/2018 academic session, Dokubo constituted a committee to conduct a verification exercise. The committee was mandated to amongst others; ascertain how 1,061 students were deployed in March 2018, to various institutions in the country, whether they are beneficiaries of the Presidential Amnesty Programme, and if their deployment followed due process. The committee discovered that out of 1,061 delegates deployed for educational programmes for the 2017/2018 academic session, only 314 were found in the database of the Amnesty Programme.

It was a major anti-corruption feat achieved by Dokubo within a short period in office which has become a subject of investigation by relevant authorities.

Empowerment/Job Placement

Cognizant of the fact that the success of the Reintegration component of the Amnesty Programme depended largely on the Reinsertion part of it which entails aiding Processes of returning already trained ex-agitators to civil society, Dokubo has taken bold steps on empowerment, through the provision of start-up packs and mentoring for several already trained and qualified ex-agitators to become entrepreneurs. Between April and July, 2018, the post Training Engagement Unit of the Amnesty Office empowered 535 beneficiaries in various trade areas. Within May 25 and July 5, 271 beneficiaries were empowered in Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa states. The empowerment trade areas include, building materials (cement); fish farming,



QUOTE BY PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI ON NIGER DELTA

"Our Administration is fully sympathetic to the plight of the good people of Niger Delta and we are in touch with the State Governments and leaderships of the region. It is known that the clean-up of the Ogoniland has started. Infrastructural projects financed by the Federal Government and post amnesty programme financing will continue".

... Culled from President Muhammadu Buhari's Independence Day Speech of October 1, 2016.

poultry, and provision shops.

On August 9, 2018 Prof Dokubo inched a step further on his ladder of achievements with the distribution of starter-packs to 150 already trained ex-agitators at Boro Town, Kaiama, in Bayelsa State. Two deep freezers, a ceiling fan, Sumec Fireman Generator, plastic buckets, 2000 litre overhead water tank, waste collection items, plastic chairs and tables are to be distributed to the beneficiaries in various locations across three states. The empowerment package for the 150 beneficiaries at the epoch making Kaiama even attended by top traditional rulers, community leaders youth groups and government functionaries, also includes payment of a two year rent for a shop for each of the beneficiaries; frozen food items worth 500kg, shop setup with electrical, painting and furniture items. The beneficiaries are also assisted in business name registration, and are provided packaging materials, signage and stationeries.

While 3,150 graduates of vocational training programmes were scheduled for business set-up and empowerment in 2017, 2,500 delegates among them were rolled over to this year due to fund related challenges. However, 5,700 delegates including the expected roll-over from the previous year have been proposed for empowerment/business set-up this year, depending on availability of funds.

Determined to facilitate job placement for beneficiaries of the Amnesty Programme, Prof. Dokubo created a job placement and International Development Partners Engagement Unit (JPIDPEU) on May 2, 2018. So far, the unit has profiled 28 delegates for underwater welding jobs in oil servicing companies; 100 delegates for aviation crop spray pilot jobs. It has also concluded profiling of 25 delegate for catering services, hotel and fast food jobs and 75 delegate for other job opportunities. This is just the beginning of an action plan of the

Post Training Engagement and Job placement units of the Amnesty Office for the next two years. The 28 successful delegates for underwater welding jobs in oil servicing companies are among 53 delegates profiled for selection after a data verification of 103 beneficiaries on the list of those trained in welding.

The Job Placement Unit of the Amnesty Office has stepped up efforts at securing job placement opportunities for beneficiaries trained in catering, garment production and agriculture. Towards this end, it is partnering life NID, and agriculture-based project whose concept was approved in December 2016 by the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (UN-IFAD/Nigeria) Executive Board, and aims to integrate the youth into profitable agriculture in the Niger Delta.

Fresh initiatives by Prof. Charles Dokubo to fast-track the training and empowerment of ex-Niger Delta agitators enlisted in the Presidential Amnesty

Programme has also at transforming beneficiaries of the Amnesty Programme including those to be deployed to UNITAR into successful professionals, whether in the public or private sector, and it is linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is to reduce poverty by 2030.

The component of UNITAR programmes covered by the MOU included Sea-farers' Certificate and National Diploma Course; Subsea Welding Programme, Agribusiness Skills Training Programme, as well as empowerment and job placements for trained delegates which though a critical factor in the reintegration component of the Amnesty Programme, had not been successful in the past. The partnership with UNITAR will yield positive results, as Prof. Dokubo initiates and develop a new paradigm of reintegration programmes from national to international-based synergies.

While trained delegates in maritime related skills had suffered lack of seafarers' component to their skill acquisition in the past, the new partnership with UNITAR in this area will put an end to it.

Apart from achieving synergy between the Amnesty Office and other Ministries, Department and Agencies of the Federal Government saddled with the task of aiding the deepening peace efforts and sustainable development in the Niger Delta, Prof Dokubo has also ensured effective Liaison with Governments of the states in the Niger Delta with a view to creating platforms for the gainful employment of trained ex-agitators. This is just the beginning of several initiatives in his drive to refocus the Amnesty Programme for the benefit of its beneficiaries and the Niger Delta people. He is keeping hope alive with work in progress.

Amnesty is Now Working!

WHY NIGERIA NEEDS TO BE STRUCTURED

By Atiku Abubakar

In a recent interaction in the United States, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo asserted that the "problem with our country is not a matter of restructuring...and we must not allow ourselves to be drawn into the argument that our problems stem from some geographic re-structuring" it is a surprise that the vice-president would take such a position and, in particular, fail to appreciate the connection between Nigeria's defective structure and its under performance.

It is unhelpful to reduce the construct of "restructuring" to a geographical concept as VP Osinbajo does, which in itself demonstrates a lack of appreciation of the core tenets of the concept.

For the avoidance of doubt, restructuring is not about the re-drawing of state or regional boundaries. The restructured Nigeria that a large number of Nigerians talk about, is a Nigeria that not only provides opportunities for everyone to work but even more specifically challenges every layer of governance to demonstrate capacity to create wealth and jobs for the citizens.

Restructuring is not just about the devolution of powers to the states, it is about transforming the respective roles of the federal, state and local governments to perform more efficiently in matters of territorial as well as economic governance.

Above all, when we talk about restructuring, we are not talking

about just constitutional tweaks, we are talking about a cultural revolution. It is not about re-shuffling a few responsibilities or resources, but about disrupting the authoritarian politics our democracy has inherited from its military and colonial rulers of a past.

Viewed this way, Nigeria needs to be restructured. Nigeria has operated a faulty system of federalism especially under military governments. Both economic and political structures are defective, resulting in weak economic management systems which, in turn, prevent all levels of government—federal, states and local governments, from operating at optimal levels.

Faced with the reality of non-performance, Nigerians have clamoured for the restructuring of the economy towards a more diversified structure. To make this happen would require that we establish and sustain a model of governance which would nurture a spirit of participation and consensus on key national issues and accommodate all the diverse segments of the society. In other words, if we accept the wisdom behind calls for a restructuring of the economy, we must be ready to build a foundation for its success: we must, in other words re-structure the polity.

The federal structure is so complex with a very strong centre that it has succeeded in accumulating many responsibilities, and along with these, huge resources, which belong to the other levels of

government.

It is all too obvious that the current arrangement does not respond to the needs of the people at the local level. We have all too often lied to ourselves that the politicians sitting in Abuja can effectively respond to the needs of a population in far remote locations a Kaura Namoda, Iseyin, Arochuku or Bama. Only the autonomy of the local governments and the states both of which are closer to their people than the central government in Abuja can guarantee this and result in more effective decisions. Only when local administrations are on the saddle will there be greater accountability for decision making as well improved flexibility, adaptability and ability to change as a result of a reduction in bureaucracy.

I strongly believe that the restructuring of Nigeria will foster the spirit of co-operation and consensus in a nation of diverse ethnic groups, cultures and religions. It is desirable, in fact you may even say it is required to establish, nurture and sustain a strong and effective democratic government.

In this continuous dialogue, we should remind ourselves that restructuring is not a new or strange phenomenon.

A number of developing economies have had cause to restructure their economies, for a greater efficiency or to correct imbalance or to reoriented systems with greater reliance on the private sector as engine of growth. Even the United Kingdom is restructuring its political and economic systems to enable a better union among its component parts. Businesses restructure for better performance. Even families do!

Working with the National Assembly and all other stakeholders, we will lead the process of genuine and transparent constitutional amendments, in order to provide the necessary stimulus and focus on how to restructure Nigeria the would work for all.

Atiku Abubakar, a former Vice-President is a presidential aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party

Issele-Uku Agog As Obi Nduka Performs 'Izu Afiachi' In Afor Market



Issele-Uku, the Administrative Headquarters of Aniocha North LGA of Delta State, was agog as market women, residents and visitors scramble to catch a glimpse at the amiable monarch of Oligbo Kingdom, HRM Agbogidi Obi Nduka, Obi of Issele-Uku, as he emerged from the palace to perform the 'Izu Afiachi', an age long tradition of visiting the market to signal publicly, the anniversary of the Issele-Uku annual festival. Obi Nduka who was beaming with smiles, waved intermittently at the cheering crowd and throwing money at the market women and children who scrambled to catch some.

He also bought commodities from market women and paid them handsomely.

He also bought commodities from market women and paid them handsomely.

Obi Nduka who just returned from the United States of America to commence the annual festival, walked round the market until visiting the Odu Omu, where the Omu

Designate, Madam Beatrice Nwamumu received him. He greeted the Omu and her cabinet members and dropped a gift for them.

He said prayers at strategic locations within the market – Ishu Mkpitime and Ishu Onicha before returning to the palace to report to the waiting elders led by Ogbelani Diokpa Isimchei Okonkwo of how the buying at the market went.

According to Diokpa Isimchei, "Izu Afiachi is as old as Issele-Uku. It is the market of the gods, praying and thanking God for another season of festival celebrations. You must inform your God when you are celebrating your anniversary (Onye Gba Ahor Ogwa Chie). It is when Obi Isei visits the market to pray and call on God to take control of affairs before embarking on activities heralding the annual festival of Issele-Uku.

Traditionally, Obi Isei cannot do anything regarding our festival without going to the market, to signal the commencement of the annual festival.

At the market, Obi will make sacrifices by buying commodities from market women and throwing money to those who cheer at his presence. It is usually a thing of joy to see an Obi Isei, because it might take like another year before some persons may have the opportunity to see him again.

Now that our Obi is back from the market, he will now explain how the market was. It is the same thing when a woman goes to the market, she will come back to say market was good today or the other way round.

It is a yearly thing. And of course, Obi cannot go to the market without meeting the Omu at her shop (Odu). The Omu is the custodian

of the market; it is a known truth that when the Omu leaves market is when the market officially closes for the day. So the Obi must meet the Omu in the market and will be duly welcomed by her", Ogbelani narrated.

The Ogbelani, therefore called on illustrious sons and daughters of Oligbo Kingdom to always come around to witness these traditional activities preceding the Ine Festival in the interest of history.

In addition, Chief Uche Ngbanwa (the Ashi-Obi of Issele-Uku), affirmed that the Issele-Uku annual festival commenced on the 20th of August with the traditional function of "Ilo Ifedi Unyagbe".

He stated that 'Ilor Ifedi Unyagbe' is a private prayer of the Obi and Anasi-Obi (wife), where they perform the act of cooking together and praying to God for a fruitful, prosperous and safe season of harvest, otherwise known as the New Yam Festival (Iwaji).

It was a fun-filled ceremony ignited at the arrival of Ndi Egwu Issoh and Ndi Opi to usher out Obi Nduka, which immediately changed the atmosphere at the palace. The following chiefs accompanied Obi Nduka on this very important traditional outing: Chief Fidelis Jigide (Isagba of Issele-Uku), Chief Peter Ijei (Akogwu of Issele-Uku), Chief Victor Isiekwenagbu (Oza of Issele-Uku), Chief Gabriel Ebite (Agujiegbe of Issele-Uku), Chief Emperor (Ogodili-Eze of Issele-Uku). Others are the Onei Nweafia, Chi-Obi, Osodi and Ashi-Obi.

Culled from Patrick Ochei

2019 elections set to be Nigeria's most expensive

By Odilim Enwegbara

The 2019 general elections are set to be Nigeria's most expensive polls in history, according to Daily Trust investigations of approved official expenditure of past elections. President Muhammadu Buhari had proposed N242.45bn (equivalent to \$672.35m at official exchange rate) to the National Assembly for next year's general elections. The money will be shared between the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and five other security agencies that police the elections.



Mrs. Amina Zakari



Prof. Mahmood Yakubu



Dr. Abiola Akiyode Afolabi



Odilim Enwegbara

The federal electoral umpire will spend a total of N190bn, representing 73.51 percent of the proposed amount, while the remaining N52.45bn (26.49 percent) would go to security agencies that will police the voting process.

The breakdown shows that the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) was allocated N4.28bn, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) N3.57bn, Nigeria Police Force N30.54bn, Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) N2.63bn, and Directorate of State Security (DSS) N12.21bn.

During the 2015 elections, with 67m registered voters, Nigeria spent \$625m, according to data prepared by the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS) in 2015.

INEC had at a recent stakeholders' summit in Abuja said that over 100 political parties may feature on the ballot paper during the 2019 polls,

while an estimated 80m voters may take part in the elections.

The election budget is about \$50m higher than what Nigeria spent during 2015 elections. What INEC is set to get this year is also more than half of what the commission got from 1999 to 2015 as electoral expenditure.

From 1999 to 2018, the INEC had received N450bn as an electoral expenditure from the federal government, according to official documents reviewed by Daily Trust.

These figures did not include other money INEC got from international organisations working on election areas over the period.

The federal government, through the National Assembly, approves money (electoral expenditure) for INEC during election years, apart from its traditional budgetary allocations.



Adams Oshiomhole

poll.

Kenya, with 14.3m registered voters, spent \$427m during its general elections in 2012 and \$499m in 2017, while Australia, with 14.7m voters, spent \$197.6m for the House of Representatives and half of Senate elections in 2013.

Nigeria to spend more than India, bigger economies such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

Nigeria's elections cost higher than Canada, for instance, spent \$375m the \$600m the Electoral on electoral expenditure where Commission of India (ECI) spent 17.5m voted. The United Kingdom during the 2014 general elections in spent £113m during its 2010 which 553.8m people voted out of parliamentary elections in which 815m registered voters.

The cost of conducting elections in Nigeria is also higher than those of

45.6m voted. £28.6m was the cost of distributing candidates' mailings, and £84.6m for the conduct of the

Budget to enhance card readers—INEC

But the director of voter education and publicity of INEC, Oluwale Osaze Uzzi, said the INEC budget will be used in procurement of enough card readers, upgrading them for the elections, as well funding overhead cost.

The INEC director, who spoke in a television programme monitored by our reporter, said: "You do know that your laptops, even in the best storage conditions, don't work efficiently and effectively as they did eight years ago. Technology has moved on. So, with the improvement



Uche Secondus

of technology, we have to country's return to democracy in electoral umpire's highest total enhance the card readers and 1999. budgetary expenditure was

voters cards." The total budgetary allocations during the 2015 elections where

He said the commission "will INEC received from the federal it spent a total of N236.7bn from certainly do the budget defense government from 1999 to 2018, 2012 to 2015.

process and when it is done it will was N730.99bn, according to The electoral commission spent be by way of an appropriation official documents reviewed by about N212.6bn from 2008 and act. We will make it public. I am Daily Trust. 2011; N84.6bn from 2004 to

sure the National Assembly will Of this sum, N450bn was 2007, and N54.2bn from 2000 to make it public." captured under 'electoral 2003, according to the INEC data.

Daily Trust recalls that while expenditure,' while N191.8bn **Polls shouldn't be moneymaking venture – CISLAC**

defending the 2018 budget was 'personnel cost,' N36.9bn The Buhari administration should be worried about the cost of

estimates of the electoral body in 'overhead cost,' and N54.7bn was The electoral expenditure started conducting elections, Auwal January, INEC chairman Professor 'capital expenditure projects.' with N1.5bn in 1999 to N29bn in Musa Rafsanjani of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) told Daily Trust.

Mahmud Yakubu had said that The exact cost of the 2019 general elections, which would hold across the 119,999 polling units in the country, could only be arrived at after the passage of electoral act by the National Assembly. He said given the Further analysis of the official administration's position on the documents revealed that the effective and responsible

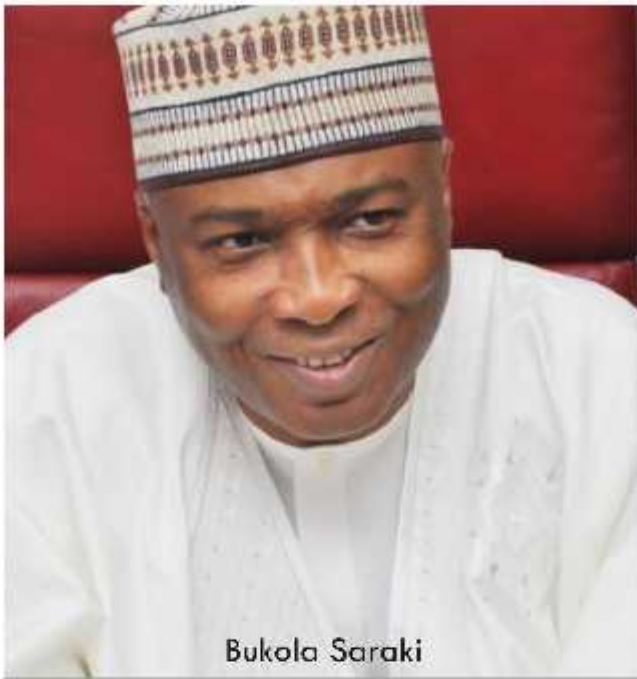
The N242.45bn proposal was made by the president after the transmission of a new version of the amendment made to the 2010 electoral act by the National Assembly.

Rise and rise of elections cost

Review of official documents of INEC budgetary allocations showed that the cost of elections has been rising since the



Musa Rafsanjani



Bukola Saraki



Yakubu Dogara

management of public resources, it's expected that there would be a reduction of waste and extravagant spending in conducting elections. "The proposed budget to hold elections has not given hope that under this administration we will not witness abuse of public resources in the name of holding elections which even the previous administrations have not spent this much," he said. Rafsanjani said, "Unfortunately despite the huge spending on elections in Nigeria, we still witness fraudulent electoral outcome and violence which this huge proposed budget may not guarantee integrity in its outcome." The CISLAC chief said Nigeria must "stop wasting public funds in every election circle and build a credible system like other countries where



conducting an election is not an avenue for money-making."

He advised that this government must at the end give assurance of electoral transparency and absence of manipulation and violence.

INEC audit reports should be public—TMG

The Chairperson of Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Dr Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, told Daily Trust that civil society organisations must track the election budget to ensure value for money.

"While I am not saying that the budget may be padded or not, I think that it's important that due diligence is ensured in

procurement, checks and balances is done effectively by the agencies or organs expected to perform oversight function on INEC," she said.

Akiyode-Afolabi said, "INEC should also disclose previous

audit reports to enable more comparison of costs allocated for

various items previously and now."

"TMG is yet to assess the full budget breakdown for the 2019 elections to be able to do a nuanced analysis, however in a country that is going through

economic downturn one will be quick to say spending such an amount on the election is very high," Dr Abiola said.

What Nigeria can do with election budget

Comparatively, the proposed 2019 election budget is enough

to fund the dualisation, reconstruction and rehabilitation of 62 key economic roads across the six geo-political zones of the country.

Also, the election budget is about 44 times higher than what the 36 federal universities will spend on capital projects in 2018.



PHOTOSPEAK

Publisher of Newsplatform Magazine, Prince Vincent Egunyanga recently hosted the Director, Niger Delta Development Company (NDDC) Dr. Ibitoye Abosedo, in Port Harcourt among the dignitaries that attended the hosting included some media executives. It was to honour Dr. Abosedo who bagged recently.



Kano 2019: The battle ahead for Ganduje, Kwankwaso, Shekarau



Following recent defection of Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso and about 13 other Senators from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Kano State Correspondent, Kolade Adeyemi, recalls the political rivalry between former Governor Kwankwaso and his successor, the incumbent Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje and former Governor Ibrahim Shekarau and reports on the likely effects of Kwankwaso's defection in the intricate politics of Kano State ahead the 2019 General Elections



SINCE last Wednesday's political drama at the Red Chamber of the National Assembly, when about 14 senators defected from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) there has been speculation that the development would go a long way in shaping or re-shaping political calculations ahead the 2019 general elections.

To keen observers of Nigeria's current politics, it was however not a surprise in the real sense of the word, though everyone seem to agree that the development would affect the politics of various states and zones differently. The Nation observes that hours after the defection of the senators, the effects have started to manifest, especially in the states where stories of political alignment and re-alignment had been heard loudly.

In Kano, for example, the battle has been centred on three major political gladiators: the incumbent Governor, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje; his immediate-predecessor as governor, Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso; and another former governor of the state, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau. Though there may be other political leaders that could also spring surprises, there is no doubt that they are bound to queue behind the political lineages of these three.

At the inception of the fourth Republic in 1999, Engr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, on a twin-ticket with Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, won the Kano State governorship election under the banner of the PDP. As at that time, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau was Permanent Secretary in the Cabinet Office. His disposition over Kwankwaso's style of leadership which was extremely critical did not go down well with Governor Kwankwaso, who in many occasions, openly showed his anger to the senior civil servant.

Kwankwaso and Shekarau's rift grew stronger by the day so much that at one point, Kwankwaso ordered his immediate redeployment out of cabinet office and later demoted him to a class room teacher. This development prompted Shekarau's resignation from the civil service. He went in search of greener pastures with the Dantata Foundation.

Free from the 'bondage' of civil service under a perceived antagonist governor, Shekarau in 2002 re-energised his plot of sacking Kwankwaso out of Kano Government House. Using aggressive propaganda, Shekarau who was respected for his pious lifestyle, particularly, within the religious

circle, endeared himself into the heart of the Kano masses. In the build-up to the 2003 general elections, Shekarau aligned with the populist Muhammadu Buhari (now the sitting President), who was the presidential candidate of the All Peoples Party (APP). With the influence of Buhari, Shekarau clinched the APP governorship ticket and defeated incumbent Kwankwaso, in a historic election that has continued to beat the imagination of pundits. Shekarau held sway as Governor of Kano State for consecutive eight years, breaking the jinx in Kano politics. For these eight years, Shekarau tackled Kwankwaso, notwithstanding the so-called Federal might which he enjoyed as the Minister of Defence under President Olusegun Obasanjo.

In 2011 general elections, at the expiration of Shekarau's tenure, Kwankwaso staged an aggressive come-back and defeated Shekarau's choice candidate, Salihu Sagir Takai of the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP). At this point, Ganduje remained Kwankwaso's deputy. Kwankwaso and Shekarau had another open political clash at the advent of the legacy party that later transmuted into the All Progressive Congress (APC). In fact, Mallam Shekarau, who came from the ANPP bloc of the legacy parties, was said to be one of the brains behind the APC merger arrangement.

At this point, Kwankwaso, engrossed with his presidential ambition, became a major player among the PDP rebels that formed the nPDP.

In the heat of the PDP crisis, Kwankwaso, with power and money at his disposal, struck a deal with the APC and cross-carpeted and the party structure

was handed over to him on a platter of gold. Malam Shekarau who was relegated by the party leadership had no choice than to play to the tune of the PDP-led Federal Government, which compensated him with the portfolio of Minister of Education.

Also, the political atmosphere in Kano remains even more tensed following the irreconcilable political rift between Kwankwaso and Governor Ganduje, which started at the tail-end of Kwankwaso's second-tenure. The unfolding drama that followed last Monday's defection of Kwankwaso to PDP, forced Ganduje to cut short his official trip to London. Being one of the major point men to President Muhammadu Buhari and considering the strategic nature of Kano to Buhari's 2019 presidential project, Ganduje, who made a short stop-over at Abuja, ensured that his political structure remained intact and solid. In fact, his immediate response to the already tense situation foiled a grand plot to divide the Kano State House of Assembly by Kwankwaso and his men. Ganduje's underground work paid off as the leadership of Kano State House of Assembly, came out openly to puncture rumours that 22 of them, including the Speaker, were making plans to defect to the PDP. Addressing reporters on the development, the Speaker, Hon. Yusuf Abdullahi Ata, dispelled the rumour of defection of some APC members to the PDP and affirmed that members of the Assembly were in solid support of Governor Ganduje and President Muhammadu Buhari.

According to him, "the Assembly has 40 members from the 44

local government areas in the state and 33 of those members are solidly loyal to Ganduje and Buhari. Six members, who are staunch followers of Kwankwaso, as well as one PDP member, who clinched the mandate through the outcome of Supreme Court judgment, are still with us. Ata further stressed that, "the defection of Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso to PDP will not in any way affect Governor Ganduje's victory in Kano State."

Also speaking on Kwankwaso's defection to PDP, his cousin, who is currently serving as Ganduje's Commissioner for Rural and Community Development, Ilyasu Musa Kwankwaso, described it as a blessing to Ganduje's 2019 return. According to him, "Kwankwaso's return to the PDP will only succeed in capturing 60 per cent of the party's structure. The former Foreign Minister, Ambassador Aminu Wali and the erstwhile Minister of Education, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau, including Senator Bello Hayyatu will be left to grapple with the remaining 40 per cent."

Ilyasu Kwankwaso further explained that, "the implication of this is that Senator Kwankwaso will never endorse the candidature of Aminu Wali and Shekarau. He will attempt to manipulate the already existing structure for his personal gain. I want you all to wait for the next one month, after the defection of Senator Kwankwaso from the ruling APC and be on the watch out for what would happen, as there would be mass defection of numerous PDP members to the APC. Kwankwaso will neither support Wali's candidature nor Shekarau's candidature."

It is however important to underscore the fact that from the forgoing scenario, Kwankwaso's main target is to ensure that Ganduje is not re-elected as governor of Kano State in 2019. Already, he has started perfecting his plots with the endorsement of Ganduje's deputy, Prof. Hafiz Abubakar, as a potential governorship candidate in the 2019 gubernatorial elections in the state. This plot is becoming clearer because few months ago, Hafiz openly declared that he was not interested to run as deputy governor

with Governor Ganduje in the 2019 elections. Also, a fortnight ago, Prof. Hafiz and Kwankwaso were sighted in London where they held a high profile political meeting with some Kano stakeholders, where Prof. Hafiz was finally endorsed to run as a governorship candidate in the 2019 governorship election.

Reacting to Kwankwaso's defection to PDP, Malam Shekarau, through his spokesman, Sule Yau Sule, welcomed him to the party and only hoped that he would abide by the constitution of the party and play the game of politics according to the rules. "I hope the PDP has received a reformed Kwankwaso. I hope it is not the old Kwankwaso I knew. I hope he will, this time around, abide by the rules and regulations of the PDP. I hope he will not repeat what he did after he joined APC in 2015. At that time, he took over everything, leaving us with empty hands. I hope Kwankwaso is not coming to PDP to repeat the injustice he did in 2015. If everybody will be allowed to play his card according to rules of the party, that will be better for him (Kwankwaso) and every member of the party," he added.

However, though there were rumours that Kwankwaso and Ganduje are struggling to win the heart of Shekarau, the former Minister of Education however denied striking any deal yet with both of them, adding that he never sat one-on-one with Kwankwaso since 2015.

Be that as it may, pundits have continued to doubt the possibility of Kwankwaso working together Shekarau as many of Shekarau's lieutenants are said to have started piling pressure on the two-time Kano State Governor to dump PDP for Kwankwaso before it is too late. Come what may, as events continue to unfold in the weeks ahead, the compass is focusing on Ganduje, Shekarau and Kwankwaso as no one can predict, for now, where the pendulum will swing.

Culled from Nationonline.com



Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on why climate leadership is a new growth opportunity for the world

By Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, will gather next week at the and prosperity. And the Co-Chair, Global Global Climate Action Summit good news is that Commission on the in in San Francisco: we are all making it sustainable Economy and Climate significantly underestimating doesn't need to cost The world is teetering on the the economic opportunity that more, on the contrary, it cusp of a new economic era. can be gained from cleaner, can lead to real cost This comes as major structural climate-smart growth. New savings. Significant changes are shaping the global analysis is finding that bold technological and economy, like rapid climate action could yield a market progress over urbanisation, major direct economic gain of \$US26 the last decade has demographic transitions, trillion through to 2030, already begun driving increasing globalisation, compared with business-as- the shift to a new climate a shift to service-based usual. And we know that these economy, proving that economies, and increasing numbers are likely to be we can have strong automation. Can this conservative. We are at a growth, while tremendous shift deliver unique "use it or lose it" acting on climate strong, sustainable and moment in history. Over the change. And we are inclusive growth? Will it make next 12-15 years, we expect to already seeing real people's lives better? The invest about US\$90 trillion in results: new jobs, decisions we make today will infrastructure, more than the economic savings, determine the answers to total current stock. Ensuring i n c r e a s e d these important questions. that the infrastructure we invest competitiveness and One thing should be clear to us in is sustainable will be a critical market opportunities, all and especially to those who determinant of future growth and improved wellbeing

for people worldwide. This period is also essential in terms of climate. The last 19 years included 18 of the warmest years on record. In 2017, weather- and climate-related disasters were responsible for thousands of deaths and US\$320 billion in losses. Unless we act boldly on climate now, we will continue to see more frequent and more extreme weather events like these.

What will it take to unlock this opportunity? Among the most urgent priorities over the next 2-3 years are implementing carbon pricing and removing fossil fuels subsidies. This could generate more than US\$2.8 trillion in government revenues in 2030, equivalent to the GDP of India today, for use toward other public priorities or to reduce distorting taxes.

Other key priorities that can be catalytic are: accelerated investment in sustainable infrastructure, harnessing the power of the private sector and unleashing innovation, and ensuring a people-centered approach so that the gains are shared equitably and that the transition is just. Women especially play a critical role in delivering and benefiting from inclusive, sustainable growth. Greater participation by women in the economy drives growth.

And in countries where more

women participate in political life, parliaments are more likely to set aside protected lands and ratify international environmental treaties.

Given that women are often the most affected by a changing climate, and that they currently represent just 23% of parliamentarians worldwide, there is clearly an important opportunity to enhance women's leadership in delivering this new growth agenda.

Accelerating towards a strong, sustainable, inclusive economy requires decisive leadership. Finance Ministers, in particular, play a critical role in guiding investments and setting the right conditions to unlock much-needed private capital at scale. When I served as Finance Minister of Nigeria, for example, we worked to reform petrol subsidies in 2012.

Some \$13bn worth of petrol subsidies had been burdening the Nigerian national budget, and we were able to redirect some of those funds to much more productive ends.

Within a year, our programme to reinvest the savings from what was previously spent on subsidies meant we could finish renovation of a north-south national railway, as well as introduce improved

maternal and childcare services in 500 primary healthcare centres. Others have found similar benefits: in Indonesia, fuel subsidy savings in 2015 were reallocated to major investments in social welfare and infrastructure through increased budgets for ministries, state-owned enterprise, and transfers to regions and villages. Using lessons learnt from Nigeria, Indonesia and other countries, Finance Ministers can take bold steps to lead a whole of government approaches to growth that can deliver development and climate objectives.

We can eliminate extreme poverty, prevent dangerous climate change, and improve the lives and livelihoods of millions. But only if we set out to do so decisively.

Fortunately, we still have a window of opportunity to deliver a better world with more efficient, livable cities; with low-carbon, smart energy, mobility and water for all; and through the restoration of degraded lands while protecting valuable forests.

There can be no kicking the can down the road. Each effort underway around the world must build on the last to tip the world over the cusp and into a better future for all.

Sultan: Everything not okay in Nigeria



The sultan added: "We have our problems and challenges. But we should collectively try and overcome them. As leaders, we must try and work for peace. There is no problem in this world that defies solution unless we are not honest. If not, we will overcome the problems." "We must also educate our followers that despite the challenges, we belong to one God Almighty but choose to worship God in different ways." On 2019 general election, he implored politicians to stop using children of the poor to spread violence.

He also spoke against killing of innocent people in the name of religion. "People have wrong notions of Jihad.

You cannot kill people pretending you are fighting for God. You are simply deceiving yourself. Jihad does not entail that. God did not create you to fight for Him," he said.

Earlier, the National President of Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, Archbishop Augustine Akubeze, lauded the sultan for his roles on interfaith peace and peaceful coexistence in the country.

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Cardinal Onaiyekan, noted the need for peace among religious leaders and for them to work towards ensuring peaceful coexistence among the citizens. In his remarks, the Catholic Bishop of the Sokoto Diocese, Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah, acknowledged the sultan's cordiality to all, irrespective of religion and other

The Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, speak the truth. Everything is not okay yesterday urged religious leaders to unite and preach against violence before, during and after the 2019 elections, just as he said Nigerians should stop deceiving themselves over the country's problems.

He also advised politicians to stop fighting because of defections. "Politics is a choice, like religion. Therefore, let's not fight each other because of defection," he said when he received the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria in his palace in Sokoto yesterday.

religion, ethnicity or region. I know we have problems in Nigeria. Let's not deceive ourselves."

"There is no fight between Christianity and Islam, but maybe disagreement between Muslims and Christians. But we must try and fish out extremists in our midst. Though, you cannot completely fish out bad eggs from the society, we should continue doing our part to ensure a peaceful country," he said.

Apapa Customs May Exceed 2018 N426bn Revenue Target- DC Gaya



Despite the gridlock quarter of this year by about due to the fact that most that has N4.3 billion, collected Nigerians abroad always use characterized the N176.7 billion as revenue in this period of the year to access road to the Lagos the first half of this year send goods home for sale to Ports and the low level of while it succeeded in the use the proceeds to imports into the country, the first seven months at celebrate the Yuletide with Apapa Customs Command generating N210.2 billion, families and friends or for of the Nigerian Customs thus exceeding the revenue investments. Service (NCS) may meet and of the corresponding period The Automated Systems for possibly surpass the of last year. Customs Data (ASYCUDA) revenue of N426 billion The hope of meeting the Project Manager / Deputy given it this year as target by target by the Command is Comptroller Revenue, the Headquarters of the also high because it is Apapa Command, Service. expected that there would Muhammed Gaya told Despite the challenges, the be an increase in the volume Marine & Economy journal in Command was able to of import in the last quarter Lagos recently that in spite improve on its revenue – a characteristic of the last of all odds, the Command generation in the first three months of every year was not leaving any stone

untuned to achieve its revenue target for this year or even surpass it. He however said that it would be an onerous task baring in mind that the level of imports through the Apapa Ports from which the revenue is realized has been low since the beginning of this year but pointed out that the high dedication of the officers to their work and the various revenue collection strategies that have been adopted by the Command may make it possible.

Gaya stated that every Customs Command naturally has it as a desire to meet and possibly surpass the revenue target the Federal Government has set for it adding that Apapa Command has always strived to meet its revenue target in recent times and has been working towards it even harder this year.

He disclosed that the launch recently and the subsequent commencement of implementation of the Nigerian Integrated Customs Information System (NICIS) II platform which has demonstrated its capacity to boost the revenue collection profile of the Command may make the increase in revenue and possibly exceeding it a reality.

The Command has consistently exceeded its revenue level on a monthly basis so far this year even better than what obtained in the corresponding period of last year while it has also worked towards meeting the target given to it for the period.

Gaya said the Command is poised to continue to firm up its revenue collection through ensuring that importers pay the right duty on their goods, plugging of loopholes in revenue, constant training of the officers as well as enlightenment for

the stakeholders constantly on the need to abide by the rules adding that all these will assist in its quest to meet the target. The Command's policy of engaging in recovery of debts owed it by importers, focusing on the handling of non oil exports as well as improvement in the level of compliance have also helped in raising its revenue collection level.

The Deputy Comptroller has also appealed to the importers, the licensed customs agents and the freight forwarders to constantly improve on their capacity of compliance in revenue payment by ensuring that they are sincere in their declaration so that they can pay the correct duty on their goods, emphasizing that there is no limit to compliance in revenue payment.

The N426 billion revenue target of the Command is the highest of all the targets of any Customs Command being that the Apapa Area Command is the biggest while the Apapa Port from which it generates its revenue is also the largest of all the seaports in the country.

The Command was able to collect over 90 per cent of its revenue target for last year despite the odds, raising hope that it will meet the target this year, due to the new automation and the human efficiency in its operations.

The fact that the 1.2 kilometre road severely damaged portion of the Access road leading to the Apapa Port is close to completion while the traffic congestion is being put under control by a combined team of law enforcement agents is also a plus that the revenue collection would increase and the target would be met by the end of the year.

African Senior Athletics Championships: Athletes Depart Asaba After Big Show

Athletes and officials of countries that participated in the 21st African Senior Athletics Championship have commended the organisers for a job well done.

In a statement issued by Olukayode Thomas, Head Media and Publicity for CAA Asaba 2018, the LOC boss, Chief Solomon Ogba thanked all the athletes and officials from all the participating countries for making the 2018 African Championships a memorable one.

Ogba affirmed that despite the initial setbacks which were promptly addressed, Asaba 2018 remains one of the most glamorous African Championships ever hosted on the continent.

"We are very grateful to the Delta State governor; first for making available these planes to airlift the athletes and their officials back to Lagos as they fly back to their various countries.

"Beyond that, we are also very grateful to Gov. Okowa for making Asaba 2018 a reality and bringing Africa to Delta State.

"We are sure that the legacies from this championship will be long lasting," Ogba said.

On their part, the departing athletes and their officials commended the Asaba 2018 LOC for all their hard work geared at seeing that the African Championships was hugely successful.

Members of Team Kenya who emerged as the overall champions after five day of competition at the newly-completed Stephen Keshi Stadium said they would always have fond memories of Asaba as it turned to be a 'lucky' ground for them.

Despite not finishing tops, members of Team South Africa, South Sudan, Eritria and others said they were happy to be in Delta State adding that they had a swell time in the peaceful city of Asaba.

The Confederation of African Athletics, CAA have already announced Algeria as the host of the next championship.

Okowa Bags Olympic Merit Award, Says Award Will Inspire Him To Do More

For his outstanding roles in the development of sports in the country, Governor of Delta State, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa has bagged Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC) Merit Award.

In a colourful award ceremony held in Asaba President of NOC, Engr. Habu Gumel personally presented the award to the governor at the ceremony which also, saw such notables personalities as Rt. Hon. Sir Adekunle Ademola, Sir Awotire Eleyae, late Alhaji Babayo Shehu, Chief Falilat Ogunkoya-Omotayo, Blessing Okagbare-Ighotegunor, Sir Isaac Uwadiaelkhuoria, among others receiving awards at the ceremony.

Governor Okowa thanked God for using him as an instrument for the development of sports and urged government at all levels to be committed to the development of sports.

According to the governor, "I must truly

thank the President of NOC for the award given to me, it will spur me to talk about sports and encourage the development of sports."

"We should get more committed to our athletes and sports development and I believe that government can drag the private sector to support the development of sports because, with the support of government and the private sector, our sports men and women can do more," the governor said, adding, "I thank the organizers of this award, it is very instructive and very heartwarming to get the award done because there is no one who does not like to be appreciated for his good deeds, I believe with this awards, we have encouraged our sports men and women or encouraged their children to continue with strides; we should have a space to continue to appreciate those who have won laurels for us both locally and internationally."

The governor used the occasion to also appreciate those who have contributed to the success story of the African Athletics

Championship.

He noted that, "this championship has greatly touched the economy of this city and our state, but beyond that, sports is a unifying factor and many of our young ones will be encouraged to go into sports and use sports to better their lives; there is nothing you spend in sports that is a waste."

Minister of Sports and Youths Development, Barr. Solomon Dalung, represented by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Mr Adesola Olusade said Governor Okowa has distinguished himself as a patriotic Nigeria by making it possible for Asaba to host the Senior Athletics Championships and commended the NOC for recognising talents that have contributed to the development of sports in the country.

Engr. Gumel commended the committee that selected the award recipients recognising men and women who have won gold for the country and congratulated Governor Okowa for the successful hosting of the Asaba 2018.



After pulling out of the 100m and 200m events, Blessing Okagbare was on the tracks in the Day 3 of action at the African Senior Athletics Championships and she made her presence count; helping Nigeria to a gold medal in the 4x100m women's event.

The gold medal-winning quartet for Nigeria had youngster, Joy Udo-Gabriel starting off in grand style before Okagbare

took the second leg and handed nicely to Tobiloba Amusan and Rosemary Chukwuma held her own to give Nigeria a precious gold medal ahead of the Ivorian quartet led by Ahuriele Ta Lou.

The Nigerian ladies posted an impressive time of 43.77secs.

"We thank God almighty for

our team winning the gold, this is a collective effort, we all put in our best to give Nigeria gold and we are happy we delivered," Okagbare told journalists after the race. In the men's 4x100m, Nigeria with a time of 38.74secs settled for second place behind South Africa who so far are dominating the proceedings in Asaba.

There was more celebration for Nigeria in the field events with home girl, Ese Brume leaping to gold with 6.83m.

In the Women's Discus, Onyekwere Chioma got gold with a throw of 58.09m while her compatriot Okoro Chinwe got silver with her throw 57.37m.

Meanwhile, African athletes competing at the 21st African Senior Athletics Championship have expressed delight at the electric atmosphere inside the





Stephen Keshi Stadium since the competition began on Wednesday.

As promised by the Local Organising Committee Chairman, Solomon Ogbu there has been a huge turnout of fans at the stadium since Day 1 and the African stars on parade have given thumbs up to the Asaba fans.

Africa's fastest man at the moment, Akanni Simbine who won the 100m heat event said it was not only a delight to win the gold medal but to also be in Nigeria.

Simbine described Nigeria as a sports-loving country, owing to the level of interest shown by the people since the commencement of the ongoing 2018 Africa Senior Athletics Championship in Asaba, Delta.

He said: "If Nigeria can start preparations on time by putting good logistics in place and doing all the necessary things, they can host the rest of the world in athletics.

"The fans here are wonderful and very

cheerful, which is also part of the glamour of major athletics meets in the world. So, if Nigeria can get the other things right, they can host the world," he suggested.

in the 400m Women's event also hailed the high spirits of Delta state fans that have been thronging the Stephen Keshi stadium in large numbers since Caster Semenya who won the gold medal Wednesday.



VACANCY

**Reporters/Correspondents
Wanted Nation Wide**

Qualifications

**HND, BA/BSC in Mass Communications From
Any Recognised Polytechnic or University, in Nigeria.
Apply to Info@newsplatformngr.com**

VISIT

OUR DAILY

**Newspaper/online news reports
for breaking news, detail reports,
features, interviews, events coverage,
sports, supplements/adverts on**

www.newsplatformngr.com

NEWSPLATFORM MEDIA

CONTACT US
FOR YOUR

GRAPHIC DESIGNS
NEWSPAPER/ MAGAZINE
PRODUCTION
PASSPORT
ID CARD

Press Conferences
Newspaper Adverts
Change of Name
Posting of Posters

20 Ohia Street, Old GRA. Amadi Flat,
Port Harcourt

OR CALL:
08031979708, 08055379764

DI
PRINT

