

Q3 2019

Local

Digest

CONTENT

NCDMB stakeholder magazine



AfCFTA

*Taking Nigerian Content
to new African*

Markets

Desicon's Anchor Handling Tug and Supply Vessel, *Frontier Silver*, sets sail to Nigeria

On the back of its recent success on the Exxon Mobil Ibot Wellhead Platform Tender and in fulfillment of the commitment made by the Management of Desicon Engineering Limited at the Practical Nigerian Content Conference held in the first week of December 2018, the Company's AHTS has set sail in Nigerian waters to support its Pipelay Barge, the S900, in its offshore operations. As a pacesetter in the industry, this development will significantly boost Desicon's capacity to deliver more local content value to its esteemed clients and generate additional revenue for growth.

Desicon continues to take strides in CAPEX investments and human capacity development in line with its vision to growing a world-class EPCIC service provider.

In its down time, the *Frontier Silver* will also be available for hire by other Operators



Frontier Silver specs

Vessel type – AHTS (Anchor handling cum tug & supply vessel DP2)
Class - ABS (American Bureau of Shipping)
Port of registry - Lagos
Manning company – CS Offshore, DMC Dubai
Length - 69.90m

Breadth - 16.90ms
Depth moulded - 7.20m
Draft designed - 4.50m
Complement - 42 Men
Gross tonnage - 2538
Net tonnage - 761
Max speed - 13kn

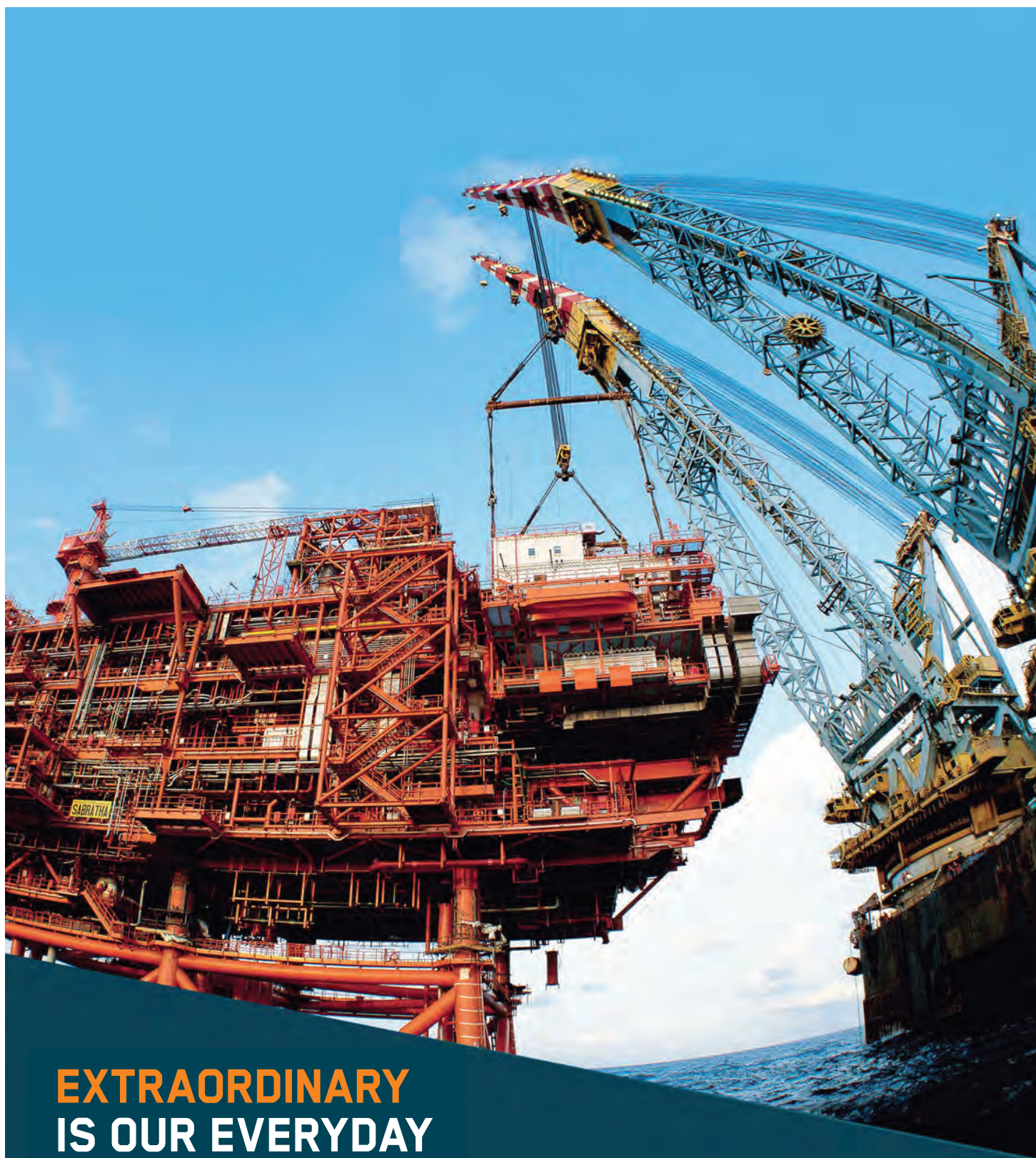
Main engine - 02 Nos (Man B&W)
DG sets - 02 Nos (Caterpillar)
Shaft generators - 02 Nos
Emergency generator— 01
Bow thrusters - 02 Nos
Stern thruster - 01 No

Frontier Silver is equipped with fully operational navigational equipment on bridge and complies with all class requirements.



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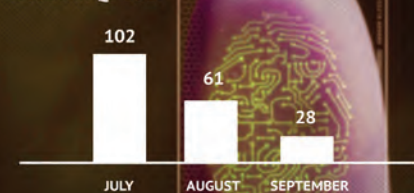
SMART FACT

Biometric Records in Q3 2019

JULY TO SEPTEMBER



Biometric Cards Issued in Q3 2019



Commercial Evaluation Report issued in Q3 2019



Expatriate Quota Approved/Rejected in Q3 2019



NCCC Issued in Q3 2019



NCEC Issued in Q3 2019



NCP Issued in Q3 2019



NJQS Records in Q3 2019

JULY TO SEPTEMBER



Technical Evaluation Report issued in Q3 2019



Temporary Workers Permit Approved/Rejected in Q3 2019



Source: Strategy and Policy Development Division

The stars are lining up in the horizon

Two years into our 10-year strategic roadmap, things are falling in place. We seem to be riding on the crest of a high and beautiful wave. We can see the stars lining up in the horizon, towards meeting our 70 percent local content growth projection. From our implementation tools to our stakeholders' engagements and collaborations, down to the recent appointment of the new Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva - all the critical success factors are getting aligned towards the inevitable fulfilment of our 10-year strategic objective.

We're, therefore, poised to take the current as it flows. Hence, we're intentional in all that we do. Our programmes and projects are defined and oriented to advance our mandate and the pursuit of our growth plan. Thus, our activities and scorecard in the third quarter clearly reflect our strategic objective.

In Q3, 2019, we issued Total the NCCC for the Ikike field development. The NCCC marked the conclusion of the technical and commercial evaluations of the project, paving way for the start of the execution phase. Ikike is a US\$500 million investment with great potential to expand Nigerian Content opportunities and generate thousands of jobs.

Another "big bang" in the third quarter was the signing of the Letter of Intent (LoI) for the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Train 7 EPC Contract. This is a milestone, which signalled the imminence of Train 7 final investment decision (FID) and the kick-off of the construction of Train 7. As the first major project that NLNG is embarking upon since the enactment of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGIC) Act, the management of NLNG deserves commendation for their commitment to fully comply with the requirements of the Act.

In line with government's ease of doing business policy typified in our Service Level Agreement (SLA) with NLNG, we fast-tracked our approval processes and turnaround time for the Train 7 NC certification and authorisation, completing all our touchpoints a record five months.

NCDMB will continue to promote initiatives that support vendor development and local supply chain efficiency. We keep encouraging service providers to strive to reach and possibly surpass, the benchmark of international oil and gas companies. We enjoined Nigeria service companies, including the successful applicants for the Nigerian Gas Flare Commercialisation Programme (NGCFP) of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, to make local content compliance a critical component of their management philosophy and project execution strategy.

Train 7 Project holds so much hope and prospects. The Federal Government is, therefore, keen to see the FID and the start of operation. The project has the potential to generate about 40,000 direct and indirect jobs, engage many service providers and address insecurity in the region. This is why the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva directed that any encumbrances in the way to its FID must be addressed by all agencies of the Ministry without delay.

FID for Ikike, NLNG, Zabazaba, Bonga South West Aparo and other big projects still in the funnel, are crucial to our local content drive and growth projection. This is why I have often said that “Without projects, there’s no local content”.

Within the quarter, we moved the needle in the development of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Park Scheme (NOGaPS). It has now moved into the second phase, which involves construction of facilities in the two sites. The contractors have been introduced to the host communities and a community interface committee (CIC) for each location inaugurated to ensure smooth project delivery.

NOGaPS embodies our hope and determination to catalyse in-country manufacturing, grounded in our conviction that without a strong manufacturing base, our goal of entrenching sustainable local content practice in Nigeria would be a pipe dream.

Our revised Human Capital Development template, known as the 60-20-20 model, is yielding desirable results. Under this training model, we insist that every training the Board signs off must guarantee 60 percent employment for the participants. Based on this understanding, the Board went into partnership with AOS Orwell to train 50 young engineers in Smart Electrical Engineering for six months. The training involved a balanced mix of classroom work and practical. It was conducted at the Lagos Energy Academy (LEA). The first batch of beneficiaries completed their training within the quarter.

True to our plan, 60 percent of the participants have secured jobs with reputable companies. In fact, four of the 50 trainees got international placements with BIC Electric and now working in Europe.

The second batch of 50 for the Smart Electrical Engineering have also started their training since September at the same location. These beneficiaries are usually selected from the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Joint Qualification System (NOGICQS) and made to undergo qualifying tests and interviews. Beneficiaries do not have to know anyone in the Board or press any button to get selected. The process is transparent and merit-based.

Still on Human Capital Development, the Board in partnership with Danvic Petroleum International began the training of university lecturers from Geology and Geophysics Department on the use and application of OpendTect Seismic Interpretation Software. This software is widely used by operating companies to enhance hydrocarbon discovery. The first phase of the training started with 18 lecturers drawn from six universities, namely Niger Delta

University, Bayelsa State; Federal University of Technology, Owerri; Federal University of Technology, Minna; Federal University of Technology, Akure; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and University of Maiduguri.

The training covers software application, hardware maintenance, data processing and interpretation.

The historic signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement by President Muhammadu Buhari in the third quarter opened a vast opportunity for cross-border trade and investment. It’s a fresh tonic to our growth plan through regional expansion. Hence, in most of our engagements in the quarter, we enjoined Nigerian companies, particularly indigenous service providers, to rise to the occasion and harness the opportunities AfCFTA presents.

On our part, NCDMB will continue to promote initiatives that support vendor development and local supply chain efficiency. We keep encouraging service providers to strive to reach and possibly surpass, the benchmark of international oil and gas companies. We enjoined Nigeria service companies, including the successful applicants for the Nigerian Gas Flare Commercialisation Programme (NGCFP) of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, to make local content compliance a critical component of their management philosophy and project execution strategy.

Our initiatives for vendor development are funded from remittances to the NCDF. This is why we take seriously infractions of the Act, particularly those relating to NCDF remittances. As I indicated at the 2019 NOG, the Board will take a serious view against any act of infraction tending to take the wind out of our sail. After the ongoing forensic audit, NCDMB will be left with no option than to shut out defaulters from future tenders in the industry, without prejudice to pursuing other legal recourse.

The Board will also continue to explore and catalyse investments opportunities across the oil and gas value chain, including petrochemicals and refineries and foster backward and forward links in order to optimise the gains of local content practice. This is what motivated our recent visit to Notore Chemical Industries plant in Eleme, near Port Harcourt, within the quarter.

Granted that our local content journey appears to be moving pretty well, we think there’s still room for improvement. To obtain feedback on how to improve our processes and programmes, we convened the maiden edition of Nigerian Content Consultative Forum (NCCF) retreat in Lagos in the third quarter. The retreat helped us to aggregate views for improvements as well as interrogate other policy options needed to re-energise the NCCF as well as our implementation strategies.

There’s no doubt that incorporating the nuggets collated at the retreat will accelerate our journey toward meeting the strategic objective of our 10-year roadmap. Happily, the stars are aligning on the horizon.

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Cover

The Africa-wide trade agreement is a boost to Nigerian Content, creating new markets to be serviced by built-up capacity in the oil and gas industry.



Innovation

MVXCHANGE sets out its stall as the *Uber* of offshore support vessels, bringing efficiency to an otherwise opaque process.



Milestone

Tranos, an industrial powerhouse, is in its early stages of growth. Its potential holds a lot of promise for Nigeria's quest to grow its economy and people.



Policy

Chief Timpre Sylva, Minister of State for Petroleum Resources' focus reassures the oil and gas industry of policy stability and support.

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Editorial

Naboth Onyesoh

Hope, hype and hurdles to Africa's Free Trade deal

The vision of Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) is to be the catalyst for the industrialisation of the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry and its linkage sectors.

To industrialise successfully, Nigeria needs export markets, besides other key drivers. Hence, one of the strategic pillars of NCDMB's implementation framework is sectorial and regional market linkage. This is why the recent signing of the Agreement for African Continent Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by President Muhammadu Buhari resonated with our vision and strategic objective.

The African Free Trade Agreement holds tremendous prospects for Nigeria and other signatory states; that is, if and when fully operationalised. Despite the vast potentials, there're grave concerns and storms to navigate. Thus, our cover story this quarter focuses on the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, titled: *AfCFTA: Taking Nigerian Content to new African Markets*. The story explores the history of the agreement, the economic arguments for and against it. It reveals the hope, the hype and the hurdles to cross for the benefits to materialise.

In addition, two major events in the quarter renewed NCDMB's optimism for Nigerian content growth, to wit: the issuance of Nigerian Content Compliance Certificate to Total for Ikike Project and the signing of the Letter of Intent for the NLNG Train 7 EPC contract. These landmarks are well described in the column: *Summit*, written by the Executive Secretary, Engr. Simbi Wabote.

Milestone this quarter features Mr Jude Abalaka, Managing Director of Tranos, an engineering, manufacturing and fabrication company. Tranos is an indigenous service company that is adding significant value through innovative technology and engineering solutions for the energy, ICT and other critical sectors of the Nigerian economy. Its service offerings include electrical and industrial enclosures, manufacture of high-

The African Free Trade Agreement holds tremendous prospects for Nigeria and other signatory states, that is, if and when fully operationalised. Despite the vast potentials, there're grave concerns and storms to navigate.

quality electrical distribution systems as well as design and manufacture of power systems for telecoms base stations. The company has the record of being the first in many niche areas. Readers will find the interview with Mr Abalaka engaging and revealing.

Pacesetters brings out the fascinating testimony of the investments in human capacity development and the domiciliation of capacities. It spotlights ILF Engineering Nigeria, how it exported Nigerian skilled manpower for a Front-End-Engineering Design (FEED) project in Iraq.

Please, do well to read our usual health tips under *HSE*. You'll surely get tips to stay fit with simple life changing habits like eating right, fresh air, sunlight, water intake and walking longer distances.

Travelogue this quarter unveils Gurara Waterfalls, tucked away in Niger State. It's a tranquil and beautiful tourist destination with unspoiled naturalness. Gurara is another hidden treasure in Nigeria.

Our special thanks go to our long-standing partners for their abiding faith in the importance and mission of *Local Content Digest*. Saipem, MG Vowgas, Tamrose Ventures and Marine Platforms deserve constant commendation for supporting us with adverts. We invite other companies to do likewise.

Happy reading!

NLNG, NCDMB target 40,000 jobs from Train 7

About 40,000 direct and indirect jobs will be created at the peak of constructing Train 7 for the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG). It will increase the capacity of the NLNG plant from its current 22-million-tonnes from its six trains to 30 million tonnes, about 35 percent increase in capacity.

Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) made the job projection in September during the signing of the Letter of Intent (LoI) for the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contract between NLNG and the preferred consortium- SCD, constituted by Saipem, Chiyoda and Daewoo.

Engr. Tony Attah, Managing Director, NLNG, said Train 7 will attract almost US\$7 billion, with an addition of the upstream scope of

\$10 billion. The company plans to deliver the project within a four to five-year period and would sign the Final Investment Decision (FID) by the end of October 2019, he said.

Wabote said Chief Timipre Sylva, Minister of State for Petroleum Resources had charged all stakeholders connected with the Train 7 project to expedite actions on it. "The Minister has this project as one of his focus areas to put an end to the drought of FIDs in the oil and gas industry in the last few years," he said.

Apart from the job opportunities and accruable revenues, Sylva also sees the additional tonnage of LPG to be produced from Train 7 as a key benefit to reduce importation of cooking gas, the NCDMB boss said. "He is also excited that Train 7 project attracts other upstream gas supply

projects required to keep the LNG train busy. The project opens up other development opportunities for some gas fields in the shallow and deep offshore acreages, such as HI, HA, HK and Opoukunou-Tuomo fields," Wabote said.

The Executive Secretary urged the SCD consortium to fully implement the approved Nigerian Content Plan for the project, which covers engineering, fabrication, civil works, local procurement, project services, logistics, equipment leasing, insurance, hotels, office supplies, aviation, haulage, human capacity development and jobs.

To Attah, NCDMB has kept to its commitment of reducing the approval cycle on projects. He thanked President Muhammadu Buhari and the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources for their support to the project.



Engr. Tony Attah, Managing Director, NLNG (3rd left), Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB with management of NCDMB and NLNG after the formal handover of the commercial evaluation report for the Train-7 project at NCDMB's liaison office in Abuja.

Bayelsa, Cross River NOGaPS get interface committees

Community Interface Committees (CICs) have been set up for the Nigerian Oil and Gas Park Schemes (NOGaPS) being developed at Emeyal 1 in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State and in Odukpani, Cross River State.

The committees will enhance the interface between the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), NOGaPS communities and contractors, community participation and compliance with the Community Content aspects of the project. The ultimate goal is to provide an environment conducive for the execution of the second phase of contracts awarded for NOGaPS.

Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB, inaugurated the committees during town hall meetings to introduce the contractors that will execute the newly approved work scopes on the NOGaPS projects.

His Royal Highness Jephthah Ogba Wolisi will chair the Bayelsa NOGaPS CIC Committee. Other members include representatives of the host communities and contractors, while Mr. Kelly Olaye of the NCDMB is the Secretary.

Barr. Edet Etim Okon, the Acting Head of Onim Ankiong Clan will chair the CIC of Odukpani NOGaPS. The committees will terminate at the completion of the project or whenever the management of NCDMB determines that their services are no longer required.

Wabote hailed President Muhammadu Buhari for approving the next phase of the projects, which entails the key infrastructure for the NOGaPS sites. He noted that the Federal Government was impressed with the harmonious manner the contractors worked with the communities since the commencement of the projects.

At Bayelsa NOGaPS, Messrs OK Isokariari & Sons is responsible for the road construction and technical skill development centre, while MegaStar Construction Company Nigeria Limited is responsible for the construction of security and administrative block as well as hostel/mini estate.

At Odukpani NOGaPS, Messrs Faith Plant Global Services International Limited is the contractor for the construction of the Capacity Building centre while EST Master Construction Limited is responsible for the construction of security gate and administrative building. Others are Altex Engineering Services Limited, responsible for the construction of the hostel/mini-estate and Linzo Contracting Limited is the contractor for the construction of internal roads and drainage system.

Notore seeks investment for Free Zone

Notore Chemical Industries Plc has sought the partnership of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) in the development of its industrial complex and provision of services to oil and gas companies and allied sectors.

Mr. Onajite Paul Okoloko, Group Chairman of Notore Chemical, sought the partnership when he took Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary of NCDMB on a tour of the facility in August.

He said Notore's assets encompassed the agricultural, oil and gas and infrastructural sectors; it is building a second fertiliser plant and an industrial city and would commercialise some of its assets. Okoloko added: "The larger picture from one of our

subsidiaries, Notore Industrial City, is to create an industrial chemical estate. Our Free Trade Zone is rated number one by PricewaterhouseCoopers. It has a deep river port, 10.5 metres of draft, with direct access to the ocean. We also have 560 hectares of land and is the only free trade zone in the country that has gas and power.

"In our estate, you can have fertiliser plants and petrochemicals because we have the gas infrastructure. So, you can use that as a raw material. At the same time, we have a logistics base that can support the oil and gas industry."

The Executive Secretary said Notore was positioned perfectly for hosting allied industries and serving as a logistics base for

key oil and gas operations. "This facility is just 15 kilometres to NLNG in Bonny. There is potential to participate in the NLNG Train 7 project. There is vast land here. You can also have accommodation for projects. This location could become a staging ground for most of the NLNG construction that would happen," he added.

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

Gas flare applicants tasked on Nigerian Content

Successful applicants for the Nigerian Gas Flare Commercialisation Programme (NGCFP) must be familiar with key provisions of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act and comply with the provisions in the execution of the projects. They must also imbibe the compliance mindset and know that Nigerian Content Act was designed to protect investors and not to frustrate business.

Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) gave the advice at a conference organised by the Ministry of Petroleum Resources for the applicants in Abuja.

He advised the companies to focus on technical safety in their operations, adding: "Most

operators will insist on top-notch technical assurance to show that you have the right systems in place to take over the flared gas from their facility."

The gas flare applicants should also start with the number of flare sites they can handle and grow sustainably. They should also complete end-to-end thinking before submitting proposals because centres for flares utilisation projects are usually at considerable distance from the flare sites.

Wabote availed the applicants other nuggets, saying: "Be very creative with structuring your source of funding; it is most unlikely that you will get your funding from a single source. Data is king. Get the right resource to analyse and interpret the data set for your field/flare site of

interest.

"Some aspects of the value chain is partially deregulated or not deregulated at all. Factor these into your financial models with realistic assumptions. Collaborate to divide and conquer. For example, you can focus on LPG extraction while you partner someone else that uses the stripped gas for power generation."

The Executive Secretary made other recommendations: "There are several technologies out there for gas processing. Beware of reliance on untested and unproven technology. Some communities have come to rely on the flare as source of heat for some of their activities; it is important to be aware of this as you take over their 'source of heat'."



Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB with stakeholders of the industry at the Gas Flare Commercialisation Programme (NGCFP) conference at PTDF auditorium in Abuja.

Wabote, NCDMB get Nigerian Business Leadership Awards

Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) was honoured recently as the *Transformational Business Leader in Public Sector in 2019* by the *BusinessDay's* Nigerian Business Leadership Awards. The NCDMB was also recognised as the *Government Agency of the Year for Enabling Business*.

The awards review committee said the Executive Secretary provided exemplary leadership and spearheaded several initiatives helping to create an environment conducive for the private sector to thrive. It added that the award celebrates a public officer under whose inspirational leadership new opportunities for domestic prosperity were being unlocked.

Wabote thanked the management of

BusinessDay and the Awards Review Committee for the recognitions. He expressed delight that “the media and populace fully appreciate our efforts in using Nigerian Content to create employment opportunities and to promote the growth of the local economy”.

He dedicated the awards to his family and staff of the NCDMB, saying: “I have succeeded in this role simply because I have the full support of the management and staff of the NCDMB. Their commitment and dedication to duty is second to none.” Wabote assured that the awards would reenergise him and NCDMB to do more for the country.

The Executive Secretary also thanked President Muhammadu Buhari for the opportunity to serve and expressed

gratitude for the support he received from the Presidency to deliver on the mandates contained in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act.

Eminent personalities were also honoured with Life Time Achievement Awards. They include Mr. Hareesh Keswani, Group Managing Director of Artee Group; Mrs. Ibukun Awosika, Founder/CEO, The Chair Centre Group and Chairman, Board of Director, First Bank Limited; Dr Layi Francis Fatona, Managing Director, Niger Delta Exploration & Production Plc; Dr. Pascal Dozie, founder and Chairman of Kunoch Limited and former chairman of MTN Nigeria and Mr. Tunde Afolabi, Chairman/CEO of Amni International Petroleum Development Company.



(L-R): Mr. Tunde Afolabi, Chairman/CEO of Amni International Petroleum Development Company; Dr. Layi Fatona, Managing Director, Niger Delta Exploration & Production Plc and Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB at the Nigerian Business Leadership Awards in Lagos.

NCDMB, Danvic Petroleum train 18 lecturers on software

Eighteen lecturers of Geology and Geophysics have been trained on OpendTect Seismic Interpretation Software, which is widely used by operating companies in the oil and gas industry to enhance the discovery of hydrocarbon resources.

The participating lecturers were drawn from six universities, three each from Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State; Federal University of Technology (FUT) Owerri, Imo State; Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna, Niger State; Federal University of Technology (FUT) Akure, Ondo State; Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Kaduna State and University of Maiduguri, Borno State.

The scope of the training included software

training, hardware maintenance as well as data processing and interpretation.

The training was sponsored by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) while Danvic Petroleum and its partner, dGB Earth Sciences Netherlands, provided the OpendTect Software, at no cost. The cost of the software for the six universities was about US\$1.2 million.

Mr. Patrick Daziba Obah, Director, Planning Research and Statistics, NCDMB, spoke at the start of the training in Abuja. He confirmed that ExxonMobil donated the workstations that would host the software in three universities – NDU, Bayelsa, FUT, Owerri and ABU, Zaria. Similarly, Chevron donated the workstations for FUT Akure while Sapetetro

donated the workstation for FUT, Minna.

Dr Mayowa Afe, Managing Director of Danvic Petroleum, expressed optimism that knowledge of the software by the lecturers would enhance the training of students in Geology and Geophysics, thereby making them more employable and relevant to the needs of the oil and gas industry after graduation.

He said such programmes would also change the scenario where oil and gas companies preferred expatriates to graduates produced by Nigerian universities because of the knowledge gap between the two groups, particularly in specialised areas of the oil and gas industry, where exposure to up-to-date technology is necessary.

NCCF to provide feedback on NC implementation

Sectorial groups of the Nigerian Content Consultative Forum (NCCF) have to provide credible feedback on the implementation of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act.

This was the consensus at the maiden edition of retreat of the NCCF held in Lagos recently, with the theme: *Consolidating the Gains of the Oil and Gas Industry; Putting Nigeria First Through the NCCF*.

Mr. Patrick Daziba Obah, Chairman, NCCF, NCDMB explained that the forum was established by the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act 2010 as a medium for the Board's

stakeholders to share ideas, collaborate and submit policy proposals relevant to Nigerian Content development. He said the retreat was conceived to set the agenda of the next phase of the NCCF in line with the Board's Nigerian Content 10-Year Roadmap.

Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB, stated that the NCCF was set up in accordance with section 57 and 58 of the Nigerian Content Act. He said it has eight sectors, notably Fabrication, Engineering, Finance, Legal Services and Insurance, Shipping & Logistics, Materials and Manufacturing, Information and Communication Technology, PETAN and

Education and Training.

He added that the Board approved the creation of the Essential Services and Multinationals groups to bring the total number of sectorial working groups to 10. "This was also in line with the provision of the same Section 58 of the Act, which allows for addition of any other professional services," he said.

He noted that though NCCF had made some progress over the years, but it still required more areas of improvements. "We want to get feedback on how we have fared in achieving the objectives of the NCCF, as contained in the NOGICD Act," he said.

60% NCDMB trainees get jobs

Sixty percent of the 50 participants in the Smart Electrical Engineering Training sponsored by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) have secured jobs.

Four of the engineers work in Europe with BIC Electric, while other successful participants were employed in-country with AOS Orwell, Daystar Power Group, Eauxwell, Jubaili Bros and PNN, among others.

The six-month classroom and on-the-job training was facilitated by AOS Orwell, an oil and gas servicing company, at the Lagos Energy Academy (LEA). Another batch of 50 engineers

have commenced their training at the same academy. The beneficiaries, like all other trainees of NCDMB, were selected from the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Joint Qualification System (NOGICQS) and underwent qualifying tests and interviews.

Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB, described the success recorded with the Smart Electrical Engineering Training as a validation of the Board's new model for human capacity building, which emphasises delivery of trainings with a line of sight to employment opportunities. Under the new model, 60 percent of the Board's training

spend and efforts is devoted to programmes that guarantee jobs for the participants, while 20 percent are channeled to trainings that would improve the skills of persons that are already employed. The remaining 20 percent of the trainings caters for general and non-certificated trainings.

The Board's new capacity building model helps to meet the employment targets set in the Nigerian Content 10-year roadmap and the drive of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration to create jobs for young people from activities in the oil and gas industry and ancillary sectors.



Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB with community chiefs and stakeholders after the inauguration of the Community Interface Committee (CIC) for the Nigerian Oil and Gas Parks Scheme (NOGaPS) in Emeyal-1, Ogbia, Bayelsa State.

NCDMB sponsors refresher course for 250 Bayelsa teachers

Two hundred and fifty secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State have been retrained in the second phase of the Teachers Development Training Programme sponsored by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) in collaboration with the Bayelsa State Government.

The sponsorship is in line with the NCDMB Direct Intervention Initiative, which builds human capacities in the oil and gas industry and allied sectors of the Nigerian economy.

The training lasted six weeks and the participating teachers comprised 88 in Mathematics, 52 in English Language, 78 in Basic Science and 32 in Basic Technology for

Junior Secondary school.

The teachers were drawn from the state's eight local government areas. The programme took place at St. Jude's Girls Secondary School, Amarata in Yenagoa Local Government Area. The first phase was held at the University of Africa, Toru-Orua in Sagbama. NCDMB had also sponsored the same training in Kastina State in the last quarter of 2018. The Board plans to replicate the programme in other states.

Mr. Sallahudeen Muhammad of the Capacity Building Division of NCDMB represented the Board at the beginning of the training. He stated that the Teachers Development Programme would improve the teaching

method in Bayelsa State and impact positively on the performance of students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. He highlighted the positive roles teachers play in the society and urged them to pay attention and maximise the opportunity.

Hon. Jonathan Obuebite, Commissioner for Education, Bayelsa State, thanked the NCDMB for its support for the growth of education in the state. The commissioner said the state would not take it for granted. He urged the teachers to show maximum cooperation and seriousness in order to achieve the purpose for which they were being trained.

ESUT graduate wins NCDMB Prize

Emmanuel Obasi Chukwubueze, a fresh graduate of Engineering from the Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu State, recently won the NCDMB Prize for Best Engineering Research.

His research publication was adjudged by the Council for the Regulation of Engineers in Nigeria (COREN) and the Committee of Deans of Engineering and Technology (CODET) to be the best among projects produced by final year engineering students from universities across

the country. He was rewarded with a cash prize of ₦600,000.

Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary of NCDMB, presented the prize at the 28th Engineering Assembly held in August in Abuja. He said the award promotes research and development culture among young engineers.

He said the NCDMB was concluding plans with CODET on how to support and bring research findings and products into the market, as part

of the 10-year Research and Development roadmap of the Board.

Wabote urged the engineering professionals to take the lead in research and development as the pathway to addressing challenges and providing solutions to societal problems. "I look forward to greater strategic alliance among engineering professionals to tap into the R&D opportunities presented by the Board and develop solutions to societal problems," he added.



Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB, officials of the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) presenting an award to Emmanuel Obasi Chukwubueze from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, winner of the NCDMB Award for Best Engineering Undergraduate Research Publication at the 28th COREN Assembly.

Host Communities Association to Support NC Implementation

The Bayelsa State Chapter of the Host Communities of Nigeria has pledged to support the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) to ensure the sustenance of the Board's projects and peaceful operations in the state.

HRH Boma Albert, the State Chairman, led members of the association on a visit to the Board recently. Commending the siting of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Park Schemes (NOGaPs) in Bayelsa, Albert highlighted the benefits to include job creation for the indigenes and industrialisation of their communities. He requested the Board to include members of the association in its skill acquisition trainings

within and outside the oil and gas sector.

"Being a capacity development agency, we plead with the Board to train our members that span over 500 communities, on skills acquisition in various strata of the economy to ensure that more people can benefit," he said.

Dr. Ginah O. Ginah, General Manager, Corporate Communication and Zonal Coordination, NCDMB, pledged the Board's readiness to support the group. He said the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act recognises the place of host communities, adding that this informed NCDMB's decision to develop and issue the Community Content

Guidelines to protect their rights and privileges in oil and gas operations.

Ginah also said NCDMB created the Community Contractors Finance Scheme as part of the Nigerian Content Intervention Fund (NCI Fund). According to him, qualified firms can access as much as ₦20 million for use in funding valid contracts in the oil and gas industry, with a maximum tenor of five years at five percent interest rate.

He added that the Board also provided for community contractors participation in the procurement of items in the second phase of the NOGaPS development.



Dr. Ginah O. Ginah, GM, Corporate Communication and Zonal Coordination, NCDMB with staff of the Board and executive of the Host Communities of Nigeria, Bayelsa State Chapter after the association's visit to NCDMB office in Yenagoa, September 2019.

Lagos school gets NCDMB ICT Centre

Opebi Senior Grammar School in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State recently became a beneficiary of the Information and Communication Technology centres donated by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) to select schools across the country. It was part of its Corporate Social Responsibility projects.

This particular centre was attracted by Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, former Chairman of the Senate Committee on Local Content in the 8th National Assembly. The centre will enable the learning of information communication technology by secondary school students in an environment conducive for learning.

It is equipped with 30 brand new computers, two air conditioners for each room, uninterrupted internet service, projectors, printer and a photocopier. It is also powered by a generating set with a backup inverter, has free diesel supply, computer instructors and a maintenance contract.

Adeola, who represents Lagos West Senatorial District, stated that information technology has become fast-paced across the world and the ICT centre would ensure that young persons from Lagos State are not left behind.

Dr. Ginah O. Ginah, General Manager, Corporate Communications and Zonal

Coordination, NCDMB, explained that part of NCDMB's mandate is building human and material capacities in the oil and gas industry. Part of the strategy is to instil ICT knowledge and capacities in young students. He added that the centre would also create opportunities for senior secondary students to prepare adequately for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME).

Mrs. Grace Adepeju Akande, Principal, Opebi Senior Grammar School thanked the Board for siting the ICT Centre in the school and assured of the safety and careful utilisation of the facility.

Service companies tasked on IOCs standards

Oil and gas service companies and manufacturing firms need to meet the standards set by international operating companies so they can receive patronage, Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), has said.

He gave the advice when he visited Tranos, a multi sectorial servicing company in Lagos, in company of some top management officials of NCDMB and senior representatives of select oil and gas companies.

He said the oil and gas industry insists on

quality while government's drive for Nigerian Content would not encourage standards to be compromised. This underscored the need for service companies to meet the standards that will qualify them to be added to the operating companies' approved vendors' lists. He advised international operating companies to support local companies in their quest to meet their standards and specifications.

The Executive Secretary noted that several Nigerian companies were investing and setting up servicing and manufacturing facilities. He assured all stakeholders that the Federal

Government would ensure that they enjoy patronage from the oil and gas industry so they can employ more Nigerians. He added: "For every one person employed, 10 lives are affected by association. We have to build our manufacturing base alongside agriculture because they are the major employers of labour."

Wabote commended Tranos for its investments, noting that the modest size of the facility was bigger than many foreign yards that produce components imported for the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

Contributors: Naboth Onyeshoh, Obinna Ezeobi, Nyoki Ita, Teleola Oyeleke, Ifeanyi Nwokemodo, Chinomso Nworgu

AfCFTA Taking Nigerian Content to new African Markets

Nigeria's recent ratification of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement will enable oil and gas companies to export their capacities and capabilities, create value, employment and shared prosperity.

Oil and gas companies may well become the biggest beneficiaries of Nigeria's participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) - African Union's audacious single market of free movement of goods, services and investment within the 54-member states.

Reason? Many operating and service companies leveraged the successful implementation of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act in the last nine years to acquire huge and hi-tech assets and capacities and are well equipped to operate successfully across the continent's hydrocarbon industry. Given the bullish nature of Nigerian establishments, they stand a good chance of flourishing in a liberalised landscape, when the final details of the AfCFTA treaty are defined and operative.

Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), encourages Nigerian companies to key into the continental pact. "If you take the population of Africa and the potential market, and given the general level of development of countries, the sky is the limit for any manufacturer that makes the right investment and has the right quality and partnerships," he says.



Nigeria's oil sector benefitted immensely from NCDMB's implementation of the NOGICD Act, which catalysed the development of major oil and gas facilities...These facilities have been used for different challenging projects, including the fabrication and integration of Total Egina Floating Production Storage and Offloading Platform (FPSO) and can readily provide hi-tech services to the hydrocarbon market across the Gulf of Guinea and beyond, at lower costs and faster delivery time.



(R-L): Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB; Dr. Folade Yemi-Esan, immediate past Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Resources and Acting Head of Service of the Federation; Engr. Sadeeq Bornu, Deputy Managing Director, NLNG; Engr. Tony Attah, Managing Director, NLNG (5th) during the signing of the Letter of Intent (LoI) for the Train-7 Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contract between NLNG and the preferred consortium - SCD, constituted by Saipem, Chiyoda and Daewoo in Abuja.

stakeholders and other investors to embrace AfCFTA. They want our corporations to become the early adopters, rather than the late majority or even laggards – terms enunciated in Everett Rogers' *Diffusion of Innovation Theory of Communication*.

Mansur Ahmed, President, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), is encouraging Nigerian businesses to see the huge prospects in the continental economic policy and take steps to maximise the benefits. He spoke in July when Alcon, a Port Harcourt-based company, inaugurated its ultra-modern factory. He said: "Every manufacturer or investor should look at AfCFTA and begin to thrive. I am glad that Alcon is seeing this vision and there is plan for expansion. As we go into the agreement, we are going to create a bigger market, four to five times bigger than what exists presently."

Another company with a similar vision is Tranos. Mr Jude Abalaka, its Managing Director, said the company is expanding its capacity for manufacturing cable trays and ladders, with a view to meeting the local needs and exporting to African countries from September 2020.

Breaking trade barriers

Before now, intra-African trade had been limited, barely 10.2 percent of the continent's total trade in 2010, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). An online report quoted David Luke of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as stating that "colonialism created a situation where neighbours stopped trading with each other. The main trading route was between African countries and European countries and between

African countries and the United States. Removing barriers to trade is expected to not just grow trade within Africa, but also the kind of trade this continent needs".

The UNECA report also stated that between 2010 and 2015, fuels represented more than half of Africa's exports to non-African countries, while manufactured goods made up only 18 percent of exports to the rest of the world. "When you have this kind of economy, young people cannot find jobs," Luke says, "and you see them trying to get to Europe and drowning in the Mediterranean Sea".

In the past two decades, there has been significant discovery of oil and gas resources across the length and breadth of Africa. Although Nigeria, Angola, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Sudan remain the top crude oil producers, over 15 other nations are producing and exporting crude oil. They include South Sudan, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Gabon, Tunisia, Cameroon and Ivory Coast. Others include Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Mozambique. Significant oil and gas discoveries have also been made in basins located between Mauritania and Guinea. Industry analysts posit that the emerging oil and gas provinces represent veritable opportunities for Nigerian operating and service companies under the AfCFTA Agreement.

Nigeria's oil sector has comparative advantage

Economists have opined that countries and sectors with comparative advantages will thrive the most when the African single market



Chief Timipre Sylva, Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, with Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board, at a press conference marking the end of retreat by agencies under the Ministry of Petroleum Resources.

becomes fully operational.

While countries with large manufacturing bases and enabling physical and industrial infrastructure, such as South Africa, Kenya, Egypt and Morocco are in a better position to gain from the free movement of manufactured goods, Nigeria will have comparative advantage in the oil and gas industry because our services subsector is developed relative to most African contemporaries.

Nigeria's oil sector benefitted immensely from NCDMB's implementation of the NOGICD Act, which catalysed the development of major oil and gas facilities, including top tier fabrication yards, dry dock facilities and manufacturing firms, among others. These facilities have been used for different challenging projects, including the recent fabrication and integration of Total Egina Floating Production Storage and Offloading Platform (FPSO) and can readily provide hi-tech services to the hydrocarbon market across the Gulf of Guinea and beyond, at lower costs and faster delivery time.

Another plus is the existence of organised trade associations like the Petroleum Technology Association of Nigeria (PETAN), Oil and Gas Trainers Association of Nigeria (OGTAN), Petroleum Contractors Trade Section (PCTS), among others. These associations foster service improvement among members, conduct peer reviews and enforce code of conduct and self-regulation.

Nigeria's comparative advantage extends to crude oil production. Aside pumping 2.3 million barrels per day - the highest in the continent – the country also has the biggest clutch of smart indigenous producers that can rule Africa.

In the past decade and a half, indigenous producers sprouted and blossomed, thanks to the Federal Government's marginal field bid rounds and divestments by some multinationals of some onshore and shallow waters fields. These developments led to the emergence of Seplat, Aiteo, Eroton, First E&P, MidWestern, Britannia-U, Neconde Energy and other operating companies. Some of these firms have significantly increased production volumes from their fields, some by as much as 300 percent, according to market data, with targets to contribute 30 percent of the nation's total production.

Energy experts say the local operating firms are succeeding because they are nimble, have less red tape and lower overhead costs. They also relate amicably with host communities, thereby eliminating disruptions and attendant inhibitions. Such Nigerian companies are odds on to make hay in new territories when the AfCFTA treaty takes effect.

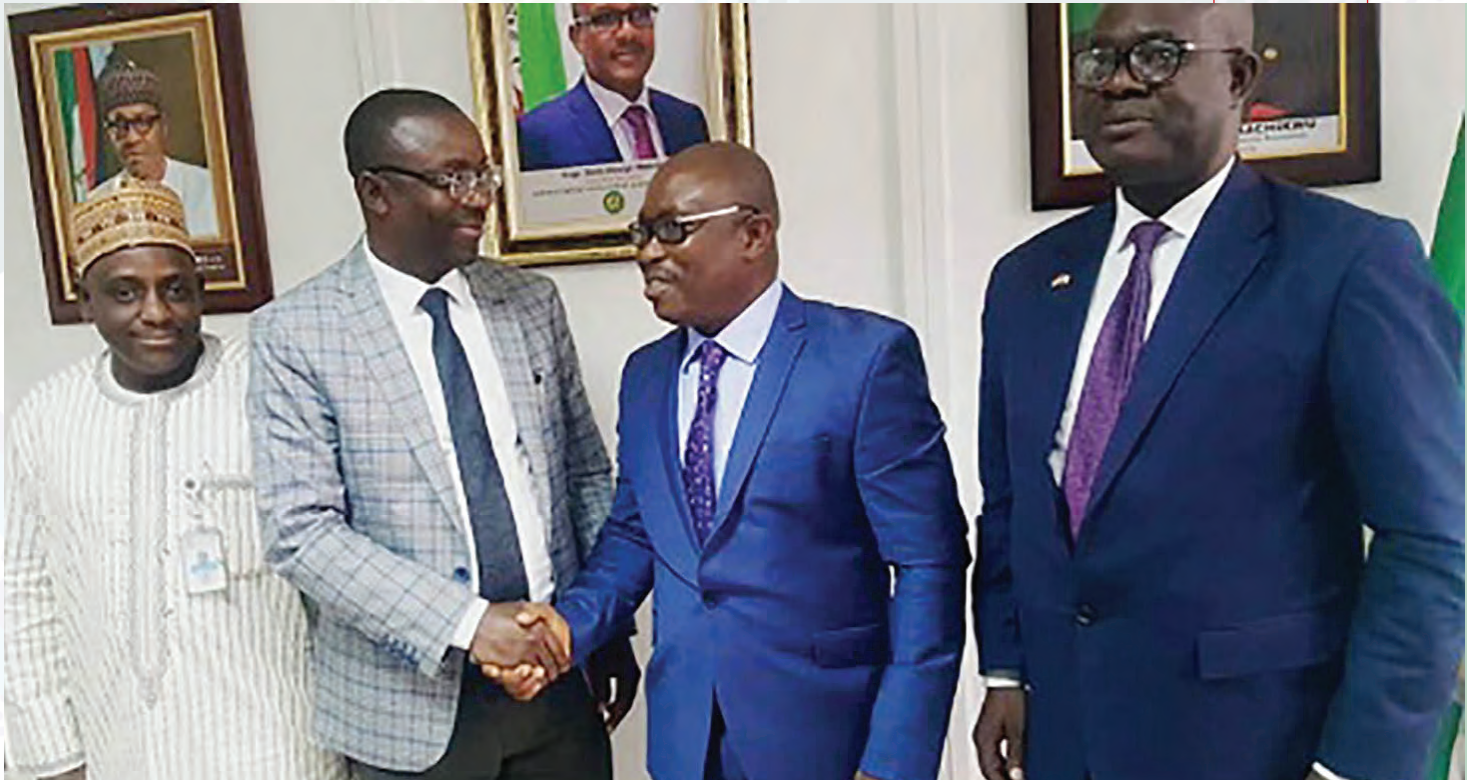
Evidence of Nigeria's leadership of the oil and gas sector is also discernable from the number of African countries that visit to understudy the Local Content policy. Senior officials of the Board also get invited regularly to mentor other nationals on developing applicable policies for their jurisdictions.

Nigerian Content 10-Year Roadmap ties into AfCFTA

Long before AfCFTA was finalised, NCDMB had identified *Sectorial and Regional Market Linkages* as a key pillar of its Nigerian Content 10-Year Strategic Roadmap. The framework was put in place early 2017, a few months after Wabote assumed office as the Executive Secretary of NCDMB. It documents the short, medium and long-term targets to increase Nigerian Content performance from 28 percent to 70 percent by 2027. The key rewards from the implementation, according to the NCDMB helmsman, "are the creation of 300,000 jobs from industry activities and the retention of \$14 billion in-country out of the \$20 billion annual industry spend".

The Sectorial and Regional Market Linkages pillar is NCDMB's policy thrust for extending Local Content capacities to other critical sectors of the Nigerian economy and other African markets. The intent is to meet the needs of other sectors and countries, sustain the growth of Local Content and address the challenge of overcapacity witnessed in some areas, a situation Dr. Emmanuel Ibe Kachikwu, immediate past Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, described as overcrowding. Seeking new markets would also eliminate the danger of losing developed human and material capacities due to delays in oil and gas projects cycle.

Long before AfCFTA was finalised, NCDMB had identified Sectorial and Regional Market Linkages as a key pillar of its Nigerian Content 10-Year Strategic Roadmap. The framework was put in place early 2017, a few months after Wabote assumed office as the Executive Secretary of NCDMB. It documents the short, medium and long-term targets to increase Nigerian Content performance from 28 percent to 70 percent by 2027.



(L-R): Mr. Abdulmalik Halilu, General Manager, Research, Statistics & Development, NCDMB; Prof. Samuel G. Edonmiekumo, Vice Chancellor, Niger Delta University; Mr. Patrick Daziba Obah, Director, Planning, Research and Statistics, NCDMB and Dr. Mayowa Afe, Managing Director, Danvic Petroleum at the start of the training of 18 lecturers of Geology and Geophysics on OpendText Seismic Interpretation Software, sponsored by NCDMB.

If we implement Nigerian Content Act like the holy books, we will kill the Petroleum Industry

Some key achievements of Nigerian Content implementation

Before the enactment of the NOGICD Act in 2010, out of the US\$20 billion annual industry spend, less than three per cent was retained in Nigeria. Most activities were done outside Nigeria. As of today, Nigeria has been able to claw back about \$5 billion out of the \$20 billion.

Then, most of the welding activities were done outside the country. Today, we have about five world-class welding yards, with Nigerians fabricating about 60,000 metric tonnes per annum in-country. There is the Nigerdock welding facility in Lagos; Samsung facility in the LAD-OL Concession in Lagos; EWT in Port Harcourt; Aveon Offshore in Port Harcourt and Saipem also in Port Harcourt.

With the Egina Floating Production Storage Offloading (FPSO) platform coming into production late last year, Nigerian companies fabricated six of the 18 modules in-country and carried out their integration in Nigeria. That was a huge achievement. Today, 95 per cent of the oil and gas service companies in the onshore or swamp areas, be it drilling, well intervention and simulation activities, is done by Nigerians. These were the exclusive preserve of multinationals, like Schlumberger, Halliburton and others.

In the upstream sector, multinationals were operating all the fields in the country in the past. Today, we have Nigerians operating some oil fields. Seplat, a Nigerian company bought over from Shell, now operates the acreage. When they took over, the field was producing about 20,000 barrels per day. Today, Seplat is doing about 75,000 barrels per day; same thing with Aiteo. There are many others. They account

for almost 25 to 30 per cent of the country's total oil production, not to talk of the domestic gas production in the country.

Update on the Nigerian Content Intervention Fund

NCDMB established the Nigerian Content Intervention Fund in 2017. It is a \$200 million fund made available to the Bank of Industry (BoI) to manage on our behalf, because NCDMB is not a bank.

The NCI Fund has five product lines. They include Manufacturing loan, Asset acquisition, Contract finance, Community contractor finance scheme and Loan re-financing. It has eight percent interest and one-year moratorium, except the Community contractor finance scheme, which has five percent interest. The interest rates cannot change regardless of prevailing inflation rate. The maximum a company can apply for is \$10 million.

Before the BoI disburses the money, the borrower must get a guarantee from a commercial bank. So far, we have disbursed \$160 million to competent Nigerian companies.

Expatriate Quota management

NCDMB has rejected about 1,494 expatriate quota applications since the beginning of this year. We felt that we have Nigerians who have that capability to do the work. But it is important to clarify that Nigerian Content is not about 'Nigerianisation'. Some people complain when they visit some companies and see expatriates. That's not the intent of the Nigerian Content Act.

The oil and gas industry is a highly technology-intensive area. Nigeria does not have some of the technologies. We need a mix of these

Considering when the Act came into effect and the requirements contained there-in, if we were to apply the law like the Bible, oil production would have stopped for couple of years, to enable us build up capacity before we continued. That is why we use the carrot and stick method to build up capacities.

expatriates and Nigerians to deliver projects and push the frontiers of oil exploration and exploitation.

Egina project, for instance, is about two kilometres of water depth. Human beings cannot get there. Only robots can. The underwater map of Egina looks like a complete city, in terms of the trees. So, we need those highly technical people to continue to work with Nigeria to develop the industry.

From when the Nigerian Content Act came into being in 2010 till today, expatriates population has reduced by about 80 percent.

For instance, Shell in the 1990s had Nigerians only in mid-level management. There were lots of expatriates everywhere. Today, about 95 per cent of staff of Shell are Nigerians. Another example is Bonny NLNG. Almost 90 per cent of the staff in Bonny NLNG today are Nigerians, including the Managing Director.

The statistics is the same in other companies. That shows the tremendous gains the NCDMB has made. The Nigerian Content Act specifies the number of expatriates those companies are allowed to bring into the country for investment purposes.

However, we also have challenges with Nigerian companies. The IOCs do everything they can to comply with the provisions of the Act. If they can't, they take a waiver. But the local service providers, to a large extent, are the ones we have had to struggle with, in terms of compliance.

Why NCDMB is careful in wielding the big stick against offenders

People try to circumvent the process sometimes. When we find them, we take necessary actions. We get into the persuasive mode because we want to build capacities first. We are not reluctant to wield the big stick; we are just careful.

Considering when the Act came into effect and the requirements

contained there-in, if we were to apply the law like the Bible, oil production would have stopped for couple of years, to enable us build up capacity before we continued.

That is why we use the carrot and stick method to build up capacities. If one reads the Act itself, it says all fabrications must happen in-country. It also says all steel products must be purchased in-country. If the NCDMB insists that all fabrications and steel products be done in-country, we would not have any project.

We know that our country does not have a functional steel mill at present and still has challenges with logistics and infrastructure, like power. With these, our cost of projects will hit the roof if we are not careful.

Every project has an economic value. If the project cost becomes higher than the return on investment, would anyone put his or her money into it? Because we have knowledge of the industry, we try to balance the process in a win-win situation to continue the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons.

If the NCDMB used the Act as a Bible, we would kill the petroleum industry. We must apply some level of intelligence and continue to be persuasive and ensure progress with the process.

Why NCDMB is involved in some investments

Often, people look at the activities of regulatory agencies only from the perspective of monitoring. That's why the authors of the Nigerian Content Act also talked about development. NCDMB has to join in the development of the sector. But, as a regulator, NCDMB does not get involved in areas where it would compete with private sector players of the industry. That is why the NCDMB narrows itself to catalysing some government initiatives.

Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board.

The market looks promising, but challenges remain

Trade consultants warn that intending enterprises in the AfCFTA sphere would face some challenges. One fundamental strategy they would need is encompassed in the right technical, commercial and local partnerships when entering new terrains.

An example of such partnerships exists between Alcon and ABB, a global leader in electrical and power original equipment manufacturing. The symbiotic relationship recently produced Alcon's ultra-modern factory for electrical power distribution panels and switchgears.

Mr. Hany Abd-Elazim, Country Managing Director, Nigeria, ABB, said the factory provides an opportunity to export products within the ECOWAS region and expand to the continent when the AfCFTA takes effect from mid-2020. "This will support the cooperation to have local value added products from Nigeria to be exported," he said.

Wabote also underscored the importance of nurturing strong partnerships, saying: "If local companies have the right processes and procedures in place, international Original Equipment Manufacturers will be willing to form alliances and partnerships that will endure."

Aspiring Nigerian businesses must also improve their competitiveness and perfect their manufacturing and services credentials. They must also be technically competent and cost efficient. Suffice to add that they would no longer be protected by the NOGICD Act, which

guarantees patronage even when their bids are slightly higher than international competitors. Such firms must also be ready to meet the legal and Local Content policies of their hosts.

The recent xenophobic attacks against Nigerians and other nationals in South Africa and the retaliatory incidents cast a big shadow on nations' commitments to free trade and unhindered movement. African leaders are expected to finalise the details and address the emerging threats so that the expected benefits would be evenly distributed and the lofty ideals realised.

For Local Content stakeholders, this is a vintage chance to lead investors and producers all over Africa. Kachikwu threw down the gauntlet at the Nigerian Oil and Gas Opportunity Fair in April, when he said: "We should be able to generate oil companies that can transcend operations across the continent."

AfCFTA would make it possible.



Obinna Ezeobi is with the Corporate Communication/Zonal Coordination Division.

MVXCHANGE

Uber of offshore support vessels, sets sail

The platform enables you to select and hire vessels from the comfort of your office

Have you ever ordered an Uber or Taxify cab to take you across town? It was an easy, no-stress process, right? A big departure from when you had to stand outside your house under the sun, wait for a cab, haggle rates with the driver before you get on your way?

Now, imagine you could engage Offshore Support Vessels (OSVs) in the oil and gas industry the same way. Sounds nice, doesn't it? If you nodded in agreement, then say hello to a Nigerian startup, MVXchange.

MVXchange seeks to eliminate bottlenecks associated with current vessel contracting environment by the deployment of efficient IT solutions. Tonye Membere-Otaji, Founder/CEO of the company, (an alumnus of the IMD Business School, Switzerland and Bradford School of Management, UK), describes MVXchange as an 'Uber' for OSVs. The platform allows companies in need of vessels to instantly verify vessel availability, compare vessel rates with other vessels with similar spec and confirm the compliance status of vessels with regulations. MVXchange also eliminates tedious email exchanges as it comes integrated with a seamless instant messaging service to allow easy clarification and enquiries between vessel owner and prospective clients. Needless intermediaries are completely eliminated from this process.

Among the underlying principles driving the philosophy of local content policies is the idea that local challenges and opportunities require locally-inspired solutions. Accordingly, local content draws from the belief that a people should make the most of their comparative advantages for the benefit of the economy within the geographical location they find themselves.

The Nigerian tech start-up space has grown exponentially in the past few years as startups seek to find bespoke solutions

to daily challenges faced by Nigerians. This growth has also caught the eye of the international community. In August 2016, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg visited the Nigerian tech community in Yaba, a Lagos neighbourhood fondly called the Nigerian Silicon Valley by tech enthusiasts.

According to Nigerian Startups Funding Report 2018 by Techpoint Africa, Nigerian startups raised US\$178 million in investments in 2018. Of the 148 startups, 15 raised over \$1 million. It was, therefore, only a matter of time before such disruptive indigenous technology found its way into the oil and gas business space.

MVXchange allows companies in need of vessels to instantly verify vessel availability, compare vessel rates with other vessels with similar spec and confirm the compliance status of vessels with regulations.

MVXchange.com has already attracted the interests of investors on the continent due to the confidence market experts have in the company's business model. The company recently closed pre-seed funding round worth \$100,000, led by Oui Capital, with participation by Elshcon Nigeria Limited, Neon Ventures and Zircon Marine.

MVXchange has also gone a step further to provide BIMCO Charter Party Agreement (CPA) review and advisory services to their users in collaboration with Olisa Agbakoba Legal (OAL).

Tonye started nursing the idea of MVXchange way back in 2015 as an employee of oil and gas offshore support services company, Elshon Nigeria Limited.

The need for a solution, like MVXchange, is no secret in the oil and gas industry. The Executive Secretary, NCDMB, Engr. Simbi Wabote, recently revealed that operators in the industry spent \$3.047 billion (est. ₦1.096 trillion) on marine vessels from 2014 to 2018. This demand is expected to grow as the industry ramps up operations in search of additional crude deposits beneath the ocean floor. The need for an efficient private sector-driven solution to support this growth cannot be more imperative.

The gain for government and operators from such solutions is the elimination of bottlenecks in vessel contracting processes and infusion of a private sector-driven transparent model in vessel chartering.

The big question, which remains on the minds of those eager to see an increase in private sector-led solutions in the government space, is: 'When will regulators in Nigeria's maritime and oil sector key into MVXchange's one-stop-shop vessel contracting management solution?'

Market-driven forces ensure that the private sector is always steps ahead of government in driving service delivery. While some only see competition between government and the private sector, maybe we should consider that there is another more mutually beneficial way of looking at this illusion of rivalry. Latching onto a proven private sector-led solution to service delivery will ensure Nigerians are better served.

The MVXchange train is already on the move and gaining speed. Those willing to get onboard at the next station have limited time and seats available. The impact of the solution will be similar to the way Uber disrupted cab services in Nigeria.

Don't get left behind!

-Bashir Ahmed



NCDMB Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP)

NCDMB Youth Empowerment Programmes target different categories of Nigerians, notably fresh graduates, physically challenged, unemployed, uneducated, internally displaced persons, youths in oil producing communities and young farmers living along pipeline corridors.

It has a life-long support model with four key activities: training, provision of starter packs, apprenticeship and mentorship. The programme is designed to link beneficiaries to the market. It adopts the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) or National Directorate of Employment (NDE) curriculum and identifies and aligns with programme partners.

Under the model, beneficiaries are organised into cooperatives and business entities and the trainings focus on high impact trades that contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The overarching intent of the programme is to diversify the employment base of the nation.

Focus

Areas of focus of the NCDMB YEP include raw food storage, artisanal trades (basic welding, carpentry, plumbing, electrician, painting), digital soft skills, GSM phone repairs, laboratory analysis, environmental safety, tailoring (protective clothing) and chemical production. The Intervention cuts across the six geo-political zones.

applications. It adopts the NDE curriculum for GSM training and certification. NCDMB provides stipend and creates trainee database. Trainees are screened and assigned to areas of specialisation; that is, software development and installation and GSM hardware assembly and repairs.

The programme is being executed in collaboration with UBA as banker for trainees and business development support.

2nd Stage - Graduation

Upon graduation, the trainees are awarded certificates and handed starter packs. The programme will provide a shopping complex, which will be named and commissioned by Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB. The shops therein will be furnished and allocated to the trainees. The shopping complex will be provided an off-grid power solution to ensure sustainability.

The programme is being executed in collaboration with the Kano State Government to ensure local incentives. There is also some collaboration with the Vice-President's Office to facilitate access to social investment intervention fund for trainees.

3rd Stage - Apprenticeship/Internship

The programme provides for eight weeks of practical exposure. The aim is to expose the trainees to entrepreneurship training, particularly book keeping, inventory management, sales and marketing, customer relationship, customer data base management and soft skills.

The programme will also facilitate registration of business ventures -



Better Life Empowerment Programme for Kano - GSM Training

Since the GSM revolution in 2002, Nigeria's teledensity has risen astronomically, from 1.89 percent in 2002 to 123.48 percent in 2018. This growth has positioned the telecommunications sector as a high impact sector in terms of employment and empowerment opportunities. The Youth Empowerment Programme 'GSM Training' is expected to create significant socio-economic impact in Kano, the North West and Nigeria.

Youths between the ages 15 to 34 constitute 35.62 percent of Nigeria's population.

Unemployment rate is estimated at 23.98 percent. Youth restiveness is largely due to unemployment and underemployment. It is also a fact that employment opportunities in the main stream sectors of the economy is a function of the level of skills of the individual.

GSM Training: Four Stage Execution Strategy

1st Stage - Classroom training

Candidate selection is based on local mobilisation and interest. It's an eight-week technical training, focussing on GSM hardware assembly and repairs, software installation and development of software

individual and cooperatives.

There will also be attachment of the trainees to super GSM shops for internship (phone repairs and installation of application).

There will be intensive marketing of the shopping complex in Kano State. The programme will also facilitate access to trainees by super telecommunication firms, foundations and the Nigerian Communication Commission.

4th Stage - Mentorship

The last stage is an eight-week mentorship programme. The trainees will be assigned mentors from super telecommunication firms and foundations. The mentors will oversee the development of business plans among the trainees and facilitate business development support by partner bank.

It is expected that the trainees would have become income earning individuals and cooperatives at this stage and transition into established entrepreneurs.

Abdulmalik Halilu

General Manager, Research, Statistics & Development, NCDMB

SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE AND ABDOMINAL OBESITY

Simple steps to eliminate that paunch

Concerned with the embarrassing pouch when you look in the mirror? Help is on the way!

George again adjusted his favourite blue pinstripe shirt as he tucked in his stomach to get the shirt to fit over his protruding belly. As he did, with an irritable frown and an audible pant, he once again wondered as he often did at these moments, how he managed to grow such a paunch. He knew the answer and that angered him the more; since he secured a “good job”, George had hardly engaged in any physical activity.

He was always telling himself he was “too busy”. In school, George was very active physically and had a trim, well chiselled body that many admired. The paunch started to build when he joined the workforce and became physically inactive, having to sit practically all day working hard at a desk.

Abdominal obesity or potbelly is prevalent today, particularly among men and women who work an “eight to five” job seated at a desk all day. Like George, it is common to see young people in white collar jobs with protruding bellies that push tightly against shirts that are barely restrained by the buttons.

A sedentary lifestyle is one with little or no physical activity. George, for instance, drives to the office, sits at his desk for almost 10 hours – the modern workplace is a highly functional one, with trendy equipment to ease the workflow. The average office has a computer, printer, scanner, photocopier and other equipment within arms’ reach – drives back home at the close of business and sits another four hours or thereabout to enjoy his favourite TV programmes before going to bed. So, George is practically sitting or lying down all day almost all week without any physical activity. Suzanne Brume, a Nigerian fitness instructor, cautioned against such lifestyle. “There are a host of health issues that we face due to lack of physical activity,” Brume said.

Such sedentary lifestyle fuels abdominal obesity, which can easily lead to chronic health conditions like diabetes, respiratory system problems, sleep apnoea and mental health disorders that will affect productivity negatively. According to doctors from Bowen University Teaching Hospital and University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, “fat deposited around the abdomen, especially in males,

is far more dangerous than fat deposited in other parts of the body because abdominal fat is metabolically active while fat elsewhere may not be”.

Contrary to George’s belief that the nature of his work makes it difficult to stop his belly fat, fitness experts say there are simple steps he and many others like him could take to stop the paunch and possibly reverse it.

Orjiugo Oguguo, a UK-educated ACE certified health coach, recommends that busy executives should build regular exercise routines into a typical workday. Oguguo advises that at regular intervals one should take a minute or two to do stretches in a corner of the office. Then at intervals of 30/40 minutes, one should leave the desk and take a few minutes’ stroll.

According to award-winning Nigerian fitness blogger Suzanne Brume, “A lot of people are actually pretty sedentary throughout the day and think that going to the gym for a half-hour is more important than consistent motion throughout the day.” It would be hard to lose weight that way. “Consistent motion throughout the day is more important than a quick half hour in the gym in the morning or evening,” she says.

So, build movement into the work activity. Rather than stretch while seated to reach the printer, scanner or even the stapler, why not stand and move to those equipment. Why not stand to read the dailies.

Another exercise routine that could readily fit into the office or work period, experts suggest, is the use of the stairs, if you work in a storey building, rather than take the elevator. Always climb the stairs to your office. But if you work in some of those tall towers, with your office on the 10th/12th floor, you can climb the stairs a quarter or half of the way and then take the lift. However, if you can manage the stairs right to your office, that would be great.

Publications by *juststand.org*, a site devoted to raising awareness around the health risks associated with sedentary lifestyles, showed that “a growing body of research has found a strong correlation between long periods of sitting and elevated risk of illness or injury. But when you’re moving, fat-burning enzymes stay activated, burning far more calories than when you’re sitting”.

People are pretty sedentary throughout the day and think that going to the gym for a half-hour is more important than consistent motion throughout the day. It would be hard to lose weight that way. Consistent motion throughout the day is more important than a quick half hour in the gym in the morning or evening.

**-Suzanne Brume,
award-winning fitness blogger**

Biking

is a huge boost to health and networking

Few sports can be compared to biking for the executive desirous of maintaining both physical and social wellbeing

Biking, cycling or bicycle riding has long been known to be a great sporting activity for fitness, physical and mental wellbeing. Riding also has great benefits for the environment and the economy. The life-changing benefits of biking are manifested in several ways.

According to Dr Michael Smith of WebMD, "Biking is about as ideal as a cardio exercise gets. It provides a low-impact workout that also builds strong legs and improves heart health. Practically anyone can do it. It's great for beginners." Indeed, biking is a low-impact workout; it is easy on the joints, meaning that people of all ages or fitness levels can readily and safely engage in it for an all-round benefit.

Fitness experts say even moderate biking can help burn about 400 calories in one hour. Biking, unlike most other sporting or fitness activities, is a fun way to keep fit and healthy. Among other benefits, biking helps lower blood sugar levels, burn unwanted fat, especially the dangerous ones in your midriff, helps you gain strength, stamina and flexibility, improves your heart's health, helps digestion, improves joint mobility, improves memory and creative thinking and helps relieve stress and anxiety.

An increasing number of Nigerians are beginning to appreciate the immense benefits of cycling. Cycling is being adopted by top-level private and public sector executives and business owners who are discovering fitness as an alternative lifestyle. Thus, there is a growing trend of cycling clubs in the country promoting a biking culture for recreation, fitness and health, social development as well as for its

environmental imperatives.

Some of the foremost cycling clubs across the country are Cycology Riding Club, Lagos; Road Runners and Recreational Cycling Club, Lagos; Wheelers Cycling Club, Abuja and Lifestyle Cycling Club, Port Harcourt. And over the years, these clubs continue to encourage business leaders to take cycling as a lifestyle activity, so much so that some of the top executives who are members are encouraged to participate in international amateur championships across the world, such as the Gran Fondo in New York, United States or the Cape Argus Tour in Cape Town, South Africa, among many others.

Lawyer and cycling enthusiast, Ladipo Soetan of Cycology Riding Club, speaks on the health benefits he derives as a biker. He said: "The difference between jogging as an exercise and cycling is that if you want to jog, you usually have to check how you run; whether you pronate or under-pronate or you go neutral. And then, if you run with the wrong shoe, you will have pain in your shin and your knees. Even if you don't have those kinds of problems, over a period of time you will find out a symptom of wear when you are running. The impact of the running begins to affect your knees; you begin to feel pains, particularly when you are a middle-aged person. However, in cycling, because you are moving in a circular motion, you still get the exercise without the (possible) damage to your knees."

Soetan added that due to biking, "some of us that were diabetics are now pre-diabetic again and have cut down on our medication. People who are hypertensive are now competing often because one of the ways the doctor tells

you to reduce hypertension is to lose weight".

Perhaps an important health and wellness aspect of biking is its ability to help build the rider's social and networking skills. These skills are critical to healthy living and a fulfilled long life. Imagine building friendships across industries and class as a member of a cycling club whose membership is drawn from banking, manufacturing, oil and gas, media, agriculture, medical science, engineering, law, among other fields.

The Harvard Medical School conducted a nine-year study on socialising and found that "those with the most friends cut the risk of an early death by more than 60 percent, reducing blood pressure and strengthening their immune system". In effect, the friendships built as a member of a cycling club and the support system one can draw from it remain significant to overall wellbeing. And when this is coupled with the fitness element of biking, then bikers are onto a winner.

No matter your body size, cycling remains a great way to shed those extra kilos without dramatically altering your lifestyle. "If you lose weight, your heart would do less work. Even if you are eating heavy food, riding 60 kilometres to 100 kilometres a week, 400 kilometres a month, just know that your body is doing more exercise than it used to. In other words, the amount of energy you are burning is more than the amount of energy you are taking in," Soetan said.

You can get immediate benefits of biking by asking your friends to join you to form a riders club. It is fun.

Biking helps lower blood sugar levels, burn unwanted fat, especially the dangerous ones in your midriff, helps you gain strength, stamina and flexibility, improves your heart's health, helps digestion, improves joint mobility, improves memory and creative thinking and helps relieve stress and anxiety.



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1. Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB with Engr. Tony Attah, Managing Director, NLNG at the formal handover of the commercial evaluation report for the Train-7 project at NCDMB's liaison office in Abuja.

2. Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB with staff of the Waste Management Society, Bayelsa State Branch, after a visit to the Board's headquarters in Yenagoa.

3. Mr. Akintude Adelana (3rd left), Mazi Nnamdi Okwuadigbo National President, ICAN; Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB, with ICAN executives and management of NCDMB after a visit by the ICAN President to the Executive Secretary at NCDMB's liaison office in Abuja.

4. Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, former Chairman, Senate Committee on Local Content in the 8th National Assembly with Dr. Ginah O. Ginah, General Manager, Corporate Communication & Zonal Coordination, NCDMB at the commissioning of the newly built Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Centre in Opebi Senior Grammar School, Lagos.

5. (L-R): Barr. Naboth Onyesoh, Manager, Corporate Communication, NCDMB explaining the Board's activities to Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB; Dr. Folasade Yemi-Esan, immediate past Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Resources and now Acting Head of Service of the Federation and Mallam Mele Kyari, Group Managing Director, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) at the Nigeria Annual International Conference and Exhibition (NAICE) organised by the Society of Petroleum Engineers in Lagos.



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6. Ms Hadiza Bala Usman, Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) and Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB during a courtesy visit to NPA Head Office, Marina, Lagos.

7. Group photograph of trainees at the NCDMB skill acquisition training for youths on mobile phone repairs and maintenance in Kano State.

8. Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB with dignitaries at the launch of New Yenagoa City in August by the Bayelsa State Government

9. Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB with the Grand Patriarch of the Efiks and the Obong of Calabar, His Eminence, Edidem Ekpo Okon Abasi Otu (V) and members of his cabinet during the inauguration of the Community Interface Committee (CIC) for the Nigerian Oil and Gas Parks Scheme (NOGaPS) in Odukpani, Cross River State.

10. Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB and Mr. Onajite Paul Okoloko, Group Chairman, Notore Chemical Plc, during a facility visit to Notore Chemical Industries Plc. in Eleme, Rivers State.



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Tranos, Nigeria's leading multi-sectorial firm, sets sight on the African market

A shining light that has been operating in power, oil and gas and telecom sectors for 11 years, manufacturing top of the range enclosures for generators, rotating equipment, making power distribution and protection components and many more is TRANOS. JUDE ABALAKA, its Managing Director, says the company is expanding its capacities into new markets on the back of its leading role in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

The Executive Secretary of NCDMB was quite impressed when he recently visited your company's facilities. How did Transos evolve to this stage?

Our focus, from the onset, was to find ways of being of service to our customers. With that kind of philosophy, we started by investing in human resources, on equipment, knowledge for our people and setting processes. In doing that, it gave us so many advantages.

We've been able to develop capabilities in various stages, ranging from mechanical, design, manufacturing, electrical and even the combination of the electrical and mechanical skills, to come up with various products and services. We have also been able to offer products and services along the broad range of industries because rather than looking at what we can do for one industry, we approached it from the perspective of developing capabilities that can solve various problems for various industries.

What's your company's current manufacturing capacity for cable trays and enclosures, and what would you have after your planned expansion?

We produce cable trays but we also use the system to make various types of enclosures, from the electrical to the mechanical and even to the larger e-houses. We also use the same system to do some heavy fabrication. We can turn out 72,000 metric tonnes of products per annum. If we allocate some resources to making cable trays, we are able to produce about 200-300 metres of cable trays per day.

Tranos sees that Nigeria is a large economy with a lot of industrialisation going on and our capacity won't be enough to meet the requirement we have. We have now invested in a new line that will give us about 7,200 metres of cable trays and ladders per day, which is a huge difference from what we currently have. That gives us a lot of advantage because we are now going to put ourselves on the same level with the best in the world with regard to cable trays and ladders, which is actually what prompted this investment.

How solid are your plans to go into the manufacturing of gaskets?

We love to take on challenges and when we see a gap in the needs of the industry or the customers, we try to fill it. With regard to the gaskets, we are looking at soft-cuts gaskets and spiral gaskets. We have actually started the process and have a strategic business unit - a separate organisation to manage it. As at today, we have ordered the equipment. We have a new facility that we are trying to put up beside our current facility. In the new facility, we will install our cable trays line and create some space for the gasket manufacturing. The second thing we are doing is to ensure that we produce gaskets that are acceptable in the oil and gas sector.

Our focus will not only be to make gaskets, we have to make gaskets that are of sufficient quality, which will meet the standards of what the industry is used to already. We want to give the same level of quality that you expect. We are already in discussion with manufacturers of the raw materials we need, which the oil industry is already conversant with. Our target is that sometime in the first quarter of 2020, we should be launching that line.

Some companies tried to manufacture gaskets in-country in the past but failed. What do you think accounted for those false starts?

It's a bit difficult to tell why companies do what they do. But it's obvious that a number of challenges will confront companies that try to invest in facilities. We have faced them and overcame because

we love what we do.

For example, when we are trying to setup a facility, we look at the cost implications, supply chain challenges, like where to get raw materials and its consistent availability, among other factors. We have done this a number of times and we have developed ways to overcome those challenges. We practically reinvest every money we make. Even when it comes to raising capital, it's easier for us because we've been able to prove to both the financiers and our customers that we can do this. That has given us a bit of an advantage. We believe that as a Nigerian company, we are not inferior to any other company and that gives us some courage to try and overcome some of these challenges that stop other companies.

What are your company's plans to meet global standards in gasket manufacturing?

When you look at gaskets, there are two things you need to keep an eye on to ensure that your quality is good enough. They are your raw materials and the manufacturing process. Both of them tie into being able to meet a particular standard for products. What we have done is to pay particular attention to our selection of raw materials, manufacturers of our equipment and the selection of partners whom we are going to work with. We have based everything on the expectation that these gaskets are going to be used for oil and gas applications, which demand the highest quality standards.

So, we are guided by the philosophy that if we design for customers that expect the best, it means that we can meet everybody's requirement. That is why we are not just coming from an average level or just trying to take it up, we are starting from the higher level. If we are buying



■ Jude Abalaka



equipment, we buy the best available and ensure that the suppliers of our raw materials are the best.

If we have gaskets being imported at the moment, it then means that the manufacturers of those gaskets are acceptable in the industry already. We will be sourcing our raw materials from the same place so that the foreign manufacturers will not have advantage over us.

Are there specific certifications that gasket manufacturers should have? Are you looking at having them?

We are looking at having them. The first certificate has to do with your production process and that's ISO9001 and ISO14001. We already have that certification for our current production processes. We are just going to extend that to the new line. Having the certificates also guides the philosophy of setting up your quality process. The beauty of quality from the process perspective is that you are basically designing a process for your production. That process is what determines the quality, which means that anything you produce using that process gives you an expected output. We are very definite about that. Again, because some of those requirements have to do with raw materials sourcing, we have to also pay particular attention to that. We will also try and get type approval from certification bodies. The type of approval basically means that a certification agency, like BV Veritas, has tested your product and then has certified it, then it meets the expected standard. That has to be done once we start production.

What has been the level of patronage for your products by the oil and gas industry compared to the power sector?

On patronage from oil and gas companies, let's say 50-50 because I guess not a lot of companies actually realise that we produce these things. We have now revamped our marketing strategy to tell people that there is a Nigerian company that manufactures these things. We have also been at a number of exhibitions to talk about them. But it takes a bit of time for people to actually overcome the mindset that these things can't be done in Nigeria. We are beginning to break through that initial disbelief. With the help of the NCDMB as well, we are beginning to get words out there. When the Executive Secretary came, he came in with representatives from the International Oil Companies and they looked at our facilities. The things we showed them convinced them that it is actually possible. And we also don't even approach this from the mindset that we are a finished article. We focus on continuous improvement. Although we are not selling as much as we would love to, but I guess it is just a process.

NCDMB has been pushing for Nigerian companies to extend their reach to the Gulf of Guinea and beyond. Recently, Nigeria signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. How is Transos positioning itself to take advantage of these opportunities?

We are quite interested in the move. I mentioned earlier that we are investing in new cable trays capacity. It means that by the third quarter of 2020, we will be making 7,200 metres. That is 7.2 kilometres of cable trays or cable ladders per shift. Our target is to produce in three shifts. To consume all that output, we need a larger market. We think that if we can make these things for the Nigerian market, be it oil and gas or manufacturing, there will be so many African countries we can supply as well. The same applies to the switches, sockets, enclosures and other things we make. We are

at the point where we are beginning to say, 'how do we organise our marketing and sales functions to look at a broader market and communicate our products and services to a wider market and at the same time?' For us, the continental free trade agreement is very important and a pointer that there are opportunities for us as we begin to grow our capacities.

Transos operations cut across power, oil and gas, office equipment and household items. Which do you consider your niche?

We see what we do in four categories. First, building enclosures for electrical panels, control panels, sound proof enclosures for generators and enclosures for various applications. We have a good design team that does a lot of designs so we are able to basically build what we design. The second thing we do is power distribution and protection. Here, you have switches and sockets, cable trays, ladders and electrical switch gears, LB panels.

We also have the services we provide to the oil and gas industry. We customise our other services to satisfy the oil and gas market. You could look at the cable trays and ladders, the switch gears and the enclosures being provided for use in the oil and gas industry. We are able to provide the same service to different sectors. Our niche will fall under the enclosures, because that is where you can find all the various types of enclosures that we make and we have all kinds of customers who we are substituting their imported enclosures with the one locally made.

How has your organisation benefitted from the implementation of the Nigerian Content Act?

We have been in the business for 11 years and the Nigerian Content Act is about 10 years. We were there before the Act and we have been there as it has progressed. We can see that it has been very helpful because it has now gone to the stage where the Act is promoting the patronage of Nigerian companies and helping to develop those Nigerian companies to provide the values that the IOCs and other companies need. Now, Nigerian companies are winning contracts and delivering projects that were previously done exclusively by foreign companies before the NOGICD Act. We have been able to develop competence such that we are also offering services to other sectors of the economy. If you develop competencies, you can easily spread your tentacles and serve companies outside the shores of Nigeria. The implementation of the Nigerian Content Act has been helpful. It has gradually changed the paradigm of how the companies, including the IOCs, approach the discussion of Nigerian Content Development.

Another key aspect is training. The Board's strategy of including and encouraging training has been very important. It means that as time goes by, we will have more well-trained people around. These are intangible things we didn't really know were there. We benefit both directly and indirectly. I also commend the Board for showcasing local competencies either in exhibitions organised by the Board or through other platforms.

What's your business outlook in the next five years?

We have been building enclosures for a number of years, especially for mechanical applications, generators, rotating equipment generally and electrical applications from the small wall mounted ones to the bigger containerisation solutions. In the next five years,

We are quite interested in AfCFTA. We are investing in new cable trays capacity. By the third quarter of 2020, we will be making 7,200 metres. That is 7.2 kilometres of cable trays or cable ladders per shift. Our target is to produce in three shifts. To consume all that output, we need a larger market. If we can make these things for the Nigerian market, be it oil and gas or manufacturing, there will be so many African countries we can supply as well.

we want to own that niche in the Nigerian market because we have a situation where we do this things but not many people know it. We will also perfect internally our system for mass customisation where we can provide these products for people in larger quantities and be able to customise to meet individual needs. That is possible with the technologies we have available now. We really want to own that niche and become a household name, so that when someone needs an enclosure, Tranos comes to mind immediately.

Secondly, we also want to be able to organise our products into an ecosystem of products that address the power distribution market - from the switches and sockets on your wall to your distribution panel, to your cable trays and ladders. We are looking at becoming the solution, especially with regard to power distribution and protection. We have partnership with Schneider and the likes. We can now begin to put these products into an ecosystem. What this means is that we should be able to solve your needs revolving around your power distribution requirements.

We are not just asking you to take this power distribution panel, take this cable tray and ladders, we should be able to actually put your mind at rest as regards anything revolving around those requirements. It is being able to group our products and communicate them to the customer so they know them. Instead of coming to Tranos and saying 'I need a panel, the customer should say, 'I need all my power requirements in this factory sorted', and we do that for you. We are also going to put in place new lines for cable trays and ladders with the gasket factory as well. We will always focus on providing value and solving problems for customers and sniff out areas where customers are having issues.

It's often said that the greatest asset of any organisation is the human capital. How do you train and retrain your personnel to make them fit and competitive?

Training is more like part and parcel of what we do. It is not an expense, it is more like an investment once done correctly. In Tranos, training is an ongoing thing and we have plans to partner some companies to start training for ourselves and others as well. We must have well trained people to do things and have a system in place that ensures that we keep training people. By so doing, we would have built a pool of well-trained Nigerians. Any long-term plan that we have without thinking of the human resources and their level of knowledge will not succeed. Our current strategy is to keep investing in training people with the long-term plan of formalising it by setting up some sort of institution that helps in training people and even others within the industry.

It is fascinating that you see training as an investment rather than an expense. In the last 11 years of your journey, how much have you suffered in terms of staff churn?

Of course, the more you invest in people, the better they get and become attractive to others. It is like a double-edged sword: you have

to invest in them so they are attractive to yourself and others within the industry. But as someone said, if you don't train them and they stay, it is even worse because you have people who are there but are not actually doing the work.

What is your staff retention strategy?

That is an ongoing learning process for us because over the years, we have been trying to improve on how we retain staff. But we also found out that it doesn't necessarily stop people from leaving. It is an ongoing thinking as an organisation to say, 'How best can we retain people because there are so many schools of thought now that say young people don't want to stay in a particular place for long. For us as an organisation, we consider how best to make the work environment more comfortable and more convenient for people to stay.

What are some of the key challenges facing Tranos?

I will say the competence of our personnel is the first challenge. For example, if a company is trying to set up a new line for making gasket or cable trays in Europe, it is easier for them to get experienced personnel. But here, there is no company already doing it. Hence, getting experienced people is a challenge, which means that you have to keep training them. It takes you a longer time to get them to a level where they are good enough and there is also the risk of someone else poaching them.

Of all these challenges, which specific one would you would want government to address to enhance business growth?

Well, some of these problems are sort of systemic and it is not just something you can simply press a button and they disappear. They are more like policy-related issues that the government needs to revisit. Issues relating to multiple tax authorities and multiple taxation and so many things we need to grapple with, that make life difficult for entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

Government needs to listen to businesses because we have taken the plunge to make things happen here. There has been a lot of talk about many Nigerians moving to Canada. So, you can imagine people that have an option to relocate and they stay and run businesses here. Anyone running a business in Nigeria has other options. For the person to have made that decision, I think businesses require encouragement from the government and that encouragement should show in the way you interact with government agencies. They should feel your pain and not make it worse for you, which is actually what it is. A lot of times we hear that government wants to encourage business but when you meet the foot soldiers or when people come to your organisation and say that they are from a government agency, they are not coming with a friendly tone. I think it is something that we really need to look at, to encourage more people to do this because for us to grow as a country, we need more people setting up companies and running good businesses because that's the only way we can develop as a country.



Leveraging credit to grow wealth

The lens through which credit is viewed provide different perspectives. Its key role in wealth creation is undeniable.

Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States of America, famously remarked, "If you would like to know the value of money, go try to borrow some; for he that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing". The implication of this is clear: Do not borrow. Not many share this sentiment, though.

Credit or borrowing is as old as humanity itself. And contrary to popularly beliefs that religions and cultures consider credit as bad, that is certainly not the case in Christianity and Islam. In Islam, for instance, Riba (interest on loans) is frowned at as not being fair in economic relationships. This suggests that Islam recognises the human need to borrow; it simply frowns at capitalising on that to exploit the borrower. The story of the widow in 2 Kings 2:7 aptly illustrates how borrowing could be used to achieve wealth.

Then culturally, debt has never been seen in any Nigeria as a bad thing. It can be argued though that default on loans could lead to unpleasant consequences, which is not different from how loan default is viewed by the formal financial system. In fact, the concept of *ajo* (thrift contributions) among the Yoruba is not so much as the savings per se but the idea of contributors, usually traders and market women, being able to access a large pool of funds to invest in businesses. Among the Igbos, for instance, credit is not strange. In ancient times, there were community deities, particularly in the Nsukka axis, which acted as credit institutions providing micro-credits to the people.

Modern society has simply built on these concepts of credit/borrowing and provided better structures through institutions like the financial services industry. Individuals and organisations have used and will continue to use debt to build wealth. Warren Buffet, Aliko Dangote, Femi Otedola, George Soros, Bill Gates, Tony Elumelu, and many others have used credit to build economic empires. And nations today continue to borrow to fund budgets and grow their economies.

There are several options available today for credit/debt. Equity, bank facility or trade credit are just a few. "Borrowing money to invest can pay off and boost your potential returns, if you know what you are doing. Remember that it has its downside," says a financial analyst, Ambrose Odion. What is most important is to assess and net off one's credit needs versus the associated risks. Credit can be sourced from loved ones, usually at zero interest rates, from financial institutions: banks, insurance firms and micro-finance institutions, venture capitalists, stock exchanges, trade credits, all of which come at a cost.

Many may argue against borrowing, considering that it has its upside and lots of downsides. But then, wealth is often a function of the level of risk one is willing to take. The bigger the risk, the bigger the profit. Also, modern society is a highly competitive one, with many jostling for the next big opportunity to take advantage of and remain competitively advantageous. So, being conservative in business without adequate funds blunts your competitive advantage significantly, leaving you and the

business at the mercy of every crisis. One can start a business with the little resources at hand without having to borrow, but then as the business expands, it is imperative to consider credit options.

One way to use credit to grow wealth is by investing the money in interest-yielding assets, such as real estate, money and capital markets securities such as equities, bonds, exchange traded funds, treasury bills, among others. An investor and CEO of First Registrar, Mr Bayo Olugbemi, writing on *Saving and Investing for the Rainy Day*, said: "Money is a factor in investing. The difference between the rich and the poor is how they treat money."

Many of the housing estates springing up across the country today are heavily leveraged. The real estate market in the cities and big towns may have peaked due to a supply glut, but returns on investment still average 30-40 percent year-on-year in the past five years. Government bonds and treasury bills have a coupon rate that is usually above the inflation rate.

You can also function as an Angel investor using credit. An angel investor is usually a well-heeled individual who provides capital for a business start-up. Such investment can be exchanged for convertible debt (that is, debt converted into equity in the business). One must be careful though to invest in a viable venture. An individual can also use credit to start a business. The agriculture sector is particularly attractive now for investment.

Borrowing money to invest can pay off and boost your potential returns, if you know what you are doing. Remember that it has its downside.

-Ambrose Odion, Financial analyst

EXPORTING ENGINEERING SKILLS FROM NIGERIA MOBIL'S SUPPORT FOR ILF HAS BEEN KEY

A template for Local Content growth that lends itself for adoption

First ever in-country fabrication of two wellhead platforms completed by an Operator - MPN SFD Project - another local content first by MPN

If ILF Engineering Nigeria's feats were not attested to by the projects the company had executed over time, its achievements would be consigned to folklore status. In 1976, for instance, ILF built a Commercial Vehicle Plant in Bauchi State; the engineers whose expertise birthed the plant, gave birth to a class of Nigerian engineers whose skills were required for a Front End Engineering Design (FEED) project in Iraq in 2014.

Chief among NCDMB's most celebrated local content achievements has been the continuous drive to domicile engineering activities in-country in partnership with major operators. A shining example of this is the recently completed Total Egina FPSO where Nigerian engineers played key roles in the first-ever partial integration of an FPSO in-country. Mobil Producing Nigeria (MPN) has also moved the needle on local engineering capacity by steadily entrusting complex work scopes to in-country engineering design firms. The story of how MPN's commitment to local content played a key role in the rise of DeltaAfrik Engineering is well documented and celebrated.

Over the years, MPN has supported the Board's local content implementation by partnering Nigerian engineering companies via Engineering Services Agreements (ESA) and Engineering, Procurement and Construction Management (EPCM) contracts to develop local capacity, says Emmanuel Mboho, Mobil's Design Engineering Manager. Some of these firms are: Ariosh, Amazon Energy, NETCO, FODE, IELS, KOHASA, among others.

ILF's growth and experience with MPN is quite remarkable. The company forayed into the Nigerian business space in the 1970s with an engineering support contract for a commercial vehicle plant. In 1980, it established ILF Engineers Nigeria, with its main office in Lagos. The company thereafter secured its first major project management contract from NNPC for 2C & 2D pipeline system. Subsequently, it was awarded a five-year inspection contract for the 760MW Kanji Hydropower plant in 1986.

ILF's major breakthrough in offshore projects was in MPN when its competency led ILF to design the Usari Offshore Platform. MPN's trust in ILF was borne out of the company's performance while

providing design services for Mobil Qua Iboe Terminal.

Providing insight into ILF's growth in Nigeria, its Managing Director, Abiodun Oshodi, a 19-year veteran of the company, said: "During my early days, the company's key assignments were executed by expatriates due to the lack of requisite in-country skills. However, as the company gained a foothold in the oil and gas sphere, deliberate efforts were made to hire and train competent local engineers."

Asked how effective development of Nigerian engineers at ILF has been, Abiodun alluded to the fact that in 2006, all engineering discipline leads with the company were expatriates, while in 2013 ILF executed "follow-on engineering for Mobil's QIT Gas Flare Elimination project with lead positions all manned by Nigerian professionals".

ILF's commitment to Nigeria has never been in doubt. In 1980, when Gunther Horlesberger was in Nigeria to establish the ILF Engineering office, he was shot by robbers in Lagos. Undeterred by the incident, Gunther returned to the country a few months after recovery to complete his task and resume as Managing Director.

ILF owes a large chunk of its success in Nigeria to the strategic support accorded the company by Mobil Producing Nigeria. The oil giant has been committed to local content development by supporting the growth of in-country engineering firms.

In 2018, Mobil and ILF hit another milestone with the completion of engineering design for MPN's Pigging Facilities Upgrade Phase 7 project. ILF completed over 43,000 man-hours work scope with a team of 34 Nigerians and three expatriates.

With an installed capacity of 100 engineering work stations, ILF Nigeria now supports engineering design operations outside Nigeria. These include the Detailed Engineering Design for a 10-kilometre gas pipeline project in Ghana (approx. 10,000 man-hours), project management consultancy for the Seme Field redevelopment project in Benin Republic (approx. 130,000 man-hours), technical due diligence for power assets in Sierra Leone (approx. 1,000 man-hours).

Anthony Anyanwu, Oluwole Sojinrin and Hopeth Babafemi, among others, all of ILF Nigeria, have supported ILF projects in Europe and the

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- Abiodun Oshodi, Managing Director, ILF Engineering Nigeria

Jatto Hamza

Journey from Auchi to Poland

I am Jatto Hamza, a graduate of Electrical/Electronic Engineering from the Federal Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State. I am among the privileged beneficiaries of NCDMB training in collaboration with AOS Orwell/Siemens that was held at the Lagos Energy Academy, LEA, Ikeja.

The training, which took place from September 2018 to February 2019, was highly impacting as I was exposed to the smart world of power systems through the modern-day electrical engineering practice. In the course of the training, an opening for various engineering roles by BIC Electric (a Polish company with a Danish DNA) came to the Academy through the management, which I applied for.

In November 2018, I was contacted for a phone interview and later invited for the next stage, which was a brief interview and a written test that was held at the Danish Consulate, Ikoyi, Lagos. In December, 2018, I was invited for the final stage of the recruitment process, which was a panel interview comprising the company's representatives from Europe physically present and a video conferencing with another representative in Europe virtually present in the meeting. It was an amazing session, I must say, considering the fact that the interviewers were delighted to know that I was on the Smart Electrical Engineering Training with LEA.

Interestingly and as expected, by January 2019, I got a congratulatory call from the Danish Consulate that I had been finally selected. I was asked to resume work in Denmark by April 1, 2019, as one of the West African trainees.

My colleagues and I arrived in Europe and resumed immediately at the Headquarters in Poland. So far so good; everything is going on smoothly and as expected, in spite of the weather and the language. But since English is the global language of business, interacting is not a big challenge.

The management of the company believes so much in the knowhow and ability of Africans. They are very much open to dialogue, willing to make improvements where necessary. I admire the leadership style

and quality of the organisation. There is a thin line between the management and workers; there is always mutual respect for and from everyone.

Also the fact that the training is on-the-job makes it beautiful. I am allowed to work with little or no supervision with different teams on various projects. This has made me open to continuous learning and improvement. It has also made me to accept and respect people the way they are irrespective of beliefs, race, colour or religion.

The training has been practical on world-class live projects. It is purely hands-on on different projects across several countries in Europe, in industry and automation, building installations, renewable power (wind) as well as oil and gas. Summary of my job description is providing various electrical installations (power, control and instrumentation systems) on building and industrial projects. Conducting of various tests (dead and live) on cables and equipment. It also involves providing pre-commissioning services on equipment, among many others. All these are done applying the European Standards.

My heart-felt gratitude goes to the Almighty God, who has made this a reality. And I also want to sincerely thank and appreciate the NCDMB in collaboration with AOS Orwell, for this great empowerment initiative that has given a world-class opportunity to engineers like me. I also want to thank the LEA (its management and trainers) for providing me with an in-depth knowledge and training, which has placed me on an international platform to practise with peers across the globe.

I advise young people who want to follow in my step to never look down on any avenue for growth and development. They should have an open mind and be ready to pay the price for any prize that is desired. Know that money isn't everything. Build integrity in your professional journey. Never assume that you know it enough and whatever you know, don't be scared to share or pass the knowledge to anyone that needs it. Kill your fears and doubts with boldness and attempts. And lastly, register on NOGICQS, if you haven't.

Middle East, such as the FEED for a seawater supply pipeline in Iraq, thereby exporting Nigerian skills!

Mboho recalls that during his early days at MPN, he knew ILF Nigeria as an engineering firm with mainly expatriates supporting projects across the JV assets. It is gladdening to note that ILF Nigeria embraced with open arms the opportunities offered by the partnership with MPN to develop the capacity of its Nigerian office to a stage where it currently provides competent specialist engineers to other countries. Mboho said he was impressed last year during the detailed design execution of PFUP7 to see Nigerian engineers not only executing all the engineering work (including specialised studies, like flow assurance, structural modeling and analyses, among others) but also offering innovative ideas to optimise the design.

The support received by ILF from Mobil has been deliberate, focused and strategic. It could serve as a template for supporting Nigerian service companies to grow local content.

-Bashir Ahmed



Jatto at work in Poland

Resetting the senses at the invitingly soothing and tranquil Gurara Falls

If you can fish and make a fire, this tourist destination gem beckons you to unwind and connect to nature to recharge your juices for higher productivity.

Beyond the facade of calmness overlaying the landscape and the welcoming ambiance, which ushers one into its location, is the beautiful testimonial of one of Nigeria's natural wonders, the Gurara Waterfalls.

It is unusually tiresome at work today, I find out I am dissolving and losing something I cherish about myself - my laughter and easy outlook to life. I know what I need because I have often prescribed this to friends and colleagues. Go and see nature and you'd realise that life is beautiful, I will say with a lyrical voice. I plug in my headphone as the bus leaves Minna, the Niger State capital. I slip in and out of sleep while Asa's *I had to run away and hide*, set on repeat, accompanies me on the journey.

The whiteness of the water is surreal. For once, since I left the house, I am grateful for the sun. As the water touches the base, it tumbles up and produces a big, visible rainbow on the water as it flows downward into a calm river. I envy the thick bushes on either side of the falls: they remind me of well-fed children, with their greenish lush.

“Gurara!” I am jolted awake and thank the driver. The bus zooms off and the first thing I notice is the sign post announcing the waterfalls.

The waterfalls, also known as Nigerian Premier Falls, is one of the major tourist destinations in Nigeria. It is located at Kilometre 69 on the Minna-Suleja road. Before it was made popular pre-Independence by the Europeans, the waterfalls had been employed by the locals for fishing and rituals. This has, however, given way to receiving tourists: it is now a resort with a recreation centre and the prospect of a five-star hotel.

A brief visit to the falls and the experience cannot be forgotten in a jiffy. I am required to pay an entrance fee of ₦500, which I learn could have been more if I had come with my car. The barricade is lifted by a man with a welcoming facial expression who comments on my figure. “*Slim aunty, no fall for wata o.*” I smile and tell him I can swim.

I start the 30-minute walk with a group of tourists. As we proceed, I realise the place is not as quiet as it has earlier been. I can hear the commanding heaviness of water falling from a very high level. I look around and notice that everyone around me is also fascinated by this awesome sound. There is a mishmash of cool and warm sensational veil that embroiders one with every step taken closer to the falls. There is something unavoidable about the sound. Even

before I see the falls, I hear it, about four miles, distinct like a battalion of army marching to war. My heart throbs for peace and excitement as I quicken my pace.

There is a fruitful mango tree, which momentarily houses a group of people dressed in blue polo shirts. We are offered roast corn even before we sign our names on the register. After signing in, I am introduced to my tour guide. There is a mini-bar made with red bricks at the entrance and an open hall for small parties. The building is situated at a strategic point, rendering tourists a wholesome perspective of the falls while sitting and relaxing. The tour guide is a patient and interesting man with answers to every question you have about the falls.

The falls is at its best display from April to November, good around December to January, and passable around February and March, due to the dry season.

The tour guide leads us to a red brick walkway for a proper view of the waterfalls, which appears as though one is viewing the falls from an equal level, only that the walkway is barricaded a safe distance from the waterfalls. At that moment, I do not remember anything. I only stare and wonder. How can something this huge and exuberant be hidden from the gaze of civilisation and its attendant impact? As I watch, I imagine a heavy hand holding a mighty jug, pouring milk over fifty metres away from the ground.



The whiteness of the water is surreal. For once, since I left the house, I am grateful for the sun. As the water touches the base, it tumbles up and produces a big, visible rainbow on the water as it flows downward into a calm river. I envy the thick bushes on either side of the falls: they remind me of well-fed children, with their greenish lush.

The tour guide leads us to a staircase, which he claims is as old as the waterfalls itself. Only that now, it has been reworked with cement. He points at a shorter route to the end of the falls - smaller set of rocks buried in water. The rocks sit on each other in a fashion that mimics a stairway. From where I stand, I see how treacherous climbing slippery rocks can be. He says we can try this route if we return during the dry season when the water level is low.

As we walk down the stairs, I breathe better when the guide tells me the snakes have all been hunted and taken out for the safety of tourists. However, he promises if I stay long enough, I will find monkeys, which come out of hiding to drink water. The water, as I learn, rids itself of whatever impurities and dumps them at the bank of the river for whoever is responsible for cleaning the area. I learn it gets 'angry' whenever people throw things at it. I bend over and take a gulp with my hand cupped together, after the similitude of the tour guide.

The river is home to different varieties of fishes: tilapia, catfish, snake fish and electric fish. Tourists who know how to fish are allowed to cast their hooks. And if you can make a fire, you can grill your catch and enjoy the freshness of the fish. The sands are white and grinded, giving the feet a feel of the beach. There are trees and rocks to relax on.

I do not hear the sound of moving vehicles, engines or machines - only peace, quietness and security, as I stand opposite the waterfalls now.

There is a signpost warning that swimming is strongly prohibited. Movement is, however, allowed in the shallow part of the water. The guide explains that the sign will be removed when the water current is low in the dry season; then, swimming can be allowed. I stow my swimming trunks away and pleasure myself with dipping my feet in the water and collecting beautiful pebbles.

Tourists can only make temporary tents, as there is no accommodation yet. However, the government is working to expand the offerings of the destination. There is a large piece of land enclosed from the falls earmarked for development.

Je're. That's what the orange-coloured fruit at the bank of the river is called, in Gbagyi language. There is a sweet and sour taste to the fruit, like lime flavoured with sugar. I take a seed with me and hope it prospers somewhere in my house, a token I can see and remember I was here.

Hafsat K. Abdullah is an award-winning spoken word artist, poet, novelist, model and performance artist who studied English and Literature at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

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NONYE OF KOCHHOUSE SAYS ECOMMERCE WILL DRIVE NIGERIAN FASHION

Nonye Nkwocha, Creative Director, KochHouse, brings his IT background to running his fashion business, which aspires to make Nigerian wears become fashionable across the globe.

What inspired you to morph from IT to fashion?

My inspiration and motivation came from a hunger to wear my own designs. I almost always had problems with being able to afford what I like and never liking what was within my budget. KochHouse was born out of that need, to make affordable clothes for classy men and still retain the qualities and aesthetics of luxury.

You seem to favour suits!

I have four brothers, growing up my dad called us kings. This made us feel royal and so it affected the way we thought about things, conducted ourselves and even dressed. So, for the longest time, as with many people also, I had always loved being in a suit or looking at people showing up for events in suits and tuxedos. There is a special kind of respect accorded to people all dressed up in a clean cut nicely fitted suit. That's why I say a suit is not just a piece of clothing but an investment.

Your suits bare rare details. What dictates these blends?

Simply put, being me. I believe everyone is unique in their own way. Based on backgrounds, environments or innate qualities, everyone has a signature or an imprint that tells him out in a crowd. I try to channel that into my collection and individual pieces. I find a way to make it simple, modern and classy. Beauty for me is in the subtle details.

Who defines what should trend?

Just as in every other industry, there are shot callers, influencers and pacesetters. These are not limited to people but organisations and different bodies, such as fashion houses and publications. We always keep up with the trends but try not to follow these trends but carve out our own path through it. We like to infuse our own signature, some other reason why you would want to buy a Koch piece, aside it being trendy. And other times, occasionally, our clients do. They determine what suits them best and how they would want to be seen at a particular period.

Why the special interest in men's wears?

Ladies, generally, are fashionable, colourful and would spend extra or go the extra mile to look beautiful and elegant. Men? (laughing). Just the regular will do. Nothing extra or colourful. Some men do not even know unpopular colours – lilac, burgundy, and teal. As depicted in our emblem, one of our goals at KochHouse is to be a

haven for men of taste - high and low. We walk you through the process to becoming a gentleman and suave. Our logo has a crown and a tower that symbolise making every man a king. The tower is a safe place to hide your fashion insecurities and shortcomings, thus making you a better version of yourself through clothes.

How has your work evolved since you launched your label?

KochHouse is seven years this year. We have grown through the years, maintaining our core as a simple and relatable brand but continuously exploring new trends and ideas. We started out as a simple men's shirt company but now it is a full brand that caters to all men's needs - from leather slippers, shoes, ankle boots, suits, traditional wears, tuxedos and wedding looks. There is something here for every man!

What skills are important for a successful career in fashion design?

Doggedness, creativity, flexibility - ability to learn and unlearn with ease and good customer relationship skills.

Prediction of which will dominate the formal wear segment between suits and Nigerian wears.

Our dream at KochHouse is to have the Nigerian work look (corporate look) as a *kaftan* or senator. It is a gradual transition and we hope it continues. The idea of a suit is beautiful and easy on the eye, but with fashion, comfort is key. Suit and jackets are borrowed from our colonisers. This works perfectly for them and when you are over there because it was made to suit their weather. We are in a humid region and all year round, even in the wet season, it is always hot. A *kaftan* is a smart and office-friendly attire. It's being adopted in some circles and offices and we hope this trend gradually gains ground.

What is next for you and KochHouse?

Nigerians are finally beginning to embrace and trust e-commerce and online transactions. It is the future of not only KochHouse but all businesses. We hope to deepen our ecommerce offering before the year runs out to service our increasing client base within and outside the country. A fully automated and IT-run KochHouse; that's the future of the business.





***The Lost Okoroshi* - Abba Makama**

The Lost Okoroshi is Abba Makama's sophomore feature film following his 2016 debut, titled: *Green White Green*. The film follows Raymond Obinwa, a disillusioned security guard (and something of a layabout) whose main preoccupations are checking out women and figuring out how to escape the bustle of Lagos in favour of the more relaxed countryside. He wakes up one morning to find that he has transformed into a mute, purple spirit - traditional Igbo masquerade, *Okoroshi*.

In his new form, Raymond sets off on a quest to find a new home in the city and along the way, he encounters brassy sex-worker Doris and street hustler Willy-Willy – who is convinced of Okoroshi's earning potential.

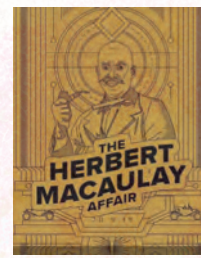
Written by Africa Ukoh and directed by Abba Makama, *The Lost Okoroshi* features old-time Nollywood comedian, Chiwetalu Agu as well as Tope Tedela, Ifu Ennada, Seun Ajayi and Judith Audu.



***The Set Up* - Niyi Akinmolayan**

From the director of the chart-topping *Wedding Party 1* and *The Arbitration*, Niyi Akinmolayan comes with another intriguing offering, *The Set Up*. It is the story of Chike and Grace, childhood friends who are thrust into the deadly world of espionage, lies, deceit, seduction and blackmail when they join a mysterious private club called The Academy. Edem procures the services of The Academy to assist in his scheme of marrying Motunrayo, heiress to her late father's business empire. So many moving pieces on a chess board – who is playing who?

The film is a thrilling piece of drama that never runs out of suspense and is as fast-paced as it is engaging. It features a fine blend of Nollywood oldies and newbies that include Adesua Etomi-Wellington, Jim Lyke, Dakore Egbuson-Akande, Tina Mba, Joke Silva, Kehinde Bankole and Ayoola.



***The Herbert Macaulay Affair* - Imoh Umoren**

"At this point of our history as we need to remind ourselves of the labour of our heroes past," says Imoh Umoren whose latest film, *The Herbert Macaulay Affair*, is a must-see.

The Herbert Macaulay Affair is a biopic about one of Nigeria's founding fathers and foremost nationalist. The film attempts to tell the story of young Herbert who returns from studying overseas to sow the seeds for the revolution that would eventually lead to Nigeria's Independence. The narrative delves into Macaulay's personal life, struggles and love for Caroline Pratt, his wife.

Herbert, upon his return, is annoyed by the segregation he witnesses at work and in his way rebels against authority. He meets and falls in love with Caroline whose father is a police officer with the colonial British Force, and this sets him on a warpath with his father-in-law to-be as both men have opposing ideologies. Through this film, we see different shades of Herbert - the lover and revolutionary.



– Rema

Born Divine Ikubor, rave of the moment, Rema, released hit track, *Dumebi*, as part of a four-track self-titled project, *Rema EP*. Interestingly, another single of the project, *Iron Man*, made former United States President Barack Obama's summer music list. Speaking on the inspiration behind *Dumebi*, Rema says: "Back when I was going through hard times in Benin, Edo State, I liked this cool girl who came from a rich background. I didn't have much money, and when I texted her, she wouldn't reply. One day I was in the studio and saw her pic, and I told the producer, 'Give me a beat for this girl who rejected me'."

The beauty of *Dumebi* is its eclectic nature as it borrows from trap music (percussion), soft rock (with the guitars and strings), pop (with the strings) and hip-hop. The melody is fascinating with its highlife, Afropop and Bollywood music feel. Produced by Mavin Records in-house producer Ozedikus, *Dumebi* shows the promise that Rema holds for Nigeria's music.



***Totori* - Olamide x Wizkid x ID Cabasa**

Certified hit-maker, ID Cabasa (remember him from 9ce *Gongo Aso*?) taps on his man – Olamide aka Badoo, who also links up with longtime friend and frequent collaborator, Wizkid for this new joint, *Totori*, which will surely rock your playlist. Riding on the already established music chemistry between Wizkid, who delivers yet a catchy hook, and Olamide who handles the verses, this monstrous jam has a reggae vibe around it with very rhythmic beats and call-response lyrics.

Oya Totori mi one time (tor); Totori mi two time (tor tor); Totori mi three times (tor tor tor); Totori mi four times (tor tor tor tor), says the lyrics, which makes for very excitable dance grooves. *Totori*, which is local parlance for tantalising or sweet sensation, is a banger that will rock many clubs and living rooms.



***Culture* - Umu Obiligbo ft Flavour x Phyno**

Akunwafor Jnr and Okpuozor, the duo that make up the highlife group, Umu Obiligbo, receive a massive boost in getting Phyno and Flavour, two heavyweights, to produce a cross-over mainstream sound on steroids.

You cannot but be enthralled by the combination of esoteric sound of *Udu* drums, *Ogene*, plosive aerophone and slit drums to produce *Culture*, which is infused with a heavy dose of highlife, Igbo rap and afrobeats. The acoustic sounds of guitar and flutes give a smooth soothing sound in your ears and your feet will surely dance to this very cultural sound, which is produced by superstar producer 'Masterkraft'.

Even though the song is rendered in Igbo language, it does not detract from its sprightly soundscape led by Flavour's highlife inflected vocals and gritty rap bars delivered by Phyno. Listen to *Culture* and your feet will surely thank you.



***A Small Silence* - Jumoke Verissimo**

Award-winning author, Jumoke Verissimo whose debut collection of poetry, *I am Memory*, makes a gallant entry into the world of prose with her debut novel, *A Small Silence*. Published by Cassava Republic Press, *A Small Silence* is set in Lagos and tells the story of Prof, a Nigerian activist and retired academic, formerly imprisoned for 10 years for protesting the government's treatment of disenfranchised communities. On his release, Prof shuns the world that drove him to the edge, embracing a life of solitude and sitting in darkness in his room at night.

Adopting the allure of silence, he alienates family and friends until a knock on the door from a young woman named Desire changes everything. Desire, an orphan and final year student, had grown up idolising Prof, following a fateful encounter in her hometown of Maroko as a child. Tentatively, the two begin to form a bond. However, the darkness of the room threatens to drive Desire away for good.

A Small Silence is an intimate and evocative piece. Expertly crafted and full of subtle power, it challenges cultural norms around silence, darkness and solitude in a manner that ignites the imagination.



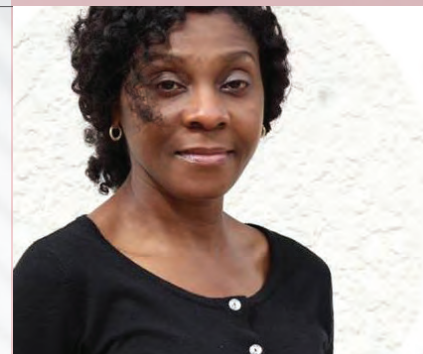
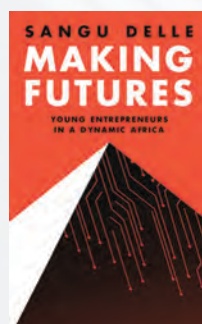
***Making Futures: Young Entrepreneurs in a Dynamic Africa* - Sangu Delle**

Having acquired a vast knowledge of business environments across Africa, Harvard Business School alumnus, Sangu Delle, shares intimate knowledge about how young creative entrepreneurs are identifying problems as opportunities and using technology to drive growth in a continent that has been long overlooked.

Readers will be enamoured with the passionate portraits of 17 inspirational, courageous and hard-working young entrepreneurs – eight women and nine men - who have been selected from Delle's seven-year jaunt across 45 countries in Africa and engaging over 600 individuals that are doing amazing work across the continent. People such as Bernice Dapaah who founded the *Ghana Bamboo Bikes Initiative*, which hires young women to use bamboo to create environmentally-friendly bicycles or Bilikiss Adebisi who founded Wecyclers, a social enterprise empowering low-income communities to turn trash into cash.

In telling the story of an emerging entrepreneurial ecosystem in Africa and how young entrepreneurs are building enterprises at scale in a digital age, *Making Futures* showcases the breadth of diverse entrepreneurial journeys on the continent. The book is organised across four broad sections: The Aspiring Moguls (general business entrepreneurs), The Sociopreneurs (social entrepreneurs), The Creatives (entrepreneurs in the creative economy) and The Techies (technology entrepreneurs).

The book is a testament to new possibilities on the continent and how we can solve important challenges on the continent with and without digital technologies.



***Mystery at Ebenezer Lodge* - Dunni Olatunde**

"There is one more room to see in this house before we move on to the garage that houses our old cars and motorbikes..." Mama stole a look at Bosun, Bolu and Nosa, whose faces lit up like a Christmas tree...the oldest wardrobe you have ever seen. Ball gowns, my wedding gown and lots more... She waved them into the third room. "Let me show you...."

Mystery at Ebenezer Lodge tells the story of the Ilesanmi children, Bosun and Bolu, who are on holidays at their grandparents' house in Ibadan, until their grandfather travels to Ilorin urgently. Along with their neighbour, Nosa, they are sent to spend one week in the care of their grandmother's aunt, 79-year-old Mama Onireke of Ebenezer Lodge. But the old mansion holds more in store for them than a quiet holiday. Someone is getting into the old buildings on the grounds without using the doors. The children are determined to get to the root of the mystery at all costs.

If you are looking for a book that does justice to tales of children's adventures and evokes a nostalgic thrill, *Mystery at Ebenezer Lodge* is certainly a good read. Little wonder it has been selected in the three-book final shortlist in the 2019 edition of the *Nigeria LNG*, NLNG's Nigeria Prize for Literature, which focuses on children literature this year.

The book is relatable and enjoyable because children will recognise themselves in the characters as mystery at Ebenezer Lodge highlights curiosity, riddles and problem-solving skills.



INDUCTION

Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB, being inducted as a Honorary Fellow of the Chemical Society of Nigeria (CSN) by Prof. Sunday Olawale Okeniyi, President, CSN, at its 42nd Conference in Lagos.



AWARD



Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, Executive Secretary, NCDMB with his wife, Mrs. Sotonye Wabote after receiving the Nigerian Business Leadership Award for Transformational Leader in the Public Sector 2019 at the BusinessDay Nigerian Business Leadership Award in Lagos.

WEDDINGS



Mr. Osagie Dandy, an officer in the Finance and Account Division, NCDMB walked down the aisle with former Miss Esther Cynthia Uwaifo on 27th July, 2019 at Ikoyi Marriage Registry, Ikoyi, Lagos. We wish them a blissful married life.

Mr. Bobby Tonye Ekaro, an officer in the Information and Communication Technology Department, NCDMB tied the knot with former Miss Chinwe Opara on 24th August, 2019 at TREM church, Utako, Abuja. We pray God to bless their home.



Policy

My priorities as Minister of State for Petroleum Resources

By Chief Timipre Sylva

Mandate from Minister President

President Muhammadu Buhari made it clear that the oil and gas industry remains critical to the Nigerian economy of today and the future. It remains key to the successful implementation of our budget at all levels. When he was inaugurating his Cabinet, Mr President transmitted his priorities for the Next Level agenda and we in the Ministry of Petroleum Resources must focus our performance on those priorities.

Ministerial roadmap

On my assumption of office as Honourable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, we had a session with key leaders of the ministry and heads of agencies to cascade the presidential agenda, receive status reports from the ministry and its agencies to enable us develop strategic priorities, a roadmap and a delivery framework for the next four years and beyond. The retreat concluded with the production of high-level priorities that focused on increasing oil and gas reserves and production, energy security through the curtailment of smuggling and revamping of our refineries. We will also focus on increasing federation revenue through cost control and increased efficiencies in oil and gas production; facilitate investments in capital projects, thereby enhancing job creation opportunities and poverty eradication.

Monitoring framework

Our roadmap has clear deliverables to be achieved in short, medium and long terms. A performance management

framework has also been developed along with a programme of monitoring output and evaluating outcomes to feed into the Ministry's score, supporting the Next Level agenda.

The heads of the agencies agreed to strengthen their collaboration and hold monthly business meetings with the Honourable Minister of State to continue the ongoing collaboration to deliver the objectives of the ministry. A monitoring team will be set up, chaired by the Honourable Minister of State, to monitor the implementation of the strategies developed to achieve the ministry's deliverables and feed into the quarterly briefing by the Minister to the Federal Executive Council.

No divestments of JV assets

There will be no divestments of Federal Government's interests in our Joint Ventures. It was not discussed at the ministerial retreat; it may have been discussed at other levels, but it has not been cascaded to us yet. So, it is not on our table.

We will work with the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to cut 50 percent of our over-production; that is, the excess we produce over and above our OPEC quota.

We are also working on cutting our cost of producing crude oil. This is something we have been discussing because government must make more profit from oil activities and the bottom line is very much affected by the cost of the business.



There will be no divestments of Federal Government's interests in our Joint Ventures. It was not discussed at the ministerial retreat; it may have been discussed at other levels, but it has not been cascaded to us yet. So, it is not on our table.

Bid rounds will happen soon

Bid round is on the table. We want to expand the space and we are looking at fine-tuning modalities for a bid round. First, we will hold marginal field bid round, then a full scale bid round. We also have a very clear programme against products theft. There is no reason why the country should be losing production, not just crude oil theft, but products theft as well. We will come out clearly with the full details of our programme on this later.

Excerpts of the press conference by Chief Timipre Sylva, Honourable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, after the retreat with Directors and heads of agencies in the Ministry of Petroleum Resources.



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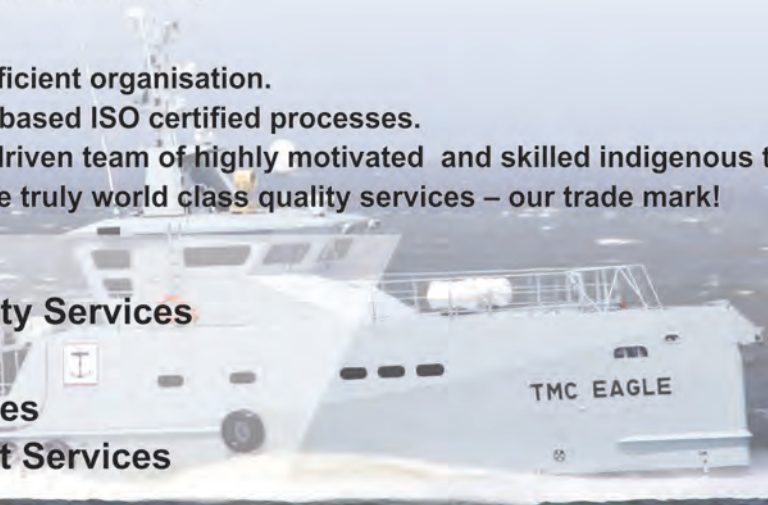
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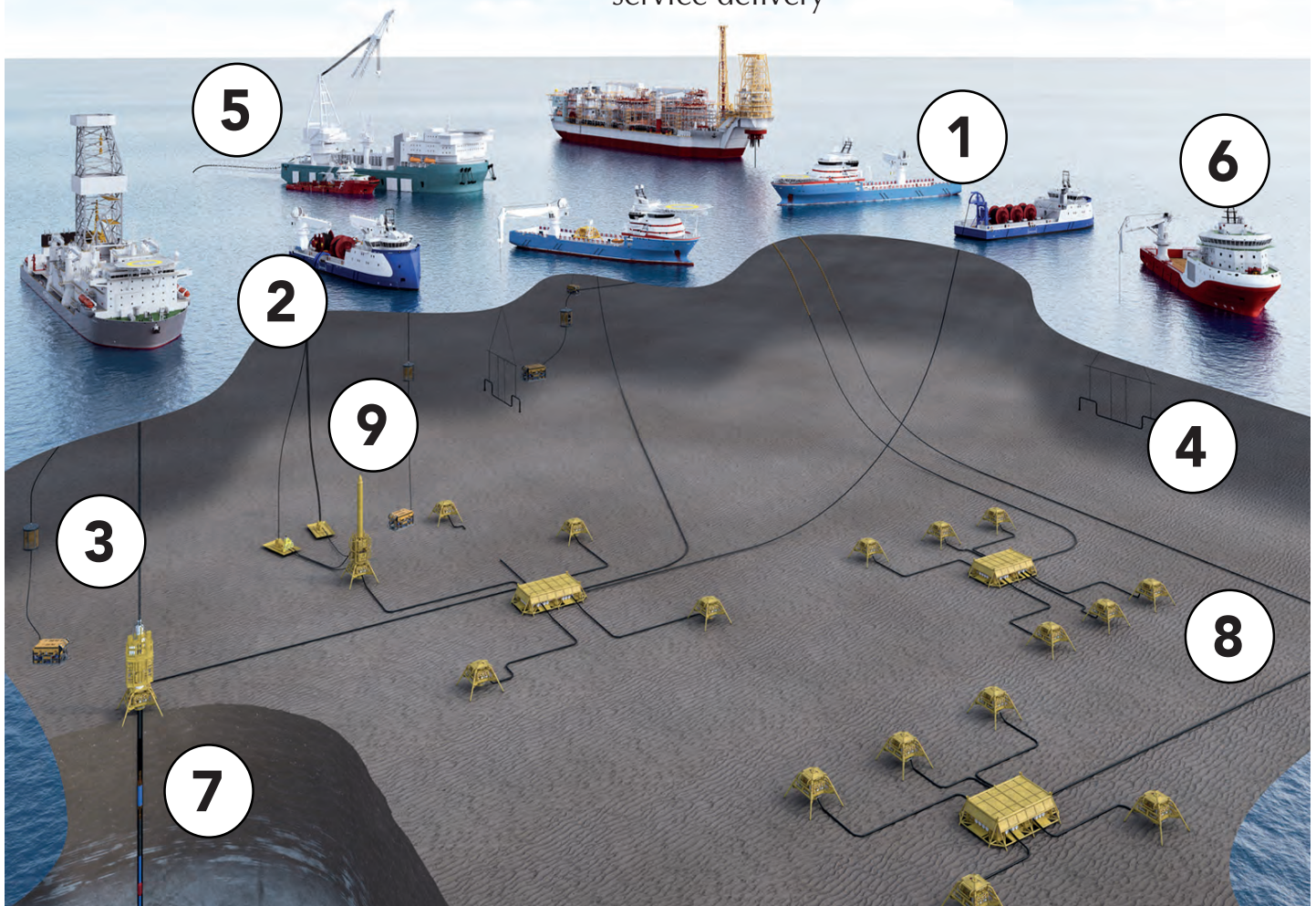
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