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The Guardian

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WEEKEND

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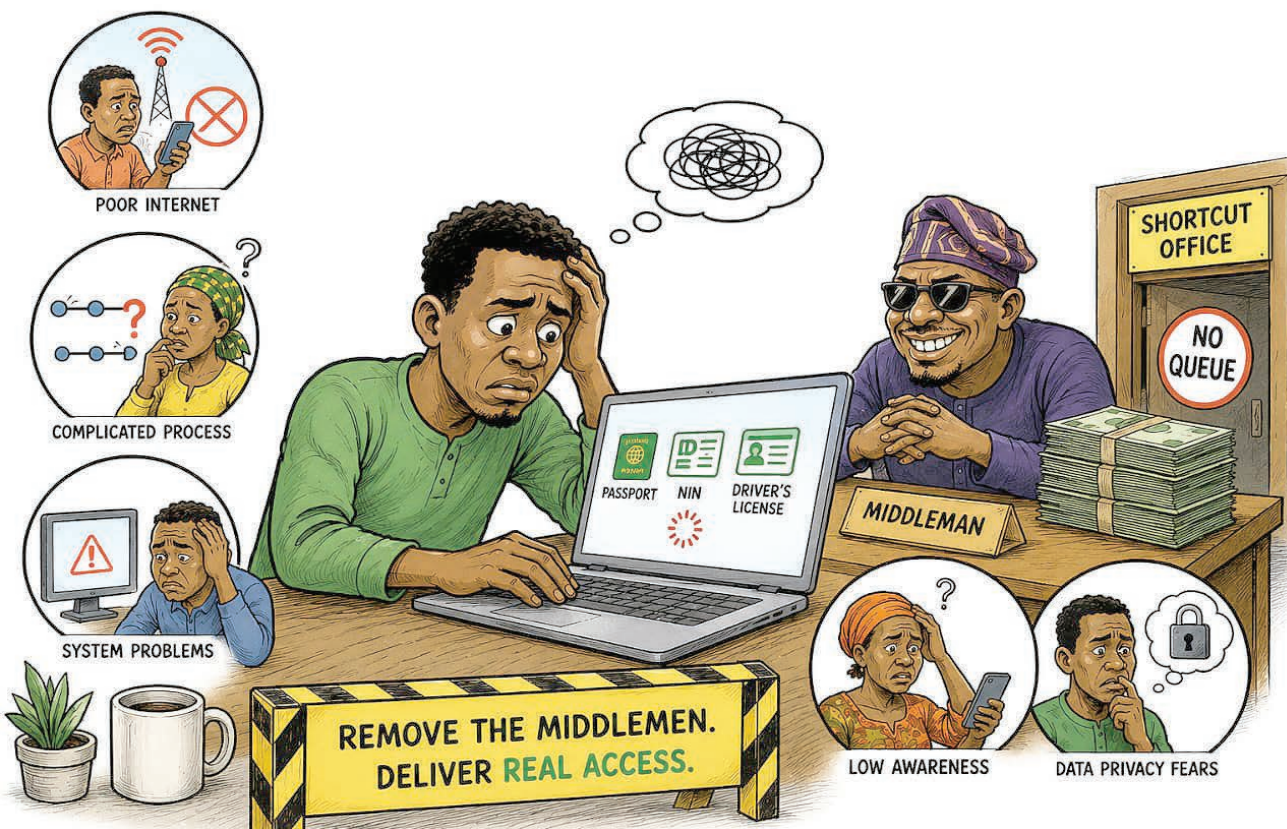
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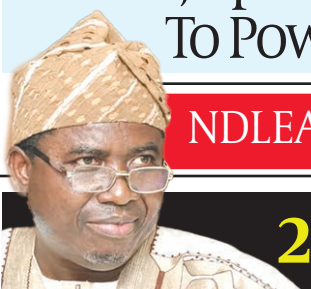
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REJOINDER

ON PURPORTED WAEC RESULT CRISES AS ALLEGED BY A STAFF VIA PUNCH NEWS PUBLICATION ON AUGUST 28, 2026

The attention of The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has been drawn to a publication made by Punch News on August 28, 2026 claiming that an official of WAEC had attributed candidates' poor performance to purported issues within the Council.

WAEC wishes to clarify that the individual named in the report, Mr. Olanrewaju A. Fadehan, is a staff of the Council. He was recently involved in a case of misappropriation of hundreds of litres of diesel from the WAEC Awka Office underground tank storage and after investigations, it was found that he, as next supervising officer in the Branch Office (while the Branch Controller was away from the Office) held a meeting and agreed with some other staff to perpetrate fraud by covering up the record of misappropriated diesel. They agreed to doctor the Office records and attempted to write off the misappropriation, by raising coupons to cover the recorded losses, as if the Office had used the misappropriated diesel.

He and the erring staff were thereafter sanctioned. He was sanctioned with a four-week suspension with attendant loss of pay with effect from May 1, 2026. He returned to the Office by June 1, 2026 and immediately proceeded on examination duties at his Office. By June 5, he had produced his defamatory statements in video and print forms and published them on social media platforms. He was never sanctioned with Demotion as he falsely claimed. He should be asked to substantiate his claim of being demoted.

The accusations he has been making in the public space are unsubstantiated, speculative, and lack credible proof. He has defamed the Council repeatedly and told the public that he was being targeted for his supposed whistleblowing efforts. This is far from the truth. It is important to also note that Mr. Fadehan is still a staff of the Council and his employment has not been determined. He has published that his employment has been determined while continuing to earn salaries from the Council. His allegations have been investigated at various levels and found to be false. He has been spreading falsehoods and sensational materials to spite the Council.

In view of the fact that the staff is well aware of the falsity of his statements and still goes ahead to pass them off as facts and truth, it is obvious that the statements are aimed at damaging the Council's reputation. He has been given various opportunities by the Office to substantiate his claims but has not done so. Rather, he continues to elevate spurious statements to the level of unfounded claims in order to stir public sympathy, blackmail the Council and tarnish the well earned reputation of the Management and staff of WAEC. He has only weaponised his bitterness at the sanction meted out to him, against WAEC Nigeria.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Council firmly states that there was no "mass failure" in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) for School Candidates, 2026. Statistics readily available in the public space shows candidates' rates of performance for the examination and WAEC's module for remarking of scripts, upon request, is still operational upon request from schools.

The WASSCE for School Candidates, 2026 results were subjected to WAEC's rigorous and standardized internal assessment processes before release.

The general public is hereby requested to be wary of the lies of Mr. Fadehan, as necessary steps have been taken to institute legal action against the staff. WAEC's Stakeholders are further advised to disregard any misleading reports and always verify information through the official WAEC channels.

Thank you.

Issued by the Public Affairs Department

Signed: Moyosola F. Adesina- anipr

Head, Public Affairs

WAEC, Yaba, Lagos,

Friday, 28th August, 2026 For: Head of National Office

Tears, Jubilation As 146 Woro Kidnap Victims Reunite With Families

From **Mansur Aramide** (Ilorin) and **Njadvara Musa** (Maiduguri)

RESIDENTS of Woro and Kaiama communities in Kwara State trooped out en masse on Friday to receive the 146 victims of the Woro kidnap attack amid dancing, drumming and jubilation as they reunited with them.

Many residents embraced their relatives and friends, shedding tears of joy as they welcomed them home.

The *Guardian* learnt that the Kwara State government gave out N80 million cash to support the victims after rehabilitating them for 21 days.

The government gave the victims between N200,000 and N1 million each with adults receiving N1 million, youths N500,000 and children N200,000 to enable them restart life after the trauma.

The Chairman of Kaiama Local Council, who is also the Chairman of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Kwara State chapter, Alhaji Abubakar Abdullahi Danladi, disclosed the gesture at the palace of the Emir of Kaiama while celebrating the return of the victims. He described the return of the victims as a great and memorable occasion for the people.

He commended President Bola Tinubu and Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq for their efforts

- **Kwara Govt Disburses N80m Cash Support**
- **Families Seek Action On 1,500 Missing Persons In Yobe**
- **Troops Neutralise 21 Boko Haram, ISWAP Terrorists In Adamawa**

in securing the safe return and rehabilitation of the victims.

According to him, the state government had done well by keeping the victims under rehabilitation for 21 days in Ilorin before reuniting them with their families.

He said 146 victims had been reunited with their families, while three others were still receiving treatment in hospital.

"We want to specially thank Governor Abdul-Razaq for the cash support. Adults received N1 million each, middle-aged youths received N500,000, while children received N200,000 each to support them to start again and settle well," he said.

Danladi urged members of the public to support and encourage the victims, noting that they needed collective assistance to fully recover from the trauma.

He also stressed that security was everybody's responsibility, urging residents, village heads and other stakeholders to support security agencies and promptly report strange persons or movements in their communities.

The Village Head of Woro, Alhaji Umar Saliu, described the safe return of the 146 victims as good news for the community.

Saliu also called for sustained support for the victims to regain their mental strength and overcome the psychological effects of their ordeal.

He commended the state government for commencing the rebuilding of shops burnt during the attack, saying the development would help revive economic activities in the area.

The traditional leader also appealed to the government to support farmers who had fled the community because of persistent attacks.

"Agriculture is our mainstay. Our farmers have lost everything. The government should please support them with assistance to start again," he said.

The Chairman of the Intervention Committee between the government and Woro Community, Mr. Ahmed Ibn Ahmed, said 13 people were still in captivity, appealing to the government to intensify efforts to rescue them.

Ahmed said over N80 million in cash support had been distributed to the victims, appealing

to the government to strengthen security in the area, particularly communities sharing boundaries with the national park.

According to him, criminals were taking advantage of the national park, making it necessary for the government to strengthen security around the area.

He further appealed to the government to restore electricity to Woro and other communities still without power supply.

One of the rescued victims, Mariam Ayuba, expressed delight over her freedom and thanked the governor for the financial support.

She said she would use the money to revive her salon business, which had become crippled following her ordeal.

Another victim, Amira Saliu, said she was extremely happy to reunite with her family and friends after spending six months in captivity.

"I can't express my feelings. I am so happy that I have lost words. I thank Almighty Allah for my safety and the governor for the support.

"I will use the money wisely and plan myself. I will try to forget the experience and move on with my life," she said.

Woro community was attacked on February 3, this year, with over 100 people killed and 176 abducted. The victims were rescued on August 5.

Meanwhile, families of the 1,500 missing persons in Yobe State have urged government agencies and humanitarian organisations to intensify efforts to trace their loved ones and establish their whereabouts.

The distraught families made the call on Thursday in Damaturu during activities to mark the 2026 International Day of the Disappeared Persons.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in Damaturu, disclosed that more than 1,500 people were registered as missing in Yobe, out of over 17,000 cases being tracked across Nigeria.

Head of the ICRC Sub-Delegation in Yobe State, Sayd Rashid Hassan, said the figures could represent only a fraction of the actual number of missing persons.

Hassan added that more than 50 per cent of those registered in the state were children when they disappeared from their communities. He said the ICRC was working to prevent family separation, reunite families, establish the fate and whereabouts of missing persons and protect the dignity of deceased persons.

He, therefore, called for stronger systems to document and identify unidentified bodies, noting that more than 50 families in Damaturu had received support through the ICRC's Accompaniment Programme.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng



The rescued Kwara state Woro attack victims reunited with their families.

New NBA President Vows To Build 'Bolder Bar,' Speak Truth To Power

From **Obinna Nwaoku**, Port Harcourt

THE Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has entered a new chapter with the inauguration of its 33rd President, Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya (SAN), who has promised to build a "bolder Bar" that will speak truth to power, defend judicial independence and demand accountability from institutions of government.

Badejo-Okusanya assumed office in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, with a wide-ranging agenda that combines national advocacy with an aggressive focus on the welfare, economic security and professional development of lawyers.

In one of the strongest messages of her inaugural address, she said the NBA must be independent enough to challenge those in power, disciplined enough to command credibility and courageous enough to act whenever fundamental rights, judicial independence and the rule of law are under threat.

She equally said the NBA would not become an appendage of government, saying: "We will engage gov-

Osigwe Urges Support, Warns Against Unfounded Allegations

ernments constructively but we will not be captured by any government, party, region, religion, interest or individual."

She emphasised that while the NBA would collaborate with governments where such engagement advanced the public good, the association would not allow itself to be captured by any government, political party, region, religion, interest group or individual.

"Our loyalty is to the Constitution, to justice, to the rule of law and to you, the members whose mandates we hold in trust," she said.

Badejo-Okusanya said her administration would support the judiciary while demanding integrity, efficiency and accountability within the justice system.

"We will defend judicial independence but we will not be indifferent to delay, conflicting decisions, corruption or conduct that diminishes public confidence," she noted.

According to her, respect for institutions should not be interpreted as si-

lence in the face of their shortcomings, stressing that genuine respect requires the courage to help institutions improve.

She also promised that the NBA would engage governments constructively but would challenge them whenever necessary, insisting that such engagements would be guided by "facts, fairness, discipline and boldness."

Her position, she explained, was not an attack on the judiciary but a commitment to strengthening it.

"Respect for institutions does not require silence about their shortcomings. True respect requires the courage to help them become better," she said.

Also, Badejo-Okusanya promised a major technology-driven overhaul of NBA services explaining that membership-related services—payments, stamps, enquiries, continuing professional development and access to benefits—should become easier, faster and more transparent.

According to her, a service portal would soon allow members to submit their credentials and areas of interest for consideration for appointments and service opportunities.

She also announced plans for highly subsidised electronic law reports for members.

The NBA affinity card is equally expected to return in an upgraded form, combining payment functionality with negotiated discounts on airlines, hotels, supermarkets, pharmacies and other essential services.

In a significant welfare intervention, the new president said the NBA would engage the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice over compliance with the Legal Practitioners' Remuneration Order.

She also plans to establish a committee to explore lawful mechanisms for encouraging payment of living wages to vulnerable lawyers.

The objective, she said, is to make proper remuneration a professional standard rather than leaving individual lawyers to negotiate from positions of weakness.

Healthcare is another major plank of the new administration, as Badejo-Okusanya disclosed discussions with the African Medical Centre of Excellence, in partnership with King's College Hospital, London, for discounted comprehensive wellness screening for lawyers.

She said the proposed partnership could also facilitate medical outreach programmes across NBA branches, including basic checks capable of detecting warning signs before serious conditions develop.

She disclosed that the administration would also explore possible support mechanisms for indigent lawyers requiring further medical care.

"A healthier Bar is a stronger Bar, and a stronger Bar is a bolder Bar," she said.

Meanwhile, the immediate past President of the NBA, Mazi Afam Osigwe (SAN), urged members of the association to rally behind Badejo-Okusanya, declaring that her victory was based on competence and merit rather than tokenism.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

News

Oil Sector Reforms Yield Fruits As Rig Count Hits 73

By Moyosore Salami

NIGERIA'S upstream petroleum industry is entering a period of renewed activity, with new rig deployment coinciding with the advancement of a major deepwater oil and gas project that could attract as much as \$21 billion in investment.

The latest developments have strengthened the investment narrative around Nigeria's petroleum sector under NNPC Limited Group Chief Executive Officer, Bayo Ojulari, whose leadership has focused on improving operational efficiency, encouraging disciplined investment and accelerating commercially viable projects.

Figures released by the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) show that Nigeria's total rig count rose to 73 in March 2026 compared with 72 rigs in both January and February.

The land segment remained the dominant component of the industry, accounting for 52 rigs. Offshore activity also recorded an increase, moving from 11 rigs to 12, while swamp operations held steady at nine rigs.

Overall, the March rig count was 22.6 per cent higher than the corresponding period in 2025. The increase suggests that exploration and production activity is gaining traction as operators and investors respond to improv-

• NNPC, Partners Move To Develop Bonga Deepwater Project

ing conditions within the upstream environment.

There is, however, an important qualification to the figures. The total rig count measures rigs in the sector, not necessarily rigs working at a particular moment. NUPRC data show that only 31 of the 73 rigs recorded in March were active. The remaining rigs were on standby, stacked or undergoing mobilisation.

The distinction does not diminish the significance of the overall increase, particularly because a larger rig base can support greater drilling and development activity as projects advance.

At the same time, NNPC and its partners have taken another major step towards developing the Bonga South-West/Aparo deepwater project.

The OML 118 development is regarded as a landmark project because of its potential scale and investment requirements. It is estimated to require between \$15 billion and \$21 billion over its lifespan and could reach peak production of approximately 175,000 barrels of oil per day. The project could also deliver about 140 million standard cubic feet of gas daily at

peak production, making it important not only for crude oil output but also for Nigeria's gas supply ambitions.

NNPC has signed key agreements with Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited, Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria Deepwater Limited and Nigerian Agip Exploration Limited. These agreements are intended to advance the project towards a Final Investment Decision.



Deputy Chief of Staff to the Lagos State Governor, Sam Egube (left); Secretary to the Lagos State Government, Barr. Abimbola Salu-Hundeyin; Executive Assistant to Lagos State Governor/Head, Lagos State Office of Diaspora Affairs, Dr. Jermaine Sanwo-Olu; Lagos State Deputy Governor, Dr. Kadri Obafemi Hamzat; the Assistant Minister and Director-General for African Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Ms. Takahashi Misako; Assistant Director, First Africa Division, Mr. Yoshihiko Inagaki and Head of the Development Cooperation Section, Embassy of Japan, Ms. Hitomi Nikura during a 'Courtesy Visit' by the Assistant Minister and Director-General, at the Official Residence of the Deputy Governor, in Osborne, Ikoyi, Lagos... on Friday.

PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

Nigeria, Thailand Target Enterprise Development As Agric Cooperation Deepens

From Monday Osayande, Asaba

NIGERIA and Thailand have strengthened bilateral cooperation in agriculture with a new partnership focused on agricultural education, modern aquaculture, youth development, technology transfer and enterprise creation.

The collaboration, formalised through the signing of a Record of Discussions involving the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), Kasetsart University (KU) and the Federal Cooperative College, Oji River (FCCO), Enugu State, is expected to create new opportunities for Nigerian youths seeking careers and businesses in the agricultural sector.

The agreement was signed on Thursday during a ceremony and luncheon dialogue attended by senior government officials, diplomats and representatives of the participating institutions from both countries.

A major component of the partnership is the establishment of a standard fish farm at FCCO fully funded by the Government of Thailand.

The facility is expected to provide students and other beneficiaries with hands-on training in modern aquaculture, while serving as a centre for practical learning, technology transfer, innovation and skills development.

NDLEA Trains Over 100 Counsellors To Improve Drug Rehabilitation Services

By Bertram Nwannekanma

THE National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has begun a nationwide training programme for more than 100 counsellors as part of efforts to improve the quality and consistency of treatment and rehabilitation services for people struggling with drug use.

The training, which commenced at the NDLEA Academy in Jos, Plateau State, is aimed at equipping counsellors with modern therapeutic skills and standardising rehabilitation practices across the agency's treatment facilities nationwide.

Coordinated by the Directorate of Counselling, Treatment and Rehabilitation (DCTR), the exercise brings together counsellors from NDLEA formations across the country.

It is the first agency-driven capacity-building programme of its kind for NDLEA counsellors in several years.

For the participants, the programme represents more than professional development. It is expected to strengthen their ability to respond to the changing nature of substance use disorders and provide better care to clients undergoing rehabilitation.

Speaking at the opening of

the first phase of the exercise, NDLEA Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Brig-Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd.), represented by the Director of Counselling, Treatment and Rehabilitation, ACGN Bashir Ibrahim, said the training was critical to revitalising staff morale and strengthening the agency's rehabilitation services.

In a statement issued by the agency's Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, Marwa said: "This initiative will equip our counsellors with modern therapeutic tools to deal with the growing complexities of substance use disorders while ensuring that people receive

ing treatment at NDLEA facilities get evidence-based and quality interventions."

He said the training would also help to harmonise counselling practices by introducing uniform protocols across rehabilitation facilities operated by the agency's state commands.

According to him, other objectives include improving counsellors' clinical skills in dealing with emerging psychoactive substances and co-occurring mental health disorders, aligning rehabilitation practices with national and international standards, and strengthening ethics, confidentiality and quality assurance.

Nigerian Scientist Leads AI Research Team On Safer Breast Cancer Treatment

By Gbenga Salau

A Nigerian scientist, Dr. Eli-Ajah Kolawole Oladipo, has led an international research team that used artificial intelligence to identify promising animal-derived molecules that could pave the way for more targeted breast cancer treatments with fewer side effects.

The study, published in the Future Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences, combined AI-powered drug discovery with advanced 3D protein modelling to identify therapeutic peptides capable of targeting breast cancer-driving proteins more effectively than an existing FDA-approved anticancer peptide in computer simulations.

Breast cancer remains one of the world's deadliest diseases among women, accounting

for about 36 per cent of female cancer diagnoses globally and millions of new cases every year. Conventional treatments such as chemotherapy, surgery and radiation often damage healthy cells alongside cancerous ones, while many tumours eventually become resistant to existing drugs.

To address the challenge, Oladipo, who is based at Adeleke University and the Helix Biogen Institute, led researchers from Nigeria, Ethiopia, the United Kingdom and the United States in designing potential cancer-fighting molecules using AI instead of relying solely on years of laboratory testing.

The international team included Omolara Omoboye Adegboye, Stephen Feranmi Adeyemo and Modinat Wuraola Akinboade of Helix Biogen Institute; Prof. Bamidele

Abiodun Iwalokun of the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research; Dr. Olumide Faith Ajani of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in Ethiopia; Dr. Olumuyiwa Elijah Ariyo of Afe Babalola University and Federal Teaching Hospital Ado-Ekiti; Prof. Helen Onyeaka of the University of Birmingham; and academic collaborators at Stony Brook University in New York.

Speaking on the significance of the research, Oladipo said the project demonstrated how AI could dramatically speed up the search for safer cancer therapies.

"We turned to artificial intelligence to design precise, nature-inspired therapeutics aimed at developing treatments that can target cancer cells while sparing healthy tissue," he said.

Rather than manually testing thousands of compounds in laboratories, the researchers deployed machine-learning algorithms and Colab AlphaFold2, an advanced protein-structure prediction system, to screen a global database of more than 1,500 natural peptides.

The AI platform evaluated the compounds for structural stability, toxicity and allergenic potential before narrowing the search to three leading candidates derived from animal sources.

The shortlisted molecules were then tested through virtual simulations against two proteins that play critical roles in breast cancer progression—Matrix Metalloproteinase 1 (MMP1), which enables cancer to spread, and Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor (EGFR), which accelerates tumour growth.

Abia At 35:

Cleric Affirms Kalu's Performance, Blames Decline On Successive Governments

By Joseph Onyekwure

BISHOP Silas Eke of the Kingly People's Assembly has said former Abia State governor, Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, left behind a prosperous and politically influential state in 2007, arguing that the decline witnessed in subsequent years should be attributed to successive administrations.

Eke, who reacted to former Aviation Minister Osita Chidoka's assessment of Abia State at 35, said Chidoka was right to acknowledge Kalu's role in projecting the state onto the national stage during his eight-year tenure as governor.

In a statement on Friday, the cleric said any objective assessment of Abia's democratic journey must distinguish between the condition of the state Kalu handed over in 2007 and what it became in the years that followed.

According to him, Kalu's administration gave Abia visibility economically, politically and in sports, while Aba emerged as one of the major commercial centres in the country.

"I agree completely with Osita Chidoka that Orji Uzor Kalu put Abia firmly in the national conversation and made the state punch above its weight," Eke said.

Aiyedatiwa's Approach To Governance Deserves Recognition, Praise—Group

From Adewale Momoh, Akure

A GROUP, the Asiwaju Media Team, has said the Ondo State Governor, Lucky Aiyedatiwa, has changed the narrative of the government being perceived as rigid and inaccessible to ordinary citizens.

According to the group, the Aiyedatiwa-led administration has provided a government that is more open, accessible and inclusive, while also strengthening the security architecture of the state through intelligence and proactive crime-fighting measures.

In a statement signed by its Director-General, Emorioloye Owolemi, the media team emphasised that Aiyedatiwa's approach was largely preventive, creating a peculiar challenge where citizens rarely celebrate tragedies that never occurred.

The group also argued that the same principle applied to the administration of President Bola Tinubu, noting that many Nigerians do not celebrate a government for preventing a crisis because they never experience the crisis.

Owolemi stressed that governments that successfully prevent crime often receive less recognition than those that respond dramatically after a crime has already occurred. He, however, clarified that this did not mean insecurity had disappeared completely, but that prevention, intelligence gathering, surveillance and proactive security measures could stop incidents from becoming widespread crises.



Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara (left); Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sunday Aneke; Rivers State Deputy Governor, Prof. Ngozi Odu and former Deputy Governor, Tele Ikuru, during the inauguration of reconstructed run-way and military apron at Nigerian Air Force Base Port Harcourt ...on Thursday
PHOTO: NAN



Nigeria's Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique, Ambassador Okechukwu Kingsley Onaga (right) presenting his Letters of Credence to the President of Mozambique, Mr. Daniel Francisco Chapo at the Presidential Palace in Maputo ...recently



Second Vice President, Athletics Federation of Nigeria, Ms Aku Aghazu (left); Event Manager, Power Oil, Ijeoma Obi; Head of Commercials, Enugu Air, Mr John Eze; Commissioner for Sports, Enugu State, Mr Lyord Ekweremadu; Managing Director, Nilayo Sports Management Limited, Mrs Yetunde Olopade and Marketing Manager, Energy and Hydration Seven Up Bottling Company, Ms Omokehinde Thomas, during a news conference on Second Enugu International Marathon in Enugu... on Friday. PHOTO: NAN



Lead, Private Sector Engagement and Investment, National Talent Export Programme. Oluwajoba Oloba(left); Principal Education Officer, Employment Department, Ministry of Wealth Creation and Employment, Lagos State, Habebah Ibrahim; Programme Director, Nigeria Ishk Tolaram Foundation, Oje Ivagba; Director of Employment, Ministry of Wealth Creation and Employment, Shitta Lateef Damilola; Communications Lead, Public Relations and Strategy, Nigeria Ishk Tolaram Foundation, Ayanfejesu Famubode and Director, NITDA IT hub (NITHUB), University of Lagos, Prof. Victor Odumuyiwa, at the 2026 Ishk Tolaram Foundation Vocational Skills Graduation in Lagos. PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

Metronotes

MoiPayWay Technologies Holds Kwara Tech Fest 2026

AFIRM, MoiPayWay Technologies Limited, is set to host the Kwara Tech Fest 2026 in Offa to provide global technology, investment and innovation opportunities for the people. The two-day festival will connect founders, developers, investors, institutions, sponsors, exhibitors and emerging talent while presenting Kwara as Nigeria's next technology frontier. Scheduled for October 20-21, this year, the festival is aimed at strengthening Kwara's position in Nigeria's technology and digital economy. In a statement, its Chief Executive Officer, Damilola Parkinson, said the event is expected to bring together technology leaders, startup founders, investors, developers, students, corporate organisations, government institutions, universities and international partners for two days of innovation, investment discussions, product exhibitions and practical collaboration. The event would create direct connections between local talent and organisations seeking new markets, investment opportunities, skilled professionals, institutional partnerships and emerging technology solutions, he added.

Tinubu's Electric Buses Timely Response To Workers' Plight — BAT-IG

By Kehinde Olatunji

THE Bola Ahmed Tinubu Ideological Group (BAT-IG) has commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for the deployment of 37 electric buses in Abuja under the Renewed Hope Mass Transit Programme, describing the

initiative as a practical response to the transportation challenges facing civil servants. The group said the intervention was particularly significant because it came shortly after its Convener, Bamidele Atoyebi, submitted a proposal

to President Tinubu on August 13, 2026, urging the Federal Government to provide affordable transportation for workers across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). Atoyebi, according to the group, made the proposal after engagements with civil

servants at the National Broadcasting Commission, a military hospital and other federal institutions in Abuja on August 12, where workers expressed concerns over the rising cost of transportation and its impact on their incomes.

NAL Inducts RCCG Pastor, 45 Others, Urges Promotion Of Indigenous Languages

By Isaac Taiwo

THE Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL) has inducted 46 new members into its fold, including Prof. Oladele Balogun, a contemporary Nigerian philosopher and

Senior Pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). The induction was held during the 28th convocation, induction of new members

and investiture of regular and honorary fellows of the Academy. Speaking at the event, NAL President, Prof. Andrew Haruna, called on the Federal

Government and sub-national governments to prioritise indigenous languages as part of efforts to strengthen national identity, intellectual development and nation-building.

By Suliya Tella

ITOLO Girls' Secondary School, Lagos, will commemorate 45 years of cherished memories, enduring friendships, and educational heritage with a landmark

Lagos School Marks 45th Anniversary

homecoming on Saturday, September 5, 2026. The celebration, with the theme: "Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present," will bring together alumnae, for-

mer teachers and staff, students, families and friends of the school to celebrate its rich legacy and the lasting impact of an Itolo education. The anniversary provides an

opportunity to reconnect across generations, celebrate achievements, preserve shared memories and recognise the people and experiences that have contributed to the school's history.

Rotary Club Of Omole-Golden Installs Dr. Omowunmi Bakare As 23rd President

By Opeyemi Babalola

THE Rotary Club of Omole-Golden, District 9111, with over 100 active members, is set to usher in a new chapter

of leadership and humanitarian impact as Dr. Omowunmi Qubrat Bakare is installed as its 23rd President for the 2026-2027 Rotary year.

The Investiture and Fundraising Ceremony, scheduled for Saturday, August 29, 2026, will bring together corporate leaders,

philanthropists, development partners and community stakeholders to celebrate leadership, service and the power of partnership.

CELSIR Awards Seed Grants To Selected Formerly Incarcerated Persons

By Sunday Aikulola

To improve Nigerian's quality of life, the Centre for Legal Support and Inmate Rehabilitation (CELSIR) recently awarded business seed grants to selected formerly incarcerated persons.

The grants were presented during CELSIR's Development Forum. The initiative forms part of CELSIR's broader approach to reintegration, recognising that successful reintegration does not end when a person leaves a correctional facility. It has been

observed that returning citizens often face the difficult realities of rebuilding relationships, overcoming stigma, restoring trust and finding sustainable means of livelihood. The business seed grants build on CELSIR's Basic

Entrepreneurship Programme (BEP), a one-month entrepreneurship training implemented in collaboration with ONE Foundation. It combined learning with practical sessions led by experienced professionals.

Justice Akinyemi To Deliver Keynote Address On Judiciary's Role In Data Protection Sept. 1



Akinyemi

JUSTICE Abiodun Akinyemi of the Court of Appeal (JCA) is set to deliver the keynote address at PrivCon 2026, scheduled to hold on Tuesday, September 1, 2026, at The Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos. Entitled, "From Unfamiliarity to Competence: The Role of the Judiciary in Advancing Privacy and Data Protection Rights in Nigeria," Akinyemi is expected to explore how Nigerian courts have moved from limited exposure to privacy-related disputes toward a more developed understanding of data protection law, and what this shift means for the enforcement of privacy rights going forward. The keynote comes at a time when Nigeria's data protection regime, anchored by the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) 2023, continues to take shape through regulatory guidance and an emerging body of case law.

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Despite Digital Push, Nigerians Still

By Suliyat Tella

NIGERIA'S push to move government information and services online predates the country's current digital transformation drive. The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was created in April 2001 to implement the Nigerian Information Technology Policy and coordinate information technology development in the country.

Six years later, the National Information Technology Development Agency Act 2007 provided a statutory framework for the agency's responsibilities, including the development of standards, guidelines and regulations for information technology practices and systems.

Since then, government agencies have increasingly moved information and public services to digital platforms, allowing citizens to access some services without having to visit government offices. Yet, for some Nigerians, accessing a government service online means not always mean doing it alone.

When Oluwanishola Samuel wanted an international passport in 2023, according to him, he paid about N60,000 to a middleman to handle the process for him. "I cannot go and waste my time at the immigration office," he said.

Samuel had initially tried to use the government's online platform but he abandoned the process after several unsuccessful attempts. "Nigerian websites when it comes to government agencies, it is always buggy," he said. "I tried it several times, when I could not get a hang of it, I left it and opted for the middleman."

He met the middleman through a friend and the process became straightforward after that. "Using the middleman, my passport was ready under two weeks," he said.

Samuel's experience was not limited to the passport process. For his National Identification Number, he went to a cybercafé, where he also had his NIN slip made into a conventional identity card after obtaining the slip. Cybercafé, rather than a government office, became the place where he received assistance with the process.

For other Nigerians, the decision to use someone else has been linked to the time involved in navigating government procedures.

Another applicant, Samuel Benjamin decided to obtain his international passport without using a middleman. After making the required payment, he attempted to book a date for data capture.

The available date was three months away. The wait did not put him under immediate pressure because he had enough time, but he said it could have been different for someone who needed the passport urgently.

When he eventually went to the passport office in FESTAC for data capture, the officers repeatedly asked who was handling the application for him. He was then directed to the SERVICOM office. There, he met two women. After explaining what he had come to do, he said, "they never responded nor told me what next step."

According to him, the women continued processing documents for people they were assisting as middlemen. After about an hour, one of them asked him to bring his documents, she went through them and told him he needed to photocopy a document. Benjamin said the requirement was not contained in the information he had seen on the website. He went to make the photocopy. He was subsequently asked to provide two passport photographs. He complied.



It was after this, that his application was processed. He waited another four hours before moving to the next stage. At subsequent stages, he said there were also delays, including instances where officers brought people into the queue ahead of others, although the queue itself was a sitting queue. He eventually obtained his passport without using a middleman.

His experience meant that completing the application without an intermediary still involved a physical visit and several hours at the passport office.

The Nigeria Immigration Service says Nigerians can apply for and renew their passports online without using a third party.

The Service Public Relations Officer, ACI Akinsola Akinlabi, said applicants are required to use the online platform for passport applications. "There's no other platform you can use to renew your passport. You have to go through online," Akinlabi said.

Applicants make payment online, book an appointment and appear at the selected immigration office for biometric capture.

Cash payments at passport offices were stopped many years ago.

The NIS also provides online platforms for visa applications, residence permits and other immigration services.

"For passport, it's passport.immigration.gov.ng. For e-visa, it's e-visa.immigration.gov.ng. If you apply for visa at the embassy, it's visa.immigration.gov.ng. If you apply for resident permit in Nigeria, you apply at epac.immigration.gov.ng," Akinlabi said. He said the Service also introduced a platform for its national biometric card.

According to him, the NIS regularly publishes information about its official platforms and conducts campaigns warning Nigerians about fake websites and payment platforms. Applicants are expected to use the official portal, make payment, book an appointment and appear on the appointed date with evidence of payment.

"You do not have to rely on anyone," he said. The Service does not encourage Nigerians to use third parties, he added.

When asked why Nigerians still use middlemen despite the availability of online platforms, Akinlabi said the NIS was not aware of the extent of such use.

He said the Service's position was that Nigerians could complete the processes themselves. "We are not hiding the process. The process is open. We have made it public."

Akinlabi said some of the complaints received by the NIS are related to applicants not following instructions on the portal. He said some applicants begin the process without reading the instructions carefully.

The instructions, according to him, specify the documents required, passport photograph specifications, passport validity and the processing office. Passport photographs must meet specified standards, including a white background, applicants who upload photographs that do not meet the requirements can encounter difficulties with their applications, for passport renewals, applicants are expected to upload documents including evidence of birth, the data page of the passport being renewed, certificate of state of origin and local government identification. Where documents are missing, the application can be queried.

Akinlabi said applicants receive notifications through the phone number or email address provided during the application. They are expected to respond to the query before processing can continue.

According to him, applicants receive confirmation that their application has been received and notifications when it is being processed or queried. The applicant is then expected to respond to any query before processing can continue.

Akinlabi said Nigerians also needed to invest in digital education as more government services moved online. "People themselves have to invest in digital education," he said.

He noted that internet use in Nigeria had continued to grow and that many Nigerians were already active online. "Even I have to learn how to use the internet. I have to learn some digital tools that will help me," he said.

Yusuf Adegoke, another applicant who applied for his international passport in Osogbo in 2024 said he completed the procedure on a Thursday and received the passport on Monday.

Adegoke said he made an additional payment by tipping an immigration officer who assisted him. His account adds another experience to the range of ways applicants have navigated the passport process.

While Samuel paid a middleman to handle his application and Benjamin completed the process himself, Adegoke said he completed his application but received assistance from an immigration officer.

The experiences also differ from that of Ibrahim Oladipupo who uses an intermediary for his driver's licence. Oladipupo said he met the woman who handles the transaction through his friend's father. "He was the one that introduced us to the woman," he said.

Whenever he and members of his family need to renew their driver's licences, he said, they contact her. "We pay her and she gets it done," he said.

He said they do not pay her an additional fee but sometimes tip her. The passport process has also undergone changes in official fees.

When Samuel obtained his passport in 2023, the official fee for a 32-page passport with five-

For applicants, however, the experience of using a digital government service can include several stages: finding the correct platform, understanding the instructions, uploading the required documents, making payment, securing an appointment, responding to queries and, in the case of passport applications in Nigeria, appearing physically for biometric capture.

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Depend On Middlemen

year validity was N35,000. In September 2024, the Nigeria Immigration Service increased the fee for the 32-page passport with five-year validity from N35,000 to N50,000. The fee for the 64-page passport with 10-year validity increased from N70,000 to N100,000. A further increase took effect on September 1, 2025.

The 32-page passport with five-year validity became N100,000, while the 64-page passport with 10-year validity became N200,000.

The NIS said the 2025 increase was intended to uphold the quality and integrity of the Nigerian passport. The Service also said it remained committed to balancing quality service delivery with accessibility.

The fee changes mean that Samuel's 2023 experience took place when the official charge for the 32-page, five-year passport was N35,000.

He said he paid about N60,000 to the middleman who handled the process, although he did not provide a breakdown of the amount between the official passport fee and the intermediary's charge. The current official fee for the same passport is N100,000.

The NIS has continued to maintain that applicants do not need third-party assistance to access the service. Passport applications are not the only immigration services that have moved online.

According to Akinlabi, foreigners seeking Nigerian visas can apply through the Service's online platforms. The e-visa process, he said, can be completed without visiting an immigration office or embassy. "It's for foreigners," he said, explaining that the e-visa service is for foreigners seeking to enter Nigeria. The Service also has a contactless passport renewal service for Nigerians living in the diaspora.

The contactless service was introduced for Nigerians abroad who may have difficulty accessing Nigerian embassies and consulates. Applicants using the service do not have to visit an embassy for the entire process. They are required to submit their documents and passport through the prescribed process, after which the passport is processed and returned.

For some other services, however, physical attendance remains necessary.

For example, applicants for residence permits may still have to visit a designated embassy or consulate for biometric capture.

Akinlabi said the e-visa and contactless passport services were examples of processes that can be completed without a physical visit. The experiences of applicants have also raised questions about how government digital platforms are designed.

A design expert who spoke on condition of anonymity said the issue was not simply whether government agencies had websites. "Nigeria lacks a design culture," he said. He referred to Dubai's Government Communication Guide, published in 2025, as an example of a government setting standards for how its institutions communicate.

The guide covers areas including communication strategy, audience identification, digital communication, social media and monitoring and evaluation. The expert said Nigeria did not have a comparable design culture, to the best of his knowledge.

He said the absence of such an approach could be seen in government-owned digital platforms. "It trickles down into their digital platforms. Big websites, software, whatever it is. It is just blank. It's because there is no intentionality behind it," he said.

The expert also questioned whether government agencies analyse how users interact with their platforms. "Are we even sure there are analytics behind these things we build?

Where are people dropping off?" he asked.

He compared government platforms with products developed by private-sector companies, mentioning Paystack and Chowdeck.

"Check the quality of those platforms. Bring it down to any government platform you know. So, you can easily see the gap," he said.

According to him, privately funded companies have a different approach to developing digital products. "If you were a private institution backed by funders' money, I think you would have a separate approach to the things you build," he said.

Some government platforms appeared to be developed simply to satisfy the requirement that an agency should have a website. "I think in Nigeria, we just build things to check a box," he said. "We build things so that tomorrow when somebody says, 'Do you have a website?' we say yes."

He said the approach affects websites, software and other digital products developed for public use. "If there is no intentionality behind this, we would just keep having these problems," he said.

Nigeria already has standards governing government websites. NITDA's *Standards and Guidelines for Government Websites V3* provides requirements for institutions operating government websites.

The guidelines address areas including website content, accessibility, usability, security, privacy, maintenance and updating. They state that information published on government websites should be current and updated at least weekly.

Government homepages are also expected to provide basic contact information, including a functional telephone number and a monitored email address.

A feedback or comment page, search facility and site map are also listed among the required features.

Government institutions are expected to publish documents and other information on their websites. Where publication of a document is not practical, the guidelines require information on how citizens can obtain it to be provided on the website.

The guidelines also provide for accessibility and usability requirements for government websites. NITDA's responsibilities under Nigeria's digital governance framework include developing standards and guidelines for information technology and supporting the adoption of digital technologies in government. The agency has also been involved in the development and implementation of e-government standards.

What happens after an application is submitted?

ACCORDING to the NIS passport process, moving the application online has reduced some parts of the process to digital steps, but applicants in Nigeria still have to appear physically for biometric capture. The applicant begins by completing the application online.

The process includes providing personal information, verifying the NIN, uploading the required documents and passport photograph, selecting a processing centre, making payment and booking an appointment.

The applicant then visits the selected centre on the appointment date for biometric capture.

Akinlabi said the online platform also allows the Service to communicate with applicants during processing. An application can be accepted for processing, queried where there are issues with the submitted information or documents, and subsequently processed after

the applicant responds.

The Service said applicants are notified through the contact details supplied during the application. For applicants who do not respond to queries, processing can be delayed.

Akinlabi said some applicants do not return to their accounts or check the email addresses they provided after submitting their applications. Applicants should read the instructions and monitor their applications.

The NIS's digital services show that putting a government transaction online does not always mean the entire process takes place online.

For passport applications in Nigeria, the application, payment and appointment booking are completed online, while biometric capture requires physical attendance.

For e-visas, Akinlabi said applicants can complete the process without visiting an immigration office or embassy.

For Nigerians in the diaspora using the contactless passport service, physical visits to embassies can also be avoided, although documents and passports still have to be submitted through the required channels.

The distinction between an online application and a fully digital service is therefore reflected in the different immigration services available to applicants.

For those who use intermediaries, the people involved in the process are mostly not strangers. Samuel met his passport middleman through a friend, Oladipupo was introduced to the woman who handles his driver's licence through his friend's father, Benjamin used a cybercafé for his NIN-related service.

The arrangements also vary. Samuel paid about N60,000 to the middleman for his passport process in 2023. Oladipupo said he pays the woman who handles his driver's licence but does not make additional payments, although he sometimes tips her. Adegoke said he tipped an immigration officer who assisted him during his passport application. The NIS, however, maintains that applicants can use its official platforms without third-party assistance.

Akinlabi said the Service has continued to publish information about its official platforms and conduct public awareness campaigns. He said applicants should avoid fake websites and payment platforms and use only the portals provided by the NIS.

"We do not patronise fake websites," he said.

The NIS said its digital platforms are monitored and updated. When asked how often the Service updates its website, Akinlabi said updates are carried out regularly. "Of course, we update it all the time," he said.

He said information about the Service's activities and press releases are published on the website. "Of course, the website is well monitored," he said.

He added that the Service also monitors the platform for cyber threats. "The NIS understands its responsibility. And it continues to carry it under the leadership of the Controller-General," he said.

For applicants, however, the experience of using a digital government service can include several stages:

finding the correct platform, understanding the instructions, uploading the required documents, making payment, securing an appointment, responding to queries and, in the case of passport applications in Nigeria, appearing physically for biometric capture.

The number of Nigerians using the internet has continued to grow alongside the expansion of digital public services.

DataReportal estimated that Nigeria had 109 million Internet users at the end of 2025, representing 45.5 per cent of the population. The World Bank's latest country data puts internet use at 41 per cent of the population in 2024.

Nigeria's digital identity infrastructure has also expanded. The World Bank said more than 100 million National Identification Numbers had been issued by late 2025.

Digital identity is one of the components of digital public infrastructure, alongside digital payments and secure data-sharing systems, which the World Bank identifies as foundations for digital government services.

The government's digital infrastructure is also expanding. In October 2025, the World Bank approved \$500 million for Nigeria's Building Resilient Digital Infrastructure for Growth project, which is intended to expand affordable, high-speed broadband to communities that remain underserved or unserved.

The figures provide a picture of a country with a growing population of internet users and expanding digital infrastructure, while government agencies continue to move services and transactions online.

For the Nigerians interviewed for this story, however, the way those services are accessed varies. Samuel used a middleman, while Benjamin completed his application himself but spent hours at the passport office. Adegoke completed his process but said he tipped an officer who assisted him.

Adegbeyega continues to contact an intermediary whenever he needs to renew his driver's licence. The NIS says its platforms are available and that applicants are not required to use intermediaries. Its online services continue to expand, while NITDA has standards governing government websites and digital platforms.

The experiences of the applicants interviewed show the different ways Nigerians currently navigate those services, from completing transactions themselves to relying on cybercafés, personal connections and intermediaries.



Politics

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2027: Towards A Credible National Register Of Voters

With more than 10 million fresh registrations awaiting verification and de-duplication, Nigerians want the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure the integrity of the National Register of Voters ahead of the 2027 elections, SEYE OLUMIDE reports.

As preparations for the 2027 general election gather momentum, attention is shifting from the recently concluded Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise to the more difficult task before the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC): producing a credible, accurate and verifiable National Register of Voters.

The issue is significant because confidence in the voter register is central to confidence in the elections themselves. Concerns over underage registration, duplicate entries, missing names and voter transfers featured prominently in debates over the register used for the 2023 elections and remain unresolved in the minds of many Nigerians.

INEC has repeatedly maintained that its biometric verification processes are designed to identify and remove duplicate registrations and other ineligible entries. But the commission now faces a fresh test as it processes more than 10 million new registrations recorded during the latest CVR exercise.

INEC had announced that 3,867,997 Nigerians successfully completed registration during Phase III of the exercise. That brought the cumulative number of fresh registrations across the three phases to 10,188,755, with 2,572,054 recorded in Phase I and 3,748,704 recorded in Phase II.

Of the Phase III figure, 2,697,863 Nigerians completed registration physically at designated centres, while 1,170,134 used the online pre-registration platform before completing the mandatory physical verification.

The figures, however, are preliminary. INEC is expected to subject the new registrations to biometric verification and de-duplication before adding the clean records to the existing National Register of Voters, which currently contains more than 93 million registered voters.

Election observers, political parties and civil society groups told *The Guardian* that it is this next stage that will determine whether the latest registration exercise ultimately strengthens or weakens public confidence in the 2027 elections.

But the latest CVR was itself marked by a number of operational, technical and accessibility challenges, raising questions about whether every eligible Nigerian who sought to register was able to complete the process.

In some registration centres, technical difficulties, including downtime of biometric capture equipment and poor network connectivity, reportedly slowed or disrupted registration. Limited numbers of registration machines and long queues also caused delays, leaving some prospective voters frustrated after spending hours at centres.

For some applicants, the difficulties went beyond delays. Concerns were also raised about the security of the registration process, including the protection of users' credentials and personal information on aspects of the online registration platform.

Security challenges presented another obstacle in some parts of the country. In areas affected by insecurity, registration centres were reportedly relocated or temporarily suspended, while fears for the safety of registration officials and applicants affected access to the exercise.

There were also concerns about accessibility. Some registration centres were said to lack adequate arrangements for elderly citizens and persons with disabilities, while inadequate civic education and public awareness in some rural communities made it difficult for prospective voters to understand the multi-phase registration process, deadlines and procedures.

The problems were particularly significant because the CVR was not simply a technical exercise. For Nigerians seeking to participate in the 2027 elections, failure to complete registration could ultimately mean exclusion from the electoral process.

Before and after the 2023 elections, political parties, election observers and other stakeholders questioned aspects of the voter register, including allegations of under-

age registration and multiple registrations.

Some registered voters also complained that their names could not be found at their designated polling units despite completing registration and obtaining Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs). Others alleged that they were transferred from their original polling units without adequate notice, making it difficult or impossible for them to vote.

The credibility of the register also featured in the litigation that followed the 2023 presidential election. Although the Presidential Election Petition Court found that the petitioners had failed to establish that alleged deficiencies in the register substantially affected the outcome of the presidential election, the controversy reinforced concerns about the need for greater transparency in the compilation and management of the voter roll.

For some Nigerians, the problem has been more immediate and personal.

A student, Bankole Dada, said he was unable to complete his registration during the latest CVR exercise after encountering difficulties at the registration centre.

Similarly, a commercial bus operator in Apata, Oyo State, Femi Aina, said he visited a registration centre twice but was unable to complete the process.

Political parties were also critical of aspects of the CVR exercise. The African Democratic Congress (ADC), Labour Party (LP) and sections of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) questioned what they described as unusual increases in registration figures in some parts of the country.

The parties called for greater transparency, regular publication of registration statistics, wider access for election observers and independent verification before the final register is certified.

National Publicity Secretary of the ADC, Bolaji Abdullahi, said the party would await the publication of the final register before deciding its next course of action.

"The credibility of the elections is tied to the voter register, and if the final register suffers credibility issues, then we will know where to start from," he said.

The Electoral Act 2026 places a statutory responsibility on INEC to compile, maintain and continuously update the National Register of Voters. It also provides for registration, transfer of voter records, public display of the register, claims and objections, and the removal of duplicate, deceased and otherwise ineligible voters.

The provisions therefore provide a legal framework for INEC to clean the register while giving eligible voters an opportunity to challenge omissions or wrongful deletions.

But questions have emerged over what the final figures will reveal.

The registration data showed substantial variations across the country. Kano recorded the highest number of completed registrations with 330,906, followed by Lagos with 181,254 and Delta with 166,895. Edo recorded 156,150, while Sokoto had 145,160.

Other states with relatively high figures included Ebonyi, Taraba, Ogun, Bauchi, Jigawa and Oyo.

At the lower end, Ekiti recorded 2,276 registrations, while Ondo had 23,824, Plateau 41,993 and the Federal Capital Territory 56,285. Osun recorded no registrations during the period because INEC suspended the exercise ahead of the state's governorship election.

Although INEC has explained that the figures are pre-

liminary and subject to verification, the disparities have prompted calls for the commission to provide detailed information on how the final register will be produced.

A retired military captain and former governorship aspirant in Imo State, David Mbamara, said the credibility of the exercise should not be judged by aggregate figures alone.

"The credibility of the register will depend not only on how many people registered, but also on whether the process inspires confidence across all parts of the country," he said.

Political economist and democracy advocate, Prof. Pat Utomi, described the integrity of the voter register as one of the most important determinants of the credibility and legitimacy of the 2027 elections.

Utomi expressed concern over the suspension of aspects of the registration process, arguing that the timing could affect inclusiveness, particularly for first-time voters and Nigerians who recently attained voting age.

He said public confidence would be strengthened if registration procedures were transparent, inclusive and demonstrably compliant with the law.

President of the Middle Belt Forum, Dr. Bitrus Pogu, also faulted the suspension of the CVR exercise, warning that it could deny some Nigerians the opportunity to participate in the 2027 elections.

Pogu, however, said INEC's priority should now be to produce a register that is accurate, transparent and legally defensible through a rigorous de-duplication process that removes multiple and ineligible registrations without disenfranchising genuine voters.

He also called for public display of the provisional register, adequate time for claims and objections, and timely issuance of PVCs.

For Convener of the Movement for Credible Elections, Wale Okunniyi, the challenge before INEC has shifted from registration to verification.

He said the commission must ensure that Nigerians are able to scrutinise the final register and challenge inaccuracies before the 2027 elections.

"Ultimately, regardless of improvements in election technology, logistics or result transmission, confidence in the electoral process begins with confidence in the voter register," Okunniyi said.

An Oyo-based political scientist, Prince Adetayo Adegunle, urged stakeholders to exercise caution in interpreting the preliminary figures, saying conclusions should not be drawn until INEC completes the de-duplication exercise.

He acknowledged that the number of new registrations was significant but said the variations across states warranted closer scrutiny.

Adegunle urged INEC to publish the methodology used for de-duplication, provide adequate time for claims and objections, and release disaggregated state-by-state registration data.

He also called for stronger collaboration between INEC and the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), improved use of technology and greater participation by civil society organisations and other non-partisan groups in auditing the register.

The Chairman of INEC, Prof. Joash Amupitan, had, however, assured Nigerians that the commission would produce a clean and credible voter register ahead of the next general election.

According to him, "the voter register is the foundation upon which free, fair and credible elections are built," adding that its accuracy and integrity are critical to ensuring that every eligible voter's voice is heard.

That assurance hinges on how the commission conducts the outstanding processes: publication of the provisional register, the claims and objections process, the removal of duplicate and ineligible records, and the protection of genuine voters from wrongful exclusion.

For Nigerians, therefore, the question after the CVR is no longer about how many people registered; it is whether the register that will eventually emerge can withstand scrutiny as well as whether voters, political parties and other stakeholders will trust it when the ballots are finally cast.

The credibility of the elections is tied to the voter register, and if the final register suffers credibility issues, then we will know where to start from.



Oborevwori's Delta: From Peace-Building To Youth Empowerment

By Festus Ahon

THERE is a quiet but unmistakable shift in Delta State. Beyond the roads, bridges, markets and other physical infrastructure dotting the state, the Governor Sheriff Oborevwori administration is pushing a broader development narrative that seeks to build peace among communities, empower young people, strengthen the civil service and reposition the state's economy for a future beyond oil. From the streets of Warri to the farms of Ughelli and the corridors of government in Asaba, the emerging story is that of a state moving to turn its diversity and resources into instruments of development rather than sources of division. Perhaps nowhere is this new thinking more evident than in Warri, where the first Warri Unity Games brought together youths from different communities in a sporting celebration designed to deepen friendship and reconciliation. Governor Oborevwori, at the closing ceremony, described sports as a potent instrument of peace-building, saying the state government would continue to support initiatives that promote unity, youth development and peaceful coexistence. The governor was represented by the Commissioner for Higher Education, Prof. Nyerhovwo Tonukari, at the ceremony.



Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, placing eggs on eggs trays from the automatic egg-collection conveyor system at Tatcha Farms, Okuloho, Okpe Local Council, during his recent inspection tour of selected farms as part of efforts to identify and support large-scale agricultural farms across the state, while the Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr. Charles Aniagwu (behind the Governor); Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Mr. Val Arenyeka (2nd right); and proprietor of the farm, Olorogun Alfred Mrakpor (right) look on. PHOTO: SAMUEL JIBUNOR

ny. The initiative, spearheaded by the Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III, carries a deeper significance. Warri has had its painful chapters. The wounds of past conflicts remain part of the collective memory of its people. But the message coming from the palace today is different: the future must not be held hostage by the past. At the Olu's fifth coronation anniversary, the governor described Atuwatse III as a peace-builder and exemplary monarch whose reign had restored glory, promoted unity and contributed to the development of Warri and Delta State. Oborevwori's message to the diverse ethnic groups in Warri was unequivocal: there is no justification for allowing ethnic differences to destroy centuries of coexistence. In a region where peace is the foundation upon which investment, commerce and development must rest, the emphasis is significant. But the administration's peace agenda is only one side of a broader development strategy. The other is economic empowerment, particularly of young people. In Ughelli, the state government has embarked on a programme to train and empower 1,000 youths in agriculture and agribusiness. It is a calculated attempt to change the narrative around farming.

For decades, agriculture has often been viewed by many young Nigerians as a last resort. The Oborevwori administration is trying to sell a different idea: farming can be business, technology, wealth and influence. Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Mr. Val Arenyeka, told participants that agriculture was capable of producing some of the wealthiest people in the world and urged youths to approach it with the mindset of entrepreneurs rather than subsistence farmers. The programme is focusing initially on cocoa, coffee, cotton and ginger—commodities with strong domestic and international markets. But what distinguishes the initiative is its practical orientation. Participants are being exposed to mechanised farming, livestock-feed production and other hands-on agricultural techniques. Inputs are also being provided. They include 10,000 cocoa seedlings, 100,000 cotton seedlings, 5,000 coffee seedlings and 5,000 ginger seedlings. For the Special Adviser to the Governor on Agriculture and organiser of the training, George Oyefia, the objective is not simply to train youths and send them home; it is to give them the foundation to start. That distinction could determine whether the programme becomes another government empowerment scheme or grows into a genuine agricultural revolution. With unemployment, food insecurity and youth restiveness remaining national concerns, the economic logic is compelling. A young person who becomes a successful cocoa farmer, ginger producer, cotton entrepreneur or agribusiness operator is not merely creating personal wealth. He is potentially creating jobs, feeding communities, generating taxes and reducing dependence on government. That philosophy of empowering people to become productive is also visible within the state civil service. At the Permanent Secretaries' Quarters in Asaba, Oborevwori recently commissioned 12 four-bedroom duplexes, internal roads and drainage facilities and presented brand-new official vehicles to 12 Permanent Secretaries. To some, such projects may appear merely ceremonial. But the governor's argument is that the quality of governance depends significantly on the welfare and effectiveness of those who run the machinery of government. Permanent Secretaries are the administrative engines of ministries. They provide continuity, institutional memory and professional guidance to political office holders. Oborevwori has therefore linked workers' welfare to public-sector efficiency. Beyond the new residences and vehicles, the administration says 302 public servants have benefitted from vehicle loans, while 119 have accessed housing loans. Another 450 senior management staff underwent a seven-week training programme designed to strengthen leadership and administrative capacity.

NDC Lagos Central Candidate Unveils Five-point Agenda, Backs Obi

By Shakirah Adunola

THE Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) candidate for Lagos Central Senatorial District, Bamofin Ladipo Johnson, has unveiled a five-point legislative agenda for the district. Speaking to supporters in Lagos during the launch of his campaign policy document, Johnson canvassed support for the party's presidential candidate, Peter Obi, ahead of the 2027 general elections. He said Obi possessed the capacity to address the country's economic challenges, urging Nigerians to support the NDC presidential candidate. He explained that his legislative agenda was designed to provide practical solutions to the challenges confronting residents of Lagos Central, with emphasis on social welfare, economic empowerment, youth development, infrastructure and good governance. Johnson said the protection, livelihood and development of his constituents would remain at the centre of his legislative priorities if elected. Under his social welfare and housing agenda, he pledged to pursue legislation to curb arbitrary displacement of residents, establish structured temporary shelters and integrate healthcare, psychiatric support and skills acquisition programmes into social intervention initiatives. He also promised to advocate social protection programmes for vulnerable groups, legislative support for elderly and child welfare, and the upgrading of community centres to promote grassroots development. On economic empowerment, Johnson proposed low-interest credit lines for small busi-

nesses, localised and stable power grids in commercial hubs and what he described as friendly, non-predatory tax policies to support entrepreneurs and small and medium-scale enterprises. He said he would also seek to reduce regulatory bottlenecks affecting local businesses, attract corporate investment to Lagos Central and expand community-based cooperative funding models. According to him, the objective is to create an enabling environment for businesses to grow and generate employment opportunities for residents. Johnson also placed emphasis on the blue economy, saying Lagos Central's coastal location presented opportunities that could be harnessed to boost economic activity. He proposed investments in modern fishing, aquaculture and maritime logistics, as well as the development of sustainable port-adjacent commerce to expand economic opportunities and revenue generation. On youth development, education and employment, the candidate proposed technology-driven and artisanal incubation hubs, partnerships with technology firms to organise coding and digital marketing boot camps, and the establishment of a senatorial seed fund for promising youth start-up ideas. He also pledged to partner with local industries to facilitate employment placements for young people. In the education sector, Johnson promised to pursue the rehabilitation of dilapidated primary and secondary schools, provision of modern science laboratories and information and communications technology centres, continuous professional development for teachers and yearly tertiary tuition grants for brilliant but indigent students.

On infrastructure and security, he pledged to pursue policies aimed at making Lagos Central a safer and better-connected district. His proposals include the development of standardised drainage networks to address perennial flooding, rehabilitation of inner-community roads and expansion of safe water and land transport links. Johnson also proposed collaboration with community stakeholders and security agencies, including the deployment of localised closed-circuit television cameras in high-risk areas, while insisting that security measures must respect residents' civil liberties. In the health sector, he promised to advocate the modernisation of primary health-care centres, free prenatal and postnatal care for low-income mothers and the enrolment of vulnerable constituents in sub-

sidised state health insurance schemes. On governance, Johnson pledged to ensure equitable distribution of legislative benefits without nepotism. He also promised to hold quarterly accountability meetings with constituents and establish dedicated feedback channels through which residents could communicate their immediate needs. The campaign document said the overall objective was to build a stronger and more inclusive Lagos Central through practical legislative interventions, economic opportunities and improved social services. The NDC had previously affirmed Obi as its presidential candidate for the 2027 elections at a special convention in Abuja, with Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso as his running mate. Johnson urged voters in Lagos Central to support the NDC ticket, saying the party offered what he described as practical leadership and policies capable of improving the welfare of Nigerians.



Obi

How Remi Tinubu's Ogun Visit Put the State's Governance Gains In Sharp Focus

By Kayode Akinmade

GOVERNMENT is ultimately judged not by the number of projects it announces or commissions, but by how effectively those projects improve the lives of the people. At its most fundamental level, governance must respond to the basic needs that sustain human life and dignity—food, shelter, healthcare, education and security.

That was the significance of Senator Oluremi Tinubu's visit to Ogun State on Tuesday, August 18, 2026. Far from being another ceremonial political engagement, the visit provided an opportunity to see, in tangible terms, how investments in basic needs are being translated into projects and interventions designed to touch lives.

Within the space of a day, the First Lady commissioned the President Muhammadu Buhari Estate and the Gateway Medical Centre of Excellence, while also witnessing the South-West zonal launch of the National Community Food Bank Programme. She later engaged traditional rulers, community leaders and other stakeholders at the June 12 Cultural Centre in Abeokuta.

Taken together, the three interventions tell a compelling story: shelter for families, healthcare for citizens and food support for the most vulnerable.

Governor Dapo Abiodun's remarks at the events provided the thread connecting them. Development, he noted, loses much of its meaning when economic growth is not accompanied by improvements in the basic conditions of life.

"The hospitals become useful when they save lives; the houses fulfil their purpose when they shelter families," he said.

That philosophy perhaps best captures what the First Lady's visit brought into focus: governance is ultimately about the people behind the statistics, the buildings and the ceremonies. **A Housing Project Rescued And Transformed**

THE story of the President Muhammadu Buhari Estate is particularly instructive because it is not simply a story of a new housing project. It is a story of an inherited project that could easily have become another abandoned government investment.

When the Abiodun administration inherited the project, it was largely undeveloped. Infrastructure had been awarded, while only a single show building had been completed. There were also unresolved contractual and legal issues involving the original contractor. Rather than allow the project to deteriorate further, the administration intervened, resolved the dispute and restructured the development through a



The First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu (middle); Governor Dapo Abiodun (third left) and other government officials/party chieftains at the commissioning of the Gateway Medical Centre of Excellence, Abeokuta, Ogun State...recently.

Public-Private Partnership arrangement. Under the model, government provided the land and infrastructure framework, while private developers took responsibility for the construction and marketing of the housing units.

The result is now visible along the Abeokuta-Sagamu corridor: 108 units of four-bedroom detached and semi-detached duplexes, supported by tarred roads, street lighting, water supply, power, security and recreational facilities.

The significance goes beyond the number of houses delivered. It demonstrates that government can rescue stalled projects, resolve inherited challenges and deploy alternative financing models to bring them to completion.

It is also important that access to the estate has been presented as open to qualified residents rather than restricted to political associates. The Commissioner for Housing, Jagunmolu Akande Omoniyi, made this clear in a response on X on Monday, August 24, when a resident questioned whether the houses would be allocated to party loyalists.

"Ownership is open to all who desire to live and work in Ogun State and meets affordability criteria as set!" he stated.

For the 108 households that will ultimately occupy the estate, the project represents more than bricks and mortar. It represents security, dignity and a place to call home.

Bringing Quality Healthcare Closer To The People

IF housing provides shelter, healthcare protects life. For years, Nigerians have had to travel considerable distances—and in some cases outside the country—to access specialised medical treatment. The challenge has often not

been the absence of medical professionals alone, but the shortage of adequately equipped facilities capable of providing advanced care. The Gateway Medical Centre of Excellence is designed to address part of that challenge. The 250-bed facility in Abeokuta is equipped with modern medical infrastructure and is intended to strengthen Ogun's capacity to provide specialised healthcare while reducing the need for residents to seek treatment outside the state. For the Abiodun administration, the objective is not simply to construct another hospital, but to build a healthcare institution capable of improving outcomes and making quality treatment more accessible.

"For us, healthcare infrastructure only fulfils its purpose when it saves lives and improves the wellbeing of the people," Abiodun said.

He added that the facility was part of the administration's broader commitment under its Building Our Future Together agenda to develop projects and institutions that improve the quality of life of residents and position Ogun as a destination for excellent and accessible healthcare. The real test, therefore, will not be the magnificence of the facility but what happens inside it—the lives saved, illnesses treated, mothers safely delivered of their babies and families spared the burden and uncertainty of travelling elsewhere for care. That is where the true dividend of the investment will ultimately be measured.

Tackling Hunger Where It Hurts Most

FOOD is even more fundamental. While shelter protects people from the elements and healthcare protects them from disease, adequate nutrition is essential to survival and healthy development.

It was against this background that the South-West zonal launch of the National Community Food Bank Programme in Ogun State assumed particular significance. Three food banks were simultaneously launched in Sagamu, Yewa North and Abeokuta South, with a focus on vulnerable groups, including children under six, pregnant women and lactating mothers. The programme is deliberately linked to Primary Healthcare Centres, allowing vulnerable households to be identified more effectively and ensuring that food support reaches those who need it most. Governor Abiodun described the approach as a significant step in tackling food insecurity and malnutrition.

The First Lady, while addressing the gathering, also encouraged other South-West governors to adopt and replicate the initiative in partnership with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Abubakar Kyari, underscored another important dimension of the programme: the need to connect food assistance with agricultural production and structured procurement. That approach has the potential to make the intervention more sustainable—moving beyond emergency food distribution towards a system that strengthens local agriculture while supporting vulnerable households.

For a hungry family, however, the policy debate is secondary to the immediate reality. Food on the table means a child can eat, a pregnant woman can receive adequate nutrition and a vulnerable household can withstand the pressures of rising living costs.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

Governor Mbah's Masterstroke Sends Opposition Scampering In Enugu

By Onyekwere Nwobodo

ORDINARILY, appointment of new members is a routine, standard administrative action in the life of a government. It could entail filling existing vacancies or bringing in more specialist hands based on the critical need assessment in the course of project delivery.

Governments do this all the time, at all levels, and in all jurisdictions, so the recent appointment of additional members by Governor Peter Mbah into governance roles couldn't possibly be any different!

Disgruntled mischief merchants, for lack of verifiable

shortcomings in Mbah's impeccable governance model, have attempted to make a meal out of an action that ordinarily deserves to be applauded. Pray, which government in history recruited every personnel it would ever require once at inception?

No government is beyond interrogation, yes, but if, for instance, someone is appointed anew from

an otherwise underrepresented area, was it better to have allowed the perceived injustice to persist or take practical steps to cure the apparent oversight? Is there a prescribed number of allowable political appointees in a democracy?

It has become so obvious that rather than for any altruistic reasons, the noise by the motley gang of opposition, (present only in the social media anyway), to the well intended

exercise is driven by a sense of grievous communal loss!

Governor Mbah, apart from continually delivering on his governance mandate, has, with this masterstroke, struck a surprise, devastating blow to his opponents by effectively diminishing, virtually extinguishing the shrinking population from which their grieving rank had recruited. Otherwise, how is it their worry that some people who had opposed the emergence of the governor in 2023 were appointed into government?

They would have preferred the governor to continue to dwell in their unhelpful, hateful, old fashioned political philosophy which views political disagreement as mortal enmity rather than appreciate and acknowledge the goodness and statesmanship in Mbah's action.

If anyone had opposed Mbah as gubernatorial candidate in 2023, the man himself reckons and quite rightly so, it wasn't anything personal, and if in his judgment and magnanimity as governor he makes that former opponent an offer to

Mbah is so confident without being arrogant... The opposition criticism of his recent appointments is 'much ado about nothing.' They go to no issue really and change nothing.

join hands with him to move Enugu State forward, and the fellow accepts, shouldn't we applaud?

The governor is an intellectual giant, no doubt, but he does not fear or loathe to cohabit with equally knowledgeable persons, even if they were originally of different political persuasion. That is rising above self, ego or pettiness!

His interest, as I have come to understand, is what you bring to the table, and how that makes the governance group and Enugu State better; nothing more, nothing less.

Many politicians recruit and surround themselves with 'yes-men' who grovel at their feet, massage their bloated ego even if they offer nothing more to drive the administration's agenda.

Mbah is so confident without being arrogant, so self-assured, and forever highly receptive to and respectful of empirically sound, professional viewpoints.

The opposition criticism of his recent appointments is 'much ado about nothing.' They go to no issue really and change nothing.

The new team members are highly welcome, and must not forget that adding value is the main consideration, and *Ndi Enugu* must not lose on any account.

As long as the need arises, and/or vacancies exist, any forward looking administration like Mbah's would always continually reinvent, recalibrate, re-jig the machinery of governance with injection of quality personnel in needful areas for optimum performance. And crucially, the more, the merrier!

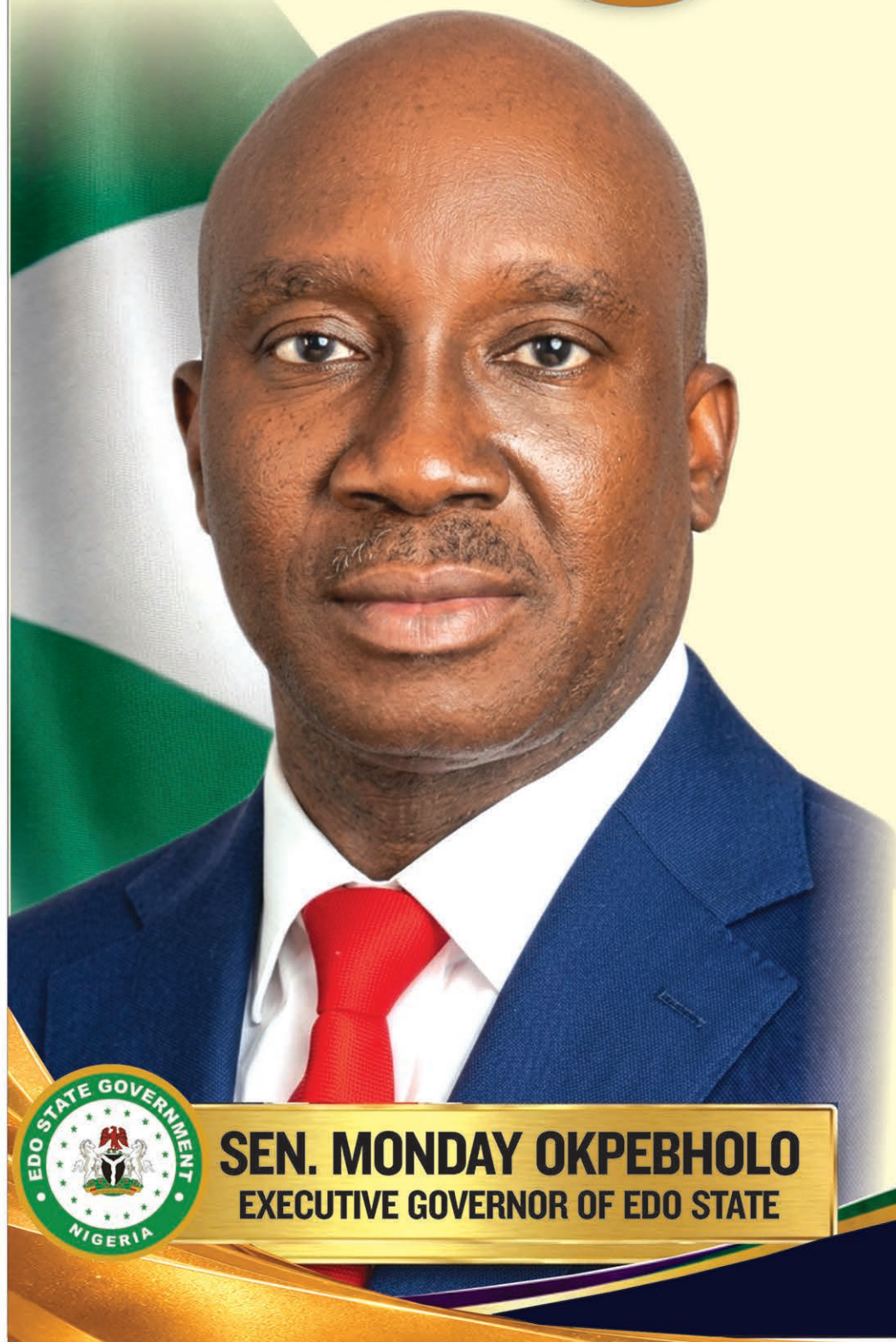
**Mr. Nwobodo is Special Adviser, Media, to Enugu State Governor.*



Mbah

HAPPY BIRTHDAY,
MR. GOVERNOR
Celebrating
His Excellency

@
56



SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF EDO STATE



IGBINEDION EDUCATION CENTRE

Educating Leaders of the 21st Century

Dear Mr. Governor,

The Board, Council, Management, Staff and Students of Igbinedion Education Centre, Benin City, warmly felicitate with His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Executive Governor of Edo State, on the joyous occasion of his 56th Birthday Anniversary.

At 56, we celebrate a distinguished public servant and purposeful leader whose commitment to the progress and development of Edo State continues to inspire hope and confidence in our people.

Your Excellency, your administration's commitment to education, infrastructure, healthcare, agriculture, security, job creation and human capital development reflects a clear determination to build a stronger, more prosperous and sustainable Edo State.

As an institution dedicated to nurturing excellence and educating leaders of the 21st century, we particularly appreciate your commitment to education and to creating an enabling environment in which our children and young people can learn, develop their talents and fulfil their potential.

We pray that Almighty God continues to grant Your Excellency wisdom, strength, sound health and divine guidance as you continue to serve Edo State and Nigeria.

Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency!
Congratulations, Senator Monday Okpebholo!

Signed

The Board, Council, Management, Staff & Students
of Igbinedion Education Centre
Benin City, Edo State



Editorial

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Dolly Rebecca Parton (1946 – 2026)

THE death of Dolly Parton four days ago, on August 25, 2026, is one of the most touching events in recent times. Even though she passed on at 80, which should ordinarily be regarded as a ripe age, her countless fans globally felt the shock, as she had always been seen more as an old adolescent rather than an old artist. Dolly was one of Country music's most singular performers, besides being a singer, songwriter, actor and philanthropist. She thus depleted the small remnants of iconic music artists who kept the world spellbound with scintillating and talented performances in the 70s 80s and 90s.

Dolly's life is a testament to dreaming big, believing in oneself, and lifting up others. Beyond her musical achievements, she was a trailblazer for women in the entertainment industry. She broke barriers and defied expectations, becoming one of the most successful and influential singer-songwriters of her generation.

The artist was a star performer in Country music, and went on to become one of the genre's most recognisable and universally adored ambassadors to broader popular culture.

A rhinestone life that shone bright enough for the world to see, Dolly will forever stand as an inspiration not only through her timeless music and prolific songwriting, but also her

wit, warmth, and kindness: Dolly Parton's legacy is one of love and resilience.

Dolly's career in music is nothing short of legendary. Her distinctive voice, heartfelt lyrics, and charismatic stage presence endeared her to millions of fans worldwide and, for generations, inspired the careers of countless artists of all genres.

With a seven-decade career, she inspired multiple generations of artists and fans with her music and an unwavering commitment to making the world a better place. Dolly's generosity and compassion were evident in her numerous charitable endeavours. She donated millions of dollars to various causes, including education, healthcare, and disaster relief. Born January 19, 1946, in Sevier County, Tennessee, Dolly Rebecca Parton grew up in a humble family as one of 12 children in a small one-bedroom home in the Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee. She grew up in poverty and in her 1971 hit, *Coat of Many Colours*, describes how she would wear rags, which her "mama" had knitted together to school. She lived a simple childhood chasing the beauty of butterflies, listening to Appalachian folklore and ancient ballads passed down by her relatives. Huddling around the family radio to hear the Grand Ole Opry broadcast, Dolly and her siblings would joyfully make music together.

From an early age, her musical talent was evi-

dent and encouraged by her mother – crafting simple songs on her guitar that were seemingly pulled from the spirit of the Smoky Mountains themselves. She took notice of the attention her music got from everyone around her and knew then she was meant to share her heart and talent with the world.

She began writing songs at the age of five, the first being about a corn-cob doll her mother made for her called 'Little Tiny Tasseltop'. While she couldn't read or write at this point, her mother wrote down the lyrics as the knee-high Dolly sang them. Noticing something special about the tiny blonde spitfire, her uncle, Bill Owens, who was also an accredited songwriter, began chaperoning Dolly to and from Nashville and encouraged her to continue honing her God-given talents.

At just 10 years old, Dolly began singing on local radio and TV shows and debuted on the Grand Ole Opry stage at just 13. She made her big move to Nashville a few years later and it was on that fateful first day in town that she met her husband of nearly 60 years, Carl Dean.

In a world full of divorced men and women, Dolly would be respected for honouring the marriage institution. She never allowed fame to get to her and was only married once. Her late husband, Carl Thomas Dean, whom she married on May 30, 1966, was her only man for nearly 60 years until his passing on March 3, 2025. "If I had to, I'd do it all over again," she wrote in a statement for the couple's 50th anniversary in 2016 when they renewed their vows. However, health issues prevented the couple from having biological children.

In 1984, Dolly was diagnosed with endometriosis, which often affects the ovaries, fallopian tubes and the tissue lining the pelvis. It can make getting pregnant difficult, too. Ultimately, she had her entire uterus and part of her cervix removed when she underwent a partial hysterectomy to treat her symptoms. However, she was able to help enrich the lives of millions of kids around the world. Her Imagination Library organisation has given over 300 million books to children from birth until they enter kindergarten.

She told Oprah Winfrey in 2020. "I didn't have children because I believed that God didn't mean for me to have kids so everybody's kids could be mine, so I could do things like Imagination Library, because if I hadn't had the freedom to work, I wouldn't have done all the things I've done."

Dolly earned her first #1 single in 1971 with *Joshua* – a heartfelt story centred on kindness and the lesson that things aren't always as they appear. Based on the Appalachian men she grew up around, the song cemented her as a Country music star in her own right.

Between 1974 and 1979, Dolly ascended to superstardom. In 1975 and 1976, the Country Music Association named her Female Vocalist of the Year. In 1978 she was honoured with the CMA for Entertainer of the Year.

Dolly's contributions to American culture were recognised in 2006 when she received a Kennedy Center Honor. She amassed 11 Grammy Awards and 54 nominations, including the Lifetime Achievement Award, 10 Country Music Association Awards, including Entertainer of the Year; five Academy of Country Music Awards, including a win for Entertainer of the Year; four People's Choice Awards; and four American Music Awards.

In 1999, Dolly was inducted into the coveted Country Music Hall of Fame. In 2022, she was also inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

As of 2012, she had written more than 3,000 songs including *I Will Always Love You* (a two-time U.S. country chart-topper and an international hit for Whitney Houston that sold 40 million copies worldwide), *Jolene*, *Coat of Many Colours* and *9 to 5*. She sold more than 100 million records, making her one of the best-selling female artists ever and released 49 studio albums. Her music had received Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) gold, platinum and multi-platinum certifications.

Working with her frequent songwriting partner, her uncle Bill Owens, she wrote several charting singles, including two Top-10 hits for Bill Phillips: *Put It Off Until Tomorrow* and *The Company You Keep* (1966). She also wrote Skeeter Davis's number 11 hit *Fuel to the Flame* (1967). Her songs were recorded by many other artists during this period, including Kitty Wells and Hank Williams Jr.

She was one of the most-honoured female country performers in history. The Record Industry Association of America certified 25 of her single or album releases as Gold, Platinum or Multi-Platinum Record. She had had 26 songs reach no. 1 on the Billboard country charts, a record for a female artist. She had 42 career Top-10 country albums, a record for any artist and 110 career-charted singles over the past 40 years.

LETTER

TV Awareness Campaigns And Refuse Disposal In Ifako Ijaiye

SIR: On a daily basis in Ifako Ijaiye area of Lagos state, households sit with waste piling up in compounds and along verandas, waiting for disposal. Refuses are stacked up by the road, long before the garbage truck comes to clear it. Sadly, it is becoming a familiar scene in Lagos, a city that now produce more than 14,000 tons of solid waste a day; more than double what it used to generate few years ago.

The gap between what people know they should do with their solid wastes and what circumstances allow them to actually do is why this study was undertaken in the Ifako-Ijaiye area, one of Lagos's most densely populated and fastest-growing suburbs.

The study examined the responses of 365 residents to answer a question Lagos state policy makers have been circling for years: are the television enlightenment campaigns urging proper waste disposal actually fostering behavioral changes? The answer is quite contradictory, drawn from a five-part questionnaire measuring exposure, knowledge, perception, habits and the barriers residents face with solid waste disposal. Residents watch, understand, largely agree with what the television campaigns tell them, and yet, the bins overflow, the trucks come late, people still dispose solid waste anywhere they can find, as well as in the drainage. This comes with consequences for a state whose leading contributor to flood damage is non-biodegradable waste. Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency has linked flooding in 2025-2026 to more than 240 deaths nationwide and the displacement of over 144,000 people across 27 states in Nigeria. Do Lagosians really watch and learn?

The study found that television remains the dominant channel through which residents of the area learn about proper waste

disposal ahead of radio, print and other digital platforms. As majority of the residents prefer audio-visual format for personal reasons such as ease of commitment to memory. This exposure appears to have paid off in one important respect: knowledge. Residents demonstrated a strong grasp of the health risks tied to poor solid waste handling, from the breeding grounds refuse heaps create for disease-carrying pests to the dangers of open burning and importance of sorting wastes before disposal.

Lagos' waste problem has outpaced its waste infrastructure for decades and private collectors and government trucks fails to keep up with the ever-growing volume of solid waste. Currently Lagos generates 14,000 tons of wastes a day, driven by population increase. Ifako Ijaiye itself has grown to over a million residents.

Households' wastes are primarily handled by government-appointed private operators, informal collectors such as itinerant buyers, while a meaningful portion still ends up in illegal dumpsites, storm drains, according to World Bank data cited in the research. It is against that backdrop that Lagos State and private brands alike have turned to television as a tool of behavior change.

High behavioral control, poor infrastructure

The residents reported avoiding waste burning and instead rely on waste collectors for pick-up this same reliance exposes residents to the system's biggest weakness: when collectors don't show up on time, which the study and earlier Lagos-focused research both describe as common, households are left holding waste with nowhere sanctioned to put it. Government policy, by contrast, emerged as a genuinely strong behavioral lever. Residents said Lagos State's

environmental rules and the threat of sanctions shaped their disposal habits.

The bigger picture

The findings reveal a city that has tried its best to get ahead of its waste problem. In late 2022, the household brand OMO ran a month-long, youth-focused plastic-recycling campaign under the banner "Dirt for Good," broadcast on Lagos television stations. Around the same period, the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA) took its "Eko Clean Air" campaign to Ibeju-Lekki community in Eti-Osa, pairing public education with a cash-for-trash exchange scheme. The state has distributed an initial 40,000 color-coded bins to households and businesses under its "adopt-a-bin" program, green for general waste, blue for recyclables and in 2024 moved to ban Styrofoam and single-use plastics outrightly till date.

Nigeria's National Policy on Solid Waste Management, has already flagged many of its structural weaknesses in which the Ifako-Ijaiye data surfaces at street level: patchy enforcement of existing waste laws, outdated waste collection systems, and a public that is not always given the tools to act on what it has been taught.

Recommendations from the study

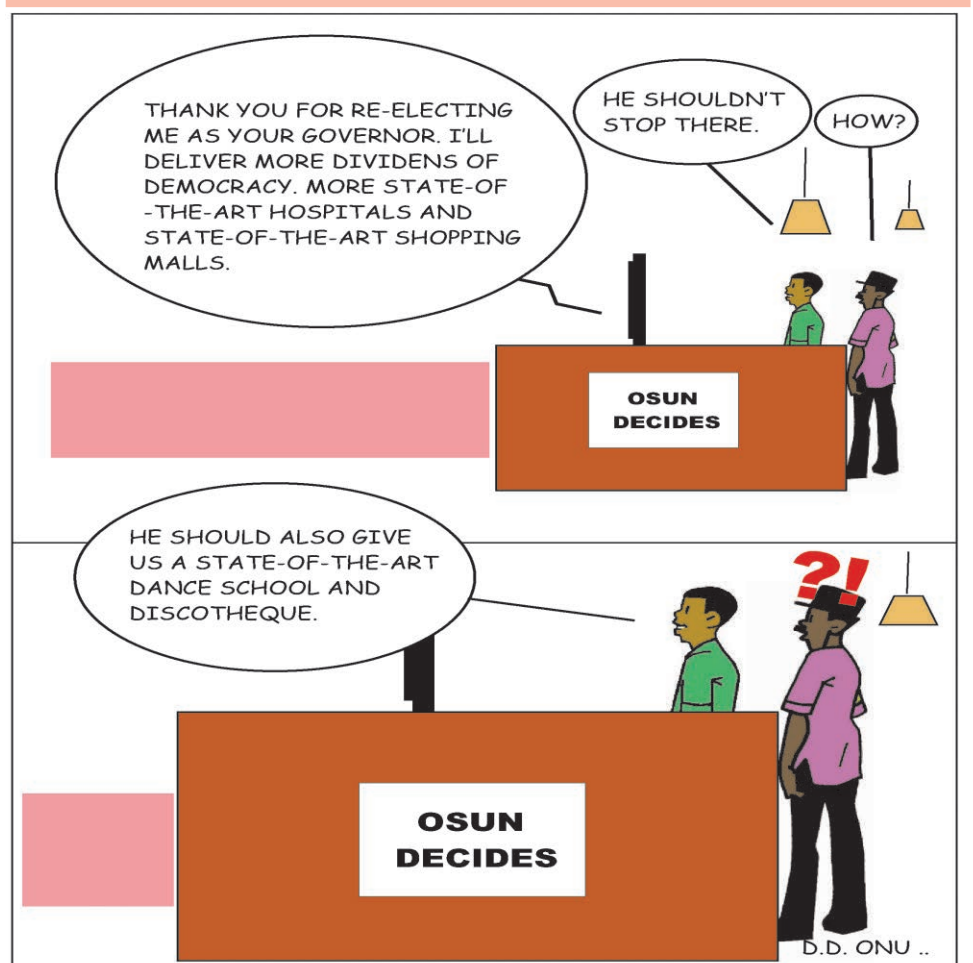
* The study recommends that waste-disposal programs should be aired more frequently and in local languages.

* Allow opportunities for residents to ask questions and engage with campaign presenters, through social media engagement, call-in segments, community forums.

* Word of mouth also has a role to play. Residents who have absorbed the campaign lessons from television are well placed to pass them on to neighbors and family, extending the campaigns' reach beyond the screen.

* Waste collectors should show up when they are supposed to.

• By Kehinde, Paul Owoseni.



Opinion

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Foreign Aid: African Organisations Must Learn To Build Beyond Grants

By Chibueze Ewuzie

Official development assistance fell by 6.1% in 2024 and by a record 23.1% in 2025, with the United States responsible for roughly three-quarters of the decline. Nigeria alone lost more than \$600 million in health funding, according to Chatham House. These numbers are more than a funding story. They are a stress test of whether African development organisations have built institutions capable of surviving beyond the next funding cycle.

FOR years, much of Africa's development sector operated on a familiar rhythm: a donor priority shifted, a call for proposals opened, organisations adapted, delivered the programme and moved on to the next grant. That model has produced important gains and remains necessary. But the conditions that sustained it are changing.

Official development assistance fell by 6.1% in 2024 and by a record 23.1% in 2025, with the United States responsible for roughly three-quarters of the decline. Nigeria alone lost more than \$600 million in health funding, according to Chatham House. These numbers are more than a funding story. They are a stress test of whether African development organisations have built institutions capable of surviving beyond the next funding cycle.

The answer cannot simply be "find more donors". It must be to rethink what organisational resilience means.

This is where innovation matters. Innovation is often reduced to AI, apps or digital platforms. But organisational innovation is broader: it is the ability to rethink what an organisation does, how it operates, how it creates and sustains value, and how it learns. Sometimes that means technology. Sometimes it means a new partnership, a different service model, a new revenue stream, or a better way of solving a problem that communities have faced for years.

At SCIDaR, the funding shock and USG Stop-Work Order accelerated a realisation that innovation could no longer depend on a few entrepreneurial individuals. It had to

become an institutional capability and a deliberate strategy for organisational resilience, growth and long-term value creation. We established a dedicated Innovation function, created an Ideation Challenge to give staff a pathway from identifying problems to testing solutions, and introduced more systematic ways of listening to clients. We are also advancing a portfolio of strategically connected initiatives: the Strategic Emerging Leaders Programme is strengthening the leadership pipeline needed to sustain institutional growth; Leadership & Institutional Delivery, a new service line, is helping organisations build the systems and capabilities required to translate strategy into consistent performance; Tendara, an AI-enabled tool for identifying opportunities, is supporting more proactive and diversified business development; and our Data Repository System is converting years of programme experience into an organisational asset that can inform decisions, improve delivery and support the development of new solutions.

These initiatives matter not because they make SCIDaR look innovative, but because they illustrate a broader principle: organisations must learn to turn experience into assets, capabilities and new sources of value.

The sector still has three major blind spots.

First, we confuse innovation with technology. A sophisticated digital solution is not necessarily a good solution. In many settings, low-tech or locally designed approaches may be cheaper, more trusted and more sustainable.

Second, we design too far from the people who will use the solution. Innovation works better when communities, front-line workers and local institutions are involved in defining the problem and shaping the answer.

Third, we have become better at piloting than scaling. The global development sector has accumulated hundreds of digital health pilots with limited pathways to sustainable adoption. "Pilotitis" is not a technology problem; it is an organisational one. We need fewer experiments designed to impress funders and more solutions designed from the beginning for adoption, financing and scale.

For African development organisations beginning this journey, I would prioritise three foundations: money, people and

evidence.

Money means building a more diversified revenue base, combining donor funding with government contracts, domestic financing, philanthropy and, where appropriate, earned revenue. The objective is not to abandon grants, but to ensure that the loss of one funding stream does not threaten the institution.

People means investing in strong local leadership, talent and succession systems. If knowledge, relationships and decision-making leave when a project ends, the organisation has not really built institutional capacity.

Evidence means owning the data, knowledge and systems needed to make decisions. Data should not exist primarily to satisfy donor reporting requirements. It should help organisations understand their markets, improve delivery, demonstrate value and decide where to invest next.

But African organisations cannot make this transition alone. Donors need to fund institutional capability and longer-term resilience, not only project outputs. Governments should see capable development organisations as partners, clients and potential owners of solutions that can be embedded in public systems. Universities can turn implementation experience into evidence, talent and intellectual assets. The private sector can bring capital, technology and commercial expertise through genuine co-investment rather than CSR alone.

The aid cliff should therefore not be viewed only as a crisis. It is also a forcing function. It is exposing an uncomfortable truth: an organisation can be excellent at implementing projects and still be structurally fragile.

The next generation of African development organisations will need to do more than deliver programmes designed elsewhere. They will need to design, own, finance, scale and continuously improve solutions themselves.

The future of African development will not be determined by the organisations that depend on external resources, but by those that build the leadership, systems and resilience to shape their own future.

• **Chibueze Ewuzie is the Chief Innovation Officer at the Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR), where he leads the organisation's Innovation portfolio.**

By Debo Akinbami

Re-telling Aiyedatiwa's Infrastructural Feats

IN his brief stay at the helms, the Governor of Ondo State, Lucky Aiyedatiwa, has made good impressions. In diverse dimensions, he has delivered sturdy dividends. In his resolve to upscale the quality of governance in Ondo, the Governor spread sterling strides across the various governmental spheres. His rare acts of governance have been serially applauded. His lustrous achievements remain as benchmarks across the various sectors. His season of impactful administration has raised the bar.

In consummate cravings for change, Governor Aiyedatiwa stamped lustrous projects on the nook and cranny. His bid to further elevate the state by building a virile economy and pushing for measurable development explains the priority he places on quality infrastructure as a pivotal precondition; and, he has, in so doing, unleashed momentous projects on the state; so that when weighed in terms of quality and quantity, his efforts leave none in doubt about his resolve to turn the state around.

Inaugurated February 24, 2025, Governor Aiyedatiwa has barely spent two of his four-year-term but he has, in a short while, carved a niche in infrastructure. The Governor's achievements on this front have not only been impressive; they have been instructive; and arguably unmatched by those who recently held the same office before him. It is to Aiyedatiwa's credit that he has largely completed the projects inherited from his principal and predecessor, Rotimi Akeredolu, SAN, and has, on a larger scale, accomplished new ones.

The iconic Onyearugbulem-Shagari/Irese Road project that Aiyedatiwa inherited from Akeredolu and delivered with finesse and precision speaks to the seriousness with which the Governor takes matters of governance. Named after the foremost leader of the Pan-Yoruba Socio-cultural Group, Afenifere, the Pa Reuben Fasoranti massive road project, which is the first of its kind in the state capital, now stands as an enduring memorabilia of the late Akeredolu.

Governor Aiyedatiwa does not just deliver infrastructure, he makes certain that they are evenly distributed. His style departs from the

pattern of governance where leaders concentrate projects within their domain. He does not lose sight of the fact that the entire Ondo State is his own constituency, and so he consciously touches the three senatorial districts with equal spread of projects.

In the northern part, Governor Aiyedatiwa approved, with dispatch, the immediate construction of a dual carriageway from the Supare junction to Ikare-Akoko, as part of measures to address the recurrent accidents happening at Akungba-Akoko-the university's community. In the same north, the Governor is constructing the Arigidi-Agbaluku road, rehabilitating the Arigidi-Oke Agbe road, and building the Oba-Ikun-Isoani road, and Okela Federal Technical College road at Ikare.

Apart from making asphalt overlay for selected roads in Owo, Ose and the four Akoko local councils, Governor Aiyedatiwa has also completed asphalt overlay on the Iwara-Ayegunle road at Oka-Akoko, and has constructed the Kajola lane at Oke-Ogun, Owo. This administration constructed the Opomulero road, Owo, as well as the Oselu road, up to Isuada junction, Owo. Governor Aiyedatiwa has also constructed the Falodun Avenue road in Oke-Ogun, Owo, the Adelami, Off Isuada road, and constructed Ekungba road at Owo.

In like manner, Governor Aiyedatiwa has wrought incredible projects in the central senatorial district. His works in the central district have been staggering. His urban renewal projects in the state capital continue to attract loud applause. Being part of this effort, the traffic signal infrastructure-at major intersections- makes a massive infrastructure that bears direct impacts on residents' mobility and overall quality of life. The Aiyedatiwa-led administration constructed the beautiful Igoba road.

This regime dualised the Akure-Oda Road; constructed the Alagbaka Exit-SIB road. The Lucky administration also constructed selected roads in Afunbiowo and Ajipowo Estate. There is a long list of roads rehabilitated by the same administration. They include the

Ajegunle road, Akure; Odopetu-Oke Padi-Lao road, Akure; Eco Bank-Oke Arata-Iro road, Akure; Gbangbalogun-Odole-Odi Olowo road, Akure; Bye Pass-Gbogi Street;UBA-WAEC road, Alagbaka, Akure.

Other road projects rebuilt by Governor Aiyedatiwa, in the central area: FUTA South - Gate road; Oke-Eda -Government House road, Sita-Government House-CBN road. Oja Oshodi road; SK Bright Road; Ayeloro Street; Akosile Street; Dare Ajaye road; Maronu road; Plaza road; Oke-Eda Government House road; Bishop's Court -Civil Service Commission road; investment road-Shoprite intercession - Federal Secretariat, SIB road. The administration rehabilitated the Ayeyemi road, Ondo; St. Stephen-Hospital road,Ondo; Odotu-Oke Igbala road, Ondo; Fagun and Valentino roads, Ondo.

Apart from those already delivered, the governor has approved other projects in the central region and they are already at various levels of completion. In this category is another legacy project- the flyover bridge along Oyemekun-Oba Adesida road, from Agbegbola junction to St. Mathias. The Governor is also currently constructing the dual Akure -Idanre carriageway, Arakale-Oke-Aro dual carriageway; the Akure-Ijare road, and the Akure-Imafon road.

The governor has approved the construction of the Araromi-Ijare-Odo Oja-Igbara Oke, amidst selected township roads at Ilaramokin; MTD Roundabout -Olofin Grammar School Road, alongside selected township roads at Idanre. Access and internal roads were approved by Governor Aiyedatiwa for Ondo State University of Medical Sciences, Ondo; the Sabo-Orimolade-Akinkugbe-Yaba road, Ondo, and the Holy Trinity-Italuworo road, Ondo. For the residents' relief, the Aiyedatiwa-led administration is building selected roads within the Obaile Housing Estate.

The south senatorial district is also receiving the Governor's attention. The administration has rehabilitated the Dumes Road at Ore. It

has reconstructed the Niger Delta Road, Igbokoda; the Mobil dual carriageway, Ore; Reserve Garage, Ore; VIO-Internal Revenue Road, Ore; Ade Adeyemi-Olaoluwa Street, Okitipupa. The Alli Balogun, Ewe and Okeraye roads have been rebuilt by Governor Aiyedatiwa. The same way the Onaopemipo road has been rehabilitated. At Irele, Mobayode and Luhare roads have been fixed by this administration; the same way township roads are constructed at Igbotako.

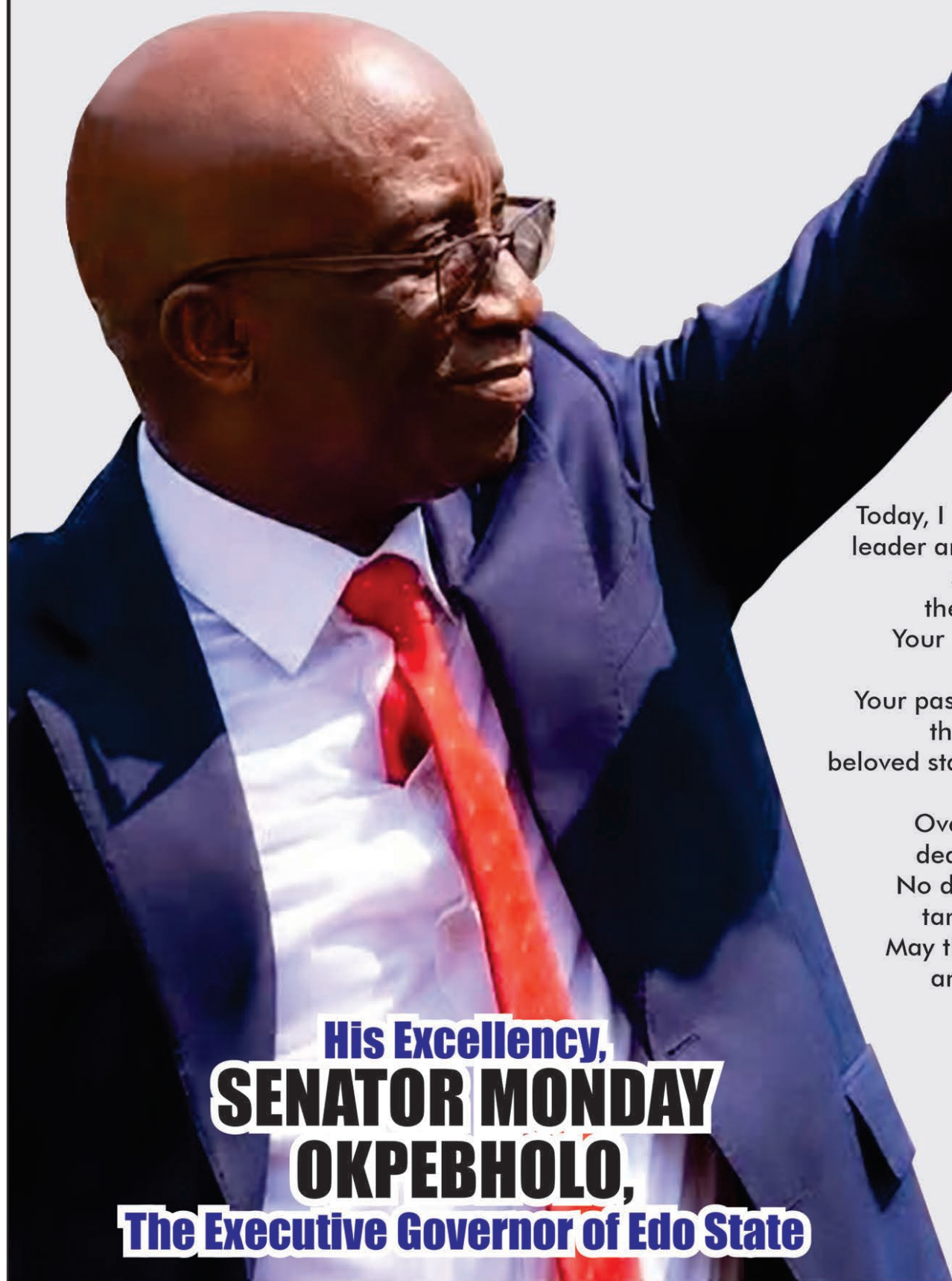
Only recently, Governor Aiyedatiwa commissioned the concrete walkways built to the relief of the Obenla Community. Other projects approved within the southern belt are now at various layers of completion. They include the asphalt overlay of Ugbeyin-Okitipupa Market; OAUStech-Ugbonla Jetty, Igbokoda; construction of dual carriageway between the College road-Okoga Junction -Irewole Roundabout, Igbokoda; rehabilitation of the Omotosho-Igbotako-Ijuodo Road; construction of Ajagba-Akotogbo Road; Ajagba-Iju Osun Road and the construction of Okunmo-Igodan Lisa Road, as well as selected township roads in Ile-Oluji/Okeigbo.

Governor Aiyedatiwa has embarked on the canalisation of Ugbonla-Idiogba-Ilowo-Obenla-Rewoye- Ikorigho-Awoye in Ilaje, with spurs from Idiogba-Olotu. He had also approved the construction of Agadagba Obon-Ile Ikiri-Igaligaigbo road, with selected township roads at Igboegunrin and Araromi Seaside. On the list of the roads approved for construction is Zion Pepe-Agerige township road; the Irele-Sabomi-Igbotu road, and the Oniparaga-Ago Alaye-Araromi Obu-Ayesan Road.

Without dramatising it, the Governor has delivered plethora dividends in infrastructure. Governor Aiyedatiwa is busy rewriting Ondo's infrastructural story. He is remaking the state's visage and reordering governance at an enviable rate. The foregoing represents evident testimony of his strides; they reflect the large scale infrastructural revolution happening under Governor Aiyedatiwa and a foretaste of the eldorado underway.

• **Dr. Akinbami is the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor of Ondo State on Public Communication.**

Happy BIRTHDAY Your Excellency!



**His Excellency,
SENATOR MONDAY
OKPEBHOLO,
The Executive Governor of Edo State**

Today, I heartily celebrate a trailblazer, visionary leader and the people's governor, His Excellency, **Senator Monday Okpebholo,** the Executive Governor of Edo State.

Your life has been defined by God's grace and benevolence.

Your passion for public service and dedication to the growth and development of our beloved state endear us all. You have been amazing.

Over time, you have shown resilience, dedication and purposeful leadership. No doubt your leadership style has made tangible impact on the lives of many. May the years ahead bring renewed vigour and success in all your endeavours.

Congratulations, Sir!



**Signed:
Mr. Austine Iluore
CEO**





MINISTRY OF
AGRICULTURE AND
FOOD SECURITY
EDO STATE

Happy Birthday

TO AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADER

His Excellency

**SEN. MONDAY
OKPEBHOLO**

EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR,
EDO STATE

On this special day, we celebrate your exemplary leadership, visionary foresight, and unwavering commitment to the growth and development of Edo State. May God grant you continued wisdom, strength, good health, long life and greater accomplishments in your service to our dear state.

*Wishing You A Day Filled With Joy,
And A Year Of Impactful Achievements.*



PEOPLE
Focused



PROGRESS
Driven



EDO
First

Together, we are building a greater Edo

*Stronger Today,
Brighter Tomorrow.*



From

HON. AMB. DR. JERRY UWANGUE (DFCISM)

Honorable Commissioner
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
Edo State



Congratulations

Happy Birthday YOUR EXCELLENCY

On behalf of the **Governing Council, Senate, Management, Staff and Students of Edo State University Iyamho**, I warmly felicitate with **His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Executive Governor of Edo State** and Visitor to the University, on the occasion of his birthday anniversary.

Your Excellency, your administration's vision and determination to transform Edo State through purposeful governance, infrastructural and human capital development, and expanded opportunities for our people continue to inspire hope and confidence in the future of our dear State.

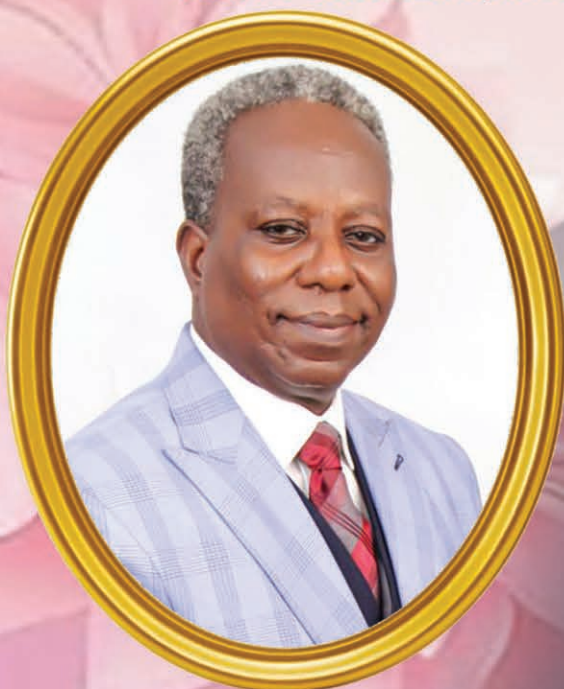
Your birthday anniversary offers us a special opportunity to gratefully acknowledge your compassion, humility, kindness, and generous support.

When we spoke, you listened.
When we called, you answered.
When we requested, you provided!

In the month the request was made, Your Excellency increased our monthly subvention from ₦100 million to ₦250 million. You provided vehicles to address the transportation challenges of the Vice-Chancellor, students and staff of Edo State University. You responded swiftly to our security challenges towards making our campus safe. In addition, Your Excellency has demonstrated unparalleled commitment to the infrastructural development of our university.

May the years ahead bring you greater fulfilment, more remarkable achievements, and continued success in your service to Edo State and humanity.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, YOUR EXCELLENCY



Prof. Victor O. Adetimirin
Vice-Chancellor
Edo State University, Iyamho

**HIS EXCELLENCY,
SENATOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO,
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF EDO STATE**

Emmanuel Anaje Ifebunmi In Cycle Of Becoming

By Gregory Austin Nwakunor

A SOLO show by Nigerian artist, Emmanuel Anaje Ifebunmi, is scheduled to open on Saturday, September 5 at The O.O Art Studio on Bashorun Apampa Street, Jericho Reservation Area, Ibadan, Oyo State. It will be on till Friday, September 11, 2026. Featuring a new body of 15 works (acrylics and gloss on canvas), the show, titled, *Cycle of Becoming*, reflects growth and identity.

Ifebunmi, an accomplished artist from Kogi State, has made a name for himself in the art world through his unique and captivating works.

Utilising acrylics and gloss as his primary mediums, he creates stunning paintings on canvas. His talent has not gone unnoticed, as his works have been widely exhibited and collected in various countries.

His art has graced galleries and exhibitions in Nigeria, the United States, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, garnering praise and admiration from art enthusiasts and collectors alike.

His artistic style, which he refers to as ‘semblance realism’, is a testament to his creative vision. Through this approach, he blurs the lines between reality and abstraction.

When viewing his paintings up close, the viewer is immersed in a world of vibrant colours and intriguing textures. However, as the observer steps back or views the artwork through a camera lens, the subjects and narratives hidden within the canvas emerge, creating a captivating and transformative experience.

With each stroke of his brush, he continues to push boundaries and captivate viewers with his unique artistic perspective. His ability to blend realism and abstraction creates a dynamic and engaging visual experience, leaving an indelible mark on the global art scene.

In his foreword to the show, Oluwale Omofemi, the curator of O.O Art Studio says Ifebunmi is one artist whose work catches your attention.

Omofemi notes, “two years ago, when Ifebunmi had his first show in my studio, there was something immediately honest and promising about the work he presented. The exhibition



sold out, but beyond the sales, what stayed with me was the sense that we were witnessing the beginning of an artist who was still finding his voice, yet already had something personal and meaningful to say.”

He continues, “today, I am pleased to welcome him back to the studio with a new body of 15 works. What is immediately evident is the growth. The work feels more assured, more reflective, and more willing to engage with the complexities of identity, movement and becoming.”

In *Cycle of Becoming*, Ifebunmi uses the bicycle as more than an object within the composition. It becomes a metaphor for movement, balance, uncertainty and perseverance — the constant motion required of us as we navigate the different stages of life. His figures inhabit

different identities through their clothing, hairstyles, gestures and postures, while the recurring presence of the bicycle reminds us that life itself is a continuous journey.

Ifebunmi’s work does not present life as a perfectly resolved experience. Instead, it acknowledges the moments when “we move forward, pause, question ourselves, lose balance and find our way again. There is a quiet strength in this recognition: the understanding that becoming is not always comfortable, but it is necessary,” says Omofemi.

The show is a reflection Ifebunmi’s own journey as an artist. The young artist, whose first exhibition was two years ago, has returned with greater confidence and a deeper understanding of what he wants his work to communicate. “His practice is beginning to reveal a clearer

visual language, while still retaining the sincerity that first drew my attention to his work. That progression matters. Art, like life, is rarely about arriving at a final destination. It is about movement, discovery, uncertainty and the courage to continue. Every new body of work is another opportunity to understand oneself more deeply, and Ifebunmi’s *Cycle of Becoming* feels very much like such a moment,” says.

Through a recurring figure and her bicycle, he explores the many versions of “ourselves that emerge as we move through time.”

The works (acrylics and gloss on canvas) include: ‘Identity in motion series’, ‘A moment to Breathe’, ‘In her own time’, ‘A basket of love’, ‘Chasing sunshine’, ‘Turning point’, ‘Tailored Resilience’, ‘Leaning into Tomorrow’, ‘Dreaming in Motion’, and ‘The Beauty of Waiting’, and ‘Steady Momentum’.

Cycle of Becoming, according to Ifebunmi, is his “reflection on growth, identity, and the quiet strength required to navigate life. Through a recurring figure and her bicycle, I explore the many versions of ourselves that emerge as we move through time.

“The changing dresses symbolise the different roles we inhabit and the stories we wear. They speak of memory, culture, femininity, and the constant evolution of self. . .” The gloves, he explained, represent protection and resilience.

“The bicycle is the heart of the series. More than an object, it becomes a metaphor for life’s journey.”

Ifebunmi notes that as an artist, these works are deeply personal, adding that “they are reminders that becoming is never a destination, but a continuous cycle.”

Wake Up! Returns For Second Act

By Balkis Ademuyiwa

THE contemporary art and photography exhibition, *Wake Up!*, is back for a second edition.

Curated by Awele Onwordi, *Wake Up! 2* pays homage to the Nigerian youth and burgeoning street culture, which many of its contributing artists reference in their works.

Titled, *Young, Wild, Free*, the exhibition celebrates the creativity, resilience, freedom and cultural influence found in Nigerian youth. Taking aim at societal issues and economic concerns, the exhibit reflects the youth and their refusal to compromise or bow despite all the challenges stacked against them while charting youth culture through art, music, fashion, skateboarding, photography and community.

The show will be held at the Angel and Muse Gallery on Sumbo Jibowu Street off Ribadu Road, Ikoyi. It will open on Saturday, September 5, 2026 and will run until September 11, 2026

This edition, which focuses on celebrating, nurturing and exploring artistic practices rooted in youth and street culture, will feature works from Dencity and Superglider House.

Exhibiting artists include Ajilore Kehinde, Chuka Onwordi, graphic designer, who embodies themes of death, melancholy and beauty in his works; Zidyep, Abuja-based creative whose works move between digital and physical spaces through art, graphic design and air brushing; Franklyn Okoye, graphic designer and artist whose works explore themes of identity and hyper-reality; Awele Onwordi, founder and curator of *Wake Up* and multidisciplinary artist, whose practice spans character art, creative logo design, album covers and more; Oluchi Kogolo, digital illustrator whose work explores street culture, personality and storytelling through a raw and playful visual style and Kozetuo Apeji, multidisciplinary artists whose

Arojah Takes Leah To Cradle Of Creativity Festival 2026

By Balkis Ademuyiwa

ONE of Nigeria’s leading theatre companies, Arojah Royal Theatre, will represent the country at the Cradle Of Creativity Festival 2026.

Presented by ASSITEJ, the festival, which is South Africa’s premier international theatre festival for young audiences, will hold at The Market Theatre, Johannesburg.

According to the artistic director of Arojah Royal Theatre, Jerry Adesewo, the 2026 edition brings together theatre-makers from across Africa and the wider international theatre community, alongside workshops, professional development activities and opportunities for intercultural exchange.

He said, “the festival is a platform for artistic excellence, international collaboration, audience development and professional exchange.”

Adesewo said, “Arojah Royal Theatre’s participation extends beyond the presentation of a single production. It represents an opportunity for Nigerian theatre to contribute to conversations around Theatre for Young Audiences, inclusive artistic practice, African storytelling and the role of the performing arts in confronting

difficult social realities.”

The festival runs from August 31 to September 6, 2026 while *Leah* is scheduled for performances on September 4, 5 and 6 at the Barney Simon Theatre, The Market Theatre.

The Johannesburg presentation comes at a particularly significant moment for the Cradle of Creativity. The 2026 edition marks the 50th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising, when young people took to the streets in protest against apartheid education policies.

The festival is consequently placing young people’s courage, activism, creativity and capacity for transformation at the centre of its artistic programme.

Written and directed by Adesewo is inspired by the true-life story of Leah Sharibu, the Nigerian schoolgirl abducted by Boko Haram alongside more than 100 other girls from the Government Girls’ Science and Technical College in Dapchi, Yobe State, in February 2018.

While most of the abducted girls were subsequently released, Leah remained in captivity, and uncertainty has continued to surround her fate.

In *Leah*, Adesewo transforms this unresolved national memory into a theatrical exploration of courage, faith, resilience, education, memory and the enduring consequences of conflict on children

and young people.

The play traces Leah’s journey from a schoolgirl in Dapchi through her abduction, captivity, forced marriage and motherhood, while foregrounding the resilience and hope that sustain her. The production also gives voice to countless girls and young people affected by conflict and displacement.

For Arojah Royal Theatre, participation in the festival offers an opportunity to place a distinctly Nigerian story within a broader African and international conversation about children, conflict, human rights, memory and the transformative possibilities of theatre.

“*Leah* is ultimately about remembering,” says Jerry Adesewo, playwright, director and Artistic Director of Arojah Royal Theatre. “It is about what happens when a young person disappears and the world gradually moves on. Theatre gives us an opportunity to bring Leah back into the public consciousness, not by pretending to know what happened to her, but by refusing to allow her name and story to disappear.”

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng



Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by Shaibu Hussein

Kaduna Film Festival To Close August 30

THE ninth edition of the Kaduna International Film Festival (KADIFF) which opened on October 25 in Kaduna, will close on August 30 with an award night. The festival is holding under the theme: Cultural Renaissance. At the well-attended opening ceremony, founder and Executive Director of KADIFF, Israel Audu, urged stakeholders to leverage film to preserve culture, create opportunities and project Nigerian stories globally. Audu noted that film was more than entertainment, describing it as history, culture, education, diplomacy and an instrument of economic and social transformation. Audu who described KADIFF as a platform that had grown into an avenue for discovering talent, promoting cultural tourism, attracting investment and positioning Northern Nigeria within the global film conversation disclosed that the festival had from inception brought together filmmakers, industry professionals, students, cultural institutions, diplomats and audiences from Nigeria, Africa and Europe to screen films, share ideas, build networks and establish partnerships. Guest at the opening included Prof. Dul Johnson, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Bingham University, who represented the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Haruna Ayuba, Hajiya Nana Tijani, representing the National Gallery of Art, Blessing Kwashi, who represented the leadership of the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), and Former Sen. Shehu

Sani who commended the organisers for their resilience in promoting film and the arts in Kaduna. Earlier, Patience Fakai, Kaduna State Commissioner for Business and Innovation, who represented Gov. Uba Sani, described culture and stories as economic assets capable of driving tourism, investment, employment and enterprise development. She noted that Kaduna's heritage, festivals, cuisine, music, landscapes and creative talents provided a strong foundation for a thriving creative and tourism economy. The Commissioner urged filmmakers to see the state as a destination for investment and collaboration, highlighting government efforts in hospitality development and vocational training.

Toronto International Film Fest Announces 2026 Primetime Programme

THE Toronto International Film Festival, presented by Rogers, has announced its 2026 Primetime programme, spotlighting groundbreaking episodic storytelling and auteur-driven television from some of the world's most exciting creators. This year's Official Selections showcase the creative power and influence of the medium,

featuring major World Premieres and new seasons of compelling dramas, thrillers, and docuseries starring François Arnaud, Bérénice Bejo, Linda Cardellini, Jon Hamm, Carrie-Anne Moss, Gary Oldman, Hudson Williams, and more. Primetime spotlights the best in international and North American series, bringing new shows to the big screen. Featuring one or two episodes and conversations with cast and creators, this programme treats TIFF audiences to a first look at upcoming series before they hit TV, alongside the people who made them. This year's lineup has a heavy focus on series based on established IP, including *American Hostage*, *Carrie*, and *Crystal Lake (Friday the 13th)*. The programme's opening title is Jesse McKeown's *Below*, a six-episode series starring Mackenzie Davis, Charlie Heaton, and Josh Hartnett, about a small town in Newfoundland that comes under siege by a mysterious sea creature. Premiering his new series *Carrie*, Mike Flanagan makes his return to TIFF after his 2024 People's Choice Award winner *The Life of Chuck*.

TIFF will hold from September 10 through to 20, 2026. *Being Heumann* directed by Siân Heder has been announced as the opening film while the closing film is *Villeneuve: The Rise of a Legend* directed by Yan Lanouette Turgeon.

Durban FilmMart 2026 To Host Conversations Around Industry Guilds

AS a platform that remains a significant gateway to the African and global film industry for film professionals, the organisers of Durban FilmMart has announced a focus on South African cinema through its SA Focus

programming stream. This focus brings together the nation's most influential industry bodies, guilds and creative professionals to address the current state and future of the local audiovisual sector. The programme will hold alongside panel discussions, masterclasses, pitch forums and networking opportunities. Taking place under the theme *Shifting Worlds: Turning Towards Ourselves*, the 17th Durban FilmMart, scheduled from 9 to 12 October 2026, once again anchors conversations about the health and future of the local industry within the wider market. For Director of the Durban Film Institute Magdalene Reddy, the 2026 Durban FilmMart has been programmed with a view that answers begin at home. 'It begins with the strength of our guilds, the ability of our practitioners to pivot, and our willingness to have honest conversations about what needs to change. By bringing together the organisations that represent South Africa film professionals, DFM 2026 reaffirms that a thriving local industry is the foundation for everything else we build internationally' she said. Opening the SA stream, Animation SA will unpack how the sector is adapting to consolidation, shifting streaming algorithms and the rise of generative AI in the session *Africa-Centred Collaboration in a Shifting Landscape: New Strategies and Practices in Marketing, Distribution and Community Development for Animation and Gaming*. The panel features Isabelle Rorke, Mocke Jansen van Veuren, Rashid Juma, Xolile Vundla and Nick Cloete. The Writers Guild of South Africa presents *Writers vs the Machine*, tackling AI's growing role in writing and what it means for authorship, craft and copyright. Ensuring women's perspectives remain central to industry change, *Sisters Working In Film and Television (SWIFT)*, will present *Women's Voices on Industry Dialogues: Why Your Voice Matters*. The 17th Durban FilmMart will hold from 9 to 12 October 2026. Details on the festival can be sourced at www.durbanfilmmart.co.za

Why Reputation Is Becoming Most Valuable Currency In AI Era

In this interview, Chukwuemeka Okereke, Managing Director of Influxion Communications Limited, tells GREGORY AUSTIN NWAKUNOR how artificial intelligence is transforming public relations and strategic communications. He argues that as AI makes content abundant and attention increasingly fragmented, trust, credibility and reputation will become the defining sources of competitive advantage for organisations.

Artificial intelligence is transforming virtually every industry. What does it mean for public relations and strategic communications?

AI is fundamentally changing the economics of communication. For a long time, content was relatively scarce. Producing a quality article, campaign, presentation, video or corporate communication required people, time and resources. AI has changed that equation dramatically.

Today, content can be generated almost instantaneously and at enormous scale. Organisations can produce more content, more frequently and for more audiences than ever before. But there is an interesting paradox here, the more content we produce, the less valuable content itself becomes.

The real scarcity is shifting from content to credibility. AI can help us produce information, but it does not automatically make that information believable. It can help an organisation communicate, but it cannot, by itself, give that organisation legitimacy, integrity or trust.

So, for me, the central communications question in the AI era is no longer simply, "How do we get our message out?" It is increasingly, "Why should anyone believe us?"

You have described trust as becoming the new scarce asset. Why?

Because we are moving from an attention economy into what I would call a trust economy.

For many years, communications success was largely associated with visibility—media coverage, impressions, followers, engagement and share of voice. Those metrics remain relevant, but visibility without credibility is increasingly fragile. You can have millions of impressions and still have very little influence. You can have hundreds of thousands of followers and still lack authority. You can dominate the news cycle and still have a weak reputation.

The more important question is therefore, how many people believe what you say, and why do they believe you? That is where trust becomes commercially important.

What exactly do you mean by the "trust premium"?

The trust premium is the value an organisation derives from having a strong, credible and resilient reputation. Imagine two organisations offering essentially the same product or service at comparable prices. One has a reputation for keeping its promises, treating customers fairly, being transparent and demonstrating strong leadership. The other has a history of disappointing customers and avoiding accountability. The difference between those two organisations is not merely emotional. Trust can influence customer decisions, investor confidence, employee attraction and retention, partnerships, regulatory relationships and even how stakeholders respond when something goes wrong. A trusted organisation often has less friction in its relationships. That is the premium.

Does this mean reputation should now be considered a business asset rather than simply a communications issue?

Absolutely. Reputation has always had business consequences, but I think organisations are becoming much

more conscious of that connection.

Reputation can influence whether a customer chooses you, whether an investor believes in you, whether a talented professional wants to work for you, whether a partner wants to collaborate with you and whether stakeholders give you the benefit of the doubt during difficult moments. The important thing is that reputation cannot simply be created by communications. Messaging is what you say. Reputation is what stakeholders conclude from what you repeatedly say and do.

That distinction is critical. If an organisation says it values customers but consistently gives them poor experiences, communications cannot permanently bridge that gap.

If a CEO talks about transparency but avoids accountability, people will notice. Reputation ultimately reflects the relationship between promise and experience.

How does AI complicate the question of authenticity?

Significantly. As generative AI becomes more sophisticated, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between what is genuinely created by a person and what has been synthetically produced.

We will increasingly

ask, Was this photograph real? Did this executive actually write this article? Is this video authentic? Is this testimonial genuine? Was this opinion based on experience or generated from a prompt? Those questions matter because trust depends on authenticity and evidence.

This places a new responsibility on communications professionals. We are no longer simply managing messages. We are increasingly managing the credibility and authenticity of information. That means stronger editorial standards, fact-checking, verification, transparency and ethical use of AI will become increasingly important.

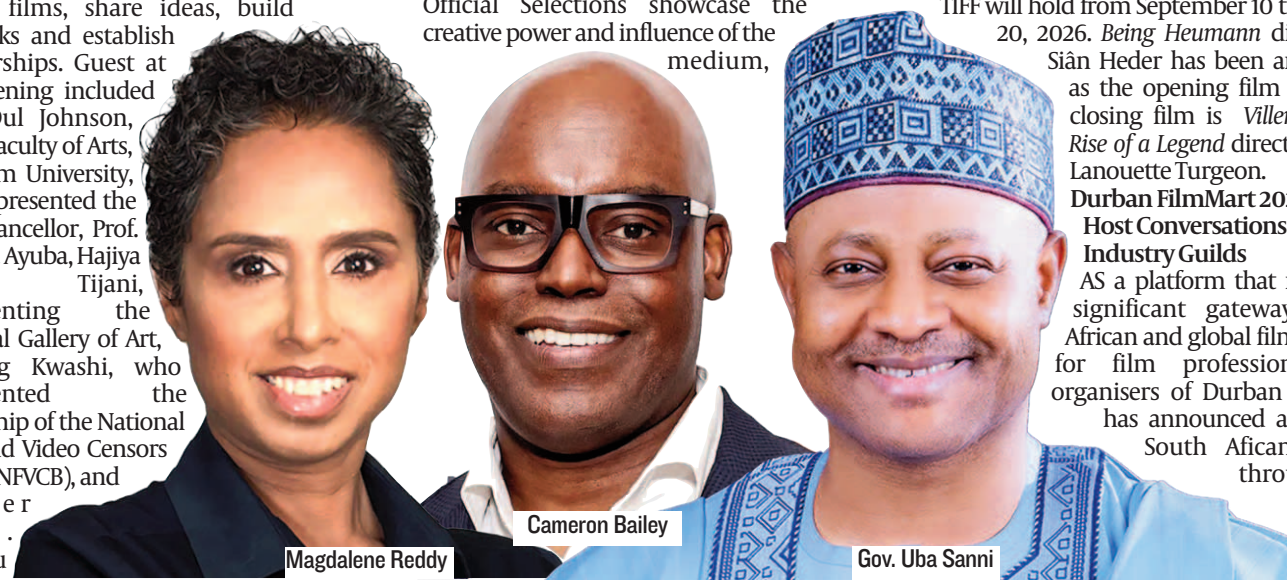
Does AI therefore threaten the communications profession?

I would not frame it primarily as a threat. I see it as a transformation. AI will automate

some activities. It will make research, content development, monitoring, analysis and production significantly faster. But that makes the human contribution more important rather than less important. Judgement, context, empathy, relationships, ethical reasoning, institutional knowledge and credibility cannot simply be automated. The communications professional of the future will need to become less of a content producer and more of a strategic adviser, reputation architect and trust builder. The question is not whether AI can write. Of course it can. The question is whether the person using AI understands what should

be said, why it should be said, when it should be said and whether the organisation can credibly stand behind it.

Read the remainder of this story on www.guardian.ng



Magdalene Reddy

Cameron Bailey

Gov. Uba Sanni



Okereke

By Daniel Anazia

AJEGUNLE musicians and the wider Nigerian music community will on Sunday celebrate the life and enduring legacy of John Aigbokhan Oboh, popularly known as Mighty Mouse, the pioneer widely regarded as the ‘Father of AJ Music’.

The gathering is expected to bring together artistes, producers, creatives, family members and members of the Ajegunle community to honour a man whose influence extended far beyond his own recordings. The celebration comes at a time when there are growing calls for greater documentation of Nigeria’s musical heritage.

Mighty Mouse, who died on September 18, 2023, played a foundational role in the development of AJ Music, a sound that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s from Ajegunle, with influences from Edo Esan samba, reggae, jazz, and other African rhythms.

More than a music producer, he was a renowned DJ, a mentor, innovator, experimenter, teacher, benefactor, and above all, an artiste who believed in the power of his own dream, which helped take the sound to the Nigerian mainstream industry.

The result of his incorporation of reggae and dancehall with African rhythms and local expressions to develop a sound that reflected the realities and identity of Ajegunle was a distinctive musical culture that eventually produced some of the most recognisable street sounds

Ajegunle Musicians Honour Mighty Mouse, ‘Father Of AJ Music’

and personalities in Nigerian popular music.

Mighty Mouse may be gone, but the sound he helped create continues to live through the artistes he mentored, the music he produced and the Ajegunle community that still calls him its musical father. His Jahoha Studio was an important creative centre for musicians, producers and engineers, especially youths who were given opportunities to learn, experiment and develop their craft.

Speaking about the celebration, his sister, Mabel Oboh, described the late composer as the “undisputed father of Ajegunle music”, recalling his determination to take the sound beyond the community where it originated. She also highlighted his collaborations and experiments with other musical traditions, including an Afro-Celtic project with Piper Norman.

“We are honouring John Aigbokhan Oboh, popularly known as Mighty Mouse, the man we proudly call the Father of Ajegunle Music. We are not only celebrating him as the man who created a sound; we are celebrating him as the man who created opportunities for people.

“We are not simply remembering a great musician and producer, but honouring a man whose creative vision changed the musical identity of an entire community. Those of us who were young musicians around

Mighty Mouse miss him deeply.

“We

miss his voice; we miss his ideas. We miss the way he could hear something in a music that the musician had not yet discovered. Most importantly, we miss the father figure behind the music,” she said.

“Mighty Mouse understood that talent does not always come with money. He therefore created a space where young musicians, producers, engineers and aspiring artists could learn, experiment and develop their abilities. His studio was not simply a place where people came to record and leave. It became a place of learning and opportunity.

“Many people who could not afford professional studio time were given opportunities to record, learn and develop. His generosity helped create a generation of musicians and music professionals. That is one part of his legacy that must never be forgotten,” Oboh added.

While Ajegunle became synonymous with the energetic sounds, artistes such as Daddy Showkey, Daddy Fresh, Baba Fryo, and Marvellous Benji, passed through that environment. The story of the movement cannot be separated from Mighty Mouse, whose approach was rooted in experimentation.



Tobe SZN Joins Funke Akindele, Others As Moniepoint Partner

By Daniel Anazia

SOCIAL media personality and content creator, Tobechukwu Ugeh, popularly known as Tobe SZN, has joined Funke Akindele, Real Warri Pikin and other prominent personalities as a creative partner of fintech company, Moniepoint.

The partnership adds Tobe SZN to the digital financial powerhouse’s growing network of creators using their platforms to connect the company with a younger, digitally engaged generation.

The announcement of the partnership was made in an Instagram post, where Tobe also reflected on his personal experience using Moniepoint and how the platform’s rewards system became part of his own financial journey.

Unlike a partnership built solely around brand visibility, Tobe’s collaboration with Moniepoint is rooted in his familiarity with the platform, giving the partnership a more personal dimension as he joins the company as a creator partner.

With a combined audience of close to one million followers across social platforms, Tobe has built a reputation for creating highly engaging content around Nigerian culture, travel, lifestyle and everyday experiences. His content is known for blending humour with real-life experiences, while increasingly exploring conversations around Nigeria, its people and the opportunities within the continent.

His rise has also seen him work across entertainment, culture and tourism, positioning him as part of a new generation of Nigerian creators whose influence extends beyond traditional social media entertainment.

Mindustry Conference Partners Warner Music Africa/Africori For Fifth Edition

By Daniel Anazia

MINDUSTRY Conference, the yearly platform focused on the intersection of ministry, music, business, leadership and culture, has announced the opening of registration for its fifth edition, m,m holding on Saturday, October 3, at the Marriott Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos, with Warner Music Africa/Africori joining as supporting partner.

Convened by Dr Ezekiel ThankGod, popularly known as EeZee Tee, Founder/CEO of EeZee Conceptz, and organised by the Institute of Mindustry, the platform’s organising body, this year’s conference continues Mindustry’s mission to equip the next generation of gospel creatives and leaders with the knowledge, capacity, systems and relationships required to build sustainable careers, businesses and institutions.

With the expanded partnerships, the conference is expected to bring together key players in Africa’s music ecosystem to examine the opportunities and the challenges shaping the continent’s rapidly evolving creative economy.

The one-day event will combine keynote sessions, panel conversations, mentorship, and networking across ministry, music, business, leader-

ship, and culture, anchored by Mindustry’s five-stage frameworks: Calling, Capacity, Excellence, Influence, and Legacy.

The partnership with Warner Music Africa/Africori, one of the leading forces in African music distribution and artiste development, marks a significant step in Mindustry’s effort to bridge the gospel music community with the wider professional music industry, bringing global label expertise directly into conversation around music distribution, artiste development, publishing, rights management, technology, international expansion and the changing economics of the African music industry, as well as the next generation of gospel talent.

Speaking on this year’s edition,

EeZee Tee said, “At EeZee Conceptz Global, we believe that the future of gospel music will not only be determined by the songs we create, but by the people, systems and institutions we build around those songs.

“Our partnership with Warner Music/Africori reflects exactly that – an investment in the next generation, giving creatives and leaders access to knowledge, experience and conversations that can strengthen their capacity to serve both ministry and the marketplace.”



TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

Poco Lee Did Not Hear About African China, Obviously

POPULAR Nigerian dancer, Iweh Odinaka, aka Poco Lee, is currently in a UK correctional centre awaiting his first court hearing scheduled for September 15. The Nigerian dancer is facing allegations of sexual assault among others. He was arrested earlier this month after reportedly performing at a show in the UK. According to reports, Poco Lee, being a ‘fine boy no pimples’ allegedly carried an ‘Oyinbo handbag’ to relax his nerves after a night of rigorous dancing. When morning came, the ‘handbag’ screamed that Poco Lee took her to the hotel against her wish. And you no say e nor dey tay Oyinbo dem to call 911. The rest is history as our dear brother is now eating half done beans in a UK prison till he will be formally charged on September 15. Poco Lee may be too young to know about the story of African China who went through a similar ordeal in that same UK about two decades ago when he was on top of his game in the Nigerian music industry. African China spent over a year fighting the sexual assault charge till he was discharged and acquitted. That is the problem with this Soro soke generation in Nigeria. They don’t know anything about the past. They think the world started when X (Twitter) came into existence. If Poco Lee had learned about African China, he would have zipped up and bore his ‘konji’ till he came back to Nigeria where nobody will call the police after willingly following you home. Let us wish and pray that Poco Lee will prevail at the end like African China did.

Interrogating VDM’s ‘Cow Money Laundering’ Conspiracy Theory

T4T saw the video of social media activist, Martin Otse aka VDM, at the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) yearly conference held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, where he was weaving a conspira-

cy theory of how politicians launder monies through open cattle grazing. He boldly said that the reason why open grazing will not stop in Nigeria is because politicians and other powerful people launder billions of naira through the cows. He did a maths of a big cow costing 2 million naira and that a herd comprising of about 200 to 500, which according to him amounts to billions, it has become an easy route to launder money, and also because almost all politicians use this avenue to launder money, they will never vote to stop open grazing which has been one of the causes of clashes between herders and farmers across the country.

As T4T watched the video of VDM as he confidently sugar coat this conspiracy theory, his mind raced to a certain woman in his town in Delta State who is a big cattle herder. She has been in the business for over three decades now and she was the one who supplied T4T’s family two cows when they buried his mum in 2021. T4T’s mind was racing and doing a mental calculation of how many billions she must have helped politicians launder all these years. No wonder she is so rich!

T4T noted that the large gathering of lawyers actually clapped and cheered VDM as he was sounding off on this rather ridiculous theory. A semi literate boy succeeded in getting into the heads of so called ‘Learned Colleagues’ with z nonsensical and jagbajantis trash and they clapped!

Anyway, sebi the same NBA also invited Zazzu to be star performer at their last convention, na dia way na.

Lamentations Of That Nollywood Actress

If you are above 35 years, there is a possibility that you will know who Tari West is, especially if you are a follower of Nollywood movies.

Ms West is relatedn (so T4T heard) to late movie star, JT Tom West,

so, movie runs in the family as Tari is an actress and producer. She would be considered among the people that pioneered the Nigerian home video industry that later became known widely as Nollywood. This is however not the story here. T4T ran into a lengthy Facebook post by the veteran actor on Monday where she was lamenting how her contributions to the industry were being systematically buried by people who ‘hate’ her.

“Erased From The Story. But Not Erased From History.” This was the headline of her lamentation and she deliberately used an all cap to highlight how pained she is. “Oh Nollywood, how could you treat me this way? Is this what I deserve? My heart is broken,” she began like say she dey write another book of Psalms for bible.

She continued, this time in an imaginary low tone as visualised by T4T: “You tell the Nollywood story without me in it, after all I gave.(a question mark should have been here). Everything.”

“I sat in that hall yesterday and listened to how it all began. Not one mention of my name. Every time, I watch others take the glory. Ahhh... Thank you. Yes, my name has been slandered by those who call me enemy. They fight anything good coming my way. The same people who promised “You will never be President of a Guild in this industry.” And go to any length to achieve it. This has happened too many times. And I can’t take it anymore. To those being used: Don’t you have a conscience? Do you remember there is Karma? I leave you all to God. Because God sees. And God remembers.”

T4T join hand with Auntie Tari West to leave una matter for God hand.

House Of Estree Reimagines Ankara Through Modern Tailoring @ 16th AFWL

... Unveils Twelve-Look Collection

By Maria Diamond

WHEN House of Estree took to the runway of the 16th Africa Fashion Week London (AFWL), it was a showcase of the versatility of *ankara*, as the designer, Esther Olorunfemi, popularly known as Estree, transformed the vibrant African fabric into a range of contemporary silhouettes.

Rather than limiting African textiles to traditional styles, the collection reimagined *ankara* through modern tailoring, with pieces including structured jackets, belted outerwear, tailored trousers and other contemporary men's wear and women's wear designs.

This approach reflects the wider House of Estree design philosophy. The brand works with African fabrics, particularly *ankara* and *asoke*, transforming them into contemporary pieces ranging from blazers, skirts and tailored trousers to bomber jackets, winter jackets and coats.

The result is a meeting point between African textile heritage and modern global fashion, demonstrating the versatility of African fabrics beyond traditional wear.

Representing her flagship fashion brand, House of Estree (@houseofestree), the UK-based Nigerian creative delivered a dual-impact presentation, unveiling a striking 12-look collection on the main runway while simultaneously maintaining a strong presence on the AFWL exhibition floor.

The showcase also placed the spotlight on KOWRI, Estree's newly launched active wear brand, which was strongly represented on the AFWL runway before an international audience of fashion critics, global buyers, diaspora leaders and style enthusiasts.

On the runway, the activewear, KOWRI brought a distinctly different energy to the presentation, showcasing its T-shirts, jerseys, hoodies and jogger pants on the runway.

Rooted in African cultural symbolism while designed for contemporary lifestyles, the activewear brand brings together heritage, style and functionality.

Although deliberately stylised as KOWRI, the brand takes its inspiration from the cowrie shell, historically used as a form of currency and exchange in parts of Africa and long associated with wealth, value and cultural heritage.

Drawing from that history, it is built around the symbolism of wealth and protection, reinterpreting an enduring African symbol for a contemporary generation.

"African Fashion Week London provides an important international platform to showcase the depth, sophistication and global potential of African fashion. Bringing our 12-look collection to the AFWL runway, while also presenting KOWRI to an international audience, is both a celebration of our heritage and a statement on where contemporary African fashion is headed," said Estree, Founder and Creative Director of House of Estree.



Angbazo Is Recipient Of 7up Harvard Business School Scholarship

By Maria Diamond

REAFFIRMING its long-standing commitment to developing Nigerian leaders through access to world-class education and leadership development, Seven-Up Bottling Company (SBC) has unveiled Jochebed Angbazo as the 16th recipient of the 7UP Harvard Business School Scholarship (7UP-HBSS).

According to SBC, the scholarship is awarded to individuals who are passionate about Nigeria and understand the opportunity that exists in the country and are ready to return and apply what they learn to create impact in their communities and the wider society.

Managing Director SBC, Sari El-Khalil, represented by Chief Finance Officer, Muhammed Ahmad, emphasised the brand's commitment to the scholarship and its impact on recipients and society. He cited Misan Rewane, the first 7UP-HBSS recipient in 2010, whose organisation, West Africa Vocational Education (WAVE), is strengthening employability skills for young people across the region. "We are very proud of the profound impact the 7UP-HBSS initiative has made on recipients and in Nigeria. We remain committed to the programme despite the challenging business environ-

ment because we have seen the value it continues to create for individuals and for the country."

Head of People and Culture, SBC, Olayinka Olufade, highlighted the vision of SBC Chairman, Faysal El-Khalil, who established the scholarship 16 years ago and reiterated the rigour associated with the selection process. She said: "The process is deliberately rigorous, with candidates assessed not only on their professional achievements and academic potential, but also on their commitment to creating a meaningful impact in Nigeria."

Head of Legal and Corporate Affairs, SBC, Nkemdirim Agboti, highlighted the company's extension beyond its brands and business performance, saying, "Our success is measured not only by our refreshing brands, but also by our responsibility to the communities around us, the opportunities we create and the lives we touch, and 7UP-HBSS is a strong expression of that belief."

The 16th Recipient Of 7up Harvard Business School Scholarship, Angbazo has more than eight years of experience across real estate, financial services, digital media, and hospitality. Born in Jos, Plateau State, she believes in the country's potential and its people.



Head of Legal and Corporate Affairs SBC, Nkemdirim Agboti (left); the 16th recipient of the 7UP Harvard Business School Scholarship, Jochebed Angbazo; Chief Finance Officer, SBC, Muhammed Ahmad and Head of People and Culture, SBC, Olayinka Olufade at the unveiling ceremony in Lagos, recently...

From Mechanic To Cinema Icon: The Journey Before 'Ogogo' Said Goodbye

By Suliyat Tella

JUST before he became a household name in the film industry, Taiwo Hassan, popularly known as Ogogo, was a mechanic, who worked with the Ogun State Water Corporation for about 13 years, combining his job with acting, before eventually leaving in 1994 to pursue acting full-time.

For more than four decades, Ogogo, was one of the most recognisable faces in the Yoruba film industry until his demise on August 23, 2026, at the age of 66 bringing an end to a career built with dedication and passion.

His passionate interpretation of roles in movies with imposing, authoritative and unmistakably command in Yoruba language made his name, personality and character accorded the kind of respect that made any movie he was featured in a blockbuster.

Ogogo could deliver a line with a combination of calmness and authority that made even ordinary dialogue sound weighty. His use of

Yoruba proverbs, traditional expressions and oriki further strengthened the cultural identity of his performances.

The Market Place Journey

Born in Ilaro, Ogun State, in 1959, Hassan began acting in 1981. His entire life, career path and impact in the industry before his demise brings to the fore the reality of the Yoruba saying 'aye loja, orun ni ile' meaning 'earth is a market place, afterlife is the home.'

Hassan's earliest years in entertainment were rooted in Yoruba theatre and oral performance. In a 2024 interview with *City People*, he recalled that he began his career as an Akede Oba, a praise chanter

came.

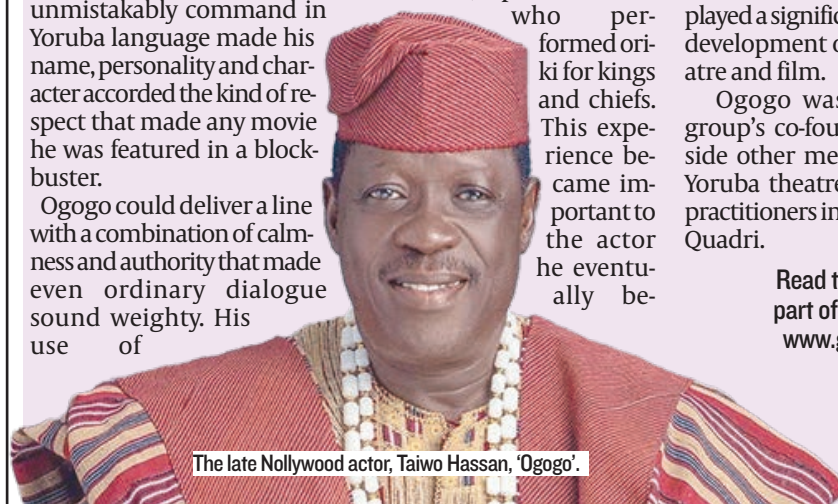
He was known for his ability to deliver Yoruba praise poetry and for the commanding voice with which he performed it. His skill earned him the nickname 'Olohun-lyo', before another name from his family's oriki eventually became the identity by which millions of Nigerians would know him - Ogogo. What began as part of his lineage and cultural identity eventually became one of the most recognisable stage names in Nigerian entertainment.

The Odunfa years

One of the most important chapters in Ogogo's career was his association with the Odunfa Caucus, a group that played a significant role in the development of Yoruba theatre and film.

Ogogo was one of the group's co-founders, alongside other members of the Yoruba theatre community practitioners including Yinka Quadri.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng



The late Nollywood actor, Taiwo Hassan, 'Ogogo'.

Sokoto Gov's Wife Commiserates With Banditry Victims' Families

From Muhammad Gazali Garba, Sokoto

SOKOTO State Governor's wife, Hajiya Fatima Ahmad Aliyu, on Tuesday commiserated with families of victims of the recent bandit attack in Kebbe Local Council of the state.

She also flagged off the distribution of N6m, food items and clothing materials to women among internally-displaced persons in Kebbe and Yabo local councils.

She expressed sympathy with the families of the victims over the loss, pain and hardship caused by the attack, noting that the incident affected not only the immediate families but the wider community. She urged Kebbe residents to remain patient, united and steadfast in prayer, expressing confidence that Almighty Allah would bring an end to the security challenges confronting the area.

Hajiya Fatima said citizens must continue to support one another and maintain hope, assuring them that the government would continue to explore measures aimed at easing the difficulties faced by people affected by insecurity.

She prayed for the repose of the souls of those who lost their lives, the speedy recovery of the injured, and strength and comfort for the bereaved families. She also prayed for an end to banditry and lasting peace across Sokoto State.

Under the humanitarian intervention, beneficiaries in Kebbe Local Council received

• Supports Vulnerable Women In Kebbe, Yabo Local Councils



Hajiya Aliyu and others at the event

250 bags of rice, 200 bundles of *Atamfa*, 50 cartons of spaghetti and N3 million.

Similarly, beneficiaries in Yabo Local Council received 300 bags of rice, 200 bundles of *Atamfa*, 50 cartons of spaghetti and N3 million.

In total, 550 bags of rice, 400 bundles of *Atamfa*, 100 cartons of spaghetti and N6 million were distributed to internally displaced women across the two local government areas.

The *Atamfa* bundles constituted the clothing component of the intervention.

The governor's wife said the intervention was aimed at cushioning the economic hardship faced by displaced persons, stressing the importance of providing immediate assistance to families affected by insecurity.

She urged the beneficiaries to make judicious use of the support and assured them of the government's continued concern for their welfare.

The Commissioner for Women and Children Affairs,

Hajiya Hadiza Ahmed, commended the her for visiting and commiserating with the families of the victims, as well as ensuring the distribution of cash, clothing materials and food items to the beneficiaries.

Hadiza said the intervention demonstrated the government's commitment to supporting vulnerable members of society, particularly women displaced by insecurity.

She noted that the assistance would provide immediate relief to the beneficiaries and help them cope with the challenges arising from displacement, insecurity and economic hardship.

In their separate remarks, the wives of the Chairmen of Kebbe and Yabo local councils, Hajiya Maimuna Musa Garba kuchi and Hajiya Hadiza Bazar, thanked the governor's wife for visiting the affected families and providing cash, clothing materials and food support to internally-displaced women in the two local councils.

ShortStory

Shadows Of Destiny (2)

By Segun Durowaiye
(08055356855)

Continued from GUARDIAN WEEKEND, August 22-23, 2026

Aina was still wondering what the woman meant! "I am asking if you can work for me as an housemaid?" the madam asked. "I can do it ma, there is no problem. I will take care of your house and do the cleaning properly," Aina replied enthusiastically. "In that case, could you follow me to my house? Enter the car. I live in Maryland Estate," she gesticulated. "That's no problem madam," Aina said, and hopped into the front seat of the Cherokee Jeep, "But one thing, madam," she added, "I would be happy if we could quickly dash to Apapa Wharf to brief my husband about this development. He works there as a Labourer."

"Well, that is a better idea, Tunde, drive straight to Wharf," the lady commanded her driver. "By the way, I haven't introduced myself to you properly, I'm Mrs. Yetunde Olamide. I'm an international businesswoman. What's your name, and the name of your baby?" At this particular moment the car revved into life and zoomed off towards Ojota.

"Madam, my name is Aina Balogun," she replied getting really excited, "I'm a native of Oyo State. The name of my little baby is Ayobami. I came to Lagos about three years ago with my husband, Dipo Balogun. And things have not been easy for us living in Lagos. I stay at Ajegunle with my husband, and this is our first child. I do this Alabaru work just to help my poor husband." "Don't worry," Mrs. Olamide replied, "I know you are in need. I'll be of help. You can both pack into my house if your husband wouldn't mind. I have space enough to accommodate your family in the bungalow at the back of my duplex." The time was 1p.m. and the weather was mild; the Jeep headed towards Oshodi on its way to Apapa Wharf.

On getting to Wharf that afternoon, Dipo was busy offloading a container of cement. Immediately he set his eyes on his wife getting down from a car, he threw down the bag of cement he was carrying and took to his heels running like a stray dog. He was shocked beyond comprehension! "What could his wife be doing in Wharf at that time of the day?" he thought questioningly. He had concluded that she must have been ar-

rested for theft or any other crime.

"Wait! Wait!! Wait!!! Dipo, don't run!" shouted Aina, "there is no problem!" she further persuaded at the top of her voice. Convinced after much persuasion, he stopped and turned.

"What's the problem?" he stammered after regaining his composure.

"There's no problem, Dipo," Aina replied excitedly, "I have come to tell you that I have got a job as a house-help with this good madam..." she said. "Enhen, hah, I didn't know, Aina," he replied, "wow, thank you so much madam, God bless you! I hope you are not embarrassed by my behaviour?" "Not at all," answered Mrs. Olamide. "Well... if you don't mind, come along with your wife to know my place."

"That's no problem, madam," Dipo answered with smiles brightening his formerly troubled face. The following weekend Dipo and his wife packed into the bungalow at the back of Mrs. Olamide's duplex. Mr. Olamide himself lived in the United States and occasionally came to the country from his base in New Jersey. They had a child that lived in the country at the same expansive duplex in Maryland, where his mum stayed. The boy was eight years old then. Unknown to Aina and her husband, the Olamides had one nagging problem that had to do with their 8-year-old boy named Bankole. The boy was always having convulsive and epileptic fits almost every week, and this had been a continuous occurrence for many years. It had been a source of sorrow and sadness for the Olamides in spite of their enormous wealth. Mrs. Olamide and her husband had spent a fortune on the young boy's health, seeking both orthodox medical treatment and traditional medicine, but to no avail. His condition was even growing from bad to worse.

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Mrs. Olamide just came back from the Church with her young son. About 20 minutes later when they had eaten their lunch, Bankole and his mum sat glued to the television, watching a movie. Fifteen minutes into the movie Bankole suddenly jerked and coughed, then he collapsed on to the bare ground, in a fainting fit...

To be concluded.

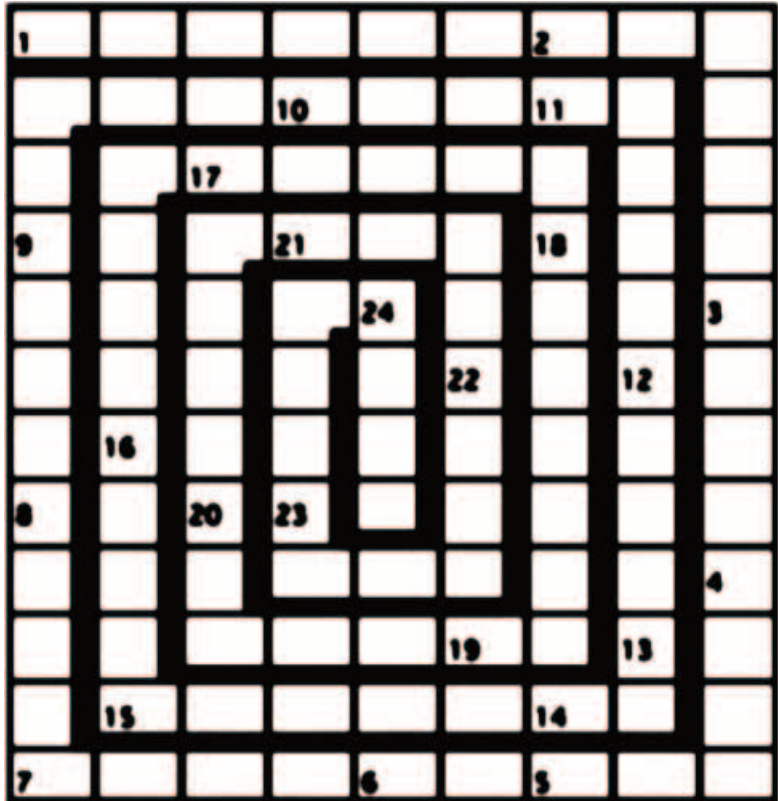
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Overlapping Word Game

Solution

- Funakaye
- Yenisey
- Youth
- Hostile
- Lest
- Stated
- Editor
- Oracle
- Lessor
- Rabbi
- Biblical
- Vested
- Eden
- English
- Shiver
- Erratic
- Icicle
- Estrange
- Edible
- Educate
- Tender
- Erudite
- Enter
- Rage



Overlapping Word Game

- African Footballer of the year 1985, (7).
- Cast out of public office, (7).
- Constantly busy and hurried, (6).
- Hanging ice rod, (6).
- Means of leaving a place, (4).
- With printed letters sloping to right, (6).
- Glazing or frosting for cakes, (5).
- Pres. John Mahama's country, (5).
- Governor Soludo's state, (7).
- Talk or write aimlessly, (6).
- Spoiling fault, (7).
- Long-handled scoop, (6).
- Large antelope, (5).
- Human-looking robot, (7).
- Used to insult intelligence, (5).
- APC National Leader, (6).
- 7th planet from the Sun, (6).
- Small animal resembling lizard, (10).
- Ridicule, (6).
- LGA in Akwa Ibom state, (6).
- LGA in Borno state, (5).
- LGA in Cross River state, (8).
- Sing high, (5).
- Musical instrument, (4).

Word Search

Nigerian Capital Cities-2

Uyo	Enugu	Abakaliki
Yola	Bauchi	Ado Ekiti
Kano	Gombe	Makurdi
Awka	Owerri	Umuahia
Dutse	Kaduna	Yenagoa
Asaba	Calabar	Damaturu

B	A	T	R	A	B	A	L	A	C	D
A	D	I	T	I	K	E	O	D	A	E
S	C	G	A	O	A	E	K	M	B	R
A	A	L	I	W	N	S	A	A	A	A
G	O	M	B	E	O	T	D	K	K	I
Y	G	A	E	R	U	U	U	U	A	H
C	A	B	N	R	A	D	N	R	L	A
U	N	A	U	I	K	O	A	D	I	U
A	E	S	G	C	W	Y	O	I	K	M
B	Y	A	U	B	A	U	C	H	I	U
D	A	M	A	T	U	Y	E	N	A	G

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Birthdays

AKINLOYE, Alayeluwa Oba Tijani Adetunji, the Ojomu of Ajiranland, Lagos, will be 86 on September 6, 2026. Born on September 6, 1940, he is an alumnus of St. Matthias Catholic School, Lafiaji, Lagos 1950; Hussey College, Warri in 1957; Abeokuta Grammar School, Abeokuta, Ogun State and University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), where he studied Agriculture, graduating in 1974. He later acquired a Postgraduate Diploma in education in 1981. He started his career with teaching and taught at various schools between 1965 and 1981; he served as Principal, Community High School, Ilado, Maroko, Lagos in 1983; between 1991 and 1993, he was the first Executive Secretary of the Eti-Osa Local Government Education Authority; he was crowned as the 14th Oba Ojomu of Ajiranland on Octo-



Akinloye

ber 23, 1993. He is presently the Chairman of Royal Realities Limited. He was honoured by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2003 as Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON).

The foremost traditional ruler of the Lekki Peninsula is a Director of CityScape International Limited.

IGBINEDION, Chief Gabriel Osawaru, businessman, industrialist, philanthropist and Esama of Benin Kingdom will be 92 on September 11, 2026.

He was born on September 11,



Igbinedion

1934 to Chief Josiah Oviawe Agharagbon Igbinedion and Madam Okunozé Igbinedion, both of Ovia North East Local Council of Edo State.

He was educated at Benin Baptist Primary School, 1944. He joined Leventis Motors, Ibadan and as Sales Manager requested and got transferred to Benin Area Office in charge of the defunct Mid-West Region till 1968.

He went into private business with the establishment of Mid-Motors Nigeria Limited, the first vehicle assembly



Gbadebo

plant in Nigeria with headquarters in Benin City. In 1976, he established Okada Dry Nigeria Limited, the first indigenous soft drink bottling plant in Nigeria.

He was appointed Minister of Works and Housing in 1986; redeployed as Minister of Employment, Labour and Productivity. He is the Honourable Chancellor and Chairman of the Board of Regents of the first private university in Nigeria, Igbinedion University, Okada and Chairman/Group Managing Director, Okada Group of

Companies. He holds the traditional title of *Esama* of Benin Kingdom.

GBADEBO, Oba Michael Adedotun Aremu, Okukenu IV, the Alake of Egbaland and paramount ruler of Egbaland, will be 83 on September 14, 2026. Born on September 14, 1943, into the Laarun Ruling House, he is a grandson of the sixth Alake of Egbaland, Oba Gbadebo, who ruled from 1898 to 1920.

He attended Baptist Boys High School, Abeokuta and Ibadan Grammar School, then went on to the University of Ibadan in 1965, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1969.

He joined the army in 1969, and attended the Command and Staff College, Jaji from September 1978 to August 1979. He eventually became a Principal Staff Officer to Major-General Tunde Idiagbon, the Chief of Staff at the Supreme Headquarters, Dodan Barracks,

from January 1984 to September 1985. He retired from the army as a Colonel.

Gbadebo's election as Alake in August 2005 ended a six-month period of uncertainty about who would succeed the former Alake, Oba Oyebade Lipede, who died on February 3, 2005.

He is the Chairman of the Board of Oando Plc. He was appointed as a Non-Executive Director of the Company on April 10, 2006. He was also awarded military honours including the Forces Service Star and the Defence Service Medal.

He has served on the boards of several companies including Ocean and Oil Services Limited and currently serves on the boards of charity and cultural organisations, some of which he founded himself.

Compiled by Gbenga Akinfenwa, oluwagbenga.akinfenwa@guardian.ng or gbengaherkin@yahoo.com

Events



Bishop of the Methodist Diocese of Lagos West, Rt. Rev. Ezekiel Oluayinka Akande (fourth left); Presbyter of Abaranje Area, Very Rev. Isaiah Opaayemi (third left) and new communicants at the first confirmation service held in the Methodist Church (Wonderland), Abaranje, Ikotun, Lagos... recently.

PHOTO: FELIX KUYE



Vice President, Finance/Investment, Nigerian Baptist Convention, Deacon Biodun Oloyede (left); Vice President, Ministerial, Prof. John Eyinanya; Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Akeem Owoade; President, Nigerian Baptist Convention, Rev. Olusola Idowu; and Vice President, Administration/Human Resources, Deacon Musa Ubandoma, during a courtesy visit to the Alaafin in Oyo State.



The celebrant, Deaconess (Mrs.) Ekanem Monday Udo (middle), surrounded by her children, grand children and great-grandchildren during her 90th birthday celebration in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State...last Sunday.



Deputy Director and Head, Food and Agricultural Group, Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Nene Maudline (left); Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Systems, Emmanuel Audu; Special Adviser to the Governor on Agriculture and Food Systems, Dr. Oluwarotimi Fashola; and President, Rice Millers Association of Africa/Chairman, Rice Millers Association of Nigeria (RIIMAN), Peter Dama at the 3-Day Training on Fortification of Rice production for Rice Millers and Regulatory Agencies at the Lagos Rice Mill, Imota.



Convener, H.E.L.P. Nigeria Initiative, Rev. Mrs Ruth Iwunze (left); first Female President, United Gospel Churches of Nigeria, Bishop Priscilla Otuya; and Coordinator, International Federation of Female Ministers' Groups and Organisations (IFFMGO), Nene Kalu Mmaju at the Campaign for Peace and Reconciliation in Nigeria in Lagos.

Men's Day Celebrations At Solution Sanctuary International For August 30

ALL roads lead to the Solution Sanctuary International, the venue of this year's yearly celebration of Men of Solution Sanctuary International, slated for Sunday, August 30, 2026, by 8:00am, with the theme: "Claiming God's Promise".

In a statement from the men's desk, it is a special session organised by men's of the church to show appreciation to the creator for preserving all members, as no record of tragedy was recorded.

They added that the event

was also to edify God who has been there for them for the past 12 months.

In their separate submissions, the General Overseer and Lead Prophet, Pastor Khoe Mishael and Prophetess (Mrs) Victory Michael noted that all members, including pastorates, Elders, youths and children in the church are very much grateful and happy to file out for a glorious session, to hold at No 2, Oye-siku Street, Near Alapere Estate in Agboyi/Ketu LCDA, Lagos State.

Ashoka Teachers' Challenge: Empowering Educators To Turn Classroom Problems Into Solutions

By Bertram Nwannekanma

Teachers are emerging as critical drivers of social change, with the Ashoka Teachers Challenge demonstrating how educators can transform everyday classroom challenges into practical solutions that benefit students, schools and wider communities.

The initiative, organised under Ashoka's changemaking programmes, is built on the belief that teachers should not merely implement educational reforms but should also be empowered to identify problems, develop innovative solutions and inspire students to become changemakers themselves.

The challenge culminated in

the Educators Innovation Showcase, where three teachers emerged as winners. Adeyanju Adeyoola of Lagos State Model Junior College, Kankon, Badagry, won first place and N3.5 million for the BKind Anti-Bullying Game Initiative.

Felix Alabi of Abule-Eko Community Junior Grammar School came second with ClassSync and received N3 million, while Abraham Lawal of Lagos Progressive Junior Secondary School placed third with his Student Leadership for Future of Work initiative and received N2.5 million.

Speaking on the broader vision behind the programme, Co-President of Ashoka Africa, Angelou Ezeilo, said teachers occupy a strategic position in

building a generation capable of responding to society's most pressing challenges.

She explained that Ashoka's "Everyone a Changemaker" vision was founded on the recognition that solving social problems should not be left to a small group of experts

or social entrepreneurs.

"Why just have this elite group of people who are working on these solutions? Let's make sure every single person understands that they can make change," she said.

According to Ezeilo, Ashoka, founded in 1980, now oper-



Abraham Lawal (left); Adeyanju Adeyoola and Felix Alabi displaying their prizes at the event.

ates in about 99 countries, with approximately 5,000 fellows globally, including about 500 across 26 African countries. She stressed, however, that the changemaking philosophy must begin early, particularly in schools.

This thinking informed the CTEACH programme, which seeks to equip teachers with changemaking skills and encourage them to integrate empathy, collaboration, shared leadership and problem-solving into everyday classroom activities.

"We weren't adding a curriculum. We wanted them to integrate changemaking skills into the classroom, into the things that they do every single day," Ezeilo said. She said teachers were delib-

erately chosen because of their influence on children's confidence, attitudes and aspirations.

"We thought that the bold way of transforming the classrooms was to pour into these teachers, making sure teachers understand what changemaking skills are," she said. The programme also seeks to reconnect teachers with their sense of purpose and remind them why they chose the profession.

Project Lead of the CTEACH Changemaker Teachers Challenge, Christianah Adeboye, said empowering teachers could produce a multiplier effect across the education system.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

From The Rector

Ibru International Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor Delta State. www.ibrucentre.org

Christian Benevolence: Willing Heart A Wheel To Drive God's Purpose (2)

By Stephen Wolemonwu

Transformation And Mission

IMAGINE a wheel: it moves only when it is connected to a willing force. In the same way, the Christian life advances only when the heart is willing—willing to obey, to give, to serve and to love.

Romans 12:2 calls believers to reject conformity and embrace transformation. Benevolence is one of the clearest fruits of this transformation. A conformed heart clings to self-preservation, but a transformed heart becomes a wheel that drives God's mission of mercy, justice, and reconciliation.

James 2:15-16 challenges believers: "If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them: 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?" Benevolence is the practical expression of faith. So, exegetically, Christian benevolence is not optional charity, but a core expression of covenant faithfulness—rooted in scripture, practiced in generosity, lived in community and judged by Christ as evidence of authentic discipleship.

We must understand that Christian benevolence is both vertical and horizontal:

Vertical: It reflects our love for God, who first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Horizontal: It manifests in love for our neighbours, fulfilling the second great commandment. "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself,'" (Matthew 22:39).

This verse is part of Jesus' teaching on the 'Great Commandment.' The first part of this commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:37-38). The second, is to extend that love outward—calling us to treat others with the same care, dignity and compassion they would want for themselves.

It is a powerful reminder that Christian benevolence flows from love: when the heart is surrendered to God, it becomes the wheel that drives His purpose, both vertically (toward God) and horizontally (to-

ward people).

The heart, when yielded to God, becomes the wheel that turns both vertically in worship and horizontally in service. This dual movement ensures that benevolence is not reduced to philanthropy, but remains a spiritual discipline rooted in divine purpose.

The Implications

- **Benevolence is evangelistic:** it draws unbelievers to the light of Christ (Matthew 5:16).

- **Benevolence is communal:** it strengthens the community through mutual care (Acts 2:44-45).

- **Benevolence is prophetic:** it challenges systems of injustice by embodying God's kingdom values (Micah 6:8).

Historical Benefit Of Benevolence

IN Nigeria and Africa, Anglicans provided vivid historical examples of benevolence—ed-

ucation, healthcare and social outreach—that show how willing hearts became wheels driving God's mission.

Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1810-1891)

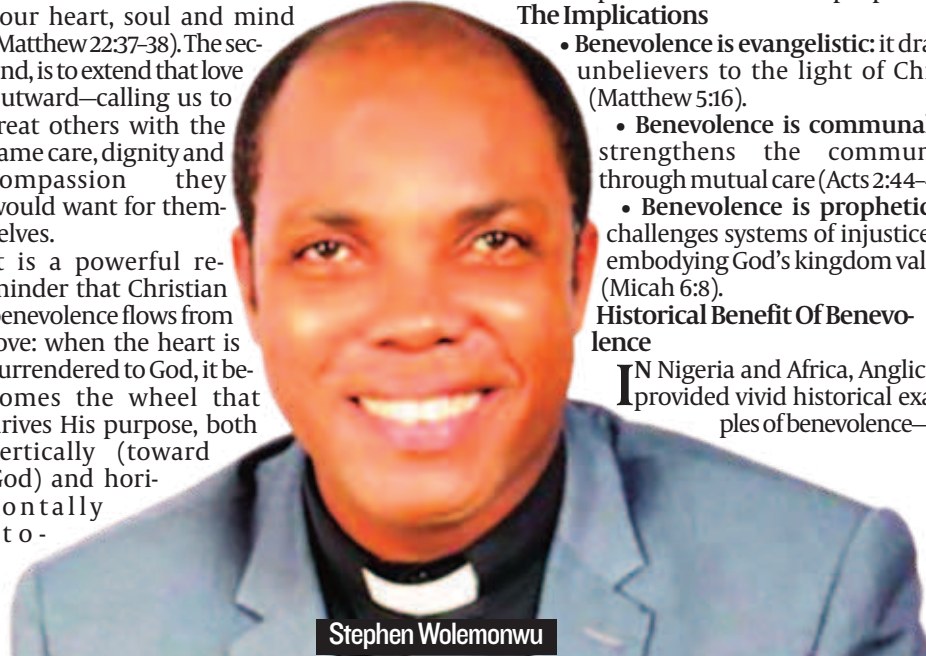
THE first African Anglican Bishop was consecrated in 1864. He was a freed slave who returned to Nigeria, translating the Bible into Yoruba and Igbo. Had his ministerial emphasises on education, literacy and compassion for the marginalised, laying the foundation for benevolence in Nigerian Anglicanism. Crowther's life shows how a willing heart, once enslaved, became a wheel that carried God's purpose across Africa.

This missionary effort gave rise to the founding of CMS Grammar School, Lagos, on June 6, 1859; which is the first secondary school in Nigeria. This was an act of benevolence, lifting communities through education; generations of leaders have emerged from this generosity.

Conclusion

Christian benevolence is the willingness of the heart to become a wheel and a dynamic force that propels God's mission in the world. It is not passive charity, but active participation in divine purpose. When the heart is surrendered, benevolence becomes unstoppable, rolling forward the Kingdom of God with power and grace.

- **Venerable Stephen Wolemonwu is the Rector, Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State (08035413812)**



Stephen Wolemonwu

By Charles Ighele

IN this part of the world, parents-in-law are held in high esteem. They are more like one's parents. And as such, the love given to one's parents must be replicated to them. Also, the affection one shows to one's parents must be shown to them too. The respect one gives to one's parents must also be given to them too. It is not for competition, but one's obligation.

I usually tell couples that once you are married as a woman you are not only married to the man, who is your husband; you are equally married to the man's

siblings and his parents. Also, the man is not only married to the woman, but to the woman's siblings and his parents. Therefore, as you the man likes your parents, so, does the woman. Showing love to your parents-in-law has a way of making your relationship better. This is because when, for example, the man sees that you the woman shows unconditional love to his parents, he will be happy with you and his family will be happy with you too. He will definitely go to any length to make you happy because you are making him happy by showing

Loving Your Parents-in-Law

love to his parents and thereby making them happy. As the man, when you show love towards your parents-in-law, your wife will be very happy. This is because nobody wants his/her parents to be disrespected. Showing love to your parents-in-laws as a man will make your wife very happy. And this will positively affect the love between you.

Do not join the group who say parents-in-law are bad. Do not heed to the ill-advised friends who will tell you that you need to be battle-ready

for parents-in-law and that you need to be tough when dealing with them if not you will be seen as "mumu" that means you will be taken as someone who is overly subservient to another person. I have found out that people who behave rudely to their parents-in-law, or who "show their parents-in-law pepper" never enjoy their marriages. They are always at dagger drawn with their spouses or their family members.

Truth be told, there may be some parents-in-law who may be difficult but it does

not mean that you are to disrespect them. Don't try to show your parents-in-laws that you are a no nonsense man or woman. It is not the best way to treat parents-in-laws. You can tell your husband about it or see a marriage counsellor who will be able to counsel you well on what to do or how to handle that particular alleged difficult parents-in-law. Remember that you will also be a parents-in-law one day, and ask yourself: "If my son or daughter-in-law behaves rudely or contemptuously towards me the way I am doing to my parents-in-law

will I be happy?" Love you!

- **Bishop Charles Ighele is the General Superintendent of Holy Spirit Mission, Lagos.**



Ighele

Henry Abayomi Odeneye: A Man Whose Ministry Transcended Borders

By Chris Irekamba

AS family members and the congregation of Harvest Point Ministries, United States (US), conclude plans to commit their President, Pastor Henry Abayomi Odeneye, who also doubled as the head of Yoruba Christian Fellowship widely known as Dagunduro Prayer Family to mother earth on Friday, September 4, 2026, sympathisers have described the late cleric as a man whose ministry transcended geographical boundaries.

According to them, the late Odeneye impacted lives, spreading the gospel through Yoruba language and the Christian fellowship.

Ceremonies marking his burial will hold in both Nigeria and the United States (US).

The late cleric died in Houston, Texas, on August 8, 2026, at the age of 73, after a brief illness. He was a distinguished minister, evangelist, philanthropist, churchplanter and prayer revivalist.

A statement jointly issued by the Pastor Henry Odeneye Legacy Group and Communication Director/Nigeria representative of Harvest Point Ministries, Pastor Tunde Adebisi, said the late cleric was the Executive Council member of The Apostolic Church, LAWNA,

• Interment Holds September 4, 2026

United States (US); and the South Kirkwood District Apostle of LAWNA, United States, the missionary outreach of the Nigeria-based denomination.

A commendation Service of Songs, according to the statement, will hold in Lagos on September 2, 2026, thereafter, there will be wake-keep, while outing service will hold on September 3, 2026 and Thanksgiving Service would hold in Houston, Texas, on September 4, 2026.

The statement added that the platforms built by the late Odeneye before his death impacted positively on churches, ministers and individuals around the world. The statement said he migrated from Nigeria to the United States, where he pioneered the preaching of the gospel in Yoruba language and promoted its visibility within the American Christian landscape.

The statement noted that Odeneye's notable contributions include the establishment of Harvest Point Ministries with branches and centres in several countries, including Tanzania, Uganda, Senegal, Benin Republic, Togo and Nigeria, with additional centres in Brazil and Mexico, as well as the theological instruction in

African languages.

"He was particularly proud of the development of theological education conducted in languages such as Swahili, Ewe and Yoruba, describing the initiative as a significant development in the history of Christian ministry on the continent," the statement said.

It also added that Odeneye's advocacy for Yoruba culture also earned him recognition beyond the church. He was honoured with a Presidential Gold Medal for community service and cultural integration. His ministry's work of promoting Yoruba language and Christianity also attracted congressional recognition in the United States in October 2022. It said his cultural advocacy produced another landmark achievement in Houston and

for that reason on December 6, Dagunduro Yoruba Day was recognised as the contribution of the Yoruba Christian Fellowship and promotion of Yoruba culture and community life. The initiative prompted the Mayor of Houston to recognise his contribution.

The statement also acknowledged Odeneye's other contributions such as Faith Without Boundaries Pastor Odeneye, the vision, which extended beyond preaching from the pulpit. It said that through the Dagunduro Yoruba Christian Fellowship, his ministry has helped Yoruba-speaking immigrants to prepare for American citizenship civic tests.

His ministry also took pilgrims to the Holy Land. Jerusalem Pilgrimage began in 2019, with a second journey successfully undertaken in August 2022. His contribution to

tourism and relations with Israel earned him an award as a Friend of Israel and Ambassador of Israel for Tourism from Israel Ministry of Trade and Tourism.



Late Pastor Henry Abayomi Odeneye

Text: John 8:29 (KJV): “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him,” (KJV).

BELOVED, one of the greatest questions that can arise in the heart of a believer is this: “Is God always with me?” There are moments when the answer appears obvious. When doors open, prayers are answered, provisions come, and everything seems to be moving in the right direction, we easily say: “God is with me.” But there are other moments when circumstances become difficult, when the heavens seem silent, when prayers appear unanswered, when trouble surrounds us, and when we begin to ask: “Lord, where are You? Are You still with me?”

Our opening scripture gives us a powerful assurance. Jesus said: “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone.” The Lord Jesus knew the reality of the Father's presence. He knew that the Father was with Him, even though He would face rejection, persecution, suffering, and the cross.

This teaches us an important truth: the presence of God is not determined by the condition of our circumstances. God can be with you when everything is going well, and God can equally be with you when everything appears to be going in the wrong direction.

Many people think that if God is with them, they will never experience trouble. But the Bible does not teach that. Rather, the Bible teaches that God will be with His people amid trouble.

David declared in Psalm 23:4: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.”

Notice that David said: “Though I walk through the valley.” He did not say that he would never enter the valley. He understood that there would be seasons of darkness, difficulty, uncertainty and pain. But his confidence was not in the absence of the valley. His confidence was in the presence of God: “for thou art with me.”

Child of God, perhaps you are passing through a valley today. Perhaps you have prayed and have not yet seen the answer. Perhaps you are facing a situation that has made you wonder whether God has forgotten you. I want you to know that God has not abandoned you.

The silence of God does not mean the absence of God. There are times when God may not ex-

Living Waters

By Pastor Lazarus Muoka

Founder/General Overseer

The Lord's Chosen Charismatic
Revival Ministries Worldwide

• For more messages and testimonies visit: www.tlccrm.org 08056889396



Is God Always With You?

plain what He is doing, but He remains faithful. There are times when you cannot trace His hand, but you can trust His heart. The fact that you do not understand your circumstances does not mean that God has lost control of your life.

Isaiah 43:2 gives us this wonderful promise: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

God did not say, “if thou passest through the waters.” He said: “When thou passest through the waters.” He knows that His children will encounter difficult seasons. He knows there will be rivers to cross and fires to pass through. But He promises: “I will be with thee.”

Consider the three Hebrew children—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They refused to bow before the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar because of their faithfulness to God, and they were thrown into a burning fiery furnace.

If someone had looked at their situation, he might have concluded that God had abandoned them. But God was there with them!

Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace and said: “Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt,” (Daniel 3:25). What a testimony! God did not keep them from entering the furnace, but He entered the furnace with them.

The presence of God is greater than the problem you are facing. Jesus' disciples experienced this when they were caught in a great storm. The wind was contrary, the waves were rising, and fear filled their hearts. Yet Jesus was with them.

Matthew 8:26 says: “And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and

rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.”

The disciples thought the storm would destroy them, but Jesus was in the vessel. As long as Christ was with them, the storm could not have the final word.

Hebrews 13:5 declares: “For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” These words should strengthen every discouraged heart: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

God is not like men. Men may promise and fail. Friends may disappoint you. People may abandon you when you need them most, but God remains faithful.

The Psalmist asked in Psalm 139:7: “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?”

There is nowhere you can go where God cannot reach you. You cannot run beyond His knowledge. You cannot hide beyond His sight. You cannot fall so deeply that His hand cannot reach you.

However, while we rejoice in the assurance of God's presence, there is another important question we must ask: “Are you walking with God?”

God desires fellowship with man. He does not want us to merely know Him; He wants us to know Him personally.

Amos 3:3 asks: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” If you desire to enjoy fellowship with God, you must walk in obedience with Him. Sin must not become your lifestyle. Disobedience must not become your habit. You cannot deliberately live in rebellion against God and expect to enjoy intimate fellowship with Him.

Our opening text gives us an important prin-

ciple. Jesus said: “The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”

Jesus lived to please the Father. Likewise, if we want to walk closely with God, we must desire to please Him.

There may be someone reading this article, who once walked closely with God, but has gradually drifted away. Perhaps prayer has become difficult. Perhaps the Bible no longer excites you as it once did. Perhaps sin has entered your life and weakened your fellowship with God.

The good news is that God is calling you back. **James 4:8** says: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”

Moses understood the importance of God's presence. When God was leading Israel, Moses said in Exodus 33:15: “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.”

Moses understood that the greatest blessing was not merely the promised land. The greatest blessing was the presence of God.

What is the value of having money without God? What is the value of possessing earthly success, while losing your soul? What is the value of gaining the whole world and spending eternity away from God?

Jesus asked in Mark 8:36: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Beloved, do not allow the pursuit of earthly things to make you lose the presence of God.

If you have Christ, you have hope. If you have Christ, you have a Saviour. If you have Christ, you have eternal life. If you have Christ, you have One who will never abandon you.

Jesus said in John 6:37: “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Come to Him today. Whatsoever your past might have been, come! Whatsoever your failures might have been, come! Whatsoever your disappointments might have been, come! Christ is still calling.

To the believer, who is already walking with God, do not be discouraged because of what you are passing through. Your present situation is not the conclusion of your story.

Keep praying, keep believing and keep trusting. Keep obeying. Keep walking with God.

There may be tears today, but joy is coming. There may be a battle today, but victory is possible. There may be darkness around you, but God is still your light.

So, is God always with you? If you belong to Christ and walk with Him, you can rest upon His unfailing promise: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

‘G.O. Prayed, Terrible Chest Pain Disappeared’

IAM Sister Ekaette Onwudiri. I reside at Baruwa, Ijesha, Lagos. I came to The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries for the first time in 2003. But last Thursday, something happened. I started experiencing excruciating chest pain. It was severe and defied all medications.

As if that was not enough, I began to have frequent stooling throughout the night. I was declaring, I am a Chosen till dawn.

The following day, I went to the hospital and doctor sent me for a BCG scan test, and when the result came out. The doctor said I did not have

enough blood flowing through my heart. He said it was the reason for the pain.

Eventually, I was admitted. This was during the women programme. However, I was at the event, but it was like I was life-less because I was very weak. In fact, I cannot recall all that happened at the

programme because of my situation.

After that programme, I went home and the problem continued until I came church on Thursday. G.O. mounted the pulpit and said we should tap wherever that was paining us three times and I did that and fell under

anointing. When I regained consciousness, G.O. was rounding off his prayer. He said: “Tell God what brought you here.”

I presented the same case again to God and suddenly fell under anointing again. When I recovered myself, I found out that the pain had disap-

peared. P-r-a-i-s-e, the Lord! God of Chosen is great. Now, I can do what I could not do before. P-r-a-i-s-e, the Lord!

I pray to God for Him to grant our G.O., my family and all Chosen members Worldwide eternal rest in heaven at the end of our lives here on earth in Jesus' name. Amen!



Participants responding to altar call at the just-concluded Workers and Leaders' Conference held in Mgbidi, Imo State

OUR goal should not only be to have a pure heart to make it in the rapture; it should also be to receive power to serve God acceptably, preach the gospel to others persuasively and bring them to the Lord deliberately. God wants to show Himself strong and powerful to those whose “heart is perfect toward him.” Such people’s hearts are full of love for God and their neighbours. However, possessing a pure heart while manifesting love without power, or sympathy without supernatural authority, is not enough. We must seek this power that protects from harm and enables us to witness to others powerfully, as we reconcile them to God.

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” This is not just a promise, but also a prophecy that God is faithful to fulfill in the lives of those who seek Him for the experience of purity of heart.

God’s word will surely be performed for those with pure and obedient hearts. Isaac’s story illustrates this truth. Despite being in an unfavourable environment where the locals opposed him and sand filled the wells he dug, God remained faithful to His covenant. “Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.” Similarly, regardless of whatever has happened in the past, if we stay in the place God has assigned to us, we will experience prosperity, progress, promotion and blessedness.

Those who choose obstinacy and impurity instead of a pure

IbruCentre

Benefits Of Purity Of Heart (3)

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor W. F. Kumuyi



heart will forfeit God’s blessings. This was the fate of Saul, Solomon and others who neglected God’s promises due to disobedience.

However, God’s mercy offers a second chance to those who

abandon their evil ways and return to Him, like the people of Nineveh who repented en mass after Prophet Jonah declared an imminent judgment from God for their numerous sins. God’s promise is, “I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.” If sinners repent and return to God genuinely, all prior negative pronouncements on their lives will be revoked and God’s blessings will still be theirs.

Although the prophecies by prophets of old were fulfilled, we have “a more sure word of prophecy” from the only Potentate on high in the new covenant. This prophecy promises that our lives will be filled with light, not darkness, destruction or demonic devastation. More than that, the “day star (will) arise in (our) hearts” to guide us on the path of light and “there shall be a performance” of God’s word in our lives. As our hearts are purified, we will see God’s presence in all that concerns us, as well as in the lives of those for whom we intercede. Ultimately, we will see God face-to-face on the final day and receive great rewards.

• **Further reading (King James Version):** Matthew 5:8. Ephesians 2:14,15; Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:7,9. Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 10:14,16,22; 1 Timothy 1:5. Psalm 17:3; Daniel 1:8. Matthew 5:8; 24:35; Psalms 24:3,4; 89:34. Psalm 51:7,10; Ezekiel 36:26,37; James 1:6. 2 Chronicles 16:9; Luke 10:27,19; Acts 1:8. Matthew 5:8. Genesis 26:2-5,12; Jeremiah 1:12. Jeremiah 18:7,8. 2 Peter 1:19; Luke 1:45.

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

Text: 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

Key verse: 2 Corinthians 6:1: “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain,” (KJV).

IN 2 Corinthians 6:1, Apostle Paul drops an urgent heart-to-heart appeal to the church. The very first thing Apostle Paul established is the identity of the people he was addressing in this verse. He said: “As workers together with him...” He was talking to believers, his co-labourers in Christ who are called for the advancement of the kingdom. As co-laborers with Christ, we have received a measure of grace for the advancement of the work of God and Apostle Paul is calling on us to maximise that grace we have received. Grace is a divine empowerment to live for God and do the work of God. Grace is given for service rather than passive consumption. “By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me,” (1 Corinthians 15:10).

In 2 Corinthians 6:1, Apostle Paul issues a staggering warning: it is entirely possible to re-

Maximising God’s Grace (4)

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

ceive the grace of God in vain. The word “vain” means empty, fruitless or without effect. To receive grace in vain is to be handed the greatest investment in the history of the universe and do absolutely nothing with it. God does not want us to just tolerate or accumulate His grace; He wants us to maximise it. The Parable of the Talents (in Matthew 25:14-30) provides profound insights into stewardship, responsibility and personal growth. Every servant received something; one servant received five talents, another servant received two talents and the other

servant received one talent. It was like a measure of grace given to each of them according to their capacity. No one is left empty-handed. Each of us possess unique gifts, time and resources meant to be utilised. The first two servants maximised the grace given to them by putting the talents into use and they produced more talents. The servant that had five talents got more five and the servant that had two talents got more two. As we maximise the grace of God bestowed on us, it multiplies for greater impact. The servant that had one went and hid it. He did not maximise it, but wasted it.

Maximising the grace of God leads to divine elevation and not maximising it leads to demotion. In Matthew 25, we saw

that the servant that had five talents and got more five was made ruler over many things by the Master (Matthew 25:21). Then the servant that had one talent and did not invest it was cast into outer darkness and the master collected the one talent from him and gave it to the servant that have 10 talents.

Grace can be lost when we do not use it. A gift or talent not developed will not become useful. You grow in skill and competence when you put into use the one you acquired. The grace does not make us lazy rather it fuels our labour. It increases and expands as we deploy it for the work of God and kingdom purposes. Whatever gift or talent God Has given to you is for you to use it for the benefit of humanity and kingdom of God. We waste it if we do not activate it and it becomes dormant. It becomes active when we use it to be a blessing to others.

• **Today’s nugget:** Grace multiplies as we maximise it. **Prayer:** Lord help me not to waste grace bestowed upon me. **Prayer lines:** 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com, Rev. Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.



Amadi

AICU’s Sierra Leone Fire Crusade Records Huge Success

By Uboh-Ekong Treasure

AMERICAN International Christian University (AICU) has just concluded its yearly World Youth Conference in Kono District, Sierra Leone, tagged “Kono Youth Fire Crusade” with the theme: “Supernatural Outpouring That Breaks Yokes.”

Third in the series, the event aimed at reigniting and sustaining young people’s faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ. Coming on the heels of a similar one held in the United States of America in 2024, followed by the Nigerian version, the event achieved a huge success in the three nation’s major campuses in 2025.

Just like the previous ones, the purpose of the Kono outing was for the youths to be committed to Jesus Christ. It also aimed at edifying and galvanising the Gen Zs on how to mature their faith, aside encouraging participants to move from passive engagement to an active one with the Great Commission in mind.

According to AICU Founder and President, Pastor Akinsola Ojo Kings, the event served as an avenue for the youths to explore their purpose in life, search for the truth and achieve true spirituality.

He said: “The time has come



Founder and President of AICU, Pastor Akinsola Ojo Kings

for a global community of Christian youths to take their place in life and positively influence the society.”

In his address titled, “Equipping The Saints,” King emphasised that the crusade was designed to equip the youths with new character, new authority, spiritual armour and compassion for souls.

King revealed that Day 2 was dedicated to Ministers of God, stressed that effectiveness in ministry is determined by how adequately equipped the ministers are, before they started propagating the words of God.

This is why, he said, God is raising ministers who are equipped by the word, empowered by the spirit, sustained by prayer.

The benefits of Adoration Cont’

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!” (Ps 27:14).

DAVID knew from experience what it meant to wait for the Lord. He had been anointed king at age 16, but did not become king until he was 30. During the interim, King Saul out of jealousy chased him through the wilderness. David had to wait on God for the fulfillment of his promise to reign. After becoming king, his rebellious son, Absalom chased. Waiting for God is not easy. Often, it seems that he is not answering our prayers or does not understand the urgency of our situation. That kind of thinking implies that God is not in control or fair to us. But God is worth waiting for. Lamentations 3:24-26 calls us to hope in and wait for the Lord because often God uses waiting to refresh, renew and teach us. Make good use of your waiting times by discovering what God may be trying to teach you in them.

Blessings To The Righteous (Psalm 37)

“Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart,” (Ps 37:4).

“Delight yourself also in the Lord.” To delight yourself in the

Adoration (77)

Lord is to desire and enjoy the nearness of His presence and the truth and righteousness of His Word (cf. Job 22:26; 27:10; Is 58:14). To those who delight themselves in the Lord, God gives the desires of their hearts.

1. God will answer the cry of our hearts if our desires are in accordance with His will (see John 15:7).

2. When we delight ourselves in God and His will, God Himself places desires within our hearts that He then sets out to fulfill (see Phil 2:13).

“Delight,” Vv. 4 and 11 use an intense word, Heb ‘anag, to speak of the exquisite delight we are to take in the Lord and in the great (abundance) peace (blessing, well-being) He gives. Vs. 23 uses another word, hafets “delighteth” that expresses God’s genuine pleasure when we do what makes Him Happy (Ps 40:8; Jer 9:24)

“He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday,” (Ps 37:6).

“He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light.” The

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus Prof. Mercy Olumide



righteous who are oppressed by sin in the world are promised:

1. **Answers to their prayers** (vv. 4-5); (2) vindication of their righteous standards (v.6); (3) a heavenly inheritance (vv.9,11,34); (4) the Lord’s sustaining help (vv. 17-19,39); (5) the Lord’s guidance, protection and presence (vv. 23-25,28); and (6) salvation (v.39).

Conclusion

Ultimately the purpose of human existence is to live before this great and glorious God in adoration, love and praise and to find in Him alone our all in all.

FELICITATION

ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR

56th Birthday

HIS EXCELLENCY

DISTINGUISHED SENATOR

MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

On behalf of the Board, Management, and entire staff of the Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS), I, Mr. John Osirenimhe Odior, Executive Chairman, joyfully felicitate with Your Excellency on the momentous occasion of your 56th Birthday anniversary.

Your Excellency, your milestone birthday offers us a profound opportunity to celebrate an astute technocrat, a consummate administrator, and a visionary leader whose remarkable accomplishments across both the private and public sectors continue to shape the political, economic, and socio-cultural landscape of Edo State and Nigeria at large.

Since assuming the reins of governance, your administration has brought renewed vigor and direction to our state. Your relentless focus on efficiency, transparency, innovation, and excellence has placed Edo State on a swift trajectory toward becoming a premier economic powerhouse and regional business hub.

From aggressive infrastructural upgrades to strategic investments in education, healthcare, agriculture, security, and job creation, the tangible progress under your watch is a clear demonstration of your capacity and deep commitment to the welfare of our people.

The people of Edo State reposed their trust in your leadership, confident in your vision to rebuild, remodel, and restore the pride of our beloved state as the true Heart Beat of the Nation.

Today, your decisive actions and transformative policies evidently seen in the judicious utilization of our positively growing internally generated revenue validate that trust daily, inspiring confidence across all sectors of our economy.

As you mark your 56th year, we pray that God Almighty grants you continuous good health, divine wisdom, and long life to lead Edo State into an era of unprecedented prosperity and sustainable growth.

Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency!



SIGNED:

Mr. John Osirenimhe Odior FCA, ACTI

Executive Chairman

Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS)



EDO STATE
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE



Congratulations!

ON YOUR BIRTHDAY, YOUR EXCELLENCY!

I join the good people of Edo state, Esan South East Local Government Area, party faithful, and well-wishers across Nigeria to celebrate you, HIS EXCELLENCY, SENATOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO, Executive Governor of Edo State, as you mark another remarkable milestone in your eventful life journey.

You are a committed servant of the people of the Edo project in words and deeds. Your bold infrastructural interventions, reconstruction of critical roads, revamping of healthcare delivery, and strengthening of security architecture across the three senatorial districts.

You are a dependable leader, loyal soldier of our great party, the All Progressives Congress, APC, and a great ally of the Federal Government, and an unwavering supporter of the reformist agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, who has positioned our dear state as Mr President's true home base.

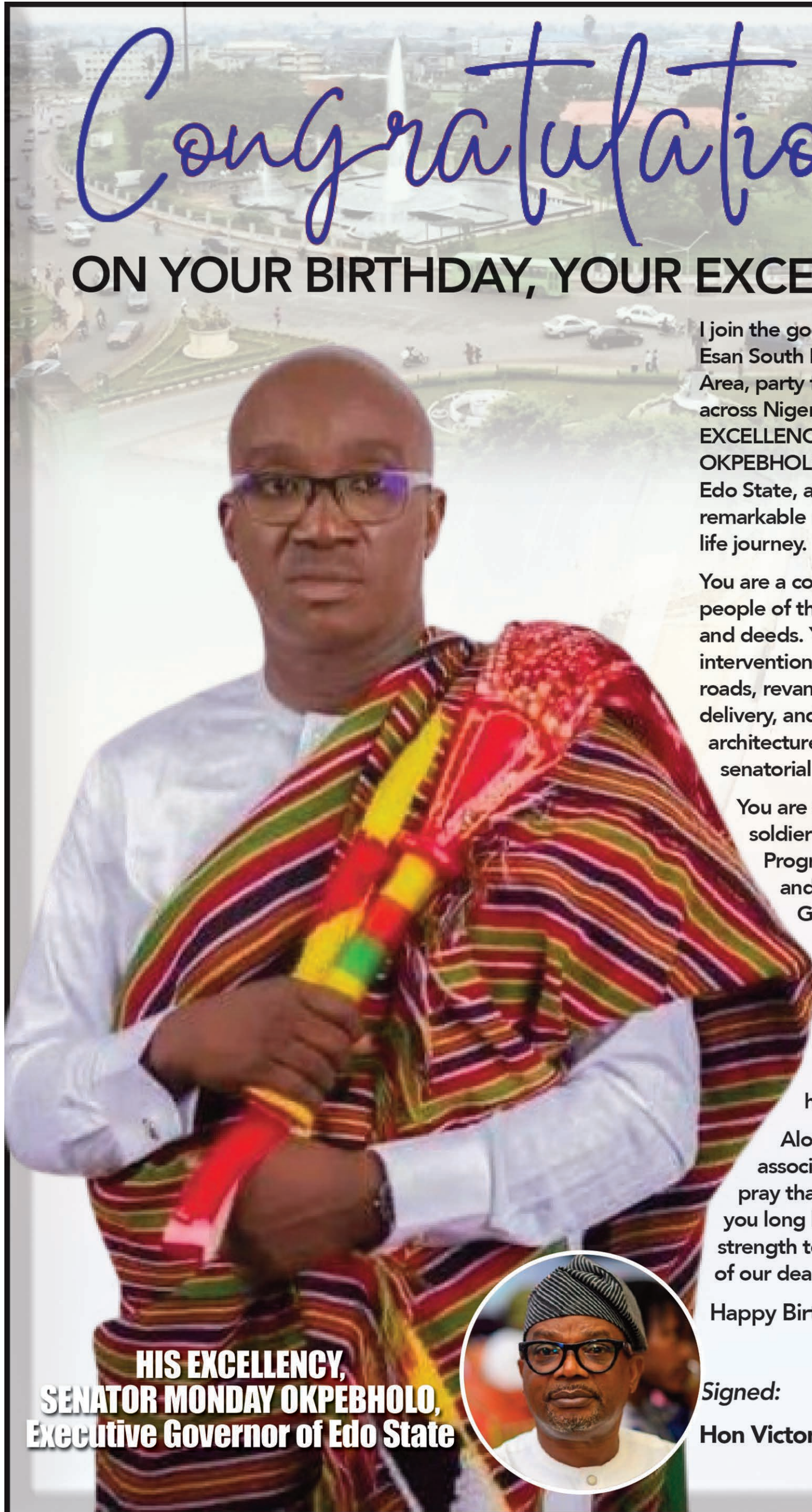
Alongside your family, associates and well-wishers, I pray that the Almighty God grants you long life, sound health, and the strength to keep piloting the affairs of our dear state to greater heights.

Happy Birthday, Your Excellency!

Signed:

Hon Victor Eboigbe.

**HIS EXCELLENCY,
SENATOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO,
Executive Governor of Edo State**



Interview

AI Can Solve Shortage Of Healthcare Professionals In Nigeria — Oyenekan

Oluwadamilola Oyenekan has spent over seven years building a Silicon Valley career across regulated medical technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in medical imaging, including roles at Medtronic and Google Health. In this interview with SUNDAY AIKULO-LA, she speaks on how AI can transform healthcare and what doctors can do with the right infrastructure and technology.

Can you share your opinion about AI and the future of telemedicine?

TELEMEDICINE is how you digitise or provide virtual healthcare delivery. For instance, you can be on a video call with your doctor without going physically. It's a good way to deliver healthcare especially in low and middle income countries. But we must take into account connectivity issues. We need to find a balance on how we can integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into telemedicine.

But before you deploy AI, it must be validated and tested. AI will help transform and revolutionise healthcare. Doctors leverage AI to aid diagnosis of patients, whether through ultrasound medical imaging or leveraging you to understand the guidelines.

In Nigeria where there is shortage of healthcare professionals, AI could really help. To address challenges of AI, there should be guard rails. When you are designing the architecture of your products, what kind of governance architecture have you put in place to ensure that risks of the use of AI is taken into account? So you design the

product with the risk in mind. You may not have 100 per cent safety, but you are getting close to 90 per cent to ensure that what you are deploying in the field has been vigorously tested and validated against the population before deploying. So, I will say avoid deploying AI tools without validation and testing.

From Lagos to Silicon Valley, what are the challenges you confronted?

The challenges you face is like you are the only one that looks like yourself in the room. Being able to adapt to the settings is very important in Silicon Valley. In Lagos, everybody looks like me, very comfortable. In Silicon Valley, they like people who can deliver. As long as you can build, people respect you. So, it's beyond where you come from. We have a lot of immigrants here. Even Elon Musk is an immigrant from South Africa.

What is your advice to Gen Z's and upcoming medical professionals?

Gen Z's must think outside the box. You don't have to follow the same path as everyone. Get your degree and follow your career path. For instance, I built a career track for myself and if you look at my Curriculum Vitae, there is sequence.

You need to sit down and reflect where you want to see yourself in 10 years time. If you look at what everybody is doing, you are doing yourself a disservice because you must be able to form your own path. Gen Z's must also learn to take feedbacks. Some feedbacks are good, while some are not. So, you must be in tune with your own vision. If you know your path, you know what feedback to take and the one not to take.

There are issues around brain drain in Nigeria; how can this challenge be addressed?

I did my internship at Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), and I noticed it would be incredibly difficult for even the best doctors to deliver optimally when the infrastructure is lacking. That was also what drew me into technology and engineering because without the foundation and the right infrastructure, you make it difficult for people that want to deliver healthcare to do their work. If the infrastructure is strengthened, you make people's job a little easier for them. Government should work on developing better infrastructure. They must also supplement the pay. When people leave Nigeria, they know how much they will get paid here. They must be paid what they are truly worth in the healthcare sector. Their efforts must be appreciated. If we are able to do that, people will want to stay and help their communities as opposed to coming here. It is very stressful becoming a doctor here, but the stress is alleviated with supplemental assistance from nurses. We also have nurses in Nigeria, but they are so stressed. So, how do we find a balance from paying well to good infrastructure for doctors to deliver healthcare appropriately.

What are your long-term goals?

I'm still in Silicon Valley, California, and I still have a few things that I want to accomplish. I want to continue to make a name for myself in medical technology and AI space but I also see myself building a research organisation specifically in Africa, leveraging transformative AI tools. I'm looking at bringing global health and Africans together to help advance health innovation, enabling Africa to participate. We've been known to be at the receiving end of already developed technology solutions. I think we need to flip things a bit. We need to be part of developing the solutions from the beginning. There is also need for capacity building, that is, training people in Africa on how to use these tools.



Oyenekan

Can you share your academic background?

I grew up in Lagos, Nigeria. I was born there. I did my elementary school in Sunnydale in Ikeja GRA. After that, I went to Greensprings School, Anthony Village, Lagos. From there, I went for my A levels. I also moved to the U.S. for my university undergraduate degree.

What are the things that you learnt in school that have helped you so far in your career?

Greensprings did a lot in public speaking and communication. In the U.S., you can be very intelligent, but if you can't communicate very well, you are not going to get very far. At some point, you might be as smart as everybody, but what differentiates you will be the way you present your work and lead people. Leadership is very heavy on communication.

How would you assess the level of health data infrastructure development in Nigeria?

Health data infrastructure in Nigeria is progressing quite well based on my readings because I've been very deep in the Nigeria health technology space. The committee they put together, the Nigerian Digital Health Initiative, and other committees have defined architecture that will strengthen the health data infrastructure. Those steps have been very good. But the question is: how do we put them into practice?

I know they have pulled a few of the private players to join them in building this. But I think we need to realistically continue to grow in practice. I think trying to ensure one patient one record through the National Digital Health Architecture (NDHA) is good. Even if they switch hospital, they are able to move with their records, digitising the healthcare records as well in the sense that data can be exchanged from one hospital to another. Beyond that is: how do we take part in data driven solutions, because without our data in those technology, we can't really use the technology because we must represent our population in the technology that is happening today. There is more practice that needs to be done in terms of deploying these conceptual solutions that have been put in place.



NDDC Begins Reconstruction of Benin-Sapele Expressway

The Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori has flagged off the reconstruction of the Benin-Sapele Expressway being undertaken by the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC in response to President Bola Tinubu's directive to repair failed sections of the expressway.



L-R: The NDDC Governing Board Chairman, Mr Chiedu Ebie; the NDDC Managing Director, Dr Samuel Ogbuku; the Commissioner for Works, Rural Roads and Public Information, Delta State, Hon. Charles Aniagwu; the Representative of Delta Central Senatorial Zone, Senator Ede Dafinone; the Delta State Representative on the NDDC Board, Rt Hon. Monday Igbuya and the NDDC Executive Director Projects, Dr Victor Antai, during the flag-off of the Reconstruction of Benin-Sapele Expressway, Sapele, Delta State.

Special Projects

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TheGuardian SPECIAL FOCUS ON 100 TOP-NOTCH ENGINEERS POWERING THE NIGERIA ECONOMY - Part I

TWENTY-FIVE years into democracy, Nigeria's goal of achieving sustained, inclusive growth hinges on strengthening the professions that build nations — with engineering at the core.

The report highlights that engineering capacity directly drives economic development and infrastructure delivery. With Nigeria's population set to exceed 260 million by 2030, the demand for housing, power, transport, water, and digital infrastructure is rising fast. Meeting this requires over \$2.3 trillion in investment by 2043, according to the National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan.

Key challenges include power shortages affecting over 80 million people, a housing

deficit of 17+ million units, high logistics costs, and the need to expand digital and AI capabilities. Yet Nigeria has no shortage of talent. Engineers at home and in the diaspora are leading globally, and institutions like NSE and COREN are upholding standards. The priority now is aligning education, industry, and policy so graduates and firms can deliver world-class solutions locally.

The report spotlights engineers and organizations already solving Nigeria's problems through renewable energy, AI, smart infrastructure, and talent development. Its central message: Nigeria's demographic advantage will only translate to economic growth if it is matched by deliberate investment in engineering capacity, policy support, and local content.



ENGR. ABDULJELYL A. KARHEEM,
CEng, CIOB, RICS, CIARB, Founder
& CEO, Afia Group of Companies



ENGR. CHICHI EMENIKE, FNSE,
Ag. Managing Director & Gas Asset
Manager, Neconde Energy



ENGR. CHILAKA UGORJI
Managing Director & CEO,
Bridgesite Nigeria Limited



ENGR. IBRAHIM GIDADO
Chairman & CEO,
Prime Elevation Ltd



ENGR. DR. BENEDICT IHEAKAM,
MNSE, COREN, Head Of Operations,
Audi Company Ltd



ENGR. KENNETH E. UGWUANYI
MD & Chief Executive Officer,
Wellmeka Limited



ENGR. KINGSLEY EZE, FNSE,
Chief Executive Officer,
Teneco Ltd

TheGuardian SPECIAL FOCUS ON 100 TOP-NOTCH ENGINEERS POWERING THE NIGERIA ECONOMY

“Appoint Professionals To Head Technical Ministries”

ENGR. DR. BENEDICT IHEAKAM, Mnse, Coren, Head Of Operations, Audi Company Ltd



Ekpoma. He is also certified in Marine Surveying and Liquid Cargo Surveying by North West Kent College and Lloyd's Maritime Academy, London.

A COREN-registered engineer, Engr. Iheakam is a member of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Nigerian Institute of Mechanical Engineers, Fellows of the Institute of Management Consultants, Institute of Corporate Administration, and the Nigerian Association of Technological Engineers. His professional reach extends to ASME, PMI, SNAME, CEDA, and ASEM. This body of work has earned him listings in Who's Who in Science and Engineering and 2000 Outstanding Scientists of the 21st Century.

His industry footprint includes working with Shell and other international oil and gas firms. He established FG Wilson assembly plants in Nigeria for generators, Yamaha motorcycles, and air conditioners, and managed marine workshops in Port Harcourt. Under a Shell-sponsored program, he designed technical training for the Nigerian Navy, Army, Police, and Niger Delta youths. During the Bakassi operation, he commanded a marine support team that refurbished and deployed 15 combat boats (FAC-Fast Assault Craft) in record time.

Under the auspices of Nigeria Railway Corporation where he rose to assistant director, he was in charge of the maintenance of Rolling stock. He was in the Team that Fabricated the IBB REVOLUTIONS 1&2 (locally fabricated locomotive - diesel).

Beyond Nigeria, he has represented the country at different engineering fora in the USA, UK, Japan, South Africa, UAE, Turkey, and other countries.

In 1993, he was recognized as Best Participant in a Commonwealth-sponsored maintenance program in Zambia.

In this exclusive interview, Engr. Iheakam reflects on his career path, assesses the current state of engineering in Nigeria, identifies critical policy gaps, and shares his perspective on the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for the

next generation of Nigerian engineers.

Excerpts...

In today's Nigeria, do engineers have room to grow and thrive?

Opportunities exist, but focus and structure are lacking. Corruption and poor policy implementation have limited progress, and many of our best engineering minds are leaving the country due to lack of opportunity. The engineering curriculum also needs to be reviewed to emphasize entrepreneurship. An engineer should be equipped not only to seek employment but to create jobs. Currently, many graduates wait endlessly for interviews and government jobs. There is also a funding gap. Government should design accessible loan schemes or seed funds for young engineers and polytechnic graduates to start businesses. Many are repaying education loans and cannot afford to wait. Passion is critical. Engineering is about solving problems and improving lives. We must also benchmark our curriculum against what is relevant today. Countries like the US place strong emphasis on certification and technical standards across trades. In Nigeria, we still carry courses that may no longer be relevant. Policy is important, but implementation remains our biggest challenge.

Quackery is a challenge in engineering. How can it be addressed?

Quackery is widespread and government is aware. The key is enforcement of standards. COREN and other regulatory bodies must move beyond documentation to active monitoring. One approach is to create clearly defined strata. Artisans and technicians with basic education should have a recognized category with defined scope of work and pathways for upgrading. That way, they are not misrepresented as engineers, but are still accommodated and professionalized. Standards without implementation will not solve the problem.

How does Nigeria benchmark against other countries on quality and regulatory compliance?

Regulatory bodies are not doing enough. Nigeria

has competent professionals who can match global standards, but we lack infrastructure, funding, and structured training. Basic infrastructure is a major constraint, especially power. Businesses rely on expensive generators, but Nigeria has strong solar potential, particularly in the North, that should be integrated into the grid. Government investment is needed to drive growth and diversification beyond oil and gas. Every state has mineral resources for export-oriented manufacturing, and coal deposits like those in Enugu should be revived. We must also plan for the energy transition as oil demand declines and alternatives like solar and electricity grow. Capital-intensive sectors need government support. A functional railway network linking all state capitals would cut road pressure, haulage costs, and improve safety. Marine transport and wave energy should also be developed. Finally, technical ministries need professional leadership. Appointing trained experts to head ministries like Energy and Marine will improve decisions and results.

What is your outlook for young engineers in Nigeria?

The future holds opportunities, but the system must be reformed. China recently converted 2,000 universities to polytechnics to emphasize technical skills. Nigeria should review its education system to create stronger linkages between universities and industry. Students should graduate with practical experience, not just theory. Infrastructure for research and development must be in place. The world is moving toward AI, robotics, and automation, and our curriculum must reflect that. Funding is also essential. Scholarships and support for engineers to study abroad and return with new skills will help. The profession must also be made more attractive. Other professions have clear salary structures and career progression. Engineering needs similar incentives to retain talent. If these reforms are made, young Nigerian engineers can move from job seekers to job creators and key drivers of National development.

WITH a career spanning more than three decades, Engr. Dr. Ben Iheakam has built a distinguished record across mechanical, marine, manufacturing, and energy sectors in Nigeria and internationally. Over the years, he has held leadership positions in key professional bodies and has been at the forefront of driving engineering excellence, skills development, and industrial capacity in Nigeria.

Engr. Iheakam holds an HND in Mechanical Engineering from Federal Polytechnic Nekede, a PGD and MTech in Marine Engineering from Rivers State University of Science and Technology, an Advanced Diploma in Management and Computer Science from the University of Lagos, an MBA from Ogun State University, and a PhD in Technology Management from Ambrose Alli University,

Transformative Leadership Driving Nigeria's Infrastructure Future

Engr. Ibrahim Gidado, Chairman and CEO of Prime Elevation Ltd

Engr. Ibrahim Gidado, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Prime Elevation Ltd, leads with purpose from Abuja, where he has built Prime Elevation into one of Nigeria's most respected construction and project management firms. Under his leadership, the company delivers complex residential, commercial, and institutional projects for public and private clients nationwide.

His journey has been defined by end-to-end command of the project lifecycle. Engr. Gidado oversees everything from strategic planning and procurement optimization to construction management and large-scale infrastructure delivery. The focus, he insists, is on precision, assembling and guiding multidisciplinary teams to meet exacting standards of quality, efficiency, and sustainability, while embedding accountability, innovation, and operational excellence into the firm's culture.

For Engr. Gidado, the work goes beyond sites and structures. His commitment is rooted in a broader conviction: that infrastructure is the backbone of national transformation. He believes Nigeria's future will be shaped by resilient, future-ready communities that drive economic growth, create sustainable employment, and raise living standards. That vision informs every decision at Prime Elevation, to build not just for function, but for impact. It is this belief in engineering as a catalyst that continues to drive him. Through scalable solutions, strategic collaboration, and forward-looking leadership, Engr. Gidado is positioning Nigerian construction at the forefront of innovation, delivering infrastructure that is both transformative and enduring in its contribution to national progress. In this feature interview, Engr. Ibrahim Gidado reviews Prime Elevation Ltd's key achievements to date, provides insight into the prevailing industry challenges, and presents a forward-looking perspective on the sector's trajectory.

Excerpts...

What core values guide your leadership and the operations of your organization?

At Prime Elevation Limited, our leadership is anchored on a strong set of core values that define both our culture and the way we execute every project. Integrity is at the heart of everything we do. We believe in transparency, accountability, and honoring our commitments to clients, partners, and stakeholders.

Excellence drives our pursuit of quality. We are committed to delivering projects that meet the highest standards of safety, functionality, and craftsmanship, while ensuring they are completed on time and within budget.

Innovation is another key value. The construction industry is constantly evolving, and we embrace modern technologies, sustainable building practices, and creative problem-solving to deliver greater value for our clients. Collaboration is equally important. We believe that the best outcomes are achieved by fostering strong partnerships with clients, consultants, contractors, government agencies, and our workforce.

Finally, we are guided by a commitment to impact. Beyond constructing buildings, we aim to create infrastructure that improves communities, stimulates economic growth, creates employment opportunities, and contributes meaningfully to Nigeria's development.

These values shape every decision we make and continue to position Prime Elevation Limited as a trusted and forward-thinking leader in the construction industry.

As the Chairman/CEO, Prime Elevation Ltd, what key opportunities do you see for engineers and engineering firms as Nigeria pursues economic diversification and infrastructure development?

Nigeria's drive toward economic diversification presents one of the greatest opportunities for engineers and engineering firms in our nation's history. As the country shifts from an oil-dependent economy to one driven by infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture, technology, housing, and industrial development, the demand for engineering expertise will continue to grow significantly.

For engineering firms, this is an opportunity to move beyond traditional construction and

become strategic partners in national development. We have a critical role to play in delivering roads, bridges, housing, healthcare facilities, educational institutions, renewable energy projects, industrial parks, and smart cities that will support long-term economic growth.

I also believe there is enormous potential in embracing innovation. Firms that invest in digital technologies, Building Information Modelling (BIM), sustainable construction practices, renewable energy solutions, and modern project management systems will be better positioned to compete both locally and internationally.

Another significant opportunity lies in public-private partnerships (PPPs). Government alone cannot meet Nigeria's infrastructure needs, so collaboration between the public and private sectors will create new avenues for engineering firms to finance, design, build, and maintain critical infrastructure.

Equally important is human capital development. Engineering firms must invest in mentoring young professionals, strengthening technical capacity, and promoting research and innovation. Building a highly skilled workforce will ensure Nigeria not only meets its infrastructure demands but also exports engineering expertise across Africa.

At Prime Elevation Limited, we see ourselves not merely as contractors, but as partners in nation-building. Our vision is to deliver infrastructure that stimulates economic activity, creates jobs, improves quality of life, and leaves a lasting legacy for future generations. With the right policies, investment, and collaboration, I believe Nigeria's engineering sector can become a major driver of sustainable economic transformation.

Can you share some of your organization's ongoing projects?

We currently have a number of projects underway across different locations. In Abuja, the company is delivering a 10-storey mixed-use development in Wuse II, a 7-storey commercial development in Maitama, three units of 7-bedroom duplexes with basements on Amazon Street in Maitama, and two multilevel warehouses measuring 4,680 square meters in Idu.

Other projects include a 3-storey commercial building and a 3-storey warehouse in Kaduna State, a 33-room hotel development in Mararaba, Nasarawa State, and the remodeling of a 7-bedroom mansion in Jalingo, Taraba State.

What policy interventions or government support are critical to enable Nigerian engineers to compete globally and deliver world-class projects locally?

For Nigerian engineers to compete globally and consistently deliver world-class projects

proj-

ects locally, there must be a deliberate partnership between government, the private sector, and professional institutions. Our engineers possess the talent and technical capability, but they need an enabling environment to maximize their potential.

First, government must prioritize long-term investment in infrastructure through consistent funding and transparent procurement processes. Predictable project pipelines enable engineering firms to build capacity, invest in technology, and develop specialized expertise.

Second, policies should encourage the adoption of modern engineering technologies such as Building Information Modelling (BIM), digital construction, artificial intelligence, automation, and sustainable building practices. Incentives for innovation, research, and local technology development will enhance productivity and global competitiveness.

Another critical intervention is access to affordable financing. Many indigenous engineering and construction firms have the technical expertise to execute major projects but are constrained by limited access to long-term capital and performance guarantees. Strengthening financial support mechanisms will allow local firms to undertake larger and more complex projects.

Government should also promote local content by creating policies that encourage qualified Nigerian engineering firms to lead major infrastructure projects while fostering strategic partnerships that facilitate knowledge transfer from international firms. This approach builds local capacity without compromising quality.

Equally important is investment in education and continuous professional development. Stronger collaboration between universities, research institutions, regulatory bodies, and industry will ensure that engineering graduates possess the practical skills required for today's rapidly evolving construction environment.

Finally, regulatory reforms that simplify approvals, reduce bureaucratic delays, and strengthen quality assurance will improve project delivery and enhance investor confidence.

At Prime Elevation Limited, we believe that with the right policy framework, sustained investment, and commitment to innovation, Nigerian engineers can not only deliver infrastructure that meets international standards but also compete successfully across Africa and the global marketplace. The future of engineering in Nigeria is incredibly promising, and with the right support, our professionals can become global leaders in delivering trans-

formative infrastructure.

What is your assessment of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) in supporting local firms?

The NCDMB has been instrumental in growing indigenous participation in Nigeria's oil and gas sector through local content policies, capacity building, financing, and technology transfer. Its biggest impact has been building real Nigerian capacity, creating jobs, transferring knowledge, and retaining value, not just increasing local presence.

To do more, the Board should make funding easier to access, partner better with financial institutions, support innovation, speed up project approvals, and give more backing to SMEs so they can handle bigger projects.

The NCDMB approach is a strong model that other sectors can copy. With continued collaboration between government and the private sector, Nigerian companies can become globally competitive.

Overall, the NCDMB has made solid progress. With refined policies and more support for innovation, it can help Nigerian firms lead at home and across Africa.

How is your organization preparing for the future in terms of talent development, sustainability, and adoption of emerging technologies like AI, renewable energy, and smart infrastructure?

At Prime Elevation Limited, our future strategy is built on people, sustainability, and technology. We invest in developing engineers and construction professionals through training, mentorship, and global best practices.

Sustainability is core to our projects, we use energy-efficient designs, responsible sourcing, and waste reduction to deliver durable, resilient infrastructure.

We're also embracing technology like BIM, drones, data analytics, and AI, plus renewable energy and smart building solutions to improve efficiency and meet client demand.

In short: we're building a future-ready company that combines skilled people, sustainable practices, and innovation to deliver world-class infrastructure for Nigeria's growth.

What legacy do you hope to leave behind, and how do you envision the next generation of Nigerian engineers powering the economy? I hope to leave behind a legacy of transformative leadership, enduring infrastructure, and empowered people. I want to be remembered not just for the buildings we constructed, but for the positive impact on communities, businesses, and Nigeria's economic development. True success, to me, is measured by the lives we improve, the opportunities we create, and the standards of excellence we set for future generations.

Through Prime Elevation Limited, my vision is to build an organization defined by integrity, innovation, quality, and professionalism — one that shows Nigerian engineering and construction firms can meet global standards and compete internationally.

I also want to leave a legacy of mentorship and capacity development. It is our responsibility to prepare tomorrow's leaders. By investing in young engineers, promoting continuous learning, and creating room for innovation, we can raise a generation that is technically skilled, ethical, and globally competitive.

I am optimistic about the future of Nigerian engineers. With AI, digital engineering, smart infrastructure, renewable energy, and data-driven project management, the next generation will tackle our most pressing infrastructure challenges. As Nigeria diversifies its economy, engineers will lead in building the infrastructure for industrialization, transportation, housing, healthcare, energy, agriculture, and digital connectivity, driving growth and improving quality of life for millions.

My message to young engineers: dream boldly, commit to excellence, embrace innovation, and never compromise your integrity. I am confident that you will rise to the challenge and leave an even greater legacy than ours.



"FIX ENGINEERING EDUCATION, FUND R&D, AND PROVIDE AFFORDABLE FINANCE TO GROW LOCAL CAPACITY"

ENGR CHICHI EMENIKE, FNSE, AG. Managing Director & Gas Asset Manager, Neconde Energy

FOR over 27 years, Engr. Chichi Emenike, FNSE has shaped Nigeria's oil and gas sector, from technical roles to executive leadership. She now serves as Ag. Managing Director & Gas Asset Manager at Neconde Energy, where she combines engineering expertise with strategic vision to grow and optimize key energy assets.

Beyond the boardroom, she's a leader in the industry and for women in the industry. She's a Fellow of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, 2nd Vice President of the Nigerian Gas Association, a founding member of Women in Energy Network, and a member of the Association of Professional Women Engineers of Nigeria.

Engr. Emenike has deep experience in Nigeria's energy sector and is driven by leadership that delivers results, builds people, and promotes sustainable national development. She has transitioned from managing complex technical projects to providing strategic financial oversight, and now focuses on the commercial optimization of large-scale energy assets by aligning engineering with business value and long-term performance.

She is committed to closing Nigeria's infrastructure and energy gaps, strengthening local capacity, unlocking natural resources, and creating opportunities for the next generation of engineers, especially women. Her work is guided by excellence, innovation, professional development, and inclusion. She also noted that in the oil and gas industry, leadership is defined by principle, not position, and that an engineer's values determine safety, performance, and legacy. She highlighted five core values that anchor her leadership.

"As an engineer, I have grounded my leadership in a few core values: Safety, treating the safety of people, facilities, and the environment as a fundamental leadership responsibility, not simply a regulatory requirement; Excellence, pursuing high technical standards, continuous learning, and data-driven decision-making while encouraging my team to keep improving; Courage and Confidence, speaking up when something is unsafe or incorrect, challenging assumptions respectfully, and having the confidence to contribute in environments where women may still be underrepresented; Accountability, taking ownership of decisions and outcomes, while also holding teams responsible in a fair and constructive way; and Sustainability and Responsibility, recognizing that engineering decisions in oil and gas affect communities and the environment, and therefore pursuing solutions that balance operational performance with long-term social and environmental responsibility," she said.

She continued, "Ultimately, my leadership philosophy is to lead with competence, character, and empathy, demonstrating that strong technical expertise and inclusive leadership can coexist."

Speaking in her current industry role, Engr. Emenike said Nigeria's next phase of engineering growth will depend less on repeating existing models and more on expanding scope, building deeper capability, and applying commercial thinking. She identified three areas where Nigerian engineers and firms can gain significant traction.

First is gas infrastructure beyond the traditional upstream space, which she described as the most immediate opportunity available today. She stated that Nigerian companies must transition from primarily supplying manpower to operating as integrated project developers, EPC/EPCM contractors, asset managers and technology providers. She noted substantial room across gas gathering and evacuation, gas processing and conditioning plants, CNG/LCNG infrastructure, industrial gas networks, LPG penetration, and gas-to-power

systems. For her, capturing more of the value chain is key to building scale locally and retaining value within the country.

The second area is infrastructure rehabilitation and asset integrity. She observed that this represents a huge business opportunity that receives less attention than greenfield projects. Nigeria has thousands of kilometres of pipelines, roads, bridges, power assets, water systems, industrial plants and public infrastructure that require engineering services.

Lastly, she emphasized commercial engineering. In her view, the engineer of the next decade needs to understand not just whether something can be built, but whether it can be financed, operate reliably, secure buyers for the output, manage lifecycle cost, navigate regulatory risk, leverage local-content opportunities, and generate sustainable cash flow. That, she said, is where engineering starts becoming a business-development and national-development capability, rather than simply a technical function.

Engr. Emenike said Nigeria must move beyond merely supporting engineers and instead build a complete engineering-industrial ecosystem with the systems, capital and incentives needed for Nigerian firms to design, build, own and operate at scale. She identified engineering education as the starting point, calling for universities and polytechnics to be equipped with modern labs, fabrication facilities, relevant software and curricula tied to industry demand.

Engr. Emenike called for a stronger engineering ecosystem through structured internships and apprenticeships, upgraded postgraduate programs in power, transport, water and digital engineering, and deeper industry participation in teaching and mentoring.

On innovation, she proposed R&D grants and tax credits for joint work by firms, universities and research institutes, the creation of applied-research centres to tackle national problems, and government as first buyer of locally developed technologies.

The 2nd Vice President of the Nigerian Gas Association, says closing financing gaps is key to engineering growth. She called for long-term, affordable finance, expanded development-finance facilities, credit guarantees, and funding for equipment, software, testing and certifications. She also wants pension funds and institutional investors involved in infrastructure to provide patient capital. These steps, she noted, will shift Nigeria from importing capacity to building it locally and enable Nigerian engineers to lead national development.

On legacy, Engr. Emenike hopes to be remembered for impact, innovation, and empowerment, through mentoring and building systems, not just projects. She envisions young Nigerian engineers transforming the economy across infrastructure, energy, manufacturing, tech, agriculture, healthcare, and sustainability. With Nigeria's large youth population, engineers can create innovative, affordable, locally relevant solutions.

She emphasized that women engineers must be central to this, as diversity strengthens creativity, leadership, and problem-solving. Equal access to education, mentorship, funding and networks benefits the entire economy. Her goal: a future where girls see engineering as their field, and a pipeline of confident engineers who build solutions and industries. If realized, Nigerian engineers will move from participating in growth to leading it.

ENGR CHICHI EMENIKE, FNSE,
AG. Managing Director & Gas Asset
Manager, Neconde Energy

ENGR. CHILAKA UGORJI Champions Local Capacity and Sustainable Engineering in Nigeria

ENGR. Chilaka Ugorji's name has been synonymous with engineering delivery in Nigeria's energy sector for 28 years. At the helm of Bridgside Nigeria Limited, he has steered the firm through complex projects that deliver power to industries and value to communities.

A seasoned executive with more than two decades in leadership, Ugorji fuses technical depth with commercial strategy. His remit spans business development, engineering, project management, construction, logistics, and large-scale infrastructure execution.

Over the last decade, he has led aggressive business development drives that have won major EPC contracts and helped expand the footprint of indigenous engineering firms in a competitive market. His portfolio reflects the breadth of the sector: from oil and gas infrastructure and turnaround maintenance, to major civil, mechanical, electrical and instrumentation works, as well as detailed engineering design.

Yet beyond the projects, his driving force is clear, advancing Nigerian engineering through local capacity, innovation and sustainable infrastructure. "That vision continues to guide our work at Bridgside Nigeria Limited. We are not just delivering projects. We are building the capability for Nigeria to design, own and operate its own future".

He continued, "The foundation of leadership and operations at Bridgside Nigeria Limited rests on five core principles: integrity, safety, quality, professionalism, and timely delivery. Sustainable success is built on trust, technical competence, and consistent performance. Excellence, innovation, and accountability define how we execute every project. Safety is prioritized at all times, and honesty guides engagements with clients, partners, and our staff. My leadership approach centers on empowering teams, driving continuous improvement, and maintaining high ethical and technical standards".

Engr. Ugorji said Nigeria's industrial potential remains largely untapped because its natural resources and energy are not fully harnessed. This gives engineers a central role in driving the next phase of industrial transformation.

As Nigeria accelerates infrastructure development and economic diversification, engineering will be key to creating value in power, transport, manufacturing, agriculture, mining, and the digital economy.

He also noted that government investment and the implementation of local content policies, especially in oil and gas, are opening more opportunities for indigenous firms to lead complex, capital-intensive projects.

For engineering firms seeking to lead, Ugorji said the imperative is to embed innovation, embrace technology, uphold high standards of quality, and invest deliberately in local talent. This approach will not only drive Nigeria's industrial evolution but also build the credibility and capacity needed to compete internationally. The opportunity, in his view, is to build better, build locally, and build with a global outlook.

Ugorji outlined Bridgside Nigeria Limited's ongoing projects across oil and gas, infrastructure, and public sectors. These include the refurbishment of the PHRC Refinery Jetty Complex and substations, maintenance dredging at Forcados for Renaissance, utilities maintenance at NLNG Head Office, and offshore crane maintenance for Chevron. The company is also supplying technical manpower to IOCs and providing engineering design consultancy and other infrastructure services.

He noted that these projects reflect Bridgside's commitment to operational excellence, strengthening local capacity, and supporting Nigeria's industrial and energy objectives. On policy interventions, he identified the sustained implementation and deepening of Nigeria's Local Content Policy as a cornerstone for long-term growth in the engineering sector and for positioning Nigerian engineers to deliver world-class projects and compete globally.

He argued that "giving indigenous engineering firms greater responsibility to lead major projects is essential. Such a shift builds technical knowledge and leadership capacity, creates quality jobs, and ensures that critical expertise remains within the country rather than being exported. Equally vital, is deliberate investment in engineering education and human capital. Government should institute structured programs and scholarships that enable top engineering graduates and young professionals to pursue

advanced degrees, specialized technical training, and hands-on industry exposure at leading institutions and firms worldwide".

The goal, he explained, is to create a pipeline where the knowledge and skills acquired abroad are repatriated to strengthen Nigeria's engineering base. He further emphasized the need for increased funding in research, modern laboratories, and technology acquisition. Coupled with access to affordable, long-term financing for indigenous firms, these interventions would significantly enhance industry competitiveness.

To ensure lasting impact, he called for stronger collaboration among government, academia, regulators, and the private sector. Such alignment, he noted, will accelerate innovation and equip Nigerian engineers with the capacity to deliver world-class projects both domestically and on the international stage.

Speaking on the company's future outlook and how it is positioning for what comes next in talent, technology, and sustainability, Engr. Chilaka Ugorji, a COREN-registered engineer and member of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, laid out a clear roadmap. "Our vision for the future rests on three pillars: innovation, people, and sustainability. We are embracing emerging technologies, building the capacity of our people to lead in that new environment, and ensuring that everything we do is aligned with long-term, sustainable outcomes."

Bridgside Nigeria Limited is prioritizing talent development by recruiting and mentoring young engineers, and investing in training, certifications, and exposure to global best practices to build future industry leaders. The company is also embracing technology as central to modern engineering, integrating digital project management, AI, automation, and other tools to improve efficiency, quality, and project outcomes. In addition, Bridgside maintains strict discipline in project documentation to support continuous learning, better decision-making, and improved execution.

Engr. Chilaka Ugorji said Bridgside Nigeria Limited is building a strong maintenance culture and expanding into renewable energy, smart infrastructure, and other sustainable solutions to meet Nigeria's future needs.

For him, legacy is about people. He aims to be remembered for leadership built on excellence, integrity, and trust, through strong teams and accountable delivery.

At Bridgside, this means delivering quality engineering that drives Nigeria's infrastructure and industrial growth while investing in young engineers through mentorship, training, and global exposure. His goal is to position Nigeria as a hub for engineering excellence in Africa by shaping the future of the profession through innovation, leadership, and lasting impact.



ENGINEERING THE FUTURE: Engr. Kingsley Eze, on AI, Talent, and Nigeria's Infrastructure

FOR a man whose career has spanned finance, consulting and technology, the through-line has always been problem solving. Engr. Kingsley Eze, FNSE, Chief Executive Officer, Tenece Ltd, began his professional career at Diamond Bank as a Financial Control Analyst, a role that grounded him in discipline, numbers and the inner workings of business. From there he made a deliberate pivot into technology with Anderson Consulting, drawn by the growing weight of the internet and digital tools in shaping commercial outcomes.

That shift clarified something for him. Engineering, in his view, is not defined by a title or a discipline alone. It is the practice of identifying a problem, crafting practical solutions, and applying knowledge and technology to deliver better results. It is that same principle that now anchors his commitment to engineering in Nigeria. He sees the profession as central to addressing the country's most pressing needs, from improving business performance and strengthening public service to building infrastructure and creating solutions tailored to local realities. Nigeria's challenges, he notes, are particular to its context. Addressing them effectively will require engineers capable of developing solutions that are equally specific, practical and rooted in the environment they are meant to serve.

In this special report, Engr. Kingsley Eze, FNSE, shares his perspective on the significant milestones achieved by Tenece Ltd, the key challenges facing the engineering industry, and his projections for the sector's future.

What core values guide your leadership and the operations of your organization?

At Tenece, we are guided by deferred compensation and the discipline of delayed gratification. Our ambition is not to build a company that performs well today and fades tomorrow. We are building an institution designed to outlast all of us.

That requires a long-term view, making investments now whose full returns may not be immediately visible. It demands patience, discipline, and a conscious choice to prioritize the future over short-term gains.

We also hold excellence as a way of life. For us, excellence is not conditional. It is not reserved for convenient moments or for when people are watching. It is the standard that shapes how we approach work every single day.

We operate in an environment where mediocrity is sometimes accepted and "good enough" is often considered sufficient. Tenece exists to prove a different point. We are committed to demonstrating that it is possible to build an organization where excellence, professionalism, and high standards are embedded in how our people think, decide, and deliver.

As the CEO of Tenece Ltd, what key opportunities do you see for engineers and engineering firms as Nigeria pursues economic diversification and infrastructure development?

I believe Nigeria's progress will be determined by our ability to develop solutions tailored to our peculiar challenges. That creates enormous opportunities for engineers and engineering firms, because they sit at the center of designing and delivering those solutions.

The opportunities cut across nearly every aspect of national development. Civil engineers will be essential to roads, railways, housing and other physical infrastructure. Electrical engineers will be critical to closing the gaps in power and energy. Computer and electronics engineers will drive the build-out of our digital infrastructure and technology capabilities.

Beyond specific disciplines, however, Nigeria must take ownership of the engi-



neering of its own infrastructure. We cannot continue to rely on external expertise to design, build, and maintain the systems that underpin our economy.

If we are serious about economic diversification and global competitiveness, we must build the local capacity to understand our problems, design context-appropriate solutions, execute them at scale, and continuously improve them. That, to me, is the defining opportunity for Nigerian engineers and engineering firms.

Can you share some of your organization's ongoing projects?

We are making significant investments in building our artificial intelligence capabilities and offerings. Our ambition is for Tenece to emerge as a leading AI company in Africa, and to play a defining role in helping African corporations make the transition into an AI-driven future.

We view AI as more than the next technology trend. It will fundamentally reshape how businesses operate, how decisions are made, and how value is created. Our focus is on positioning ourselves to guide organizations through that transition and help them integrate AI in ways that are practical and impactful.

In parallel, through the Genesys Foundation, we are investing in the development of the technical and engineering talent that will power Nigeria's digital and economic future. We recognize that infrastructure and solutions are only as strong as the people who build and sustain them.

Talent development is therefore central to our long-term strategy.

We are also nearing completion of the Tenece Experience Centre. The Centre is designed as a space where people can see, touch, and understand what the future of technology looks like. Our goal is to make emerging technologies more tangible, and to demonstrate how they can be applied to solve real business and societal challenges.

As a stakeholder in the industry, do you think regulatory bodies are doing enough to eradicate quackery?

Regulation is critical to eradicating quackery and protecting the integrity of the engineering profession. Standards matter, especially in a field where the quality of engineering work directly affects lives and the country's infrastructure.

Bodies such as the Nigerian Society of Engineers, of which I am a Fellow, are doing commendable work in promoting professionalism and upholding standards. That said, I believe there is still more ground to cover.

One area with significant potential is stronger collaboration between industry and academia. We must ensure closer alignment between what our academic institutions produce and the skills and competencies that industry actually requires.

If we are to raise standards across the profession, it starts with the pipeline. Engineers entering the profession must be properly trained, adequately equipped,

and exposed to the realities of modern engineering practice. Deeper partnerships among regulators, academia, and industry are essential to achieving that.

What policy interventions or government support are critical to enable Nigerian engineers to compete globally and deliver world-class projects locally?

The most important intervention is education. We must build better delivery models that produce the right talent and skills for the economy we intend to create.

The world is changing rapidly, and the demands on engineers are changing with it. We cannot rely solely on traditional approaches to engineering education and expect our graduates to compete effectively in a global economy.

This will require coordinated action among government, academia, and industry. Government must provide the policy direction and funding environment. Academia must deliver quality education and research. Industry must define the practical skills and competencies needed in the workplace.

When these three work in alignment, we can develop a talent system that produces engineers who are not only academically sound, but capable of solving real problems and competing at a global standard.

What is your assessment of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) in supporting local firms?

NCDMB plays an important role in deepening local participation and building the capacity of Nigerian firms. However, there is room for the organization to be more visible and to engage more directly with local firms and other industry stakeholders.

Greater visibility and engagement would help local businesses better understand the opportunities available, while also giving NCDMB clearer insight into the challenges firms face on the ground.

The ultimate goal should be to create an environment where Nigerian firms are not just participants, but are building the capabilities to compete effectively and deliver increasingly complex projects.

How is your organization preparing for the future in terms of talent development, sustainability, and the adoption of emerging technologies like AI, renewable energy, and smart infrastructure?

We are investing deliberately in all three areas because the future will demand a different approach to technology, talent, and sustainability.

On artificial intelligence, we are actively building our AI capabilities and solutions. Our ambition is to help African businesses make a practical transition into an AI-enabled future.

In renewable energy, we are partnering with GreenAge to deliver local solutions. Nigeria's energy challenges require approaches that are practical, sustainable, and suited to our context, and we see renewable energy playing an increasingly central role in that mix.

Talent development is equally core to our strategy. Through the Genesys Foundation, we are building the technical talent that will drive Nigeria's digital and economic future. We believe that adopting emerging technologies and delivering world-class infrastructure must go hand in hand with developing the people who can design, implement, and sustain them.

Ultimately, our focus is on preparing for the future rather than waiting for it. We are building the technology, the talent, and the capabilities that will enable Nigerian and African businesses to participate meaningfully in the next phase of global economic development.

"Nigeria Must Move From Users to Creators and Owners of Technology"

ENGR. KENNETH EMEKA UGWUANYI, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Wellmeka Limited

ENGINEERING is a profession of consequence. Our clients entrust us with high-value assets, complex wells, and operations where there is no margin for error. The data we present, the equipment we deploy, and the decisions we make must be technically rigorous and completely transparent. Integrity is not optional. It is the baseline."

On Engineering Excellence, for Engr. Ugwuanyi, excellence begins before any contract is signed. "We do not lead with a service to sell. We lead with a problem to solve. The first step is to understand the technical objective, then engineer the most appropriate, efficient, and sustainable solution. That is the difference between vendors and engineering partners."

While on safety, he informed that, in an industry defined by high pressures, heavy mechanical loads, hazardous chemicals, and complex well conditions, safety is treated as a design parameter.

According to him, QHSE is not an afterthought. It is embedded from project conception through execution. Disciplined risk management is what allows ambitious engineering to be delivered without compromise

On Innovation, Complacency, he argues, is the enemy of progress. "We challenge our engineers to question the status quo. Can this equipment be improved? Can this process be made smarter? Can this software deliver more? Innovation at Wellmeka means refusing to accept 'this is how it has always been done' as the final answer."

On accountability, responsibility at Wellmeka is mapped deliberately from the design desk to field execution. The principle is that clear ownership at every stage, in engineering design, equipment preparation, and operational delivery, leads to higher standards when people know they are answerable for results.

Summarizing his approach, Engr. Ugwuanyi keeps it direct: "Build competent people. Create robust systems. Give engineers real responsibility. Insist on integrity. And never stop improving the technology."

It is, in his words, a simple formula. But executed consistently, it is how a Nigerian engineering company earns the right to compete globally.

Engr. Ugwuanyi called this a pivotal moment for Nigeria, saying engineering capacity will decide how quickly the country industrializes, diversifies and retains value locally. With Nigeria's oil, gas and renewable resources, he stressed the need for more local participation in engineering, manufacturing, maintenance, digitalization and technology development to capture greater economic value. In oilfield services and other sectors like power, gas, transport, water, manufacturing, mining, telecoms, agriculture and renewables, Nigerian firms can move from importing and executing projects to designing, building and owning the technology.

He also pointed to digital tools, AI, automation, remote monitoring, predictive maintenance, digital twins, robotics and data analytics, as areas where Nigeria's young engineers can lead rather than just use imported solutions. The key shift, he said, is from buying engineering products to designing, manufacturing and owning them. That would create high-value jobs, save foreign exchange, strengthen supply chains, and position Nigerian firms to export across Africa.

He added that Wellmeka is currently running several programs that combine oilfield services with engineering, manufacturing and digital technology.

His words, "A major area is our coiled tubing and well-intervention operations, where we support operators with well clean-out, production restoration, zonal isolation, stimulation, nitrogen lifting and related intervention services. We are also strengthening our high-pressure pumping and stimulation capability, including equipment and systems required for cementing, matrix stimulation and other well-service applications".

"Another important program is our engineering and manufacturing initiative. We are progressively developing and manufacturing specialized oilfield equipment locally, including coiled-tubing reels and spoolers, hydraulic systems, filtration systems, tanks, blending equipment and selected high-pressure service packages.

"This program is particularly important to us because it demonstrates the transition from indigenous service delivery to indigenous engineering and manufacturing. We are equally investing significantly in digital technology".

Engr. Ugwuanyi noted that the company has developed AEGIS, a data-acquisition system that can take over 50 sensor inputs to monitor field equipment and well-service units. It is also building CoildATA, an engineering and job-design platform for coiled-tubing operations that integrates calculations, simulation, monitoring, and post-job analysis into one workflow.

The goal is to build an integrated Nigerian energy-services technology platform that links engineering, manufacturing, field operations and digital systems. He stressed that government policy and support are essential for Nigerian engineers to compete globally and deliver high-standard projects at home. Stability matters because firms make long-term investments in people, facilities, equipment, software and research that are risky when policies keep changing.

On procurement, he said major projects should value what local engineering contributes, not just the cheapest upfront

He stands at the intersection of technical mastery and industrial vision. Engr. Kenneth Emeka Ugwuanyi, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Wellmeka Limited, is a thoroughbred professional of high repute. A First-Class Mechanical Engineer from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and a leader with over two decades at the frontlines of Nigeria's oil and gas sector, he embodies the rare blend of field expertise, corporate stewardship, and indigenous innovation.

Speaking on the principles that guide the firm, Engr. Ugwuanyi, frames them around five non-negotiables: Integrity, Engineering excellence, Safety, Innovation, and Accountability.

price. The difference is between importing equipment and buying from a Nigerian company that employs local engineers, manufactures and maintains locally, pays taxes, and reinvests in technology.

He also called for patient capital to match the long investment cycles in engineering and manufacturing. Stronger testing, certification and research infrastructure is needed so engineers can access accredited labs, materials testing, prototyping and certification. Universities and industry must collaborate more, with training tied to real industrial problems and exposure to modern software, manufacturing, automation and product development.

Lastly, he urged intentional government support for Nigerian engineering firms expanding across Africa. Nigerian Content should be measured by how much engineering knowledge, intellectual property, manufacturing capacity and technology ownership remain in Nigeria after a project, not just by local spending.

Engr. Ugwuanyi journey began in 2007 on the fabrication yards of offshore platforms, where precision was non-negotiable. By 2008, he had joined a multinational oilfield services firm, rising through the ranks to Field Service Manager. Across West Africa and beyond, he operated at the edge of complex well-intervention technologies, international operating standards, and disciplined engineering management. Those years did more than shape a career. They cemented a conviction: Nigerian engineers possess the capacity to design, manufacture, and deliver sophisticated solutions that meet and exceed global benchmarks. That conviction became the foundation of Wellmeka Limited.

For Engr. Ugwuanyi, engineering transcends profession. It is a strategic instrument for national development. Truly competitive economies, he believes, are built by nations that understand their technical challenges, design their own solutions, manufacture critical equipment, secure intellectual property, and cultivate successive generations of world-class engineers. Nigeria is not short on engineering talent. What remains is the deliberate building of institutions, infrastructure, industrial capacity, and opportunity to convert that talent into measurable economic value.

Through Wellmeka, that vision is being executed. The commitment is clear: to demonstrate that a Nigerian engineering company can progressively develop indigenous technology, fabricate sophisticated equipment, execute complex energy-service operations, and ultimately compete on the international stage.

In an industry long shaped by imports, Engr. Ugwuanyi is engineering a new narrative, one where Nigeria builds, owns, and leads

Assessing the role of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board in supporting local firms, he stated that the establishment and work of NCDMB have been

among the most important developments in strengthening indigenous participation in Nigeria's oil and gas industry.

"Before the Nigerian Content framework, a substantial proportion of engineering services, equipment and technical capability in the industry were sourced internationally. NCDMB has helped create an environment where Nigerian companies can participate more meaningfully in areas historically dominated by international service companies. The policy has encouraged investment in Nigerian personnel, facilities, equipment ownership, fabrication and technical capacity, he stated.

However, he noted that Nigerian Content must continue to evolve. The next phase should place greater emphasis on technology ownership, engineering design, manufacturing, research and development, intellectual property and export capability. He asked how many technologies used in the industry are designed in Nigeria, how much specialized equipment Nigerian companies can manufacture, and how many Nigerian engineering products can eventually be exported to other African markets. Those, he said, should increasingly become key measures of Nigerian Content success.

"NCDMB can play a significant role in this transition by supporting credible indigenous engineering and manufacturing companies with access to development finance, technology partnerships, testing infrastructure and opportunities to demonstrate locally developed solutions".

He further stated that the ultimate objective should be the emergence of Nigerian engineering companies that are competitive not because they are protected locally, but because their technology, quality and execution capability enable them to compete anywhere in the world.

Engr. Ugwuanyi said Wellmeka is preparing for the future by shifting from a traditional service company to one that integrates mechanical engineering, electronics, software, data science, automation and AI.

He stated that talent development is a key focus, with younger engineers being trained to solve real engineering problems, understand equipment performance, redesign systems, and apply software solutions. Digital platforms like AEGIS and CoildATA will generate operational data to support predictive maintenance, diagnostics, optimization and AI-driven decisions.

On sustainability, he said the approach goes beyond compliance to include efficient equipment design, waste reduction, local supply chains, and extending asset life through predictive maintenance. While oil and gas will remain important, the company is also building capacity for renewable energy, electrification, energy storage and efficient industrial systems. Also, Capabilities in sensors, data acquisition and remote monitoring are also being developed for broader applications in smart infrastructure.

The overall strategy according to him, is to transform Wellmeka into a wider engineering and technology enterprise that can contribute to Africa's future energy and industrial infrastructure.

He said his legacy is showing what is possible when Nigerian engineers are given the resources to build technology. "I would like Wellmeka to demonstrate what is possible when Nigerian engineers are given the opportunity, responsibility and resources to build technology."

He wants young engineers to see equipment "conceived by Nigerian engineers, designed by Nigerian engineers, fabricated by Nigerian technicians, controlled by software developed by Nigerian programmers", so they know tech does not always arrive in a container from somewhere else. "Nigeria's next generation of engineers must move beyond being excellent users of technology to becoming creators and owners of technology."

He added they will need to combine core engineering with software, AI, automation and sustainability, and "think globally" so solutions from Port Harcourt can work in Angola, Ghana, Senegal or beyond. "We need is confidence backed by competence, discipline and sustained investment. Our aspiration is ultimately simple: engineering solutions developed in Nigeria, delivering value to Africa and competing with the best anywhere in the world."



Wellmeka

AFIA Calls for Better Financing and Regulatory Reforms to Support Nigerian Engineers

ENGR. ABDULJELYL ADEKUNLE KARHEEM, CEng, CIOB, RICS, CIARB, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Afia Group of Companies

What core values guide your leadership and the operations of your organization?

OUR core values are Excellence, Integrity, Innovation, Sustainability, and Community Impact. We are committed to delivering high-quality projects on time and to specification, maintaining transparency in all dealings, continuously improving our methods, building sustainably, and ensuring that our developments positively impact the communities where we operate.

As the Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Afia Group, what key opportunities do you see for engineers and engineering firms as Nigeria pursues economic diversification and infrastructure development?

There are significant opportunities in housing delivery, urban infrastructure, public-private partnerships (PPPs), commercial developments, and specialized facilities such as healthcare infrastructure. As Nigeria continues to diversify and invest in infrastructure, engineers who can deliver quality, cost-effective, and sustainable solutions particularly through joint ventures and PPPs, will play a central role. Firms that combine technical competence with strong project management and local knowledge are well positioned to thrive.

AFIA Group in December 2025, commissioned the Afia Apartment and Afia Court, can you share more about these projects?

In December 2025, we successfully commissioned Afia Apartment and Afia Court. These landmark projects were commissioned by the Executive Governor of Oyo State, His Excellency Engr. Seyi Makinde, and the Olubadan of Ibadan, underscoring the significance of the developments to the state. Both projects form part of our residential portfolio in Ibadan and reflect our commitment to delivering modern, functional, and quality housing. Afia Court is a premium residential development, while Afia Apartment provides quality apartment living. They were designed to meet the growing demand for well-planned residential accommodation in the city, with a strong focus on quality finishes, functionality, and long-term value for residents. In recognition of our contributions, Afia Group was also honoured with the award of Biggest Indigenous Developer in Oyo State by City People.

Can you share some of your organization other ongoing projects and completed projects?

Our completed and landmark projects include the Chief Lateef Oyelade GRA, Ring Road, Ibadan, done as a PPP with the Oyo State Government. We also have Afia Court and Afia Apartment at Lateef Oyelade GRA, Mandamis by Afia in Iyaganku GRA, Magdalen's Court by Afia in Agodi GRA, Apinke's Lodge at Lateef Oyelade GRA, and The Crest by Afia in Agodi GRA.

Right now, we've got more residential estates, commercial developments, and strategic joint ventures in the pipeline across the South-West. We're also looking into specialized facilities and more public-private partnerships to scale impact.

What are the other companies under the group and its mission and objectives?

Afia Group of Companies is a diversified group. Afia Construction Limited is our core engineering arm. It was incorporated on 9 September 2008 and handles building construction and engineering.

Beyond construction, we also have: Afia Homes: We develop and manage residential communities and land assets designed for comfort, security, and long-term value. We make home ownership more accessible through structured payment plans and verified titles. Afia Farms & Food Processing Company Ltd: We invest across the agriculture value chain, cultivation, livestock, processing, and distribution. The aim is to create rural employment and strengthen national food security.

Afia CEO Mentorship: We support founders and executives with the strategy, systems, and accountability needed to scale profitable, values-driven businesses.

Afia Institute of Islamic Studies: The Institute combines authentic Islamic scholarship with modern learning methods to nurture students of sound character who contribute to their families, communities, and the nation.

Our mission is to deliver high-quality solutions across all our sectors, drive sustainable development, and create lasting impact in the communities we serve. Our key objectives are to be a leading player in real estate development and construction in Nigeria, deliver projects to high standards of quality and safety, create value through strategic partnerships including PPPs and joint ventures, promote accessible home ownership through



ENGR. ABDULJELYL ADEKUNLE KARHEEM, CEng, CIOB, RICS, CIARB, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Afia Group of Companies

From London housing estates to the GRA streets of Ibadan, Engr. Abduljelyl Adekunle Karheem's career has traced a steady climb through construction, and he now channels that experience into a bigger mission at home.

He developed his professional foundation in the United Kingdom, where he gained extensive experience across leading London-based organisations. His portfolio includes Servite Houses, Sanctuary Housing, Notting Hill Housing, Network Housing, Newlon Housing, Ascham Homes, St Albans District Council, Ringley Surveyors, and Morrison Construction. He began his career as a Technical Officer and, through dedication and consistent professional excellence, rose to the position of Project Engineer. The progression reflects a strong growth trajectory within the construction and housing sectors.

A Chartered Engineer with broad expertise in building construction, project management, and public-private partnerships. His academic credentials were obtained in the United Kingdom and include Building Surveying from the University of Greenwich, Building Engineering from Sheffield Hallam University, and Construction Project Management from the University of West London. He is currently pursuing an LLM/MSc in Construction Law and Dispute Resolution at Leeds Beckett University.

He is a member of several internationally recognised professional bodies, including the Chartered Institute of Building, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, the Chartered Association of Building Engineers, and the Society of Construction Lawyers, UK.

Engr. Karheem's commitment to engineering in Nigeria is driven by a desire to deliver quality infrastructure and housing that improves lives, creates jobs, and contributes to national development. He maintains that Nigerian engineers possess the capacity to deliver world-class projects, provided they are given the right support, enabling environment, and opportunities.

In this special interview, Engr. Karheem reflects on the key milestones recorded by Afia Group of Companies, examines the prevailing challenges in the sector, and outlines projections for the future.

partnerships with financial institutions like Stanbic IBTC, and contribute meaningfully to community development, food security, leadership capacity building, and education.

What policy interventions or government support are critical to enable Nigerian engineers to compete globally and deliver world-class projects locally?

For Nigerian engineers and firms to really compete, here are the key things we need to see from government: Consistent and transparent PPP frameworks so everyone knows the rules and can plan long term. Easier access to long-term project financing to make big projects viable. Faster, simpler regulatory and approval processes for construction and real estate. Real support for local content and building local capacity. Stable economic policies that help control construction cost swings. And more investment in technical education and continuous professional development for engineers.

With these in place, Nigerian engineers and companies will be able to deliver quality projects competitively, both here at home and abroad.

How is your organization preparing for the future in terms of talent development, sustainability, and adoption of emerging technologies like AI, renewable energy, and smart infrastructure?

We are actively preparing for the future across three key areas: Talent Development: We continue to invest in mentoring young professionals and building internal capacity to ensure we have a skilled workforce capable of delivering high-quality projects. Sustainability & Emerging Technologies: We are incorporating smart home technol-

ogies into our developments and exploring renewable energy solutions. We are also working with foreign partners to design future projects that will not be fully dependent on the national grid. Our goal is to generate power on-site and earn credit by selling surplus energy to the PHCN (electricity distribution companies). These initiatives form part of our broader strategy to deliver more sustainable, efficient, and future-ready infrastructure.

What legacy do you hope to leave behind, and how do you envision the next generation of Nigerian engineers powering the economy?

I hope to leave a legacy of quality, integrity, and impactful developments that improve living standards and demonstrate that Nigerian engineers can deliver excellence. I envision the next generation of Nigerian engineers as highly skilled, innovative, and globally competitive professionals who will drive infrastructure development, housing delivery, and technological advancement ultimately powering sustainable economic growth across the country.

How do you strike a balance between your professional responsibilities, family life, and social commitments, while maintaining excellence in all areas?

Balance comes from prioritization, effective delegation, and strong systems. I believe in surrounding myself with competent teams, maintaining clear focus on strategic priorities, and making deliberate time for family and community responsibilities. Excellence is sustained by discipline, continuous learning, and a commitment to doing things the right way both professionally and personally.

Felicitations on your Recognition

To Our Dearest Daddy,

Engr. Abduljelyl Adekunle Karheem,

CEng, CIOB, RICS, CIArb, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Afia Group of Companies

With hearts full of pride and gratitude, we celebrate you on your well-deserved recognition as one of the
100 Topnotch Engineers Powering The Nigeria Economy in The Guardian Newspaper Special Report

Daddy, this honor reflects the years of vision, integrity, excellence, and leadership you have poured into engineering and nation building. Through Afia Group of Companies, you have not only delivered projects but have also raised the standard of professionalism, mentored many, and contributed meaningfully to Nigeria's growth and development.

We have watched you lead with discipline, serve with humility, and inspire with consistency. Your dedication to quality, innovation, and impact continues to make us proud to call you our father.

Congratulations on this remarkable achievement. May this recognition open greater doors for you, and may your influence continue to shape the future of engineering in Nigeria.

With all our love,



Signed by:

His Children:

Mr Abdullahi Olalekan Karheem
Ms Folashade Aminat Karheem
Mr Idris Oladimeji Karheem
Mr Mohammed-Al - Ameen
Olakunle Karheem
Master Dhul-Qorinain
Olasubomi Karheem
Master Abdulwahab
Olayiwola Karheem
Rashidat Olatanwa Karheem
Mohamud Olatunji Karheem




Big congratulations, Mogaji Adanla!

Engr. Abduljelyl Adekunle Karheem, CEng, CIOB, RICS, CIArb, Founder & CEO of Afia Group of Companies—your recognition as one of the 100 Topnotch Engineers Powering The Nigeria Economy is so well deserved.

You continue to raise the bar for engineering excellence in Nigeria.

We celebrate you and Afia Group. More wins ahead!

Signed

Chief (Dr) Tokunbo Olukoya
Chief Princess (Mrs.) Adekunbi Olukoya



Heartfelt Congratulations
 on being named as One of the 100

Topnotch

Engineers Powering the Nigerian Economy

Engr. Abduljelyl Adekunle Karheem
 Founder & Chief Executive Officer, AFIA Group



Dear Engr. Karheem,

It is with immense joy and sincere admiration that the entire team of Shanxi Sufeng New Materials Technology Co., Ltd. extends our warmest and most heartfelt congratulations to you on your well-deserved nomination as one of the 100 Topnotch Engineers Powering the Nigerian Economy, to be featured in The Guardian's commemorative report releasing on 29th August 2026.

As your long-term, stable Chinese supplier and trusted strategic business partner, we have witnessed firsthand your outstanding professionalism, far-sighted vision and unrelenting dedication to Nigeria's industrial and economic construction over our years of cooperation. As a distinguished seasoned engineer and leading entrepreneur of AFIA Group, you have always upheld integrity, innovation and excellence, continuously driving local industrial upgrading, boosting domestic engineering capacity and making remarkable transformative contributions to Nigeria's socio-economic development. This authoritative honor from The Guardian fully recognizes your legendary achievements and far-reaching industry influence, and it is a supreme testament to your persistent efforts and remarkable leadership.

We deeply cherish our stable, mutually beneficial partnership built over long-term collaboration. Your pursuit of high-standard engineering development aligns perfectly with our corporate philosophy of supplying high-quality new material products to support Africa's infrastructure and industrial growth. We take great pride in cooperating with such an outstanding industry leader as you, and your achievement also inspires our whole team to keep improving product quality and service capacity to better support AFIA Group's nationwide business layout across Nigeria.

On behalf of all staff at Shanxi Sufeng New Materials Technology Co., Ltd., we once again celebrate this glorious recognition bestowed upon you. We sincerely wish you continuous breakthroughs in engineering innovation, greater prosperity for AFIA Group, and more outstanding accomplishments in boosting Nigeria's economic revitalization. We also look forward to deepening our long-term stable cooperation hand in hand, jointly creating greater value for Nigeria's industrial development in the years ahead.

With deepest respect and best wishes.

Shanxi Sufeng New Materials Technology Co., Ltd.



Yewa North LG Boss Commissions Legacy Projects

By **Chris Irekamba**

THE Chairman of Yewa North Local Council of Ogun State, Dr. Olusola Akinbode, has commissioned a newly constructed Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) with equipment and motorised borehole at Igbofoki, Emado in Ayetoro.

The chairman also commissioned Atokun Kara Market, Saala- Orile; a block of three classrooms furnished with chairs, desks and other facilities at Igan-Alade; and a renovated block of four classrooms furnished with chairs and desks at Ebute-Igboiro. Other projects commissioned by the council

include the renovated YNLG Multipurpose Town Hall and Osoba Shopping Complex in Ayetoro and 10 lockup shops at Igbofoki.

The government has also provided office equipment for ease of administrative duties, distributed solar lights across the 11 wards, as well as constructed a perimeter fence around the council secretariat.

Speaking during the commissioning, Akinbode said the projects were designed to complement the efforts of the Ogun State government and bring meaningful development closer to residents at the grassroots.

He said his administration was committed to creating a conducive environment that would reduce the challenges and risks associated with accessing basic social amenities while improving the socio-economic wellbeing of the people.

Akinbode said: "You entrusted your votes to us, therefore, I assure you that we will not disappoint you, as we continue to work for the success and wellbeing of everyone."

"By the time this administration rounds off, all the 11 wards in the local council will have more projects to showcase."

Jang, Kwankwaso Disagree Over Plateau State NDC Guber Ticket

From **Leo Sobechi, Abuja**

BARELY 24 hours to the publication of names of governorship and State Assembly candidates by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) stands the risk of not fielding a candidate for Plateau State.

Recall that the NDC sent in the name of the state chairman of the party, Yakubu Ndam, as a placeholder following the purported suspension of Da Jonathan Sunday Akuns, who emerged unopposed from the NDC direct primary election for the state.

Based on the contrived logjam over the governorship ticket, the North West National Vice Chairman of the party, Barnabas Ejisi and the Plateau

State chairman, Ndam, have been making frantic effort to procure a proper substitute for the placeholder.

As stakeholders became aware that the NDC governorship ticket is up for auction, the NDC leaders decided to approach the vice presidential candidate of the party, Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, in a bid to get the upper hand in the supremacy between them and Akuns, who was the only aspirant that purchased nomination forms and went for the straw poll.

In a telephone interaction, the state chairman, Ndam, told *The Guardian* that the decision to use him as a placeholder was to enable the stakeholders agree on a consensus candidate, adding that he does

not recognise the fact that the ticket was under contention.

However, those plotting to supplant Akuns, who is from Plateau Central Senatorial District, have run into a brick wall after finding out that zoning convention in the state did not favour Ndam to become the substantive gubernatorial standard bearer.

Led by the National Vice Chairman, North Central, Ejisi, the stakeholders reached out to former Jonah David Jang, to explore the possibility of using Jang's preferred governorship candidate in the Kabiru Tanimu Turaki faction of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Garba Sunday Biggs, to replace the placeholder and deny Akuns access to the ticket.

Wema Bank CEO To Chair CIBN Banking, Finance Conference

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

THE Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Wema Bank, Moruf Oseni, has been appointed Chairman of the Consultative Committee for the 19th Annual Banking and Finance Conference of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN).

The two-day conference is scheduled for September 8 and 9, 2026, at the Congress Hall, Transcorp Hilton, Abuja.

The CIBN Annual Banking and Finance Conference is the institute's flagship knowledge-sharing and solution-driven platform, bringing together policymakers, regulators, fi-

nancial institutions, development partners, technology providers, academics, business leaders and other stakeholders in the financial services industry and the broader economy.

The 2026 edition is themed, 'Building a Resilient Economy in an Era of Disruptions: Strategic Imperatives for the Banking and Financial Services Industry.'

The conference is expected to facilitate discussions on emerging economic and financial challenges, with participants examining strategies for strengthening institutions, enhancing resilience and positioning the Nigerian banking industry for sustainable growth.

Resolutions from the conference will be documented and presented to relevant stakeholders and policymakers through a communique, with the aim of supporting informed decision-making, policy formulation and strategic alignment with global best practices.

Speaking at a press briefing, Oseni, who is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (FCIB), said the 2026 edition had been designed to go beyond conventional discussions to provide practical solutions to issues confronting the economy and financial services industry.

2027: Yiaga Africa To Deploy 3,000 Observers To Monitor Campaigns

From **Sodi'q Omolayo, Abuja**

YIAGA Africa has announced plans to deploy more than 3,000 observers across the country to monitor political campaigns, developments and election-related violence as the 2027 general election beckons.

The organisation also said it would activate 774 long-term observers, one in each local council, to monitor the pre-election environment and provide early warnings on potential threats to peaceful elections.

Speaking on Friday at a two-day national training for State Focal Persons and trainers on the *WatchingTheVote* (WTV)/Parallel Vote Tabula-

tion (PRVT) methodology in Abuja, Director of Programmes, Yiaga Africa, Cynthia Mbamalu, said the training marked the official launch of the organisation's national deployment for the 2027 elections.

Mbamalu said 42 trainers and 47 state coordinators were being trained to cascade the exercise to the states and facilitate the recruitment and training of local council supervisors and observers.

"This is our official launch of our national deployment for the 2027 elections and we commenced today our training of trainers.

Today, we're training 42 trainers who are going to be equipped to go to the state lev-

el and train our long-term observers," she said.

According to her, the state coordinators would recruit one local council supervisor in each of the 774 local councils, who would in turn recruit more than 3,000 observers for the election.

She explained that the observers would begin monitoring the pre-election environment from September, with particular attention to political party campaigns and activities, political developments and incidents of violence.

"Based on INEC's timetable, campaigns have started and for us, once campaigns begin, elections have started," Mbamalu said.

Heartfelt Congratulations ON YOUR WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION

ENGR. ABDULJELYL ADEKUNLE KARHEEM Founder & Chief Executive Officer, AFIA Group

Dear Sir,

Congratulations on this prestigious recognition by *The Guardian* as one of the "100 Topnotch Engineers Powering the Nigerian Economy" is a well-deserved honour and a testament to your exceptional leadership, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to nation-building through engineering and enterprise.

Your vision, integrity, and consistent contributions to Nigeria's socio-economic development continue to inspire many of us. This recognition reflects the remarkable impact you have made over the years through visionary leadership at AFIA Group, setting standards of excellence, innovation, and sustainable growth in our nation.

You have not only distinguished yourself as a seasoned professional of international repute and an award-winning business leader, but you have also been a beacon of inspiration and a role model to engineers, entrepreneurs, and young professionals across Nigeria.

On behalf of myself, the Trust Score Initiative (TSI), and the entire sons and daughters of Ibadanland, I celebrate this milestone with you. We are proud of this achievement, which brings honour not only to you and AFIA Group, but also to Oyo State and Nigeria at large.

May Almighty Allah continue to grant you greater wisdom, strength, good health, and abundant grace to attain even higher achievements. May your legacy of excellence continue to uplift lives and contribute to the progress of our dear nation.

Once again, hearty congratulations, Sir. This is indeed a proud moment for you, **AFIA Group, Oyo State, and Nigeria.**

With highest regards and warmest celebration.



ADEOGUN TUNRAYO MUSLIMAH (ATM)
Convener, Trust Score Initiative (TSI)
Promoting Trust. Creating Value. Empowering Lives.



TRUST SCORE INITIATIVE (TSI)
Promoting Trust. Creating Value. Empowering Lives.

As Nigeria intensifies its strategic push to diversify its economy, the long-neglected agricultural frontier is undergoing an institutional awakening. In this report, *The Guardian* examines the newly launched 10-year Nigeria Coffee Revival Initiative, exploring how a synchronized alliance between pan-African producer networks and federal policymakers aims to restructure a fragmented value chain, reverse a multi-million-dollar import dependency, and return Nigerian coffee to the global stage as a premium, sustainable producer, **OLUDARE RICHARDS** writes.

FOR many decades, an immense agricultural treasure has lain quietly beneath the soil of Nigeria's most fertile regions, overshadowed by the country's long-standing and overwhelming reliance on crude oil revenues.

From the misty, high-altitude sweeps of the Mambilla Plateau to the expansive, sun-drenched agricultural clusters traversing 14 states, coffee farming has remained a classic example of a dormant economic giant.

Once a proud and lucrative pillar of local trade, with recorded commercial exports as far back as 1896 and a robust export footprint in the 1960s and 1970s, the domestic industry has suffered from generations of systemic abandonment, structural policy neglect, and a total lack of specialised extension services.

This protracted decline has created a deeply lopsided economic reality where the nation spends an estimated 3.48 million dollars yearly to import processed coffee products to satisfy a rising urban cafe culture, while its own domestic earnings from raw green bean exports have languished at less than 200,000 dollars per year.

It is this stark economic imbalance that has prompted an urgent response, signaling the official launch of a comprehensive 10-year national blueprint driven by the National Coffee Revival Initiative. At the forefront of this mobilisation is the Cocoa and Coffee Farmers Alliance Association of Africa, whose leadership views the recent expansion of their mandate as a profound structural correction born out of a critical necessity to protect rural livelihoods from market vulnerabilities.

The alliance leadership explicitly noted that the transition from COFAAA to COCEFAAA was not merely a rebranding exercise, but an institutional reckoning. Under the old structure, the singular focus on cocoa, while historically justified, had begun to expose a fundamental vulnerability where the entire economic architecture of member-farmers rested on a single commodity whose price was set in London and New York, not in Accra or Ibadan.

"When cocoa prices collapsed, our farmers collapsed with them," the alliance leadership told *The Guardian*, emphasising that "there was no buffer, no alternative, no fallback."

Through this continental integration, the alliance intends to rescue growers from a monocrop trap that has kept generations of smallholders in cyclical poverty. This structural fragmentation has severely diminished Africa's role in the global trade landscape over the last 50 years.

Continental records reveal that Africa's collective share of global coffee production has catastrophically collapsed from 27.2 per cent in the 1970s to roughly 12.5 per cent today.

When analysing this 14.7-percentage-point contraction, the alliance leadership insists on looking inward rather than pointing to external factors, stating that this is a question that deserves an honest answer rather than a diplomatic one.

While 30 per cent of the decline stems from international dynamics like Vietnam's rise and Brazil's mechanisation, the alliance argues that 70 per cent of this decline sits squarely on the shoulders of domestic policy abandonment. They point out that when commodity prices fell decades ago, governments dismantled commodity boards and abandoned research. The

How Coffee Farming Can



farmers did not stop farming; rather, the state stopped supporting farming, which is the vital distinction that must be understood. Vietnam built state infrastructure around coffee at precisely the moment Nigeria was dismantling it.

This domestic policy retreat has left smallholders entirely exposed to volatile global dynamics, a reality the alliance warns is already playing out in the sister cocoa sector, serving as a stark warning lyric for coffee's future.

COCEFAAA's Global President, Comrade Adeola Adegoke, pointed to the current cocoa crisis, where multi-million-dollar corporate investments are being funneled by multinational corporations into laboratory-grown, synthetic cell-cultured alternatives in Western and Israeli bioreactors rather than field-level climate adaptation, as an existential threat to African smallholders.

"We are not opposed to innovation. We are opposed to innovation that is used as a substitute for justice," Adegoke argued, challenging the corporate narrative.

He noted that the newly released Coffee Barometer 2026 highlights a similar structural neglect in the coffee sector, where an impending El Niño cycle threatens severe droughts and supply shocks across major coffee-producing regions while growers continue to receive poor compensation and zero price transparency.

He maintained that if a company can find the resources to invest in growing crops in a bioreactor, then the claim that there is no money for farmer welfare programs, disease-resistant seedling distribution, or living-income schemes simply does not hold up.

To counter this trajectory, COCEFAAA is utilising its new mandate to establish a disciplined, defensive framework. Nigeria's current global ranking (sitting at 147th globally with a modest production of 40,800 bags per year) is a status that alliance planners refuse to view as permanent. The alliance leadership declares that Nigeria's 147th ranking is not a verdict, but a baseline whose value lies not in what it confirms about the past but in what it demands of the future.

To alter this standing, the initiative outlines a disciplined 24-month roadmap built on strict milestones, beginning with a comprehensive mapping process. The alliance asserted that there cannot be a revival of what has not been mapped, adding that within the first six to 12 months, Nigeria must complete a rigorous baseline assessment and formalize a national agenda. They warn that "a revival strategy that produces no visible results in its first two years will lose political will and farmer confidence alike,"

concluding that "Nigeria has been ranked as 147 for too long precisely because the nation has been long on vision and short on structured, sequenced execution. The next 24 months must be different, not in ambition, but in discipline."

A primary focus within this mapping and cultivation framework is the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba State, which stands out as one of Nigeria's most under-exploited agricultural frontiers.

Situated at over 1,500 meters above sea level with a temperate climate and rich volcanic soil, the plateau offers perfect conditions for high-grade arabica cultivation. The alliance has outlined a clear roadmap to unlock the 150 undocumented indigenous varieties discovered on the plateau, noting that these crops are potentially Nigeria's entry point into the specialty coffee tier, where per-kilogram prices can exceed ten times the commodity market rate.

The immediate step called for a joint scientific research expedition involving the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) and international partners to catalog and characterise the varieties, with alliance heads warning that without rigorous varietal documentation, they cannot protect these varieties under intellectual property frameworks, risking their loss to bio-prospecting by external actors. The long-term goal is for Mambilla Arabica to become as geographically recognised in specialty coffee circles as Ethiopian Yirgacheffe or Kenyan AA.

However, any strategy must ultimately survive the economic realities of the smallholder farmer, for whom the initial three-to-four-year crop gestation period represents a severe financial barrier.

Alliance leaders openly admitted that a subsistence farmer cannot absorb three years of waiting without income support, warning that if they do not solve this problem concretely, every revival strategy built will collapse at the last mile with the farmers themselves.

To insulate the 10,000 scattered smallholders from global price volatility during this phase, the alliance is deploying a protective framework resting on four pillars: direct input support, intercropping promotion to provide income continuity, cooperative revolving savings structures, and advocacy for a National Coffee Stabilisation Fund modeled after successful instruments used in Colombia and Côte d'Ivoire.

Defending this financial buffer, alliance representatives argue that Nigeria has used similar mechanisms for petroleum and there is no principled reason why a strategic agricultural commodity cannot receive the same protection, concluding that their 10,000 smallholder members

did not create the conditions that produced price volatility and should not be left to absorb its consequences alone.

To confront these crises, Nigeria is set to host the 'African Cocoa and Coffee Fiesta' on October 7 and 8, 2026, at NECA House in Ikeja, Lagos, under the theme "Building a Sustainable Value Chain for Cocoa and Coffee across West, Central and East Africa."

Organised by COCEFAAA, the assembly aims to bring together farmer cooperatives, researchers, and development financiers to establish a unified African front demanding value-addition on continental soil.

This summit serves as a direct bridge to the federal administrative response in Abuja, where policymakers are working to integrate these grassroots warnings into a formalized national framework. At the strategic helm of this transition is the Deputy Director of Tree Crops at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS), and a key co-organiser of the summit, Mr. Ajayi Olutobaba.

Olutobaba acknowledged the historical policy omissions that directly suppressed the sector's growth. "Coffee has long sat in the shadow of cocoa and cashew in our national commodity planning, and that has cost us," he explained.

To resolve this institutional vacuum, federal ministries and technical research bodies are currently collaborating under directorate supervision to co-draft a comprehensive Nigeria Coffee Sector Development Policy, ensuring the government presents a single, consistent voice to development partners and investors.

He noted that this macro-structural fix must manifest directly at the aggregation and quality assurance stage. He emphasised the need to introduce accredited consolidation and grading centres where smallholder output from cooperatives can be graded and certified to be of required standards.

From an administrative standpoint, trade policy will support this by gradually tying import duty concessions for processors to verifiable local sourcing targets, effectively positioning Nigerian coffee for both domestic processing and international export simultaneously.

With the overarching strategic and trade frameworks established by the directorate, the granular operational execution falls directly to the ministry's commodity desks.

The Desk Officer for Coffee and Tea at the FMAFS, Mr. Remi Adamolekun, outlined the immediate, technical agronomic interventions required to correct the trade deficit, noting that reversing the lopsided trade numbers demands an aggressive pivot toward modernizing pri-

Generate Massive Wealth

mary production at the farm gate. “Embarking on the sensitisation and advocacy programme on modern agronomic practices for coffee production, rehabilitation of old farms, improved on planting materials such as high yield variety, disease resistant and climate smart farming will reverse the imbalance,” he said.

However, implementing these agronomic upgrades across fourteen distinct states introduces a complex matrix of operational realities. Mr. Adamolekun candidly identified the interconnected departmental friction points that must be managed to standardize support across diverse agroecological zones. He noted that: “The challenges ranges from funding, climate issues, unstable policy and policy gap, agronomic constrains and insecurity.”

To circumvent these historical policy gaps and encourage a sustainable shift toward local value addition, the Desk Officer’s strategy bypasses total reliance on finished imports by introducing practical toolkits and infrastructure support designed to empower local processors and farmer cooperatives directly.

“Government can Provide Processing Machine/equipment for farmers/processors. Packaging machine for value additions and branding. Provision of solar powered facilities to facilitate and support processing. Capacity building, policy and market facilitation,” he noted.

This processing push is further accelerated by international compliance mandates, specifically the impending enforcement of the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), which requires strict proof of origin for coffee entering international ports. To bridge the gap between local smallholders and international markets, the FMAFS is actively collaborating with technical partners to deploy digital geolocation tracking networks, including polygon mapping initiatives handled by agritech entities.

Adamolekun stressed that establishing these localised traceability networks requires deep institutional scaffolding and immediate land-use alignment.

He said that “Land reform to support land available for farming practices. Governments should Set up a centralised data management for farmers, strengthen institutional support to assist farmers on compliance. Policy implementation and alignment should be carried out effectively by the government.”

The regional deployment of these tracing, processing, and planting frameworks represents the vital quick wins necessary to sustain political and economic momentum across the sub-national clusters.

Within ‘The Southwest Cluster’, Ondo State has launched a 12-month baseline diagnostic alongside a rapid seedling campaign targeting over 2,000 farmers in historic highland corridors like Akure North, Idanre, Ifedore, and Akoko. Concurrently, Ekiti state is successfully tying its coffee-cocoa intercropping push into its Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone to drive high youth participation, while Osun Sstate is establishing structured aggregator frameworks to tap into international funding pools like the Africa Coffee Facility.

In the South-South, Cross River state is currently rolling out a seven-year multi-stakeholder development roadmap spanning to 2032, featuring a massive institutional partnership aimed at distributing 30 million seedlings across 18 local government areas, while Edo State introducesd site-specific soil corrections and advanced, disease-resilient hybrids to reinforce production capacity.

Nowhere is this operational mobilisation more evident than in the northern frontier, where Plateau State is rapidly positioning itself as the vanguard of high-altitude specialty coffee.

Following the International Coffee Festival hosted in Jos in August 2025, where international delegates from 27 countries formally recognized the state’s exceptional origin profile, the local administration is moving aggressively to convert global acclaim into structural infrastructure.

The Plateau State Director of Agricultural Services, Zakka Lang, explained to *The Guardian* that this international validation serves as a vital



corporate catalyst, offering an unassailable data point to attract foreign direct investment and establish local processing capacity.

He said: “The endorsement from twenty-seven nations in Jos provided the ministry with immense strategic leverage, offering definitive proof of our unique quality profile. International capital fundamentally aligns with de-risked origin narratives.

“To convert this momentum into processing plants and foreign direct investment, we are translating that delegates’ acclaim into empirical data, aggregating Q-Grader cupping scores and Specialty Coffee Association ratings to define Jos Highlands Coffee as a premium, high-altitude product characterised by bright acidity and delicate floral notes. By establishing an official Geographical Indication, we will structurally insulate our origin story, preventing imitation and guaranteeing premium market access for exclusive buyers.”

To minimise investor risk, the Plateau State Ministry of Agriculture said it is establishing a dedicated Plateau Coffee Processing Zone across the strategic corridors of Jos South and Barkin Ladi. This dedicated cluster aims to lower entry barriers by provisioning critical shared infrastructure, including three-phase power, water networks, and targeted tax waivers. Under a public-private partnership model, the state will provide land and absorb thirty percent of early-stage capital expenditures, enabling private partners to deploy advanced post-harvest technology. Director Lang noted that by leveraging letters of intent gathered during the festival network, the state can secure verified off-take agreements that de-risk the processing matrix from day one.

Simultaneously, the administration is addressing the critical supply bottleneck by leveraging its central Heipang Nursery to deploy a massive five-million-seedling roadmap across nine coffee-growing local government areas, including Mangu, Bokkos, Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Jos South, Jos North, Pankshin, Kanke, and the Wase highlands. To ensure maximum field survival, the state is completely abandoning old, supply-driven distribution quotas in favor of a demand-driven model that demands equity and accountability from smallholders.

“Seedling distribution and long-term sur-

vival represent the exact friction points where traditional state agricultural programs historically falter. Our new strategy relies on a rigorous hub-and-spoke logistics network. While the Heipang Nursery remains our centralized production core, we are erecting nine localized satellite hardening bays adjacent to each local government headquarters.

“Moving the seedlings at the early six-to-eight-leaf stage allows them to acclimatise to local ecological variances, significantly minimizing transport shock across the long corridors from Jos to Pankshin or Wase. Furthermore, distribution will be strictly synchronized with regional rainfall patterns, accompanied by real-time USSD and WhatsApp digital tracking systems to ensure every single root is mapped directly to a verified farmer,” he said.

To anchor accountability, the ministry is implementing a modest cost-recovery contribution of twenty to N50 per seedling, completely eliminating the negligence associated with free inputs. This framework is reinforced by a structured ten percent replacement policy for verified ecological losses, alongside ward-level Coffee Extension Agents whose performance incentives are tied explicitly to a six-month field survival target exceeding seventy percent. Cultivation will carefully align with altitude variances, prioritizing premium Arabica varieties across the high-elevation zones of Mangu, Bokkos, and Pankshin, while distributing resilient Robusta hybrids across lower, hotter districts like Kanam.

This state-level production surge is designed to link directly into traceable market channels. Working in tandem with the grassroots mobilization, the Ake` Collective is building highly transparent supply networks encompassing 1,000 regional smallholders. This initiative serves as Plateau’s primary defensive shield against rigid global trade barriers, most notably the EUDR compliance mandates.

“In the current global trade environment, absolute traceability is the explicit dividing line between active market access and complete international exclusion. Under the EUDR framework, compliance is a non-negotiable prerequisite for entering European ports.

“Importers face severe penalties unless they

can provide rigorous geolocation polygon mapping for every smallholder plot, combined with satellite proof that no cultivation occurred on deforested land after the 2020 threshold. The Ake` Collective’s deployment of field agents using digital mapping tools equips our smallholders with comprehensive due diligence portfolios.

“By proving our environmental compliance, we insulate Plateau coffee from being blended down into cheap global commodities, unlocking premium pricing structures that deliver immediate financial returns to the farmgate,” he explained.

Downstream, the state is translating this upstream volume into a robust employment engine by preparing the deployment of 822 specialized coffee shops and mobile carts, a strategy projected to generate 10,000 specialized youth jobs within three years. To resolve the traditional barriers of capital, capability, and supply security that frequently paralyze young entrepreneurs, the Ministry of Agriculture is deploying a structured lease-to-own model in collaboration with local fabricators in Jos, allowing youth to amortize equipment costs through small monthly deductions without collateral demands.

Applicants will be bundled to access institutional backing via the Bank of Industry and the Plateau State Youth Empowerment frameworks, backed by state-issued off-taker guarantees. Technical continuity will be anchored by a specialized Barista and Business Academy at the Heipang processing zone, providing intensive four-week certifications covering brewing science, hygiene, bookkeeping, and inventory management. Uniform menus, recipe compliance cards, and mobile quality auditors will rigorously protect the integrity of the “Jos Highlands” brand across all municipal hubs.

To ensure these downstream entrepreneurs never experience supply disruptions, the ministry is deploying ten mobile training centers sponsored by the Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC). These mobile units are tasked with standardizing post-harvest processing skills across regional cooperatives, directly addressing the critical parameters that dictate global coffee valuation.

“Post-harvest processing governs up to sixty percent of final coffee quality; an improper execution will flatten the finest genetic attributes. Through the RMRDC mobile training units, we are making our top-tier festival cup scores the structural standard across the entire state. Our curriculum prioritizes selective picking and water-drum floatation to instantly isolate premium specialty-grade sinkers from commercial-grade floaters, dropping defect rates below three percent.

“We are training farmers on precise twelve-to-twenty-four-hour controlled fermentation checks and three-tank washing mechanisms to articulate our origin’s native citrus and floral notes. Most crucially, we are shifting drying operations away from cracked concrete floors to elevated African raised beds, enforcing a strict ten-point-five to twelve percent moisture threshold verified by digital meters before bagging. This comprehensive post-harvest certification will serve as the ultimate credential for international market access,” he told *The Guardian*.

Ultimately, scaling up the coffee value chain successfully requires attracting a new generation of farmers into coffee agroforestry. To facilitate the steady flow of resources and extension services to young people, the federal desk is actively focusing on restructuring existing agricultural frameworks to build sustainable, well-equipped rural communities.

Adamolekun outlines the ministry’s final departmental roadmap to transform primary production into an attractive, modern enterprise, serving as the definitive administrative conclusion to the national revival blueprint.

He said: “Establishment of modern Agric Village that will contain basic amenities, make funds available for the youths as take off grant, ensure stable policy and Security guarantee. Infrastructural development..All these will make farming more attractive for the Youths and make Agriculture a green career. Engage youths in policy making and dialogue.”

This nationwide convergence demonstrates that coffee offers a realistic, exportable, job-rich alternative to oil revenue, proving that the National Coffee Revival Initiative is a vital avenue that has already kick-started a vibrant new drive within the sector.



By Dotun Olayemi

HE had worn Nigeria's uniform once already. Ayebusiwa Olabode Victor, a 34-year-old former Navy man from Ilutitun in Ondo State, had done his service, come home, and gone looking for the next chapter of an ordinary life.

What found him instead was a recruiter's promise: a security job in Russia, decent pay, papers processed, nothing to worry about. He signed the contract in late February 2026, a week after Nigeria's own Foreign Ministry had quietly warned citizens against exactly this kind of enlistment.

By May, Ukraine's Defence Intelligence had confirmed what his family would learn not from the Federal Government in Nigeria, nor from any Nigerian embassy, but from a foreign bulletin. He was dead, killed in fighting near Hrafske in the Kharkiv region. The bulletin that carried his name belongs to a wider effort Kyiv set up specifically to break the pipeline that killed him.

On 25 May 2026, Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched stoprussianrecruiters.org, a clearing house built to document and publicise the predatory recruitment practices of the Russian Ministry of Defence, to expose the recruiters and the networks that feed them, and, by that exposure, to save the lives of the foreign nationals still being funnelled toward the front.

The site draws on independent investigations, casualty data, victim testimony and media coverage compiled by Ukraine's Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War working alongside the Foreign Ministry.

On 29 June 2026, it published the names of 485 African nationals recruited into the Russian armed forces and confirmed dead. Victor's name sits inside that list. He is one name in a ledger that keeps growing. Ukrainian authorities and the Coordination Headquarters say 215 Nigerians have signed contracts with Russia's Ministry of Defence, and at least 25 are now dead or missing. That places Nigeria fifth among African nations by confirmed deaths, behind Kenya, Ghana, Uganda and South Africa, in a continental toll that has passed 485.

Some of the dead were declared, then found alive in Ukrainian prisoner camps, a confusion that says as much about the chaos these men were fed into as it does about anyone's record-keeping. The pattern is depressingly consistent. Young Nigerians, some armed only with student or work visas, arrive in Russia expecting factory floors or driving jobs, and within weeks find themselves handed rifles after training that can run as short as three weeks.

Survivors describe being used as expendable infantry, sent ahead of regular units to draw fire or trip mines, with a frontline life expectancy measured in hours, not months. "You escape, or you die," one African survivor put it. That is not a metaphor. That is the operating instruction. Three more Nigerian names belong in this account, not among the dead but among the missing in the ordinary sense: men Ukraine is holding as prisoners of war, whose details stoprussianrecruiters.org has also made public.

Matthew Sunday Bankole, 37, has been detained since November 2025. Adisa Ridwan Balogun, 33, has been held since December 2025. And Kehinde Oluwagbemileke Adisa, 30, has been in Ukrainian custody since June 2025; he had travelled to Russia to study population and development, and only later signed a military contract that put him on the front rather than in a classroom. Their cases, taken together with Victor's death, sketch the same trajectory from

Veteran Soldier Who Died 90 Days After Signing Russian Contract

three different starting points: a veteran looking for security work, a student who was redirected mid-course, and men whose paths into a Russian trench are still not fully public.

In July 2026, former Nigerian Senator Shehu Sani added his own voice to the warnings already circulating, cautioning Nigerians against enlisting in the Russian armed forces and urging citizens not to let themselves be turned into mercenaries. What should trouble Nigerians most is not simply that this is happening, but how little the state has done about it. Zimbabwe has arrested and charged nine people, including Russian nationals, in six separate cases since 30 March. Two of those charged are Russian citizens, identified as Sofia Leonova and Leonid Koftov. The Zimbabwean nationals implicated are alleged to have worked hand in hand with Russian handlers: Oscar Sifelani Mtshiya, 48, is believed to have trafficked five Zimbabweans to Russia alongside four unidentified Russian collaborators; Edward Kachingwe allegedly worked with a Russian national known only as "Roman" to move Zimbabweans through South Africa; Resnath Chingombe is accused of colluding with a Russian handler going by "Curious"; and four more Zimbabweans arrested in March 2026 are alleged to have worked with a Russian contact identified only as "Ivan".

Kenya, for its part, has repatriated 28 of its citizens since December, even as it wrestles publicly with allegations that a sitting cabinet minister, Labour Minister and former Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Mutua, had close personal and political ties to the very work-place scheme, one that sent more than 400,000 Kenyan nationals abroad, that is now accused of funneling citizens toward Russian recruiters.

One of the men photographed with Mutua in June 2025, celebrating what he called a "life-changing opportunity" in a food-packing factory abroad, was Erastus Mundia Muyela, a 38-year-old Kenyan believed to have died fighting for Russia in Ukraine. Sources allege President Ruto has known of Mutua's involvement for some time. Mutua denies it, and says he has deregistered 23 recruitment agencies over suspicious practices.

Nigeria has issued one vaguely worded advisory that never names Russia, and nothing else. No arrests of recruiters. No repatriation mission for Bankole, Adisa or Balogun. No compensation for grieving families like Victor's. No public inquiry. There is a genuine legal knot here, since Nigerian law treats enlistment in a foreign force as a crime carrying up to life imprisonment, and any returning survivor could face prosecution rather than sympathy.

It is worth sitting with why that knot exists at all. The statute was written for a different kind of man: the trained mercenary who sells

his gun to the highest bidder with his eyes open. It was not written for a jobless graduate handed a Russian work visa and told to sign paperwork in a language he could not read, only to be marched to a trench three weeks later. It was not written for a student like Adisa, who went for population and development and came back, if he comes back, a prisoner of war. Treating both men as the same offender is not the rule of law being applied evenly. It is the rule of law being applied lazily.

International practice offers a way through, if Nigeria cared to look. Ukraine itself has chosen to hold captured Nigerians like Bankole, Adisa and Balogun as prisoners of war rather than execute them as unlawful combatants, a courtesy the Geneva Conventions do not strictly compel it to extend to mercenaries.

Kenya and Zimbabwe, for all their own shortcomings, have started to draw the same line Nigeria refuses to draw. That a man deceived by a trafficking network is a victim first, and a case study in state failure second, before he is ever a criminal. Nigeria's own anti-trafficking statutes already recognise this distinction for women moved into forced labour and prostitution abroad. There is no principled reason the same logic should stop at the barracks door simply because the deception ended in a rifle rather than a brothel. None of this requires Nigeria to grant blanket amnesty to every man who signed a Russian contract, nor should it.

Some recruits may well have known precisely what they were walking into. But that distinction, between the deceived and the willing, between the trafficked and the mercenary, can only be drawn through investigation, hearings, and a functioning repatriation pipeline. It cannot be drawn from Nigeria's current position of studied silence, which resolves nothing and simply lets every family, Victor's, Bankole's, Adisa's, Balogun's, bury their dead or wait for their POWs without ever finding out which category their son belonged to.



Foundation Trains Healthcare Workers On Early Detection Of Scoliosis

By Suliyat Tella

THE Scoliosis Focus Foundation has held a scoliosis screening and training programme at Gbagada General Hospital, Lagos, as part of efforts to improve early detection and management of the spinal condition.

The programme, which attracted more than 50 participants, brought together healthcare workers, people living with scoliosis, parents and caregivers, as well as medical and mental health professionals.

The Founder of the Foundation, Dr Ayomide Akintan-Adejuwon, said the training was the second edition held at the hospital and was designed to equip healthcare workers in paediatrics, physiotherapy and nursing with skills to detect scoliosis early.

She said participants were also trained on how to use a scoliotometer, an instrument used to assess spinal curvature.

Akintan-Adejuwon said the programme included contributions from physiotherapists, spine specialists and mental health professionals, stressing the need for a multidisciplinary approach to scoliosis care.

Chief Spine Surgeon, Dr Shobade Mutaleem Ayodele, also educated participants on scoliosis, addressing questions about the condition, its diagnosis, treatment and management.

He also shared his experience of managing patients with scoliosis and highlighted the importance of seeking appropriate medical care rather than relying on misconceptions surrounding the condition.

Consultant Family Physician at Gbagada General Hospital, Dr Habideen Moshood Gbolahan, who chaired the event, said the Scoliosis Focus Foundation was helping to address the lack of awareness surrounding the condition.

He said many people were still unaware of scoliosis, while others were surrounded by myths that could prevent them from seeking appropriate care.

According to Gbolahan, the Foundation's programmes were important because they sought to institutionalise not only the diagnosis of scoliosis but also its proper management.

A Consultant Physiotherapist from Babcock University, Adedawale Adedayo, said people living with scoliosis in Nige-

ria still lacked adequate representation and support.

Adedayo, who has managed scoliosis for nearly 10 years, said some parents only became aware of scoliosis when their children were diagnosed, while others could deny the condition and delay treatment.

He said severe scoliosis could affect a person's quality of life and self-image, adding that appropriate support was not readily available to many patients.

"Presently, we don't have something substantial to say that supports scoliosis right now in the country," he said.

A clinical psychologist at Gbagada General Hospital, Damilare Ashani, said people living with scoliosis could experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and concerns about their body image.

He said these challenges could be particularly difficult for adolescents, who may worry about bullying, social acceptance and their physical appearance.

Mental health therapist, Titi Akintan, said healthcare workers had a role to play in counselling and encouraging young patients, noting that emotional support should form part of scoliosis management.

The July report of Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) showed that Nigeria is currently witnessing an oil production surge. Oil losses through pipelines remain at historical lows even as Nigeria's combined crude oil and condensate production also increased to approximately 1.735 mb/d in June due to increased security of oil assets orchestrated by the Tantita Security Services Nigeria Ltd (TSSNL) and the security agencies. Sustaining the existing framework will bolster Nigeria's economic stability and predictability, ONYEDIKA AGBEDO reports.

NIGERIA met its OPEC production quota for the third straight month in July, producing a combined 1.67 million barrels per day (mbpd) of crude oil and condensate. Data obtained from the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) July 2026 report showed that crude oil output averaged 1.505mbpd in July, while condensate added 0.17mbpd, taking the combined daily average to 1.67mbpd. The regulator said peak daily production reached 1.78mbpd and the lowest daily output was 1.57mbpd during the month.

"Despite some operational problems at a few fields, Nigeria met the OPEC quota of 1.5mbpd in July," the NUPRC said. The commission noted, however, that overall production fell four per cent compared with June.

The NUPRC attributed the month-on-month decline mainly to operational challenges at the Erha and Akpo fields. "Disruptions at Erha and Akpo constrained volumes and were a significant factor in the production shortfall for the month," the commission said.

The regulator added that most other producing assets remained stable. "Operators implemented measures to maintain production efficiency and to minimise the impact of the disruptions," it noted.

Also, the NUPRC Q2 2026 statistics on the enforcement of the Domestic Crude Supply Obligation (DCSO) in accordance with the provisions of Section 109 of the Petroleum Industry Act showed that a total of 53.7 million barrels of crude oil and condensate were supplied to local refiners between April and June, showing an overall performance of 97.4 per cent.

The statistics showed that DCSO is being actively administered and enforced by the NUPRC.

The Guardian learnt that on a monthly basis,

Why Nigeria Should Sustain Current Surge In Oil Production

the commission meets with stakeholders including crude oil producers and local licensed refineries after which the producers are allocated a specific volume of their crude oil and condensate which should be offered to local licensed refineries.

However, in line with the PIA, the framework operates on a "willing buyer, willing seller" basis, which shapes eventual outcomes.

In the month of April, following consultations with stakeholders, 18, 127, 638 barrels were allocated to producers.

However, the producers exceeded expectations, offering 19, 312, 476 barrels to refiners. Eventually, 20, 879, 381 barrels were supplied to local refiners, meaning the producers met 114.9 per cent of their allocation.

In May, the commission, in enforcing its DCSO, allocated 18,778,392 barrels of crude oil to the producers but the producers, exceeding their expectation once again, offered 23,187,893 barrels to the local refiners. However, the producers' actual supply to the refiners by the end of the month stood at 14, 228, 865 barrels representing 75.8 per cent compliance.

In the month of June, the commission allocated 18,172,638 barrels to the producers. The producers offered 26,835,119 barrels to refiners which in turn took 18,606,026 barrels representing a 102.4 per cent performance.

The commission observed that the improvement in DCSO coincided with an increase in local oil production and the signing of the long-term crude supply agreement supported by bankable Sales and Purchase agreement between the Producers and Domestic refiners.

At the level of refinery participation, the statistics show that the Dangote Refinery required 63 million barrels in Q2 but the producers offered higher volumes of 68.1 million barrels.

The 68.1 million barrels offered to the Dangote Refinery by producers represents 98 per cent of all offered volumes.

Eventually, 52.6 million barrels were accepted by the Dangote refinery. This implies that the refinery only accepted 78 per cent of what it was offered.

The commission reaffirmed its commitment to achieving the government's objective of energy sufficiency. Leveraging the framework of the PIA, 2021, the commission said it aims to sustain recent gains in crude oil production while continuously enforcing the DCSO – an indication that the operating environment was inching towards sustainability.

For years, Nigeria grappled with losses run-

ning into billions of dollars due to sabotage on oil installations and pipelines, community interference, as well as production shutdown. These losses had negatively impacted national revenue and kept oil production at its lowest ebb.

However, the sector is turning the corner with the NUPRC report showing that pipeline losses have continued to drop, helping oil production to surge to new levels.

These achievements have been linked to the works done by the Tantita Security Services Nigeria Ltd (TSSNL) in the Niger Delta region.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu had appointed TSSNL led by High Chief Government Oweizide Ekpemupolo, alias Tompolo, to protect Nigeria's oil assets in the Niger Delta region. The appointment mandated the TSSNL to support the national economy in getting the full benefits of oil resources through its security operations. The firm works in collaboration with other security outfits to carry out the assignment.

Tantita's operations has ensured the security of oil pipelines, enabling uninterrupted flow of petroleum resources and ensuring Nigeria's migration from a position of constant loss management to stability, planning, growth and development.

No doubt, the TSSNL operations have transformed the oil and gas landscape and allowed Nigeria to expand oil production quota and significantly cut rampant oil theft. Its track record in mitigating risks associated with oil pipelines has positioned it as a reliable partner in preserving Nigeria's economic backbone.

The impact of the firm's operations was captured in a recent survey, with majority of the respondents attributing the de-escalation of security incidents in the Niger-Delta region to the pipeline surveillance operations executed by TSSNL. This has prompted stakeholders to advocate for continued collaboration with the firm to ensure the nation's sustainable development.

President General, Niger Delta Progressive Alliance, Nse Victor Udoh, said pipeline protection enabled national institutions to progress from reactive crisis management to strategic foresight, from temporary containment to durable systems-building, and from uncertainty-driven decisions to calculated national ambition.

"It is important to clarify the role of pipeline surveillance within the wider energy landscape. Energy security encompasses the full value chain, from exploration and production to refining, distribution, pricing policy, and subsidy frameworks. Pipeline surveillance

When crude flows are secure, refineries can plan feedstock intake with assurance. Export commitments can be met without fear of sudden shortfalls. Gas-to-power projects can operate without recurrent shutdown risks. Investors can assess Nigeria's petroleum sector with clearer risk profiles. Surveillance therefore does more than stop theft. It reintroduces reliability into national energy planning.

does not manage these domains.

"Its mandate is precise: safeguarding critical infrastructure that transports petroleum resources. Yet this single function has proven foundational. Without secure transportation channels, production targets falter, refining plans collapse, exports decline, and fiscal projections become unreliable," Udoh said.

According to him, asset protection, in this context, is not a supporting activity. "It is a precondition for economic order. In effect, the pipeline is the hinge on which the entire petroleum value chain turns. When that hinge is weak, every other link in the chain carries strain. When it is secure, the entire system gains coherence," he explained.

He stressed that the immediate impact of secure pipelines has been operational. "Sustained monitoring and rapid response systems have sharply reduced pipeline breaches and illegal tapping. Receipt rates have climbed towards full recovery, with national output rising to levels not seen in recent memory.

This redirection has restored Nigeria's credibility in international oil markets, allowing Nigeria to reclaim market share lost to Angola and Libya.

"Economic stability follows predictability. When crude flows are secure, refineries can plan feedstock intake with assurance. Export commitments can be met without fear of sudden shortfalls. Gas-to-power projects can operate without recurrent shutdown risks. Investors can assess Nigeria's petroleum sector with clearer risk profiles. Surveillance therefore does more than stop theft. It reintroduces reliability into national energy planning. And reliability is the bedrock upon which sustainable economic growth is built. With predictable flows, national budgeting becomes more credible, infrastructure planning becomes more precise, and long-term contracts become easier to negotiate. Predictability is the silent currency of modern economies, and pipeline surveillance has begun restoring it," he stated.

Udoh further noted that benefits extend into public finance. "Higher accounted-for production translates directly into increased export revenues, improved foreign exchange inflows and strengthened fiscal capacity. National oil company performance in recent years illustrates this shift towards profitability and efficiency, driven in part by reduced losses and enhanced operational continuity.

"As revenues stabilise, government budgeting gains credibility.



Oil rig (inset) Tompolo

Verve Card Offers 15% Cashback, Brand-new Car In Promo

By Sulaimon Salau

AS Nigerian consumers continue to seek smarter ways to maximize value from their everyday spending, Verve has launched the 2026 edition of its National Consumer Promotion campaign, called the Verve Goodlife 7.0 Promo, offering cardholders enhanced cashback, exclusive lifestyle rewards, and the opportunity to win a brand-new car.

Running from August through November 2026, she said the promo reinforces Verve's commitment to reward customer loyalty by turning everyday card usage into meaningful rewards and experiences.

During the promo period, cardholders can earn 15 per cent cashback at participating locations, regardless of the day of the week. Each participant is eligible for one cashback per day, irrespective of the number of transactions made, while also standing a chance to win a host of exciting rewards.

Speaking on the campaign, Executive Vice President, Group Marketing and Corporate Communications, Interswitch, Cherry Eromosele, said: "At Verve, we understand that today's consumers expect more from every purchase they make. The Verve Goodlife 7.0 National Consumer Promotion is our way of rewarding the trust our cardholders place in us every day by transforming routine transactions into opportunities for instant savings, memorable experiences and life-changing rewards.

"From enhanced cashback to curated lifestyle experiences and the chance to win a brand-new car, we are creating meaningful moments that go beyond payments. This campaign reflects our commitment to continually delivering value while making everyday spending more rewarding for every Verve cardholder."

This year's campaign introduces an elevated rewards experience, combining practical savings with aspirational lifestyle benefits.

Train 7 Project Critical To Nigeria's Economic Future, Jobs Creation –Tinubu

By Sulaimon Salau

WITH Nigeria LNG Limited's Train 7 Project now beyond the 90 per cent completion mark, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has said its successful delivery will be critical to Nigeria's ambition to build a stronger gas economy, expand exports, create jobs, deepen local capacity and reinforce investor confidence.

President Tinubu spoke at the State House, Abuja, on Thursday, when he received the NLNG delegation, led by Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NLNG, Adeleye Falade, who briefed him on the progress of Train 7 and the company's broader role in Nigeria's gas development agenda.

The briefing covered the status of Train 7 and prospects for future expansion, along-

side key issues affecting NLNG's operations and wider contribution to Nigeria. These included liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) pricing and accessibility, LPG trucking through the Bonny-Bodo Road corridor, the company's contribution to public revenue, its investment in the Bonny-Bodo Road and national social-impact projects, and the need for a more enabling business environment.

Tinubu congratulated Falade on his appointment, saying he was taking charge of NLNG at a defining moment for the company and for Nigeria's gas ambitions. With Train 7 nearing completion, the President said NLNG must help convert the country's gas reserves into jobs, exports, industrial growth and long-term economic value.

The president described the

project as a benchmark for delivery, partnership, Nigerian Content and investor confidence.

He assured the NLNG management that the Federal Government would continue to improve the business climate, provide greater regulatory clarity and remove bottlenecks to major oil and gas investments.

"Nigeria is open for business, but it must be business that creates value at home - building capacity, supporting communities, protecting the environment and contributing to national prosperity. NLNG must continue to lead by example," he added.

In his remarks, Falade thanked the president for his support, assuring him that NLNG remained fully committed to the safe and successful delivery of Train 7 and to

the company's wider responsibility to Nigeria.

He said the project would expand Nigeria's LNG production capacity, support export growth, create opportunities for Nigerian workers and businesses, deepen local participation and generate greater long-term value from the country's gas resources.

On LPG, Falade restated NLNG's commitment to supporting the domestic market and improving access to cleaner cooking fuel for Nigerian households and businesses.

Falade called for coordinated action by the Federal Government, regulators and industry operators to expand domestic supply, improve storage and distribution infrastructure, eliminate avoidable costs and create a more transparent.



Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola (middle); Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, Mrs. Fatima Sugra Mahmood (left) and Director, Federal Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Mr. Omoragbon Wellington (right) and other members at the inauguration of the Technical Committee on Accelerating Fish Production in Nigeria, in Abuja on Thursday.

NUPRC To Boost Nigeria's Investment Appeal In Oil, Gas Sector

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) has said the speedy completion of its proposed headquarters, The Barrel, will boost the commission's efficiency and Nigeria's investment appeal.

The Barrel, a 10-storey building with the capacity to accommodate 900 to 1,000 people is being constructed in the likeness of a convex, curved cylinder that bulges outward at its center.

• Seeks Completion Of Headquarters

The facility, located at the Central Business District, Abuja, was initiated in 2020 but has yet to be completed, forcing the NUPRC to resort to smaller offices in different locations in the FCT.

Speaking during an inspection of the proposed head office, the Chairman, NUPRC Board, Senator Magnus Abe, said the current arrangement whereby major oil and gas companies seeking to discuss multi-billion-dollar invest-

ments had to move between different NUPRC locations across Abuja to transact business with the regulator, projected an image that is detrimental to the country's investment drive.

Abe said: "It is a thing of great embarrassment to this country when major oil and gas companies come to Nigeria to discuss investments worth billions of dollars, only to meet the regulator in a block of flats and from there pro-

ceed to other parts of the city to see different departments to conduct transactions with the NUPRC.

"This image is not just bad for the country, but bad for business."

Abe added that the proposed permanent site would provide a central location for the Commission's operations and engagements with industry players, while also serving as a symbol of national pride and confidence in Nigeria's oil and gas sector.

FG Moves To Accelerate Fish Production In Nigeria

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Federal Government has moved to translate recommendations on boosting fish production in Nigeria into concrete action, with the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Dr. Adegboyega Oyetola, inaugurating a technical committee to drive implementation.

Oyetola, who inaugurated the "Technical Committee on Accelerating Fish Production in Nigeria" in Abuja, on Thursday, said the initiative was aimed at mov-

ing beyond policy recommendations to coordinated action capable of delivering measurable improvements in the country's fisheries and aquaculture sector.

He said fish remained a critical source of animal protein for millions of Nigerians, while the fisheries and aquaculture value chain provided livelihoods through production, processing, marketing, transportation and other related services.

"Fish is an important source of animal protein for mil-

lions of Nigerians. The fisheries and aquaculture sector sustains livelihoods across production, processing, marketing, transportation and related services.

However, domestic production remains substantially below national demand, with consequences for food security, household incomes and foreign-exchange resources," he said.

Oyetola identified high production costs, particularly the cost of feed, inadequate

access to quality fish seed and broodstock, weak fish-health and biosecurity systems, post-harvest losses and insufficient cold-chain and storage infrastructure among the major challenges confronting the sector.

He also cited limited access to affordable finance, gaps in research and innovation, weak data systems, as well as inadequate standards, traceability and market development as constraints that must be urgently addressed.

According to the minister,

"The transfer of fisheries and aquaculture functions to the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy has provided a stronger institutional platform for addressing these challenges as part of Nigeria's broader blue-economy development."

He reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to increasing sustainable domestic fish production, strengthening the fisheries value chain and progressively reducing Nigeria's dependence on fish imports.

NIMASA Boss Gives Update On Maritime Development, Cabotage Law

By Sulaimon Salau

THE Director-General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr. Dayo Mobereola, was at the State House, Abuja, where he discussed issues bordering on the development of Nigeria's maritime sector with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

During the meeting, Mobereola briefed the President on developments within NIMASA over the past two years, highlighting the progress recorded by the Agency as well as some of the challenges confronting the industry.

Following the briefing, Tinubu reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the continuous development of Nigeria's maritime industry. He noted that the creation of the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy was a deliberate step towards ensuring that the maritime sector contributes more significantly to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

While commending NIMASA for the progress recorded so far, the president charged Mobereola and his team at NIMASA not to rest on their oars.

MTN Deepens CSR Commitment With N1m Each For School Athletes

By Gbenga Salau

MTN Nigeria has recognised the achievements of CHAMPS athletes Ezekiel Asuquo, Lucy Nwankwo and Toheebat Jimoh following their strong performances at national, continental and international levels since the conclusion of Season 4 of the athletics competition.

The athletes were received by MTN Nigeria's Chief Marketing Officer, Onyinye Ikenna Emeka, at the MTN Head office, Ikoyi, Lagos. The meeting reflects MTN Nigeria's continued support of grassroots athletics and their pursuit of excellence on the national and international stage.

The engagement gave the athletes an opportunity to reflect on their progress over the past four months. Asuquo and Jimoh represented Nigeria at the World Athletics Championships in Gaborone, Botswana and subsequently contributed to the country's gold-medal success at the African Senior Championships in Accra, Ghana. Nwankwo recorded two individual gold medals at the CAA U18/U20 Region II Championships in Dakar before competing at the World U20 Championships.

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How Agriculture Drives Development In Sokoto

“Agricultural development in Sokoto State must not be a seasonal occupation dictated by rainfall. Through ‘farming without seasons’—supported by irrigation, availability of inputs, and market access—we are transforming the challenges into opportunities to build an unbeatable rural economy.”

—Governor Ahmed Aliyu

By Karen Ibrahim

UNDER Governor Ahmed Aliyu, the Sokoto State Government sees agriculture differently—beyond a traditional way of life and subsistence farming, but as an engine for food security, job creation and economic transformation.

As a deliberate policy, the administration has demonstrated its determination to move the sector towards modern, technology-driven and commercially viable agriculture capable of feeding families, creating wealth, generating employment, providing raw materials for industries and improving farmers’ incomes.

This strategic shift is firmly anchored in the Governor’s 9-Point Smart Agenda, where agriculture occupies a central place in his development vision, with the clear objective of building a productive, resilient and sustainable agricultural economy that can drive the state’s economic prosperity.

The importance of agriculture to the economy of Sokoto State cannot be overstated. More than 70 per cent of the state’s population is actively engaged in farming, while official state sources estimate that more than 80 per cent of its inhabitants practice one form of agriculture or another, whether crop cultivation, livestock production.

Agriculture is therefore far more than an economic sector in Sokoto; thus, any serious effort to achieve sustainable economic transformation in the state must, consequently, place agriculture at the centre of its development strategy. Agriculture is, without doubt the economic lifeblood of the state.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, agriculture remains one of Nigeria’s largest employers, accounting for roughly a third of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In Sokoto, farming forms the bedrock of rural livelihoods, with staples and cash crops—millet, sorghum, rice, wheat, onions, tomatoes, cowpeas, and garlic—cultivated across its extensive agricultural belt. The state’s comparative advantage is reinforced by its location within the Sokoto-Rima Basin, one of the region’s most vital natural irrigation corridors.

The huge investment in agriculture by the Governor Aliyu’s administration is therefore understandable. Long before crude oil emerged as Nigeria’s dominant foreign

exchange earner, agriculture was the backbone of the nation’s economy and a major source of foreign exchange. It is this heritage that the governor is determined to revive.

For him, revitalising the sector is not just desirable; but an economic imperative. Thankfully he has taken into consideration the fact that the challenges confronting agriculture today are, however, significantly different. Climate change, insecurity, inflation and the rising cost of farm inputs continue to threaten agricultural productivity. And this is where leadership comes in; finding solutions to problems. This explains the investment in modern agriculture—mechanisation, irrigation and value-chain development—a deliberate strategy to unlock the sector’s full economic potential, improve farmers’ productivity and incomes, and guarantee food security.

Recognising the strategic importance of food security, Governor Aliyu’s administration has prioritised direct input support. The state government recently launched a massive N7.7b wet-season input initiative, supplying over 157,000 bags of free and heavily subsidized NPK and Urea fertilisers, alongside thousands of bags of high-yield, drought-resistant seeds, herbicides, and insecticides across all 23 Local Council Areas. Rather than relying solely on open market forces—which have priced many smallholders out of production—the administration stepped in directly.

Crucially, to prevent these vital inputs from falling into the hands of black-market speculators, the government overhauled its distribution monitoring, instituting strict anti-diversion protocols and direct community-allocation channels.

Across many parts of North West, rural insecurity and banditry have disrupted farm operations. But Sokoto State has tackled this head-on by integrating security response networks into rural agricultural hubs, allowing communities in vulnerable local council areas to return to land that had laid fallow for seasons. For Governor Aliyu, high-yield seeds and fertiliser can only be effective if a farmer is safely able to access his field.

Equally transformative has been the shift toward off-season, climate-smart irrigation systems. To counter increasing rainfall variability and desertification, Governor Aliyu’s “farming without seasons” initiative has

modernised critical water infrastructure. Alongside the completed N270 million, 450-hectare Kware Irrigation Scheme, major efforts are underway to rehabilitate the Lugu Dam and Wurno irrigation systems.

To build a climate-resilient farming system, the state has partnered with the Sustainable Power and Irrigation for Nigeria (SPIN) project to integrate solar-powered irrigation pumps, reducing farmers’ reliance on expensive diesel generators. Furthermore, the establishment of a 7,000-hectare Moringa agroforestry project is helping to combat desert encroachment, while generating significant economic benefits for rural families.

Beyond its environmental value, moringa offers multiple income streams through the production and sale of its leaves, seeds and oil, and opportunities for processing, value addition and local employment. Its resilience to harsh climatic conditions also makes it a valuable crop for strengthening household incomes and diversifying livelihoods in vulnerable rural communities.

Bumper harvests, while a sign of increased agricultural productivity, has also created a serious challenge: post-harvest losses. For perishable crops such as tomatoes and onions—an area in which Sokoto is a major national producer—significant quantities are usually lost before reaching consumers because of inadequate storage, processing and market access.

Recognising this challenge, the government has taken steps to ensure that increased production translates into higher incomes for farmers. It has distributed hundreds of rural grinding machines and processing mills directly to agrarian communities, enabling farmers to process and add value to their produce closer to the point of production. In the onion sector in particular, the commercial development of 5,000 acres dedicated to onion, millet and garlic cultivation is being complemented by efforts to establish structured processing and export pathways, opening access to regional markets in Ghana and the Benin Republic. The objective is clear: to move farmers from simply producing more to preserving, processing and profitably marketing what they produce.

The government is also tackling post-harvest losses through investment in storage infrastructure, particularly for onions. The recently launched onion storage facility will enable farmers to preserve their harvest for longer periods, reduce spoilage and limit distress sales during periods of glut. By extending the shelf life of onions and allowing farmers to take advantage of better market conditions, the facility is expected to improve incomes, while strengthening Sokoto’s position in the national onion value chain.

Connecting these farms to markets requires addressing the state’s rural road deficit. Through the Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP).



Permanent Representative of the African Union Sixth Region Global (AUGRG) for Nigeria and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Ambassador Afolabi Oke (left); CFO A4S, Mrs Mariam Okondugba; and A4S Advisory Board member, Dr. Pradit Withisuphakorn, during the collaboration between A4S and Natari in Lagos.

A4S, Natari Deepen Investment, Seek Growth Of Agricultural Technology

By Sunday Aikulola

AS part of efforts aimed at achieving improved farmers’ productivity, food security, and women’s economic empowerment, A4S and Natari, two independent companies with separate ownership, management and investment platforms, have reaffirmed their strategic commitment to the nation’s agricultural sector.

The investment spans across agricultural technology, food production, agro-processing, farmer productivity, women’s economic empowerment, investment and sustainable wealth creation.

Addressing journalists in Lagos, Permanent Representative of the African Union Sixth Region Global (AU6RG) for Nigeria and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Afolabi Oke, disclosed that the collaboration is strengthened by a strategic relationship with

Providus Bank.

Oke, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of The Rock Foundation and Global InfoSwift Consulting, stated that over the last two years, a lot of farmers in the country have been using the product.

To him: “You just spray the solution on your plants and the yield is tripled. It also bridges food security gaps and Nigeria can also export agricultural produce in large quantities. One sachet of the solution can do over six hectares of land. It is also purely organic. It is also good for human consumption.”

He added that they have also had a conversation with the Presidential Committee on Economic and Financial Inclusion (PreCEFI) under the Office of the Vice President concerning the product.

On his part, A4S Advisory Board member, Prof. Pradit Withisuphakorn, disclosed that the solution supports crop quality, root devel-

opment, nutrient utilisation, plant development, flowering and fruiting.

The don added that there is a business model around the solution. That is, from technology to farm, finance, processing, markets and wealth creation.

To this end, he said the partnership therefore intends to increasingly examine: Production cost, yield, crop quality, market price, revenue and net farm income.

Concerning gender inclusion, he said women are active across the nation’s agricultural value chain as: farmers, processors, aggregators, traders, food entrepreneurs, distributors and small-business owners.

On her part, Project Director, GIC and Rock Foundation, Adenowo Oluwaseyi, said the solution can bridge unemployment gaps and assist the nation’s Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Technical adviser to the president on eco-

nomics and financial inclusion and Executive Secretary, PreCEFI, Nurudeen Abubakar Zauro, said the government is deliberate about moving from programmes that simply identify beneficiaries to programmes that create co-creators of prosperity.

On his part, the Chief Executive Officer of A4S, Nitti Sawangsab disclosed, “Our focus is the farmer. Technology has no value if it does not solve a real problem for the person producing the food. 4Tree is designed around plant productivity, but our objective in Nigeria is to demonstrate its value under Nigerian conditions and measure the results.”

The Managing Director at Natari Nigeria Limited, Ibiang Orji, noted: “Our relationship with A4S allows us to explore how agricultural technology can be integrated into real investment projects, while Providus Bank adds a financial platform capable of supporting businesses as they grow.”

2027: Sheriff's Supporters Defend Appointment Into Tinubu Campaign

From **Lawrence Njoku** (Enugu) and **Njadvara Musa** (Maiduguri)

SUPPORTERS of former Borno State Governor and chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Senator Ali Modu Sheriff, led by Isa Aminu, have defended his appointment as the party's North-East Zonal Campaign Coordinator, saying he is prepared to use his political experience to deliver victory for the APC in the 2027 elections.

Also, the Northeast Coalition for Truth, Justice and Responsible Leadership (NCTJRL) led by Alhaji Abba Habib, has drummed support for Sheriff over the appointment, describing the petition calling for his exclusion from the body as an attempt to weaken an experienced Northeast leader and create unnecessary division among people.

The supporters also dismissed allegations linking Sheriff to Boko Haram, describing the claims as an attempt to undermine his political influence in the North-East.

They were reacting to criticisms of Sheriff's appointment by the Nigeria Rescue & Renewal Movement (NRRM).

In a statement signed by Aminu, the supporters said Sheriff had consistently denied any connection with Boko Haram, insisting that allegations against him should not be treated as established facts without evidence.

"Ali Modu Sheriff neither founded, funded nor fraternised with Boko Haram—directly or indirectly," the statement said.

Nigeria Records 10,000 Diphtheria Cases, 65,000 Cholera Infections In 2026

From **Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze**, Abuja

THE Nigeria Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (NCDC) has said that over 10,000 confirmed cases of diphtheria have been recorded in the country in 2026.

Also, over 65,000 suspected cases of cholera have been recorded this year across 35 states and approximately 195 local councils in the country.

The Director General of NCDC, Dr. Jide Idris, who disclosed this while giving an update on cholera and diphtheria situations in the country, disclosed that Cholera transmission is ongoing.

He stated that the continuing burden of diphtheria highlights the need to further improve vaccination coverage, particularly among

unvaccinated and incomplete vaccinated children.

He observed that Cholera cases have declined considerably from the peak recorded earlier in the season, while the proportion of reported cases resulting in death is significantly lower than it was at the same time last year.

Idris, however, noted that for diphtheria, although the country has continued to record a substantial number of cases, the fatality rate has also declined considerably.

He stated that most confirmed cases are concentrated in a few states, particularly Kano, Borno and Bauchi, adding that too many children remain unvaccinated or among incomplete vaccinated.

The NCDC boss pointed out that vaccine hesitancy, insecurity, hard-to-reach communi-

ties, displacement and population movement make it more difficult to reach every child who needs protection.

Idris emphasised that diphtheria is vaccine-preventable, adding that bringing transmission under control requires improved vaccination coverage and reaching every eligible child who has missed a vaccine dose.

He observed that reactive vaccination is ongoing in affected areas, while essential treatment and laboratory commodities are being provided.

Idris urged state and local councils to identify communities with low vaccination coverage and ensure that children who missed routine doses are reached and fully vaccinated.

He noted that while cholera and diphtheria have different drivers and require some dis-

ease-specific interventions, there are also important elements of the response that cut across both outbreaks.

"Across both diseases, NCDC continues to coordinate the public health response with state governments and partners, providing technical support where it is most needed. Surveillance and laboratory capacity are being strengthened, healthcare workers are being supported on case management and infection prevention and control, and affected communities are being engaged with the information they need to protect themselves and seek care early," he said.

He stressed that National Rapid Response Teams had also been deployed to affected states as the need arose to support investigation and response activities.



Dr Taiwo Fasoranti (left); former Governor of Ogun State, Olusegun Osoba; Ondo State Governor, Lucky Aiyedatiwa; former Governor of Ondo State, Olusegun Mimiko, Deputy Governor of Lagos, Kadri Hamzat and others during the Centennial Birthday Lecture in honour of Chief Reuben Fasoranti, Leader of Afenifere and Asiwaju Yoruba, themed, "A Century of Courage and Stewardship of Yoruba Democratic Legacy," held at Muson Centre, Onikan, Lagos on Friday.

Unity Among Traditional Rulers, Leaders Vital For Progress Of Yoruba Nation – Gani Adams

By **Oludare Richards**

THE Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, Iba Gani Adams, has identified lack of unity as a major challenge slowing the wheel of progress of the Yoruba nation.

He highlighted divisions among traditional rulers and Yoruba leaders, calling for renewed commitment to unity.

He made the call at the Oodua Progressive Union (OPU), USA Afro Fusion Festival (OAFest

2026), themed, 'Celebrating Our Heritage, Strengthening Our Unity, Shaping Our Future,' held in Indianapolis, USA.

Iba Adams warned that personal rivalries and fragmentation could weaken the collective strength of the Yoruba people. He appealed to all Yoruba leaders and members of OPU to set aside their differences and embrace dialogue, mutual respect and collaboration.

"Our strength lies in our ability to come together as one people, united by common goals and shared values," he noted.

Adams also emphasised the importance of cultural pride and visionary leadership in advancing the Yoruba cause worldwide, stressing the importance of Yoruba heritage as the foundation of identity for millions of Nigerians globally. While noting that culture embodies wisdom, creativity and resilience, Adams urged

OPU members and other Nigerians in Diaspora to take up the mantle of custodianship by preserving the Yoruba language, celebrating traditional festivals and upholding core values such as respect, courage and community spirit.

"Our heritage is a source of inspiration and guidance for our present and future," he said.

The Aare Ona Kakanfo also praised the OPU USA for its

dynamic growth since its official launch last year. He noted that hosting annual conferences across various states not only boosts morale, but also encourages physical interaction among members, fostering cohesion and attracting new participants.

He urged members to remain united despite challenges, reminding them that good leadership requires resilience and the ability to weather storms.

HURIWA Condemns Abduction Of 15 NYSC Members, Demands Immediate Rescue

By **Balikis Ademuyiwa**

THE Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has condemned the reported abduction of 15 National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members in Kogi State and demanded their immediate and unconditional release.

The rights group, in a statement signed by its National Coordinator, Emmanuel Nnadozie Onwubiko, expressed concern that young Nigerians serving their country could still be kidnapped on Nigerian highways without

an effective system to protect them.

The corps members were reportedly abducted on Wednesday, August 26, 2026, while returning from the NYSC orientation camp in Bayelsa State and travelling towards Abuja.

They were reportedly intercepted by armed men along the Ofu/Itoke-Onicha-Igo road in Ofu Local Council of Kogi State.

HURIWA said the incident was another reminder of the failure to adequately protect NYSC members across the

country, noting that corps members had, over the years, been kidnapped, attacked and killed while travelling to their places of primary assignment.

The organisation said the Federal Government had yet to provide a lasting solution to the security risks faced by corps members while travelling across the country.

HURIWA said the latest incident was another reason for a serious review of the NYSC scheme, particularly the movement of corps members through highways known to

be dangerous.

It questioned why corps members travelling from high-risk areas could not be transported by air to safer locations before continuing their journeys to their places of primary assignment.

The group said the government could not continue to post young Nigerians to dangerous areas and leave them exposed to armed kidnappers on the highways, describing the situation as unacceptable.

HURIWA demanded the immediate rescue of all the abducted corps members,

alive and unharmed, urging security agencies not to allow the incident to become another forgotten kidnapping case.

It also demanded a full investigation into the circumstances surrounding the abduction and the arrest and prosecution of all those responsible.

The rights group called on the Federal Government to urgently review the movement of corps members across the country and introduce safer transportation arrangements, including air transport where necessary.

FTSE's Nigeria Frontier Market Restoration Validates Tinubu's Reforms – City Boy Movement

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE City Boy Movement, a youth advocacy organisation, has commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for the economic reforms that paved the way for Nigeria's return to FTSE Russell's Frontier Market status, describing the development as an important vote of confidence on the Nigerian economy.

According to verified reports, FTSE Russell is proceeding with Nigeria's reclassification from "Unclassified" to "Frontier Market" status, effective September 21, 2026. Nigeria was removed from the category in September 2023 following difficulties accessing foreign exchange and repatriating capital.

The Director General of the City Boy Movement, Francis Shoga, described the decision as a significant validation of the progress made under the Tinubu administration.

"When our grand patron, President Bola Tinubu, took office, Nigeria's foreign exchange market was under severe pressure, with billions of dollars in investor funds trapped in the country.

Ogoni Dialogue: Group Denies Accusing NSA Of Improper Action, Insists On Transparency

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE unfolding debate over the future of Ogoniland has taken a fresh turn, with the apex socio-cultural organisation of the Ogoni people, KAGOTE, highlighting one of its most sensitive concerns—the alleged invocation of the name or authority of the National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu.

The group stated that it did "not" accuse the NSA of personally authorising any improper action, stressing that the very uncertainty surrounding the use of the NSA's name makes clarification necessary.

KAGOTE's latest position was contained in a statement directed to the facilitators of the Ogoni Dialogue Committee (ODC) signed by its President, Chief Lesi Maol, where it expressed strong support for the Federal Government's renewed engagement but raised a series of questions about how the process is being managed.

According to KAGOTE, where the name of a senior government official is invoked in connection with a sensitive process such as the Ogoni Dialogue, there should be no doubt about whether such representation was actually authorised.



CHANGE OF NAME

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ABDUL: I, formerly known as Abdul-Kareem Abeebat Temilade now wish to be addressed as Amusan Abeebat Temilade. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ABEL: I formerly known as Abel Rebecca now wish to be known and addressed as Samuel Rebecca Ojochenemi. All for documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: Formerly known as Joseph Ogei Francis now wish to be addressed as Joseph Ogei Francis Diyemowei. Former documents remain valid public note

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Aghedo Israel, now wish to be addressed as, Aghedo Israel Osamudiamhen. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Bello Jireh Godwin now wish to be addressed as Bello Jireh Godwin Mustapha. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Chioma Juliet nwokedi now wish to be addressed as Chioma Juliet Ebong. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Temitope Adegbite now wish to be addressed as Temitope Adegbite-Ajibade. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

ADEDOYIN: I, formerly known as Kikelomo Bola Adedoyin now wish to be addressed as Kikelomo Bola Otugade. All other documents remain valid. General public note

ADELOWO: I, formerly known as Miss. Adelowo Racheal Bolanle now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Adeyemi Racheal Bolanle. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

ADEWOYE: I, formerly known as Adewoye Adenike now wish to be known as Akinwale Adewoye Adenike, DOB 7th March 1977. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

AGUINEDE : I, formerly known as, Aguinede Samuel Eromosele now wish to be addressed as Osagiede Friday Omosi,. All former documents remain valid .Pneral public take note.

AHAMEFULE: I, Formerly Known as Miss Ahamefule Glory Chigozie now wishes to be Addressed as Mrs. Ngama Glory Chigozie. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AHUCHAOGU: I, formerly known as Blessing Chiemena Ahuchaogu now wish to be addressed as Maria Chiemena Dominkovic. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

AKESINRO: I, formerly Miss Akessinro Oyinkansola Ayomide now wish to be addressed as Mrs Asunloye Oyinkansola Ayomide. Former documents remain valid. Public take note

ANTHONY: I, formerly known as Anthony Judith Esodomhe, now wish to be known as Mrs. Akin-sowon Judith Esodomhe. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

ASHIBINNU : I, formerly known as Precious Ashibinnu Ebebe now wish to be addressed as Precious Asupa Ebebe. All other documents remain valid .General public note

ASHIBINNU: I, formerly known as Precious Ashibinnu Ebebe now wish to be known as Precious Asupa Ebebe. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

AYOOLA: I, formerly known as Bisola Oluwaseun Ayoola now wishes to be addressed as Bisola Oluwaseun Bakare. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

BAYO : I, formally known as Adebayo Glorious Bayo now wish to be addressed as Adebayo Glorious Mojeed Adejumo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

BEANARD : I, formerly known as Paul Adejor Beanard now wish to be known as Paul Adejor Stephen. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

BELLO: I, formely known as Miss Eniola Halimot Bello now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Eniola Halimot Bello-Fanu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was captured in my International Passport as Oraeki Hilda Akachukwu instead of Oraeki Princess Hilda as it is in my NIN. Former documents remain valid General public note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured in BVN as Edun Olaoluwa Opeyemi instead of Edun Olaoluwapo Opeyemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name were wrongly written as ; Frances Chiamaka Ugochukwu instead of Frances Chiamaka Roland. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name were wrongly written as Chikamso Michael Ugochukwu instead of Michael Ugochukwu RoLand. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name were wrongly written as Light Munachi Ugochukwu instead of Light Munachi Roland. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name were wrongly written as ; Chidera Emmanuel Ugochukwu instead of Emmanuel Ugochukwu RoLand. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Nneoma Amechi-Igwe Junia and Junia Nneoma Amechi Igwe Instead of Amechi-Igwe Junia Nneoma. All former documents. Public note

DAVID: I, formerly known as David Tamunosiki and Prince-David Nengy Tamunosiki now wish to be known as Prince David Tamunoiyalla. Former documents remain valid. Public note

EKE: I, formerly known as Eke Chinemerem Janemagna now wish to be known as Emmanuel Chinemerem . All former documents remain valid. Public take note

ESTHER : I, formerly known as Miss Chinelo Esther Omeh, now wish to be known as Mrs. Chinelo Esther Jideofor. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EZE I formerly known as Eze Blessing Ogochukwu now wish to be addressed Mrs. Nwabueze Blessing Ogochukwu All former documents remains valid. General public take note

EZENWA : I, formerly known as Ezenwa Amarachi Dorathy now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Ifeanyi Amarachi Dorathy All former documents remains valid. General public take note

EZEYOIRI: I, formerly known as Ezeoyiri Jane Nwanneka, now wish to be addressed as Jane Nwanneka Ikechukwu-Nweke. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

IDEMUDIA: I, formerly known as Glory Amen Idemudia now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Glory Amen Sylvester All former documents. Public note

ITEPU: I, formerly known as, Miss Itepu Precious Osewe now wish to be addressed as Mrs..Erewele Precious Brave,. All former documents remains valid,. Public note.

JOHNSON: I, formerly known as Johnson Obonoh now wish to be known as Obonoh Otobong Johnson. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

JOSIAH: I, formerly known as Winsome Gift Josiah now wish to be addressed as Winsome Tariere Dan-Adere. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

KADIRI : I, formerly Kadiri Mohammed Adikwu, now wish to be addressed as, Kadiri Muhammed Adikwu, My DOB is, 18-11-1988, not, 06-10-1993. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

KAFAYAT: I, formerly known as Alao Adeola Kafayat now wish to be addressed as Ajibola Adeola Adesire. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

KAMOLI: I, formally known as Kamoli Salawu now wish to be addressed as Kamal Idowu Salau. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

KAMSI: I, formerly Alisiobi kamsi Samuel now wishes to be known and address as Alisiobi kamsiyochukwu Samuel, All former documents remain valid, JAMB, General public take note.

MONDAY: I, formally known as Monday Emmanuel Praise now wish to be addressed as Esousa Essien . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

MUSA: I, formerly known as Mercy Koji Musa now wish to be addressed as Mercy Koji Abiodun All other documents remain valid .General public note

ODENORE : I, formerly known as Miss Odenore Esther Ekeniyere now wish to be addressed as Mrs. moukhuede Esther Ekeniyere, All former documents remain valid, public note.

OGUNKEYE: I, formerly known as Temitayo Ogunkeye now wish to be known as Temitayo Olukoya. All former documents remain valid. Public take note

OGUNYEMI: I, formerly known as Ogunyemi olawumi christiana now wish to be addressed as Olowojeun-jeje olawumi christiana. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OLANIPEKUN : I formerly known as Olanipekun Oreoluwa Iyaniwura, now wish to be addressed as Olanipekun Oreoluwa Mary. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

OLUFADÉ : I, formerly known as Olufunmilayo Tope Olufade now wish to be known as Temitope Olufunmilayo Ademiluyi. All former documents. Public note

OLUWASEGUN: I, formerly known as Oluwasegun Blessing Oluwabukunmi wish to be addressed as Olusegun Blessing Oluwabukunmi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OTHEGBEMHA : I. formerly Othegbemha Edith, now wish to be addressed as Imhasi Edith Odufa,. My DOB is, 17-05-2000, not, 05-01-1996, All former documents remain valid. Public note.

OYAKHIRE : I formerly known as, Oyakhire Felix now wish to be addressed as Okpono Felix Akhimien, . All former documents remainsvalid . General public take note.

OYATOYE: I, formerly known as Oyatoye Fiyinfoluwa Ayodeji now wish to be addressed as Nwaokolo Fiyinfoluwa Ayodeji. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

OYEBISI: I, formerly known as Miss Oyebisi Taiwo Oluwabunmi, now addressed as Mrs Ojuade Taiwo Oluwabunmi. Former documents remain valid. General public and authorities take note.

PRUDENT: I, formerly Miss Prudent Njideka Susan Egwuenu and Mrs Chika Njideka now Mrs Njideka Susan Chika Onwudiwe. Former documents remain valid. Public note.

SAKA: I, formally known as Saka Rasheed Sola now wish to be addressed as Saka Rasheed Shola. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

SIKIRU: I, formerly Sikiru Emmanuel Yao Olorunwa now wish to be addressed as Adzamli Emmanuel Yao Olorunwa. Former documents remain valid. Public take note.

THOMAS: I formally known as Thomas Folashade Abisola now Mrs Ogunfowora Folashade Abisola. All former documents remain valid. General public please note.

TOGUN: I, formerly known as Togun Ayibagebra Eburnoluwa now wish to be addressed as Ayibagebra Eburnoluwa Victoria. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

UWASOMBA: I, formerly known as Uwasomba Chidera now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Enyinnaya Chidera All former documents remains valid. General public take note

UWAZURUONYE : I, formerly known as Miss Ugonna Adanna Uwazuruonye now wish to be known as Mrs Ugonna Adanna Irukwu. All other documents remain valid .General public note

WEJE: I, formerly known as Weje Bosede Abisola now wish to be addressed as Ossai Bosede Abisola. All other documents remain valid .General public note

News Extra

FirstBank, MREIF Open Affordable Home Loan Scheme To Nigerians

By Abigail Ikhaghu

FIRST BANK of Nigeria Limited has disclosed that its home loan scheme with the MOFI Real Estate Investment Fund (MREIF) allows eligible Nigerians to finance completed residential properties at a fixed interest rate of 9.75 per cent, with repayment extending to 20 years.

The bank made the disclosure at a webinar titled, 'Beyond Rent: The Path to Home Ownership Leveraging FirstBank-MREIF Home Loan Scheme to Build Long-Term Wealth.'

Speaking at the webinar, Head of Personal Banking at FirstBank, Chukwuka Okonkwo, said the scheme was structured to make mortgage

financing more accessible to Nigerians struggling with the cost of acquiring homes.

Under the scheme, applicants can access up to N100 million, subject to their income, age and repayment capacity. A minimum 10 per cent equity contribution is required, while eligible contributors can use up to 25 per cent of their Retirement Savings Account (RSA) balance to supplement the contribution.

Okonkwo said affordability remained central to determining how much an applicant could obtain, adding that the bank had agreed on a debt service ratio for the scheme to ensure borrowers retained sufficient income to meet other expenses.

Schneider Electric Launches Mentorship Programme To Tackle Youth Unemployment

By Opeyemi Babalola

A FIRM, Schneider Electric, has launched a six-month mentorship programme pairing electrical engineering students in Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya with company engineers, aiming at equipping young graduates with the practical skills needed to boost the energy and technology industries amid high youth unemployment.

Launched in May and running through October, the firm in a statement, revealed that the initiative, part of the company's global corporate volunteering and citizenship programme, was already delivering results as students and mentors alike report real and tangible progress.

It noted that in Nigeria, the programme has taken root at the University of Ibadan and the Yaba College of Technology (Yabatech), where students are matched one-on-one with Schneider Electric engineers for hands-on guidance rarely available inside a classroom.

The firm emphasised that the essence of the initiative was to address youth unemployment which is currently at 53 per cent according to the State of the Nigerian Youth Report 2025, released by Plan International Nigeria and ActionAid Nigeria.

"It is precisely that gap Schneider Electric is betting mentorship can close. Advancing Energy Tech sits under VolunteerIn.

Efunkomaya Assumes Lions District 404A3 Leadership

By Isaac Taiwo

JOHNSON Efunkomaya has assumed office as the District Governor, Lions International, District 404A3 (2026-2027 Lions Year) with a pledge to unite members across the district and strengthen humanitarian interventions.

Speaking after his investiture at a ceremony held at Musical Village, Ikoro, Lagos, Efunkomaya said his emergence was the product of years of perseverance. "This is a position that I have been looking up to for years. I remember the first time I contested was about 10 years ago. Since then, I have not relaxed," he said.

He urged members to

remain committed to their aspirations, noting that his experience had taught him that persistence was essential to achieving one's goals.

Efunkomaya, who joined the Lions Club in 1985, said the organisation has remained a major platform for humanitarian service and pledged to make unity in service the cornerstone of his administration.

He said his administration would focus on providing modernised solar-powered borehole water systems as the district's flagship project for the 2026-2027 Lions Year in different parts of the district, adding that two sites had already been identified.

EVEN the elements joined in the conspiracy and the celebration. They ensured that the news of the resignation of the President and members of the Executive Committee of the Nigeria Football Federation, NFF, coincided with the marking of the anniversary of the day of my birth. It was a lovely birthday gift.

This is to publicly thank all those that sent me warm messages on the day reminding me about how the years have rolled by so fast. It is already evening in my journey through life. Meanwhile, Nigeria has played a great part in providing me opportunities to enjoy every bit of the journey, good, bad, ugly and more.

Every day that passes now is a bonus, one of giving out without expectation; of striving to add a little value to the community, to my country and to humanity; of making a little positive difference to a world that has treated me fairly and very well throughout my life.

My new mission is to utilise the (unearned) privilege of a good life gifted me by the Creator

The Perfect Gift

of all things, and to follow the Nike credo, 'Just Do It', fearlessly, and without favour. My objective is to play my part well in this life and leave the rest to posterity.

It is already the day-after, as I write this. I thank all those that sent me goodwill messages. I congratulate Ibrahim Gusau for taking the honourable path of resigning along with his board members from the Executive Committee of the NFF.

Whilst leaving, he recounted his major contributions to the game of football as a whole. I truly commend his contributions, industry and commitment. However, that the various national teams did not do well enough was the Albatross of his tenure. That's what people remember.

'Winning teams' are the only measure of achievement in sport, in which case, his

board fell short.

I commend President Bolà Ahmed Tinubu for the bold decisions he has taken in sports, unlike previous governments that shied away from confronting the monster that had taken over Nigerian sports as a whole.

BAT gave the leadership of the National Sports Commission the guidance, the backing and the confidence to hard decisions needed to break free from the shackles of the fear of a FIFA ban. How the termination of the NFF tenure was handled is a master stroke.

So, with the threat of a FIFA-ban out of the way, Nigerians can now breathe freely and take decisions that will remove the shackles of past errors, past misdeeds and the products of ignorance. There is now space



for fresh thinking, new ideas, and opportunity for a new vision in drafting new governance statutes that will produce the next set of administrators with the competency to take Nigerian football to the stratosphere.

What affects football affects all the other sports. What impacts the Nigerian Football Association will also impact other sports federations. What impacts all the federations will cascade to the Nigeria Olympic Committee that has been stagnated for decades.

Nigerian Sport is on the cusp of a revolution. These past 24 hours have been very indicative. The National Sports Commission are taking the right decisions and heading in the right direction.

I hope they will sustain the momentum, create the platform and assemble the egg-heads with the capacity to shape the future of sports in Nigeria going forward!

The first important issue to be quickly resolved is the legal status of the name of the organisation.

Read the remaining story online www.guardian.ng

Kuti, Agunbiade, Coker Get Wildcards For Tangier 2026

By Christian Okpara

KUTI Mathew, Agunbiade Sultan, Putola Tidiane, Adom-Amankwaa Eva, and Coker Naomi are among 17 players awarded wildcards for the upcoming ITF Africa Championships, Tangier 2026, this October.

Fresh from leading Nigeria's U19 boys to the team title and winning the Youth Cup in Accra. Nigerian No.1 Kuti will make his return to the senior continental stage after competing at Tunis 2025. He will be joined by compatriot Agunbiade, who enjoyed a breakthrough campaign in Accra, finishing runner-up to Kuti in the Youth Cup final.

While Nigeria will not compete in the team events in Tangier, Kuti and Sultan will have the opportunity to test themselves against Africa's senior elite in the singles events. Sultan, making his senior continental debut, will also share the stage with Nigerian stars Aruna Quadri and Olajide Omotayo, who qualified through the ITF World Rankings.

Sierra Leone's Naomi Coker is another exciting addition to the field after making history in Accra by winning a Youth Cup bronze medal—her country's first continental medal. Chad's Putola Tidiane will also make a landmark senior appearance, giving Chad its first representation at this level.

Ghanaian youngster Adom-Amankwaa Eva, who impressed during the 2026 ITF Africa Hopes Week, has also been rewarded with a wildcard. She joins Joanita Borteye and Cynthia Kwabi, who qualified through the ITF World Rankings, to give Ghana three representatives in the women's singles.

Egypt's Gaber Yassin is another name to watch. The teenager announced himself in Accra with an impressive run to the U19 boys' singles final, which has now earned him a place in Tangier and his senior continental debut.

The 17 wildcard is an important pathway for emerging players to transition from youth to senior continental competition, while also providing opportunities to support national team players, development initiatives and players who may not meet the ranking requirements at the time entries are confirmed.

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Business

TETFund: Projecting Culture Of Excellence In Education Infrastructure, Research Across Africa

"Nigeria must begin to reflect excellence, discipline and integrity in all aspects of national life. The era of dilapidated public facilities must give way to infrastructure that mirrors the dignity of the Nigerian people." – Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

IT is no gainsaying that the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is kinetically transforming Nigeria's public tertiary education landscape and contributing significantly to the enormous national machinery being deployed to accelerate the country's socio-economic development. Indeed, its evolving story is increasingly becoming one of vision, intervention, innovation and excellence – an institutional success story that is beginning to resonate well beyond Nigeria's borders. There is an instructive lesson from the remarkable transformation of Dubai.

In his book, *My Vision: Challenges in the Race for Excellence*, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai and Prime Minister and Vice President of the United Arab Emirates, observed that at a certain stage in Dubai's development, the emirate essentially stopped competing with others and began competing with itself.

That mindset was pivotal. Having moved ahead of many of its regional peers, Dubai's challenge was no longer simply to catch up with anyone else but to continuously surpass its own achievements. Its remarkable transformation subsequently became a source of inspiration for other countries in the region.

The ripple effect is evident across the Middle East. Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, among others, have unveiled ambitious development visions designed to diversify their economies, invest in human capital, accelerate innovation and reduce dependence on traditional sources of revenue.

Saudi Arabia's futuristic NEOM project, Qatar's

aggressive investment strategy, Bahrain's Vision 2030, Kuwait's Vision 2035 and Oman's Vision 2040 all speak to a region increasingly determined to compete not merely with others, but with the limitations of its own past.

Therein lies an important lesson for Nigeria and indeed, for TETFund. Established by Nigerian law to provide intervention and support for the development of tertiary education, it appears to have entered a phase where it is not merely fulfilling its statutory mandate but increasingly competing with its own records of achievement.

The Fund is progressively raising the bar on what is possible in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions, intervening in infrastructure, research, innovation, academic staff development, teaching and learning facilities and other areas critical to restoring and sustaining standards. Its reach extends beyond conventional universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, and top-tier educational institutions operated by the nation's security agencies – the Army, Navy, Air Force and Police.

The significance of this should not be underestimated. For decades, the conversation around public education in Nigeria was dominated by the challenges of decaying infrastructure, inadequate facilities, insufficient research capacity and the persistent erosion of standards. TETFund has emerged as one of the principal instruments through which government is confronting these challenges. More importantly however, Nigeria may now be exporting an education intervention model that other African countries consider worthy of emulation.

A compelling indication of this emerg-

ing influence came recently when The Gambia announced its intention to under-study the TETFund model. The Gambian Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Hon. Prof. Pierre Gomez led a high-powered delegation to TETFund's Headquarters in Maitama, Abuja, where they were received by the management team led by the Executive Secretary, Arc. (Dr) Sonny S.T. Echono.

Gomez disclosed that The Gambia had established its own Tertiary and Higher Education Trust Fund (THET), modelled substantially on Nigeria's TETFund experience.

The delegation therefore sought TETFund's cooperation and support in opening its institutional doors and sharing its experience with officials of THET, who are expected to undertake a study tour of the Fund's operations.

According to the Gambian delegation, the country had consistently followed TETFund's activities through its website, social media platforms and other communication channels and had

become convinced that establishing a similar intervention mechanism would provide an added fillip to the Gambian government's efforts to transform its tertiary education sector.

The proposed collaboration is expected to encompass areas such as research and capacity development and, importantly, strengthen the already existing diplomatic relationship between Nigeria and The Gambia.

That is a significant endorsement. It means that an institution created primarily to address Nigeria's own tertiary education challenges is now attracting attention as a reference point for education-sector intervention elsewhere in Africa.

And The Gambia is not alone. Tanzania's Education Authority (TEA), Ghana's Education Trust Fund (GETFund) and Sierra Leone's Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) are among institutions whose mandates and activities reflect similar efforts to strengthen tertiary education through structured intervention and funding mechanisms.

Nigeria, through TETFund is therefore increasingly participating in a broader African conversation about how to sustainably finance, modernise and reposition higher education for the demands of the 21st century.

From infrastructure to innovation, TETFund's mandate is broad and consequential. It encompasses essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning, instructional materials and equipment, research and publication.



Echono

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Jalla Wants NFF's Probe Backdated To 2014, Olopade Hails Gusau

By Gowon Akpodonor

TO actualise President Bola Tinubu's comprehensive reform of Nigerian football, former Super Eagles player now Chairman, Advocacy for Nigeria Football Reform Initiative, Harrison Jalla, wants the reforms to be competence-driven. He said 'the probe into, and recovery of, NFF stolen funds should date back to late 2014-2026.'

Jalla's call came on Friday, just as the Director General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Bukola Olopade, hailed the resignation of Nigeria Football Federation, President Ibrahim Gusau and the entire NFF board, describing their decision to step aside as an 'honourable path' and a sacrifice made in the interest of Nigerian football.

In a message to *The Guardian* on Friday, Jalla said: "It is a new dawn for Nigeria football. We have all fought a good fight and kept the faith, but we have not finished the course. The struggle continues until the right thing is done from the word go."

"With the composition of the Normalisation Committee, all federating units of the NFF, the private sector, and other relevant groups must be represented fairly and equally. Nobody can hide under the directive of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to skew things in their own favour or play God in this new dispensation. That era is gone forever," he said.

Jalla who has been in the forefront of the struggle said: "We do not want to go back to Egypt. The National Sports Commission, under Shehu Dikko and Bukola Olopade, must not falter or be seen to favour any individual or group over another. This reform must be total, competence-driven, and nothing more."

• Adelabu Calls For Proper Board

"Very many thanks to the National Sports Commission and to all those who later joined our team in the struggle we started so many years ago. Nigeria football wins at last."

"Anti-graft agencies should extend their probe of the NFF to late 2014 down to 2026 and recover the millions of US dollars, stolen FIFA grants and billions of naira in sponsorship funds within the period under review. The current N12 billion or N17 billion probe is merely scratching the surface. People must go to jail for corruption if we are to have a brand-new NFF," Jalla stated.

In his contribution, former Green Eagles winger Adegoke Adelabu, now a Sports Scientist, said: "I think a committee should be set up to look into the situation. Not until a proper board is set up to carry out the football activities, it is extremely difficult for one to postulate any form of strategy to run our football, because we are living under fraudulent atmosphere in all sectors. That makes it difficult for good ideas to find a place of rest. We are led by incompetent and greedy people," Adelabu, an ex-IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan player said.

Meanwhile, Olopade said in Enugu, during a Local Organising Committee meeting for the 2026 National Sports Festival that the decision by the NFF leadership to resign had strengthened his belief that Nigerian sport can still move forward when those in positions of authority are prepared to put the wider interest of the country ahead of personal considerations.

It was Olopade's first media remark since the dramatic resignation of Gusau and members of his board. Olopade said: "Because we are all in the football and sporting world trying to see how our country can move forward, I want to salute

Mallam Gusau for the honourable path he chose by resigning alongside his entire board." He stressed that the development was significant to him personally, particularly because it represented what he described as a huge sacrifice for the country.

"As this is my first media appearance since that incident, it was necessary for me to just put this out today and say that my belief in this country has been greatly energised by Mallam Gusau and his words, and all of those who resigned alongside him."

NFF Appoints Abdulrahman As NPFL COO

THE Nigeria Football Federation, on Friday, appointed Dr Ayo Abdulrahman as the Chief Operating Officer of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL). This comes on the day the new season kicked off with the star match at the Adamasingba Stadium, Ibadan between Nigeria's CAF Confederation Cup flag-bearers Shooting Stars and newly-promoted Inter Lagos FC.

Abdulrahman, who holds a doctorate degree in sports administration, comes into office with a rich experience and deep understanding of football organisation and administration, having worked across the various Leagues.

NFF's interim General Secretary, Emmanuel Ikpeke, said Abdulrahman's appointment arises following the directive on Thursday, August 27 to all Board Members and Chief Executive Officers of the various Leagues, as well as the Chief Operating Officers who are not members of NFF Staff, to vacate their positions.

Bae U, Hilda Baci Light Up Lekki Scrabble Classics

By Christian Okpara

THE Lekki Scrabble Classics has witnessed a fresh dimension with the appearance of popular celebrities Bae U and Hilda Baci, who have both featured in previous editions of the prestigious championship.

The presence of the two celebrities added glamour to an event that has continued to establish itself as a standout fixture on Nigeria's scrabble calendar.

Strategically, the Lekki Scrabble Classics has carved a niche for itself in the annals of organised scrabble, evolving into a major meeting point for mind gamers from across Nigeria and beyond.

For participants, battles on the Lekki Peninsula have become cherished memories, with the competition providing another opportunity for players to test their skills and pursue honours in the demanding word-and-number game.

While scrabble requires intense concentration, strategic thinking and composure from contestants, the Classics has successfully blended the competitive nature of the sport with an atmosphere that encourages social interaction and relaxation laced with entertainment.

Beyond the victories and defeats recorded on the boards, the championship has created a soothing environment where players, officials, guests and enthusiasts can unwind and celebrate their shared passion for the game.

The appearances of Bae U and Hilda Baci further underlined the growing appeal of the Lekki Scrabble Classics, as the competition continues to attract attention beyond the traditional scrabble community.

At the last edition, comic actor and YouTuber Bae U became an exciting personality among the special guests at the closing ceremony as the chubby presenter added an aura to the atmosphere.

Saturday Premier League Fixtures

Liverpool Vs Nott' Forest 12:30
Bournemouth Vs Everton 15:00
Coventry City Vs Hull City 15:00
Tottenham Vs Newcastle 17:30

Saturday Spanish La Liga

Levante Vs Real Betis 16:00
Real Sociedad Vs Espanyol 18:00
Sevilla Vs Atletico Madrid 20:30

By Gowon Akpodonor

DESPITE his resignation on Thursday, the tenure of former President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Ibrahim Gusau is still being assessed by many Nigeria football stakeholders.

"I have assessed Gusau's administration critically, and my overall view has not changed," United States-based former Flying Eagles and Super Eagles player, Paul Okoku told *The Guardian*.

"I gave his tenure four out of ten. That is a failing grade. Gusau's resignation should not rewrite his presidency. His administration must still be judged on results, governance and institutional reform. My overall assessment of 4/10 is based on a record that included:

Super Eagles' failure to qualify for 2026 FIFA World Cup, Super Falcons' failure at 2026 WAFCON and inability to qualify for 2027 World Cup. The defending African champions were eliminated by Cameroon in the WAFCON quarter-finals and subsequently failed to qualify for the

'Gusau's Record Must Be Judged'

Women's World Cup for the first time.

"Nigeria's Olympic Eagles/U-23 failed to qualify for the 2023 U-23 AFCON and consequently missed the Paris 2024 Olympic football tournament, the Golden Eagles/U-17 missed the 2023 FIFA U-17 World Cup and suffered further qualification setbacks at WAFU B level.

Other setbacks include the Flying Eagles/U-20 finishing third at the 2025 U-20 AFCON and reached the Round of 16 at the 2025 FIFA U-20 World Cup, but in August 2026 lost 4-1 to Burkina Faso in the WAFU B final and missed qualification for the 2027 U-20 AFCON. Nigeria's U-15/Future Eagles remains primarily a developmental programme rather than a FIFA/CAF qualification category and should therefore be judged differently. In governance, the electoral reform expanded the Congress, but the 36 State Football Associations and FCT still retained 37 of 54 votes (about 68.5 per cent), leaving one constituency with more than two-thirds of the

voting strength," Okoku stated.

"There were also achievements. Gusau pointed to renewed coaching education, greater stability in the domestic league calendar, progress in refereeing and infrastructure projects, including a 68-room players' hostel and new training pitches at the MKO Abiola National Stadium. He also cited the Super Eagles' silver and bronze AFCON finishes and the Super Falcons' 2025 WAFCON title. Those gains deserve acknowledgement, but judged in totality, I still consider the tenure a failing one. If any result has been inadvertently attributed to his administration, or if any relevant achievement or failure has been omitted, the omission is unintended, and I remain open to correction," he said.

According to Okoku, Nigeria has never developed a strong resignation culture. "Too often, leaders remain in office despite poor results, declining confidence or demands for change. Holding on becomes confused with strength. That is why Gusau's decision de-

serves respect.

"Unlike several of his recent predecessors, Gusau was not impeached, dissolved out of office or dragged through a prolonged battle for control. He announced that he was stepping aside. Whatever ultimately contributed to his resignation, which is the weight of results, internal pressure, government scrutiny or other considerations, he still had choices. He could have resisted and allowed the crisis to become another prolonged institutional battle.

"Nigerian football has seen domestic disputes quickly reframed as questions of government interference and elevated to FIFA. During the Aminu Maigari era in 2014, FIFA suspended Nigeria. During Amaju Pinnick's presidency in 2018, FIFA gave Nigeria a deadline to restore the leadership it recognised or face suspension.

"Even during recent debates over accountability and reform, warnings about possible FIFA consequences regularly surfaced in public commentary. Yet Gusau did not take that route. He stepped aside."

Porbeni: 'It Will Be Difficult For Amusan To Reclaim Her World Record Title'

By Gowon Akpodonor

FORMER Nigeria sprinter, hurdler and jumper, Seigha Porbeni, says it will be difficult for Tobi Amusan to reclaim the World Record title, which she lost in Zurich on Thursday.

Amusan finished second in the women's 100m hurdles at the 14th and penultimate leg of the 2026 Wanda Diamond League at Weltklasse in Zurich.

The Nigerian ran a season's best 12.23 seconds, but it was American Masai Russell who stole the show, winning in a new world record of 12.09 seconds. The official result confirms Rus-

sell's 12.09 as a World Record, Diamond League Record and Meeting Record, and in the process, overlapped Amusan's 12.12 seconds world record, set on her way to making history as the first Nigerian and second African after Moroc-

can Nezha Bidouane to win a World outdoor title in Oregon, USA, in 2022.

Porbeni, a former Director of Sports in Delta State, and former Head Coach of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN), said on Friday that it might be difficult for

Amusan to regain the World Title. "I don't see it happening because she (Amusan) has been so inconsistent with her starts and subsequently her races," Porbeni said on Friday.

Tobi Express, as she is called by many Nigerian athletics followers, said after losing the World title on Thursday: "Competing in a world record race is amazing. I came out here and I did my best and I am happy with this Season Best."

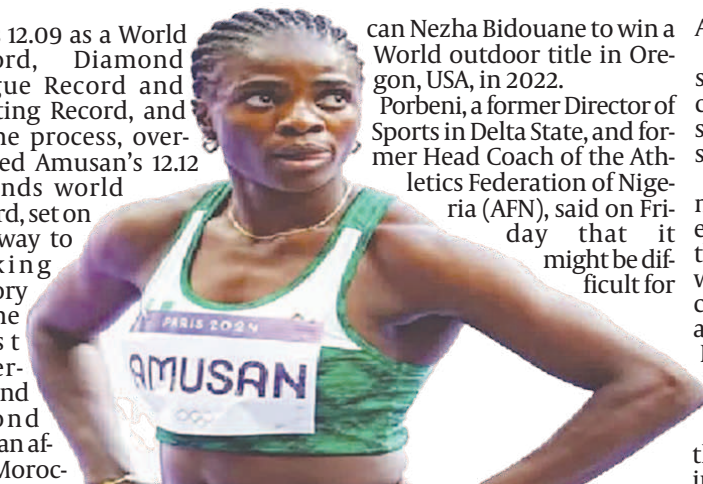
Amusan has now lost all four head-to-head races against the American, who has also tied the overall head-to-head meetings at 7-7.



Former NFF President Ibrahim Gusau



U.S.-based Super Falcons defender, Michelle Alozie could not hold back her tears after the team was eliminated from race to 2027 World Cup by South Africa in Morocco





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2025-WAFCON: Who Blocked Tinubu's Reward For Falcons?

• How Unpaid \$100,000 Pledges, Missing Abuja Flats And National Honours May Have Cost Nigeria The 2026 Title. • And Why EFCC Must Probe The Football House

From Morocco Glory To Morocco Shame: The Untold Story...

JULY 2025, Rabat. The Super Falcons beat Zambia, then South Africa, then Morocco to win Nigeria's 10th Women's Africa Cup of Nations. It was a night of dancing, drumming, and presidential phone calls. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu addressed the team live when they returned home. His words were loud and clear: \$100, 000 for each player. Three-bedroom apartments in Abuja for every member. National honours for the squad and technical crew. The nation cheered. The girls cried. July 2026, Rabat again. The same Super Falcons, same tournament, were eliminated by Cameroon in the quarter-finals. A team that had won 10 of 13 WAFCON titles looked disoriented, angry, and heavy. Between those two Julys, something happened inside the Football House. Behold, it was covered up. And now, with President Tinubu ordering a "comprehensive overhaul" of the NFF that led to the mass resignation of the President, Board Members and the General Secretary this week, a story that no sports desk reported is surfacing: **The 2025 presidential rewards have not been paid.**

And players were allegedly asked to keep quiet with letters dated after the fact. This is the story of that silence. Of promises made in public and delayed in private. And of why the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) must now ask: Where is the money? Where are the houses? And did the failure to deliver break the team?

The 2025 Promise - public, loud, and unforgettable. Nigerians remember that night. After the Falcons lifted the 2025 WAFCON trophy in Morocco, President Tinubu's reward package was announced through official channels and widely reported:

1. \$100,000 USD for each player and technical crew member.
2. A 3-Bedroom Apartment in Abuja for each member of the squad.
3. National Honours: Member of the Order of the Niger (MON).

It was hailed as the biggest reward in African women's football history. The President called it "a statement that Nigeria values its daughters." The Falcons returned to a hero's welcome. Photos were taken. Speeches made. One year later, as of August 2026, documents seen by this columnist confirmed that none of the three components has been fully delivered. That is the core of this column, a report of investigations.

The unreported letters inside Morocco 2026

ACCORDING to multiple players and officials who cannot be named here, trouble started building in the camp ahead of WAFCON 2026, also hosted in Morocco. Some players began asking, privately at first: "Where is our 2025 money? Where are the Abuja houses?" According to decent sources, NFF officials got wind that the players were planning a quiet protest—including training boycott, and a unified statement to the press in Morocco. That was when, sources confirmed, three letters were rushed to the team in Morocco. We have reviewed copies of the letters provided and verified as authentic. Key details:

Letter 1: Payment of \$100, 000 Reward dated July 27, 2026. Delivered in Team Hotel, Rabat, July 2026 on the letterhead of **The Presidency: National Sports Commission.**

Letter 2: Conferment of National Honours dated July 27, 2026 on a letterhead of **Office of the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Special Duties and Intergovernmental Affairs.** Delivered in Team Hotel, Rabat, July 2026.

Letter 3: Allocation of 3-Bedroom Flats, Abuja.



Dated September 18, 2025 on a letter head of **"Renewed Hope: Renewed Project SPV Limited RC. 7329087.**

Delivered in Team Hotel, Rabat, July 2026 The most striking is Letter 1 from the National Sports Commission, which announced the redemption of the total presidential package. It states in part, "Please, note that the approved financial reward of Naira equivalent of (One Hundred/Fifty Thousand USD) is being processed by the Honourable Minister of Finance/CME and Office of the Accountant General of the Federation and you will receive payments directly to your Bank account in due course". That promissory note surfaced eleven months after the President's public announcement. Was the presidency aware?

Letter 3 for the houses, is backdated to September 2025, two months after the WAFCON final. Insiders who spoke to **"Inside Stuff"** said the letters were meant to "calm nerves" and "ensure focus" before the Cameroon match. Full quote: "They gave us letters in Morocco so we would not talk. One year later, and they were still 'processing.' We played with that in our hearts." We reached out to the NFF for comment before publication. But at press time, the NFF Board had resigned en masse following the President's directive for an overhaul.

Why This Matters - From promise to performance

Can unpaid bonuses really cause a team to lose? Sports psychology says yes. Team cohesion dies when trust dies. Consider the timeline:

1. July 2025: Won WAFCON. Public promise made.
2. Sept 2025 - June 2026: 11 months. No payment. No allocation letters for houses. No investiture for honours.
3. July 2026: Team in Morocco. Letters arrive dated July 27, 2026. One week before Cameroon game.
4. July 2026: Cameroon eliminated Nigeria. Players told us the mood in camp was not about tactics. It was about "being used."

"It's not about the money alone," one player said. "It's about respect. The President said it on TV. Then nothing. Then letters in Morocco. We felt like beggars."

This does not excuse the technical failure

against Cameroon. But it explains the weight the girls carried. You cannot ask athletes to die for a badge when they feel the system has failed them first.

The collapse of the Football House

THIS week, President Tinubu ordered what he called a "comprehensive overhaul of the Football House." Within 48 hours, NFF President, Alhaji Ibrahim Gusau, resigned citing "personal reasons." Other board members resigned. The General Secretary whose spent more than a decade there also exited. **The Guardian**, (Nigeria) yesterday (Friday August 28, 2026) published a comprehensive lead story headlined, "Football Under Scrutiny: NFF shops for new era, 'managers' amid global accountability probe" detailing years of alleged mismanagement, contract disputes, and poor administration that led to the collapse.

Meanwhile, the mass resignation at the NFF has been hailed by fans and analysts as long overdue. But the mass resignation also creates a new problem: Who is now responsible for fulfilling the 2025 presidential promise to the Falcons? If the people who signed the July 27, 2026 letters are gone, do the letters die with them? Or does the Federal Government, through the National Sports Commission and Ministry of Finance, step in directly? That is why EFCC must step in.

Why EFCC must probe - 5 Questions

The EFCC's mandate is to investigate financial crimes and abuse of public office. The Falcons case raises 5 urgent questions:

1. **Where is the money?** Was budgetary provision made for the \$100,000 x 30 players + crew = \$3 million? If yes, where is it? If the Ministry of Finance was "processing" as of July 2026, what was the hold-up?
2. **Who signed the letters and why the dates?** Why were letters dated 27 July 2026 delivered in July 2026? Why was the housing letter backdated to Sept 2025? Was this to mislead players?
3. **What happened to the housing allocations?** Which ministry was to provide the Abuja 3-bedroom flats? Was land allocated? Were contractors paid?
4. **Who Blocked the National Honours list?**

The list for MON honours is usually processed through the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation. Why, one year lat-

er, has no investiture happened?

5. **Did the delay affect Falcons performance?**

Did the delay contribute to poor morale and Nigeria's early exit in 2026? If public funds were used to prepare a team that was demoralised by unpaid debts, that is a governance failure. This is not about witch-hunting. It is about accountability. The President made a promise in the name of Nigeria. Nigerians deserve to know why it was not kept for a whole year.

The Media Silence - Why No One Reported The Scandal

This is perhaps the most curious part. Sports journalists travelled with the team. They were in the hotels. They heard whispers of the victims. Yet, no major outlet robustly reported that the 2025 rewards were unpaid before the 2026 tournament. Why?

1. **Access Journalism:** Some reporters fear losing access to NFF if they report negatively.

2. **The Letters:** The letters were delivered inside the team hotel, away from media. 3. **NFF Control of Narrative:** The NFF press team focused on "preparation" and "morale," not welfare. 4. **Fear of Victimisation:** Players feared being dropped if they spoke. **The result:** A scandal was covered up not by conspiracy, but by silence. That must end now.

What the President must do now: President Tinubu has shown he can act decisively with the NFF overhaul. He must now do three (3) things for the Falcons:

Direct payment through Ministry of Finance:

Bypass the old NFF structure. Pay the \$100, 000/\$50, 000 directly to each 2025 player and crew from a special presidential intervention fund. Publish the list.

Allocate the houses: Work with FCTA and Ministry of Housing to allocate the promised 3-bedroom flats immediately. Ensure possession of the houses before December 2026.

Confer the National Honours: Send the list to the SGF. Hold an investiture before year ends. Let the girls wear MON on their chests.

EFCC Probe: Refer the matter to EFCC to trace what happened to the funds and who delayed the process to this shameful denouement. This is not just about the Falcons. It is about every Nigerian athlete who will hear a presidential promise in the future.

The Bigger Picture - Women's Football And Trust

THE Super Falcons are Nigeria's most successful national team. 10 WAFCON titles. Olympic qualifications. World Cup runs. Yet they have historically been the most poorly treated. From unpaid bonuses in 2016, 2019, to this 2025 case, it has been reproachful. If we want Nigeria to remain a football power, we must treat our female athletes with the same urgency we treat male athletes. That is what has happened in Spain as I noted the other day. A promise from the President is a debt of the nation. Not a gift. When that debt is unpaid, the next generation of girls will not lace their boots.

As our girls are still waiting: As of today, the 2025 Super Falcons are back in their clubs in Europe, America, and Nigeria. Some are paying rent. Some are supporting families. Some are wondering if that Abuja flat will ever come. They won for Nigeria. They danced for Nigeria. Now they are asking one question: **When will the President's 2025 promise be fulfilled?** Mr President, you intervened and cleaned the Football House. Thank you. Now please, finish the job. Pay the girls. House the girls. Honour the girls. And let EFCC find out who stood between your word and their reward. And here is the thing, a nation that does not keep its promise to its champions cannot ask them to keep winning for the nation.

What **The Guardian** stands for

Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

- *The Guardian* is an independent newspaper, established for the purpose of presenting balanced coverage of events, and of promoting the best interests of Nigeria. It owes allegiance to no political party, ethnic, community, religious or other interest groups. Its primary commitment is to the integrity and sovereignty of the Federation of Nigeria, and beyond that, to the unity and sovereignty of Africa.
- *The Guardian* will at all times uphold the need for justice, probity in public life, equal access to the nation's resources and equal protection under the law of Nigeria for all citizens.

- *The Guardian* journalist must whole-heartedly subscribe to the 1979 Code of Conduct for Nigerian journalists as amended in 1998.
- *The Guardian* believes, therefore, that it is the moral duty of every journalist to have respect for the truth and to publish or prepare for publication only the truth and to the best of his knowledge.
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