

Robbers Take Over Inland Waterways

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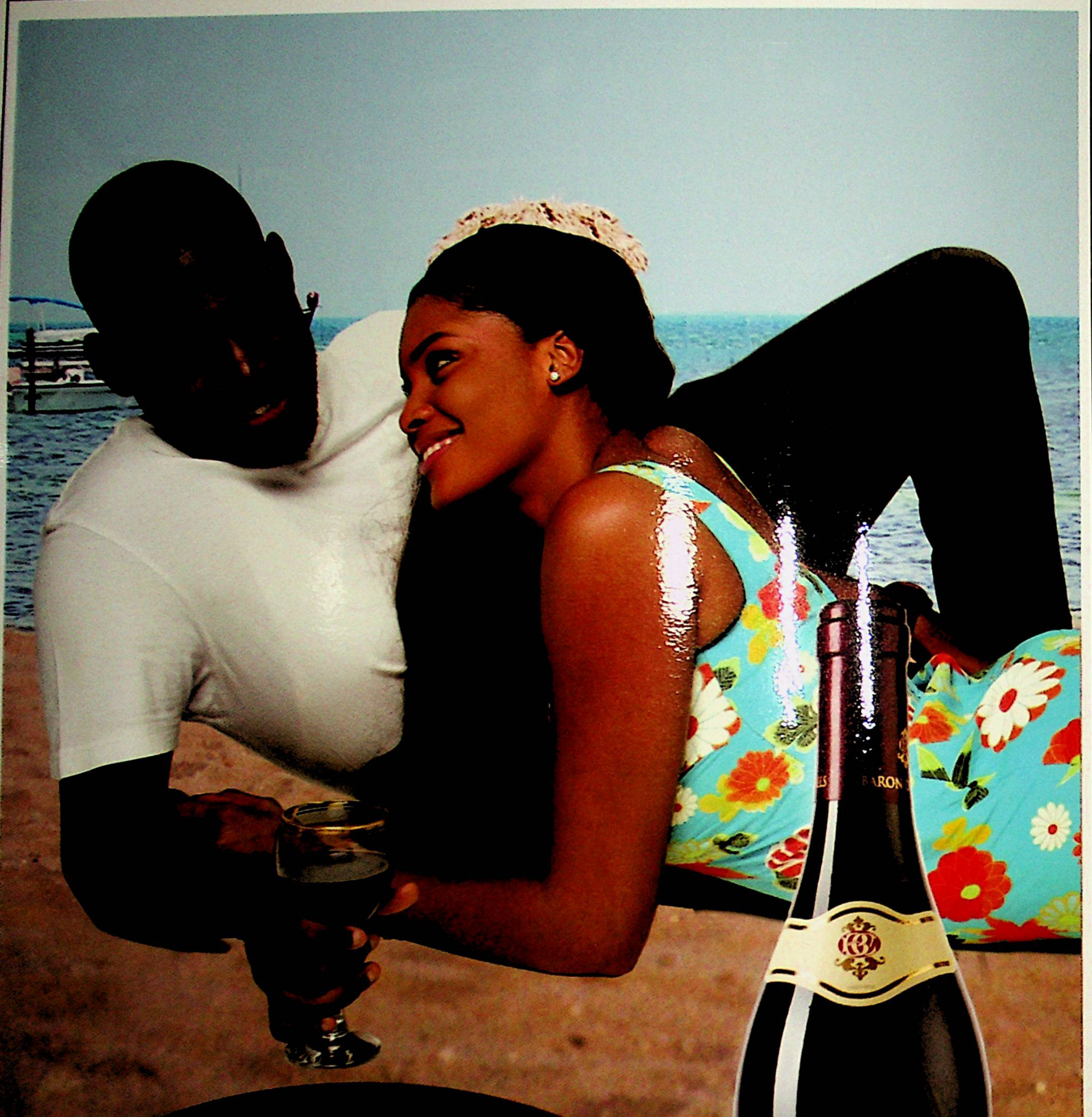
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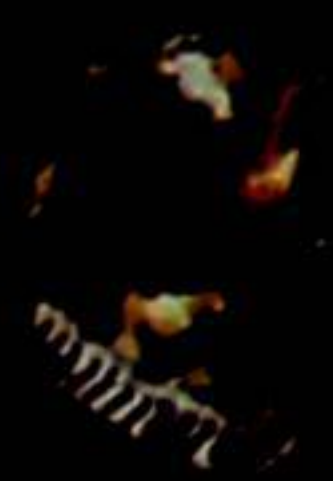


Maritime: **A Sector In Distress**



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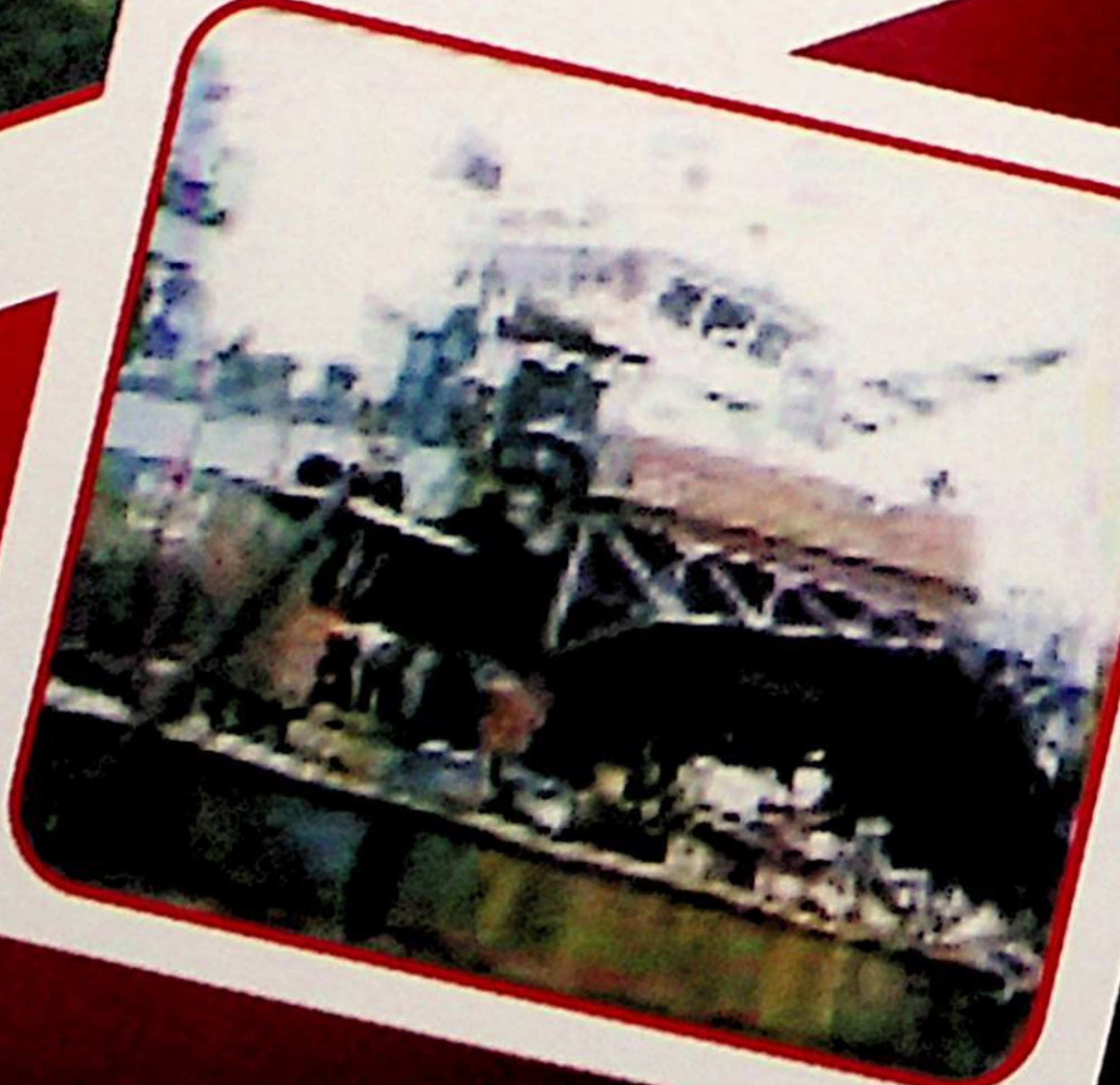


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Enyeribe Anyanwu

Where Are The Rails?

During a recent visit of officials of the Universal Parcel Service (UPS) to NPA, the managing director, Habib Abdullahi, said that Nigerian ports had become very efficient with port operations improving tremendously. Speaking through the Executive Director, Marine and Operations, Engr. David Omonibeke, the NPA boss told his visitors that there was a rail system in place to ease the movement of cargo from the ports.

Movement of containers from the ports by rail is obviously one of the indicators of efficient port operations. One can therefore, imagine that as the NPA management had told visitors the story of evacuation of cargo from the ports by rail, the visitors must have looked out of the window of the Marina headquarters to catch a glimpse of a train moving out of the port with containers.

And finding none, they must have grinned to themselves asking silently where are the rails?

Observers cannot help asking the same question. Where actually are the rails NPA talks about? Are railway lines the same as ordinary iron or steel bars laid on the ground over a distance? Are there really rail tracks at Apapa Port and how many containers have been evacuated via the rail since it was built?

To the average stakeholder, the existence of a railway that takes containers out of the port in Lagos is a mere claim. They say that if really containers are being taken out of the port by rail, the menace of trucks on the Apapa/Oshodi expressway and port access roads would have greatly reduced. At every forum, public or private, they have not stopped clamouring for a functional railway system in the ports that will help in the evacuation of cargo and also link the dry ports and inland container depots (ICDs).

Really, attempts have been made to rebuild the rail line that was built by the colonial masters along with the ports. The rail lines fell into disuse several decades ago. Since 2013 what seems like serious efforts have been made, at least in words, to

resuscitate the rail system.

In August 2013, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) issued a statement saying that evacuation of cargo by rail had begun at Apapa Port. According to the statement, this was in line with its strategy of continuously increasing its sphere of operations. It said besides easing the burden on the roads, the move is expected to significantly reduce the number of heavy-duty vehicles, particularly tankers and trailers who daily pass through the Apapa-Oshodi Expressway to access the Lagos Port Complex (LPC), and Tin Can Island Port (TCIP), Apapa, to carry their consignments or drop empty containers.

It said initially, 20 wagons carrying 20 to 40 containers would be moved per trip with the intention to make three trips a week. The commencement of the container traffic, it said, will also help in decongesting the ports and helping in facilitating the establishment and use of Inland Container Depots (ICDs) along the track corridors.

Managing Director of NRC, Mr. Adeseyi Sijuwade, said the container traffic was a strategy to demonstrate the carriage ability and readiness of the corporation to further enhance the development on the nation's economy and to enter into partnership with organisations that require its services.

Analyzing the service, he said: "Single train haulage of 20 containers is equivalent to 20 trailers or 40 trucks on the road and this goes a long way to improve the economic, health, safety and environmental sustainability of the nation."

Newspapers and the entire Nigeria press went to

town with the development which the operators said would be replicated at all the nation's ports before the end of the year. Stakeholders were excited. They applauded, backslapped one another. Then there was a ceremony at the APM Terminal to signal the commencement of evacuation of containers by rail at the port. That day, there was actually a train that left the port with some containers but ended up only God knows where. About 20 units of 40-foot containers said to be heading to Kano and Kaduna were involved. That was the only major movement witnessed.

Consequently, contrary to all expectation, no one saw containers again moving out of the port. Where this happened, the impact has been so insignificant to be noticed. Some portions of the rail tracks have grown weeds while some parts have been compromised.

The story of the train and Apapa Port is reminiscent of a typical launch of a water scheme during the days of military rule in Nigeria – a practice that was copied by politicians at the federal and state levels. Billions of Naira would be spent on a water project. On the day of launch a water tanker would be hired to fill an overhead tank and water will be coming out of the taps. The project will be commissioned with fun-fare, with the governor or president drawing water from the tap and drinking amidst thunderous applause. Then he would commission the project "to the glory of God" and go. A few days later, the water in the tank would finish and stories would follow.

What irks the average observer of the ports is that the same lies and false claims that were made by the previous administration in the country concerning rail transportation

is still being made about rails in the ports. The erstwhile administration of President Jonathan made claims and is still making claims that rail system is working in the country. It's all the same even where the project is still on the drawing board. Everyone would be coerced and cajoled to see imaginary train on the move.

The claim is still being made of the construction and existence of a modern train service between Lagos and Abuja. At the heat of the campaigns, the former President's foot soldiers went overseas to sell the lies. Nigerians there especially his supporters swallowed the yarn hook, line and sinker such that they were ready to fight whoever contradicted it.

A friend once told me of how a friend of his quarreled with him on phone, accusing him of joining ungrateful Nigerians to discredit Jonathan's administration and denying the numerous developmental projects he had executed. According to my friend, he had spoken with his friend overseas while he was in Abuja. When he called back about two hours later, he told him he had left Abuja and was now in Lagos. The friend said, "Ah, wonderful! You took the speed train to Lagos." My friend said 'no', that he travelled by air as there was no such thing as speed train from Abuja to Lagos. His friend said he was lying and that there was a speed train service between Lagos and Abuja.

All efforts to convince the angry young man, that contrary to what he had been told, there was no speed train from Abuja to Lagos earned my friend more and more insults. Angrily, my friend told him to come home and enjoy the train service himself.

Unfortunately, all the lies told about railway services are still being told today by members and supporters of the past administration. How long can this continue? •

CONTENT



Features 10-11

Nature, they say, abhors vacuum. Whenever and wherever a void is created, this has to be filled either by negative or positive elements of nature. Government has refused to take advantage of the huge resources the inland waterways offer for the purposes of public transportation and other gainful uses. Hoodlums are now increasingly filling the void, taking charge of the waterways not for public transportation or any activity that positively impacts on the lives of the populace. Waterways are now veritable routes through which hoodlums move to unleash mayhem, rob, kill and disappear into thin air.



10-11

Cover 12-17

The maritime sector of the nation's economy has been grappling with dwindling fortunes despite its huge potentials. From the port terminal operators to importers and the indigenous shipping operators, it is a general story of woes. The stakeholders' recent outcry and call for government action are captured in this cover story.

12-17



38

Ports Surveillance 20-22

As the Customs Comptroller-General, Col Hameed Ali (Rtd) undertakes his maiden tour of customs formations nationwide, it is time to take a peep into the direction the Service is heading in the years ahead, especially with his promise of a fierce battle against corruption in the service.



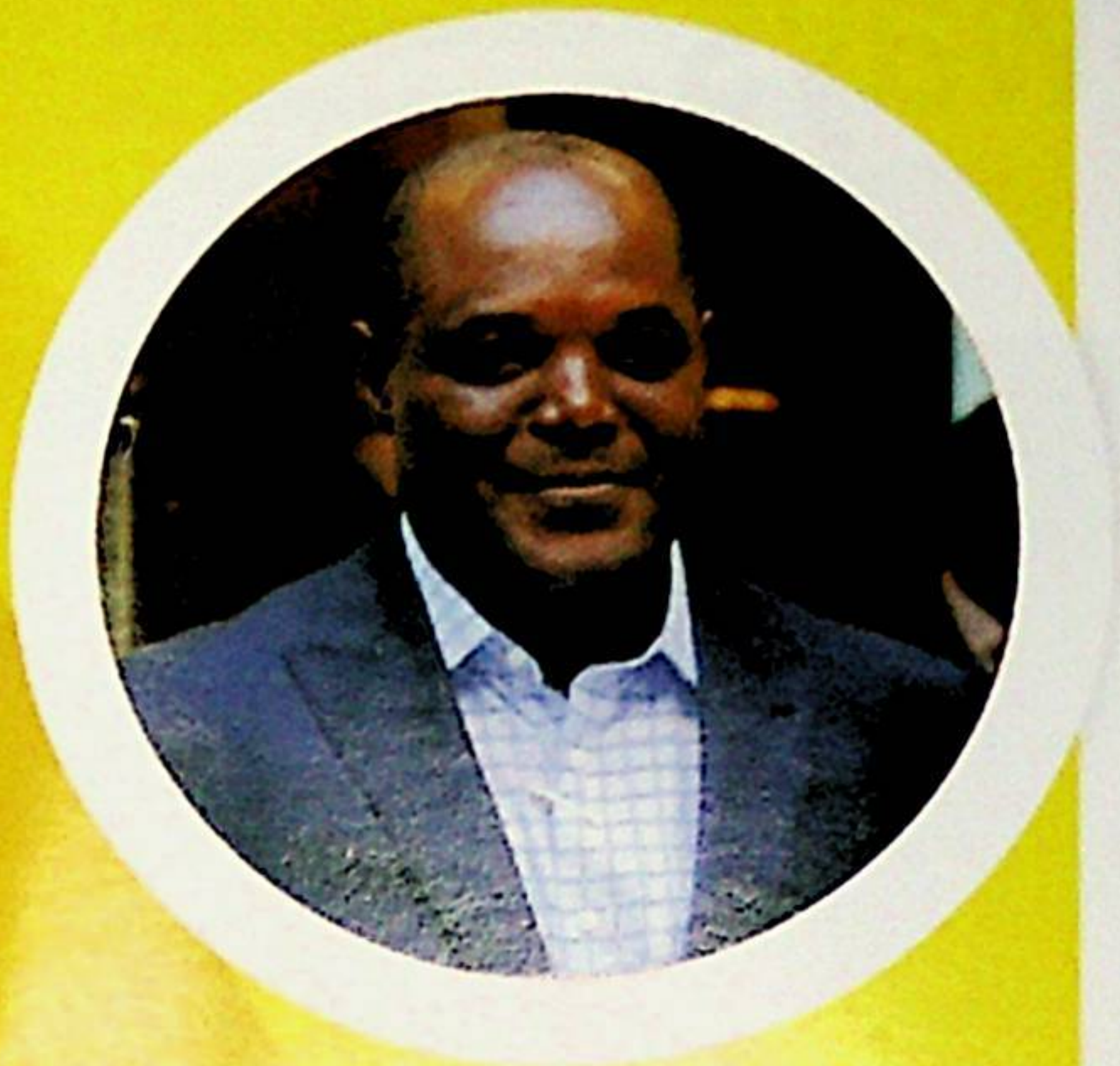
Analysis 30-31

Against the background of possible attack on the ports by Boko Haram and the consequent security alert issued by the United States Embassy on Nigerian ports.



39

Flashpoint	7
Ports Surveillance	19-24
Photospeak	26-29
Maritime News	32-36
Maritime Law	37
Marine Insurance	37
Maritime News	38
Int'l Maritime News	39



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The maritime sector of the nation's economy has been suffering dwindling fortunes despite its huge potentials. From the port terminal operators to importers and the indigenous shipping operators, it is a general story of woes as government regulatory and economic policies continue to take a toll on the sector. Find out how.

The days of corruption and graft appear to be over at the Nigeria Customs Service as the new Comptroller-General, Col. Hameed Ali (Retd) goes round customs formations reading the riot act. Details inside.

Following recent security alert issued on Nigerian ports as a result of possible attack by the dreaded Boko Haram Islamic sect, there has been anxiety all over with increased security consciousness by security agencies and port users.

As government has failed in its responsibility to develop and deploy the inland waterways for public transportation and other good uses, hoodlums and armed robbers have now taken over. See how inside.

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Government Watches On As Robbers Take Over Inland Waterways

Nature, they say, abhors vacuum. Whenever and wherever a void is created, this has to be filled either by negative or positive elements of nature. Government has refused to take advantage of the huge resources the inland waterways offer for the purposes of public transportation and other gainful uses. Hoodlums are now increasingly filling the void, taking charge of the waterways not for public transportation or any activity that positively impacts on the lives of the populace. Waterways are now veritable routes through which hoodlums move to unleash mayhem, rob, kill and disappear into thin air, writes
IZUCHUKWU OZOEMENA

On a certain day in the middle of October 2015, about forty heavily armed robbers invaded two second generation banks on 4th Avenue, Festac area of Lagos State and carted away huge sums of money. During the operation which lasted for



Danladi Ibrahim, Acting MD, NIWA.



A Naval patrol boat

hours, a two-year-old toddler and her mother who were inside their apartment in an adjoining building, were reportedly hit by stray bullets from the bandits who were shooting sporadically in all directions. Reports said both mother and child later died as a result of injuries they sustained from the bullets. A commercial motorcyclist who was also hit by stray bullets reportedly died later in an undisclosed private hospital.

Reports said the bandits who were dressed in military camouflage, attacked the banks after alighting from boats at a nearby canal. They were said to have operated simultaneously in the two banks, after which they escaped through the same canal they entered the area. Preliminary information by the police showed that the robbers came in through the waterways and they equally exited through the waterways, because there is a canal very close to the banks.

Earlier in the year, there were successful armed robbery operations in banks located in Ijede, Ipakodo (in Ikorodu) and Lekki. At the Lekki operation, five persons, including three policemen, were killed. This was between June and July, 2015. As reported by one of the hoodlums who was later arrested in connection with the Lekki incident, the robbers made good their escape into the

creeks in a fibre boat. Thus an inland waterway channel which ordinarily should be a safe channel for public transportation was the route!

According to a confession by one of the suspects who is a boat operator, the gang's movement was by means of a boat which conveyed them via water to all the three bank operations. He reportedly revealed that at a point while they were trying to escape, their boat developed a fault which hampered their movement. But the leader of the gang called another boat operator to take them away. They were able to freely operate in the inland waterways!

UNENDING PLANS FOR WATERWAYS

What has come to be known as government's plans to develop the waterways have largely remained mere projections which once started, are never followed and concluded. At a recent event in Niger State where tourists and boat operators were hosted, it was revealed that government has big plans for inland waterways. Be it in Nembe, Argungu, Lagos or Lokoja, it has been said that ancient waterways are being revived to facilitate tourism and public transportation in line with history when inland rivers were the economic lifelines of urban

settlements.

The Emir of Borgu in Niger State, Dr Haliru Dantoro and his people played host to members of the Association of Tourists Boat Operators and Water Transporters of Nigeria (ATBOWATON) as part of efforts to promote sustainable water transport and tourism. Led by their president, Mr. Ganiyu Balogun, ATBOWATON members from Kogi, Ondo and Lagos came together to inaugurate officially the New Bussa branch, carry out boat displays in line with the common saying that 'water has no enemy'. They also used the opportunity to confer on the emir the honour of Life Patron of the Association. As the President of the waters of the Kainji and all their tributaries, the Emir has been at the forefront of campaigns for the opening up of the kingdom to increased traffic to tourism, trade, communication and communal cooperation within the region.

Driven by the desire to make domestic tourism thrive in his domain, the emir sealed a partnership deal with Tarzan Marine Services, Lagos, to set up water transport on the Kainji Lake. Reports say he followed this up with a visit to Lagos with members of his cabinet on a fact-finding trip through the creeks up to Badore and Ijede in Lagos.

Speaking at an event in New Bussa, Balogun acknowledged the interest and contributions of the emir to the growth of water transportation in Nigeria and made a case for seamless water transport regime and investment opportunities in the country. Nigeria, he said, is endowed with about 3000 kilometers of navigable inland waterways and an expansive coastline of about 852 kilometers. "With this wealth, to say that Nigeria has great potentials in the movement of goods from the coast to the hinterland by water transport is an understatement." He added that the waterways which spread across 28 states of the federation deserve a unique water transportation system while

the operators of the system merit a security-conscious and morally-based umbrella body that would cater for the users of the waterways.

"The combination of attractive rivers and canals, their waterfronts, the landscapes and the historic cities along and beyond the waterfronts is ideal for water-related tourism. In this way, it is possible to stimulate visitors to use these waterways for tourism purposes. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary that measures have to be taken to ensure nautical safety, nature

Since there is nothing to show that government is eager to fill it, hoodlums and armed robbers have taken over, converting the canals and waterways into entry and exit routes for their nefarious activities

values as well as water quality and quantity. In addition, mitigating measures must be taken with regard to negative effects of climate change," Balogun said.

Speaking at the occasion, the Acting Managing Director of National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) Mr. Danladi Ibrahim said the federal government –through NIWA –has initiated fresh steps aimed at encouraging private sector participation in the nation's waterways transportation. This entails providing necessary infrastructure, security and

conducive atmosphere for the sector to adequately harness its potentials under a public private partnership (PPP) arrangement.

"Inland waterways transportation will also facilitate investment in tourism. Visitors and tourists using inland waterways will enjoy the beautiful scenery of Nigeria to see the creeks and waterfalls in Nigeria. Inland waterways transportation will also further investment in sports competition such as swimming, surfing, among others."

Abubakar Sani Bello, the Governor of Niger State observed that there is no gainsaying the fact that there exist vast investment opportunities in the inland waterways. "A look at the spread of the inland waterways across the country leaves one wondering why the investment opportunities are left almost untapped." But stakeholders are worried that if a governor who should know what to do to tap into the vast opportunities in the inland waterways for the good of the people is now the one who appears to be at sea, who should then do the job?



Hajia Ciroma, fmr MD, NIWA.

For Lagos, the Lagos State Waterways Authority (LASWA) remains asleep as most of the jetties constructed by former Governor Fashola are still lying idle.

Meanwhile, all the neglect and inaction have created a void. Since there is nothing to show that government is eager to fill it, hoodlums and armed robbers have taken over, converting the canals and waterways into entry and exit routes for their nefarious activities. They are having a field day! Until government wakes up to do the needful, they remain the emperors of the sea. ●



The abandoned Mile 2 Jetty in Lagos



Maritime: A Sector In Distress

The maritime sector of the nation's economy has been grappling with dwindling fortunes despite its huge potentials. From the port terminal operators to importers and the indigenous shipping operators, it is a general story of woes. The stakeholders' recent outcry and call for government action are captured in this cover story.

The Nigeria maritime sector is regarded as the second largest revenue earner for the country after the oil and gas sector. Experts and operators in the industry also agree that the sector has the potentials to yield more revenue than oil for the country. But these potentials remain largely untapped for the benefit of the Nigerian people. Government policies – in most cases inconsistent – corruption, preference of foreigners to local operators by government officials, apathy and negligence have been the bane of the sector, making it perform below average in terms of its contribution in revenue yields to the country.

With the dwindling fortunes of the oil sector as a result of the slump in crude oil price in the world market, the

call has become more stringent for the country to give full attention to the maritime sector and make it the leading revenue spinner in addition to agriculture and other non-oil exports. But contrary to this call and expectation of a deliberate policy and concerted efforts that will ensure maximum revenue haul from the sector, several economic policies the federal government has articulated in recent past have only plunged the sector into deeper distress, with the operators lamenting dwindling fortunes on daily basis.

An indication of the distress is seen in the job losses being witnessed in the sector.

Some terminal operators have been silently laying-off their workers pending when the situation improves or when the federal government comes up with more favourable economic policies.

Mostly affected by the economic reversals are RoRo Terminals and Oil and Gas-designated ports and terminals. Operators in the sector point to the Automotive Industry Policy, the Rice Policy and the recent Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) restriction of access to foreign exchange for some categories of imports as the major cause of distress at the RoRo terminals. Since early last year, the RoRo terminals have witnessed over 50 per cent drop in vehicle imports, triggering low business activities at the terminal. The situation became further exacerbated by the CBN's restriction of access to FOREX for 41 types of imports.

These policy decisions, stakeholders say, have compelled some importers to change their assignments to other ports, with labouring efforts in the especially Cotonou Port in Benin Republic from where the goods are smuggled into Nigeria. This, of course, deprives the federal government of much needed revenue.

Decrying the situation in the sector, the Chairman, Shipping Association of Nigeria (SAN), Mr. Val Usifoh blamed policy summersault for being partly responsible for the decline

in the volume of imports into the country and the consequent low business activities at the ports. He said that the federal government policy on rice, the automotive policy and the CBN policy on FOREX restriction for the importation of certain goods make it difficult for stakeholders to plan ahead.

Said Usifoh: "People need to plan ahead. Business should be predictable so that when you are making investment, medium or long term, you are sure of where you are going. Importation is on the low ebb, business is down for everybody and if it is down for the importer it is down for the ship owner. It is a global trend but we are feeling it more because we are import dependent in the economy. When people cannot predict where to move their investment, it will be difficult to plan," he told a national daily.

Usifoh recalled that before the auto policy came into effect, 80 percent of the 'Tokunbo' (used) vehicles were coming to Nigeria and 20 percent going to Cotonou (Benin Republic) with all the second hand trucks coming through Nigeria.

"But after this policy, over half of the second hand vehicle business now goes to Cotonou. The implication is that Nigerian ports have lost 50 percent of its second hand vehicle trade."

He advised the federal government to develop local industries as part of measures to ensure adequate supply before placing restrictions on certain imports.

Aside the low business activities at the RoRo Terminals, stakeholders blame the serious challenges being experienced at the other

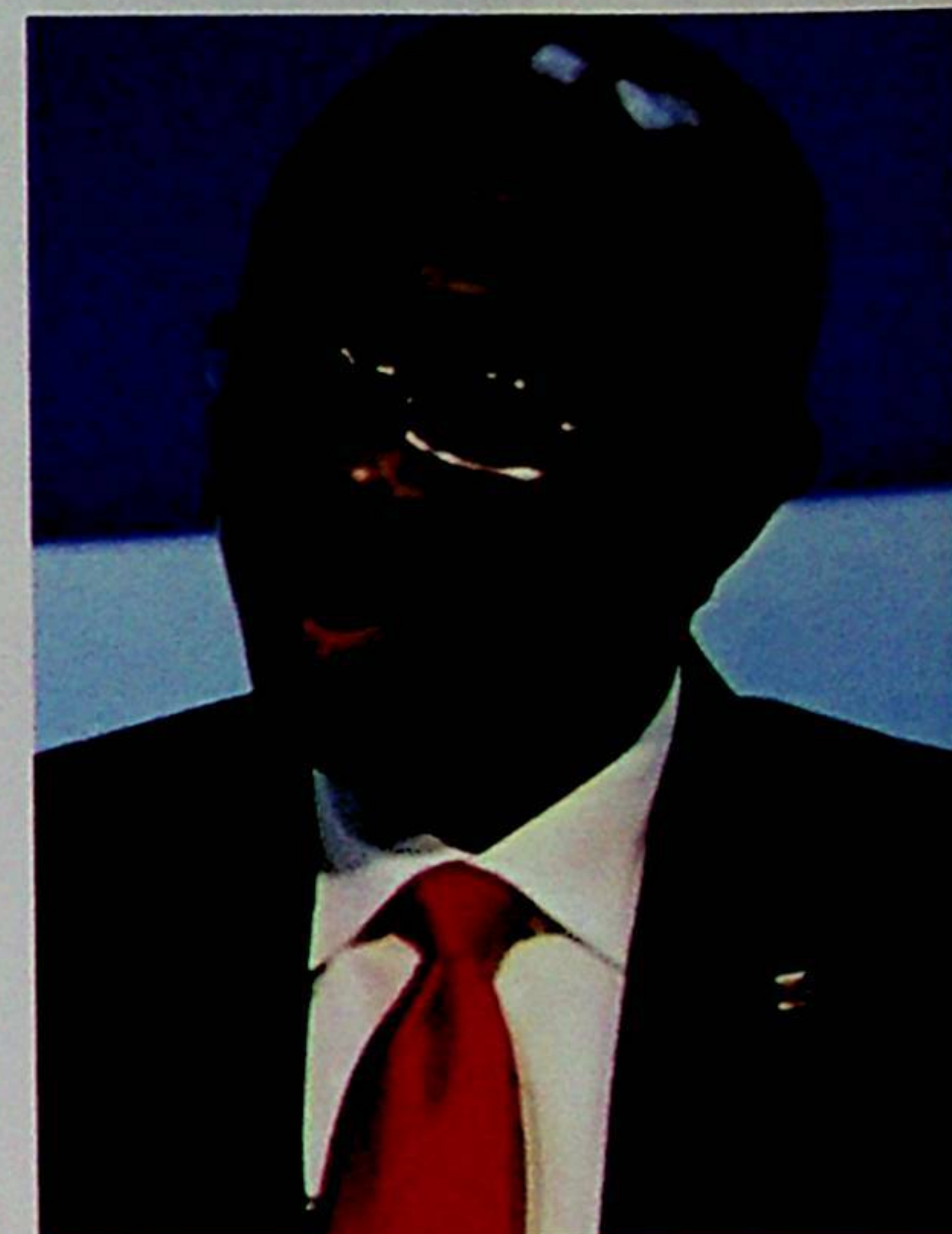
terminals, container and bulk cargo terminals on inconsistency in policy formulation by the federal government. They lament the declining volumes at the terminals.

For example, volume at APM Terminals, operator of the Apapa Container Terminal Port, has dropped by 29 per cent this year compared to 2014. The company experienced the lowest dip in April "maybe as a result of reluctance to import around the elections," said an operator. According to importers, some of them are reluctant to import and this could be blamed on the rising inflation as a result of the devaluation of the naira, lower oil prices and CBN policy on import.

With the dwindling fortunes of the oil sector as a result of the slump in crude oil price in the world market, the call has become more stringent for the country to give full attention to the maritime sector and make it the leading revenue spinner in addition to agriculture and other non-oil exports

In July 2014, the terminal recorded 31,280 TEUs while it has handled 25,658 this year.

Also, in June 2014, it recorded 29,764, which is higher than the 24,027 of the same period of 2015. It recorded 30,548 for May 2014 and 20,303 for 2015; April 2014 was 30,548 while same month of 2015



Godwin Emezie,
CBN Governor

was 18,695; March 2014 was 27,224 while this year it had 23,768.

Lamenting the drop in container volume at the port, an analyst said: "The current expectation is that this trend of lower volume compared to last year will continue for the rest of the year. Traditionally, the second half of the year has higher volumes than the first. It remains to be seen if this trend will be repeated this year."

However, despite the drop in volume, the Apapa Area 1 Command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has maintained that it generated N30.1 billion revenue in the month of August, surpassing its monthly average of N23 billion while many importers and their agents are lamenting their inability to open Form 'M' to process imports because of the CBN fiscal policy.

Commenting on the dwindling fortunes in the sector, an economist, Matthew Otiode, appealed to the federal government to come up urgently with strategies to reposition the maritime sector.

"The maritime sector has huge potentials but the nation can only reap benefits of such



President Muhammadu Buhari

A Sector In Distress



Hassan Bello, Exec. Secretary, NSC

in Lagos recently, Sarumi decried the design of Nigerian ports which he said were designed to handle imports mainly, saying that they should be re-designed and positioned to support export.

Sarumi said: "Our ports have been designed for imports only, without consideration for export, which is what the economy needs for growth. Our ports are designed to receive other peoples' cargoes and not designed to take out Nigerian cargo. The time has come for Nigeria to be outward-looking."

Corroborating Sarumi's assertion, the Executive Secretary of Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC), Barrister Hassan Bello, said: "For every container that comes, it leaves here empty. We have laden containers coming into Nigeria, but transported back empty and this affects almost everything, including the cost of shipping."

The challenges in the sector are not only felt in the port industry but also among the regulators and government agencies. Stakeholders, for instance, are saying that the non-appointment of a substantive Director-General for the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and alleged lack of policy direction for the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) in the new administration are compounding woes in the maritime sector.

NIMASA, they say, is the apex maritime regulatory agency and any instability in its leadership automatically affects the entire maritime sector. Since the removal of its former director-general last July, the agency has been headed by an acting DG. This obviously affects certain policy action and decisions with effect on productivity. This is more so as the senior management staff including the acting DG himself continue to be invited by the anti-graft commission (EFCC) to help in the probe of the profligate regime of their former boss.

On the side of Customs which is the major revenue collector for government at the ports, the stakeholders accuse the new Comptroller General, Col. Hameed Ibrahim Ali (rtd) of not unfolding a clear-cut agenda more than four weeks after he assumed office.

Ali had upon assumption of office charged customs management to work with him to deliver on the mandate given to him by President Muhammadu Buhari.

Addressing top customs officials at the headquarters, Ali was quoted as saying: "The mandate he (Buhari) has given me are three basic things: go to customs, reform customs, restructure customs and increase the revenue generation, simple. I don't think that is ambiguous, I don't think that is cumbersome. It is precise and I believe that is what all of you are here to do."

But to most stakeholders, the mandate sounds abstract as the CG has not articulated the methodology or how the mandate can be actualized. Besides, the appointment of a retired general as the CG contrary to all expectations has put the officers and men in a quandary. "There is instability in the system. We don't

potentials if adequate policies are in place and well implemented," he told The Guardian newspaper, adding that "with necessary policies, the maritime sector could bridge the gap created by the drop in crude oil price in the international market."

But for a former managing director of the Nigerian Ports Authority, the current situation does not call for lamentation but re-strategizing. He advised stakeholders to take advantage of the CBN policy.

Speaking at the maiden edition of International Sea Trade Convention held



Chief Adebayo Sarumi, fmr NPA MD

Aside the low business activities at the RoRo Terminals, stakeholders blame the serious challenges being experienced at the other terminals, container and bulk cargo terminals on inconsistency in policy formulation by the federal government

know what will happen next. It's affecting morale," one officer unanimously.

NPA STATISTICS – A CONTRADICTIONARY SCENARIO?

Meanwhile, statistics from the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) is painting a contrary picture of the situation at the ports. According to the management of NPA, there is increase in cargo throughput and that the number of ships calling at the nation's seaport is on the increase.

For the first quarter of 2015, NPA said about 5,139 ocean-going vessels with a total Gross Tonnage (GT) of 61,990,999 called at Nigerian Ports compared with GT of 57,034,338 in 2014.

Within the period, Lagos Port Complex (LPC), handled 372 vessels with a gross registered tonnage of 9,298,761,

A Sector In Distress

indicating an increase of 10.6 per cent over 8,407,233 gross tonnage achieved in 2014.

The Tin Can Island Port also handled 435 vessels with a gross tonnage of 12,232,575, indicating an increase of 8.15 per cent over 11,310,751 gross tonnage recorded in the corresponding period of 2014.

NPA's General Manager in charge of Public Affairs, Capt Iheanacho Ebubeogu, explained that Calabar Port complex recorded a total GT of 958,288, an increase of 11.67 per cent over 858,174 gross tons of 2014, "leaving the port with 100 Ocean going vessels in the period under review".

Ebubeogu also explained that Rivers Port complex recorded a total gross tonnage of 1,278,364, indicating a 9.95 per cent increase over 1,164,124 gross tons achieved in the corresponding period of 2014. A total of 132-ocean going vessels were handled within the period under review.

"Onne Port complex recorded a GT of 12,768,834, reflecting an increase of 12.99 per cent over 11,300,433 gross tons recorded in the corresponding period of 2014 with 1,025 vessels handled within the period. Delta Port Complex recorded 1,643,346 gross tons, with 2,816 vessels handled. The gross tonnage of crude oil tankers recorded within the period showed a 12.21 per cent increase over first quarter of 2014," he said.

Recently, NPA managing director, Habib Abdullahi said that Nigerian ports are now effective and efficient in cargo handling with overall improvement in port operations.

Abdullahi, who spoke through the Executive Director Marine and Operations, David Omonibeke, when a delegation of the United Parcel Service (UPS) paid him a courtesy visit to the organization, said the Nigerian port system has improved tremendously. He commended the terminal operators for the acquisition of the "state-of-the-art

equipment "that has eased port operations in Nigeria".

The Managing Director disclosed that the Federal Government has approved the establishment of deep/dry seaports in some part of the country in order to increase the facilities provided by the Authority.

LIFTING OF THE BAN ON RICE IMPORT ACROSS LAND BORDERS: ANY RELIEF?

One of the government policies that brought distress to the bulk terminals is the Rice Policy. Since its introduction two years ago, the bulk terminals have been experiencing low volumes and declining fortunes as rice imports designated for Nigerian ports are being diverted to Cotonou Port in neighbouring Benin Republic. This has increased the rate of smuggling of the commodity across the borders while both the terminal operators and the government have been losing valuable revenue.

But recently, the Comptroller-General of Customs, Col. Hameed Ali (ret'd), ordered the immediate removal of rice from import restriction list and the re-introduction of import duty payment at land borders.

The public relations officer of Customs, Mr. Wale Adeniyi, who made this known in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) said the restriction was only applied at land border stations before now, noting that the customs boss had lifted restriction on rice at border stations.

Adeniyi said that all rice imports through land borders by rice traders would attract the prevailing import duty of 10 per cent, with 60 per cent levy.

He added that rice millers



The Port of Cotonou, Benin Republic

(preferential levy) with valid quota allocation would also attract duty rate of 10 per cent with 20 per cent levy on rice importation.

"Over the years, importation has been restricted to the seaports because border authorities have found it difficult to effectively monitor and control importation of rice.

"When the decision to ban it (rice) was taken, it was not an effective measure because the smuggling of the product thrives with people using different means of conveyance, including small trucks, bicycles and even animals – putting them on donkeys and some actually carry it on their heads.

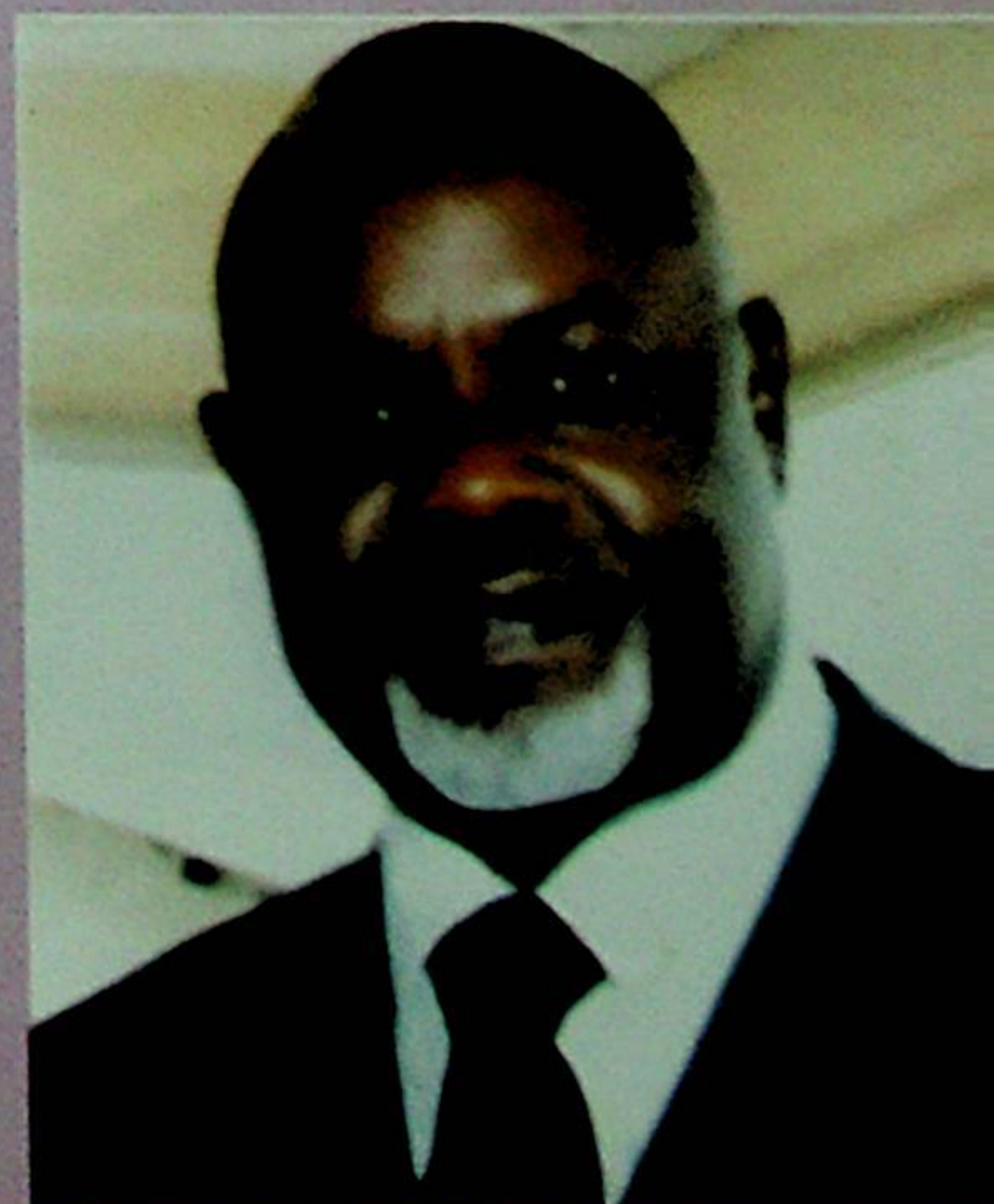
"These new measures will be for Customs to reorganize their anti-smuggling operations in the border areas and ensure that all those importers through the borders bring their rice through approved routes and pay their extant duty." Before the ban on rice importation, Customs had placed different rates of levy on rice imports – 30 per cent levy was placed on rice millers (preferential levy) and 70 per cent for rice importers. The purpose was

to encourage local production.

This relaxation of the rice policy, observers say, is expected to bring some relief to the port terminals and even the customs that has been battling the heightened smuggling through the borders.

Excited at the lifting of the ban, freight forwarders at the Idiroko and Seme Borders described the relaxation of the policy as very commendable and the best way to fight smuggling of the commodity into the country.

According to one of the freight forwarders, Chief Mba



Engr Greg Ogbeifun, President, SOAN

A Sector In Distress

Ozouwa, the Customs must have been advised that this was the best way to earn revenue from rice and check the continued smuggling of the item into the country.

THE PLIGHT OF SHIP OWNERS

Nigerian ship owners have long been lamenting their plight in the industry as foreigners have been in control of the shipping trade. Government policies and the disposition of its agencies have placed them in a position where they can only pick the crumbs when that is available.

The situation has left them (the ship owners) perpetual debtors to banks and to their workers. The cabotage act that was enacted to address the situation has been unable to help them more than 10 years of its enactment. Worse still, their hope for a change with a new government in the country was recently dashed when the Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Agency (NNPC), Dr. Ibe Kachikwu said NNPC would not use vessels to transport petroleum products locally.

According to him, the use of vessels to move crude oil coastwise was expensive when compared with the use of pipelines. This appears to put paid to the expectations and efforts of the indigenous ship owners to reap from the nation's huge cabotage trade.

Kachikwu said pipelines must be made to work because there was no

model that would make economic sense in the absence of working pipelines for the petroleum business.

He said it was unsustainable to leverage alternative models other than pipelines as far as the movement of crude and refined products were concerned, stressing that alternative models would only shoot up cost for the corporation.

The NNPC boss said, "Militancy, difficulties and what have you are not enough reasons to make our pipelines not to work. We are engaging relevant security agencies in this respect.

"Coastal movement of crude or finished products is not profitable. It is not sustainable and it is not a solution. We need to get the pipelines working,

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The Coordinator, Government Relations, Ship Owners Association of Nigeria, Mr. Temisan Omatseye, in his reaction urged the NNPC to engage Nigerian flagged vessels in the movement of crude oil and petroleum products.

He said the NNPC was spending so much on the movement of crude on the coast because of its continuous patronage of foreign flagged vessels.

He said, "Although I agree with



Dr Mrs. Ayo H. Ogun, Chairman, STOAN

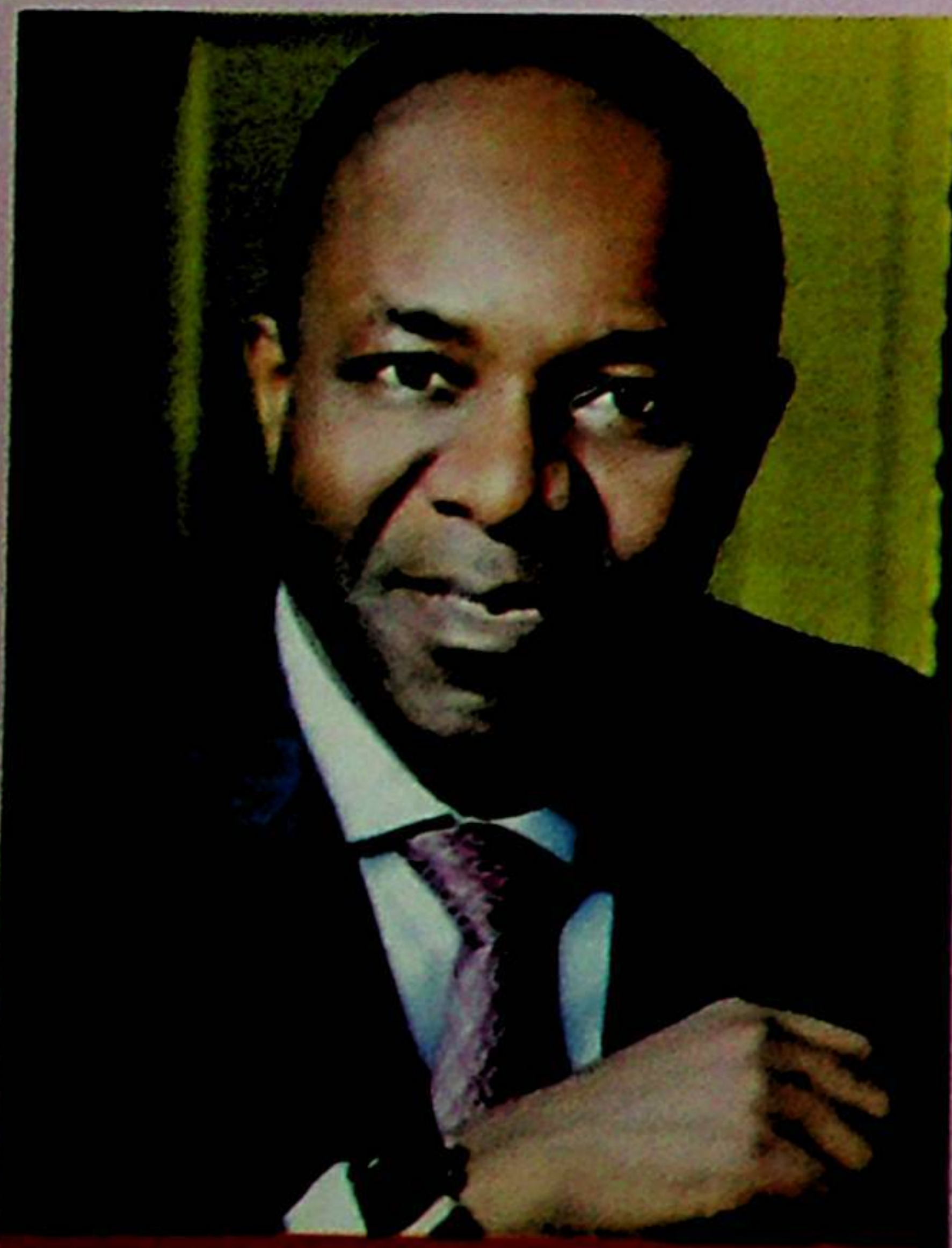
Kachikwu that is better and more economical to use pipelines in transporting crude oil, the reality is that our pipelines are not functional. As long as this is the case, the NNPC should engage Nigerian coastal vessels in the movement of crude.

"The reason why the cost of moving crude on the coast has become so exorbitant is that the NNPC didn't put it out to tender and didn't give the contract to Nigerian companies; instead, the contract was given to companies that claimed that they were Nigerian firms but not Nigerian flagged. If the NNPC had contacted the Nigerian Ship owners in the interest of patriotism, we would have found a way to make the coastal movement of crude more economical."

Omatseye described as ridiculous the amount which the NNPC was reported to have spent on the charter of such vessels, saying that it was impossible to get a very large crude carrier (VLCC) for the kind of prices the NNPC was quoting.

"The amount I am seeing in the papers, which I don't want to believe, seems to be ridiculously high for the charter of any kind of vessel in that kind of level. Basically, if the NNPC had called Nigerian ship owners to discuss with them, we would have looked at the best, economical ways to do this. We would certainly not give them the kind of charges they are talking about," Omatseye said.

"Apart from the transportation of



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A Sector In Distress

crude oil, there is also the issue of petroleum product movement. We are currently moving petroleum products via coastal vessels because the Escravos/Warri/ Lagos gas pipeline is bad. In fact, all the other pipelines are bad because the depots are not receiving products. That means products need to be moved from the refineries, be it Port Harcourt or Warri, to Lagos."

Omatseye wondered why the NNPC should continue to charter foreign flagged vessels when there were Nigerian vessels that could provide the same service.

He said SOAN had written to President Muhammadu Buhari when it hoped to enforce the regulation of Nigerian ship owners should be prioritized in the carriage of petroleum products. "This is in the interest of patriotism; the NNPC should prioritise Nigerian shipowners because this falls under the cabotage regime," he said.

STAKEHOLDERS DECRY PROBLEMS:

The enormous problems being encountered in the sector recently prompted some stakeholders to take steps to draw the attention of the Mohammadu Buhari's led federal government to

the sector, as, according to them, these problems have affected the maximization of the huge potential of the industry over the years.

The stakeholders, who include the former Chairman, Oil and Gas Free Zone Authority, Dr. Chris Asoluka, President, Ship Owners Association of Nigeria (SOAN), Mr. Greg Ogbeifun, the Chairman of the Port Consultative Council (PCC), Otunba Kunle Folarin, and licensed customs agents, maintained that there was need for the President Muhammadu Buhari administration to come up with immediate, short and long term measures to tackle these challenges.

The leading industry operators were participants at the just concluded 2015 Maritime Platform National Discourse organized by Platforms Communications. The discourse with the theme "Nigerian Maritime Sector in the Next Five Years: Deciding Where We Want to Be".

They noted that the lack of financial capability for indigenous ship owners was the reason why they wait endlessly for the disbursement of the Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF) even though the CVFF is not the only solution for shipping development in the country.

They also regretted that maritime stakeholders were not being adequately consulted in policy formulation for the sector, a situation which they said, has hampered policy implementation in the sector.

They observed that divergent views being expressed by stakeholders on critical issues have not helped the sector in making a stronger advocacy, hence the need for integration of all interest groups in the sector.

On the way forward,



An oil tanker

they called on Buhari to "identify, prioritize and develop our primordial interests and advantages because in pursuing all, we lose all; propel Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC) to come up with operating guidelines as the port economic regulator to enable stakeholders understand the platforms on which they would be regulated; increase capacity building as an essential tool for growth and development in the maritime industry."

The stakeholders also stressed the need to empower women and accommodate their participation in policy making to enhance economic growth amongst others.

According to them, discriminatory attitude among maritime training institutions leading to unhealthy competition and rivalry should be avoided, as it is not good for the maritime institutions and graduates.

"Besides, reduction in the cost of doing business at Nigerian ports will prevent diversion of cargoes to neighbouring countries. The report of the Presidential Committee set up by former President Goodluck Jonathan after the 2011 maritime retreat should be enforced by the current government as it gave clear road-map on how to develop the maritime sector holistically," the stakeholders also noted.



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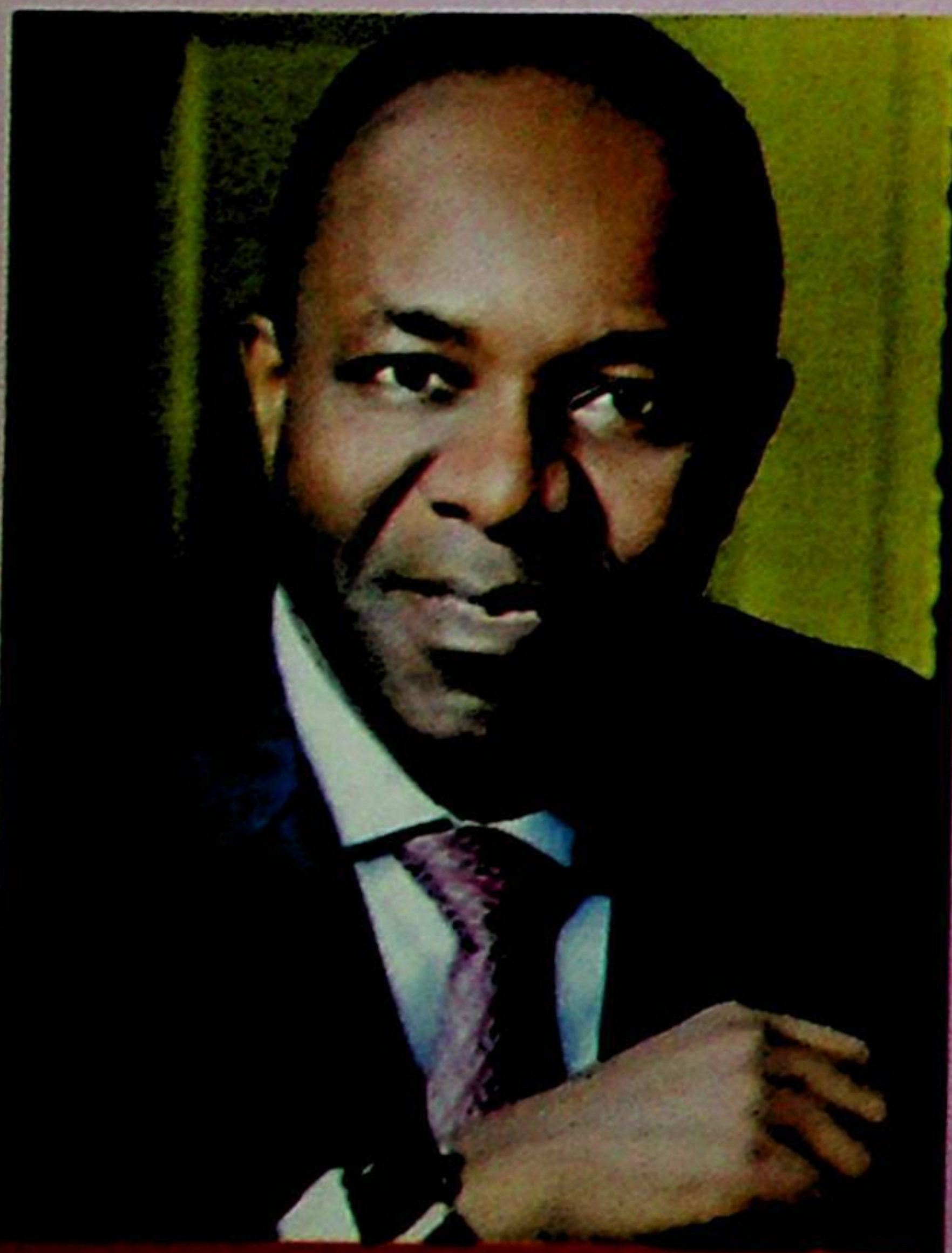
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Customs, Corruption And The New Comptroller-General



As the Customs Comptroller-General, Col Hameed Ali (Rtd) undertakes his maiden tour of customs formations nationwide, it is time to take a peep into the direction the Service is heading in the years ahead, especially with his promise of a fierce battle against corruption in the service.

Officials of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) have been accused of being in the habit of fraudulently disposing seized goods to themselves and their cronies who they often use as fronts. The revelation came recently from the Nigerian Association of Auctioneers (NAA). According to the group, Nigeria lost about N200 billion in the last four years via this unwholesome practice, a development attributed to what they referred to as lack of transparency on the part of the previous administrations. NAA general

secretary, Isibor Abhulimen said customs officers set ridiculously low prices for the items, avoid competitive bidding and auction such items to their relations who they later meet to take possession.

"An item worth two million naira for instance is seized but the customs will value it at N100, 000 and sell to their cronies and this is costing the government huge revenue and robbing other Nigerians equal opportunity to bid for these items," the auctioneers said.

"It is our prerogative to bring this glaring anomaly to the attention of Nigerians and President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, especially now that the revenues to the federal government coffers have dwindled.

"The customs should allow the professional auctioneers to do their jobs. Nigerians will witness a sharp rise in the amount of revenue generated from the sector if professional auctioneers are invited to conduct public auctioning of items impounded by customs," NAA said.

NAA recalled that in the past years, there has been no effort to generate

additional revenue for the government. "Instead," the association alleged, "they make the government lose so much revenue and this is simply because the method adopted by the customs, which is direct allocation, does not give room for the goods to be sold publicly by auctioneers who ultimately drive the prices higher through competitive bidding."

According to Abhulimen, the association President, this process of direct allocation dents the reputation of government and also makes the public lose confidence in government's style of disposal of these items.

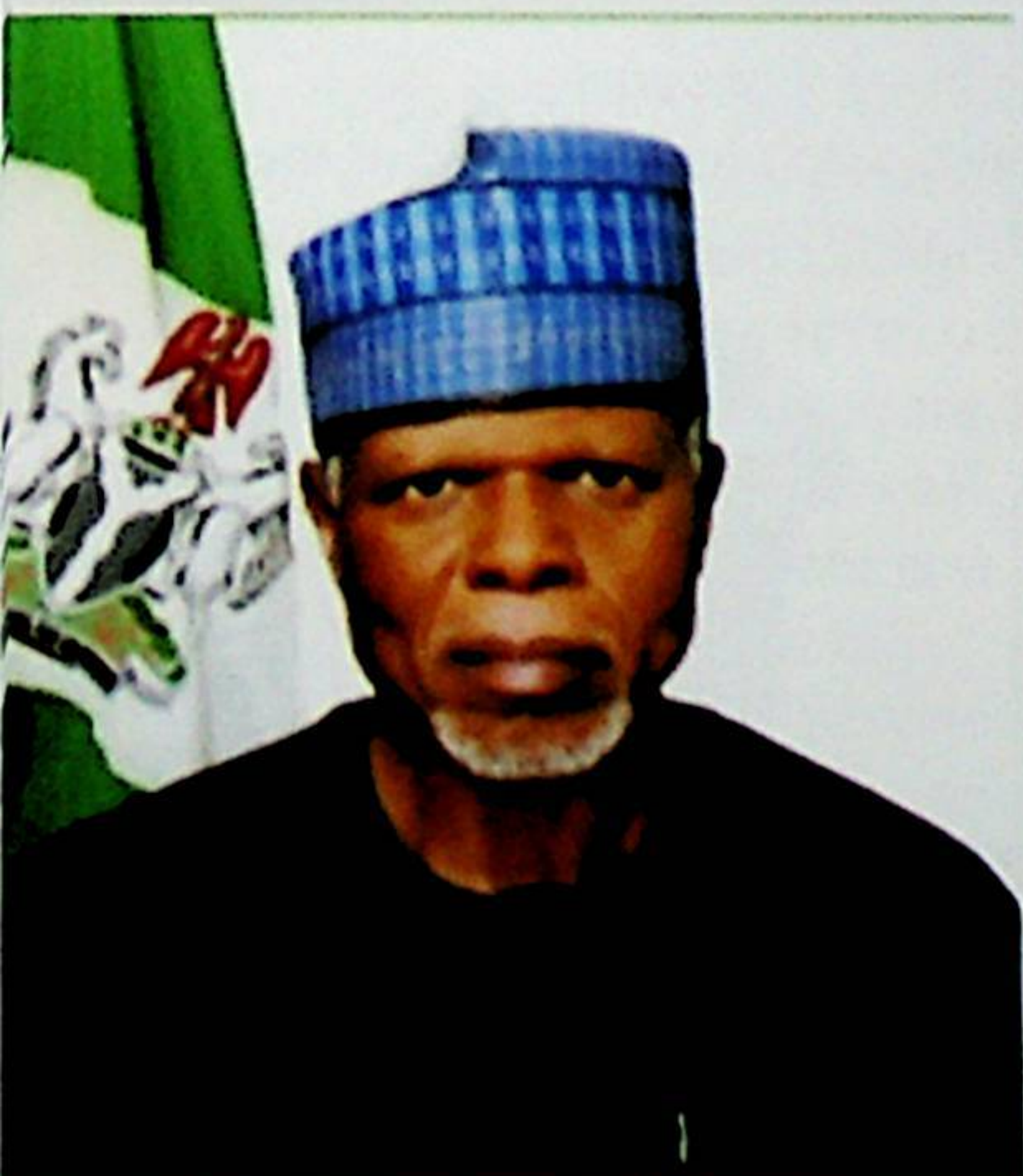
"A few customs officers are feeding fat and living large at the expense of the government and importers. The previous administration's consistent refusal to work with auctioneers, who would have generated more revenue from auction of seized goods, caused Nigeria to lose a lot of money," the association said.

The above scenario, perhaps, lays credence to the mantra the new Customs Comptroller-General, Col Hameed Ali (Rtd) has continued to spread as he tours of

Customs formations nationwide.

Over the years, the Nigeria Customs Service has come under serious criticisms for indulging in certain operational malpractices and stakeholders have never relented in speaking out whenever the opportunity arises to do so. Officers have been accused of colluding with unscrupulous importers and agents to perpetrate various forms of anti-trade practices. Even customs officers who are versed in the intricacies of the trade use bogus names to run freight forwarding businesses while in service. They divert jobs and revenue the government ought to earn through to such money establishments. Anti-trade activities perpetrated include under-valuation, concealment and even smuggling.

Instances of bribe collection has persisted like a cancerworm despite efforts by the past customs administrations to control it. Certain officers are in the habit of collecting bribes to allow banned commodities come into the country. For instance, it is true that banned poultry products are often seized at the entry points and destroyed, but Nigerian markets are flooded with such commodities and stakeholders wonder how these are able to enter the country in spite of the strict restrictions and checks in place at the border



Col. Hameed Ali (Rtd), CGC

points.

A Seme-based freight forwarder who spoke to BMWA recently said many officers, for instance, often enter into special arrangements with smugglers to furnish them information on certain illegal routes through which they can safely freight their contrabands without being apprehended by operatives on duty. It is said that cases of successful concealment and movement of contrabands alongside commodities that are not on the prohibition list occur because officers often show the carriers the best way to evade apprehension at checkpoints. If this does not happen, he argues, how come banned poultry products find their way into Nigerian markets? He also raised the issue of imported furniture which are found in offices across Nigeria especially "those belonging to the mighty in the society and even government agencies that want all of us to believe that these are prohibited items."

Many customs officers posted away from formations often referred to as 'juicy' are known to work their way back and stay put for as long as they desire. As they do this for years, they devise various ways of indulging in illegal acts which continue to yield them huge money in the old place even as they draw their salaries and other entitlements from the other point without working there. This, it has been revealed, often works for officers said to enjoy protection from their superiors at the headquarters to whom they often make returns. More often than not, this sit-tight arrangement happens to those the superiors

themselves at the various commands and the headquarters use as 'errand boys'.

Was this particular issue what Col Ali was trying to address recently when he announced that as long as he remained in the Service, nobody can remain in a place for more than three years? Perhaps! According to the CGC, "we can move you after six months if the exigencies require that but we cannot keep you in a place for more than three years". That is the maximum. The era of staying in a place for 10 years, he revealed, has come to a stop. He was speaking to officers at the PTML Command as he continued his maiden tour of various customs formations in the Lagos area. Ali warned that the era of rejecting postings or movement from one desk to another within the same command with the assistance of those he called 'godfathers' at the headquarters would no longer be condoned. He directed that officers will now have a maximum age limit to spend on a rank. If within the period an officer fails to do the needful to earn promotion, he stands dismissed. He revealed that there are reports that some officers refuse to attend training courses for whatever reasons and warned that such persons stand to be denied promotion unless their excuses are health-related.

Speaking on the need for officers to maintain honesty, integrity and transparency in the discharge of their duties, he said area controllers will answer questions if any officer under them is not punished for any wrongdoing. Frowning at endemic corruption ravaging the Service, the CGC was



Dr Kayode Farinto, Director of Publicity, ANLCA

specific about falsification of documents and undervaluation. Any officer caught doing these, he warned, would be jailed for 10 years. He charged officers who clear goods at entry points to exercise caution as any seizures made in-country when they have left the ports would be traced to the port where clearance was made and officers involved must give convincing explanations for letting the goods pass.

Meanwhile, the Comptroller General warned importers and freight forwarders to be ready to drop the tradition of trade malpractices now or be prepared to go to jail. He was addressing shipping industry stakeholders at the Apapa Port in Lagos on the first day of his tour. He made it very clear that his tenure will be that of change from the past decades of corruption in the system to the proper rule of trade regulations. Ali charged the stakeholders to do away with fraudulent practices or face the full weight of the law.

At a forum with stakeholders in Apapa, freight forwarders pledged to cooperate with the new customs boss, telling him to install necessary infrastructures to make a difference in line with

New Comptroller-General

the new order.

Speaking on behalf of the Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), the Director of Publicity, Dr. Kayode Farinto raised the issue of obsolete scanners in the ports and the challenges this is posing for the examination of containers.

He decried physical examination of goods in the ports, a system the terminal operators have devised to cause delays and payment of demurrage. The alert system by the Customs, he suggested, must be uniform and licensing of corporate companies as against persons should prevail.

On his own part, Dr. Eugene Nweke, President, National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF) called for a revisit of the role of the pre-arrival assessment report (PAAR) in trade facilitation.

He called on the new CG to address the issue of over-valuation of imports by customs officers in the ports.

Other stakeholders beamed searchlights on the reduction of the tariff rate to between 0-5%, instead of the current zero to a maximum of 35% so as to attract cargo to Nigeria. Other areas include a publication of benchmark on imported vehicles,

among others, to ensure transparency in transactions. They also suggested training and retraining of clearing agents, centralization and regulation of auction sales of overtime cargoes and condemned Police interference after consignments have been released by customs.

They also said that licenses should not be issued to foreigners as this practice deprived Nigerians of much needed jobs. Their views also covered the need to sanction customs officers who unduly delay the release of cargoes even as fraudulent DTI operators who use their facilities to commit fraud should be identified and sanctioned.

It is recalled that critical stakeholders in freight forwarding have, before now, expressed worry about the delay by the new CGC to hit the ground running by visiting the ports to assess the state of things as well as interact with them on the way forward. Prominent among them is NAGAFF, a principal voice in the Concerned Registered Freight Forwarders Association. In a recent release, the body regretted that the expectation of the freight forwarders may be disappearing because of the slow starting of the new Comptroller General of Customs Col. Hameed Ali (Rtd).

“The freight forwarders who are looking forward to be saved from the

inexplicable extortion in the ports are getting disillusioned. The expectation has been that by now the CGC should have visited the ports and strategic border locations with a view to conferring with the stakeholders. To achieve the mandate of reforms, restructure and revenue collection, we expect that he should start by conferring with the stakeholders with a view to obtaining first-hand information. If Col. Hameed Ali (Rtd.) continues to confer only with officers it may be risky to the mandate of Mr. President and anti-corruption crusade,” they observed.

The freight forwarders continued: “At the moment the rate of corruption has increased because of uncertainty. At present it is to grab whatever you can because you do not know what happens next. The instances of application from unauthorized users of ATM's desk, valuation, CIB enforcement and others have continued in a regrettable proportion. The instances of frivolous and unsubstantiated demand notes from the valuation unit have become unbearable including the extortion therein.”

Now that the eagle has landed and orders are being dished out in a military fashion, industry watchers would want a fundamental departure from the norm in terms of operations and compliance to laid-down rules for the benefit of Nigeria and her economy ●

TINCAN COMMAND

Tincan Island Command Nets N22.4billion For September

The Tincan area command of the Nigeria customs service headed by Comptroller Zakari Jibril generated the sum of N22.4billion into the coffers of the federal government for the month of September.

According to the command spokesman, Superintendent of Customs Chris Osunkwo, the command is expecting more revenue between now and the remaining months of the year.

Osunkwo who spoke on the outcome of the Comptroller-General of Customs' recent visit said officers had been charged to work assiduously in order to shore up government's revenue now that earnings from the oil sector is dwindling. During the visit, the CGC promised to cater for the welfare package of officers, among other

incentives.

“We must deliver for him to seek the impetus to meet Mr President for our welfare because, to whom much is given, much is expected. If we will appreciate a tremendous increase in our welfare, we must deliver to work better. We must shore up the customs revenue now that the oil revenue is dwindling.

“That is why government is not treating customs matters with kid gloves. The moment we are able to work assiduously, we have nothing to fear; he is there for us”, Osunkwo said.

Speaking on the N600billion revenue generated by the service as at the 30th September, 2015, Osunkwo said that the service would soon compete with the oil sector which generated N800 billion as revenue into government coffers within

the same period.

“As at 30th September, NNPC generated N800 billion and some fractions of naira while customs collected N600billion; that is N200billion above what customs made. If we work harder, don't be surprised at the end of the first quarter next year, you may hear that customs had taken over NNPC in terms of generating revenue for government”, he noted ●



Compt. Zakari Jibril, CAC

CGC Intervenes To Save Lilypond Command

The Comptroller-General of Customs, Col. Hameed Ali has promised to do the needful to ensure that business activities are revived at the Lilypond area command. The customs boss gave this indication when he visited the command as part of his working visit to all customs formations in the western zone.

He promised making major stakeholders to fast-track out best ways to ensure the command is functional optimally.

He promised that with time, the problem of stemming of containers to the command would be a thing of the past as the customs high command is working assiduously to harmonize issues between Apapa port and Lilypond container terminal on the container stemming. When this happens, the command would no longer lack containers and this would boost business activities and shore up her revenue generation.

It is recalled that some stakeholders had called on the federal government to convert the Lilypond container terminal into a holding bay for trucks in line with the original plan of the place. Another reason they presented is the low level of activities taking place there.

Responding to this call, Col. Ali said that since there is a customs command in the vicinity that collects revenue for government, Lilypond cannot be converted to a holding bay for trucks.

Earlier in her welcome address, the customs area controller (CAC) of the

command, Comptroller Olubiya R.O. (Mrs) who enumerated some of the challenges of the command said she is optimistic that the command would meet up with her revenue target, especially with the policy thrust of the CGC.

"I am sure when the economy picks up with the vision and support from you, we will indeed meet our expected target in line with your policy thrust of zero tolerance for corruption and indiscipline for effective service delivery".

Among the challenges tabled before the CGC, Comptroller Olubiya said: "the epileptic nature of activities at the command has turned it to near complete dryness; reduced importation due to general downturn in the economy. Concerted efforts made to persuade terminal operators to change their stand on sending containers to the command have yielded little or no result despite wide consultations with them and other stakeholders." She said importers avoid the command due to additional charges collected from the link area on stemmed containers.

Between January and September, 2015, the command received only 1,124 containers, a figure which is too poor for a full-fledged command. The CAC suggested that the

federal government (through the Nigeria Customs Service) should find a way of making stemming of containers to Lilypond official at least to enable her meet the 24-hour clearance policy of the government and her revenue target.

Mrs Olubiya said that if, for instance, 30% of APMT's containers can be allocated to the command, since the terminal is spacious enough to accommodate up to 7,000



Olubiya R.O, CAC, Lilypond

containers, the issue of meeting expected revenue target would be a thing of the past •

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Poultry Products In Nestle Water Nabbed

The Federal Operations Unit (FOU) Zone 'A' recently intercepted and seized a truckload of over 5000 cartons of smuggled frozen poultry products sandwiched among cartons of Nestle bottled water with a 2016 production date.

The seizure took place along the Sagamu-Ijebu Ode express road in Ogun State.

According to the unit's area controller, Comptroller Amade Abdul, the goods' duty paid value is N30, 117,600.00.

The successful Independence Day interception was made by a headquarters' special team led by

Assistant Comptroller of Customs, Shittu Abdulmaruf.

The CAC promised that the unit will continue to degrade the capacity of the dreaded smugglers however sophisticated they may be even as he was glad that his directive to all team leaders for a proactive approach in tackling smuggling has continued to yield fruits.

He added that "The operational dexterity of the unit cannot be compromised, in consideration of the need to protect our country from being a dumping ground".

A suspect arrested in connection with the seizures is expected to give useful clues towards unraveling the major kingpins behind the illicit act. At the appropriate time, the CAC said, arrests will be made after which those indicted will be prosecuted to serve as deterrent to others.

He recalled that since the commencement of 'Operation Hawk Descend,' very remarkable achievements have been made.

"From the look of things, it is certain that our aggressive patrol activities along the flanks and flashpoints have turned on serious heat on the smugglers, thereby forcing them to look for alternative means of smuggling. Unfortunately for them, we are totally determined and committed to



Compt. Amade Abdul showcasing the seizures

this assignment irrespective of whatever their antics may be".

Abdul therefore called on Nigerians to support the customs service in this fight so that the adverse consequences of smuggling can be averted. He revealed that in the series of meetings he had held with team leaders and unit heads, he had admonished them to be professional and combat-ready at all times in checkmating the excesses of smugglers and their cohorts ●

Smugglers Of Military Truck For Prosecution

The Seme area command has vowed to bring to book people who brought into Nigeria a fairly-used military truck that has the potential of undermining the security of the country. The consignment, according to a recent release by the command's public relations officers (PRO), Superintendent of Customs, Taupyen Selechang, has the

inscription 'Use for Transporting Troops'. It was smuggled through the land borders under false declaration.

Reacting to the dubious act, the command's area controller, Ndalati, G.M, said his area works in compliance with the policy thrust of the Customs Comptroller-General (CGC), Col. Hameed Ali (Rtd), which gives no room for nonchalant attitude by officers and men. The arrest, he remarked, did not come to him as a surprise.

He said he has sensitized his officers to go against anything that has to do with proven cases of false declarations, deliberate misapplication of tariff, undervaluation and concealment.

In the month of September, 2015, the command collected a total revenue of N883, 791, 678.00 while 12 seizures with a duty paid value of N3, 094,000.00 were recorded.

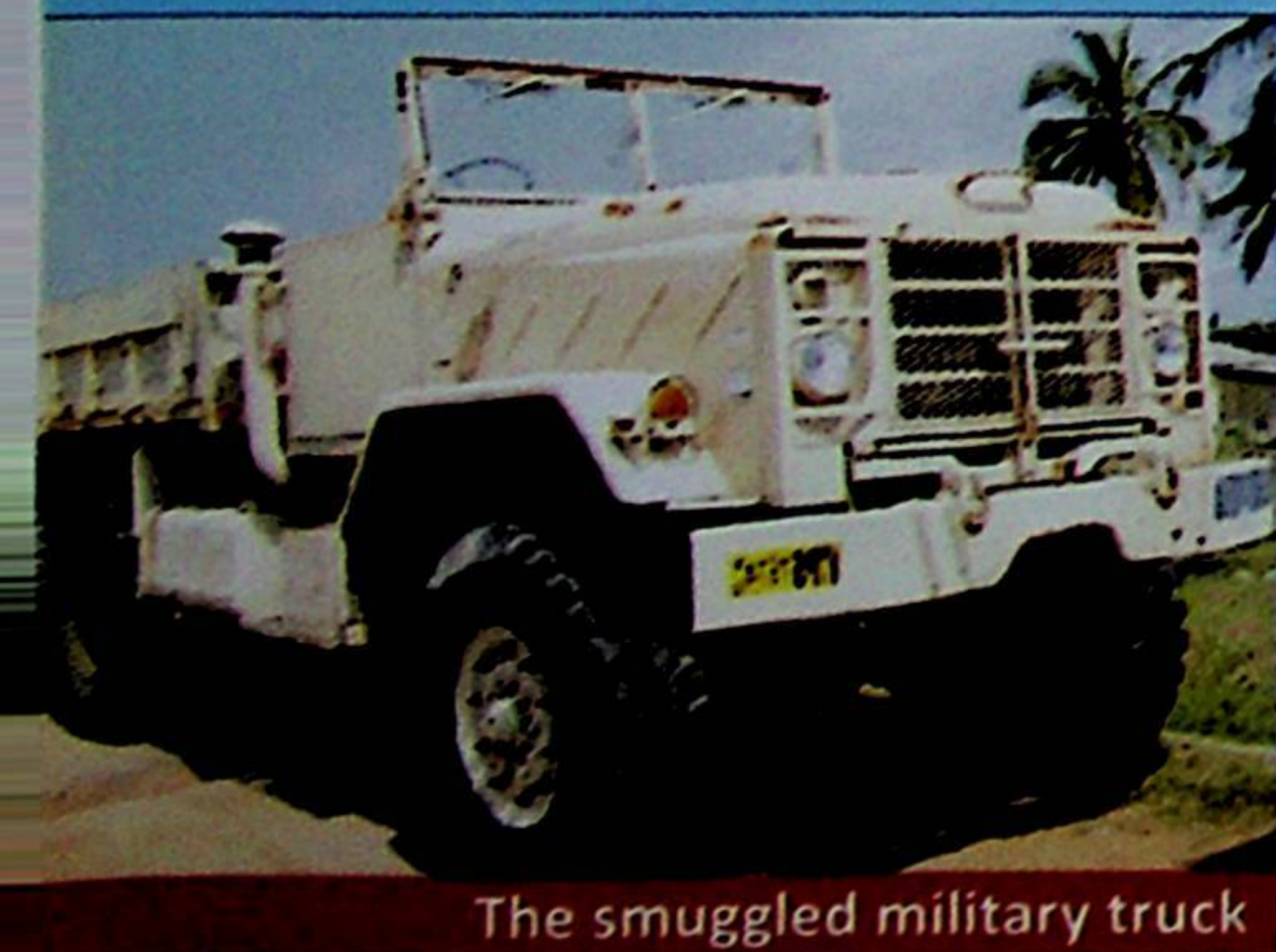
Commending the efforts of his officers and men, Compt Ndalati reminded

them on the need for attitudinal change among themselves for effective service delivery in the current dispensation. While working assiduously for maximum result, he added, they must be careful to do so according to the laid down guidelines and procedures.

The customs boss attributed the reduction in the number of seizures to the aggressive anti-smuggling operations embarked upon by the officers of the command in the spirit of the renewed war against smuggling. He indicated that suspects in connection with the seizures are currently under investigations and would be prosecuted thereafter ●



Ndalati G. M, CAC, Seme



The smuggled military truck

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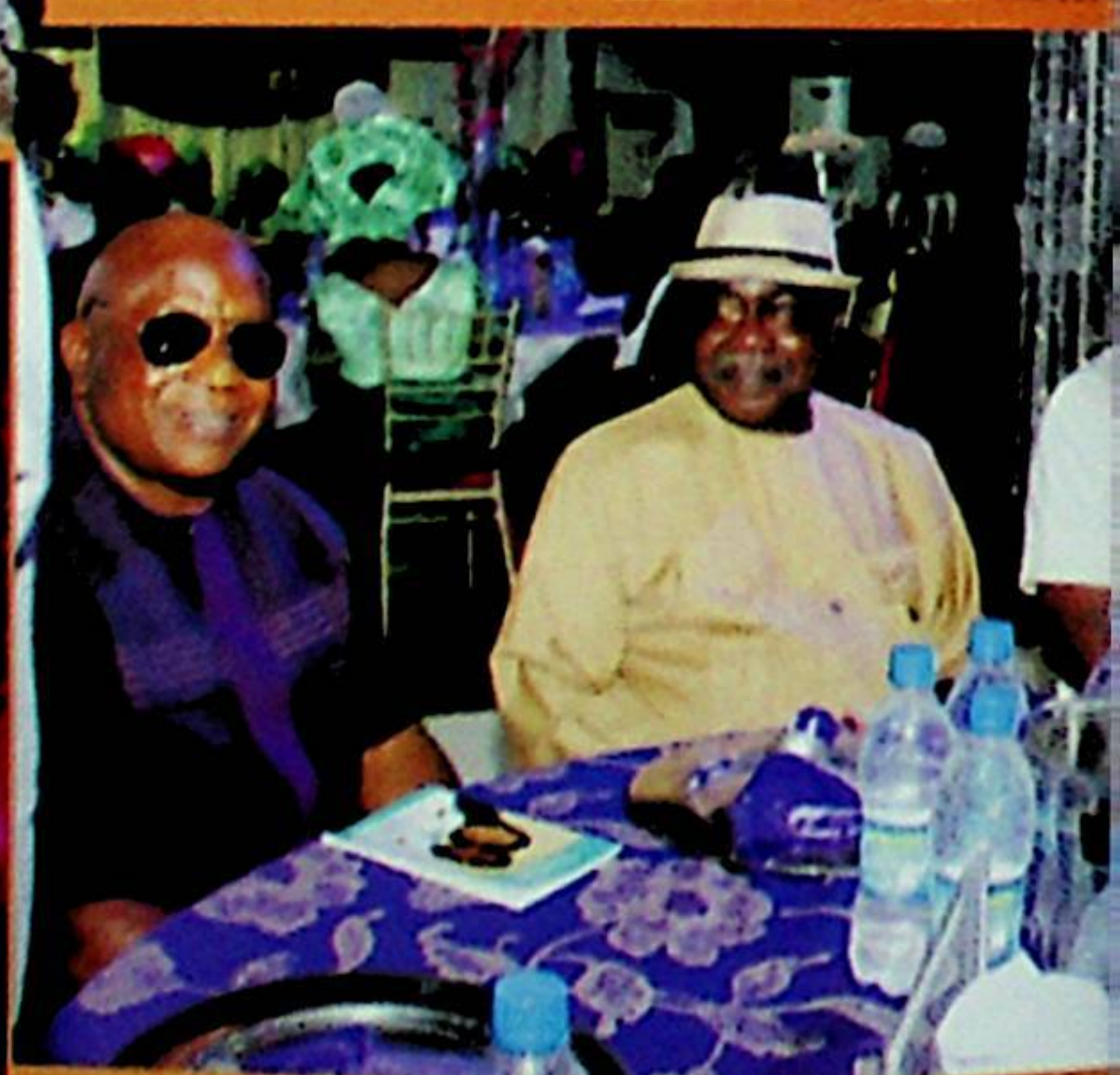
The Influential Maritime & Energy Journal

FANO'S DAUGHTER WEDS

On October 10 2015, Princess Nkechi Ogochukwu Obianigwe , daughter of HRM Eze & Lolo *Damian Emeka Obianigwe , Ezeoha* of Iwhite Owerri, Orlu L.G.A, Imo State and Chairman/CEO, FANO GROUP OF COMPANIES, wedded *Nnamdi Ifeanyi Kanu* son of *Ezinna & Ezinne Wilfred Ifeanyi Kanu* of Ndianiche Uno, Aro-Ndizuogu, Ideato-North L.G.A, Imo State. Venue was Mater Misericordiae Cath. Church, Rumuomasi, Port-Harcourt. Reception was at The Glass House Event Centre, Port Harcourt. The following pictorials capture the event.









ISPS Code, Boko Haram And Threat On Nigerian Ports

Against the background of possible attack on the ports by Boko Haram and the consequent security alert issued by the United States Embassy on Nigerian ports,

IZUCHUKWU OZOEMENA assesses the level of ISPS Code implementation in Nigeria.

The United States Embassy in Nigeria recently issued an alert on the need to increase security surveillance in the ports in Lagos following intelligence reports that members of Boko Haram, the dreaded Islamist terror group, may strike any time.

As contained in a security notice released by Assistant Comptroller-General of Customs (Enforcement and Intelligence), Mr. Dan Ugo on behalf of the Comptroller-General, "the office of the National Security Adviser has forwarded an intelligence report with the picture of a suspected Boko Haram terrorist on the above subject matter.

"The letter of information and the picture are hereby attached for your guidance. You are requested to give the

picture and information wide circulation."

"You are also to remain vigilant, alert and arrest the suspect and his accomplices anywhere you locate them".

Consequently, port operators can confirm that the ease with which people go into the ports has become drastically reduced as there has been an unusual increase in the level of security checks at all access points to the ports in Apapa and Tincan Island.

Reports say in line with the development, a terminal operator, the Port & Terminal Multiservices Ltd (PTML) is not leaving anything to chance. It has asked the PTML Command of the Nigeria Customs Service attached to her facilities to keep close tabs on the movement of people who come to do business with it. As a result, the command has vowed to ensure that only clearing agents with genuine businesses come into the premises. As a first step, clearing agents who hitherto mill around the premises even when they have little or nothing to do are now barred from the facility. According to the image-maker of the PTML Command, Steve Okonma, the agents have been notified of the security alert in the ports and the need to disallow people who have no genuine business to do to mill around. He insists that anybody who wants to enter the premises must get necessary clearance.

On her part, the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF), a prominent freight forwarders' association, has endorsed the move to make the ports secure at all times and steps PTML is taking in this direction even though it may not favour some members of the union. In the Customs & Excise Management (CEMA) Act, there are many conditions a clearing agent must fulfill to qualify to practice. Prominent among these is that he must have a physical office. Surveys show, however, that many agents that access the ports for business do not have offices, a reason they convert any available space in the terminals to meeting points where they loiter for hours constituting security risk.

In line with current security threats in the ports, therefore, their gathering at such points is no longer safe for the

facilities as the possibility of people with hidden agenda mixing up with them and reaching out to commit havoc in the ports is very high.

According to the PTML branch chairman of NAGAFF, Goodluck Onuji, the decision to send all agents out of the PTML terminal was acceptable by his body. "It is for the benefit of everybody; the terminal is just trying to beef up its security. The customs gave us photocopies of pictures of a suspected Boko Haram member. The press this was the reason for the checks." He expressed the notion by people that the terminal is a place where they can go and sleep an evening when they do not have any business to do there.

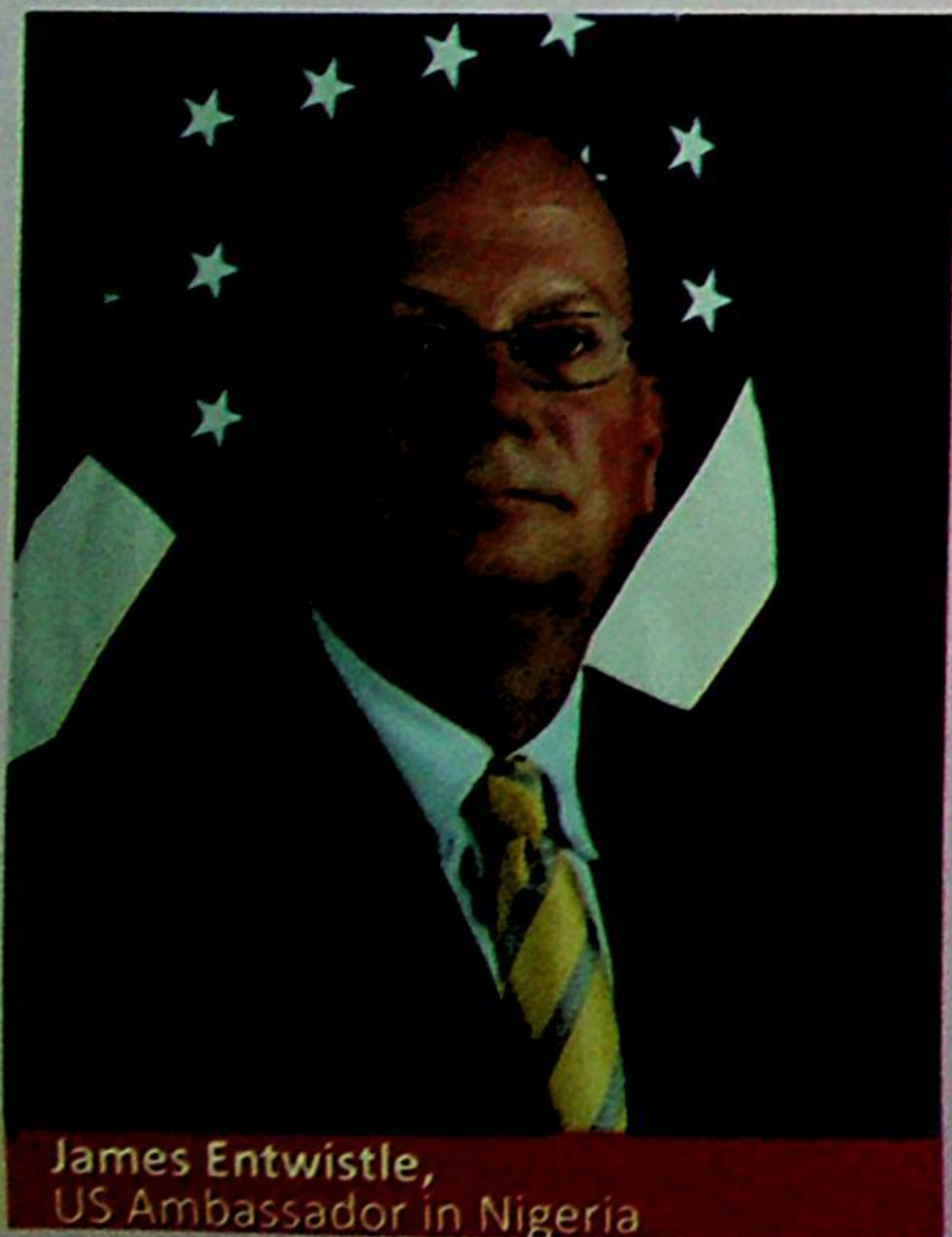
THE ISPS CODE COMPLIANCE IN NIGERIA

Having scaled the hurdle of the 2013 ultimatum by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on full compliance to the ISPS Code, Nigerian ports currently maintain a comfortable position as ports security is accorded top priority.

Over the years, acts of insecurity, lack of safety consciousness and threats of terrorism have pervaded the global maritime landscape. Dishonesty and fraud-like tendencies which have bedeviled activities in the maritime industry have complicated perceived threats of insecurity in the ports. That adequate and proportionate maritime security measures are in place.

Upon being appointed the Designated Authority (DA) for the implementation of the ISPS Code in Nigeria, NIMASA officially stated that the effective implementation of the code in Nigerian ports would involve a continuous year-to-year exercise with committees mandated to periodically inspect Port Facilities (PF) in order to ensure that required standards are achieved and maintained. NIMASA has focused not only on PF listed in the United States Coast Guard (USCG) report but on the generality of PFs in the nation's maritime domain which were placed on the watch over a period of time.

In May 2013, the USCG visited Nigeria and conducted an assessment of the security level of her ports. Issues of non-compliance to the ISPS Code were



James Entwistle,
US Ambassador in Nigeria

noted following which a 90-day ultimatum was slammed on Nigeria to upgrade or face negative consequences.

In August 2013, Patrick Akpobolokemi, then Director-General of NIMASA, the government's Designated Authority (DA) for the enforcement of the ISPS Code in Nigeria, briefed newsmen in Lagos on efforts of the agency to beat the deadline.

He hinted that tremendous successes had been recorded in making Nigerian port facilities ISPS Code compliant.

Following the ultimatum, he said, port facilities in Nigeria started to fully comply with the requirements. Akpobolokemi said that NIMASA has initiated an audit of Nigerian maritime assets to establish number, location and nature of operations of all port facilities and jetties in the country. The audit was expected to facilitate the effective execution of NIMASA's brief as the DA for Nigeria's implementation of the ISPS Code.

The "audit will help the DA capture and catalogue all port/berthing facilities as well as verify their ISPS Code compliance status, NIMASA DG revealed."

"The DA has just recently concluded Verification Inspection Exercises (VIE) on all shore-based PFs (port facilities) in the country. The report of this VIE will form the basis for re-certification of these PFs in line with ISPS code requirements. PFs deemed non-compliant will not be recertified and in extreme cases, attract added punitive action," the NIMASA boss warned.

He explained that one of the problems that had plagued port facilities, jetties and terminals was the lack of understanding of the ISPS Code, its relevance and application.

Akpobolokemi said: "To address this, policies and measures are being put in place to ensure more training and capacity building among not just security personnel but all personnel in the maritime sector as everybody has

a role to play in the ISPS theatre. Security companies that provide guard force personnel to companies operating in the maritime domain will now be required to provide ISPS training for their personnel seeing that they are functionally the primary custodians of the ISPS protocol. These security companies as well as vendors and infrastructure service providers in the maritime sector are undergoing registration with the DA in order to ensure better regulation and to streamline their activities in the maritime security arena.

"In accordance with the ISPS Code, it is the responsibility of the DA to set or change security levels for PFs in its domain. The DA will continue to work closely with the Office of the National Security Adviser and other security agencies in determining operating security levels based on the evaluation of risks and trends as well as intelligence in the various Maritime Security Zones (MSZ). The DA is working on a strategy that will see her develop capacity to gather intelligence independently and thus contribute to the nation's intelligence gathering effort as is the case in many other countries. Furthermore, as the nation's maritime security regulatory body, it is key that the DA be up-to-date with trends and events in both the domestic and international maritime turf. The DA is considering cost-effective ways of ensuring that it builds its domain awareness capabilities."

The NIMASA boss said that critical success factor to the implementation programme will be the capacity and the will to enforce the mandate by a regime of incentives and sanctions, pointing out that in the past, "compliance was

a huge issue as the previous DA lacked capacity to strictly enforce its mandate having lacked constitutional powers to do so."

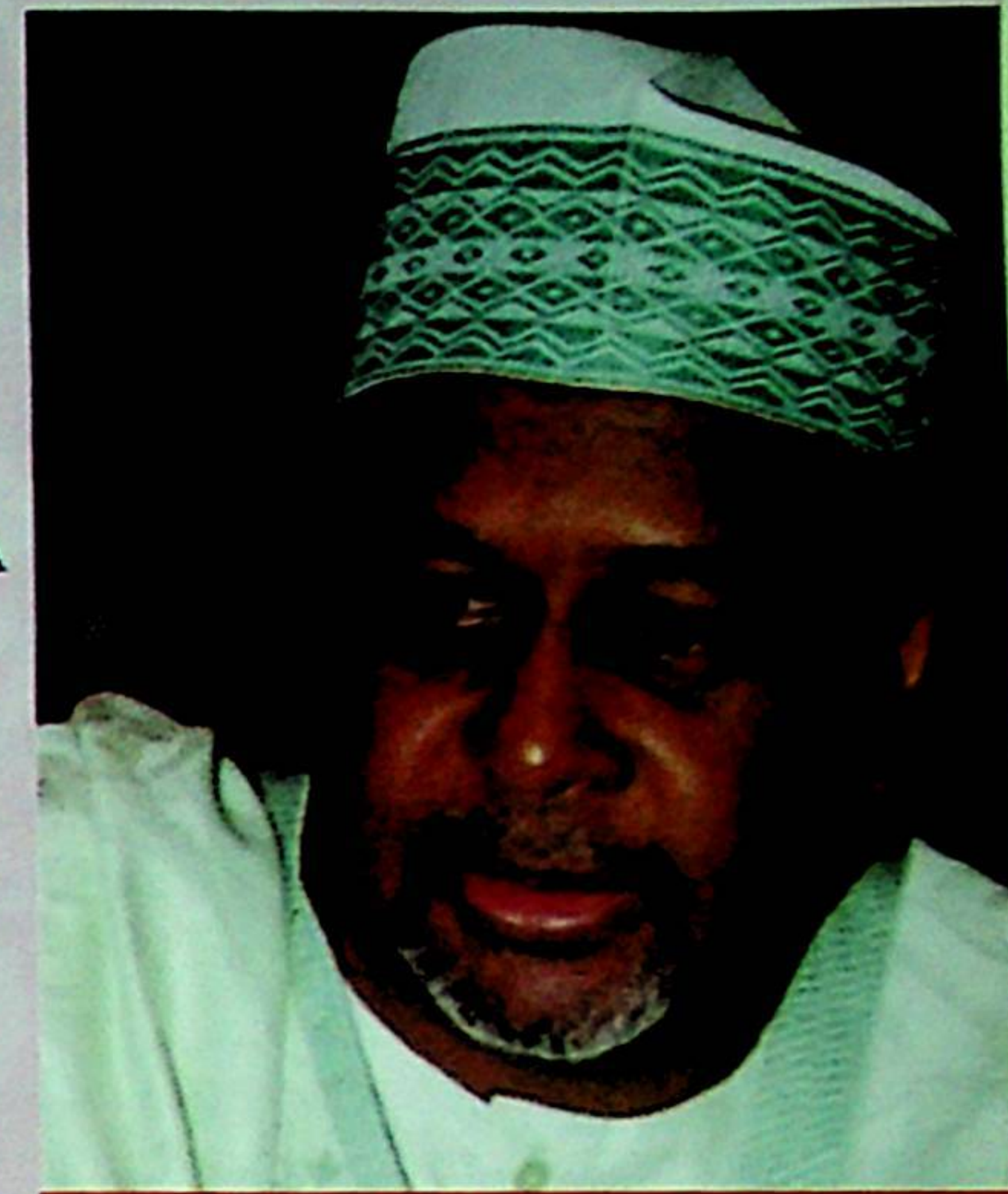
He posited that with NIMASA duly-established by law and possessing enforcement powers, the DA hopes to leverage this in ensuring stakeholders and particularly the port facilities owners/operators remain compliant.

"Considering that the ISPS (Code) is purely a security-related protocol, and given that activities bordering on maritime security are in fact matters of national security, the DA will not go into further details of its implementation strategy," Akpobolokemi said.

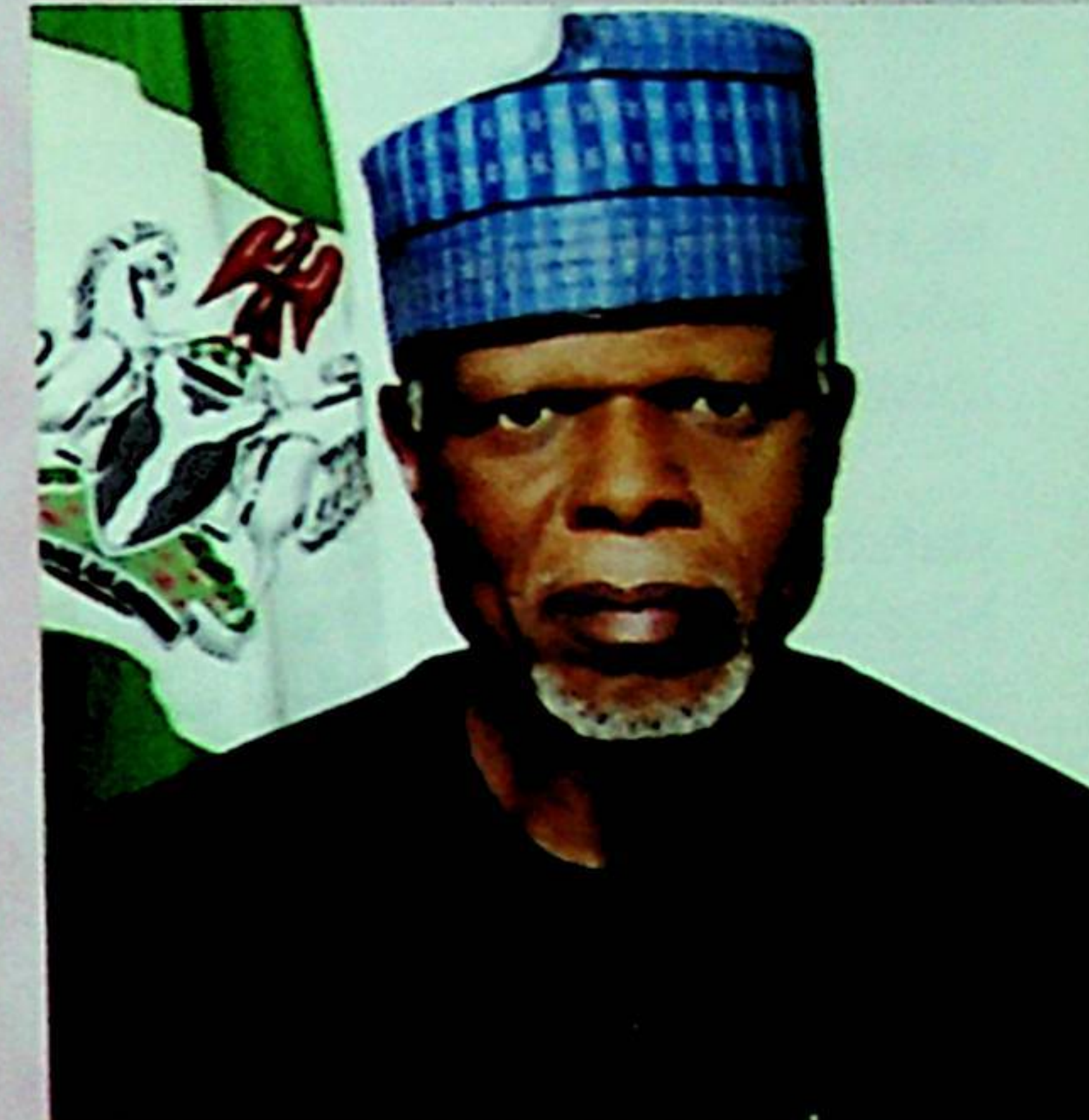
Shortly before the expiration of the ultimatum, however, the US Coast Guard team to Nigeria visited NIMASA. At a meeting with members of the ISPS Code Implementation Committee in Nigeria, the leader, Mr. Tivo Romero, commended the designated authority (DA) for ISPS Code implementation in Nigeria.

Romero said having assessed six port facilities in the country during their two-week visit, the team noticed tremendous improvement and commended NIMASA for the outreach to facility operators. His words: "I must commend the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency for its efforts so far. However, the US Coast Guard will provide required technical assistance to ensure that infrastructural and legal instruments needed for effective implementation of the ISPS Code in Nigeria are put in place. I urge you all to see this project as a voyage which we have all embarked on, that must be concluded."

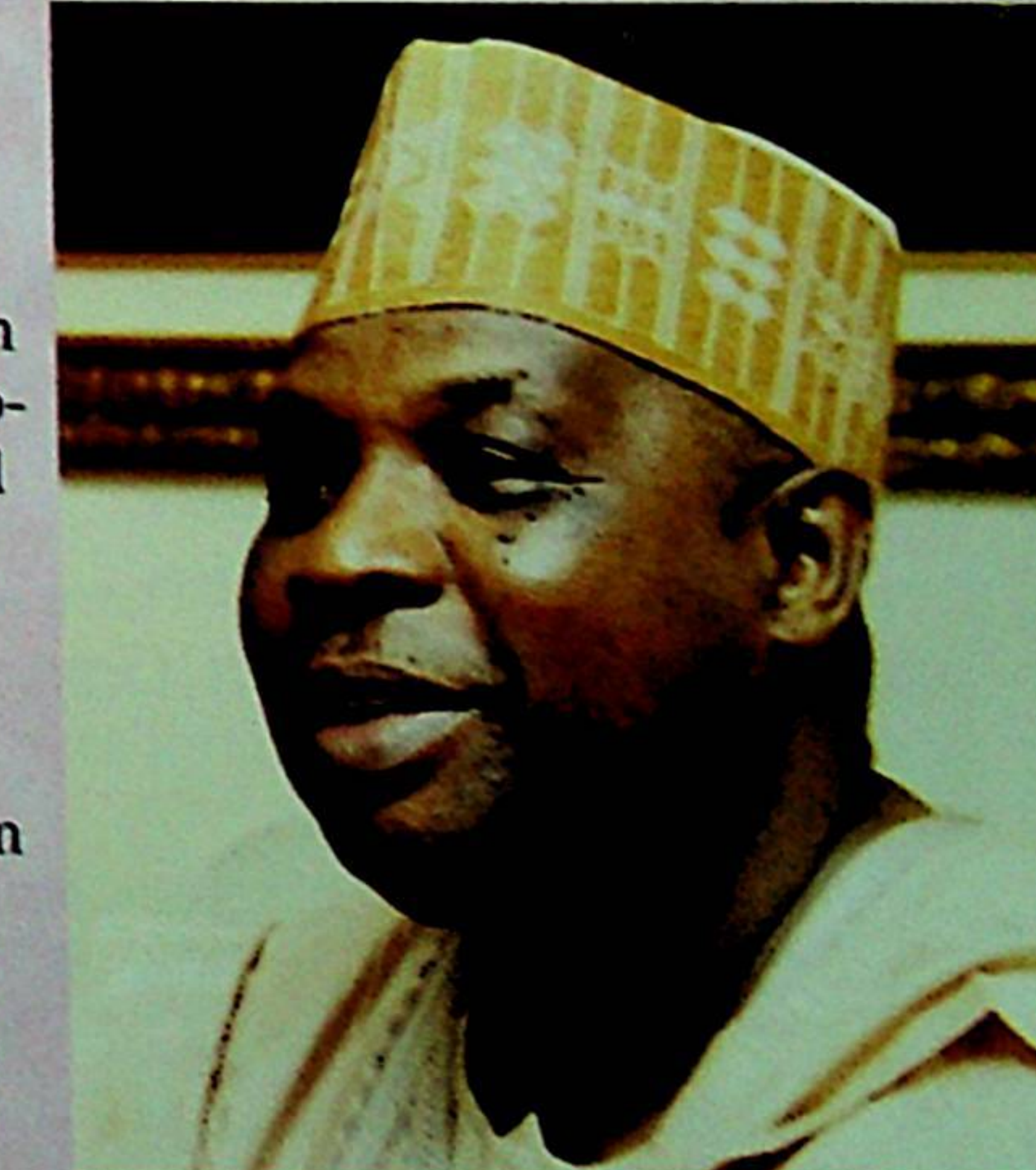
As Nigeria battles



Dasuki Sambo, former NSA



Col Hameed Ali, Customs CG



Habib Abdullahi, NPA MD

with the Boko Haram menace, shipping industry watchers agree that the vulnerable nature of the sea ports must be recognized and necessary security measures put in place to safeguard them. The latest US Embassy alert must always be kept in view.

MAN Oron, Wastes N8bn In 2Yrs On Jetty, Swimming Pool

The Maritime Academy of Nigeria in Oron, Akwa Ibom State may have wasted a total of N8 billion on jetty and swimming pool construction in the last two years.

It was learnt that despite the huge amount spent on the project, the academy has not recorded any meaningful development.

The school which was established by the federal government in 1979, is still struggling to achieve adequate training for seafarers due to mismanagement of resources.

The money was from the statutory 5 per cent of release by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) to fund the academy.

A source at MAN revealed that the management of the institution has not shown any seriousness about the development of the academy contrary to the position being painted by the authorities.

For example, no serious attempt has been made by the institution to provide training vessel for the Academy from the funds released to the school by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, NIMASA.

The source explained: "There is infrastructure decay at MAN, Oron as students are sitting on the floor to receive lectures.

"The management has suddenly increased the tuition by 80 per cent. Our students are withdrawing gradually because of the hike in tuition fees introduced by management."

It was learnt that the Academy's management raised the fees by 100 per cent with effect from the 2014/2015 session. Before the tuition was increased, National Diploma (ND I) and Higher National Diploma (HND I) cadets paid N100, 702, while ND II and HND II paid N61, 340. But with

the increase, ND I and HND I students now pay N200,704, while ND II and HND II cadets will pay N121,980. A lecturer at the academy alleged that thirty-five years after its establishment, cadets of the academy were still sitting on the floor to receive lectures.

Some cadets of the academy, who spoke anonymously over the tuition fees, said that they could not afford the money.

They noted that some of the students had withdrawn from the school.

"We all know that this is a Federal Government institution and we expect the tuition fees not to be on the high side," they said.

Meanwhile, the maritime training institution has appealed to NIMASA to improve the funds allocation to it. In a recent appeal, the Rector, Joshua Okpo, noted that the financial needs of the institution had risen above the amount the law mandated NIMASA to release to it.

According to him, although the law stipulates that NIMASA should release at least five percent of its revenue to the academy, nothing precludes the agency from allocating more funds.

He said the academy needed to build a simulator complex valued at N2.5 billion so as to meet the training requirements of its cadets.

He explained that the establishment of the complex would require the acquisition of a Global Maritime Distress Signal System, radar, ARPA simulator and engine simulator.

Okpo said an audit team from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was expected to visit the academy in January 2016 for the assessment of its facilities.

"We must try very hard to remain on the IMO white list", he



Mr Joshua Okpo, Rector, MAN

stated, even as he appealed to the Federal Government to help in purchasing the equipment.

"Without the equipment for simulator training and certification, we may not likely pass the test," he said.

Okpo said with the installation of the simulators, students of the academy would no longer have to go outside the country for further training and certification •



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Five Star Logistics Terminal To Compensate For Deceased Staff

Entitlements due to late Mr Pius Ifah, a dockworker attached to the Five Star Logistics Terminal in Lagos will be paid in full as soon as management receives report of investigation into the accident that claimed his life. This was stated recently in Lagos by Mr. Bashiru Adesina, Group Chief Accountant of the Terminal. Adesina reaffirmed the preparedness of the terminal to observe safety standards in all her operations even as issues of occupational hazards and safety are always given prompt attention.

"We observe safety standards in all our operations. Since this happened, we have given all the necessary information to the insurance company for the

family to be compensated." He explained that what happened at the terminal that day was purely an accident and could not have been a deliberate act because we are safety-conscious. "The reports will, however, tell us what really happened at the terminal and the necessary actions that will be taken."

The late Ifah, aged 52, died when some heavy-duty pipes rolled off and fell on him. This made other dockworkers to stage a protest which lasted about 12 hours in solidarity with the deceased, an action that led to a temporary stoppage of work. Ifah had reportedly finished offloading the pipes from a vessel at about 3 am. He was said to have been waiting for his colleagues when one of the pipes rolled from the heap and trapped his legs. The impact, according to reports, caused other pipes to roll off, burying him on the ground.

As stated by Adesina, "normally compensations are paid; we are human beings and must do everything possible to cushion the effect of the incident on the family of the deceased." He revealed that there are people who coordinate the issue of compensation as a Union. The family and the company must agree before such payments are made, he said.



Mr Pler Luigi Carrodano, MD, Five Star Logistics

Maritime Law Takes Centre Stage At Book Launch

Female practitioners in maritime law have been urged to show more concern in efforts to expand the frontiers of knowledge in this aspect of legal practice and jurisprudence. Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice Ibrahimauta, gave the charge in Lagos recently at the unveiling of a book entitled *Essays in Admiralty: Sustaining Maritime Development in West Africa*. The launching of the book which was dedicated to the first female Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice Roseline Ukeje, attracted many serving and retired justices, eminent jurists and lawyers from different parts of the country.

Speaking on the book which she says is the second in the series, the author, Mrs Jean Chiazor Anishere said her primary objective was to make available an up-to-date publication on the present state of maritime administration and maritime law in Nigeria with its sustainable developments. In discussing the developments in the maritime sector, she explained, the main aim of the book is to juxtapose these

developments with its sustainability in the Nigerian economy.

Mrs Anishere who is the President of Women International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA) told the audience that during her service years, Justice Ukeje championed justice from different standpoints, utilising her position to advance the essence of maritime law and practice within the ambit of the Federal High Court.

Justice Ukeje construed maritime law as an embodiment of both the letter and spirit expected to expedite maritime law and practice within a society replete with power interplay and struggles. "She was bold and not afraid to disagree with colleagues on legal positions that she felt were unjust, unreliable and that could not stand the test of time." Society and its institutions, Anishere continued, must continually promote the possession of good values as the quintessential way of life. "This, I believe, can be achieved by demonstration through honouring the right people who promote positive values" ●



Rtd Justice Ukeje (in hat) and Jean Anishere (the author of the book)

Group Bemoans Illegal Discharge Of Cargoes In Terminals

Nigerians United Against Theft in the Maritime Sector, An advocacy group, has urged the Federal Government to stop huge revenue losses incurred due to illegal discharge of cargoes in non-designated terminals.

This is contained in a statement issued to newsmen recently by the chairman of the group, Dr Jonas Bankole.

The statement, according to the News Agency of Nigeria, noted that several millions of dollars had been lost in recent weeks following the impunity with which some terminal operators engaged in inappropriate discharge of cargoes.

It said a situation where operators of private jetties allowed certain categories of ocean-going vessels to discharge in their terminals was unacceptable.

The statement said this should be stopped henceforth in line with the new administration's commitment to

blocking leakages.

It recalled that in 2006, the Federal Government classified and categorized ports and terminals and the types of vessels and cargoes to be handled in the respective ports.

The statement expressed concern over the high rate of disregard of rules and regulations by private jetty operators.

"This practice is in clear breach of the regulations of Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) rules and regulations.

"I wonder why the authority is tolerating this development which is causing huge revenue loss to the Federal Government," the statement quoted Bankole as saying in the statement.

According to the statement, unauthorized vessels do berth and discharge cargoes at non-designated jetties.

"I do not see why the authority will close its eyes and allow the Federal Government to be losing \$4.4 dollars per tonne of oil and gas cargoes not discharged at the appropriate and designated terminals," it noted.

The statement recalled that recently,

there were numerous calls to stop all midstream discharge of vessels in Bonny, Rivers, Lagos and other port formations due to sharp practices.

It noted that due to poor supervision, shippers and port operators now circumvent the formalities required for berthing and discharge of vessels in Nigeria's territorial waters.

The statement said due to unhealthy competition and poor supervision by regulatory authorities, importers prefer to discharge cargoes at cheaper rates in non-designated ports than at the appropriate terminals.

"This is a government that needs all the resources to tackle the numerous challenges confronting the nation.

"This is meaning that it will be improper for any person or organization to create avenue for revenue leakage," the statement noted.

The statement said the Federal Government should investigate the diversion of cargoes to ports or terminals in neighbouring countries, saying that the development constituted another source of revenue leakage ●

Nigerian Company Acquires A Dragflow Dredger

Dragflow recently completed the delivery of a new dredger to a client in Nigeria.

The company was contacted by Matag, a Nigerian dredging company, about acquiring a dredger to increase its capacity to dredge sand to supply local markets in Onitsha, Anambra State, and Asaba, Delta State, which is a sister city on the other side of Niger River.

Matag was interested in expanding

its ability not only to sell sand but to undertake reclamation along the river. With a previously owned cutter/suction dredge, which had a digging limit of approximately 10-12m, the company was limited to seasonal dredging.

The River Niger is known to rise as much as 8 meters during the wet season, especially when dams are opened up in Garouwa, Cameroon, which is approximately 1,200km away. Matag needed a dredger that could work

continuously through the season.

Dragflow supplied Matag with a model DRH400E35DF configured to reach a depth of 35m, equipped with a Dragflow HY400 submersible pump. With this solution, Matag has successfully deployed their dredger and has begun to work since the end of July 2015.

Dragflow says the client is "very happy" with the production that is being achieved, as well as the reduced cost of production it has achieved ●

Courtesy: Dredging News Online



Cargo Tracking Note 'll Curtail Sharp Practices

When the cargo tracking note (CTN) is re-introduced in Nigerian ports, rampant cases of sharp practices prevalent in the seaports will give way. Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) Mallam Hassan Bello stated this recently when he received the Comptroller-General of Nigeria Customs Service, Olu Hammed Ali (Rtd) in Lagos.

Bello emphasized that once the advanced cargo information system is in place, cases of under-declaration, concealment and other anti-trade practices would be a thing of the past. He said this in reaction to a request by the Customs helpline man that in

her capacity as the economic regulator in the ports, the Council should end all cases of sharp practices now rampant in the process of cargo clearance. Ali had faulted operations of multinational shipping companies in Nigeria, saying that most of the shipping manifests of consignments they carry are steeped in irregularities.

Calling for synergy among maritime agencies to ensure that importation and exportation of goods are properly documented, the customs boss noted that since the Shippers' Council is the ports commercial regulator,

there is need for her to collaborate with the customs to achieve a common goal. Customs, he explained, has put on ground mechanisms to address the irregularities surrounding shipping manifests.

Bello told Ali that shippers who conceal and under-declare are perpetrating tax evasion. As the CTN is coming in place, he assured, this trend will be checked and when this act is nipped in the bud, revenue generation from the ports



Mallam Hassan Bello, ES, NSC.

will increase.

He said the cargo information system has the capacity to generate credible data. It will also ensure that cargos being imported into the country are safe and secure •

ENL Consortium Wins Global Port Development Award

ENL Consortium, operators of Terminals 'C' and 'D' of the Lagos Port Complex Apapa, recently became the global cynosure of all eyes at the annual Seatrade event in Dubai when she won an award as the best operator in shipping and maritime across the Middle East, Africa and the

Indian Subcontinent. The award which any Nigerian company is winning for the first time, is on Port & Container Terminal Development.

The awards held under the patronage of Sultan bin Sulayem, chairman of Dubai Ports Customs and Free Zone Corporation and chairman of Dubai Maritime City Authority, were attended by over 700 guests at the Joharah Ballroom at Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai.

Hosted by international broadcaster, Stephen Marney, with a guest personality appearance from Formula 1 world champion, Damon Hill, the Seatrade awards programme is widely recognized as the region's premier maritime awards.

Chris Hayman, chairman of Seatrade, started the evening's proceedings by saying, "When we introduced this Awards programme back in 2003, this region had aspiration to become a major global centre for the maritime industries.

"That aspiration is now a substantial reality and many of the individuals and organizations who have contributed to this transformation are present here this evening.

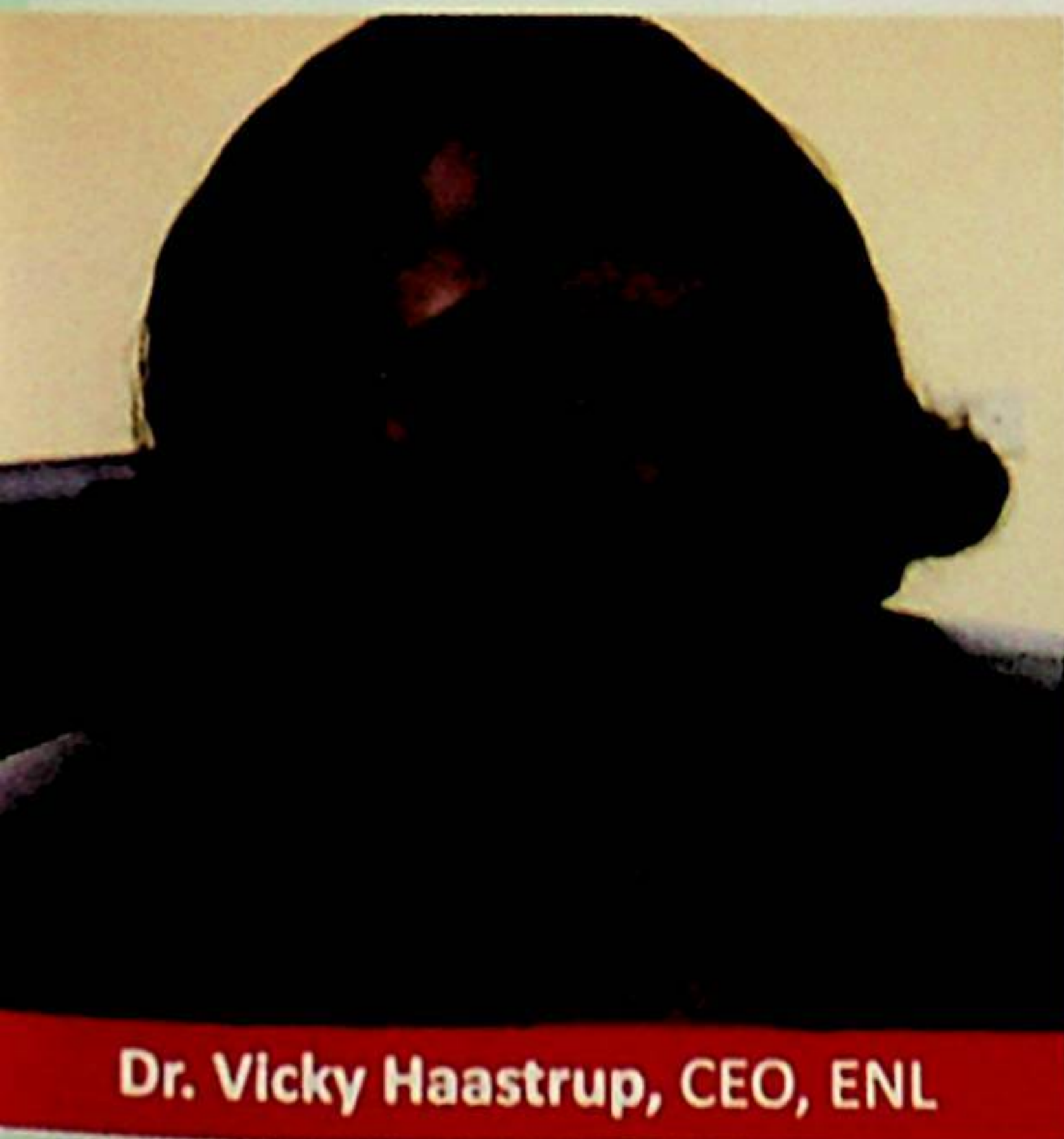
"In the past year, this region has continued to progress as a centre for world class shipping companies with a network of ports and terminals that is state of the art, and the world's biggest concentration of ship repair expertise. Its maritime service sector is

heading in new and exciting directions. Its offshore marine industry is coping well with a challenging market environment.

"In the wider Middle East, this year has seen the completion, exactly on schedule and in just one year, of the New Suez Canal, an achievement on a tight timetable which has been described by the International Chamber of Shipping as 'simply astonishing'."

A total of the 25 awards honouring individuals, organizations and companies were announced at the celebration of shipping and maritime in the region.

Other award winners include DP World and United Arab Shipping Company •



Dr. Vicky Hastrup, CEO, ENL

West Africa Container Terminal (WACT), Onne, Boosts Trade In Nigeria

West Africa Container Terminal (WACT) Onne has positively impacted trade and economic activity in Nigeria by increasing the competitiveness of the port. This makes the terminal attractive for shipping lines coming from all parts of the globe. Vessels now sail directly from Asia (particularly China), America and Europe to Onne including vessels as large as 4000TEUs capacity. This has had a direct moderating impact on the cost of goods as compared to the position in the past.

This the WACT achieved by a ₦29bn investment made in the areas of yard capacity, introduction of sophisticated cargo-handling equipments and electronic solution for invoicing and payments, thus reducing vessel- waiting time, dwell times and above all reducing the number of days for containers to arrive Nigerian markets from the origin of shipment.

West Africa Container Terminal Onne began commercial operations in 2007, and has proven to be one of the most customer-friendly ports in Nigeria and the most efficient gateway to most markets outside the greater

Lagos area.

The terminal has a capacity of 314,000 TEUs and 250 reefer plugs with a depth of 12 meters.

Speaking recently, the Managing Director of WACT, Mr. Martin Jacob stated that the Onne Port is now more competitive with an average of three direct vessel calls per week from China. Since 2011, he explained, this has grown by 22% year-on-year, a development he attributed to the visible investments and developments being made in the terminal.

He also said that the WACT Onne is a one-stop shop business environment that houses shipping lines and government agencies within the terminal to reduce travel time for customers and increase the ease of doing business in WACT.

Mr. Jacob said, "West Africa Container Terminal is determined to becoming the new hub of economic activities in Nigeria, being the gateway to major markets in Onitsha, Kano, Abuja, Nnewi, Enugu, Aba, Ogidi and Port Harcourt which will in turn boost the nation's economy. Hence our resolve to keep investing and increasing the competitiveness of the WACT so that



Mr. Martin Jacob, MD, WACT

larger ships can call the port directly and importers do not have to travel hundreds of thousands of miles to collect their goods when they can easily do that in Onne".

WACT is also planning to begin a Roll on-Roll Off service where vehicle importers can clear their cars in Onne and also increase stacking area by 100,000 square meters •



The West Africa Container Terminal, Onne

Court Of Appeal Finds That Ship Owner “Got What It Agreed To Pay For”

In a decision which has wide reaching implications for ship owners, the Court of Appeal recently upheld the decision of the Commercial Court that a bunker supply contract incorporating a retention of title (“ROT”) clause together with a right to consume the bunkers before payment is not a contract to which the Sale of Goods Act 1979 (“SOGA”) applies.

It is an implied condition of SOGA contracts that the seller has the right to sell the goods. If the seller is unable to transfer property to the buyer at the agreed time, it will usually amount to a breach of a condition and a failure of consideration, and the buyer will be relieved of its

obligation to pay.

In this case, on the premise that the bunker supply contract was a contract to which the SOGA applied, the ship owner sought to argue that it was not obliged to pay the O.W. entity with whom it had contracted for the supply of bunkers because the O.W. entity was unable to transfer title in those goods (because it had not paid its supplier and so did not have good title to transfer).

Whilst the parties had characterized the agreement as a sale contract, the Court found that this did not reflect the substance of

the obligations. The contract contained a 60 day credit period and an express right for the bunkers to be consumed before payment. The Court found that the strong likelihood that the bunkers would cease to exist by the time payment fell due meant that the owners were not contracting for the transfer of property in the whole of the bunkers, instead they were contracting for the delivery of bunkers “which they had an immediate right to use but for which they would not have to pay until the period of credit expired”.

The Court of Appeal therefore characterized the

contract as one under which goods were to be delivered to the ship owner as a bailee with an immediate license to consume, coupled with an agreement to sell any quantity remaining at the date of payment.

As a whole, this decision has important implications for ship owners who, when contracting for bunkers on terms which are prevalent in the industry, have lost the protection of the SOGA. This may not be the final word if permission to appeal to the Supreme Court is granted •

Source: *Reed Smith*

MARINE INSURANCE

IUMI Calls For Retention Of Vessel Records On Change Of Ownership

The International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI) is calling for vessel owners and technical managers to make records available that provide important information on the condition of the ship and its machinery when a ship changes ownership.

“The current trend to remove these records has the potential to impact on the new owner’s ability to operate the vessel effectively on takeover”, says Helle Hammer, Chairman of IUMI’s Political Forum

“Without continuity of information, it could be some months before the new crew and management are fully familiar with the vessel and machinery plant. During this time, there is an increased risk of machinery breakdown leading to inability or impairment to navigate, fire and explosion, or personal injury from component failure.

This, of course, affects the risk profile of the vessel”, she says.

A position paper, released by IUMI recently states that non-transfer and destruction of records is commonplace and the organization questions why this practice is seemingly accepted by new owners. Failing to hand over these important documents puts the incoming vessel managers, owners and underwriters at a serious disadvantage. The position paper cites a number of reported incidents.

IUMI believes that insurers are being exposed to claims that could be avoided if adequate maintenance records had been provided.

It says that a significant improvement to the vessel’s

risk profile would be achieved by requiring the maintenance records, operating reports, and spares inventory to be part of the permanent service history of the ship and covered by the regulatory regime, possibly through additional clauses in the sale and purchase agreement.

However, IUMI is not hopeful of achieving an early resolution to this ongoing issue despite having jointly (with the Joint Hull Committee) petitioned IACS with a suggested rule change to require the maintenance of ship records as a condition of classification.

The International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI) is a professional body which is run by and for its members. IUMI represents national and international marine insurers and considers issues of interest



Mrs Helle Hammer

to the worldwide marine insurance industry. IUMI currently has 48 national associations as members, protecting and advancing their interests. IUMI’s roots date back to 1874 •

Courtesy: International Union of Marine Insurance

Vessel Collision: We Acted Early To Save Lives, Says NIMASA

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) has explained that an existing memorandum of understanding (MOU) existing between her and owners of Bonga Field facilitated the rescue operation of crew of the ill-fated tanker involved in a recent mid-sea accident. Acting director-general of NIMASA, Mr Haruna Baba Jauro disclosed this in Lagos at a press conference by the agency to explain issues involved in the unfortunate marine accident which claimed the lives of some seafarers.

There had been a mid-sea collision between *MT Tank* (IMO no 8681460) owned by Twinstomp Energy Ltd and another vessel named *MT Elixir* (IMO no 9282510) within the vicinity of Bonga terminal offshore Warri, Delta State. In the process, *MT Tank* was cut into two with a portion going under. The midnight incident occurred at about 65 miles off shore, just about 10 nautical miles south-west of the Bonga FPSO near Warri.

Speaking in Lagos, Jauro said the agency was on top of the situation as arrangements were



MT Tank, after the collision

concluded for an underwater inspection of the sunken portion of the vessel so as to ensure that persons trapped inside the ship's cabin could be rescued alive.

He debunked insinuations that the agency was slow in deploying her search-and-rescue team to the scene. After receiving messages from her Search and Rescue Coordinating Centre in Kirikiri, Global West Vessels swung into action with her boats in line with an existing pact with the agency regarding distress at sea.

Therefore, he said, it is not true that the agency did not respond on time to the distress call after the collision, because '*NIMASA KIBERI*,' a vessel belonging to Global West Vessel, was used for the rescue operation. This stand was corroborated by Vincent Udoye, NIMASA's Deputy Director, Maritime Safety.

"NIMASA has a contract with Global West for 10 years; we are still using Global West Vessels to facilitate search and rescue," he said.

"A team comprising marine specialists and naval officers has been dispatched to the location of the

incident to contribute to the ongoing search and rescue operation," Jauro revealed.

NIMASA had earlier announced that it rescued three crewmembers and recovered one body from the accident.

The four naval officers were deployed on-board *MT Elixir* to secure the vessel and crew against attack by pirates in a location prone to sea robbery and rough weather conditions.

While sympathizing with the families of the deceased and those still trapped in the vessel, the director-general assured that the agency was in talks with the vessel owners to ensure that victims are duly compensated.

On speculations that crew trapped in *MT Elixir* would all be dead even before rescue comes, the agency said, "we cannot just give up hope that there is nobody alive there."

The agency expressed optimism that even until the very last minute, crew trapped under water could be rescued alive. "We are still hopeful until the very last minute" ●



Mr Haruna Baba Jauro,
Acting Director-General of NIMASA

MAERSK Signs LOI To Boost Cargo Flows In Eastern Indonesia

Danish shipping, trade and energy conglomerate, Maersk Group has signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Indonesia's Coordinating Ministries for Maritime Affairs and Economic Affairs to enter an alliance on the maritime and economic development of Bitung in Eastern Indonesia.

The scope of collaboration will include areas such as the processes around customs clearance, cargo release and other border procedures; the flow of goods through the port; the regulatory environment; and the shipping liner connectivity of Bitung in a regional and international perspective.

The LOI is expected to enhance inter-island connectivity, and is in line with the Indonesia New Maritime Strategy. With trade being more developed in the Western part of Indonesia, the aim of the LOI is to accelerate trade and economic development in Eastern Indonesia. Bitung has therefore been identified as a special economic development zone and a strategic national transportation hub.

Focus will be placed on driving increased connections from Eastern Indonesia to more developed parts of the country, as well as regional and global export markets. "We want to support the development of Eastern Indonesia by understanding the challenges and opportunities for the supply chains of key commodities such as tuna, coconut and their downstream products, as well as the potential of aquaculture development and the need to improve vocational skills in this area. We see the added value this will bring and expect this will enhance the economic activity and trade of the country," said Jakob Friis Sorensen, Director of Maersk Line in Indonesia.

The signing ceremony was held at the maritime seminar "Increasing Connectivity," during the Danish State Visit to Indonesia.



"We have been operating in Indonesia for more than 50 years, and we see the potential for increased

exports out of the Eastern Indonesia. We are excited to partner with the Indonesia government to enable trade and develop for example, the fishing industry, which will create jobs and economic development to the local communities. If successful, our aim is to make Bitung a model for replicating good practice in other parts of Indonesia to bring about increased trade for the

country," said Jakob Friis Sorensen •

Source: World Maritime News

Port Privatization: Strike Looms At Greek Ports

The Crew Union of Towage Companies in Greece is about to stage a towage strike in Greece which will affect vessel movements at all Greek ports and terminals.

The strike is scheduled to take place last week in October and will consist of daily four hour stoppages.

During the two stoppage periods, vessels will not be able to berth or sail from ports or terminals.

The Crew Union of Towage Companies in Greece said that the action is being pursued as a sign of protest against the planned privatization of Piraeus and Thessaloniki ports.

Greek ruling party Syriza proposed in September to sell the country's two biggest ports – the Port of Thessaloniki and Piraeus Port – under the same terms.

The Greek Government invited China's Cosco Group, Maersk Group's APM Terminals, and Philippines-based International Container Terminal Services (ICTSI) to present their bids for a 51% stake in the Piraeus port. The

same terms would be offered to potential bidders for the Thessaloniki Port Authority (OLTH), which is expected to get a new owner by June 2016.

The deadline set by the Greek government for binding bids was set for the end of October. However, based on the ongoing developments in Greece following general elections in September, it is expected that the bidding processes would be delayed.

The proceeds from the sales and privatization of national assets are expected to reach EUR 6.4 billion by 2017. The privatization is a prerequisite for Greece to gain access to around EUR 85 billion offered through a new bailout programme •

Source: Inchcape Shipping Services (ISS)





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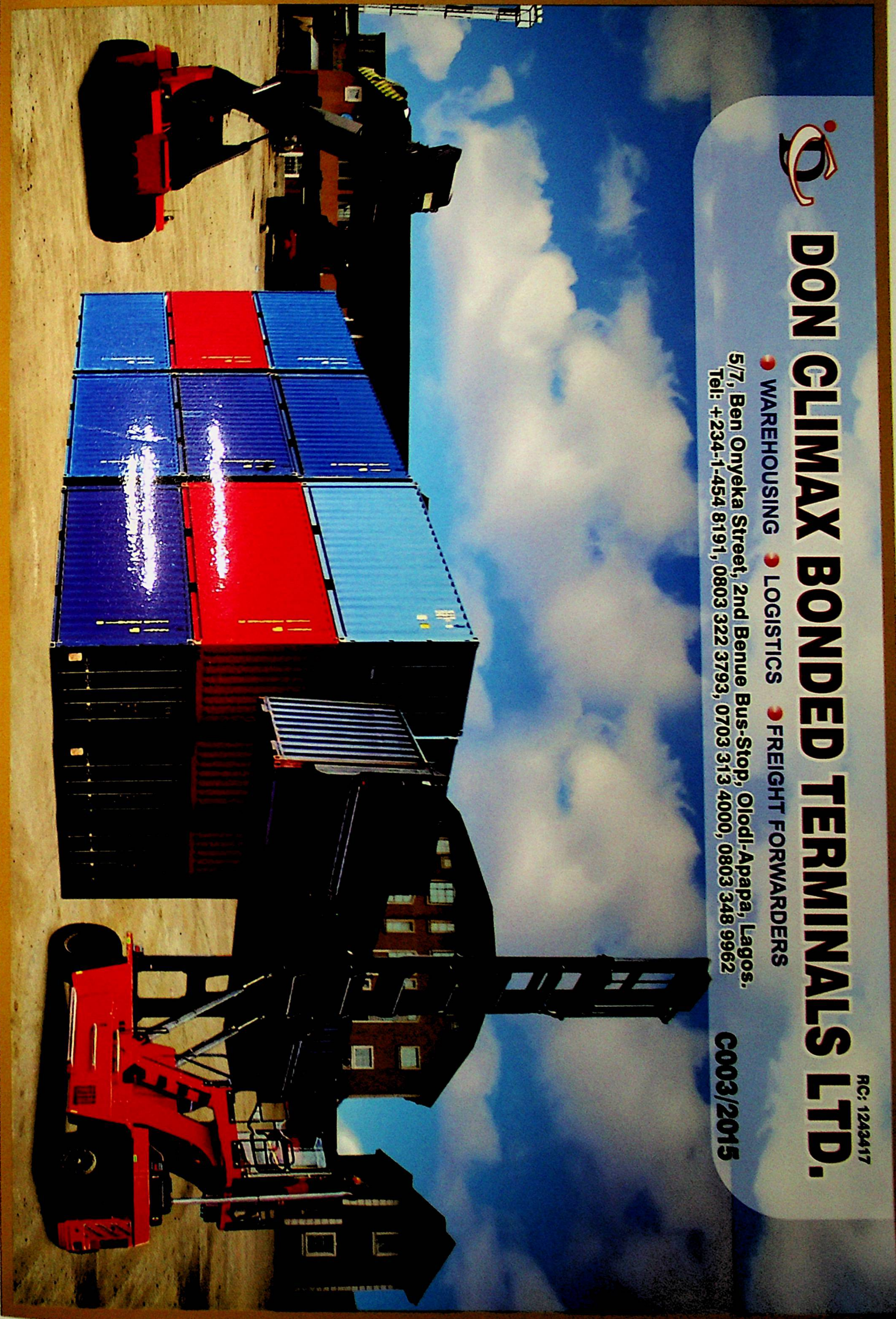
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COUNTRY/LOCATION

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Nigeria, Ibeju
Nigeria, Oboko
Benin
Ethiopia
Rep. Congo

PLANT TYPE

(Integrated Plant)
(Integrated Plant)
(Integrated Plant)
(Integrated Plant)
(Integrated Plant)
(Integrated Plant)

COUNTRY/LOCATION

South Africa
Tanzania
Zambia
Senegal
Cameroon
Cote d'Ivoire

PLANT TYPE

(Integrated Plant)
(Integrated Plant)
(Integrated Plant)
(Integrated Plant)
(Grinding Plant)
(Grinding Plant)

COUNTRY/LOCATION

Ghana, Takoradi
Ghana, Tema
Liberia
Sierra Leone
South Sudan
Kenya

PLANT TYPE

(Grinding Plant)
(Import Terminal)
(Grinding Plant)
(Import Terminal)
(Integrated Plant)
(Integrated Plant)