

tbi Africa

THE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

RC: 1368510

JUNE 2019

VOL.2 NO.4

www.tbiafrica.com

N500, \$20, £10

■ **OB3, AKK PIPELINES: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS – OILSERV BOSS**

■ **9TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: WHAT HOPE FOR NIGERIANS?**

BARU: A TRANSFORMATIONAL ACHIEVER AND REFORMIST



SEPLAT'S ACTIVITIES IMPACTING NIGERIA'S ECONOMY, DOMESTIC GAS SUPPLY

■ **DRIVING 30% OF ELECTRICITY GENERATION**

BONGA: UNLOCKING NIGERIA'S POTENTIAL IN DEEP WATER

We connect to the economic heart of the nation, pumping in energy from 120kms offshore and in water depth of 1000metres, with a workforce 95 percent Nigerians.

With the first production at our Bonga Floating Production Storage and Offloading vessel in 2005 and our recent celebration of 800 million barrels production milestone, we are proud of our pioneering roles in the Nigerian deep-water exploration, deploying our global expertise to develop Nigerian content.

Our impactful social investments in health, education and sports tesify to our belief in Nigeria, its people and its future, and we remain committed to doing even more to support a great country with huge potential.

SNEPCo employee walking on the Bonga Floating Production, Storage and Offloading vessel.

Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited



Co-venture partners




DR. NJIDEKA KELLEY

Seplat Petroleum Development Company Plc has distinguished itself as an outstanding and consistent Nigerian Independent Exploration and Production Company. Since its establishment in 2009, it has been in the forefront of promoting natural gas supply for domestic usage especially to the power sector to boost electricity supply to Nigerians even when the price was not anything near international market value.

Currently, gas supply from its assets to the power sector accounts for 30 per cent of Nigeria's electricity generation. Besides, it has continued to contribute to the development of the economy through various interventions in the education and health sectors, infrastructure and human capital development.

The cerebral management team and board of directors of the company have, ever since the company's emergence on the oil and gas industry, shown they are thoroughbred entrepreneurs. This underpinned Seplat's current strong balance sheet and profitable production base with a balanced mix of oil and gas.

Its corporate governance practice stance stands it out among its con-

Editor's Note

temporaries. Its operational and safety standards align with international best practices, hence it wasn't difficult for the management to take it to local and international capital markets. Today, Seplat is the only Nigerian company fully listed on both the Nigerian and London Stock Exchanges.

The Company has continued to strive to increase reserves and outputs from its oil and gas blocks. Through its strategic implementation of redevelopment work programme and drilling campaign, the Company has been able to grow production from mere 14,000 barrels of oil per day (bopd) to over 84,000 bopd.

As a responsible corporate entity, Seplat answered national call by the Federal Government to support gas-to-power project to take Nigeria out of darkness. The company responded by investing in the installation of dedicated gas production and processing facilities, drilling of gas production wells to meet domestic supply obligations and provide feedstock to power projects that will help increase Nigeria's power generation capacity. It is in recognition of these contributions to national development that TBI Africa editorial team chose to make Seplat our focus for this month's edition.

Also in this edition is the rising concern about the increase in inflation and how it will affect Nigerians if left unaddressed. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the apex regulatory body of banks, also recently expressed fears that inflation rate may continue to rise marginally, noting that it will, therefore, continue to tight economic policies. The CBN said the country's inflation may rise to 12 per cent this year before moderating.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

recently said the nation's inflation rate increased to 11.40 per cent in May from 11.37 per cent recorded in April, adding that the figure was 0.03 per cent higher than the rate recorded in April 2019.

Traffic gridlock in Lagos has become nightmarish and it gets worse by the day as a result of heavy downpour. Will the administration of Babajide Sanwo-Olu walk the talk, or will it end like the toothless bulldog that barks without biting?

In our political economy column, we looked at the expectations of Nigerian from members of the 9th National Assembly, highlighting the achievements and failures of the 8th Assembly.

On the lighter mood, we brought to you how to make your relationship work by making you sexual life more romantic and ways to build your self-confidence.

All these and other informative reports and discourses are packaged in this edition for your consumption.

TBI Africa team welcomes you to the 2019 Nigeria Oil and Gas Conference and Exhibition in Abuja. We wish all the participants fruitful deliberations. Remember to network well, make new friends and business partners and for those visiting Abuja for the first time, endeavour to explore and enjoy the Abuja hospitality.

Dr. Njideka Kelley is also the owner and Principal Consultant of New Generation Consulting LLC, 10101 Fondren Road Suite 353, Houston Texas 77076

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY: Syndicate Publications Limited (RC: 1368510)

#1, Alhaji Shomade Alley Street, Obanikoro, Lagos

Website: www.tbiafrica.com. **Email:** info@tbiafrica.com

Office Tel: 07089620095, 08057363319 **EDITOR:** Dr. Njideka Kelley, +17182194957, 07086167905. **GRAPHIC ARTIST:** Imekan Augustus

CONTENTS

SEPLAT'S ACTIVITIES
IMPACTING NIGERIA'S
ECONOMY, DOMESTIC GAS
SUPPLY

5

BARU: A
TRANSFORMATIONAL
ACHIEVER AND
REFORMIST

10

HOW RISE IN INFLATION
MAY AFFECT NIGERIANS

27

TRAFFIC GRIDLOCK: WILL
EXECUTIVE ORDER DO
THE MAGIC?

36

9TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:
WHAT HOPE FOR
NIGERIANS?

41

NIGERIAN AGRO SECTOR:
GAPS, CONSTRAINTS AND
PROSPECTS

47

OB3, AKK PIPELINES:
ECONOMIC
TRANSFORMATIONAL
PROJECTS

- OILSERV BOSS

51



HOW TO MAKE YOUR SEXUAL
LIFE MORE ROMANTIC

56



SEPLAT'S ACTIVITIES IMPACTING NIGERIA'S ECONOMY, DOMESTIC GAS SUPPLY

•DRIVING 30% OF ELECTRICITY GENERATION

Seplat Petroleum Development Company Plc, a leading indigenous independent oil and gas producer, has been at the forefront of promoting natural gas supply for domestic usage especially to the power sector to boost electricity supply to Nigerians. It also contributes to development of the economy through interventions in the education, health sectors, infrastructure and human capital development. In this report, TBI Africa Team takes a holistic look at the company.

SEPLAT is a leading independent oil and gas producer in the prolific Niger Delta region. It focuses on maximising hydrocarbon production from its existing assets, acquiring and farming into new opportunities.

Since the acquisition of its first blocks, oil mining leases (OMLs) 4, 38 and 41 and commencement of production in 2010, the Company has increased oil and gas production and grown reserves in every year of operation and it is currently recognised as a leading Nigerian independent oil and gas operator. Underpinning SEPLAT is a strong balance sheet and profitable production base with a balanced mix of oil and gas. Most importantly, its corporate governance practice is unrivaled among its contemporaries. Its operational and safety standards align with international best practices.

SEPLAT is presently the only Nigerian exploration and production (E&P) company fully listed on the Nigerian and London Stock Exchanges. In April 2014, Seplat

SEPLAT is presently the only Nigerian exploration and production (E&P) company fully listed on the Nigerian and London Stock Exchanges. In April 2014, Seplat completed the first ever dual listing on both the London and Nigerian Stock Exchanges



completed the first ever dual listing on both the London and Nigerian Stock Exchanges.

The Company raised US\$535 million in an initial public offering that ranked as the largest for a sub-Saharan Africa company since 2008 and the second largest ever for a Nigerian company, demonstrating the international investors' appetite for the leading Nigerian oil firm.

The capital raised allowed SEPLAT to further implement the Company's business strategy including the acquisition of additional blocks. SEPLAT has a strong reserve base and proven track record of converting contingent resources to reserves. The management team has also achieved a consistent increase in gross operated oil production and boasts a record of value-accretive acquisitions.

Since making its first acquisition in 2010, SEPLAT has risen to become a leading indigenous oil and gas operator in Nigeria. The Company has increased its production and reserves year-on-year and has consistently grown revenues and profits since it commenced operations.

Gross operated liquids production at OMLs 4, 38 and 41 at the time of acquisition was 14,000 barrels of oil per day (bopd) but through the implementation of a focused re-development work programme and drilling campaign, the Company grew this to a peak rate of over 84,000 bopd, representing a six-fold in-



•A B C Orjiako,

crease and significantly ahead of the peak rate achieved by the previous operator of approximately 56,000 bopd in 1996.

Alongside its oil business, the Company has successfully established itself as the pre-eminent supplier of natural gas to the domestic market in Nigeria through substantial investments made in the commercialisation, development and monetisation of the substantial gas reserves that exist on its blocks.

Whilst natural gas was commonly viewed as a by-product from oil production in previous years, SEPLAT was quick to see the opportunity of the increasing importance of natural gas as a key source of energy for Nigeria.

The company has responded by investing in the installation of dedicated gas production and processing facilities and the drilling of gas production wells to meet domestic supply obligations and provide feedstock to power projects that will help increase Nigeria's power generation capacity. Rather than being the by-product, natural gas for SEPLAT is a valuable primary commodity in its own right that will form a significant component of its future growth and success in Nigeria.

As Nigeria's leading independent, SEPLAT works hard to ensure its business grows and develops with wider economic and social considerations at the forefront of everything it does.

The need for reliable, affordable power is a vital step to achieve accelerated economic growth in Nigeria and we are working hard to support its delivery. SEPLAT is the leading supplier of natural gas to the domestic market and with the prolific natural gas reserves in Nigeria, it harnesses this opportunity to meet growing demand and address the current power supply deficit.

Operations Director of SEPLAT, Mr. Effiong Okon, confirmed the company's stance on gas development when he spoke at the Africa E&P Summit held in London recently where he delivered a paper entitled "Oil and Gas Rising in Africa." He said currently, SEPLAT contributes about 30 per cent of domestic gas supply in Nigeria.

He noted that given the huge opportunity in Nigeria, the company has continued to make significant investment of well over \$300 million in growing its gas business resulting to its massive current daily production capacity.

"SEPLAT current well stock is capable of



•Austin Avuru

The company has responded by investing in the installation of dedicated gas production and processing facilities and the drilling of gas production wells to meet domestic supply obligations and provide feedstock to power projects that will help increase Nigeria's power generation capacity



delivering around 400 million standard cubic feet per day (MMscfd). In addition to these, our Sapele Gas Plant upgrade and Assa North-Ohaji South (ANOH) project is to add 315 MMscfd capacity by 2020."

He stated at the Summit that Africa is the destination for gas development and investment. Africa is home to some of the world's fastest growing economies, some of them lifted by new oil and gas discoveries. An estimated 7.5 per cent of global proven oil reserves (126.5 billion barrels) and 7.1 per cent of global proven gas reserves (487.8 trillion cubic feet) sit in Africa.

He stressed that there has been abundant discoveries of oil and gas reserves, which have over the years attracted key international oil companies to the continent.

Alongside these majors is the rising of the independents who have also come into existence and have continued to grow in leaps and bounds, he said, noting the need for more significant investments in view of challenges such as importation of refined products and lack of access to electricity despite huge crude and gas reserves.

Okon added: "A lot of people in Africa still do not have access to electricity. Lack of adequate infrastructure also still presents a problem. These challenges present huge opportunities for gas development and investment. As a result, a company like SEPLAT has remained bullish with its gas development. SEPLAT, with a strategic location on the gas hub in the Niger Delta, facilitates its gas development."

According to him, the growing need for capital for emerging infrastructure such as refining and transportation of petroleum commodities and products and the development of a robust petrochemical industry, place the continent at a vantage point for investments.

SEPLAT has always shown commitment to value creation for economic development and its shareholders. At its recent annual general meeting, the company unveiled its plans for expansion including more acquisition to boost production and achieve stronger growth as well as ensure capital appreciation for the benefits of the shareholders.

As you are aware, our results from the previous two years were characterised by the extended period of force majeure at the Forcados terminal from February 2016 to June 2017



In its full year financial result ended December 31, 2018, SEPLAT recorded revenue of N228 billion, reflecting an increase of 65 per cent from the N137 billion the company made in the 2017. It also recorded profit before tax of N73 billion, indicating 480 per cent increase from N13 billion which the company made in 2017.

Speaking at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Company's Chairman, Dr. A.B.C. Orjiako, said: "The company's 2018 operational and financial performance reflected the significantly higher year-on-year levels of production uptime at its core oil producing assets combined with a firmer, albeit still volatile, oil price and increased contribution from the company's gas business.

"Our plan for acquisition of plant to grow organically is still on course. Once we are able to get valuable asset to acquire, we will go for it.

"As you are aware, our results from the previous two years were characterised by the extended period of force majeure at the Forcados terminal from February 2016 to June 2017. As we enter 2019, our reliable production base, low unit cost of production and discretion over capital commitments will allow the business to remain highly free cash flow generative and profitable.

"In the absence of any major interruption or force majeure event, this will enable SEPLAT to honour its dividend policy and provide an attractive yield to our shareholders in addition to the potential for capital appreciation."

Orjiako also stated that the company will selectively invest in low risk oil production drilling opportunities within the existing portfolio and the continued expansion of the gas business, with 2019 set to be the year that activity intensifies at the large scale Assa-North and Ohaji-South (ANOH) gas and condensate development.



"SEPLAT remains an ambitious growth-orientated company that is in a position of strength to capture inorganic opportunities where we can leverage our competitive advantages to seek out carefully considered, price disciplined and value accretive acquisitions."

For the Chief Executive Officer of SEPLAT, Mr. Austin Avuru: "SEPLAT has delivered an excellent operational and financial performance resulting in robust profitability and cash flow generation providing us with an extremely solid foundation for growth in the coming years.

"At our core assets in the West, OMLs 4, 38 and 41, the extension of the licence to 2038 means that we can confidently plan and invest long into the future to realise the full potential of those blocks."

"As we continue to enhance production and revenue diversification with new wells scheduled at OML 53 in the East, the board took the Final Investment Decision (FID) to invest in the large scale ANOH gas and condensate development which will form the next phase of transformational growth for our gas business.

"Disciplined capital allocation continues to remain at the core of our activities

evidenced by our continual deleveraging of our debt levels to the current balance of US\$350million.

"In 2018, we reinstated the dividend, increased capital investments and with the resources and headroom in our capital structure, we are equipped to capitalise on organic and inorganic growth opportunities as they may arise."

Besides FID for the ANOH project, which its Phase I on completion will process 300 MMscfd gas with accommodation space for future expansion, Avuru said the Amukpe to Escravos alternate export pipeline, which is nearing completion is expected to be fully commissioned and operational in second quarter of this year.

The project will ramp up to initial permitted capacity of 40,000 barrels per day during the third quarter of this year, he said, adding that: "Access to three separate export routes at our western assets and two at our eastern assets providing adequate redundant capacity will significantly de-risk distribution of oil production to market."

Giving back to society

SEPLAT has social investment pro-



grammes which include healthcare, education, economic empowerment/capacity building, infrastructure development and environmental stewardship initiatives.

SEPLAT through various corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes positively impact the society. In the health sector through the NNPC/SEPLAT Joint Venture has Eye Can See and Safe Motherhood signature. The programmes are for communities situated in its Eastern and Western Assets operational areas.

For the Eye Can See programme, beneficiaries had their eyes tested, receive prescribed glasses and some had surgeries for cataract related visual impairments.

The Safe Motherhood programme whose beneficiaries are mostly pregnant women and nursing mothers, had mothers receive lectures on danger signs of pregnancy and nutrition in pregnancy. The beneficiaries are also presented with Safe Motherhood kits made up of a maternity bag, vitamin supplements, treated mosquito nets and all medical items required for safe delivery.

Avuru assured that the Company is firmly committed to sustaining the CSR health programmes and other programmes

targeted at the socio-economic development of communities in its operational areas.

According to the Company's General Manager, External Affairs & Communications, Dr. Chioma Nwachuku, the Eye Can See and Safe Motherhood CSR Programmes started in 2012 in the Western Assets operational area, comprising Edo/Delta States from where it was extended to the Eastern Assets operational area in Imo State.

Nwachuku assured that both health programmes are in alignment with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Developing Goals (SDG) 3 which is to "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all."

The company signed a Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) with the host communities where its oil blocks, OMLs 4, 38 and 41, are located. It was the Company's first community development agreement signed between the Company and its local stakeholders. The GMOU provides a framework within which the Company and its host communities can work together to support wider sustainable community development. Under the terms of the GMOU, a Community

SEPLAT has structured internship programmes for talented, enthusiastic, ambitious students and those who are carrying out National Service



Development Committee (CDC), also referred to as the Host Communities Forum (HCF), has been established and is comprised of representatives from each host community.

The CDC/HCF is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the social investment programmes funded by SEPLAT and identified by the CDC/HCF, with a view to invest in areas that align SEPLAT's business objectives with local priorities whilst addressing broader development objectives. This process involves transparent communication with all local stakeholders and ensures multi-party engagement between the Company, community, civil-society groups and government.

SEPLAT is strongly committed social and environmental values as reflected in its rigorous approach to performance assessment, measurement and evaluation across its four core CSR pillars - local stakeholder engagement, health, safety; environmental rigour, employee effectiveness; and business and ethics conduct.

Capacity development

SEPLAT has structured internship programmes for talented, enthusiastic, ambitious students and those who are carrying out National Service. "We take great pride in offering the brightest young minds a chance to develop professionally and to apply their skills in a supportive environment," the management said.

The company also conducts a yearly academic quiz entitled 'Pearls Quiz Competition' for secondary schools. The school that emerges tops goes home with a star prize of cash that runs into millions of naira and sometimes with other prizes such as buses while second and third place winners also go home with prizes.

SEPLAT, over the years, has also continued to award scholarships to undergraduates students in its operational areas.



tbi Africa
THE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

ENERGY

JUNE 2019

BARU: A TRANSFORMATIONAL ACHIEVER AND REFORMIST

By Abisola Thompson

He looks calm and unassuming but behind this gentlemanliness is a tough man who is patriotic to development and growth of his fatherland. The outgoing Group Managing Director, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Dr Maikanti Baru, came on board on July 4, 2016 when he succeeded Dr Ibe Kachikwu who doubled as the Group Managing Director of NNPC and Minis-

ter of State for Petroleum Resources.

On resumption, he made it clear that he was not a stranger to the oil sector and the attendant challenges. Although, he met a Corporation faced with many challenges but did not allow that to deter him from making his positive contributions to the industry.

It would be recalled that the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) had raised an alarm about

the lack of transparency and massive corruption in the Corporation prior to his appointment.

Fully prepared to change the narratives of the Corporation, he unveiled a 12-point agenda designed to cleanse the Augean stable and reinvigorate the NNPC.

The 12-point agenda include the creation of an all-inclusive internal advisory council on security comprising repre-

sentatives from NNPC, international oil companies (IOCs), labour unions and security operatives. The council was created to brainstorm and address host community agitations, implementation of new business models to grant needed autonomy to the strategic business units and autonomous business units within the Corporation. The council was mandated to provide direction and control to ensure the national oil firm's growth and profitability.

Forbes Best of Africa Oil & Gas awarded him "The Man of the Year" prize in recognition of his patriotic service to Nigeria and his efforts to reposition the Corporation. According to Forbes, the award was based on his rising profile and impressive career path through the years.

"For these and other landmark achievements which you have recorded throughout your enviable career, your nomination for this Prestigious Forbes 2017 Award has been approved by Forbes Custom's Award Committee.

"We also believe that the award would spur you to greater heights in your quest to reposition the NNPC and bring it to global acclaim in the service of Nigeria and humanity," Forbes stated.

Speaking at his investiture as Fellow of

We also believe that the award would spur you to greater heights in your quest to reposition the NNPC and bring it to global acclaim in the service of Nigeria and humanity



the Nigerian Academy of Engineering (NAE), held at the University of Lagos recently, Baru attributed the successes to his engineering background and discipline, which wholesomely prepared him for the great task ahead.

In his presentation entitled "The journey so far," Baru said studying Engineering prepared him for life and living. Also on being the helmsman of NNPC, he enumerated those landmark progress recorded in the last three years.

According to him, engineering as a branch of study tasks the brains and whets one's ability for logical thinking and problem-solving thus challenging the creative instinct to solve existential problems and relieve humanity of drudgery.

The NNPC boss listed some of the achievements recorded under his watch to include maintaining production levels well above two million barrels per day; increasing crude oil production by NNPC flagship upstream Company - the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC).

The Corporation under his watch ensured a boost in gas production to the extent that currently, NNPC is the largest supplier of gas to power and saving enormous financial resources through Direct Sale Direct Purchase (DSDP) scheme adopted for products import.

Others include ridding government of huge financial commitments on cash call commitment by developing workable alternative funding arrangements; devising sustainable teamwork between the oil and gas industry and the numerous host communities in the Niger Delta region. This, he noted, was to curb security challenges that had dipped crude oil production some years back and instituting a regime of transparent contracting/bidding processes in all major projects.

His management, according to him, also reduced cost of crude oil production per barrel in the country from \$27 to \$22; explored opportunities in frontier basins to boost Nigeria's reserves



base and production.

The Corporation also sustained petroleum products supply nationwide and kick-started the current holistic rehabilitation of the nation's four refineries to boost capacity utilization.

Fielding questions on his recent retirement from the services of the NNPC with effect from July 7, 2019, the NNPC chief expressed gratitude to God for seeing him through a glorious career at the Corporation, noting that even after retirement he was willing to do more if called upon to serve the country.

Baru was born on July 7, 1959 and hails from Jama'are in Bauchi State, north-east Nigeria, but grew up in Jos, Plateau State. He is a Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Engineering and a Fellow of the Nigerian Society of Engineers. He is married with children.

He attended Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, where he obtained Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) with first class honours. He also holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Mechanical Engineering.

Before his appointment as the Group Managing Director, he was the Group Executive Director, Exploration and Production of the Corporation. He also worked in various capacities in both the upstream and downstream arms of NNPC. These include Group General Manager of Greenfield Refinery Projects, Managing Director of Hyson, Executive Director of Nigerian Gas Company (NGC), General Manager, Gas Division of NAPIMS, Manager – Operations, Procurement Management Services and Manager, Engineering for National Engineering and Technical Company Limited (NETCO).

During his stint with NAPIMS which spanned July 1993 to July 1999, Baru executed several gas projects which still utilize billions of standard cubic feet of gas per day.

Several other ongoing projects were also conceptualized under his care. He planned the projects that aimed at ensuring flare-out by 2008 and made huge savings while overseeing the Joint Venture Gas Projects.

He was also the NNPC's Chief Technical Negotiator on the West African Gas Pipeline project from July 1999 to April



Several other ongoing projects were also conceptualized under his care. He planned the projects that aimed at ensuring flare-out by 2008 and made huge savings while overseeing the Joint Venture Gas Projects



2004.

Baru has been the Chairman of NNPC anti-corruption committee since September 2004 till date; and has relentlessly sensitized members of staff on obligations and laws that govern corruption and corrupt practices.

On whether, if called upon to still serve

his fatherland, Baru said: "Service to Nigeria is everybody's call. Every Nigerian should be willing to serve the country when called upon to do so.

"The system that has been put in place is for a public servant to retire when he is 60 years or after 35 years in service. However, if it is the prerogative of President Muhammadu Buhari to invite you to do more, of course you should look at it and you should do more. The President graciously accepted my statutory retirement but if he says I should come and do more, I'm willing to serve."

President Muhammadu Buhari appointed Mele Kolo Kyari as the new group managing director of the NNPC. Kyari is from Borno State and he becomes the 19th Group Managing D of the NNPC with a rich profile of professional and service credentials.

SHELL SEEKS STAKEHOLDERS' SUPPORT TO CURB OIL PIPELINE VANDALISM

...LOSES 11,000 BOPD TO CRUDE THEFT IN 2018



By Abisola THOMPSON

Shell Nigeria has called for stakeholders' concerted efforts to curb the incessant vandalism of crude oil-bearing pipelines, highlighting the danger of continuous sabotage to people and environment.

The General Manager, External Relations of the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Mr. Igo Weli, said such efforts to curb pipeline sabotage will save lives, secure communities and protect the environment.

Weli spoke on Pipelines Right of Way Encroachment and Vandalism. "Shell is concerned the repeated sabotage of recently repaired pipelines exposes the environment and people to renewed and worsening pollution. Oil theft is focused on short term fiscal benefits, ignoring the long-term effects of environmental degradation.

"Since 2017, sabotage spill rate has risen steeply and crude oil theft from SPDC JV's pipeline network averaged 11,000 barrels of oil per day (bopd) in 2018, an increase of about 20% over previous year. The number of sabotage-related spills increased in 2018 to 111 compared to 62 in 2017 and, since 2012, SPDC has removed more than 1,160 illegal theft points."

Also speaking at the workshop, Shell's General Manager, Safety and Environment, Chidube Nnene-Anochie, said irrespective of the cause, SPDC cleans and remediates areas impacted by spills from its facilities."

According to Nnene-Anochie, "SPDC imple-

ments work programmes to appraise condition of, maintain and replace key sections of pipelines and flowlines. In 2018, for example, we installed 70 kilometres of pipelines and 188 kilometres of flowlines. Over the last seven years, SPDC has replaced approximately 1,300 kilometres distance of flow lines and pipelines."

She said: "In line with industry regulations, SPDC only pays compensation if the spill is operational."

NECONDE SECURES OVER N230B REFINANCING DEAL TO DRIVE OIL PRODUCTION

By Meletus EZE

A consortium of seven local and international lenders has signed an agreement to refinance Neconde Energy Limited's existing Senior Secured Medium-Term Loan Facility Agreement worth \$640 million over (230 billion), following a 20-year renewal of its Oil Mining Licence (OML), effective June 2019.

Neconde is in a Joint Venture (JV) with the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC) in OML 42. The JV's Production presently stands at an average of 50,000 barrels per day (bpd), and upon completion of the development activities planned in the 2019 work programme; output is expected to hit about 100,000bpd.

The consortium of seven lenders is made up of four Nigerian banks and three international lenders. They include Access Bank, Fidelity Bank, Zenith Bank as well as First

Towards the UNEP Report-guided Ogoni Clean Up, Weli said: "SPDC actively supports the clean-up process along with other stakeholders. SPDC remains fully committed to providing its share of \$900 million (N283.73 billion) over five years to the Ogoni Trust Fund as stipulated in the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) gazette and the agreed governance framework."

"The SPDC JV has completed its first-year contribution of \$180 million (N54.54 billion). Early 2017, the SPDC JV made available \$10 million to help set up HYPREP office and in July 2018, joint venture deposited additional \$170 million (N51.52 billion) into an escrow account to fund HYPREP's activities."

The company said it is also collaborating with communities to effectively patrol pipelines' rights-of-way through direct surveillance and GMoU surveillance, proactively engaging government security agencies to prevent crude theft and vandalism and carrying out awareness campaigns to educate community members, surveillance contractors and general public of the requirements of the 1990 Pipeline Act which prohibits any third-party activities 100ft from existing oil and gas right-of-way.

Bank (UK) Limited. The international lenders are the Africa Import Export Bank (Afrexim), Africa Finance Corporation (AFC), and Glencore Energy (UK) Limited.

Apart from being a member of the lending consortium, Glencore is also the off-taker of Neconde's equity crude oil production.

With the refinancing, Neconde, according to a statement from the firm, is now positioned to achieve its field development plans for the Asset.

The Chairman of Neconde Energy Limited, Dr. Ernest Azudialu-Obiejesi, said in a statement that the loan refinancing affirms the company's strong financial fundamentals as a leading player in the upstream oil and gas industry.

He also disclosed that "this restructuring frees up capital for Neconde to invest in more development activities that will result in production increase."



CONSUMERS' LONG, TIRING WAIT FOR PREPAID METERS

•MAPS AS FAILING SCHEME?

*The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) introduced the meter asset providers (MAPs) regulation scheme to fast-track the roll-out of meters through the engagement of third-party investors and end estimated billing. The commission had issued permits to licensed firms to begin massive roll-out of new meters by May 1. Several weeks after, consumers' anxiety about the scheme continues to wane as many distribution companies drag implementation despite the will to pay for meters, **Olamilekan FAWAS** write.*

Many conclusions, arguments or positions about the inefficiency in the Nigerian power sector oftentimes refer to the faulty process in the initial unbundling of the sector through the privatisation of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) in November 2013.

The former Chairman of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), Dr Sam Amadi, reiterated the point saying the privatisation of the power sector was designed to fail.

In a series of tweets, Amadi said the privatisation process could not produce the desired results because the power assets were sold to investors who lacked the financial and technical capacity.

The sector was privatised after the unbundling of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) in November 2013, as private investors took over distribution and generation firms "to ensure an adequate, regular and stable supply of electricity to the consumer at a reasonable cost".

"The power sector was designed to fail. We failed to corporatise and commercialize before privatizing; we privatize senselessly without paying attention to context and corporate governance and regulatory regime; we sold to investors who lacked capacity," he said.

Amadi argued that the challenges in the sector go beyond tariff increase as such move would force manufacturers off the grid. "Cost-reflective is important but excessive tariff hike is problematic because it cannot be collected and in a country with poor supply because the propensity to pay is low," he said.

Amadi's argument reiterates one of the reasons why consumers have been pushing back any form of tariff increase, especially when previous increments have yet to result in improved electricity supply.

With no less than 4,606,106 electricity consumers lacking meters, there are reservations about the implementation of the meter asset providers (MAPs) scheme, which was kicked off on May 1, as many households remain ignorant of the procurement process.

Indeed, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), had issued permits to meter asset providers (MAPs), to begin the rollout of new meters by May 1, as part of measures to address issues of estimated billing by distribution companies.

Many consumers, despite willing to pay for the meters are yet to be provided with meters several weeks after.

The MAP regulation

The MAP Regulation was unveiled in March last year, with the aim of fast-tracking the roll-out of meters through the engagement of third-party investors for the financing, procurement, supply, installation, and maintenance of electricity meters.

It introduced a new set of service providers

in the power sector, called meter asset providers, to assist the distribution companies in bridging the huge metering gap in the Nigerian electricity supply industry.

According to the regulation, the distribution licensees (Discos) and the MAPs shall enter into a metering service agreement, which shall provide for the number of meters to be installed in the distribution licensee's network over an agreed period and the recovery of the cost of meter asset plus a reasonable return over a period of 10 years, among others.

But the procurement process for the MAPs was delayed, with the regulator saying in late March that it was reviewing the MAP procurement reports.

NERC said in April that permits had been issued to the MAPs engaged by eight out of the 11 Discos, adding that the rollout of meters would commence no later than May 1, 2019.

The electricity distribution companies (DisCos) are Abuja Electricity Distribution Company Plc, Jos Electricity Distribution Company Plc, Ikeja Electricity Distribution Company, Benin Electricity Distribution Company, Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Plc, Yola Electricity Distribution Company Plc, Enugu Electricity Distribution Company Plc, and Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company Plc.

DisCos' progress on MAP and endless wait for meters

Though the Commission directed that the rollout of meters shall commence no later than the 1st of May 2019, implementation is far from reality.

In Lagos, consumers under the Ikeja Electricity Distribution Company (IEDC) have lamented the slow pace of the company in implementing the MAP scheme even when they were willing to pay for the meter.

Some of the consumers said the company preferred to issue pre-paid meters to households with existing debts so that recovery could be easily done when credit units are procured, adding that for other households without debts, accessing pre-paid meters has become a racket for which residents pay up to N100,000 to fast-track the issuance of three-phase meters that shouldn't cost N67,055.85 according to NERC guidelines.

One of the consumers who preferred to be identified simply as Mr Aremu under Shomolu Business Unit noted that he has yet to



receive the meters he paid for, months after paying more than the required cost.

For Eko Distribution Company, the pace remains equally slow, as residents lament compliance with the regulation and various service agreements by the MAP and electricity distribution licensees.

IEDC appointed Mojec International Limited- (399,790 meters), Consolidated Infrastructure Group Ltd- (397,922 meters) and New Hampshire Capital Ltd-(276,699 meters) respectively within the Ikeja Disco franchise under MAP.

Acting Chief Commercial Officer, IEDC, Ugochukwu Obi-Chukwu, at a forum recently, said the NERC mandate was for every Disco to meter all consumers under its network, saying Ikeja DisCo was all out to carry out the effective implementation of the directive.

He disclosed that the target of Ikeja Electric was to meter about 30,000 consumers monthly which will be in phases, starting with customers under Shomolu, Abule-Egba and Ikorodu Business Units.

According to him, the deployment and installation of prepaid meters to customers in Ikorodu, which will be carried out by one of its MAPs, New Hampshire Capital limited, will commence on June 17, 2019, following the successful registration and subscription for meters by thousands of customers spread across Ikorodu and Epe.

"The meter rollout was supposed to start on May 1, 2019. But it has not. There have been a lot of complaints from our members across the country. They complained that even the meters that were paid for before

now have not been given to them," the President, Electricity Consumers Association of Nigeria, Chijioke James, said recently.

He said, "One week into the deadline given by the regulator, the situation seems not to have changed. So, it behoves on the regulator to ensure that all stakeholders comply with that regulation. It ought not just to bark, but also bite; that way, we can have sanity in the sector.

"Our take is that the regulator should wake up and hold the power distributors accountable to the consumers. Consumers are beginning to lose confidence in both the regulator and the Discos. Not until we see improved services, we are not going to take the regular and the Discos seriously."

Coordinator of Electricity Consumer Advocacy Network, Akeem Balogun, expressed doubts that MAP would be able to resolve the issue of estimated billing and cover the metering gap, as NERC regulation only encourages customers to procure a meter from a third party at their own expense.

He further noted that if the government wants the regulation to work, financiers should be provided for DisCos or allow them to source for their own financiers instead of allowing customers to procure themselves.

Balogun added that the cost of meters which has been added to the current tariff is like double charging customers, adding that even though people are clamouring seriously for meters, the cost of about 38,000 for a single-phase meter is too expensive for most Nigerians considering the current economic situation.



STAKEHOLDERS CANVASS SUPPORT FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY TO TACKLE POLLUTION

By Aliyu DANALDI

To mitigate the effects of air pollution, experts have called for the use of renewable energy solutions.

They noted that governments, industries, communities, and individuals should come together and explore renewable energy and green technologies to improve air quality in the society.

The experts spoke during an event organised by the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), to mark the 2019 World Environmental Day.

Leading the call, the President of Renewable Energy Association of Nigeria (REAN), Segun Adaju, said research has proven that renewable technology is affordable in meeting commitment required from it especially in addressing the problems of air pollution, which have become so rampant in Nigerian cities.

Adaju said in terms of sustainability, renewable energy sources such as, the sun, wind, electrostatic, and others are generated in a manner that transcend generations yet unborn.

"Individuals need to develop a business model that would work for them to be able to pay in a bit as well as own renewable energy products," he said.

The General Manager of LASEPA, Antonio

Ayodele, an engineer, lamented that over time, the man-made sources of air pollution have been vehicular emissions, burning of fossil fuel, waste from landfills, generator exhausts, bush burning and other agricultural

'DIASPORA REMITTANCE EXCEEDS 2018 OIL, GAS EARNINGS'

Shile GIWA

The Chief Executive Officer of Seplat Petroleum Development Company Plc, Mr. Austin Avuru, has said diaspora remittances by Nigerians in 2018 surpassed earnings from oil and gas last year.

Avuru spoke at the Nigerian-American Multicultural Council (NAMC) 8th Annual gala night held in Houston, Texas, where he bagged the Honorary Gala Chair and Lifetime Achievement Awardee.

According to him, Nigerians in diaspora in 2017 had remitted \$22 billion, making it the highest in sub-Saharan Africa followed by Senegal and Ghana with \$2.2 billion each in the same year. Currently, the country is in the top five nations in global remittances.

Also, the Chief Economist at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Nigeria, Prof Andrew Nevin, had said Nigerian citizens living outside the country remitted an estimated inflow of \$25 billion last year, saying they

activities which involve spraying of chemicals to preserve food items have worsened air pollution in most cities.

These activities, he said are increasing cases of acid rain, various health conditions like heart failure, pulmonary diseases, asthma, skin diseases, and lung cancer. He stressed that to save the world from the malaise, the alternative solution is the use of renewable energy.

Contributing, the Chairman, Manufacturer Association of Nigeria (MAN), Ikeja Chapter, Francis Meshioye, said although renewable energy is a proficient source of generating power, there was the need to reconsider factors such as the cost, its installation and educating the people who already have a misconceived mindset about it.

Also, speaking, the General Manager, Lagos State Consumer Protection Agency (LASCOPE), Mrs. Oluwakemi Olugbode, advocated more awareness on the potential for solar as alternative solution and strengthening of law enforcement in order to address complaints on fake products from renewable energy producers.

"In Nigeria and Africa, there is limited knowledge of solar. Although we haven't received complaints in that regard but the federal and state government must ensure that renewable energy products comply with the Standard Organisation of Nigeria's regulations.

remained Nigeria's biggest export.

Quoting the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Avuru said the Bureau had two weeks ago disclosed in its report that for the full year 2018, diaspora remittances for the first time exceeded Federal Government's earnings from oil and gas sector.

The PwC's Chief Economist, in a report titled: Nigeria Economic Outlook: Top 10 Themes For 2019, noted that remittances to Nigeria represent 6.1 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and translate to 83 per cent of the Federal Government's budget of last year.

On the other hand, statistics from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), indicated that Nigeria earned N5.54 trillion from the petroleum industry in 2018, amounting to 60.88 per cent of the N9.1 trillion budget for the 2018 fiscal year and 63.45 per cent of the N8.73 trillion proposed budget for 2019.

NERC RATES EKO DISCO BEST PERFORMING DISTRIBUTION FIRM

By Shile GIWA

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) has commended the management of Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC) for being the best distribution company in Nigeria.

The NERC chairman, Prof. James Momoh, gave the commendation at the premier edition of EKEDC training for the newly employed 100 graduates. The newly employed graduates of the EKEDC participated in the session.

He said the DisCo had performed credibly well in discharging its statutory obligations toward effective electricity distribution to customers within its area of operations. According to him, the company has attained 100 per cent-customers-complaint resolution.

He added that part of the NERC's scorecard indices used for the rating include Aggregate Technical, Commercial and Collection (ATC&C) loss reduction, revenue collection and metering.

Others include are High Voltage fault clearance index, remittance to market operator and remittance to Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading Company (NBET).

He said the Meter Assess Provider (MAP) programme had come to stay because all DisCos had signed an agreement with the meter providers within their operations to start the rollout of metering.

Momoh, however, said that this would not be free to customers. "Meter distribution is going to be on monthly basis to customers as Discos are committed to MAP services providers.

"MAP is not a problem; Nigerians will get meters but they have to follow the procedure to get the meters.

"Cost reflective tariff will be effective when there are no more losses in the system; when meters must have been installed and issues of customers' enumeration are put in place that will address most lingering issues in the sector.

"Very soon, the price regime on cost reflective tariff will be out which electricity customers will also partake in the discussion to put the power sector in the right direction,"



•The NERC chairman, Prof. James Momoh he said.

The NERC chairman tasked the newly employed graduates to be more committed, dedicated and focused in the course of their duties.

He said that achieving incremental, stable and uninterrupted power supply in a safe and affordable manner is required of distribution companies.

Momoh said: "To achieve an optimal energy generation, transmission and distribution, there is the need for capacity building to design, construct, build and test the new grid that is sustainable.

"There is the need for new curriculum for universities where every electrical engineering students will be expected to take courses in economics, finance and vice versa; the general course in apps design and communication, data analytics should be taught."

In his remarks, Mr Charles Momoh, the Chairman of EKEDC, advised the newly employed graduates to take the job very serious and be more focused in achieving their goals.

Momoh also assured the employees that the system would reward quality, dedication and commitment of workers who are geared toward effective service delivery.

"You are the growth that will control the economy; we want you to be free and relate very well and avoid partaking in politics, gossip and disobedience," he advised.

Also, the Managing Director of Eko DisCo, Mr Adeoye Fadeyibi, said the training would bridge the gap for the company. Fadeyibi said he was also excited as a Nigerian because the EKEDC was taking the lead in the power sector by providing employment for some of the country's teeming youths.

"We are here for an unprecedented premier edition of EKEDC training programme where we have 100 individuals who are graduating today.

"Something that has not been done before for as far back we know, in this particular distribution company, where we carefully selected from almost 1,300 applicants.

GAS FLARE COMMERCIALISATION: DPR BEGINS PRE-QUALIFICATION OF OVER 254 COYS

By Meletus EZE

The Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) has commenced the evaluation of Statement of Qualification (SOQ) of over 254 companies who had showed interest in Nigerian Gas Flare Commercialisation Programme (NGFCP).

The former Director of DPR, Mordecai Baba Ladan, represented by Mr Olusanya Bajomo, the Deputy Director, Gas Monitoring and Regulation, said at the opening ceremony of the pre-qualification exercise in Lagos that delineation of the two committees and its composition including the Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC), Independent Observer Group (IOG), representatives of the Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI), NNPC, DPR and Ministry of Petroleum Resources (MPR) were set up to evaluate those companies that had indicated interest to participate in gas flare commercialization, which was instituted by the former Minister of State, Petroleum Resources, Dr Ibe Kachikwu.

Bajomo said about 850 companies earlier showed interest when the advert was placed but later dropped when a fee of 1,000 dollars (N360,000) was attached to the application form and other processing documentation to know those who are serious.

He said the DPR has currently identified about 178 flare gas points across the oil producing states, adding that this is part of President Muhammadu Buhari and former minister of State for Petroleum Resources agenda to achieve zero gas flare in Nigeria by 2020.

He said: "Today, we are commencing the evaluation of statement of qualifications for the Nigerian Gas Flare Commercialisation Programme. Recall that advertisement was placed for interested parties who are willing to come to take the flared gas on behalf of the government.

"We are going to open the documents to ascertain those companies that have showed interest and submitted their statement of qualification in response to the advert placed in 2018. After the evaluation, the successful companies will move to the next stage.

"The Nigerian Gas Commercialisation Programme, which is government's flagship programme that will create opportunity to take flared gas under the provision of Petroleum Act, also authorized gas commercialization

• 178 GAS FLARE POINTS IDENTIFIED



• Ahmad Shakur, Acting DPR Director

through third party companies in order to promote investment and get people who are qualified technically, have the capability and experience to work in Niger Delta to harness gas flare to market.

"So, we are currently doing preliminary evaluation process that will see companies that qualify to the next stage," he said.

Corroborating Bajomo, Mr Olawole Ogunsola, the Deputy Manager, Gas Production and Monitoring Unit, said: "Federal Government through the DPR and other stakeholders are interested in credible companies with technical capacity and financial capability to be able to take flare gas to market and that is why the net is wide at this time.

"There is no constraint to the number of firms that should undertake the programme. But ultimately, you find out that as you go along, some will drop by the side, it's like a funnel, it would go narrower until we get to the key companies that will be able to take the flared gas to market. So, government is not constraining it so that will get the best out of

the process.

"The provision of the law on paragraph 35b of the first Schedule to the Petroleum Act stipulated that government has the right on the flared gas, so government has invoked that right by means of deregulation of the flared gas (Prevention of Waste and Pollution) Regulation of 2018, signed by Mr President and Minister of State, Petroleum Resources, which came into effect July 2018

"By that regulation, government owns the flared gas and the producer has not title to the flared gas, government can now allocate it to competent companies that can take it to market place, so, its government right.

"However, the programme was to make the operators to be able to make this work, so there are mechanisms in place to Incentivise operators, well designed to protect the operators, such that if the guarantee a certain volume to third party offtaker, they can even get some fees in term of connection agreement and be saved from penalty of flaring.

Ogunsola said: "We are designing a programme that will intensify the scheme. First, the regulation has increased the flared payments, if you are producing 10,000 barrels of oil and below you pay 2 dollars, that's already incentive to them to make it happen."

In his remarks, the chairman of the evaluation committee, Mr Rabiul Sulaiman, Director, Gas, Ministry of Petroleum Resources, commended DPR initiative of electronic evaluation initiative towards the high level of transparency that was exhibited in the process.

Sulaiman urged other committee members to abide with the rules and regulation of the exercise, adding that this is tinted towards government's aspiration in eradicating gas flare in the country.

"I implore everybody in this committee to exhibit high level of seriousness and commitment in the exercise. We are not here to disqualify anybody but to evaluate those companies that merited the bidding.

"This exercise will be rigorous but it's going to pay off at the end because this will guarantee job creation as well as gainful engagement in the oil producing states," he said.

WHY WASN'T OANDO GIVEN A FAIR HEARING?

By Abisola THOMPSON

The long-awaited results from the forensic audit into Oando PLC, was finally released on Friday, May 31, 2019 on the website of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) indicating weighty infractions with attendant sanctions leveled against the Company.

In a press statement issued on its website, Oando PLC responded to the SEC's report saying: "Oando is of the view that these alleged infractions and penalties are unsubstantiated, ultra vires, invalid and calculated to prejudice the business of the Company. The Company has not been given the opportunity to see, review and respond to the forensic audit report and so is unable to ascertain what findings (if any) were made in relation to the alleged infractions and defend itself accordingly before the SEC. The Company reserves its rights to take all legal steps to protect its business and assets whilst remaining committed to act in the best interests of all its shareholders."

The severity of the penalties and the timing of the release has roused public curiosity as to the motive and the basis for the penalties. According to the Chief Operating Officer, Oando Energy Resource, Dr. Ainojie 'Alex' Irune, at a press conference in the Company's head office, "We were not given a chance to review and respond to the outcome of the report. You do not sentence a person to death without giving him or her chance to defend him or herself.

In this instance we have been sentenced to death without knowing what our crime is or being given a chance to defend ourselves. At the barest minimum, best practice requires that you give the person a chance of a fair hearing. We have not been accorded this opportunity." Dr. Irune explained that when the company made the decision to drop its court case challenging the SEC's decision to carry out a forensic audit it was assured that they could trust the system for an independent investigation that would be fair

and follow due process. He reiterated that it was in the spirit of transparency, cooperation and full disclosure, they agreed to the forensic audit.

Echoes of Oando's sentiments are resounding across the country with everyone wanting to know what exactly have the Oando management team done to warrant such steep penalties. Business personalities such as Atedo Peterside, founder of Stanbic IBTC bank went so far as to go on social media to publicly ask the SEC why it would not share the findings of the forensic audit with Oando thus giving them an opportunity to defend themselves. He went on further to challenge the SEC to share the forensic audit findings and Oando's response with the general public so we can all judge for ourselves.

According to a media source at the Oando press briefing, the forensic audit report was ready and submitted by Deloitte and Touche as far back as December 2018. Why the SEC then decided to sit on the report for six whole months without engaging Oando where necessary, remains a mystery. It also brings to mind the famous quote, power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely. Is this a case of abuse of power, or has someone been put under duress to release the report without any regard for due process? What are the details of the infractions as opposed to a summary and what are the associated penalties for each infraction according to the SEC rule book?

Drawing from a story by Proshare "Memo to the Market: The Oando Corporate Journey – At the Regulators Gate", the publication said: "Regulatory authorities in this age, as we have seen with the Debt Management Office (DMO) under Dr. Abraham Nwankwo and sustained under a new leadership understand that their ultimate responsibility is to build businesses to be viable entities, stronger and not destroy value. Sanctions arising from regulatory action therefore must be in accordance with extant rules and regulations, severe relative to infractions, precise and satisfy the deterrence principle."

Does the SEC have the right to institute these penalties? According to the guidelines of the SEC, Mary Uduk, as acting DG of the SEC was meant to submit her findings to the Board of the SEC which has been non-existent since Mounir Gwarzo was appointed DG of the SEC. This is not the norm and does not reflect corporate governance best practice. In the absence of a Board, a sign off from the Minister of Finance is required. Was this the case with the Oando Forensic Audit Report? The consensus following the press conference was that the publishing of the report whose cost would be borne by Oando without informing the principal, Oando, was contrary to best practice. It further shows that these are not the actions of a regulator working in the best interests of the market specifically minority shareholders. These actions are damaging to the Nigerian capital market and will further discourage foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country.

In terms of foreign direct investment (FDI), back in 2013 inflows totaled \$5.6 billion, most of it in the telecom and energy sectors. In 2018, Nigeria's FDI flattened to \$2 billion. According to a recent article by Forbes contributor, Kenneth Rapoza titled 'Nigeria has become Africa's money-losing machine', if you want to lose money in one of Africa's biggest markets, put it in Nigeria.

Despite sitting on nearly 40 billion barrels of proven oil reserves and \$48 billion worth of investment opportunities in the oil and gas sector, Africa's largest economy is mired in problems. Kenneth said: "Its Nigeria's abundant commodity resources that makes it so big. But its Nigeria's Government that keeps it from getting bigger and richer." When stories of this nature run in the international media we must sit up and take notice. In this instance we must look at the actions our regulators who are Government bodies take, and ask ourselves are the legal, are they correct, are they the actions of a progressive nation, do they perpetuate the negative picture that the international media, business and investing community already have of our country?

Looking at it practically, the SEC's actions could be likened to a teacher who has informed a student that he has performed woefully in his exams and will be required to repeat without detailing the subjects, where errors were made and the associated grades to enable the student know what subject areas to improve on. The NSE owes it to the shareholders, the general public and to the world at large to do things the right way. The SEC owes it to the country to show that we are not regressing, that as a regulator they are fair, transparent and fully focused on protecting the Nigerian capital market.

Speaking on the damage done to the brand since the inception of the investigation, the Chief Finance Officer, Oando PLC, Olufemi Adeyemo said: "The damage cannot be quantified. We require credit to run our business and this has come at an extra cost, one that we would ordinarily not have incurred.



•Wale Tinubu

AMIDST INITIAL HOPES, POWER SECTOR INTERVENTIONS FAIL TO SPIKE OPTIMISM

Four years after Muhammadu Buhari took over as the nation's President, and Babatunde Fashola as Minister in charge of Power as well as Works and Housing, many stakeholders rate the power sector's performance below expectation. As Nigerians await a new cabinet, stakeholders in the sector demand urgent interventions to address the sector's woes. Abisola THOMPSON writes.

The failure of the power sector to perform optimally despite previous privatisation exercise raised expectations from Nigerians, who had hoped that with Buhari and Fashola in power, the much needed reform to address inherent loopholes that existed under the previous administrations would be properly tackled.

Four years after, stakeholders insisted that poor economic indexes in the country, characterised by growing poverty, unemployment, rising debt profile, growing generator economy, relocation of investors from the country as well as the harsh business environment were indications that power supply did not improve.

Former Chairman of the Nigerian Electricity Regulation Commission (NERC), Dr. Sam Amadi, who rated the current administration poor in terms of promises in the power sector, said the model for privatisation was unrealistic because it hinged so much on the private sector, and didn't think of a holistic government reform.

"Performance in the last four years has been very underwhelming. The government did not lead the sector away from the errors or underperformance of the last administration," Amadi said.

He added that the challenges in the sector included structural arrangement, market operation, metering, weak infrastructure, market governance, capacity input, leadership, finance, stranded power, historical public sector inefficiency and gas related problem.

Amadi noted that there was a need for the new cabinet to urgently address the sector's challenges by bringing back Presidential Taskforce on Power to keep traction on minor projects to optimise supply, adding that this would be an inter-ministerial team that would ensure consistent and high-level executive attention on the electricity crisis.

Amadi equally canvassed that DisCos' performance should be benchmarked for six months, and those who fail the trial should have their



territory split to ensure effective management, stating that this would be a regulatory process that is transparent and credible, and therefore would not be a political intervention.

"In the long term, consider unbundling distribution so that retail of electricity can be competitive. It is competition not privatisation that will lead to efficiency. Ultimately bring back state investment in electricity. It is a joke to believe that with the present risks in the electricity market we can expect private sector to grow the power sector significantly. No government should socialize the investment risks and allow private sector management power facilities under special arrangement," he said.

Indeed, the deteriorating situation in the Nigeria Electricity Supply Industry (NESI), became worse that revenue collection was insufficient to pay power generation cost, leading to growing industry losses at a rate of at least N474 billion yearly.

Recently, French Agency for Development (AFD), in Abuja, said nothing less than \$10 billion is required in the next five years to offset investment shortfall in the 11 electricity distribution companies (DisCos), stressing that the entire sector was at verge of collapse.

Instead of progress, most stakeholders noted that the challenged power sector has been

enmeshed in a blame game, which further saw the Buhari-led administration compounding the situation.

A former Director-General of the West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management (WAIFEM), and professor of Economics and Public Policy, University of Uyo, Akpan Ekpo, said the power sector could increase GDP by almost one per cent if inherent challenges were addressed, adding that the current administration only performed marginally in the sector.

He insisted that the new cabinet must fix the sector, stressing that the country has all it takes to address the woes in the sector.

"No country develops with generators. Right now, we are running a generator economy and that cannot take us anywhere," Ekpo said.

National President, Association of Public Policy Analysis, Princewill Okorie, equally insisted that the sector does not deserve pass mark in the power, especially with the poor treatment of consumers and the lack of performance by NERC.

Calling for an urgent review and proscription of NERC's public affairs unit, Okorie said: "I find it difficult to really rate this government to have done well in the power sector. This is because the regulators have been grossly inefficient. NERC has been grossly inefficient and it is an abuse on

the anti-corruption policies of this government.

"Consumers are suffering. The regulators that issued licenses to DisCos cannot live up to agreements. DisCos operated as if there are no regulators".

Pioneer Managing Director, Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading (NBET) Plc, Rumundaka Wonodi, insisted that the current administration was compounding challenges in the sector, especially in the area of leadership, stressing that some power agencies were currently without boards, or have cloned their boards.

"I think the leadership of the sector has not been consistent and steady, especially after the change of administration. The fact that most of the boards of the agencies like TCN, NBET, were never constituted is not good enough, as government is not talking as one. We found out that different arms or agencies were not aligned under the power sector recovery programme of the government, therefore implementation has been elusive," Wonodi said.

Project Director, Taleveras Power Ltd, Belije Madu, listed the mistakes of the current administration in the sector to include the lack of stipulated tariff reviews along with changing economic variables based on the requirements of Multi-Year Tariff Order (MYTO), lack of improvement in power sector efficiency as well as capacity charge on a volumetric basis, which is not working must be revisited.

"Industry contracts are not enforced. There is visible lack of coordination and engagement between sector players. Investment decisions are made without consultations with the boards of distribution companies (DisCos). Investment processes are not well structured. There is need for strong cross-cutting corporate governance across sector and consistent cross-sectoral communications across the value chain.

"Nigeria's electricity supply industry is experiencing policy incoherence and gaps. Several organisations are currently making policies for NESI, without any over-arching policy harmonisation, thus resulting in policy bottlenecks. Rural Electrification Agency (REA) is making policies on off-grid electricity supply for underserved areas. Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) is making policies on levels of electricity supply (TCN Expansion Plan). Eligible Customer policy has been declared, but not been implemented," Madu added.

While distribution companies were mandated to meter consumers, industry regulator, the NERC, reported poor performance by the DisCos. In fact, a new programme called Meter Asset Provider (MAP), which was set up to fast-track bridging of the gap has not achieved desired objectives.

Partner, Nextier Power, Emeka Okpukpara, had said the distribution companies who were the link to the consumers do not have adequate asset to meter not only consumers, but also transformers.

"Due to aforementioned lack of assets, consumers are billed arbitrarily under the context of estimated billing, which has eventually eroded consumer confidence in the sector. With high incidences of energy theft coupled with consumer apathy in electricity bill payment, the sector is stuck with an eye-popping market shortfall of nearly N2trillion (\$5billion)," he noted.

According to him, the sector currently lacks

effective contract management, compliance to industry regulations and governance codes, which is within the overall co-ordination of an independent regulator – NERC.

Executive Secretary of Association of Power Generation Companies (APGC), Dr. Joy Ogaji had also noted that there was no significant improvement under the current administration, informing that GenCos were unable to pay gas debt due to the liquidity challenge in the sector. She added that the inability to pay for contracted gas led to the immediate cutting off of gas supply to some power plants.

NIGERIA, OTHERS TO ACCOUNT FOR 53% OF FOSSIL FUEL

By Meletus EZE

Nigeria and other countries will account for 53 per cent of fossil fuel in use by 2040, Seplat Petroleum Development Company Plc Chief Executive Officer, Mr Austin Avuru, has said.

Fossil fuel, also known as hydrocarbon fuel is derived from oil and natural gas, is found in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Algeria, Britain, United States, Germany, Canada and other countries of the world.

He spoke at a session at a workshop hosted by Petroleum Technology Association of Nigerian (PETAN) at the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC) in Houston Texas, United States. The workshop had "Global Energy Transformation – The Effect and Future of the African Oil Industry and Economy" as theme.

"Even up to 2040, fossil fuel will account for 53 per cent of the world energy demand. So, what we are seeing today is a gradual decline in the total contribution of fossil fuel to the energy mix over time. It is not an overnight elimination of fossil fuel," he said.

Avuru noted that the global trend in energy supply would seem to suggest alarming. "The impression is generally given that the world is fighting a spirited battle to make sure that fossil fuel becomes irrelevant; and in that context, for countries like Nigeria that are endowed with fossil fuel, some people seem to be saying Nigeria is going to wake up one day and find out there is no use for its crude oil and natural gas.

"This impression also suggests that Nigeria will become a worthless country because its fossil fuel endowment will become completely useless to the world.

"As we move beyond 2030, 2040 and 2050, the energy mix will continue to be guided by availability, commercial consideration; which means, even for fossil fuel, countries will pay attention to cost because fossil fuel will have to compete the same way renewable will be able to compete," Avuru said.

He explained that fossil fuel was always known to be a finite resource, which means that the world, even over the last 100 years, knew that it will come to a point where there will be a decline in the supply of fossil fuel as energy source.

"Those days in the 70s, there was a prediction by the International Energy Agency (IEA) that between 2012 and 2015 we would get to peak oil. Peak oil means that beyond that point, we will begin to see a decline in the world production. Thanks to technology. That date has been shifted forward. Peak oil will come. We have only shifted it forward because of technology.

"Today technology has enabled us to get crude oil and natural gas out of shale. Those of us who are geologists have always known that, there was crude oil in shale, but shale didn't have the permeability to release it. What technology has done through cracking is to induce that permeability to release the crude oil and natural gas from shale. Thanks to technology because we have seen additional sources of crude oil and natural gas that moved backwards the date for peak oil.

"So, what we are seeing today is a very sensible scientific move by the world and by the advanced technologies of the world to start developing that alternative to fossil fuel because the day will come when there will be no fossil fuel," he said.

By Shile GIWA

OPEC and its partners will take the current "economic bearishness" into account when they meet in coming weeks, and are committed to keeping oil markets balanced this year and beyond, its Secretary-General, Mohammad Barkindo has said.

The organization will be "unyielding" in its efforts to reduce oil inventories back to normal levels and revive investment in the industry, taking an approach that is "agile" and "flexible," Barkindo said in remarks delivered via video link at a conference hosted by RBC Capital Markets in New York.

"There has also been a significant change in market sentiment, in both equity and financial markets" that has worsened many institutions' outlook for oil demand growth, Barkindo said. "This will all play into our calculations in the upcoming ministerial meetings."

Meanwhile, Russia's Energy Minister, Alexander Novak, was quoted to have said the country is not ready to commit to further production cuts under an OPEC/non-OPEC supply accord, with the oil market facing many uncertainties in the months ahead.

"A lot depends on the market situation in the second half [such as] sanctions [and] trade disputes, so today we are discussing it," he said at a press briefing in Moscow, where he was meeting Saudi counterpart Khalid al-Falih at a Saudi-Russian economic summit. "We think we need to continue to monitor the situation and see what happens in June so we can take a balanced decision in July."

US sanctions on Iran and Venezuela are likely to tighten the market, many analysts forecast, while US-China trade tensions could dampen global oil demand.

OPEC and 10 non-OPEC partners, led by Russia, agreed in December to cut a combined 1.2 million b/d in the first half of 2019. Falih has urged the coalition to extend the cuts, saying global inventories were still too high.

Almost every member of the 24-country coalition is on board with a rollover of the agreement, except for Russia, which has been vacillating over how much production it was willing to cut, Falih said in an interview with Tass news agency. "All the big producers in OPEC, as well as many non-OPEC countries like Oman, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan have also supported the extension," Falih said.

"The remaining country to jump on board now is Russia. I will wait for the Russian dynamics to work themselves out. There is a debate obviously within the country about the exact volume that Russia should be producing in the second half. The coalition has

OPEC SEEKS TO BALANCE MARKET AS UNCERTAINTY LINGERS



yet to decide when it will meet to address the supply accord. OPEC originally scheduled its regular semi-annual meeting for June 25 in Vienna, with non-OPEC partners to join the talks the following day. But Russia has pushed for the dates to be changed to July 3-4, with Algeria, Iran and Kazakhstan opposed.

Falih said he may meet Novak again at

the G20 meeting in Japan on June 28-29, "to further calibrate our positions". Despite Russia's wavering on its cuts, both sides said they remain committed to continuing cooperation on managing the oil market. OPEC has for more than a year been developing a charter to formalize its partnership with its 10 non-OPEC allies, which officials say they hope to sign at the next meeting.

ELIMINATE FUEL SUBSIDY, OTHERS TO ACHIEVE DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH — EX-AMCON CEO

By Aliyu DANLADI

Mr Mustafa Chike-Obi, the Executive Vice-Chairman, Alpha African Advisory, has advised the Federal Government to remove subsidies on fuel, foreign exchange and electricity for the nation's economy to achieve double-digit growth.

Chike-Obi gave the advice at a bi-monthly forum organised by the Finance Correspondents Association of Nigeria (FICAN) in Lagos with the theme, "Reposition the Nigerian Economy for Sustainable Growth."

He said the various forms of subsidies were hindering other sectors that needed urgent attention.

Chike-Obi, a former Chief Executive Officer of the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), said that rich Nigerians were benefiting more from fuel subsidy, therefore, calling for its removal.

According to him, removing electricity

subsidy will also attract significant investments to the power sector and unlock other opportunities.

Chike-Obi said: "The most challenge to our economy is the three subsidies that is added up to our total revenue."

On fuel subsidy, he said: "The nation's economy is losing about N1.2 trillion per year. There is hidden figure in that fuel subsidy they do not allow you to see. They allow them to buy foreign exchange at N325/ dollar.

"Who gets the fuel subsidy? The rich people with six cars are those benefiting from fuel subsidy. The average rich person in Ikoyi is getting approximately 100 times a year fuel subsidy than person in Shomolu in Lagos.

"Everybody deserves to have electricity but you charge electricity based on those who need it the most at the market price. Most people than use generator pay N160/Kwh and pays comfortably.

WHY PIPELINE VANDALISM, CRUDE THEFT EXIST IN NIGER DELTA



By Abisola THOMPSON

The decision by the Federal Government to delay the implementation of the community engagement standards in Niger-Delta may have resulted in the spate of unwholesome activities in the region, an energy expert, Meka Olowola, has said.

He said the activities include pipeline vandalism, crude oil theft and other untoward practices in the region, adding that the development has slowed down oil production in Nigeria.

He said the inability of the government to review its strategy and approach to conflict resolution in the region, is having negatives consequence on the country's oil earnings.

A Community Engagement Standards is a widely researched framework for consciously and equitably engaging host communities in the Niger- Delta.

Speaking on strategies to reducing vandalism and theft in the sector, Olowola said the implementation of the engagement standards is inevitable, if the country must put an end to such activities.

He identified commitment to acceptable engagement standards across the value chain as a panacea to incessant conflicts in communities that play host to oil and gas exploration companies and coun-

seled that Nigeria should enforce the much-needed discipline in the oil and gas sector, which according to him is currently marred with violence and corruption.

He stressed the need for Federal Government to review the comprehensive standards and principles of community engagement put forward by sustainability inclined stakeholders in the sector, led by the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, Facility for Oil Sector Transparency and Reform (FOSTER II) in Nigeria, CSR-in-Action. He said standards are products of painstaking research and will help in laying solid structures to tackle community conflicts and reduce oil theft as well as illegal bunkering.

Olowola said the challenges facing both oil companies and communities in the Niger Delta region can be prevailed over with proper stakeholder engagement and communication. He stressed that the need for oil companies to engage in multilayered dialogue with host communities and the government cannot be overestimated, saying the Community Engagement Standards gives insights as to how this can be achieved using real-life scenarios.

"The rising tension between oil companies in the upstream sector and their host communities call for a multi-stakeholder engagement approach. Companies need to see their host communities as business

partners and as such must do everything possible to ensure that the relationship is mutually as beneficial as possible. The change of outlook will invariably impact the attitude of members of oil-producing states towards companies," he said.

"Following the establishment of clear communication lines between all stakeholders, oil companies must proceed to launch sustainable and far-reaching CSR activities. The practice of CSR transcends charitable donations and companies need to obtain a full understanding of this fact which will change the conduct of firms across the nation. The Community Engagement Standards codifies the best approach to optimising the gains of the oil & gas sector," he added.

Olowola decried the unending cases of pipeline vandalism in the region, stating that it is inimical to all stakeholders as the culprits create lasting damages to their environment and put their lives at risk, while the oil-dependent economy of the nation suffers huge losses.

He maintained that the government must earnestly devise strategies to halt the practice before it snowballs into greater national issue. Olowola enjoined the oil companies to hearken to the demands of members of their host communities, saying he is aware of how difficult it could be, given that individuals have diverse interests.

By Shile GIWA

About six months into the 2020 target set by the Federal Government to boost power transmission wheeling capacity to 10,000 megawatts (Mw), stakeholders in the nation's electricity sector yesterday insisted the plan is only a mirage.

The plan, which is part of a Transmission Master Plan, designed by the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), had highlighted steps to add 10,000MW electricity wheeling capacity by 2020. The Master Plan, expected to gulp N805.7 billion (\$2.238billion) equally targets a wheeling capacity of 15,000Mw by 2025, with finance options from about eight foreign banks as well as donations from the World Bank.

While the Managing Director of the TCN, Usman Gur Mohammed, had repeatedly said the plans were feasible, experts including Partner, Nextier Power, Emeka Okpukpara; former Chairman of the Nigerian Electricity Regulation Commission (NERC), Dr. Sam Amadi, as well as Executive Secretary, Association of Power Generation Companies, Dr. Joy Ogaji, said the plan is impossible.

TCN said it has about 8,100Mw transmission capacity, but in the real sense, only an average 4,000Mw is available to power. Indeed, most stakeholders believe the target was fabricated for political propaganda as power supply in Nigeria has remained epileptic.

Amadi said prevailing situation in the transmission sub-sector indicates that the plan could be difficult to achieve, saying: "There is no basis to expect such miracle in six months. With the capacity in execution that we have seen so far, the sector cannot operate at that level of efficiency."

Although the transmission sector receives investment shares when compared with the rest of the value chain, especially distribution, Amadi insisted that the transmission segment is the main bottleneck of Nigeria's electricity supply chain.

He said: "We generally believe that transmission is the main bottleneck; if power is not evacuated then the DisCos can't supply and when there is transmission failure everything is affected. So we need to expand to enhance the capacity and reliable grid. But it is counterintuitive in a sense, because if DisCos are inefficient, then they will hobble the reliability of transmission."

Grid failure on the DisCos' side also affects transmission capabilities. So failure in the industry is self-reinforcing. We need quality spending on all sides of the value chain, but since DisCos and Gencos are privately owned, government shouldn't be spending on them but rather enhance financial sector willingness to invest in them."

WHY NIGERIA WILL MISS 10,000MW TRANSMISSION CAPACITY BY 2020



Okpukpara noted that Nigeria has not done anything differently to achieve a 10,000Mw in the next six months, stressing that the money required to fund the capacity could equally remain a challenge.

According to him, the transmission network in the country is outdated, thereby a wide range of assets are scattered across the country, which require urgent repair.

Part of the TCN's master plan included the Transmission Rehabilitation and Expansion Plan (TREP), being implemented through the Nigeria Electricity and Gas Improvement Project (NEGIP), a facility from the World Bank.

He said there was need for priority projects, adding that the transmission sector has a reasonable level of investment inflow, which can only yield desired results if prioritised.

ROADSIDE GAS SELLERS UNAWARE OF GOVT'S PLANNED CLAMPDOWN - SURVEY

By Aliyu DANLADI

Some roadside sellers of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) popularly known as cooking gas in Abuja, have said they were unaware of the government planned clamp down on their business.

A visit to some of the outskirts of the territory showed that most sellers were yet to be informed of what government had planned to ensure penetration of LPG in the country.

Some of the areas visited were Gwarinpa Estate, Dutse Alhaji, Dawaki, Kubwa and Ushafa in the FCT.

The federal government had on May 24 said it would inject 600,000 gas cylinders as part of effort to ensure LPG penetration in the country.

Ms Brenda Ataga, the special Adviser to the former Minister of State for petroleum resources, Dr Ibe Kachikwu, on Gas, said the cylinders would be distributed to all recognised micro distribution centres in the country.

She said that government would commence awareness campaign to help sensitise people

to the right procedures especially roadside or illegal gas sellers.

She said that after awareness, the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) would commence clamping down on illegal or road side sellers.

"Actually, enforcement will start next week, we will start notifying people from today (May 24); there will be jingles in the media, so that people will understand what we are talking about," she said.

But Mr Emmanuel Samuel who sells Gas in Ushafa said that he had not heard the jingles on TV or radio. I listen to radio always, I have not heard any jingle on this issue you are telling me now.

"In fact, this is the first time I am hearing it. May be, if I understand what government is doing, I will comply, nobody has come to sensitise me," he said.

Another seller, at Dutse Alhaji zone1, said "I heard in the news that government wants to buy gas cylinder for Nigerians. This is a good idea but, I don't know how they will retrieve the various cylinders in many homes."

NNPC ASSURES TRANSPARENT SELECTION OF OFF-TAKERS FOR SALES OF NATURAL GAS

By Meletus EZE

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has said the selection process for off-takers for the sales and purchase of natural gas liquid resources will be transparent.

The Group Managing Director, Dr Maikanti Baru, gave the assurance at the 2019 Natural Gas Liquids Bid opening in Abuja.

"As a corporation, our current pursuit is to continuously make grow our domestic gas supply and utilisation, while maximising value from our unutilised knock off condensate and natural gas liquid resources.

"Our strategic focus in the coming months is to expand domestic Liquefied Natural Gas (LPG) supply from our established local sources while also encouraging investments in storage, marketing and distribution infrastructure.

"Through a transparent competitive bidding and evaluation process, we intend to enlist companies with proven investments in Gas utilisation, storage, distribution and marketing infrastructure," he said.

Represented by Saidu Mohammed, Chief Operating Officer, Gas and Power, Baru said the occasion marked the beginning of another landmark event in the bid to maximise value of the nation's natural gas liquid resources for the benefit of Nigerians.



He said that the objective of the 2019 tender was to engage reputable qualified companies as off-taker natural gas Liquids for domestic violence and international market.

He said it would also ensure selection of off-takers that aligned with tested transparent and accountable procedures in compliance with the Public procurement

and Nigerian Content Acts.

He said the domestic supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), also known as cooking gas, would exceed demand in the country and blamed the current low consumption in Nigeria on lack of penetration of the commodity across the length and breadth of the country.

OIL WELL FIRE: 21 ONDO COMMUNITIES DEMAND \$2.5BN COMPENSATION FROM CHEVRON

By Abisola THOMPSON

Twenty-one communities affected by the Ojumole Oil Well fire incident in Ilaje Local Government area of Ondo State, have demanded for 2.5 billion dollars as compensation from the Chevron Nigeria Limited.

Dr Akin Akinruntan, made the demand on behalf of the affected communities at a public hearing of major stakeholders conducted by the State House of Assembly in Akure.

The fire broke out in the Oil Well on April 18 and was still raging up till this moment. Akinruntan said Chevron should pay the compensation to

the affected 21 communities within the eight kilometres radius (due to low and high tide) to the tune and not less than 2.5 billion dollars.

He said Chevron management should also inform leadership of the affected communities on the method it had put in place to quench the raging fire.

According to him, this is to avoid the use of dangerous chemicals which will further put the lives of people in the community to jeopardy and this should be done immediately.

He told the oil company that the affected environment should be cleaned up and cooled

without delay.

Akinruntan said that medical examination should be carried out on the people exposed to the fire within the eight kilometres radius, while those with signs and symptoms should be treated immediately.

The communities' spokesperson urged Chevron to disclose the barrel of crude oil it produced per day from the Ojumole Oil Well.

He also advised the Ondo State Government to come to the aid of people by critically studying the amnesty international reports of June 2009.

WE'RE INSPIRED BY DPR'S REGULATORY ACTIVITIES IN OIL, GAS SECTOR –UGANDA

By Abisola THOMPSON

Officials of the Petroleum Authority of Uganda has commended the management of Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR)'s professional conducts in carryout its regulatory activities in the oil and gas industry.

Manager, National Content, Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU), Mrs Betty Namubiru, gave the commendation during their official visit to the Department in Lagos.

Namubiru said the essence of the visit was to learn from DPR's operational activities in the oil and gas sector and imbibe some the working models adopted by the agency.

She said the PAU officials were on a fact-finding mission on how best Uganda's national petroleum could be optimised for the benefit of its incoming investment to Uganda as a result of construction of the oil facilities and development of the crude oil production.

"We are truly inspired with the professional engagement of the agency in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. We are here to learn from Nigeria on how it has been able to benefit from the oil and gas sector.

"We are at the moment; Uganda oil reserves estimates remain six billion barrel and the estimates of one billion barrels is the recoverable volumes at the 'current condition'.

"These reserves can be increased to 1.4 billion

barrels from contingent resources, which are qualities of oil and gas estimated to be potentially recoverable but currently not considered to be commercially recoverable due to one or more contingencies," she said.

The PAU manager said Uganda was going into development stage of production, saying that about 20 billion dollars investment had been in the oil and gas to help in the construction and development of the upstream and midstream projects.

"The outlays for this year is part of the close to 20 billion dollars that the government expects over the next three years as joint venture oil company partner to step up activities to commercialised Uganda's petroleum resources.

"Uganda expects to reach fully-fledged oil production in the next five years following impressive oil exploration result in the Lake Albert Valley.

"Oil output is then expected to keep rising and reach full-scale in the next five years. By that time, Uganda expects to produce between 40,000 and 60,000 barrels of oil per day," Namubiru said.

She said the country was also targeting to invest in Greenfield refinery of 60,000 barrel per day production, adding that Uganda is also working towards construction of the crude export pipeline of about 45 kilometers.

Namubiru said that Uganda had unveiled five oil blocks available for licensing bid round in

Uganda's Albertine Graben for further exploration which, she noted, was expected to increase the current oil stack of the country.

Namubiru said that two oil licenses had been awarded to a Nigerian company, Oranto Energy and Australia company called Armor Energy.

She said that through an investment of about 3.5 billion dollars, the company was able to retain about 900 million dollars in-country which represent about 28 per cent. "We maintained significant percentage of the money is retained in the country towards nationalisation.

In his remarks, Mr Mordecai Ladan, the former Director of DPR, said there was need for more collaboration between Nigeria and Uganda in the oil and gas development, partnering together to "Power Africa" from abundant oil and gas resource.

Ladan, represented by Mr Ahmad Shakur, Deputy Director, Corporate Services, said Uganda could leverage on Nigeria's experiences for capacity building and knowledge development in key aspects of the oil and gas industry.

He said that technology transfer in key area across the oil and gas value chain was important, while investment opportunity across the value chain was also key.

Ladan said Nigeria's abundant hydrocarbon and human resources placed it at an advantage position in Africa to put its experience to bear in oil and gas.

He, however, hailed the initiative of PAU in undertaking a learning mission to Nigeria and pledged necessary regulatory support, adding that Nigeria was working through its challenges to transform the industry and economy and maintain its position as the giant of Africa.

He said that Nigeria is working towards increasing its oil reserves to 40 billion barrels from its current 37 billion barrel, while targeting 2.8 billion barrel per day production capacity.

"Our vision is to ensure the sustainable development of Nigeria's oil and gas resources across the value chain for our stakeholders through effective regulation, while entrenching world class professionalism, accountability, and transparency.

"Government is also working hard to eliminate gas flaring in the country as it's gradually reducing. Close to 80 per cent of gas utilisation is domestic for power which we intend to increase," he said.



•Officials of National Content, Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU) during a courtesy visit to the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) in Lagos.

HOW RISE IN INFLATION MAY AFFECT NIGERIANS

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the apex regulatory body of banks, recently expressed fears that inflation rate may rise marginally into the second quarter of 2019, fueling fears in some quarters that the economy may take the hit. Olamilekan FAWAS in this report examines the issues.

The current upward movement inflation rate may pose great uncertainty for the Nigerian market and affect the country's exchange rate but the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), had vowed to continue to tight economic policies due to the country's inflation outlook.

The country's inflation may rise to 12 per cent this year before moderating, according to the CBN Governor, Mr Godwin Emefiele. The National Bureau

of Statistics (NBS) recently said the nation's inflation rate increased to 11.40 per cent in May from 11.37 per cent recorded in April.

The NBS, in its "Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Inflation Report" for May 2019, said the figure was 0.03 per cent higher than the rate recorded in April 2019.

According to the bureau, increases were recorded in all consumption that yielded the headline index. "On

month-on-month basis, the headline index increased by 1.11 per cent in May 2019, this is a 0.17 per cent higher than the 0.94 per cent rate recorded in April 2019.

"The percentage change in the average composite CPI for the twelve months period ending May 2019, over the average of the CPI for the previous twelve months period was 11.30 percent, 0.01 percent points from 11.31 percent recorded in April 2019," the report added.

The urban inflation rate increased by 11.76 per cent (year-on-year) in May 2019 from 11.7 per cent recorded in April 2019, while the rural inflation rate increased by 11.07 per cent in May 2019 from 11.08 per cent in April 2019.

On a month-on-month basis, the urban index rose by 1.15 per cent in May 2019, up by 0.15 points from one per cent recorded in April 2019, while the

rural index also rose by 1.07 per cent in May 2019, up by 0.17 from the rate recorded in April 2019.

The report said food index rose by 13.79 percent in May 2019 compared to 13.7 percent in April 2019.

“This rise in the food index was caused by increases in prices of meat, oils and fats, bread and cereals, potatoes, yam and other tubers, fish, milk, cheese and egg, and vegetables,” it added.

In terms of state inflation profile, the report said price increases were highest in Kebbi (15.76 per cent), Bauchi (14.97 per cent) and Kaduna (13.74 per cent), while Abia (9.91 per cent), Cross River (9.68 per cent) and Kwara (8.45 percent) recorded the slowest rise in headline year-on-year inflation.

The monthly inflation rates released by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics measures the percentage at which the prices of products rise or fall. When the data shows a reduction, therefore, it means there was an increase in the price of that product but at a reduced percentage. If there is a reduction in price, it means there was deflation.

The current upward movement may pose great uncertainty for the Nigerian market and affect the country's exchange rate. The CBN had vowed to continue to tight economic policies due to the country's inflation outlook.

Commenting on the post-election outlook, Emefiele said the country's inflation may rise to 12 percent this year before moderating. According to him, despite this gloomy picture, the short-term outlook of the Nigerian economy remains good.

“We expect that monetary policy stance will remain judicious, research-driven, adequate and supportive of the real economy subject to underlying fundamentals. The current tight stance is expected to continue in the near-term, especially in view of rising inflation expectations and exchange market pressures.

“Though we will act to appropriately adjust the policy rate in line with unfolding conditions and outlooks, CBN will continue to ensure that the policy interest rate is delicately set to balance the objectives of price stability with

This rise in the food index was caused by increases in prices of meat, oils and fats, bread and cereals, potatoes, yam and other tubers, fish, milk, cheese and egg, and vegetables



output stabilization,” he assured.

What rising inflation means

According to Investopedia, “Inflation is a quantitative measure of the rate at which the average price level of a basket of selected goods and services in an economy increases over a period of time. It is often expressed as a percentage. Inflation indicates a decrease in the purchasing power of a nation's currency.”

Many economists, businessmen, and politicians maintain that moderate inflation levels are needed to drive

consumption—operating under the larger, overarching assumption that higher levels of spending are crucial for economic growth.

However, economic analysts believe the rise in inflation whether marginal or substantial has adverse implication for the economy in terms of value of money.

Inflation arises when prices rise for energy, food, commodities, and other goods and services, the entire economy is affected.

Rising prices, known as inflation, impact the cost of living, the cost of doing business, borrowing money, mortgages, corporate and government bond yields, and every other facet of the economy. When inflation is too high of course, it is not good for the economy or individuals.

Inflation will always reduce the value of money, unless interest rates are higher than inflation. And the higher inflation gets, the less chance there is that savers will see any real return on their money.



•Emefiele

However, in the view of Mr Adewunmi Adewale, an accountant with the Association of Bureaux De Change Operators of Nigeria, the fears over-spike in inflation rate may not be unfounded. What needs to be done, Adewale stressed, was for the government to be proactive rather than resign itself to fate.

He said the issue on spike on rates was all based on projections the organ of government is looking at.

Adewale noted that every indices of government in a way come in form of projections, adding that whatever projections the government was looking at to be able to inform.

"Every government wants a situation whereby the financial system needs to be a stable system and every reasonable government and every economy would want a situation whereby the foreign exchange rate would be as stable as you can find such that investors can predict the foreign exchange (FX) rates.

"We don't pray for any spike that would further inflate the rate more than we have in the current situation. So, we don't pray for such. Because when there is a stable FX rate, every other aspects of the economy would be able to thrive very well.

"You must realise that our economy is one that revolves round FX by the nature of the activities we operate, and we should be able to and that's the more reason why we must work towards the goal of this current administration, which is saying let's grow what we eat and let's eat what we grow.

"So, if there is a shift of focus from importation, the FX rate would be stable. If we produce what we eat, in terms of local content development and we are not dependent on importation as well as other some basic things," he added.

Quick wins

What the government can do as a matter of urgency, Adewale stressed, "is to drive the process of getting our infrastructure working. For instance,

if power is put in place and it gets stable that would really help the local producers very well. If there is good power supply, definitely most local producers would not depend on powering their plants with generators and expending much money on overheads and all other production cost. So, we can start from power. Let that be done. Let the government also fix our roads so that produce or products can be conveyed seamlessly from one location to the other. Things being produced in the north should be able to get to the south without much hassle and vice versa."

Like Adewale, Chinedu Bosah, a public affairs commentator said, "if there is no use of FX for importation of things like took pick and juices, among others, our FX rate can be more stable and ultimately our currency.

And the spike being envisaged may not really happen at the end of the day provided there is sustainability in the level of local production and local content development. And with that we will all be happy for it and even the investors would be happy to say our rate is stable, let us come and invest. Any reasonable investor wants to see a business environment that is stable including stability in rates, stability in policies, and even the polity itself."

CBN's interventions

Perhaps in its quest to rein in the adverse effects of rise in inflation figures, the CBN decided to cut its benchmark interest rate by 50 basis points to 13.5 per cent on March 26th 2019, mainly to stimulate the economy.

The move surprised markets who had expected the rate to remain steady at 14 per cent and marks the first rate cut since November 2015. Six out of the eleven members of the monetary policy committee voted to reduce the current monetary stance.

In February 2019, the annual inflation edged down to 11.3 per cent from 11.4 per cent in January, but still above the Bank's target of 6-9 per cent. Policymakers added that the economy is projected to grow between 2.7 per cent and 3 per cent in 2019.

CBN RISING AGAINST THE TIDE TO STABILIZE ECONOMY

By Abisola THOMPSON

As many of us already know, balancing the objectives of price stability with output stabilisation, especially in the face of external headwinds, remains a challenge to monetary policy and central banks, particularly in emerging and developing economies.

Since the global financial crisis, many central banks have begun to promote structural transformation and economic growth, beyond the singular mandate of price stability.

Consequently, policy toolkits now contain instruments that are aimed at developing the financial sector, engendering wider financial inclusion, and aligning financial policies with sustainable development and growth.

As some of you may know, the global financial crisis of 2008 – 2009, which was triggered by the housing price bubble in the United States, created considerable uncertainty in the global financial market and uncovered the weakness of many economies. It also exposed the inadequacies of conventional monetary policies in tackling the challenges that came as a result of the crisis. As a result, the United States and several countries within the Euro Area fell into a recession between 2008 and 2009.

Before the onset of that crisis, policymaking at central banks had been dominated by neo-liberal and orthodox doctrines, as promoted by key Bretton Woods Institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These tenets emphasised price stability as the sole and exclusive mandate of central banks.

However, lessons learnt from recent crises in addition to the global financial crisis, have raised doubts on the validity of this position. What became obvious, following the GFS crisis, is that conventional monetary policy tools were not sufficient in dealing with the complexities resulting from the Crisis; such as debt overhang and stagnating economic growth.

As a result, Central Banks in the US and in the Euro Area had to utilize unconventional tools in their efforts to achieve their macroeco-

nommic goals of output growth and price stability. The use of unconventional tools such as quantitative easing and forward guidance, led to a growth recovery in the US, as well as a reduction in the unemployment rate.

On the reverse side and notwithstanding its achievements, it is conceivable that unconventional policies could heighten tradeoffs such as its resulting effect on the balance sheets of Central Banks.

In this discussion, I will highlight the CBN experience with unconventional monetary policy tools in light of the extraordinary challenges the Nigerian Economy faced as a result of drop in commodity prices between 2014 and 2016.

I will also discuss some of the key challenges confronting the Bank in the formulation and implementation of unconventional monetary policy tools –including the reaction of key Bretton Woods institutions to our approach.

CBN's policy remit

Though the 2007 CBN Act specifies price stability as the overriding mandate of the Bank, permit me to highlight here, that the operationalisation of this mandate is somewhat tricky. What exactly does price stability denote? Paul Volcker and Alan Greenspan, former Governors of the US Fed, have defined it as what obtains when “the public no longer takes account of actual or prospective inflation in its decision-making”.

For the CBN, it is achieved when inflation lies within the tolerance band of 6–9 per cent. Within this band, we believe that the evolution of relative prices is able to optimize the micro objectives of firms and households while maximising total utilitarian welfare of the economy.

For an economy like ours, which is yet to attain its full potential, utilitarian welfare maximisation requires a functional consideration for real growth. Thus, growth objectives cannot be overlooked. The CBN Act 2007, in recognising this, provided the Bank with the legal backing to undertake developmental functions that are consistent with price stability. This has enabled the Bank to simultaneously promote the development of financial markets and stimulate the growth of the real sector.

Recent experience of the CBN

The CBN's experience with heterodox policies expanded during the recent economic crisis that begun in 2014 due to a number of global shocks, three of which were simultaneous and significant in shaping the trajectory of the Nigerian economy, namely:

i. Widespread and rising geopolitical tensions



along critical trading routes in the world: This began around March 2014 with the United States-led sanctions on Russia for its role in precipitating the conflict in Ukraine. Other areas include Britain's desire to pull out from the European Union, and rising trade tensions between the United States and China, with its attendant implications on global trade and capital flows;

ii. Softening crude oil prices: The significant drop in the price of Bonny light, Nigeria's crude, from US\$115 per barrel in June 2014 to US\$31 per barrel by January 2016 exposed the structural vulnerabilities of an oil dependent economies like ours; and

iii. Normalisation of monetary policy by the US Fed: In October 2014, the US Federal Reserve commenced the tapering of its quantitative easing programme towards a more conventional monetary tightening cycle. This decision led to acute capital flow reversals especially from emerging markets and heightened financial fragilities in these countries.

Effects on the domestic economy

Unarguably, the most important of these factors to impact the Nigerian economy was the plunge in crude oil price. Nigeria's over-dependence on crude oil for over 60 per cent of fiscal revenue and over 90 per cent of FX inflows, meant that shocks in the oil market were transmitted entirely to the economy via the FX markets as manufacturers and traders who required FX for input purchases were faced with dwindling supplies.

Average monthly inflows of FX into the CBN fell from over US\$3.4bn in June 2014 to a low of US\$1.4bn in September 2016. The decline in FX earnings was further complicated by the foreign capital flow reversals due to rising yields in the USA. The impact of these on our economy was evident in the rising pressure on the naira-dollar exchange rate.

With the drop in FX inflows, the exchange rate at the parallel market rose from about N200/US\$ in August 2015 to N525/US\$ in February 2017. Inflation also rose from 9.6 percent in January 2016 to over 18.7 percent in January 2017.

Our external reserves fell from about US\$31 billion in April 2015 to US\$23 billion in October 2016, and activities in the industrial sector witnessed a lull as manufacturers struggled to get access to key inputs needed in the production process.

Other vulnerabilities include slowdown in government spending (following the fall in government revenue), build-up in the demand for foreign exchange, and high exposure of the banking sector to the oil and gas sector.

Driven largely by the downside effects of these shocks, real GDP growth plunged sharply from 6.2 per cent in 2014 to a 1.6 per cent contraction in 2016. Nigeria effectively slipped into a technical recession in the second quarter of 2016 and maintained negative growths in ensuing quarters of that year. Disaggregation of the 2016 outcomes showed the worst contraction of 2.4 per cent in quarter three and a turning point thereafter.

Addressing the recession: The monetary and fiscal policy mix

In a bid to contain rising inflation and to cushion the impact of the drop in FX supply on the Nigerian economy, the monetary and fiscal authorities took extraordinary measures to tackle these extraordinary challenges. Some of the measures we took, a number of which are indeed unconventional, include;

- **Monetary Policy:** Over the intervening period, the CBN embarked on a cycle of tightening which culminated in a July 2016 hike in the Monetary Policy Rate from 12 percent to 14 percent. This decision was

expected to rein in expected inflationary pressures that may result from exchange rate pass-through to domestic prices and ensure that inflation expectations are well anchored. It was also expected to stimulate increased capital inflows to the country, which should improve accretion to reserves.

- **Conserving our Foreign Exchange (FX):** We introduced demand management approaches to conserve our reserves and support domestic production of certain goods in Nigeria. In this regard, we analysed our import bill, and encouraged manufacturers to consider local options in sourcing their raw materials, by restricting access to foreign exchange on 41 items (now increased to 43). Four of these items alone constitute over N1 trillion of our annual import bill.

- **FX Market:** In April 2017 we introduced an Investors and Exporters (I&E) window, which allowed investors and exporters to purchase and sell foreign exchange at the prevailing market rate. In addition, exchange rate management was further liberalized following the operationalisation of the "Revised Guidelines for the Operation of the Nigerian Inter-bank Foreign Exchange Market" in June 2016. The commencement of this policy guideline introduced the Naira Settled Foreign Exchange Futures Market.

- **Risk-based supervision:** The weakening of the naira, following the shift to a more flexible foreign exchange mechanism along with the exposure of several banks to the oil and gas sector, impacted somewhat on the balance sheets of domestic banks. To support the health of the banking system, the CBN took a number of steps, including:

Monitoring compliance of supervised institutions with the foreign exchange management framework issued in June 2016 through our risk-based supervision methodology.

Monitoring the financial position and performance of supervised institutions;

Assessment of the risk profile and governance management practices of banks and in the event of major deteriorations on any key risk indicator, we engaged with the affected bank in order to mitigate concerns and shore-up their capital base.

Development finance intervention: The CBN increased its lending to the agricultural and industrial sectors, through targeted intervention schemes such as the Anchor Borrowers Programme, Commercial Agricultural Credit Scheme and the Real Sector Support Facility. In particular, we sought to improve domestic supply of four commodities (rice, fish, sugar, and wheat), which consume about N1.3 trillion annually in our nation's import bill.



- **The Anchor Borrowers Programme (ABP)** which was launched in November 2015, was designed to build partnerships between small holder farmers and reliable large-scale agro-processors, with a view to increasing agricultural output, while improving access to credit for farmers.

- Our targeted focus on the agricultural and industrial sectors were driven by the vast opportunities for growth in these sectors given our high population. It was also instrumental in taking Nigeria out of the recession. In 2017, over 50 percent of the contributions to GDP growth came from the agriculture and industrial sectors.

These sectors have the ability to absorb the growing labor pool of eligible workers in our effort to meet the household consumption needs of the Nigerian populace. If efforts were made to improve productivity gains in these sectors, it will reduce our dependence on imported items that could be produced in Nigeria.

- Furthermore, improved productivity in the agriculture and manufacturing could also help in reducing our dependence on proceeds from crude oil.

In 2017, Nigeria's total revenue from exports of crude oil was US\$23 billion, relative to Indonesia, which earned close to US\$22bn from the export of palm oil in 2017. Nigeria has vast amounts of arable land that can be put to good use in the cultivation of not only palm oil but also cotton, cocoa, tomatoes and rice to mention a few. Supporting growth in the agriculture and industrial sectors is critical in our efforts to create a diversified wealth base for the country.

Doctrinal critique of our policies by Bretton Woods

While many of these measures were an

attempt at using unconventional tools to mitigate the effects of a slowdown in growth, they were initially criticised by adherents of conventional monetary policy tools.

In the view of some critics for instance, our FX policies constitute exchange restrictions, rationing of FX, discretionary allocation based on priority categories, and a multiple currency practice. Many are also unaccepting of our 41 items restriction and its recent increase to 43 items, regardless of its apparent successes. While there is sufficient evidence of significant reductions in our annual import bill, increased non-oil output and exports, and a robust BOP position, these critics assert that we are restricting trade and creating unfair competition.

To our critics, who are against the imposition of the FX restrictions, conventional Monetary Policy requires that to encourage domestic production, we should impose higher tariffs and levies. However, our experience in Nigeria has shown that this practice has never worked due to certain inefficiencies in attaining these objectives.

Our development finance initiatives in growth driving and employment generating sectors have equally not gone down well with the proponents of conventional monetary policy tools. While they acknowledged our measures have had a positive impact on output and employment, they assert that these tools constitute quasi-fiscal activities. They also maintain that implicit interest rate subsidies can have distortive effects on resource allocation.

Our argument for the unconventional Monetary Policy approach has always been that just like fiscal, monetary Policy could, at a time when development challenges abound, complement the efforts of the fiscal in employment generation, wealth creation and attainment of other growth objectives.

Policy outcomes and exit from recession

Regardless of these scathing views and critiques, the fact remains these unorthodox policies were well -conceived, and has been yielding significant gains for the Nigerian economy. Noticeable successful outcomes are gleaned from:

i. **GDP** – After five consecutive quarters of negative growth beginning in the first quarter of 2016, a coordinated approach by the fiscal and monetary authorities supported a rebound in the nation's economy during the second quarter of 2017. The recovery has been driven largely by improved non-oil activities especially the agriculture sector which expanded consistently by about 3.5–4.3 per cent reflecting efforts at diversifying the economy. This was nonetheless, reinforced by the pickup in the oil sector as oil prices

rallied in 2017. The recovery, which has been sustained for eight consecutive quarters, is expected to strengthen in the short- to medium-term.

ii. Inflation – As a result of the implementation of a tighter monetary policy regime, intervention programs in the agriculture and industrial sectors, as well as improved FX inflows, inflation began to decline, from its peak of 18.7 percent in January 2017. It currently stands at 11.37 percent as at April 2019.

iii. Reserves – The introduction of the I&E window, along with improvement in domestic production of goods have helped shore up our external reserves. Transactions have reached over \$48 billion since the inception of the window and our foreign exchange reserves has risen to US\$45bn in April 2019 from US\$23bn in October 2016. Nigeria's current stock of external reserves is now able to finance over 9 months of current import commitments. With improved availability of foreign exchange, the exchange rate at the I&E FX window has remained stable over the past 24 months at an average of N360/US\$, and the parallel market exchange rate has appreciated from N525/US\$ in February 2017 to N360/US\$ today.

iv. Anchor Borrowers Programme – The programme has helped to bolster agricultural production by removing obstacles faced by small holder farmers. We have also improved access to markets for farmers by facilitating greater partnership with agro-processors and industrial firms in the sourcing of raw materials. So far the program has supported more than 1,059,604 small holder farmers across all the 36 states of Nigeria, in cultivating 16 different commodities over 1.114 million hectares of farmland. It has also supported the creation of over 2.5m jobs across the agricultural value chain.

v. Industrial Sector – Activities in the industrial sector also witnessed significant improvement between August 2016 and February 2019, as the Primary Manufacturing Index rose from a low of 42 percent in August 2016 to 57 percent in April 2019. This development was attributed to sustained supply of FX and the dogged implementation of our FX restriction on certain items.

vi. Because of our unconventional FX and development finance policies we have recorded spectacular improvements in domestic production of most of the targeted items. Local manufacturers are consequently reporting major boosts to their revenue and profit.

Peer review

In assessing Nigeria's recovery efforts and performance, it is essential to conduct a comparative assessment of our peers.

In Argentina, though the economy was in recession throughout 2016, moderate upticks which peaked at 1.9 percent quarter two of 2017 ended that recession



Strikingly, it will be discovered that Nigeria did not fare badly vis-à-vis other emerging market economies like Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, and Argentina, that had similar economic experiences. Amidst the growing challenges, Nigeria has managed to keep real GDP growth positive and has avoided a double-dip recession in contrast to some other emerging markets economies.

In comparison and following its 2016 contractions, the South African economy recorded a double-dip recession with renewed contractions of 2.6 and 0.7 percent in the first and second quarters of 2018, respectively. Its economy grew by .8 percent in 2018. In Argentina, though the economy was in recession throughout 2016, moderate upticks which peaked at 1.9 percent quarter two of 2017 ended that recession. However, the Argentinian economy fell back into a recession as GDP growth declined by 1 percent in 2018.

The Brazilian economy had been in recession since 2015 and only emerged from it the first quarter of 2017 with a growth rate of 1.0 percent. Since then the growth has slowed progressively until the last quarter of 2017 when growth remained flat. Economic recovery still remains tepid with a GDP growth rate of 1.1 percent in 2018.

Possible complexities of heterodox monetary policy

While developmental mandate enhances the ability of central banks to foster economic growth, this may come with appreciable hitches. Essentially, policies designed to attain price stability may in fact lack congruence with the goal of economic growth. There is, therefore, the need for a clear understanding of what the limits of central banks are when it is compelled to assume a growth mandate together with the traditional price stability goal. Some of the challenges include:

Multi-mandate risks: Some of the risks that might arise from central banks' increased mandate are identified;

Trade-offs may possibly arise from the pursuit of growth and price stability objectives. Unconventional monetary policy tools could

inadvertently cause liquidity surfeit and undermine price stability.

Developmental roles may expose central banks to undue political pressure to the detriment of the economy.

Balance Sheet – Following the 2008 financial crisis, many central banks, including those of key advanced economies, quickly realised the inadequacy of the conventional approach as they hit the lower limits of adjustments to their interest rates. They thus looked for other approaches to bolster the real economy. These banks (including the US Fed, the Bank of England, the European Central Bank, the Bank of Japan, among others) experienced considerable expansions of their balance sheet while adopting an unconventional monetary policy approach.

Their experiences show that growth financing monetary policy may lead to unsustainably expanded balance sheet of the central bank especially if there are no robust means of contracting the balance sheet when the need arises. An expanded balance sheet could portend inflation risk (as monetary aggregates grow) and financial stability risk (due to excessive credit expansion).

Regardless of these probable complexities, the cost-benefit analysis of undertaking unconventional monetary policies indicates that the societal gains of such policies outstrip whatever challenges that may subsist. The experience since the global financial crises show that growth consideration cannot be sacrificed over the long-term for an exclusive focus on price stability, because unabated real contractions (and the associated persistent negative output gaps) can only lead to declining potential output, an outcome which is entirely dangerous for any economy given the structural fall in its long-run growth trajectory.

Way forward

Ladies and gentlemen, relative to our peers, the favourable outcomes and strengthening outlook of the Nigerian economy is traceable to the timeous adoption on non-traditional policy methods. The CBN has been able to reduce inflation, build our FX reserves, maintained FX market stability, and foster real growth. Nonetheless, challenges still remain. The pace of population growth at about 2.6 percent still outstrips real growth rate while inflation is outside our tolerance band. Unemployment rate and incidence of poverty remain at unacceptable levels.

Culled from a paper delivered by Emefiele at the distinguished leadership programme lecture series at the University of Ibadan last month



FED GOVT ASSURES FIRM OF COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC ZONES

By Meletus EZE

The Federal Government has assured the strategic investment partners and advisers of the Nigeria Special Economic Zone

Investment Company Limited (NSEZCO) of its commitment to the development of special economic zones across the country.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo gave

the assurance at a meeting with the representatives of the investment partners of NSEZCO, including the African Export-Import Bank, Bank of Industry, Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority, Africa Finance Corporation and the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the legal advisers, Aluko & Oyebo.

Osinbajo condemned the recent misrepresentations that were created about NSEZCO in certain sections of the media and regretted the embarrassment this might have caused the investors. He reaffirmed FG's endorsement of the strategies and plans put in place for the actualisation of the SEZs.

The VP assured the investors of the readiness of the Buhari administration to support their investments.

Bank of Industry Managing Director, Olukayode Pitan and Regional Chief Operating Officer, Anglophone West Africa, African Export-Import Bank, Abdoulaye Kone, who spoke on behalf of the investors and Gbenga Oyebo for the advisers thanked the Federal Government for the assurances and confirmed their commitment to the project.

CONCERNS OVER BANKS' NPLS, FOREX EXPOSURE

By Meletus EZE

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)-led Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has expressed worry over the concentration and high non-performing loans (NPLs) in banks.

The committee decried the persistent risks in the financial system, especially the high foreign exchange (Forex) exposure of banks, particularly to entities that do not earn forex.

CBN Deputy Governor, Edward Lametek, a member of the MPC, disclosed this in a statement on the MPC meeting, posted on the CBN's website. He reiterated that the concentration and high NPLs were also of concern to the apex bank.

He however, said payment of contractor debts by the Federal Government would go a long way in reducing the pressures in banking, and that improved surveillance and deployment of sanctions against regulatory infractions would engender good governance and stability.

"This is important because financial intermediation, especially provision of credit, is highly dependent on the state of health of financial institutions. At end-February 2019, the stock of deposit

money banks' total credit declined by about 2.5 per cent, year-on-year. This trend needs to be halted in the face of the prevailing sluggish performance of economic activity. In this context, the role of other financial institutions (OFIs) in the credit arena becomes important," he said.

He explained that these institutions (micro-finance banks, finance companies, mortgage banks, development finance institutions, among others) are expected to play the very important role of closing certain gaps in the financial system, including crucially, financial inclusion. As such, they need to be encouraged to remain mission-focused.

"Overall, the balance of risks continues to be tilted against economic growth. In my January 2019 statement, I emphasised the need to support growth given the weak outlook for economic activity based on indications from the oil sector (especially the volatility in crude prices and production cuts) and sluggish consumption demand. Of course, I noted that more clarity over the next two months (February and March) would be helpful in deciding the direction of monetary policy beyond third quarter of 2019," he said.

"Clearly, the indications then have been

justified by subsequent developments particularly as shown by the CIEA, PMIs, and the outlook for the oil sector.

"My conviction about the merit of easing the policy stance around this time has been further strengthened by the increased opportunity for doing so. First, all the measures of inflation continued to trend downwards in February with an outlook for achieving single-digit core inflation by August. This means that the real challenge remains food inflation, which may be more effectively addressed through actions aimed at boosting production and easing distribution bottlenecks," he said.

Lametek explained the CBN's interventions in agriculture would continue to be relevant; domestic yields had declined with the one year treasury bills rate at about 13 per cent; the monetary policy stance needed to be in sync, especially as inflow of portfolio investments remained high.

He added that the relatively good level of external reserves and growing confidence in the economy offer some guarantee of adequate supply of forex to the market from both the CBN and autonomous sources.

By Abisola THOMPSON

Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), says the bank, with some stakeholders, have identified smuggling and dumping as major challenges sabotaging the Nigerian economic policies.

The governor said this on the sideline of a consultative roundtable titled, "Going for Growth" with some economic stakeholders in Lagos.

The essence of the roundtable was to encourage participants to highlight important building blocks that will lead to greater economic growth in the country.

It also involves the CBN Governor listening to their ideas and views on how productivity and investments by companies operating in Nigeria can be improved.

Others include how to reduce the nation's dependence on imported goods and increase exports of non-oil goods and services.

Emefiele said: "We have identified smugglers and people dumping goods as those who sabotage those policies and we decided that we will deal with them. The strategy that we came up with is that we will not bother ourselves with them.

"There is an agency of government that is responsible for border control and if these people pass through the border control we would use the instrumentality of being the regulator of the banking system to make sure that we get the banks

SMUGGLING, DUMPING, CHALLENGES TO ECONOMIC POLICIES – CBN



to provide all details about them.

"We investigate their accounts and if they are found in economic sabotage, boarding, smuggling and dumping in Nigeria, we would not only block their accounts, we would close their accounts in all the Nigerian banks simultaneously.

He also said the CBN asked commercial banks to close those companies' accounts and those of the top members of such entities.

The bank chief said CBN in due course

would come up with the names of those that had been identified.

"We want to be sure that we come up with something that is credible and cannot be denied. At this stage we have already blocked the accounts of some in the textile and rice and palm oil company.

"We are investigating those accounts and as information becomes clearer, we can clearly say that they committed the offence.

"We would then go to the next level

SEC, EFCC PARTNER TO TACKLE CRIME IN CAPITAL MARKET

By Meletus EZE

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have agreed to collaborate to tackle crime in the Nigerian capital market.

SEC's Director-General, Ms Mary Uduk, said this in a statement signed by the Head of Media, SEC, Mrs Efe Ebello, in Abuja. She said the agreement was reached when the management of SEC met with the management team of EFCC at the EFCC Corporate Headquarters in Abuja.

She said the visit was necessary to close ranks in the face of re-awakening of Ponzi schemes, cybercrime and other fraudulent activities that had engulfed the market in the last few years.

Uduk also said the visit was aimed at revisiting the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between both organisations on Jan. 19, 2017.

According to her, some areas where the MoU seeks cooperation of both agencies include training and secondment of middle cadre officers of SEC to EFCC and those of EFCC to SEC.

She said other areas were cross boarder asset seizure, repatriation of stolen funds from the capital market and prosecution of offenders among others

Uduk said both organisations had worked together on some cases in the past and there was no better time for them to collaborate more closely than now.

Acting Chairman of EFCC, Mr Ibrahim Magu, thanked the Executive Man-

agement of SEC for the gesture and stressed the need to strengthen collaboration between both agencies.

Magu assured SEC team of EFCC's support in ensuring that clauses embedded in the MoU were executed given the magnitude of fraudulent activities presently going on in the country.

He reiterated the need for joint training of staff of both organisations, saying there was the need to review the MoU in order to achieve both organisations' objectives.

On the rising spate of Ponzi schemes in the country, Magu stressed the need for more sensitisation campaigns between SEC and EFCC.

This, he said would ensure that unsuspecting Nigerians do not continue to lose their hard earned money.

IMPACT OF BANKS' ACCESS TO GOVT SECURITIES DEPENDS ON CBN MECHANISMS – DMO

By Olamilekan FAWAS

The Debt Management Office (DMO) has said the impact of the proposed limitation of commercial banks' access to government securities on the market will depend on the actual mechanism provided by the CBN.

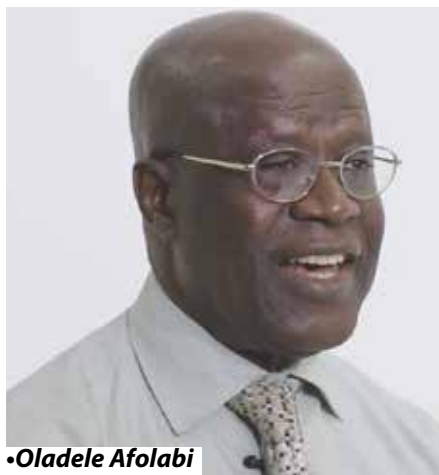
The Director, Portfolio Management Department, Debt Management Office (DMO), Mr. Oladele Afolabi, said: "For instance, how would 'Government Securities' be defined? Would this include the Open Market Operations (OMO) Bills being issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)?"

"The specifics of the mechanism would determine the impact on the market. He, however, assured that the limitation will not affect the market or discourage investors.

He said the Federal Government bond market had developed over the years from the initial period when banks were the dominant investors to the present situation where there were now other categories of investors.

Afolabi said the new categories included the pension funds, asset managers and foreign investors, all with significantly higher levels of participation than before.

The director added that the DMO had been working with other stakeholders to encourage higher level of issuances by private sector organisations and the Federal Government granted tax waivers in that regard.



•Oladele Afolabi

"This is a sign of maturity of the Federal Government bond market and we expect to continue to diversify the investor base for government securities particularly with new instruments such as the Sukuk, Savings Bond and Green Bond.

He said they were attracting new investors to the market. Afolabi explained that making funds available to the private sector was also the focus of the Federal Government as the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) expected the private sector to play a major role in the country's development.

According to him, the DMO's initiatives in the bond market are not just for the Federal Government's borrowing, but to also create a market for long term capital for other categories of issuers, such as sub-nationals and corporates.

"The current Debt Management Strategy,

which has shifted more of the Federal Government's borrowing to external sources, is to create borrowing space for the private sector in the domestic market.

"Between 2017 and 2018, the Federal Government repaid over N1 trillion of Nigerian Treasury Bills (NTBs), to make loanable funds available to private sector borrowers and also lower interest rates in the market.

"This saw the rates for NTBs dropping from about 18.5 per cent in 2017 to between 10 to 11 per cent in 2018.

"So, to the extent that the objective is to make more funds available to the private sector, this is in accordance with the government's focus."

Afolabi, however, said that banks were still expected to continue to play a key role as investors in the market.

This, he said, was because the Federal Government bonds were liquid assets which the banks would need to hold to meet the 30 per cent liquidity ratio.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in May had directed the CBN to initiate policies and mechanisms that would facilitate the restriction of banks' access to government securities such as treasury bills and bonds.

The committee said the restriction was necessary because banks had unfettered access to government securities, a situation that had the capacity to crowd out private sector lending.

NBS TO PUBLISH CORRUPTION SURVEY FINDINGS IN SEPTEMBER – OFFICIAL

By Meletus EZE

An official of National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Dr Isiaka Olarewaju, has said the bureau will publish the findings of the ongoing survey on corruption in September.

The survey is the second National Household Survey on Quality and Integrity of Public Services in Nigeria, 2019.

Olawaju, Project Director of the Survey, represented the Statistician-General, Dr. Yemi Kale, disclosed this while fielding questions from newsmen on the Survey in Abuja.

The Director in Charge of Real Sector and

Household Statistics said that field workers had been deployed and the survey would be completed by the end of June.

"The planning of the survey started since 2018 and we did testing on instrument of data collection in February, 2019.

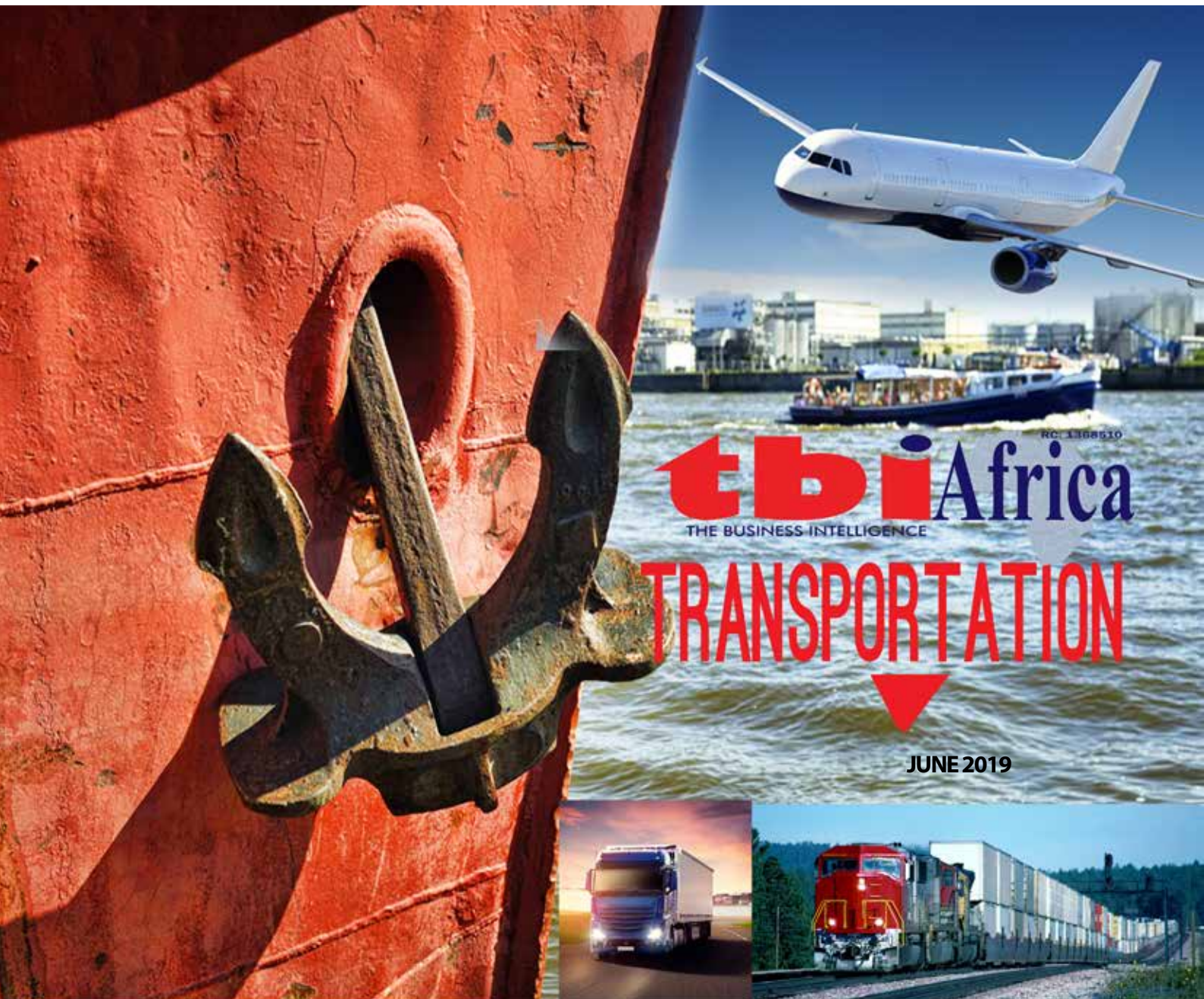
"This survey is a large one. We have since moved away from analogue to electronic, as we talk to you, we are monitoring those on field. We monitor the location of enumerators from the digital address of sample households.

"As soon as the data collection is finished, it will be available within one week, but we need to do data reliability test before

releasing the result. On or before September, the result will be made public by the Statistician-General," he said.

The director said a total of 20 field personnel had been deployed in each state including the FCT; four teams constituted in each state and a team comprised of one supervisor and four enumerators.

Olawaju said the survey would allow government and citizens to examine level of progress within the last two years particularly given that the current government has big anti-corruption stance.



TRAFFIC GRIDLOCK: WILL EXECUTIVE ORDER DO THE MAGIC?

*The first Executive Order of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's administration has shown how 'desperate' Lagos State is in getting not only the people moving, but also the state's economy, writes **Abisola THOMPSON***

The Lagos State Transport Management Authority's (LASTMA) new slogan in one of its advertisement against one way driving seems to have struck a chord with Lagosians who have in the last one week begun to appreciate that "a new Sheriff is in town".

Nothing else underscores how central transportation is to the Babajide Sanwo-Olu's

administration than the executive order, which came into force on May 30, barely 24 hours after he assumed office as the state's fifth executive governor.

For Lagos motorists, only very few unpleasant things could surpass traffic gridlock. Many could have opted to leave the state, but its economy is simply irresistible. So, rather than exiting, more people keep trooping in, compounding the economy and making nonsense of the state's transportation plan.

Successive governments had tried to resolve the traffic situation with massive road constructions and opening up of inner roads but their efforts appeared like scratching the problem on the surface. Barely two weeks after being sworn in, the immediate past governor, Akinwunmi Ambode,

showed the capacity to tackle the traffic situation when he visited some of the major grey points in the metropolis, assuring that his administration would provide solutions to the traffic snarl in the state.

In a paper delivered at the African Forum of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transportation (CILT) at Arusha, Tanzania by the Assistant Corps Marshall of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Kayode Olagunju, entitled: "Evaluating traffic congestion in developing nations, a case study of Nigeria", he listed major causes of congestion to include lane indiscipline, high traffic density, low road network carrying capacity and poor traffic management.

Other causative factors, according to him, are poor road support infrastructure, such as lay-by,

low response to removal of broken down and crashed vehicles and poor integration of urban transport planning.

Sanwo-Olu's Order, which could be interpreted as a declaration of a state of emergency on transportation, sought to address three thematic areas that have bedeviled the sector. They are road infrastructure, environmental impact and traffic management.

Transportation holds the key to unlocking the nation's economic potential. For so long, Lagos has been bedeviled by the transportation plague. The state, which hosts major drivers of the economy, the ports (both sea and air) and the nation's financial headquarters, has been held back by a dreary transportation system that has relied almost exclusively on the roads.

So grave has the impact of the gridlock to the nation's economy been that the Lagos Bureau of Statistics said the state, whose population is estimated at 25.6 million, loses about two billion hours yearly. A moving transportation sector, therefore, remains the key to unlocking the economy. Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry President, Mr Babatunde Ruwase, said recently that Nigeria loses between N5 and N7 trillion yearly to gridlock.

Signing the Order, which came, Sanwo-Olu declared that Lagosians were in a hurry to see the enthronement of discipline on the roads. "The order was to address issues, such as potholes, blockages and the rest of it," he said.

To address these issues, he mandated the state's Drain Ducks Agency, to clean all the drainage and de-silt all primary, secondary and tertiary drainages to ensure free flow of rainwater, especially during the rainy season and the blockade that usually results to ponding on the roads. He directed the Lagos State Public Works Corporation (LSPWC) to start road patching and rehabilitation.

Sanwo-Olu by fiat, directed LASTMA to operate two shifts. "Our desire is to ensure that we control traffic until everybody gets home safely. LASTMA should, therefore, extend its working hours and ensure traffic control till 11 p.m.," he said.

He instructed LASTMA and the Vehicle Inspection Service (VIS) to ensure compliance with traffic rules and regulations.

He said: "Lagosians are not going to wait for us any longer to maintain orderliness on our roads. Hence, I have invited all the Security Chiefs to witness the signing of the Executive Order so that they can hear us and support us."

It was the first time, according to Kayode Opeifa, a former Commissioner for Transportation in the state and immediate past Executive Secretary for Transportation in the Federal Capital Territory Authority (FCTA), any government in Lagos will back LASTMA's activities with an Executive Order.

"The order has put paid to thinking in certain quarters that the Sanwo-Olu government may be soft on traffic offenders. Right in front of security chiefs in the state, the governor gave LASTMA the marching order to strictly enforce all extant laws relating to transportation," he said.

Opeifa said no agency of government has suffered more in the last four years than LASTMA, many of whose officials were attacked, maimed and killed by irate citizens just for doing their legitimate job of keeping traffic moving in the state.

However, as the state seemed bent on traffic management, it understood that no success could be achieved if the roads remained bad. With virtually all its 9,600 inner road network in various stages of dilapidation, the governor recognised that nothing tangible could be done except the roads are fixed.

Not only did he mandate the LSPWC to embark on aggressive remediation of all critical roads across the state, the governor, as part of efforts at ensuring that all roads are touched, promised to release emergency toll-free telephone numbers through which Lagosians could report all bad roads in their areas.

At a public forum, the governor directed the LSPWC to swing into action. LASTMA's General Manager, Olawale Musa, said the agency is prepared to comply with the governor's directive. Musa said the 4000-man strong agency may even run three shifts at some locations that are notable for traffic gridlock. He disclosed that efforts were in top gear to provide security backup for its men whose shift runs into the night.

"Our men have been adequately briefed and they are very enthusiastic in cooperating with the administration in keeping the state moving. In some places we are planning to have working

sheds where those who may not be able to return to their homes at night could repose for the night," Musa said.

Musa, however, sued for commuters' understanding to reduce frictions that usually put his men at risk on the field.

"We would urge Lagosians to understand that we are partners and not enemies. Our desire is to ensure that everyone moves freely in the state and we would continue to do this without fear or favour," Musa said, adding that the agency was getting worried that some unscrupulous drivers (both commercial and private) were fond of abducting its officers, beating and abandoning them in desolate places.

"Every week, we receive reports in our situation room of our officials being abducted by culprits in the course of enforcing traffic regulations, beaten mercilessly before being released or in some cases the officials escaping before more harm could come their way," he said.

He disclosed that the agency has been organising regular training and retraining of its workforce to drive down a re-orientation needed for better civil engagement to promote good relationship with motorists.

Olawale added that the agency had tried to stop physical enforcement of traffic offences, but was being stalled because of lack of data. He, therefore, called for public understanding, saying that rather than taking the law into their hands, erring officials should be reported to the agency for appropriate disciplinary actions.

"LASTMA is being paid from their taxes. The government employed these officials to work in their interest to keep the roads free, so they should cooperate with us. We are there for them to ensure that they have free flow of traffic.



'WE PLAN TO RUN EFFICIENT, SUSTAINABLE AIRLINE'

By Meletus EZE

What has Ibom Air, the new entrant into the airline business, got to offer? Plenty, says its Chief Operating Officer (COO), George Uriesi, who noted that the airline invested in Bombardier Canadian Regional Jet J900 (CRJ 900) aircraft because of their suitability for Nigeria.

Besides being cost-effective, the aircraft are equipment suitable for the route and operational structure developed in the carrier's business plan, he added.

Speaking at the airline's inaugural flight on the Uyo – Lagos- Lagos – Uyo route, Uriesi said Ibom Air was investing in modern planes to ensure reliable services by a carrier that has designed few routes structure in its business plans.

Uriesi, a former managing director of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), said the carrier would fill the gaps in the air transport value chain, and assist to develop the Akwa Ibom airport, including the aircraft maintenance repair and overhaul centre.

He said Ibom Air was conceived to provide more reliable air transport services, deploy right aircraft on the route and design passenger friendly fares.

Uriesi said: "We looked at the B737 and it is obvious we looked at the economics of the operations of the Embraer and the CRJ900 and eventually we opted for the CRJ. The pros were more than the cons. Investing in more modern aeroplanes means that we have a longer period of more reliable services and in terms of business plans, that is much better for us. Besides, the equipment is the right one for this route structure."

Uriesi said the airline's vision was to be a world class regional carrier.

He said: "We don't have any ambition for long haul at all. We will settle in the country and after a while we will go into the region. We want to model ourselves around Comair of South Africa. They have been in existence for about 75 years. They have been profitable for 72 of their 75 years. They are such a world-class airline that British Airways has put their livery on it. They operate franchise for British Airways. They have no ambition to go anywhere other than Southern Africa. That is the type of model we are after."

He said Ibom Air plans to grow its fleet of aircraft from three to 10 CRJ900 aircraft in three years.

Uriesi said: "Already, the carrier is starting with three airplanes while the fourth aircraft will be added in August. We are going to have the big-



gest CRJ900 on the continent. The fourth one will come in in August. Again, the fifth aeroplane will come in the first quarter of 2020. But if the numbers are achieved before then, then we can bring it forward. It is going to be organic expansion over the next three years. There are indications that it is going to be faster than slower."

The establishment of Ibom Air, he said, was part of the grand desire to make Akwa Ibom a destination of choice for Nigerians and visitors to the country.

Uriesi stated: "Because of the airline now, the MRO will very soon become established properly. The airline is designed to be very well run. It is

not a government parastatal.

"The proposition is schedule reliability, on-time departures and superior customer service. Nigerians can plan against our schedule. Secondly, if we are leaving at 7am, we are leaving at 7am. The third is superior customer service when you interact with us.

"We believe that we are an airline that provides this tripod of services to the passengers."

The Engineering Director, Lookman Animasuan, said the airline had a fleet maintenance unit, with young and talented Nigerian engineers trained to familiarise with the CRJ aircraft type.

NPA PROMISES SAFETY ON PORT ACCESS ROADS, IMPROVED STAFF WELLNESS, OTHERS

By Olamilekan FAWAS

The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has assured ports users of safety and access to already cleared cargoes from the seaports.

This is coming as the Federal Government extended by two weeks, the time given the Presidential Taskforce on the Apapa traffic gridlock to resolve the matter, following a request for an extension by members of the taskforce and other stakeholders.

The General Manager, Corporate and Strategic Communication, NPA, Adam Jatto, expressed regrets over the accident that involved a 40 feet container that crushed three fairly used vehicles at Tin Can Island Port in Lagos.

Jatto said the NPA assures its various customers and stakeholders of continued responsibility in

ensuring that all necessary measures are taken in providing a secured and friendly environment for customer satisfaction and efficient service delivery.

He said: "We regret any inconvenience this accident may have caused the general public, especially the port community, and assure of prompt response to issues when they occur."

Meanwhile, the NPA has reassured its staff of unflinching support prioritizing health issues concerning its employees to derive the best service delivery.

Managing Director, Hadiza Bala Usman, at the yearly "Workers Wellness Programmes Fair", held at its Headquarters in Lagos, said all workers should key into the theme of the programme, "Eat Right, Keep Fit, and Enhance Productivity" which was in tandem with NPA's core values of upholding efficiency and engendering greater customer satisfaction.

IMPROVING AIRPORT FACILITIES FOR NIGHT FLIGHTS



The collaboration of Edo State Government and some aviation agencies has facilitated the installation of Category Two (CAT II) Instrument Landing System (ILS) and Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) at the Benin Airport. Analysts believe with such collaboration, there is hope for improved navigational equipment at airports, Meletus EZE reports.

The Federal Government's drive to equip its airports with state-of-the-art navigation and weather equipment has received a boost. At the Benin Airport, the Edo State Government, in collaboration with some aviation agencies, has installed a Category Two (CAT II) Instrument Landing System (ILS) and Distant Measuring Equipment (DME).

The facility upgrade was part of efforts by the government to scale up flight safety, especially at some airports designated for international standards.

Prior to this, Benin Airport was among many aerodromes that lacked requisite air navigation facilities for night flights, meaning flights operations at the aerodrome only took place between 7.00 am and 6.00 pm at the facility, thus qualifying it as an aerodrome for Visual Flight Rules (VFR).

Therefore, the joy of installing the new facility could be understood, considering the fact that Benin Airport ranks among the first eight in the country, with commanding passengers traffic for scheduled carriers.

For instance, stakeholders in the aviation indus-

try are quick to note that this effort by the state government will help stall the losses incurred by airlines due to their inability to fly in and out of any airport for 24 hours because of inadequate operational facilities.

This singular factor, according to experts, has contributed to the bust and boom circle of many indigenous carriers.

Rationale for Edo State's initiative

According to the state government, its intervention at the Airport was predicated on convictions that if airports are fully developed with appropriate operational facilities, they could open up sub-national economies for growth.

The aerodrome, government further reasoned, is part of the facilities in the economic value chain, which influences expansion of economic activities by not only freeing up markets, but providing the enabling environment to attract private investments.

Besides, an efficient airport fitted with the right navigational facilities for 24-hour flight services, will deepen the vision of any administration to industrialise the state.

Edo State was convinced that airports that are truly functional for both day and night flights, besides driving the state's industrialisation vision, could be leveraged by private investors to access business opportunities.

Strategies for facility upgrade

In 2017, Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State started a campaign aimed at upgrading Benin Airport to international standards.

From studies carried by aviation experts, the state government unearthed obvious gaps in airport and air navigation facilities that could be a road block to the dream of making Benin

Airport attain international standards.

The airport, though a Federal Government facility, Edo State assumed part responsibility for its facility upgrade estimated at N169 million.

Besides providing part funding for the project, aviation agencies including Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) and Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET) provided the needed infrastructure comprising high-end air navigation equipment.

Tour D'Benin

During a visit by top aviation actors in the country to the state in September 2017, Governor Obaseki was quick to relay his desire to improve infrastructure at Benin Airport.

He said though the Federal Government had the mandate to fix the airport, being its owner, yet, there was need to strengthen partnership to refurbish the airport.

Obaseki, who conveyed his administration's intention to the former FAAN Managing Director, Saleh Dunoma and his NAMA counterpart, Capt. Fola Akinkuotu after embarking on a tour of facilities at Benin Airport, said he would work with them to develop a plan to expand the airport space.

He said the state intended to effectively utilise assets and resources within the state for the benefit of the people, which necessitated the inspection of the airport.

"We have approached the Federal Authority to kindly come to our aid regarding the airport. The plan is to first improve the facilities in this airport and ensure that we have night landing facilities. This will enable the airport embark on 24 hours operation. With more airplanes coming in, we will see a lot more passenger

“...coming into our state,” he said.

A visibly impressed Dunoma noted that though the Federal Government had the responsibility to improve facilities at Benin Airport, he was excited by the commitment that came from the governor to upgrade the airport.

Akinkuotu commended the joint effort by the state and Federal Government on the upgrade, noting that the approach was the way to go to drive meaningful development across the country.

He said the agency would collaborate with the Edo State to ensure that passengers do not only feel safe, but have good reasons to fly to Benin Airport.

Collaboration that works

Work began after the inspection, resulting in the state constructing three security watchtowers, supplying and building houses for 220KVA generators, provided three Hilux trucks to FAAN and facilitating the installation of CAT II ILS and DME by NAMA.

The Federal Government, on its part through the Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NIMET), provided Thunder and Lightning System, Met Enclosure and Secure Aviation Data Information System while FAAN provided Enhanced Simple Approach Landing System.

Osinbajo's first flight

After the completion of air navigation facilities at Benin Airport, an aircraft in the Presidential Fleet flew Vice President Yemi Osinbajo out of the airport at 7pm to Abuja, the nation's capital, being the first flight out of the airport after the facilities were installed. This ends decades of neglect.

Speaking after the number two citizen's flight had taken off, Governor Obaseki assured that Benin Airport would commence night-time flight operations in full after the necessary facilities have been installed as they are being received in batches.

According to the governor, the landing facilities at the Benin Airport were already working as they enabled the Vice President's flight to depart Benin City at about 7 pm.

“We are expecting more night landing equipment to be installed at the Benin Airport, especially the lights.”

It's dream come true

The Federal Government and Edo State inaugurated night landing equipment at the Benin Airport, thus officially reviving night operations at the 63-year-old Airport.

Immediate past Minister of State for Aviation, Hadi Sirika, said he was elated by the development, commending Governor Obaseki's doggedness and tenacity in facilitating the start of night operations at the Airport.

“The operational capacity of the Benin City Airport has tremendously improved as we can now guarantee safe landing in reduced visibility and in bad weather condition. Aircraft can now land in Benin Airport at night. No more closure of the Airport by 6 pm.” “We have both ground and satellite-based equipment at the Airport in such a way that if the ground base equipment fails, the satellite base equipment will work to ensure safe landing at the Airport either in the day or at night,” Sirika said.

Speaking on further plans to maximise the use of the airport, Sirika said preparations have reached advanced stage in building an Agro-allied Cargo Terminal at the Benin Airport, adding that work on the civil structures has commenced with Governor Obaseki's support.

He added: “We are bringing a cargo terminal to Benin to facilitate exportation of perishable agricultural products and other produce targeted at foreign markets.”

On his part, Governor Obaseki said with the installation of the equipment and commencement of night landing facilities, the Airport can now compete with its peers across the world. He commended FAAN and NAMA for their working relationship with his administration for over a year and a half in ensuring that the upgrade became a reality.

On the benefits of the upgrade to the state, Governor Obaseki said the development will transform the Benin Airport. “The reason we insisted on upgrading facilities at the Benin Airport is that it is one of the five Airports with high passenger traffic in the country. With the facilities in place, we can now convince airlines to make night stop-over in the City to further increase passenger traffic to boost the state's revenue base.”

He said the state facilitated the construction of two watchtowers to provide military officers with a vantage point for proper surveillance of the equipment and the airport.

Equipment inaugurated at the Airport included thunder and lightning system, Secure Aviation Data Information System (SADIS); Enhanced Simple Approach Lightning System, CAT II and Instrument Landing System (ILS)/Distance Measuring Equipment (DME).

“All these equipment were put together by the officials of NIMET, FAAN, NAMA and Edo State Government. Two 220 KVA generators and plant house were built by the state government as well,” the governor revealed.

Stakeholders' / experts' views

Speaking on the development, Aviation Security Consultant, Group Capt. John Ojikutu (rtd) said night operations provide immense economic opportunities for cities with such operations, as they open up a new vista of businesses for the airlines operating from such airports and the state's local economy.

‘WHY NIGERIA'S IMPORT, EXPORT PROCEDURES FAILED’

By Abisola THOMPSON

Nigeria's import, export, regulatory and transit procedures are encumbered by lengthy procedures associated with unnecessary delays, high transaction cost, and increase of cargo dwell time, which make the local ports among the most expensive in the globe. These are the major factors that have bedevilled the successful regulation and smooth trade practices in Nigerian seaports, according to the National Council of Managing Directors of Customs Agents (NCMDCA).

National President, NCMDCA, Lucky Amiwero, in a letter to President Muhammadu Buhari, said all these factors contribute to the inefficiencies in the port system coupled with low draught level of the Nigerian ports.

He described these as the main reasons the country lost the transshipment hub status to other West African countries.

Amiwero, who is a former member of the Presidential Taskforce on the Reform of Nigeria Customs Service, said there is an urgent need for reforms on import, export, regulatory and transit procedures. Such a move will help to implement integrated set policy and procedures that are globally accepted, to ensure effective trade facilitation by the reduction of transaction cost (TC), cargo dwell time (CDT), and ensure safety and security (SS) of the processes in Nigerian ports.

He said except there is a change in infrastructure rehabilitation, Nigeria will continue to lose cargoes to neighbouring countries, which have deep seaports and better facilities.

Amiwero, in the letter dated May 19th, said it is sad that Nigerian ports cannot accommodate mega ships with 8000-20000 TEUs, unlike what obtains in others ports. These are already positioned as “millennium ports, preferred, transshipments or load centre,” adding that most West African ports were built to accommodate Nigerian bound cargoes given the country's poor infrastructure.

He also identified Cotonou, Lome, Ghana, and Cameroun as countries, which have either completed their deep sea projects or near completion, noting that while Nigerian ports draught is between 8 and 13 meters, which cannot accommodate mega ships, the least draught in other ports is 15 meters.

For instance, Lome port is 15.5 meters, Cotonou 15, Ghana 19 and Cameroun 16 meters, adding that most Nigerian bound goods by mega ships are transhipped from these countries with smaller vessels.

Political Economy

9TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: WHAT HOPE FOR NIGERIANS?



Ahmed Lawan

• Femi Gbajabiamila

*The 8th National Assembly ended on June 11 2019. The 8th National Assembly took off in 2015 with huge expectations from Nigerians about the way government business is conducted. In this piece **Olamilekan FAWAS** examines the activities of the 8th Assembly hopes the 9th Assembly will learn from its predecessor and meet the expectations of Nigerians.*

To address the numerous expectations of Nigerians, the 9th National Assembly has to implement legislative agenda that will position it to deliver laws that

will aid developments and reforms that will improve the living conditions of Nigerians.

As clearly spelt out at the beginning by the leadership of the 8th Assembly, the agenda outlined steps and prioritises legislative actions required to achieve set goals and objectives.

As the 109 senators of the 8th Senate bowed out on June 6, 2019 after four years of legislative activities, political analysts have commended their performance in spite of the tumultuous beginning of the session in 2015.

The analysts observed that although the session was characterised by some challenges, most bills passed by the lawmakers have direct impact on the economy.

According to the 8th Senate bill progression chart, over 200 bills were passed. Some of

the bills passed by the 8th senate are Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Bill 2015, North East Development Commission (NEDC) Bill 2015, Counterfeit and Fake Drugs and Unwholesome Processed Foods (Miscellaneous Provision) Amendment Bill 2015, Petroleum Industry Governance Bill 2016, Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Educational Institution Bill 2016, Not-Too-Young-To-Run Bill, among others.

The Senate also adopted bills passed by the House of Representatives. Some of them are Federal Capital Territory Hospitals Management Board (Establishment, etc) Bill 2016, Senior Citizen Centre Bill, 2016, and Compulsory Treatment and Care of Victims of Gunshots Bill 2016.

The Executive Director, Youth Initiative for Advocacy Growth and Advancement (YIAGA-AFRICA), Mr Samson Itodo, commended the Senate for passing the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Bill, which has been signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari.

Itodo, a co-convenor of the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Movement, said though the 8th assembly had challenges, they performed creditably. This Legislative Agenda takes lessons from the experiences of the 7th House of Representatives and seeks to consolidate the gains and achievements thereof.

The House of Representatives recognises that there remains widespread citizens distrust of public institutions and government generally.

It is also recognised that there was a lot of public misconception and misperception about the functions and contributions of the legislature to Nigeria's overall socioeconomic and political development. Yet, the legislature's contributions to Nigeria's democracy remain critical and important.

"The 8th House of Representatives asserted its role in providing leadership in the areas of accountable and transparent government, citizens' engagement, as well as constituency representation.

The House of Representatives collaborated with its counterpart in the Senate and other arms of government to legislate for the common good of the Nigerian people.

"Our legislative activities covered critical spheres of life in Nigeria. The House legislates to achieve reforms in Nigeria's national economy and development, tackle poverty, unemployment, confront the scourge of corruption, terrorism and security challenges in the country.

"The House also gave priority to green legislations to address environmental challenges such as desertification, erosion and pollution.

"The 8th House of Representatives also worked assiduously to improve the governance process in Nigeria by legislating to cut the cost of running government, reduce wastage and tackle National Revenue leakages.

"The House committed to playing its part in rescuing Nigeria from the clutches of hunger, poverty, disease, social, economic, political and infrastructural quagmire.

"The 8th House of Representatives, as a Peoples' Parliament, was sensitive to public demands for transparency and accountability not just by the House of Representatives but also by government at all levels.

"Our legislative actions was therefore seek to build public confidence and trust and be responsive to citizens' questions regarding the conduct of legislative business.

"The House worked for public good and served as the institution that defends the rights of the people to an accountable and transparent government.

"The House's relationship with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) was that of partnership and collaboration to deliver on citizens' expectations of the legislature," Itodo said.

At the close of legislative agenda, the House was able to pass 382 out of 1643 bills presented in the life of the 8th Assembly; resolved 1413 out of the 1588 motions sponsored and considered 205 out of the 1192 petitions received.

Giving account of its legislative business, Edward Pwajok, chairman Rules and Business Committee of House stated that "in the first session, 685 bills were introduced and 68 were passed."

"In the second session, 379 bills were introduced and 41 were passed. In the third session, 446 bills were introduced and 94 were passed. In the fourth session, 143 bills were introduced and 63 were passed. The total I repeat, 1643 bills that we presented and 352 were passed.

"For motions, 1413 were resolved, 1137

This Assembly successfully alters many sections of the constitution, including giving the State Legislature and Judiciary financial autonomy



were referred to various committees, 17 were withdrawn and 1 was deferred leaving a total of 1588.

The House received and lay on the table, 1192 petitions, lay and yet to be consider 22, considered on the floor of the House 205, and rejected 2. 108 of the bills came from the Senate, 1465 of the bills were private members bills."

On other areas of achievement of the House during the period under review, he said, "This 8th Assembly made history by altering the constitution.

"This Assembly successfully alters many sections of the constitution, including giving the State Legislature and Judiciary financial autonomy.

"We also lower the age limit for those contesting in the not too young to run bill, which opened up the space for our younger citizens to offer themselves to be voted for offices.

"We also amended the constitution so that if there is any vacancy or something happen to Mr. President, the Vice President will not only step in but retain power and the same thing too for governors.

"It is through this Assembly that private members bill changed democracy day from May 29 to June 12. It is this Assembly that increased the minimum wage to N30, 000 as against the 27, 000 proposed by the executive.

"There are many progressive bills passed which are awaiting assent. There is one to remove age discrimination because we have earlier declared state of emergency on unemployment so that our employed youths and graduates will receive favourable attention by the public service.

"Abolition of first degrees and HND dichotomy, granting married women in the public service options of citizenship, either citizenship of their father or husbands, repeal and enactment of new company and allied company act which has not been amended since 1990 to ease doing business in Nigeria.

"Prohibition of estimated billing by electricity distribution companies, establishment of the North East Development Commission and also we have passed the South East Development

Commission bill,

"Apart from bills which is the core function of the Legislature which is to make law, the 8th Assembly pursued its representational role as elected representative of the people to speak for the people of Nigeria, passed many resolutions covering all areas of our national life that concerned the people from insecurity to terrorist attacks, murder, kidnapping, killings, education, health, Nigeria in Diaspora, unemployment, youth, women, etc.

"In terms of oversight responsibility of the House, we investigated many of the Ministries to expose corruption in line with section 58 of the constitution. It is the deliberations of the House on members motion that get the police and other government agencies to embark on using local governments as a basis for recruitment using Federal Character principles"

On his part, Chief Mike Ozekhome (SAN), said the 8th national assembly was the best in the legislative history of the country. He said it performed creditably in terms of productivity and insistence on being independent.

He said: "In the entire legislative history of Nigeria, the 8th national assembly passed the largest number of pro-masses motions, resolutions and bills than any legislature before it.

"Future national assembly should and must take a cue from the 8th national assembly, that the assembly is an independent arm of government, specifically created by Section 4 of the 1999 Constitution. They should make laws for the peace, order and good governance of Nigeria.

"Though expected to cooperate with the executive, it must not do so at the expense of its own independence as an arm of government that participates in the inbuilt constitutional checks and balances.

"It is not a rubber stamp to executive desires. Any national assembly worthy of its name must rise up and use its oversight powers under Sections 88 and 89 of the 1999 Constitution, to check the excesses of the judicial and executive arms of government," he said.

In the same vein, Executive Director, Foundation for Persons Living with Disabilities, Mrs Pat John-Oseh, hailed the legislators for passing the Disability Bill.

Dr Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, the Chairperson, Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), said the 8th senate passed vital bills that contributed to the country's development.

"Examples of those bills are the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Bill and the Disability Bill, which have been signed into law.

"Those two bills came out very clearly as bills that have contributed to Nigeria's growth and development. Also, the Minimum Wage Bill signed into law is another one."

Akiyode-Afolabi, however, rated the senate low

in terms of other legislative activities, noting that though the senate passed a number of bills that were beneficial, it failed in other areas.

She said the lawmakers did not fully address issues bothering on the petroleum sector, the electoral system, among others.

"The senate did not do much to push for passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill which has to do with women.

"In the last election, women suffered a lot of violence, they suffered a lot of discrimination and you can see that the seven per cent of women in the national assembly is reducing to five per cent in terms of the number of women representation.

"A critical law of that nature is what the national assembly should have taken cognisance of," she said.

The TMG chairperson noted that delay in budget passage also characterised the 8th national assembly.

"Year in, year out, they refused to pass budget at the time when it will be right to address the yearnings and aspirations of the Nigerian people.

"So there were lots of politicking that they actually left those things they were supposed to do as members of the national assembly.

"So in terms of that, I will rate them very low because they had all the opportunity to help better the lives of Nigerian people, but they did not," she said.

On their part, some lawmakers, who appraised their performance within the period, lamented declined assent to some bills that would have impacted positively on the country.

Sen. Foster Ogola (PDP-Bayelsa), said the 8th senate performed creditably in all its ramifications.

"This 8th senate has performed beyond expectation. We have passed more bills than all the previous senates put together. Even in terms of public discourse, we have done more because the Ethics and Privileges Committee has the highest record of public complaints they have handled," he said.

Ogola pointed out that "just recently, the bill I sponsored for the Federal College of Education Agoro, Bayelsa, went through third reading.

"Also, five tertiary institutions bill received third reading, including mine," he said.

The lawmaker commended the senate for passing the redrafted Petroleum Industry Governance (PIG) Bill, which President Buhari earlier declined assent to.

He said in spite of the fact that it was one of the critical bills that were transmitted but not assented to, the senate deemed it necessary to pass it through third reading, a second time, with the hope that it would be assented to.

The senate did not do much to push for passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill which has to do with women



"Most importantly, we finalised the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill, though we could not pass the other tranches," he said.

Sen. Solomon Adeola (APC-Lagos), said there was no doubt that the 8th senate started on a rancorous note. According to him, the seeming frosty relationship between the leadership of the senate and the executive affected the performance of the senate in some aspects.

He said: "The instability of the senate lingered for about a year and a half, slowing down legislative activities within the period. Within the period, there was also change of leader of the senate, causing another round of distraction.

"However, we were able to contribute our quota as lawmakers because we believe that Nigeria is bigger than anyone. With that in mind, we were able to bury our differences to focus on the project Nigeria.

"Over 200 bills were passed by the senate and that is commendable, and it shows we were committed to contributing our quota to nation building," he said.

Adeola said his expectation for the 9th senate was to see a senate that would be acceptable to all Nigerians and a leader that would carry everybody along.

He noted that for the policies of government to be properly implemented, there was a need for collaboration between the legislature and executive. "We will be coming to the 9th senate to pursue the agenda of the APC for national development," he said.

Sen. Matthew Urghoghide (PDP-Edo), said all senators of the 8th senate worked hard to ensure what was expected of them statutorily was achieved. According to him, the 8th senate has set a standard that subsequent sessions will work hard to achieve.

Urghoghide noted that "in a bid to ensure that the workload is cleared, we revisited even bills that were declined assent to and passed them through third reading a second time.

"We expect that the 9th senate would do better."

He advised the 9th senate leadership to ensure checks and balances for a robust and sustain-

able democratic rule.

Senate President Bukola Saraki in his farewell speech to mark the end of the 8th senate thanked his colleagues for demonstrating patriotism by protecting the sanctity of the legislature.

He said although some of them had to pay dearly for daring to defend the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it was worth it.

He said he was bowing out a fulfilled man, knowing that in spite of the hiccups experienced in the life of the senate, the achievements recorded could not be matched.

"Distinguished colleagues, as we come to the final plenary and the last few days of the 8th senate, it is a victory in itself that we are seeing the journey to its momentous end.

"That I am here today, that you are here today, is a victory for democracy. It is a testament to what people can do when they come together for the greater good. This is also one of those occasions when the Supreme Creator reminds us, once again, that power does not reside in any one person.

"Let me thank each and every one of you for your contributions toward making this the historic senate that it is. When I think of the many trials and tribulations we have faced as an institution, and my own personal travails particularly at the Code of Conduct Tribunal, I am humbled.

"This is because none of our achievements would have been possible without the support and cooperation of the entire members of this chamber.

"The invasion of the national assembly by armed security operatives in August 2018 will live in infamy.

He noted that the legislations passed in areas affecting the daily lives of citizens, the economy, education, security, anti-corruption, health and many more, would remain a benchmark.

According to him, working together, they achieved many "firsts" in the 8th assembly saying, "we should rightly be proud of these, especially as they are imperishable legacies we are leaving for the people.

"Our many firsts include the National Assembly Joint Public Hearing on the Budget, which we started with the 2016 Appropriation Bill.

"The engagement of the private sector and other stakeholders in crafting the economic legislative agenda was a watershed. For the first time, there were meetings and interactions with members of the public which were not previously the norm.

"One such interaction was the Public Senate, which gave the youth the opportunity to spend a day with me as President of the Senate.

"I have pleasant memories of my reading to an audience of small children inside my office,

where, in the true spirit of Children's Day, the kids themselves were the dignitaries.

With the curtain drawn on the 8th national assembly, the senate particularly will be remembered among many intriguing moments, for the drama that characterised emergence of its principal officers in 2015, where a deputy senate president emerged from a minority party, without any accord.

Agenda for the 9th Assembly

While the 8th Assembly (Reps) could be said to have done its best though not necessarily to the satisfaction of many Nigerians, the 9th Assembly which takes off is expected to pursue agenda that would further entrench democracy and development in Nigeria.

Stakeholders in democratic governance have suggested a revisit of the unsigned Electoral Act amendment bill, bills that will boost economic prosperity and strengthen institutions as the main legislative agenda.

According to the stakeholders, poor electoral system, economic uncertainties and weak institutions are the bane of Nigeria's social, political and economic advancement.

Mahmood Yakubu, chairman Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), told members-elect to start work early and conclude work on the electoral framework in good time, well ahead of the 2023 general elections.

Yakubu urged them to come up with a review of the electoral law that would assist the commission to begin work on post-2019 elections review and road map to 2023 as the success of Nigeria's elections depends on the electoral legal framework.

"As a process governed by law, the success of elections in Nigeria depends, to a large extent, on the electoral legal framework and most importantly in ensuring adherence to the law.

"The tendency to delay electoral reforms, particularly the review of electoral framework until it is too close to the elections, leaves the commission with little time to develop processes, including regulations and guidelines, make required consultations with stakeholders, embark on effective voter education, including sensitisation, train staff and organise deployment for the elections.

Similarly, Idayat Hassan, coordinator, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) called on the incoming 9th Assembly to as a matter of urgency work on electoral reforms and avoid been rubber stamp in the guise of harmonious executive legislative relationship.

"The most important agenda should be electoral reform from day one. The Executive must not just pursue harmonious relationship now that she has majority in government but must also send executive bills to the NASS for passage," she suggested.

The most important agenda should be electoral reform from day one. The Executive must not just pursue harmonious relationship now that she has majority in government but must also send executive bills to the NASS for passage



Joseph Otteh, executive director, Access to Justice, affirmed that amendment of the Electoral should be focus of legislative agenda by the 9th Assembly to curtail the electoral malpractices.

"There are several areas where the National Assembly can help improve governance, beginning from reviewing the process that brought many of them in as lawmakers. That could be a good point of departure. If we do not strengthen the integrity of our electoral system, we will see an escalated level of abuse of the system in future elections," Otteh said.

According to him, "Nigeria needs new electoral laws that will provide not just improved balloting procedures, but non-discriminatory and mandatory enforcement of criminal laws governing the conduct of elections and tampering with election results. We should ensure that those who participate in perverting the electoral system must be kept away from the system for a very, very long time as a deterrent"

Jude Uzoma, coordinator, Foundation for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth, wants the 9th National Assembly to be very committed and look at public outcry with a view to ending poverty, poor education, lack of adequate water supply, accommodation and many other issues.

Uzoma also advocated reworking of the Electoral Act amendment bill, making laws that will strengthen anti-graft agencies and diversify the economy. "I look forward to the National Assembly passing laws, not just passing laws but making sure the existing laws become functional. Particularly when we talk about the Electoral Act that the President refused to assent to in the last National Assembly, you will realise that it is not just because the President feel entrapped by the Electoral Act," he said.

"It was probably because certain clauses were politically inclined and to favour some interests. So, in the 9th National Assembly we don't need all that, in as much as we want the President to assent to the Electoral Act, there must be amendments," he further said.

Inaugurated on June 9, 2015, the 8th National Assembly ends on June 9 and it will function until June 9 when President Muhammadu Buhari's issues a proclamation letter for the

inauguration of the 9th National Assembly.

Nigeria operates a bi-cameral legislature, comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives that functions as the nation's highest legislative body.

The National Assembly is empowered to make laws by the provisions of Chapter I, Section 4 of the 1999 Constitution.

The Senate consists of 109 elected senators and the House of Representatives has 360 elected members.

The present legislative work in the House of Representatives kicked off with the emergence of the Speaker, House of Representatives, Mr Yakubu Dogara while Dr Bukola Saraki is the President of the Senate.

But political analysts note that the 8th National Assembly has been shrouded in political intrigues and controversies since its inception, the development they describe as a threat to democracy.

The threat became a reality when Saraki and Dogara decided to defect to the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 2018 even as member of the opposition PDP attempted to impeach them.

Analysts observe further that the leadership tussle in the National Assembly has impacted negatively on governance as policies and programmes of the government are affected.

They cite the instance of the approval of most key appointees of Buhari being delayed by the lawmakers and the foot-dragging debate on budget bills, among others.

Acknowledging some shortcomings of the 8th National Assembly, Buhari said that he looked forward to a mutual and effective working relationship with the 9th National Assembly.

According to him, such effective working relationship will improve the budgetary process and restore the country to the January-December fiscal cycle.

The president recounted how the delay in the passage of budgets hindered timely execution of some projects across the country.

Buhari, nonetheless, expressed confidence that more work would be done to improve the efficiency of the budgetary process with the victory of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the general elections.

He also recalled that the 2018 budget proposals submitted to the National Assembly on Nov. 7, 2017 was passed after seven months.

In spite of this, however, observers note that the outgoing House of Representatives has been able to initiate and pass milestone bills within the legislative years.

They note that out of 1,516 bills so far treated at the House of Representatives between June 2015 and January 2019, members of the House

of Representatives sponsored not less than 1,380 bills.

One of the outstanding bills passed by the lower chamber is a Bill for an Act to Alter the Provision of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 and for Other Matters Connected Therewith sponsored by Rep. Tony Nwulu, otherwise known as the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Bill.

The bill, which drew local and international attention, was signed into law by Buhari on May 31, 2018 at the Council Chambers of the Presidential Villa in the presence of some young Nigerians, the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Movement.

The law reduces the age qualification for president from 40 years to 35 years, governor from 35 years to 30 years, senator from 35 years to 30 years; House of Representatives membership from 30 years to 25 years and State House of Assembly membership from 30 years to 25 years.

Another outstanding bill passed entitled: "Discrimination Against Persons With Disabilities (Prohibition) Bill 2018" is meant to cater for the more than 25 million persons living with disabilities in the country.

The bill was sponsored by Rep. Ochiglegor Idagbo and was signed into law by Buhari on Jan. 23, few days to 2019 general elections.

The Act, which guarantees right to maintain civil action for damage by the person injured against any defaulter, prohibits all forms of discrimination on grounds of disability and imposes fine of N1, 000, 000 for corporate bodies and N100, 000 for individuals or a term of six months imprisonment for violation.

It also provides for a five-year transitional period within which public buildings, structures or automobile are to be modified to be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities, including those on wheelchairs.

The Act, which stipulates that all public organisations are to reserve at least five per cent of employment opportunities for these persons, also establishes in Section 31 the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities with Executive Secretary as the head.

The Whistle Blowers Protection Bill is another important bill the lower house deliberated on. The bill, which was co-sponsored by Rep. Femi Gbajabiamila and Rep. Kayode Oladele, seeks to facilitate and encourage the disclosure of improper conduct by persons, public officers and corporate bodies whether private and public.

It is also to ensure adequate protection of whistle blowers from reprisals, victimisation, isolation and humiliation which are said to be some of the consequences of whistle-blowing.

Other bills passed include the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill, 2016, Terrorism Bill, 2015 Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, 2015,

Some bills died at the first reading, some at the second reading, while others at the third reading. Besides, there were bills which got the lawmakers' nod but which the executive declines assenting and one of such bill Petroleum Industry Bill



National Minimum Wage Act (Amendment) Bill, 2015, National Broadcasting Commission Act (Amendment) Bill, 2015 and North East Development Commission Bill, 2015.

Fiscal Responsibility (Amendment) Bill, 2015, Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill, 2015, Appropriation Act (Amendment) Bill, 2015, National Council of Traditional Rulers Bill, 2015, Utilities Charges Commission Act (Amendment) Bill, 2015 and National Identity Management Commission Act (Amendment) Bill, 2015 are also passed.

Similarly, the House of Representatives legislated on National Inland Waterways Authority Bill, 2015, Pension Reform Act (Amendment) Bill, 2016, Nigerian Postal Service Act (Amendment) Bill, 2016, National Agency for Albinism and Hypo-Pigmentation Act (Establishment) Bill, 2016 and Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

It is also worthy of note that within the 2015 and 2019 legislative calendar, some members have had many bills to their credit.

For example, Rep. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta sponsored not less than 62 bills in the House; Rep. Ossai Ossai sponsored no fewer than 50 bills while Rep. Edward Pwajok had no fewer than 31 bills.

These are few among many members who contributed to the legislative proceedings of the lower chamber within the year under review.

Besides carrying out its legislative function on executive bills brought before it, the House of Representatives also concurred on bills emanating from the Senate.

For instance, one major bill from the executive to the lower house was the National Minimum Wage Bill, 2019. Because of its importance to the nation's workers, the bill was given accelerated hearing.

The National Minimum Wage Bill, 2019, which was deliberated upon and passed by the lawmakers less than a week, was transmitted to the Senate for concurrence.

Some of the bills sponsored by the executive include: News Agency of Nigeria Statutory Appropriation Bill, 2016, Federal Capital Territory Statutory Appropriation Bill, 2016 sponsored by the executive, Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act (Amendment) Bill, Money

Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act (Amendment) Bill, 2016, National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency Statutory Appropriation Bill, 2016, among others.

Also, bills emanating from the Senate to the House include Nigerian Railway Authority Act (Repeal and Re-enactment) Bill, 2016, Public Procurement Act (Amendment) Bill, 2016, Defence Space Administration Bill, 2016, Federal University of Agriculture, Kabba (Establishment) Bill 2017 and Federal Colleges of Education Act (Amendment) Bill, to mention but few.

Although the 8th House of Representatives' bill progression chart shows that the lawmakers had performed well in their legislative calendar, not all the bills, whether private member bills, public bills or executive bills, sailed through the legislative drills.

Some bills died at the first reading, some at the second reading, while others at the third reading. Besides, there were bills which got the lawmakers' nod but which the executive declines assenting and one of such bill Petroleum Industry Bill.

Rep. Abdulrazak Namdas, the Spokesperson of the House of Representatives said that members, within the years under review, had been able to sponsor several bills for the socio-economic and political development of the country.

According to him, law making is the principal job and duty of a legislator and each lawmaker should have key areas of interest he or she wants to specialise on. Namdas said that a legislator must have the capacity and the knowledge and do research on particular areas he needed to sponsor any bill or a motion.

"You must be conversant with the laws as some of the laws could be in different forms; the bill could either be amended or you want to repeal the law or you want a fresh law, depending on which area of interest.

"But if you don't have the knowledge, you may not be in the position to even amend or sponsor the amendment.

"The president does not assent to some of the bills that is why you will see some bills in the fifth assembly recurring," he explained.

He admitted that there might be some instances when the executive might not be on the same page with the legislature for some reasons. "When the executive has a feeling that a bill is trying to subvert it or trying to undermine the executive power, even as good as it may be, it will not be signed into law.

"These are some of the challenges, there are bills that the legislature has been able to put in place but they have not been assented to," he said.

Namdass also cited the Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill which the president declined his

assent to, assuring Nigerians that the re-elected members would take the bill up from where it stopped.

"For some of us, who have been re-elected, we will still have to go back and work to ensure that the bill is fully assented to in the 9th National Assembly.

"The 9th National Assembly will ensure that its leadership is on the same page with the executive since majority seats in both houses were from the APC.

"In the 8th National Assembly, we had a lot of hiccups; the experiences are not good enough and we don't expect that in the 9th National Assembly," he said.

All in all, the Executive Director, Youth Initiative for Advocacy Growth and Advancement (YIAGA AFRICA) and convener of the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Movement, Mr Samson Itodo, commends the lawmakers for the feats achieved in passing the famous bill.

Similarly, the Executive Director, Foundation for Persons Living with Disabilities, Mrs Pat John-Oseh commends the legislators for a good work done on the Disabilities Act.

The 9th National Assembly, which was inaugurated on June 9, has majority members-elect from the APC.

In the Independent National Electoral Commission's list, APC has 211 members-elect in the House of Representatives; the PDP has 111, while 20 seats have yet to be declared due to the elections that were declared inconclusive in the affected constituencies.

Other political parties that will be represented in the lower chamber include: All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) with six members; Action Democratic Congress (ADC), three members, Action Alliance (AA); two members and People's Redemption Party (PRP); two members.

The African Democratic Party (ADP), Allied People's Movement (APM) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) won a seat each and out of the over 300 seats declared so far, only 10 are women.

Although many members in the 8th National Assembly will not return to the chamber having lost their re-election bids, Nigerians hope for improved relations between the Executive and the House for the development of the country.

Saraki, Dogara and Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu during a joint sitting of the National Assembly said despite its many challenges, the eighth National Assembly remains one of the most effective federal legislatures in the nation's political history.

Despite the drama and intrigues associated with the emergence of Dr. Bukola Saraki, as the President of the eighth Senate on June 9, 2015, the legislature had struggled to carry out its core constitutional function of churning out good laws for the betterment of the nation.

We expect that when the new CAMA, which we just passed, becomes law, it will yield even more significant results in helping small and medium scale entrepreneurs to access capital, grow and multiply



Saraki, a two-time former governor of Kwara State, who is also the Chairman of the current National Assembly, alongside the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Yakubu Dogara, has been able to give quality leadership to the two chambers of the National Assembly.

Although the duo faced some challenges especially from some of their colleagues, who were opposed to their emergence, they were however able to quickly put that behind them to face the legislative duties ahead of them.

The Assembly had succeeded in passing several bills in the last three and a half years with President Buhari refusing to assent to some of them. A case in point is the 2018 Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill, which was transmitted by the National Assembly to the President but refused assent in a record four times.

The Eighth National Assembly however recorded huge successes, particularly in actualising their mandate as a legislature in a country, where the people expect much from every level of governance.

As a mark of carrying out legislative duties for over three years at the National Assembly, Senate President Saraki had recently emphasised that federal lawmakers deserved some kudos, having performed well, noting that the Eighth Senate worked "assiduously and diligently to meet the demands of Nigerians."

According to him, "In this time, we have passed 213 Bills, cleared 138 petitions submitted by the public. We are happy to say that this Senate is the most productive since 1999. It has surpassed the fifth Senate with 129 bills in four years, as against the sixth Senate with 72 bills, and 128 passed by the seventh Senate.

"The number of petitions we have successfully treated to the satisfaction of Nigerians, who filed them dwarfed those treated by the sixth and seventh Senate respectively."

He was particularly excited that through legislative activities, the present Senate has contributed to growing the economy by passing Bills like the Companies and Allied Matters Act Bill; the Secured Transactions in Movable Assets Bill; the Credit Bureau Reporting Bill and the Warehouse Receipts Bill; Nigerian Railways Authority Bill and National Transportation Commission

Bill, which according to him, were aimed at providing significant reforms to the business environment and strengthening Nigeria lending legislative frameworks.

He further said, "We are particularly glad that the impact of the Secured Transactions in Movable Assets Act and the Credit Bureau Reporting Act became apparent immediately after they were signed into law as they formed the basis for which the World Bank upgraded the rating of Nigeria in its Annual Ease of Doing Business rating.

"We expect that when the new CAMA, which we just passed, becomes law, it will yield even more significant results in helping small and medium scale entrepreneurs to access capital, grow and multiply".

He recalled also that the eighth Senate passed bills like the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit Bill (FIUB); the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Bill; the Witness Protection Bill; the Whistleblower Protection Bill and the Federal Audit Service Commission Bill to support the fight against corruption.

Saraki further named the Constitution amendment bills, the 'Not Too Young to Run' bill, the Financial Autonomy for Local Government Bill, Financial Autonomy for Houses of Assembly, among other bills aimed at improving governance and ensuring that government serves the people better.

The Chairman of the House Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Hon. Abdulrazaq Namdas, said what the House achieved in the past three and a half years surpassed previous assemblies.

According to him, the House successfully passed 222 bills and referred 284 to relevant committees. He added that over 1,473 bills were altogether introduced on the House floor with 90 bills for constitution amendment while 519 others were awaiting second reading.

Namdaz disclosed that 112 bills were awaiting consideration, adding that 22 bills died naturally while 23 others were withdrawn by the leave of the House.

Since the inception of the National Assembly, no assembly has achieved this success," Namdas said, particularly elated that the House was able to work with the executive to lead the country out of recession. Also notable was the passage of the North-east Development Commission (NEDC), for which the Speaker of the House, Hon. Yakubu Dogara, took credit.

There appears however to be a lot before the lawmakers. There are still 546 bills pending before the National Assembly as it gradually winds down. Though at the last count, the Eighth Senate has so passed about 219 bills, including Senate bills, concurrence bills and constitution amendment bills, pending bills at committee stage are 167; those awaiting first reading and second reading at both chambers of the federal legislature are 95 and 236 respectively, while pending bills for concurrence are 48.



NIGERIAN AGRO SECTOR: GAPS, CONSTRAINTS AND PROSPECTS

*While agriculture remains the key to the country's development, experts are of the opinion that despite the opportunities, there are some constraints that limit the growth of the sector. **SHILE GIWA** writes on the challenges affecting the growth in Nigeria.*

Prior to the discovery of crude oil, agriculture was the main stream of the Nigeria economy. It accounted for 50 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), and more than 75 per cent of export earnings. Cash crops such as cocoa, groundnut, sesame, palm oil and rubber were at the central stage of foreign exchange earnings.

But most importantly, during that time, Nige-

ria could feed itself. But the situation changed by the mid-1960s, as Nigeria began to move from self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs to import dependency.

According to the World Bank, with abundant water supply, and a favourable climate, Nigeria can rise again in the agriculture sector, provided it utilises its small-scale farmers, promotes farming as an employment opportunity, partners with the private sector, and provide significant investments in infrastructure and technology.

Over the years, many administrations in Nigeria had initiated several strategies to boost the agriculture sector. These included the 'National Accelerated Food Production Program', 'Operation Feed the Nation', the 'River Basin Development Authority', 'Green Revolution' and the 'Commercial Agricultural

Development Project for Nigeria'.

In 2011, the administration of former President, Goodluck Jonathan, launched the 'Agricultural Transformation Agenda' (ATA) to promote agribusiness, private sector investment, job creation, productivity, value add, market access, and financing for farmers.

The ATA was seen by many as a step in the right direction for the agriculture sector. It helped revamp the overtly corrupt fertilizer- and seed-distribution business through the 'Growth Enhancement Support' (GES) Program. It also focused on private sector investments and provided marketing reforms and innovative financing.

However, In June 2016, the current administration, through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, released

its policy and strategy document for its 'Agriculture Promotion Policy for 2016-2020'. The policy hopes to build on the success of the ATA and close key gaps, specifically the reduction in food imports and improvements in foreign exchange earnings from agriculture.

This aligns with the current administration's reiteration that the Nigerian economy needs to diversify away from an over-dependence on the oil and gas sector. The policy also falls within the objectives of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Feed Africa Strategy, seeking to improve productivity; develop input and output market structures and incentives to capitalise on increased production, and promote private sector engagement and investment.

Access to inputs such as improved seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, and planting materials by farmers have been identified as one of the major challenges to smallholder farmers in Nigeria. Also poor access to information, adequate financing and post-harvest losses are other critical barriers in the sector.

Experts recognise that the agriculture sector holds tremendous opportunities for wealth creation in Nigeria, saying in the face of the global oil glut, there is a dire need for investment in this sector in order to boost the economy.

They are also of the opinion that animal production is a very important sector of the economy of any nation, adding that it is crucial in ensuring food security.

Commenting on the prospects, the managing director, El-trexone Farms, Dr Ibrahim Dikko, reiterated the need for the government to collaborate with private sector to train farmers in business schools so as to gain an insight into new opportunities in the agribusiness value chain as well as tackle challenges that have made agribusiness unprofitable in the past.

He said: "A partnership with the private sector has proven to be beneficial for agribusiness in increasing productivity and strengthening input and output market structures. For the private sector to continue to be motivated to invest, the country would do well to speed up its attempts at solving identified challenges.

"Nigeria, projected to have a population of 440 million people by 2050, needs to take food sustainability seriously. Fortunately, the country has what it takes to meet the increased demands for food and consumption patterns. Its agricultural policies, if properly implemented, are capable of making Nigeria food-secure and prosperous. By harnessing the opportunities and addressing the

constraints identified, the true potential of agriculture will be realised."

While reiterating the need to prioritise livestock production, he said increase in animal products in the country whose population is expected to reach 440 million people by the year 2050, would help alleviate poverty, provide food security and meet other needs of such a growing population.

"As Nigeria struggles to advance in animal production many factors militate against animal production in the country, like inadequate finance, high cost of animal feeds, animal diseases, lack of infrastructure, lack of government incentives, transportation and other factors militating against animal production in Nigeria and tries to proffer solutions to them," he added.

Managing director, Santuscom Agro Hub, an indigenous food packaging/processing firm, Chief Ofana Paul, who spoke on the benefit of processing and packaging as way forward to sustain food security, said, the lack of adequate storage and processing facilities accounts for the divergence between national food security and household food security.

Paul while describing packaging as an essential medium for preserving food quality, minimising food wastage and reducing preservatives used in food, said it serves the important function of containing the food, protecting against chemical and physical damage while providing information essential to consumers and marketers.

The managing director stated that his firm has been into the processing and packaging of agriculture products and has enjoyed the benefit that comes with this, adding that, with the encouragement of it, more jobs will be created for women and youths.

"We have enough to feed ourselves with here in Nigeria and that is why I often say that we should now begin to think of exporting food to other parts of Africa. The demand for the production and processing of plantain is quite huge. The demand for plantain flour in Cameroon and Ghana is so huge and that is why we need to improve on our modes of packaging and processing of agricultural products in order to meet the demands of the market."

He however noted that adequate packaging helps in advertising the product and improving the overall product value thus leading to higher sales and profit for the investor.

"It provides customer satisfaction with strong customer – oriented approach. They note that, of course, most producers of food want their customers to get home with or receive their products at home, undamaged and in great condition," he added.

Vice national president, All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Chief Daniel Okafor, who said food must be consumed on a daily basis, added that storage and processing were critical in ensuring that the commodities produced at a particular period were available for consumption whenever and wherever they were required.

He said efforts of stakeholders in the sector have not been sustained to ensure good road networks in the rural areas where the bulk of agricultural activities take place.

Also speaking, a farmer from Nasarawa State, Ganiyu Mukhtar, who said food perishes due to lack of storage and processing facilities, noted that simple, efficient, and cost effective technologies for perishables, such as roots, tubers, fruits and vegetables, are not highly developed in the country compared to the storage technologies for cereal grains and legumes.

Consequently, he said post-harvest food storage losses were very high, adding that approximately 40 per cent of such produce usually perish, compared to cereal grains and pulses at about 15 per cent. According to him, "Traditional storage facilities have certain deficiencies, including a low elevated base giving easy access to rodents, wooden floors that termites could attack, weak supporting structures that are not moisture-proof, and inadequate loading and unloading facilities."

Mukhtar, who further spoke on the recent hand over of concessioned silos, said the arrangement would not work to generate the expected income because farmers were not carried along in the process from the beginning.

He said farmers, particularly those who were far away from where silos were located across the states, would find it difficult to transport their grains to the location because of huge transport cost.



NIGERIA'S ECONOMY SEES STRONG AGRIC GROWTH

Agriculture has benefited from macroeconomic and structural reforms initiated by President Muhammadu Buhari's administration aimed at economic stability, inflation reduction and trade expansion. Analysts say the reforms could pave the way for competitive agricultural operations, if the government takes steps to reduce production costs and enhance the agro business environment, Abisola THOMPSON reports.



For watchers, within the last four years, agricultural production has confronted difficulties due to the negative impacts of climate change, high cost of production and natural calamities.

Also, Nigeria faced some challenges in the international market on agricultural produce, including commodities rejection, especially the European Union (EU) ban on Nigerian staples. The EU banned Nigeria's dried beans in June 2015 because it contained a high level of pesticide dangerous to human health.

In June 2016, the ban was extended by three years because of the presence of dichlorvos (pesticide) in dried beans from Nigeria, and maximum residue levels of pesticides showed that compliance with food law requirement as regards pesticide residual could not be achieved in the short term.

Despite this, with efforts by people from all walks of life and the political will demonstrated by the government, the nation is achieving positive results.

In the four years under review, a series of important policies were introduced to promote key branches in the agriculture sector.

For example, the Federal Government launched the agricultural sector roadmap, known as The Green Alternative, for promotion of agriculture from 2016-2020. It adopted policies to develop the fishery sector, as well as restructuring production of rice and other crops.

More importantly, the government has encouraged more enterprises to invest in rural agriculture while helping farmers and fishermen find consumers for their products.

While Nigeria has not achieved much in other areas, experts believe the nation has made progress in agriculture. One of those who share this thought is the National President, Federation of Agricultural Commodities of Nigeria (FACAN), Dr Victor Iyama.

Iyama said the government had shown some commitment to revamping the sector. This followed the launch of Green Alternative policy and other programmes, presenting agriculture as a top priority. According to Iyama, the government has increasingly prioritised agriculture and food security as a national-level driver of economic growth.

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and agriculture

Iyama said the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had impacted on the agriculture sector in the five-year leadership of Godwin Emefiele.

Through its activities, he said the CBN creatively implemented programmes to diversify the productive base of the economy, through agriculture, thereby conserving foreign exchange.

Aside conserving foreign exchange, he noted that the introduction of the policy that excluded 43 items from accessing foreign exchange from the Nigerian forex markets was largely aimed at improving domestic agriculture production.

In addition, CBN's engagements with oil palm value chain stakeholders have also been yielding fruits. It has helped to fast-track investments across the oil palm value chain. Oil palm is on the forex excluded list.

According to analysts, official figures indicate that importation of oil palm had by about 40 per cent from 506,000 metric tonnes (MTs) in 2014 to 302,000 in 2017.

Last year, the CBN governor met with Oil Palm Value Chain Stakeholders, where he rolled out further measures and set a partnership model that would stimulate investments in palm oil plantations, such that within the next five years, the global share of Nigeria's oil palm production would increase. "Our ultimate vision is to overtake Thailand and Columbia to become the third largest producer in the next 10 years," Emefiele said at the meeting.

He also told the Oil Palm Value Chain Stakeholders that, "on the finance supply side, the Bankers' Committee had established a special sub-committee to make recommendations on sustainable financing models for oil palm and four other critical agricultural commodities that include cocoa, sesame seed, shea-butter and cashew.

His engagements with state governors on how to increase oil palm production are also yielding fruits. Emefiele said: "I am happy to announce that all the states in the South-south and South-east regions have agreed to provide at least 100,000 hectares for the oil palm initiative. This programme also accommodates the small holder oil palm farmers."

For the country to attain self-sufficiency, Iyama believes that must be committed development of more estate plantations and coordinated partnerships between the small holder plantation farmers and processors.

NIRSAL

In his view, the Director-General, Feed Nigeria Summit, Richard-Mark Mbaram, said the hope of improved agricultural yields in Nigeria and indeed Africa has brightened as the Nigerian Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL) has stimulated investment in technology to boost yields and generate gainful employment.

According to him, NIRSAL Plc, a vision of the CBN is exploring ways of bringing technologies to millions of Nigerian farmers to enable them farm efficiently, effectively and sustainably.

One partnership, he noted was NIRSAL's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Heritage Bank Plc, which he said would ensure secured financing of agribusiness within all segments of the agricultural value chain.

He said the partnership was important because it would help farmers to benefit from

loans and credit available, at very low interest rates, to pursue commercially viable agricultural projects that have been packaged and fully de-risked.

Anchor Borrower Programme (ABP)

Analysts believe the CBN's Anchor Borrower Programme (ABP) will ensure Nigeria emerges from being a net importer to becoming a major producer of rice.

As at October last year, according to analysts, thousands of farmers cultivating about 835,239 hectares, across 16 different commodities, have so far benefited from the Anchor Borrowers programme, which has generated 2,502,675 jobs across the country.

By March 15, this year, the CBN committed a total of N171.35 billion in the Anchor Borrowers' Programme with active participation across the 36 states of the Federation and Federal Capital Territory (FCT), to improve local rice production. Annual rice production in Nigeria has increased to 5.8 million tonnes.

The State Chairman, Kebbi/Sokoto Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria, Muhammed Augie, said the programme has helped increase local production of the commodity.

He said the programme since inception had created economic linkage between small holder farmers and reputable large-scale processors, thereby increasing agricultural outputs and significantly improving capacity utilisation of processors.

He advised the government to ensure farmers get inputs under the programme before the start of the farming season. He pleaded that the government ensures rice farmers get loans at five percent interest like rice millers.

Iyama said CBN's support towards rice production has contributed significantly to the success of the agricultural sector.

Given the success achieved under this programme, the CBN has promised to continue to support it until the full potential of the sector is achieved.

The ABP was launched by President Muhammadu Buhari on November 17, 2015 in Kebbi, aimed at creating a linkage between anchor companies involved in the processing and SHFs of the required key agricultural commodities.

The fund was provided from the N220 billion micro, small and medium enterprises development fund.

ABP evolved from the consultations with stakeholders comprising federal ministry of agriculture and rural develop-



ment, state governors, millers of agricultural produce, and smallholder farmers to boost agricultural production.

Tomato

CBN's intervention in production of tomatoes stands at a little over N10 billion in eight projects. One of the projects is the Dangote Green House tomato manufacturing project, which has the capacity to produce 10 million tomato seedlings monthly. This would be sold to about 5,000 out growers that would grow and supply the tomato factory, which has commenced operations, with tomato fruits. The project has the capacity of generating one million jobs from supporting small holder farmers in tomato cultivation to paste. This project has the capacity to save the Nigerian economy over \$250 million annually.

Farmers' challenges

One of the challenges inhibiting agricultural growth is poor infrastructure. Country Director of HarvestPlus, Dr Paul Ilona said farmers face other challenges, particularly from weak links along the agri-business logistics chain.

Ilona said Nigerian farmers are traditionally smallholders, farming less than two hectares of land. According to him, many of them are located in extremely remote areas.

He said one of the largest structural challenges facing smallholder farmers is the lack of infrastructure, such as roads, railways, irrigation, and power that would enable their access to larger markets, improve the quality of their produce, and facilitate moving up the value chain into agro-processing activities.

With some transporters unwilling to risk damage to their vehicles from substandard roads, Ilona said growers experience difficulties in bringing their crops to market, weakening the supply-chain links to processors, and subsequently leading to produce losses.

Other stakeholders lamented unreliable power supply in the country, which poses significant challenges.

The Group Managing Director, Niji Group, Kola Adeniji, said challenges such as poor agricultural practices, low technological adoption, and poor access to extension services, low quality inputs, and lack of credit has continued to hinder the sector from realising its full potential.

Challenges notwithstanding, he said Nigeria's agriculture has enormous potential to transform the economy if the government works with the private sector to and make farming much more productive and profitable for smallholder farmers.

Going forward, he said Nigeria needs to improve its policy environment, to enable investments that will allow the farm sector to continue to adapt to the opportunities created by rising demand and the challenges of climate change and limited resources.

According to him, basic rural infrastructure needs to improve as well as investment to keep pace with economic growth.

Medical marijuana

According to him, Nigeria needs to boost its place in global agro-food markets, in exporting cocoa, cashews and medical marijuana. He said Nigeria would derive economic benefits from tapping into the marijuana market.

With an estimated value of \$145 billion in 2025, he said Nigeria would be short-changing itself if it fails to tap into the legal marijuana market.

He explained that marijuana can earn for the government more money than oil. According to him, a litre of oil is one dollar while a litre of marijuana oil is \$15.

Instead of destroying it, he said the Federal Government should control processing of medical marijuana cultivation in controlled plantations under the full supervision of the (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).



OB3, AKK PIPELINES: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS – OILSERV BOSS

Engr Emeka Okwuosa is the Group Chief Executive Officer of Oilserv Group. In this interview with TBI Africa team at the 2019 Offshore Technology Conference in Houston, Texas, United States, he stressed the importance of Nigeria's two massive gas pipeline projects - the OB3 and AKK. He also spoke on the other industry issues and the need to drive technology growth in Nigeria. He maintained that oil and gas will continue to occupy key place in the global energy mix in the foreseeable future and will continue to contribute significantly to Nigeria's economy.

Obiafu-Obrikom -Oben (OB3) pipeline is a game changer and you are playing a key role in its delivery. How soon are we getting to the final stage and how will Nigerians feel the impact of such strategic project that will change the way gas is delivered in the country?

Let's put OB3 in proper perspective, no pipeline has been built in Nigeria of that size or capacity. You may recollect where we are coming from in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, when we had the likes of Willbros Group and McDermott International, among others and there were no Nigerian players. But even at that, if you look at all our pipeline infrastructure today, nowhere has 48inch pipeline been built but that is what we building. Let us also put in perspective, it is not just about the pipeline we building, we also have the Gas Treatment Plant (GTP) at Oben, which is part of our scope. This is a GTP that will handle two billion standard cubic feet per day (2bscf/d) of gas. This has never existed anywhere in Africa. When we talk about OB3, it is not just about building a pipeline. Our own section, don't forget there are two lots there. We are building LOT B that will take the gas from mid-point all the way to Oben plant plus the Oben plant itself. For our pipeline, we finished it three years ago, but the treatment

When we talk about OB3, it is not just about building a pipeline. Our own section, don't forget there are two lots there. We are building LOT B that will take the gas from mid-point all the way to Oben plant plus the Oben plant itself.

plant took a longer time because the location was changed from Oben North to the GTP location and it took us two years to go through re-engineering it and getting the approvals. But the story is clear, the pipeline and the GTP are going through pre-commissioning now on our own section. The management of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) visited the facility last month. By Sep-

tember, our own LOT would have been done, and I can only speak for Oilserv.

With the

completion of your own LOT, will the pipeline be operational without the other party working on LOT A completing its own section?

To some extent, no, but it depends on how the owner of the pipeline wants to use it. One thing you have to know about the technicality is that we have a pipeline going to GTP Oben, but we have a 36inch line we built from Oben GTP to Escravos-Lagos Pipeline System (ELPS), which is Oben North, that is a bidirectional pipeline. This means you can take gas from the GTP in Oben into ELPS or take from ELPS into GTP, so the answer is yes and no. Yes, in the sense that from the 36inch pipeline which we have completed, you can take gas from ELPS into Oben to Ajaokuta when we commission it. But the other section cannot be completed except Lot A finishes and be able to evacuate gas all the way from Obiafu-Obrikom into Oben.

What would you consider to be some of the inhibiting factors to participation of indigenous companies in the deepwater terrain? Do you see indigenous companies operating in the deepwater in the nearest future?

We are already operating in that terrain in reality. When you say operating in the deepwater, you look at it from two different points of views. Are you looking at Exploration and Production (E&P) ownership, which is operatorship or are you looking at services. I will talk from services point of view. From the services point of view, Nigerians have been participating all the way from Bonga, Akpo and Usan, which are deepwater assets. All these have had Nigerians' input. There are two key issues with participation in deepwater arena. It is about technology and capital. Both will take time normally to scale up. Nigerians are participating but



we are only scatching the surface. There is still more opportunity for participation. Now, how do we increase that? Like the Managing Director of Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCo), Bayo Ojulari said, we require to basically assemble capacity and integrate that capacity by working together in order to have synergy and be able to deal with bigger scope. But we are in the integration of FPSO (Floating Production, Storage and Offloading) vessel, which is the issue of topsides. Nigerians are in pipelines, flow lines and risers and drilling. We are quite in a lot but it is very competitive and capital intensive and we have to slowly build it up as soon as we can because we have proven capacity but we need to do more because there is so much out there.

How do the indigenous players collaborate to be competitive and add value to the sector?

We have been adding value but not to the extent that we want it. So the way we can achieve this is by collaborating and synergizing between entities and all PETAN members and be able to handle bigger scope and compete with international service providers.

Why is there no such collaboration at the moment?

It is the Nigerian factor. Everyone wants to do things in his own way and it is not the way to go. For instance, if you go to houses that have flats, if it is 20 flats and you have 20 tenants, instead of one tenant providing energy and everyone connects to it and shares the bill, you will see everybody with his own generator. It is a Nigerian factor. It is about understanding that the way to create value requires working together and not as individuals. It is a mindset thing but



If you go to houses that have flats, if it is 20 flats and you have 20 tenants, instead of one tenant providing energy and everyone connects to it and shares the bill, you will see everybody with his own generator



we will get there.

Oilserv is good in nanotechnology and the future of oil and gas is technology. Robotics currently does a lot of works in the industry. What is your plan in incorporating technology in your operations?

We are already incorporating technology in our operations. Many years ago, you could not find any Nigerian company that can do horizontal directional drilling. You would have

had to go abroad for people to come and do it. We have deployed that. We have been able to cross rivers with 48inch pipeline, which would mean drilling and opening the line to 64inches, which is a major challenge because it collapses a lot. We are encouraging technology a lot as a company. In the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in the past eight years, we have been sponsoring nanotechnology and it has got a lot of possible applications across board. But in the oil industry, you can talk of the drilling solutions and materials. But the fact remains that in such technology, we are still on research stage from where it develops into deployment stage. Deployment requires teaming up between the research entity and the industry. It is a process and that is still at the preliminary stage. Also in UNN, we have sponsored the science park, which they call – the Lion Science Park, the first of its kind in Nigeria. UNN is the first to set up a science park and it was done in collaboration with Ideon Science Park in Sweden. It is a big thing going on in Nsukka. What are we doing there? Incubation of technology from the students at various levels and we help them to develop it, and we link them to industries that can invest and take it to work. If you have a project like this, you may not achieve 100 per cent of your initiative but if you achieve 20 per cent, you are making a major headway and it will end up like the Silicon Valley. It is things like this that Oilserv encourages to be able to drive technology in Nigeria.

There have been talks about roles of robots in deepwater operation, do you think that is possible in Nigeria?

Anything is possible but what we should be asking ourselves is how do we put that side by side with the Nigerian initiative and benefits? If you take robotics totally the way you see it, you displace human capital and if you displace human capital, what happens to our economy? I won't say it is not in our own interest to deploy that and I won't say you can stop that because you can't stop a moving train. You would have to realize that

overtime, it may take 10 years to 20 years or more, and that may become the norm but what you do you? You start to train people to develop such technology, you start to train people because somebody has to manage that. You will create a different skill-set to be able to drive that but you cannot completely take out the human interface.

At what stage is the AKK project?

The Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) project is a very unique project, not just what it would achieve, which is to be able to move gas to northern part of Nigeria and create availability of energy to drive industries and create job opportunities. If the North does not have energy, unemployment continues, security problem continues, everybody will suffer. Secondly, AKK is significant because it is the first time such project of that magnitude is being done as engineering, procurement, construction (EPC) and Finance. It is not like the previous projects where the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation or the International Oil Companies (IOCs) award you a project and pay for it and you go ahead and execute and collect your money. In this project, we (the contractors) are providing the money and to provide such amount of money is not easy. The total value of that project for the two LOTs is about \$2.8billion.

This

The Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) project is a very unique project, not just what it would achieve, which is to be able to move gas to northern part of Nigeria and create availability of energy to drive industries and create job opportunities.

is not the kind of money you raise in Nigeria. You have to go and raise that capital outside the country and for you to raise it, you need security. That security instrument is a process, and part of it requires the Federal Government comes in. For instance, if you are backing up the financing

with the tariff you will raise from that pipeline, don't forget that most of that tariff for example will be in naira. A financier who is

overseas doesn't know what you are talking about in naira. So you have to provide an instrument of convertibility that has to come from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), and guaranteed that every collection in naira will be immediately converted to dollars. That is the typical instrument. These things take time to get through the government agencies. So, we are going through that process and we are almost there. We have almost finalized the security and we have also started with the early works -engineering. As we speak, the AKK has started, that is the point I'm making.

Does the spate of kidnapping and insecurity in the north affecting the project?

We are Nigerians, if there is kidnapping, we will deal with it. We are not going to stop developing Nigeria because there is kidnapping. In construction, we are tested and we are knowledgeable. We worked 100 per cent between 2002 and 2007 when kidnapping was the norm in the Niger Delta region. Oilserv remained there. We worked in the swamps, maintained all the pipelines, so there are ways to do that. We are Nigerians, we work in Nigeria and we must create capacity in Nigeria. That is not going to be an impediment at all. It is a concern but we have procedures to deal with that.

What is the state of the oil and gas industry today and what it holds for service providers?

Oil and gas industry is very active industry all over the world and particularly for Nigeria and theme of this year's OTC panel discussion which hinged on deepwater services and opportunities, tells it all. Nigerian oil and gas industry has come a long way. Clearly, the oil and gas industry will continue to be relevant and drive the economy of Nigeria but not quite as much as we expected it in terms of integration into the Nigerian economy as far as GDP



contribution is concerned. There are many structured manners that can be put in place to be able to achieve that. Some of these were discussed at the panel session. What is important is that available opportunities in services whether it is in deep offshore, land or swamp, less than 20 per cent of that opportunity is being tapped today in terms of value, so I can say the opportunities in the oil and gas industry are still huge.

Can you tell us something about Oilserv that will encourage upcoming service firms or those intending to come into the subsector?

Oilserv was set up on a sound basis and principle. That's the basis of sound knowledge of engineering and clear plan to grow technology and grow the company organically. When we started in 1995, it was a very small company. It was only I and one other employee and we slowly build it up. Now, we built it up by reinvesting whatever money we make and acquiring latest technology. It's not just about technology acquisition but by knowing the principles of these technologies. For my background, I'm a cerebral engineer and I worked in 12 different countries before I came back to Nigeria. I was principally focused on developing engineering capacity. Along the line, we moved on to look at the best way of achieving the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) work we have. We later introduced the welding works. Welding is at the core of pipeline construction and the major threat in welding is the fact that using traditional welding system which is the manual welding system, will involve welders association. Some of them are not there to work but to create problems and you can't control the quality of output too. We moved on to develop automatic and semi-automatic welding system where it is more like being in a production line in a factory. We trained our own staff and they became the welders and because it is not manual welding but automatic, so we are not

In crossing roads, in the past, we have to cut the road and imagine cutting an eight lane road. Today, we do cross-boring system by going from one end to the other without disturbing vehicular movement on the road



bound by certain rules of the welder association. With this, we are able to do as much as 25 joints a day. Manual welding can't do more than six joints a day. That's how we sped up.

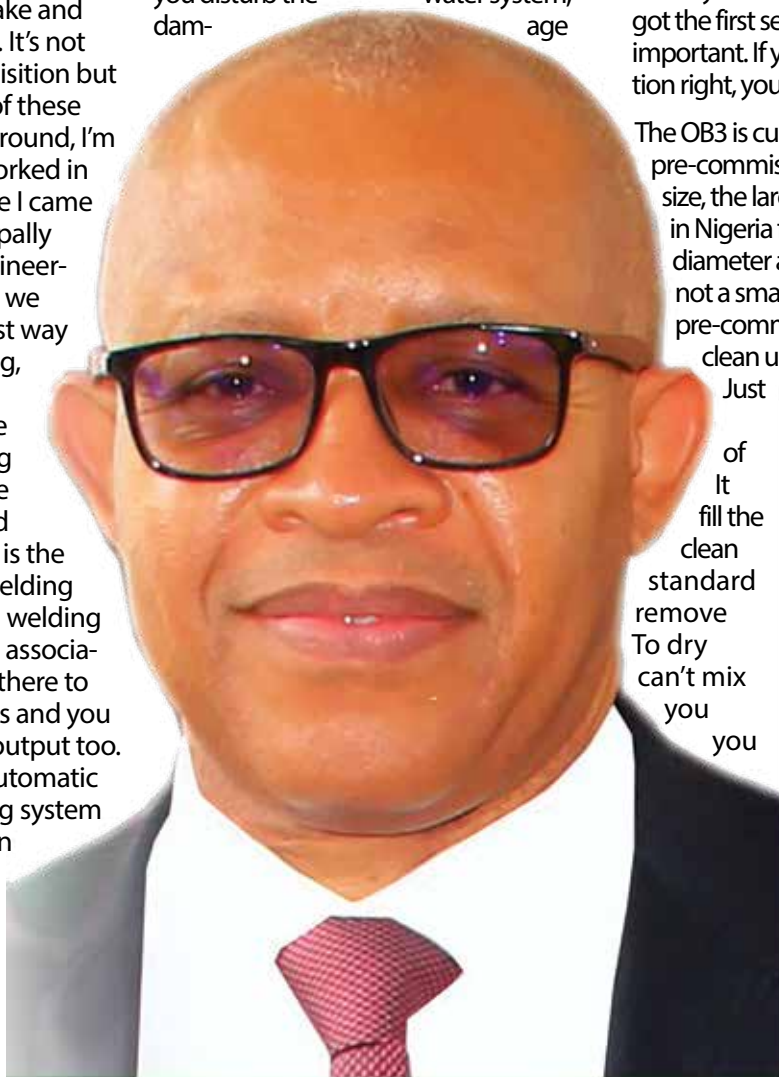
The other technology is our Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) technology system. You may realize that in building pipelines, you cross rivers, creeks, and all kinds of barriers. If it is water, you will dredge it, drop the pipeline, and cover it up. But by doing that, you disturb the water system, damage

the environment and you may muddle the water. If you don't restate it very well, you create additional problem down the road which can be erosion of the water bed. We developed a system where we can drill from one bank to the other without touching the bed of the river.

In crossing roads, in the past, we have to cut the road and imagine cutting an eight lane road. Today, we do cross-boring system by going from one end to the other without disturbing vehicular movement on the road. These gave us advantage over others. We train students and graduates and we invest in human resources.

We won the AKK project because it was through a bidding process and we came out best. We are the only company in Nigeria today that can deliver such project, the rest can't. We are the first indigenous firm to graduate from being a construction firm to full EPC Company. To be a full EPC company is expensive. It requires investment, it requires dedication. If you look at AKK, you realize we got the first section which is the most important. If you don't get the first section right, you don't have a pipeline.

The OB3 is currently undergoing pre-commissioning. A project of that size, the largest pipeline existing in Nigeria for gas, which is 48inch diameter and 67 kilometres is not a small project. For you to do pre-commissioning, you have to clean up the pipe, pressurise it. Just imagine 48"by 67km pipeline and the volume of water you have to fill it. It has to be sectionalized, water, pressurise and it up to meet all the before you can now the water, dry it up. To dry alone, because you can't mix you will use a compressor with high pressure and temperature and pump. Just imagine the volume of air you have to pump into 48" diameter by 67km pipeline. Sometimes, it can take up to three months to dry.



HOW TO MAKE YOUR SEXUAL LIFE MORE ROMANTIC



Broaching the important topic of sex can sometimes be uncomfortable for many couples but let's admit it, many of us are embarrassed about being sexually rejected or about our bodies.

Not only that, but society has also encouraged feelings of sexual shame, making romantic and intimate sex a scary endeavour to even talk about.

In an online study of 70,000 people in 24 countries, researchers found couples who have a great sex life make sex a priority rather than the last item of a long to-do list. They create space for intimacy and connection. These couples talk about sex and put the relationship first, despite the demands of work and kids. They discover

sexual pleasure through a variety of methods, not just intercourse.

Here are three ways you and your partner can make sex more romantic in your relationship.

Master the Art of intimate sex talk

The fact that you and your partner can't have intimate conversations about sex is not good for your sex life. Having sex talks with your lover helps to deepen your intimacy and emotion connection while also learning your likes and dislikes when it comes to sex.

Redefine "Sex"

We all have a unique attitude towards sex usually shaped by our individual life experiences. Sex should be about passion rather than achieving a goal like reaching orgasm or mastering a technique. Goal-orientated sex can create sexual dysfunction when the goal isn't reached as you are more likely to feel like there's something wrong with you. When you make your sex about passion, then the pressure and shame of not performing to an expectation is gone as you no longer have to feel self-conscious. In other words, simply enjoy the experience as this will make things more pleasurable for both you and your partner. Ironically, not being stressed about having an orgasm makes it easier to have one.

Have a mental erotic Love map

Building a mental erotic love map guides you on your partner's sexual likes and dislikes to help you create a great sex life. Don't be shy to ask specific questions about what they enjoy and don't, what they want to try out and what make them feel uncomfortable. Sample questions can be, what felt good about sex last time? What did we do that caused you to feel closer and connected to me? What did we do that made you relax? What did we do that turned you on? What do you need

to make sex better for you? What makes sex more like lovemaking for you? What are fantasies or thoughts you have during sex?

What to consider before making a public proposal

We have seen a couple of viral videos of public proposals gone wrong on the Nigerian side of social media; sadly, that has and will not be the last of such episodes to happen.

Many people around the world have also experienced this sting of public embarrassment at one point or another. Not only are public proposal fails funny but, it is also sad at the same time. It takes guts and a strong conviction to declare your love for someone publicly.

However, to avoid turning yourself into a laughing stock, there are some things you need to be very sure of before proposing to your partner in public.

Talk about marriage ahead of time

Just because your relationship seems like it is destined to be, doesn't guarantee it will lead to a perfect marriage. To be frank, there are no guarantees when it comes to marriage.

It is best to have candid conversations about marriage with your partner in order to know whether or not he or she is willing to settle down at the same time as you. These conversations also let you in on how this person's idea of marriage.

Make sure you are both 'on the same page'

This should be a no-brainer but judging by the kind of negative drama that sometimes comes with public proposals, you need to be double sure that your partner loves you as much as you love him or her. If you're in a one-sided relationship, getting down on a knee and proposing marriage won't fix it. You are merely signing up to get rejected.

Make sure your partner loves surprises

A person who hates to be surprised would feel ambushed with an unexpected marriage proposal in public. This is the more reason to know someone well before trying to pull off this kind of stunt, or else, the outcome may not be what you were hoping for.

It is better to be sure than sorry.

Simple conversation starters that help 'Break the Ice'. One thing killing your chance of starting something really beautiful with someone you have been crushing on for while does not know how to start or hold a conversation.

Many do not know what to say after the generic salutation – Hi, How are you? And that is a big issue that a lot of people need to



address and resolve.

The first step to achieving a good resolve is by understanding that a good conversation starter can make a boring or normal conversation great. In this article, you'll see the best conversation starters that will help turn that 'stranger' to your new buddy.

Tell me about you. This can be rephrased, whichever way that still makes you comfortable to keep up with the conversation. Either way, it is a great one because it invites the other person to tell you something that they want to share and helps the conversation evolve.

WAYS TO BUILD YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE

For somebody with social anxiety, intrusive thoughts can have a really negative impact on their confidence and self-esteem. In a Reddit thread that has gone viral and garnered more than 30,000 replies, people have started sharing their best advice on how to build self-confidence. Here are the most popular things they recommend doing:

Try working out

Exercise was cited by many as a factor in improving the way they felt about themselves. "Going to the gym helped me tremendously with my self-confidence and depression," wrote one commenter. Weightlifting in particular has helped me take control of my body and self-image." Another commenter said: "I ended up getting a personal trainer as well and it was the best thing I ever did. My social anxiety was too bad to try navigating the gym solo.

Having a guide and someone to be accountable to really keep the motivation in check, at least for me."

Going to the gym might not seem like a great idea for a self-conscious person at first; the image of all those muscular people training can be an intimidating one. "I stuck my nose up at the gym for a long time. Thought it was only for jocks and vain people. And although many jocks go to the gym, as well as vain people, lots of average people too," one commenter said. But they soon learned the psychological benefits of training: "Huge mood booster, forces yourself into uncomfortable situations, and in the end you look better... BUT you have to prepare yourself for it, you need to ensure you have the energy levels (eat properly before and

after you go, and stay hydrated throughout the day). Or else you will go and hate it while you are there as well as after. And bring music."

It's not just that working out makes you look better, which makes you feel better: the regular disciplined routine and endorphin rush can actively help people who struggle with depression and anxiety. "Running to a point of endorphin release or deadlifting really heavy helps me," said a commenter with depression. "After a good work out I don't even have repetitive, intrusive thoughts." However, they added: "The hard part is getting going to work out."

Spend some quality time solo

Other advice in the thread included getting more comfortable with being by yourself. "Go to the movies alone," suggested one comment. "Another time go out to eat alone at a restaurant that you are interested in. Do things like this regularly. It helps you be comfortable with making decisions and taking charge and it helps you be comfortable in your own skin regardless of who is around and who is looking... It forces you to be comfortable in public alone where you don't have friends to take the focus of others around you."

Do something that scares you

Don't worry, you don't have to take up sky-diving. Venturing outside your comfort zone can start with baby steps, like talking to somebody at a bar. "When you take steps outside your comfort zone, you teach yourself you can handle a lot more than you thought," said one commenter. "It makes it easier to face your fear and do things you want to do, which gives you confidence."

ADVERT RATES

HARD COPY

Rate	N=	k
Inside Front Cover	580,000	00
Back Cover	610,100	00
Inside Back Cover	551,850	70
Half Page Front Cover	320,175	50
Half Page Back Cover	300, 750	00
Quarter Page Front Cover	175,950	85
Quarter Page Back Cover	160,800	65
Full page	515,700	50
Half Page	265,000	90
Quarter page	143,250	75
Centre Spread	1,450, 270	00

Wrap Around

	N =	K
Full wrap	10,000,000	00
Full Front Page	6,000,000	00
Half Page Front	4,500,000	00

ONLINE

ADVERT BANNER SIZE / LOCATION	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months
Leader board : Top / Header Banner – (728×90px) (Home Page)	N170,000	N600,000	N1,020,000
Bottom Banner – (728×90px) (Home Page)	N100,000	N300,000	N650,000
Sidebar Ad– (500×250px)	N200,000	N500,000	N1,200,000
Article Top Ad – (468×60px) (Ads on every article)	N50,000	N200,000	N300,000
Article inline Ad – banner – (468×60px) (Ads on every article)	N50,000	N120,000	N250,000
Article bottom Banner – (468×60px) (Ads on every article)	N50,000	N150,000	N300,000

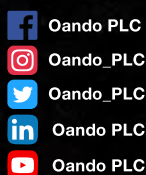


DIVERSITY, THE ROOT OF OUR STRENGTH

Our strong roots and unique diversity ensure our long-held energy dream for Africa's economic empowerment is on track.

Different, yet united by a common goal, we remain unwavering in our mission to positively impact tomorrow and generations to come.

We are Africa. We are Oando.



www.oandopl.com



the new **NNPC**



NNPC, migrating to a
world class oil and gas organization anchored
on transparency and integrity



Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
..we touch your lives in many positive ways