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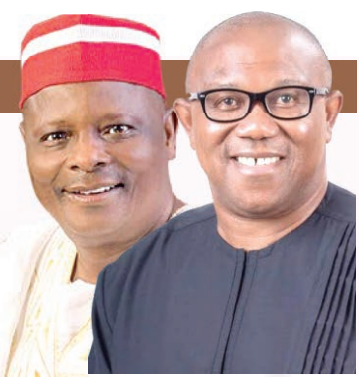
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# The Guardian WEEKEND

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Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

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# State Police Faces Fresh Hurdle As Opposition Seeks Delayed Implementation

From **Adamu Abuh, John Akubo** (Abuja) and **Moyosore Salami** (Lagos)

**• New Framework Should Commence After 2027 Elections – Obi.**
**• CUPP Urges Tinubu To First Strengthen Federal Police • Deputy Speaker Kalu Dismisses Funding Fears**
**• HURIWA Advocates Liberalisation Of Gun Ownership, Says State Police Alone Won't End Insecurity**

THE passage of the Constitution Alteration Bill seeking to establish state police across the federation by the Senate last Wednesday is raising fresh dust in the polity as many stakeholders have expressed fear that a hasty implementation of the law may create more problems for the country than it would solve.

Although they acknowledged the significance of the amendment, which ended Nigeria's decades-long debate over decentralising the country's policing structure to address worsening insecurity, the stakeholders argued that passage of the bill lacked adequate public scrutiny and also warned that rolling out the new policing structure before the 2027 polls could pave way for electoral malfeasance.

Speaking on Friday, the presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) for the 2027 elections, Peter Obi, called for the postponement of the roll out of state police to till after the 2027 general election, citing concerns that the new policing structure could be abused for political purposes.

Obi, who welcomed the Senate's passage of the Constitution Alteration Bill on State Police, described the move as a significant legislative milestone, but argued that the process leading to its approval lacked adequate transparency and public participation.

The former Anambra State governor stated this in a post on his X handle titled, 'State Police: Commendable Step, but Disorderly Legislation Raises Concerns of Political Misuse.'

According to him, the country's highly centralised policing structure has long been unsuitable for a country of its size, diversity and complexity, making the establishment of state police a necessary reform.

"The recent passage of the State Police Bill by the National Assembly marks a significant legislative milestone in addressing a long-standing demand of the Nigerian people," Obi said.

He noted that the legislative and constitutional process leading to the bill's passage was shaky and raised legitimate concerns.

According to him, the process should have involved wider community participation and public hearings, particularly given the sensitivity of the proposed reform.

"The mechanism for passing the law appears highly disorganised, with no public hearing on such a sensitive issue. Indeed, the rush to enact the law without proper legislative procedures fuels suspicion among many observers about the political motives behind it," he stated.

Obi said the greatest concern surrounding state police was the possibility of governors deploying the outfits to intimidate political opponents, suppress opposition activities and influence elections.

"There is a widespread, justifiable fear that state police forces could become instruments in the hands of governors. The suspicion is that a state-controlled police force could be weaponised to suppress political rivals, disrupt opposition rallies and manipulate elections," he said.

To prevent such abuses, he called for the establishment of independent oversight institutions, including State Police Service Commissions insulated from executive interference.

Obi stated that state policing can only become an effective security solution if strong institutional safeguards are put in place to ensure accountability and protect public interest.

He further expressed doubts about the current administration's ability to resist using state policing to influence the 2027 general election.

"Going by what Nigerians have seen so far, there is no guarantee that this administration can resist the temptation to take advantage of state policing to influence the 2027 general election by proxy.

"In view of that possibility and the danger it poses to the polity, it is necessary to defer its implementation until after the general election," he said.

Similarly, the Coalition of United Political Parties (CUPP) has cautioned against hasty implementation of the proposed state police system, warning that the constitutional reform could be undermined if not backed by strong legal safeguards and a strengthened Nigeria Police Force (NPF).

In a statement issued on Friday in Abuja, the Acting National Chairman of the coalition, Chief Peter Ameh, said the passage of the constitutional amendment bill by the Senate, following its earlier approval by the House of Representatives, marked a significant shift in Nigeria's security architecture but should not be seen as a substitute for fixing the country's overstretched federal police.

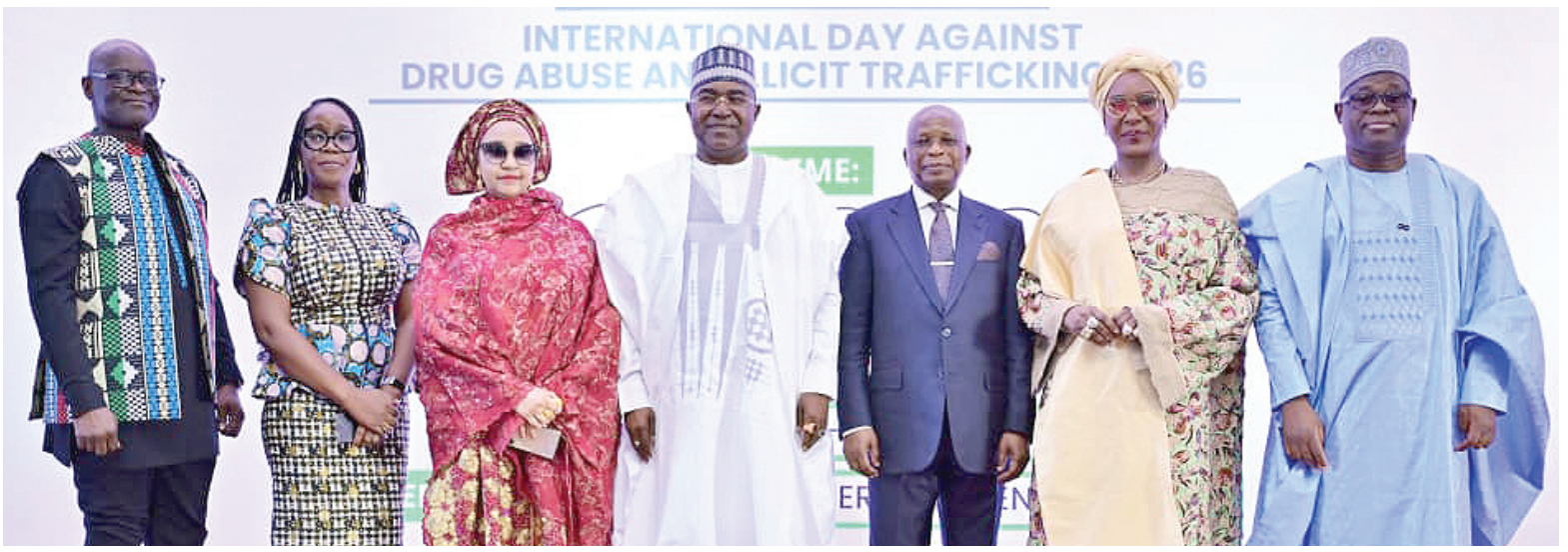
Ameh noted that while the creation of State Police offers an opportunity to improve local intelligence gathering, community policing and rapid response to crime, the Federal Government had yet to fulfill its promises to adequately recruit, equip and fund the NPF despite worsening insecurity across the country.

According to him, the failure to strengthen the centralised police system has exposed the limitations of relying solely on a force controlled from Abuja to tackle banditry, kidnapping, insurgency, farmer-herder clashes, communal conflicts and other violent crimes.

He warned that without adequate safeguards, state police could be vulnerable to political manipulation, election interference, intimidation of political opponents and other abuses of power.

"The establishment of state police presents an opportunity to bridge existing security gaps. However, it is not a silver bullet. The speed with which this constitutional amendment is being pursued raises legitimate concerns about the adequacy of safeguards against abuse," Ameh said.

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




Dr. Akanidomo Ibanga of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (left); Executive Director MTN Foundation, Mrs. Odunayo Sanya; Mrs. Munirat Marwa; Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd); Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, representing President Bola Ahmed Tinubu; First Lady of Kwara State, Amb.(Mrs) Olufolake Abdulrasaq and Senator Sadiq Sulaiman Umar representing the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio at the Conference Centre, Presidential Villa Abuja during the grand finale ceremony of the 2026 World Drug Day... on Friday.

# Tinubu Unveils Tech-driven Offensive Against Drug Traffickers, Hails NDLEA's Global Successes

From **Terhemba Daka** (Abuja) and **Obinna Nwaoku** (Port Harcourt)

**• Agency Busts Drug Rings Worth N480b, Arrests 29,262 Suspects In 18 Months, Secures 5,225 Convictions**
**• Marwa Warns Criminal Syndicates Exploiting Dark Web, Cryptocurrencies**
**• Pharmacists Seek Stronger Action Against Substance Abuse, Fake Drugs**

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu on Friday declared that Nigeria will intensify the deployment of technology, intelligence, forensic science and coordinated international partnerships to combat the evolving threat of illicit drug trafficking and substance abuse.

The President also paid glowing tribute to the leadership and personnel of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), saying their courage, professionalism and operational successes have earned Nigeria international recognition in the global fight against narcotics.

This is even as the Chairman/Chief Executive of the NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd) has disclosed that the agency arrested 29,262 suspected drug offenders, seized more than 5.3 million kilogrammes of illicit drugs valued at over N1.5 trillion, and secured 5,225 convictions between 2025 and the first half of 2026.

Marwa also revealed that the agency dismantled several transnational drug cartels, including syndicates involving billionaire drug traffickers, Mexican methamphetamine manufacturers and international money laundering networks, describing the operations as some of the biggest anti-drug successes in Nigeria's history.

Meanwhile, healthcare professionals have renewed calls for stronger government intervention to combat the twin threats of substance abuse and the proliferation of substandard and falsified medicines, warning that both pose grave dangers to public health, security and national development.

Tinubu, represented by the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), at the grand finale of the 2026 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Abuja, said his administration remains committed to tackling both the supply and demand sides of the drug problem through innovative and evidence-based strategies.

Speaking on this year's theme, 'The World Drug Problem: Persisting Issues, New Challenges, Innovative Responses,' the President warned that the global narcotics trade has become increasingly sophisticated, requiring governments to remain vigilant, adaptive and united.

He noted that substance abuse is no longer merely a public health issue, but a growing threat to families, education, economic productivity and national security.

"My administration remains committed to creating an environment in which young Nigerians can thrive and succeed. Through the Renewed Hope Agenda, we are expanding access to education, promoting skills development, supporting entrepreneurship, creating employment opportunities and implementing social interventions that address the underlying factors that make individuals vulnerable to substance abuse and criminal recruitment," he said.

Tinubu stressed that prevention must be complemented by an aggressive crackdown on trafficking networks. The President said science, innovation and data analytics have become indispensable weapons against organised drug crime.

"We must strengthen our capacity to collect, analyse and apply data so that emerging trends are identified early, interventions are properly evaluated and strategic decisions are informed by facts.

"As illicit drug markets evolve, our ability to detect and identify drugs and precursor chemicals must evolve as well. Strengthening forensic laboratories, enhancing technological capabilities and supporting scientific research will remain essential if we are to stay ahead of emerging threats," he said.

He added that the criminal justice system would continue to receive the support required to ensure that drug traffickers are effectively investigated, prosecuted and brought to justice.

Tinubu commended Marwa and officers of the NDLEA for what he described as their outstanding commitment to safeguarding the nation.

He reminded Nigerians that the drug menace is a shared global challenge that requires collective responsibility, urging governments, civil society organisations, development partners, communities and citizens to work together in building safer and healthier societies.

Delivering the keynote lecture titled, 'Celebrating Progress and Inspiring Collective Action Against Drug Abuse,' Prof. Oluwatoyin Odeku of the Department of Pharmaceutics and Industrial Pharmacy, University of Ibadan, said Nigeria has recorded measurable progress in the war against illicit drugs over the past five years.

"When the NDLEA was re-energised in 2021, many believed the drug war was unwinnable. Today, the evidence tells a different story. We have every reason to celebrate the progress made while remaining committed to sustaining the momentum," she said.

Also speaking, the Country Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Cheikh Toure, represented by Dr. Akanidomo Ibanga, praised the Federal Government's balanced approach to drug control.

He said the leadership demonstrated by the NDLEA, the Federal Ministry of Health and other stakeholders reflects Nigeria's growing commitment to evidence-based, human rights-centred drug control policies.

"UNODC remains firmly committed to supporting Nigeria through technical expertise, strategic partnerships and innovative solutions that respond to realities on the ground," he said.

On his part, Marwa said this year's global theme reflects the rapidly evolving nature of organised drug crime.

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

# News

## APC Stakeholders Hail Diri On Party's New 'Unity Secretariat'

• Alaibe Returns To Party

From **Julius Osahon**, Yenagoa

GOVERNOR Douye Diri of Bayelsa State has inaugurated an ultramodern secretariat of the state All Progressives Congress (APC) in Yenagoa.

Diri described the edifice as the "unity secretariat," noting that it has brought together key stakeholders of the party under one roof for the first time in many years.

The governor lauded the unity among members, emphasising that the strength of the party was in working together.

He expressed appreciation to those who though lost in the recent party primaries remained in its fold, calling them the heroes of the APC in the state.

Diri stressed the importance of loyalty in politics, noting that without members standing solidly behind him, he would be unable to lead the party.

He assured party faithful that he would continue to operate an inclusive leadership style and called on leaders and political office holders at various levels to use their positions to uplift people and add value rather than oppress them.

"I like to appeal that nobody should feel sidelined as nobody came to hijack the party."

## EFCC, CSO Convene Confab On Anti-money Laundering, Terrorism Financing

By **Innocent Anoruo**

SPACES for Change (S4C) is partnering the Special Control Unit against Money Laundering (SCUML) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), with support from local and international partners, to convene the third edition of the yearly Africa High-Level Civil Society Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Conference.

According to the Executive Director of S4C, Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri, the conference will take place from July 14 to 17, 2026, in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, under the theme, 'Implementing FATF Recommendation 8 Correctly: Practices, Lessons Learned and Opportunities for Reform.'

The conference builds on the growing recognition of civil society as a critical partner to governments in tackling money laundering and terrorism financing.

This year's edition will bring together over 200 participants from around the world, including representatives of African governments, FATF-style regional bodies (FSRBs), non-profit organisations, law enforcement agencies, regional and economic bodies, financial intelligence units, financial institutions, diplomatic missions, indigenous groups, academia and international organisations.

## Tinubu Creates National Health Technology Office To Drive Digital Health, Data Integration

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

• Names Adigwe Pioneer Coordinator

• Signs NIMC Act 2026 To Strengthen National Security, Digital Inclusion

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has approved the establishment of the National Health Technology and Data Analytics Office (NHTDAO), a new institution designed to spearhead Nigeria's digital health transformation, with pharmaceutical researcher, Dr. Obi Adigwe, appointed as its pioneer National Coordinator.

The President took another major step towards repositioning Nigeria's digital identity ecosystem on Friday by assenting to the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) Act 2026, a landmark legislation expected to strengthen national security, improve governance, deepen digital inclusion and accelerate the country's march towards a $1 trillion economy.

The NHTDAO, to be domiciled in the Office of the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, will serve as the country's central platform for coordinating digital health initiatives, integrating health data systems and driving technology-enabled reforms across the healthcare sector.

According to a statement issued on Friday by the President's Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, the office is intended to strengthen, not replace, the statutory mandates of existing health institutions by providing national coordination, setting interoperability standards and ensuring seamless collaboration among public and private health stakeholders.

The statement said the office will operationalise the National Digital Health Architecture approved by the National Council on Health in November 2025, providing the framework for a secure, interoperable and data-driven healthcare ecosystem.

It noted that the NHTDAO is expected to harmonise digital health initiatives nationwide, improve data governance, accelerate innovation and support evidence-based policy-making aimed at improving healthcare delivery and patient outcomes.

Tinubu also named Adigwe, the current Director-General of the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD), to lead the new office.

The Presidency described Adigwe as a scientist with an established record in deploying research and technology to strengthen healthcare systems.

During his tenure at NIPRD, he championed initiatives in artificial intelligence, translational research and technology transfer, while coordinating several high-impact international projects, including a ¥300 million nanotechnology grant and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)-supported establishment of Africa's first Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) Training Facility.

He also led the roadmap that secured an €18 million European Union grant for pharmaceutical research, the largest of its kind on the continent, and gained international recognition during the COVID-19 pandemic for leading what was described as the world's first scientific analysis debunking claims surrounding the "Covid Organics" herbal preparation.

To provide strategic direction and oversight, President Tinubu approved a high-level Steering Committee co-chaired by the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate, and Chairman of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), Mr. Olaniyi Yusuf.



Leader, House of Representatives, Julius Ihonvbere (left); Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu; Senate President, Godswill Akpabio; President Bola Ahmed Tinubu; Minister of Justice and Anthony General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi; Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo; Director General and Chief Executive Officer, National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), Abisoye Coker-Odusote and Operation Manager, Word Bank, Taimur Samad during the Presidential Assent to National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) Act 2026 held at the Presidential Villa, Abuja... on Friday. PHOTO: STATE HOUSE

## Sanwo-Olu Orders Demolition Of Distressed Houses Around Alakija Collapsed Building

By **Gbenga Salau**

• Nine Dead, 27 Rescued

LAGOS State government will demolish all buildings marked as distressed around the collapsed three-storey building at Alakija, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has said.

Speaking during an inspection tour of the site on Friday, the Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr. Gbenga Omotoso, who represented Sanwo-Olu, sympathised with the families of the victims and praised emergency responders for their swift intervention.

According to the commissioner, 27 people were rescued alive from the rubble, while nine died, stating that the search and rescue operation lasted all night.

Still at the site are Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service, Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA),the Police, Command and Control Centre, Neighborhood Watch and other agencies.

The commissioner said: "Sanwo-Olu is saddened by this incident. He sends his condolences," adding: "This should not have happened if people had obeyed the law instead of prioritising livelihoods over lives. The collapsed building had been marked as structurally distressed and occupants were directed to vacate the premises, but the warning was ignored.

"All other buildings already marked as unsafe within the area will be demolished to prevent similar tragedies and avoid a compromise of the lives of others around.

"Twenty-seven people were rescued alive, while nine casualties were recorded during the search and rescue. Sanwo-Olu commiserates with the families who lost their loved ones," Omotoso said.

The commissioner also promised that owners of the collapsed building would be prosecuted by the state.

"Anyone found to have violated building regulations or frustrated enforcement efforts will surely face legal action," he said.

Omotoso condemned the construction of buildings beneath high-tension electricity lines, describing the practice as "dangerous" and "suicidal".

According to the commissioner, the cause of the collapse is being investigated as survivors are receiving treatment at various hospitals.

The government urged residents to comply with safety directives, stressing that protecting lives remains its top priority.

## Experts Seek Nationwide School Screening, Early Detection To Tackle Scoliosis

By **Ijeoma Nwanosike** and **Suliyat Tella**

MEDICAL experts have called for the introduction of routine scoliosis screening in schools across Nigeria as part of efforts to promote early diagnosis, prevent severe spinal deformities and eliminate the stigma faced by children living with the condition.

The call was made on Friday during an event to mark World Scoliosis Day by the Scoliosis Focus Foundation in collaboration with General Hospital, Gbagada, Lagos, where orthopaedic specialists, physiotherapists, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders stressed that delayed diagnosis often results in avoidable complications, including breathing difficulties and the need for major corrective surgery.

Scoliosis is an abnormal sideways curvature of the spine that forms an "S" or "C" shape instead of remaining straight and is commonly diagnosed between the ages of 10 and 18 years, when children experience rapid growth.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of General Hospital, Gbagada, Dr. Oseni Olugbenga, described education and public awareness as the cornerstone of effective scoliosis management, noting that greater understanding of the condition would enable parents, teachers and caregivers to recognise warning signs early and seek prompt medical intervention before complications develop. He commended the Scoliosis Focus Foundation for complementing government efforts through awareness campaigns, counselling services, school education programmes and support for patients requiring conservative treatment or corrective surgery.

Olugbenga also drew attention to the emotional and psychological burden experienced by many people living with scoliosis, urging Nigerians to replace discrimination and prejudice with compassion and support that would encourage affected individuals to access appropriate healthcare.

The Founder of the Scoliosis Focus Foundation, Dr. Ayomide Akintan-Adejuwon, said World Scoliosis Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness, promote early detection and advocate improved care for people living with scoliosis, adding that the Foundation was established about 14 years ago to offer hope to patients and their families through education, counselling and other support services.

According to her, about 80 per cent of cases are classified as idiopathic scoliosis, where the exact cause is unknown, while other forms result from congenital spinal abnormalities or neuromuscular disorders. She added that recognised risk factors include family history, rapid adolescent growth, certain genetic factors and congenital abnormalities, with females generally more affected than males.

## Nigerians Hail Laolu Akande's U.S. Voice Of Truth Award

By **Eniola Daniel**

NIGERIANS have taken to social media to celebrate veteran journalist, former presidential spokesman and host of Inside Sources on Channels Television, Laolu Akande, following his recognition with the 2026 Voice of Truth Award at the inaugural U.S., Nigeria Faith Heroes Award Gala in Washington, D.C.

Akande received the award on Thursday, for what organisers described as his commitment to factual, courageous and principled reporting, particularly on issues relating to religious freedom, insecurity and human rights.

The recognition sparked a wave of commendations on X, with many Nigerians describing the award as a fitting tribute to a journalist whose work has consistently reflected professionalism, integrity and dedication to truth.

Among those who reacted was Musa Jacob (@Musa_Jacob12), who described the award as well deserved.

"A reward for dedication for Mr. Laolu Akande, a true journalist and a standard to follow. Big congratulations to you sir," he wrote.

Another X user, Adelekan Al (@adelekanadeoye), simply described Akande as "a champion of the truth."

Dr. Uzo Dan Macaulay also applauded the veteran broadcaster, describing him as "a beacon of integrity."

"A beacon of integrity whose calm, dignified image reassures and inspires. Congratulations on the 2026 Voice of Truth Award. Your steadfast courage and principled reporting lift our public life and challenge others to match your standard," he wrote.

For Ola Bankole (@OlakunleBanko...), the award was proof that diligence and consistency eventually earn recognition.

Special



# Despite Child Rights Act, Underage Labour

*Forced labour in agriculture sector is rated as one of the least visible forms of exploitation, which affects millions of children. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Child Labour Survey highlights that 39.2 per cent of Nigerian children aged 5 to 17— representing roughly 24.67 million children — are engaged in underage labour, with 56.8 per cent working in agriculture. Despite efforts to solve this problem, it has continued to grow at an alarming rate writes* ***GBENGA AKINFENWA.***

FARMERS and other stakeholders in agro business face three major challenges: high cost of inputs, lack of funds and the dearth of farm hands. The third became acute seven years ago in the build-up to 2019 general elections.

A farmer in Oyo State, Oluronbi Josiah, narrated that farm hands from other ECOWAS countries, who were always engaged on yearly contract, left *en mass* and failed to return, leaving a large pool of farmers stranded, owing majorly to depreciation of the naira, which made farming less attractive.

He said: "Majority of the labourers used to come from Togo, Benin and Ghana to work as farm hands on yearly contract. Aside from the stipend for their daily upkeep, they were usually paid at the end of the year, which they would convert to their home currencies. Owing to the decline in naira value, it was no longer economically viable for them to continue with the job, as most of them now prefer to stay in their countries and look for alternative means of survival."

Regrettably, it's learnt that the bulk of farm labourers from Kogi, Benue, Ebonyi and other parts of the country who were very useful over the years to these farmers, especially in states such as Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Ekiti and Oyo, even areas like Epe, Badagry and other agrarian parts of Lagos State, have now become commercial motorcyclists, preferring to have daily good returns, instead of working in the farms.

And what has become an option for the farmers is to embrace mechanisation – use of tractors and other machineries – which has not been consistent.

Investigations showed that only three states have tractors for farming. Sadly, where these tractors and other equipment are available, the cost of hiring them is far beyond the reach of these farmers.

Indeed, the average rental rate of a tractor, which was around N80, 000 per day in 2023, covering about 10 hours of work, increased to N205, 000 per day in 2025. This increase hinged on several factors – rising fuel costs, inflation, higher maintenance expenses, and the increasing cost of spare parts.

Even, the farmers who have the funds to acquire the tractors are being frustrated by government policies, especially the exorbitant tariff placed on imports. For instance, one of the stakeholders, Nnaemeka Obiaraeri, said he cleared a tractor he bought for N33m, with a whooping sum of N15m.

Since these options have failed and the farm hands have practically disappeared, the farmers have resorted to hiring children, especially under-age to work in the plantations; generally known as child labour in agriculture, a development experts say violates the rights of children.

According to Nigeria International Labour Organisation (ILO's) Convention, Child Labour refers to any work that deprives children of their childhood, potential, dignity and undermines their physical and psychological development. It includes all works that is mentally, emotionally, socially and morally dangerous and harmful to children.

It also involves all works that restricts or deprives children of the opportunity to attend school and force them to leave school prematurely. It also includes works that makes children combine school and labourious work for excessive periods of time.

ILO says the agric sector is one of the three most dangerous in terms of work-related fatalities, non-fatal accidents, and occupational diseases, posing serious risks to children's health, safety, and development.

According to the latest global estimates by the ILO and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), approximately 138 million children are trapped in child labour worldwide. 61 per cent of these children (nearly 84 million) work within the agricultural sector, including farming, fishing, livestock rearing, and forestry.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Child Labour Survey highlights that 39.2 per cent of Nigerian children aged 5 to 17 — representing roughly 24.67 million children are engaged in child labour, with 56.8 per cent working in Agriculture, while 22.9 per cent (14.3 million) perform hazardous work that is physically or psychological injurious.

Experts describe child labour in Nigerian agriculture sector as widespread and affecting millions of children. To them, it's not just about kids helping on family farms after school—it often means full-time, hazardous work that steals their childhood and health.

Reports have it that children in agriculture often begin working at a very young age, sometimes, as early as five years old, with a significant proportion – 67.5 per cent of them in the category of unpaid family workers, which is even higher in agriculture.

In Nigeria, investigations showed that this is very common among cassava and cocoa farmers. It was learnt that because cassava is a long duration crop, women often stoop for hundreds of hours to weed and keep just one hectare of cassava clean for a year.

In some cases, children are withdrawn from school to help their parents to weed, while others entice the children with money to force them to stay out of school, a practice that compromises the education of children and undermines their future.

The former President of Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria (CFAN), Comrade Adeola Adegoke, said the practice is a serious social issue that is very prevalent in the sector owing to poor agricultural Return On Investment (ROI) and poor remuneration of farmers who cannot afford to pay for labour hiring but rely heavily on family labour over the years.

"This prevalence is linked to poverty where majority of our farmers live within $1 a day, thereby depriving them from making a sustainable living wage in their farm businesses and prevented them from hiring labourers. Most farmers rarely cover their inputs cost on their farm investment, not to talk of making profit margins that can sustain their livelihoods. To send their children to school through payment of their school fees becomes a problem, and hiring additional labour becomes another issue.

"Many of the children of the farmers are often forced to support their parents during harvest periods and these often lead to their absence from school and prevent them from attending classes. These factors often contribute to out-of-school factor. These parents rely on the support of their children for their farming activities as a substitute for hiring laborers," he said.

The Executive Director, Kids & Teens Resource Centre (K&TRC), Folashade Bamigboye, disclosed that the crisis is apparent in rural and agrarian communities. She noted that the NBS data reveals that 44.8 per cent of children in rural areas are engaged in labour compared to 30 per cent in urban centres.

She added that in major cash-crop ecosystems like cocoa production and local food crop farming, children are frequently exposed to hazardous tasks like handling chemical pesticides, clearing dense forests, and carrying heavy loads.

Investigations revealed that children from poorer homes, whose household heads are less educated, are the major victims of this heinous act. They are often engaged in major areas of agriculture, including farming, fishing, aquaculture, forestry, and livestock.

Children, irrespective of their gender, are increasingly exposed to harsh experiences of life as their parents find it difficult to provide for their needs.

Between October 2023 and September 2024, the Lutheran World Relief launched a Child Labour Education and Resilience (CLEAR) project in Ondo State.

Its primary objectives included addressing the root causes of child labour, empowering communities with limited education on the issue, increasing net income from cocoa farming, and equipping children of cocoa farmers with essential life skills.



The initiative underscored the importance of reducing incidences of child labour, while emphasising the project's complementary relationship with the larger TRACE initiative in agriculture and cocoa ecosystems.

Also, the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), working under the Cassava Weed Management Project (CWMP) and the African Cassava Agronomy Initiative (ACAI) made bold step years ago to tackle the menace.

Their researchers developed an integrated weed control package combining best-bet agronomic practices and the use of environmentally friendly herbicides in a kit known as the Six Steps to Cassava Weed Management to reduce manual labour often done by the children and women. The package is being disseminated to help improve the livelihoods of farmers.

Workshops were also organised with the aim of addressing this problem. For instance, ILO held a four-day Media Training Workshop on Child Labour eradication organised by Action Against Child Labour in Agriculture in West Africa (ACLAWA), in Akwanga, Nasarawa State in 2024.

The organisers said the media is being encouraged to help target policy makers and government leaders swiftly on need for the enactment of the Labour Standards Act.

The organisation stressed an urgent need to have a legal framework that meets the international standards, adding that there are gaps in current Labour Act, which should be addressed.

Highlights of the training workshop included an evaluation of government efforts and policies for the elimination of Child Labour and various challenges.

Head, Child Labour, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Unit, Inspectorate Department of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Mrs. Tessy Odoh, who was present at the workshop, said Nigeria is hoping to, at least, drastically reduce child labour occurrence if not eliminate it by 2025.

Regrettably, the ILO lamented that the country is witnessing an upsurge in child labour activities. In another workshop, the National Project Manager of ILO's programme initiative – ACLAWA, Dr. Agatha, said Nigeria has over 24 million children engaged in one form of child labour or the other, noting that agriculture remains the branch of economy with the highest child labour prevalence at 56.8 per cent followed by services at 25.8 per cent and industry at 17.4 per cent.

According to its child labour situation index in Nigeria, over 31 million children representing 50.5 per cent are involved in economic activities, while 24,673, 485 children, representing 39.2 per cent are engaged in child labour practices.

"The index also showed that 14,390, 353 children representing 22.9 per cent are engaged in hazardous labour."

Dr. Agatha regretted that child labour has unfortunately been woven into the fabric of rural life in Nigeria, particularly within agricultural communities.

She said on a national scale, Nigeria has

*In many rural settings, there is a blurred line between age-appropriate character-building chores and exploitative child labour. Farm work is often traditionally viewed simply as family apprenticeship, making advocacy difficult to digest. While the laws exist on paper, the capacity to monitor and enforce compliance in remote rural farmsteads is nearly non-existent.*

# Feature

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

# Drives Agro-enterprise In Nigeria

more boys (12,689,663) than girls (11,983,822) exploited in the workplace, but when accessed by place of residence, the country has more girl victims in the urban and more boys in the rural areas.

"Nigeria has 30 per cent of the population of children aged 15-17 that are out of school while 22.4 per cent of children aged 5-14 are also out of school."

SADLY, these children are faced with severe hazards, which often times, lead to untimely deaths. According to the Nigeria Child Labour Survey 2022, 16.3 per cent of children in child labour had experienced workplace injuries.

Experts are of the opinion that child labour by its nature undermines the rights of children to good living and denies them the opportunity to acquire basic education necessary for productive adult life.

They also emphasised that child labour has manifested in various forms with daring consequences on the health, safety and morals of children.

Reports have it that exposure to pesticides and agrochemicals; carrying heavy loads beyond their physical capacity; working long hours in extreme heat; and cuts, burns, and musculoskeletal injuries from cutlasses and hoes; snake bites are some of the dangers faced by the children engaged in underage labour in agriculture.

The worst part is that unlike adults, the children work with machetes, hoes, and chemicals with little or no shield from danger.

Investigations showed that the children engaged in work on cocoa plantations might be exposed to pesticides, apply chemical fertilisers without protective gear, use sharp tools or carry heavy loads, and sometimes work under conditions of forced labour.

However, a couple of stakeholders emphasized the need to distinguish that not all children engagement in agriculture – fisheries, livestock production and crop cultivation falls under the category of child labour.

It was gathered that some age-appropriate, non-hazardous tasks can support children's development and contribute to food security and skill transfer.

While the advocates of this practice claimed that the categorisation depends on the child's age, the nature and duration of the tasks, and the risks involved, they claimed that though some children engage in this practice, it is basically to support their parents and also contribute to the country's food security dream.

It was also learnt that like in family farming, some children from tender age have their own portions where they cultivate out of passion or a kind of 'side hustle' to support their future ambitions.

A chartered accountant based in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Mr. Ayinde Olukola, who confirmed this, narrated how he usually followed his father to his farms from the age of five and how he had his own portion of land, where he cultivated vegetable and pepper till he graduated from the Polytechnic.

"Though my father was unlettered, yet he supported all his children's academic pursuit. I had my own portion of lands where I cultivated. During holidays, I'll rush home and work on the farm. I usually keep the proceeds from my harvest in my bank because my father provides us with the necessary things, including regular pocket money.

"Will you categorise this as child labour? No. It was out of passion and there are many children currently that are still engaging in this practice. There is difference, and the difference is clear," he said.

Bamigboye noted that allowing child labour to continue in the agricultural sector poses severe, multi-dimensional threats to Nigeria's long-term socioeconomic stability. She itemised perpetuation of poverty cycles; human capital depletion; threat to agricultural sustainability; and international trade and economic sanctions



as some of the consequences of the menace.

She said: "When children are deployed to fields instead of classrooms, they are denied the foundational skills required for decent work and employment. This traps agrarian families in a generational cycle of subsistence poverty, crippling rural economic mobility.

"Nigeria already faces an acute out-of-school children crisis. Feeding the agricultural machinery with child hands drains the nation's future talent pool, leaving us with a future workforce that lacks the technological and analytical literacy required to drive a modern economy.

"Relying on child labour masks the critical need for agricultural modernisation. It delays the adoption of mechanisation and smart farming practices. To build a food-secure future, Nigeria needs agricultural scientists and agropreneurs, not a workforce of unschooled, manual labourers."

She stated that as global markets are increasingly enforcing strict environmental, social and governance compliance, there is need for continued high rates of child labour in key export commodities like cocoa risk attracting international bans or heavy sanctions, which could devastate foreign exchange earnings.

The upsurge of child labour in agriculture, experts say is majorly driven by poverty, alongside limited access to quality education; inadequate agricultural technologies; labour shortages; hazardous working conditions; and traditional norms regarding children's roles in rural livelihoods.

Bamigboye lamented that despite legal framework such as the federal adoption of the Child's Rights Act (CRA), several systemic bottlenecks continue to sabotage intervention strategies.

She identified deep-seated rural poverty; cultural norms and misconceptions; weak enforcement and regulatory gaps; and deficits in rural educational infrastructure, as some of the challenges impeding remediation efforts.

"For many smallholder farmers, child labour is not a choice but an economic survival mechanism. Low crop yields, unfair pricing and lack of access to rural credit mean families cannot afford to hire adult labour, forcing them to rely on their children.

"In many rural settings, there is a blurred line between age-appropriate character-building chores and exploitative child labour. Farm work is often traditionally viewed simply as family apprenticeship, making advocacy difficult to digest. While the laws exist on paper, the capacity to monitor and enforce compliance in remote rural farmsteads is nearly non-existent. There is a severe deficit of labour inspectors equipped to cover the vast informal agricultural sector," she said.

Bamigboye revealed that in many agrarian communities, schools are either physically inaccessible, completely dilapidated or lack teachers, noting that when the quality of available education is poor, parents see little return on investment in schooling and opt to put their children to work instead.

As this menace continue to rise despite several interventions, concerned Nigerians, especially child rights activists are calling for the sanction for erring farmers or investors still engaging in this heinous practice, through necessary legislations.

For instance, Section 28(1) of the Child Rights Act, states that no child shall be subjected to any forced or exploitative labour, employed to work in any capacity except where he is employed by a member of his family on light work of an agricultural, horticultural or domestic character required, in any case, to lift, carry or move anything so heavy as to be likely to adversely affect his physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development employed as a domestic help outside his own home or family environment.

Section 28(2) also states that: "No child shall be employed or work in an industrial undertaking and nothing in this subsection shall apply to work done by children in technical schools or similar approved institutions if the work is supervised by the appropriate authority". Section 30(2) of the Child Right Act also has relevant provisions that prohibit children labour.



The Trafficking in Person (Prohibition) enforcement and Administration Act 2015', PART IV, No. 23(1b) on Employment of Child as Domestic Worker and Inflicting grievous harm, states that: "Any person who employs, requires, recruits, transport, harbours, receives or hires out a child to do any work that is exploitable, injurious or hazardous to the physical, social and psychological development of the child, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a minimum term of two years, but not exceeding seven years without an option of fine."

To solve the problem, Adegoke said his organisation has taken a strategic approach to collaborate with ILO to support farmers' livelihood and provide adequate capacity training to enlighten them to understand the evil of depriving their children from attending schools or classes because of their farming activities, empowering them and strengthening their cooperative.

"The collaboration is also done with other stakeholders: state governments, NGOs and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment. The partnership is sometimes designed to strengthen farmers' cooperatives and provide incentives with sustainable farming practices that can help them to achieve sustainable growth and development that will improve their livelihood. Access to good market and diversification of their farming investments were also intensified to ensure that their incomes are dependable and sustainable.

"Many policies and laws were adopted and enacted by the stakeholders in the industry to safeguard child labour and forced labour rights and also protect the vulnerable children from exploitation and abuse at their teenage age."

He added that the issue of EUDR regulations, which guarantees sustainable production across value chain of some commodities, is also to ensure in addition that there is no element of child labour or forced labour in the supply chain aside being deforestation free.

IN its reaction, the Ministry of Labour and Employment attributed the menace to a combination of socio-economic, cultural, and structural factors.

The Head, Child Labour, Forced Labour, human trafficking and modern slavery Section Inspectorate Department of the ministry, Tessy Odoh told *The Guardian* that Child Labour in agriculture in Nigeria is mainly caused by poverty, as poor households often rely on children to assist their parents on farms to supplement household income; limited access to education in rural areas; weak enforcement of Child Labour laws and the demand for cheap labour in agriculture; informal nature of agricultural activities; economic hardship, displacement, and insecurity, among others.

"The Federal Government recognises that while some light household tasks may be culturally accepted, hazardous work that affects a child's health, safety, education, or dignity is unacceptable and prohibited under Nigerian Labour law and international labour standards."

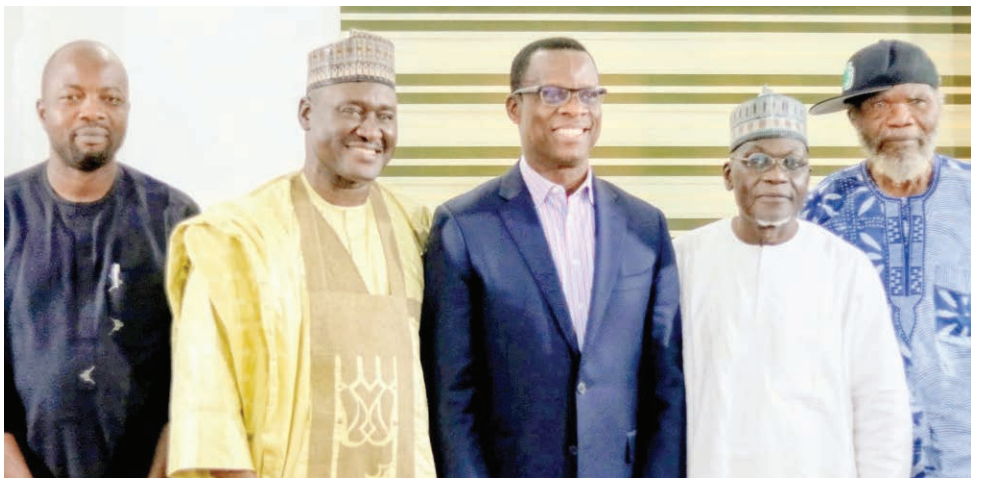
Odoh confirmed that the Federal Government has made several arrests through relevant enforcement and protection agencies, and has taken actions against violations relating to child labour, trafficking, forced labour, and exploitation of children.

"Agencies such as Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, the Nigeria Police Force, and state authorities work together to investigate and prosecute cases involving child labour and other forms of exploitation.

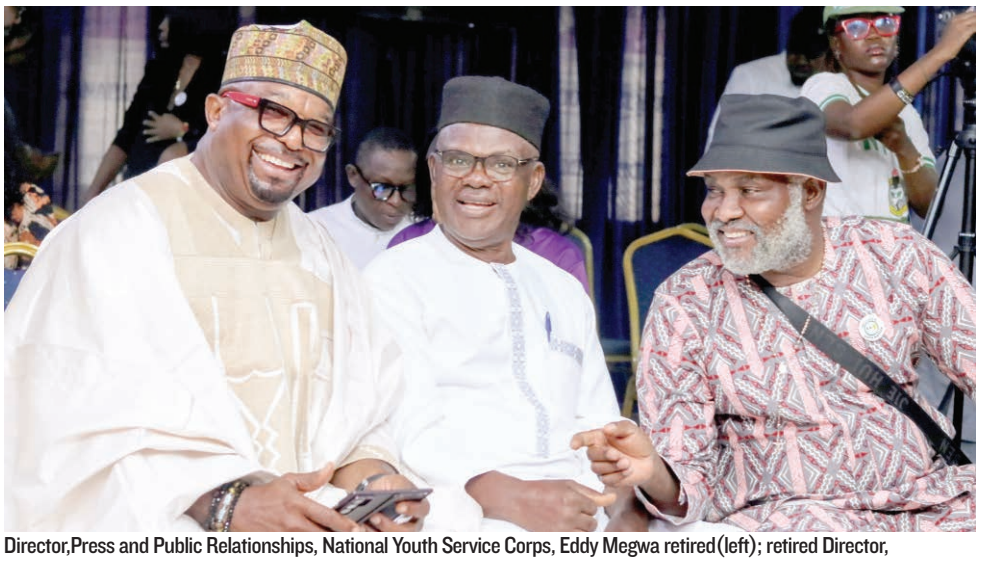
"However, it is important to note that child labour in agriculture often occurs within informal and family-based settings, making detection and prosecution more challenging. The government is therefore strengthening labour inspection systems and extension of labour inspection services to the informal sector.

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

# Diary



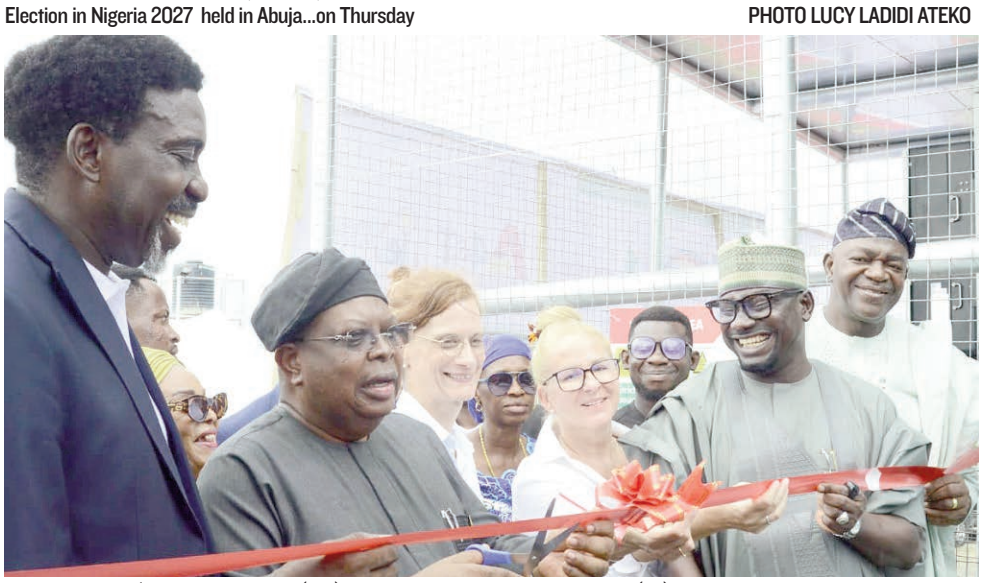
Executive Director, Grassroots Centre for Rights and Civic Orientation (GRACO), Armsfree Ajanaku(left); Executive Director, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), Auwal Ibrahim Musa Rafsanjani; former Resident Electoral Commissioner of the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC), Mike Igini; Professor of Politics and Society, Prof. Mohammed Kuna and Executive Secretary, Pan-African Strategic and Policy Research Group (PANAFSTRAG), Major General Ishola Williams (retired) during a stakeholders meeting on the review of the Electoral Act, 2026 and its implications, held in Abuja. PHOTO LUCY LADIDI ATEKO.



Director,Press and Public Relationships, National Youth Service Corps, Eddy Megwa retired(left); retired Director, Administration, Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Claudius Ekejiuba and National Coordinator of the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), Emmanuel Onwubiko during her 18th Edition Lecture on "Achieving Free and Fair Election in Nigeria 2027 held in Abuja...on Thursday PHOTO LUCY LADIDI ATEKO




Committee Member, International Academy of Forensics (IAF), Jackson Otuseso (left); Public Relations Officer, Maria Nwasoria; Chief Finance and Operations Officer of *The Guardian* Newspapers and Committee Member, IAF, Patience Ilesanmi; Shola Ogunleye; Chairperson, 2026 Global Forensics Summit, Dr. Caroline Ndubuisi; Founder, IAF, Dr. Damilola Fagboro; Committee Members of the IAF, Moriliat Ganiyu; Omunizua Obiageli and Event and Partnership Manager, *The Guardian* Newspapers, Olayinka Bolarin during the final day of the 2026 IAF summit, in collaboration with *The Guardian* held at the University of Lagos (UNILAG)...on Friday.



Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer(CEO) of A4&T Power Solution, Ayodeji Ademilua(left); Minister of Power, Joseph Olasunkanmi Tegbe; Head of cooperation German Embassy, Dr Karin Jansen; Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegate to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Mas Luga Stefanovic; Managing Director/CEO Rural Electrification Agency, Dr Abba Abubakar Aliyu and Member Lagos State House of Assembly, Abiru Lateef, representing Senator Tokunbo Abiru, at the IMAS Commissioning of Epe Project By the Rural Electrification Agency with Support of the Nigeria Energy Support Programme (NESP) held in Lagos.

# Metronotes



## Julicare Foundation Urges Support For Special Needs Children

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

THE Founder of Julicare Foundation, Prince Julius Ojo, has called on Nigerians, corporate organisations and international donors to increase support for children living with special needs across the country.

Ojo made the appeal during a Father's Day outreach visit to Modupe Cole Memorial Child Care and Treatment Home/School in Lagos recently, where the Canada-based charitable organisation donated food items and other essential supplies to support the institution's children and staff. To demonstrate its commitment to the cause, the foundation also announced that it would pay the salary of a nurse providing medical care at the school.

Ojo stressed the need for collective action to improve the welfare of vulnerable children, noting that many special-needs institutions continue to face challenges in providing adequate care, healthcare services and educational support. .

"As we celebrate Father's Day, we are reminded of our responsibility to care for the most vulnerable members of our society," he said, urging individuals and organisations to support such children through donations, partnerships and acts of kindness.

## Foundation Advocates Greater Investment In Adolescent Development

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

FOUNDER of the Smile & Shine Children's Foundation, Dr. Nimi Stephanie Ekere, has underscored the need for greater investment in adolescents, describing youth development as critical to Nigeria's future growth and development.

Ekere stpoke at STRIVE Conference 2026, with the theme "Safe. Skilled. Successful," organised by the foundation to equip adolescents with the knowledge, confidence and skills needed to navigate challenges, maximise opportunities and realise their full potential. The event brought together students, educators, healthcare professionals, mentors and youth development advocates. She noted that adolescence remains one of the most important stages of human development, serving as the bridge between childhood and adulthood.

## Akwa Ibom Medical City: 'A Journey Towards Healthcare Excellence'

AKWA Ibom State Governor, Pastor Umo Eno, has unveiled a breathtaking Medical City project designed to transform healthcare delivery, reduce medical tourism, and position the state as a leading destination for specialised healthcare services in Nigeria and beyond.

The ceremony, performed by the Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate, was graced by healthcare professionals, and development partners, showcased what has been described as one of the most ambitious healthcare infrastructure projects in Nigeria.

## Al-Habibiyyah Promotes Early Skills Learning To Address Rising Youth Unemployment

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

TO tackle rising youth unemployment in the country, a prominent faith-based organisation, Al-Habibiyyah Islamic Centre, has identified early skills learning among Nigerian youths as a strategy to reduce the challenge. The centre emphasised this during a youth empowerment and skills acquisition programme, where tertiary students and graduates were trained in core, in-demand skills relevant to today's evolving job market.

The training was organised to reduce the over-dependence on white collar jobs and improve their chances in an increasingly competitive labour market.

Speaking at the event in Agege, Lagos, the Coordinator of Al-Habibiyyah Islamic Centre in Lagos, Abdulrahman Thabit, said the youth empowerment, which began in 2024, has impacted hundreds of lives, who are now pursuing careers in what they learned.

## Lafarge Reinforces Commitment To Industrial Growth, Unveils New Corporate Identity

By **Sunday Aikulola**

AS part of efforts aimed at aligning with its new shareholder structure, Lafarge Africa Plc., recently unveiled its new corporate identity and name—HBM Nigeria Plc.

The company reaffirmed that the name change would not affect its operations, workforce, customers, shareholders, or its unwavering commitment to the nation's economic growth and infrastructure development.

Group Managing Director / Chief Executive Officer, Lolu Alade-Akinyemi noted, "HBM Nigeria Plc represents an exciting new chapter in our journey as a leading building solutions company. ..."

## Expert Urges Pro-men Mental Health Interventions With Dedicated Help Desks

A COMMUNICATION Specialist, Dr. Steven Adesemoye has challenged all critical stakeholders on the urgent need for targeted, hyperlocal, and pro-poor mental health education and support systems. He spoke during the Achievers Crew yearly retreat on Friday, June 19, underscoring the importance of addressing men's mental health.

In his presentation entitled "The Unspoken Battle: Understanding Men's Mental Health", the strong advocate for social reform and mental health awareness in Nigeria called for immediate action. Adesemoye laid bare the crisis of mental health among Nigerian men, a demographic long conditioned to mask vulnerability behind the facade of strength and success.

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



Adesemoye

## Olowolafe Seeks Overhaul Of Higher Education

• Backs Open Learning Model

By Kehinde Olatunji

THE newly installed Pro-Chancellor of Miva Open University, Dr. Tunji Olowolafe, has called for an overhaul of higher education delivery in Nigeria, saying quality education must be made accessible to all Nigerians irrespective of their location or economic circumstances.

Speaking at the university's maiden convocation ceremony in Lagos, Olowolafe said open and distance learning had become an effective tool for expanding access to higher education while maintaining academic standards.

He argued that universities must evolve to meet the realities of modern learners, that many prospective students are constrained by work, family responsibilities and geographical barriers.

He said institutions should focus on designing flexible systems that allow students to learn without sacrificing quality, rather than expecting learners to conform to traditional academic models, adding that the philosophy behind open learning was consistent with efforts by past leaders such as Chief Obafemi Awolowo to broaden access to education through innovative approaches, including free education and educational broadcasting.

# Sanwo-Olu's Refuse Evacuation Order Ignored As Waste Piles Up On Major Roads

Stories By **Gbenga Salau**

ONE week after Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, directed that the accumulated waste dotting different parts of the city state should be evacuated, there has been no significant difference as streets and roads have become illegal dumpsites.

In a statement on June 18, 2026, titled, 'Sanwo-Olu Directs Waste Evacuation Across Lagos', the state government said it acknowledges the concerns of residents regarding the recent accumulation of refuse in some parts of the state and wishes to assure Lagosians that the situation is receiving the highest level of attention from Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu and the entire machinery of government.

"We are not oblivious to the inconveniences and concerns occasioned by the situation. Lagosians deserve a clean, healthy and environmentally sustainable city, and this administration remains fully committed to delivering on that obligation.

"Governor Sanwo-Olu has consequently directed an immediate scale-up of waste evacuation operations across the state, with relevant agencies and service providers working round the clock to clear backlogs and restore normalcy as quickly as possible."

Yet, despite the directive, from Oshodi, to Mushin to Cele, Ago, Orile, Agboju, Mile 2, Ikotun, and Alaba to mention a few, huge refuse still dot the roads. In many of these places, along major road, it is not just that heap of refuse is on a location but on a long stretch of sections of the roads.

Yet, this is still the case in many locations across Lagos despite the government claimed additional resources have been deployed to support ongoing efforts, while strategic interventions are being implemented to strengthen operational efficiency and improve waste collection and disposal across affected areas.

The statement then added that: "The Governor has directed the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, the Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), and all other departments in that sector to double down on their efforts.

"Lagos is a complex and rapidly growing megacity whose daily waste generation of about 13,000 tons ranks among the highest on the African continent. While occasional operational disruptions may occur within such a dynamic ecosystem, the capacity, determination and resolve of the Government to address them remain unquestionable.

"We wish to reassure residents that this challenge is temporary. Indeed, substantial progress is already being recorded in several locations, and more improvements will become visible across the state in the days ahead.

"The administration of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has invested significantly in environmental sustainability, waste management infrastructure and urban renewal initiatives over the years. Those efforts remain ongoing and will continue to be strengthened in line with the government's vision of a cleaner, safer and more livable Lagos.

"We, therefore, appeal to residents to remain calm and confident. This is not a situation that will be allowed to linger. The Government is firmly on top of it and is pursuing a comprehensive response designed not only to clear the current accumulation but also to reinforce the long-term resilience of the state's waste management architecture.

"We also urge citizens, community leaders, market associations, businesses and other stakeholders to keep supporting environmental sanitation efforts by disposing of waste responsibly and refraining from practices that obstruct drainage channels, roadways and designated waste collection points.

"The Lagos State government assures every resident that it remains fully committed to protecting public health, preserving environmental standards and ensuring that our communities remain clean, safe and conducive for all. A cleaner Lagos is not merely an aspiration; it is a commitment we will continue to deliver."

A resident of Ago-palace, Akeem Salami said that rather than the waste in the area decreasing as a result of the directive, it has increased with more refuse dumped along the road.

According to him, the action is both the failure of government and the citizens though the citizens may claim PSP operators have not been coming as at even due.

He pleaded that the governor should back his words with action so that the refuse can disappear from the road. He said whenever he drives through the main road, he is not happy seeing the heap of waste and so was excited when he heard about the governor's directive. "I am however disappointed that one week after nothing seems to be happening. It is not good at all."

Also speaking, a resident of Orile, Tajudeen Adebayo, said that he doubted if any action was taken following the governor's order. According to him, nothing seems to have changed in terms of the refuse that has taken over different sections of Lagos roads and communities.

"If truly action was taken after the governor's instruction, it will be visible to the eyes but nothing has changed. Come to Orile and neighbouring communities, heaps of refuse are still there and it is not as if they were packed and residents dump another waste at the locations," Adebayo stated.








Heaps of waste on different sections of major roads of Lagos

PHOTOS: Ayodele Adeniran

# Coalition Demands Reversal Of Waterfront Communities' Demolitions In Violation Of Court Orders

THE Coalition against Demolition, Forced Eviction, Landgrabbing and Displacement has said that it stands in solidarity with the network of waterfront communities across Lagos, demanding the reversal of the unconstitutional and illegal demolitions and forced eviction of tens of thousands of waterfront dwellers in violation of subsisting court orders from 2023-2026.

The coalition stated that on June 21, 2017, Justice Onigbanjo of the Lagos State High Court gave his final judgment in a case brought by waterfront communities across Lagos, including a perpetual injunction restraining the Lagos State government and the Lagos State Police Command from carrying out further demolitions without consultations and resettlement.

The group added that the High Court pronounced that demolitions of long-established communities without such protections, as in the brutal demolitions of Otodo Gbame (November 2016-April 2017), violated the right to dignity enshrined in Section 34 of the Nigerian Constitution.

The coalition further said that the Lagos State government appealed the judgment in 2017, but the courts have refused to suspend the final judgment, which remains fully in force while the case is on appeal.

But in violation of these protective court orders, the coalition said from 2023 to 2026, the Lagos State government has systematically carried out mass forced evictions of waterfront communities from Oworonshoki (July 2023 and September 2025-January 2026) to Ilaje Otumara (March 2025), Makoko, Sogunro, and Oko Agbon (December 2025-January 2026) to Baba and Ayetoro (September 2024) and Ago Egun Bariga (January 2026).

"On 22 June 2026, the waterfront communities brought these facts to the attention of the Court of Appeal. The presiding Justice Folashade Ojo expressed concern at the Lagos State government appearing to violate a subsisting court order and asked the lawyer representing the Lagos State government to restate the final orders of the lower court.

"When the Lagos State government claimed not to be aware of any such violations, the presiding judge asked him to go back to the notice and make his enquiries very well. At the next adjourned date in January 2027, the waterfront communities will be moving the court for reversal of all the unconstitutional demolitions in violation of court orders, through a series of court orders for the illegally demolished communities to be rebuilt.

"We call on all residents of Lagos State and the nation to stand with the waterfront communities to demand justice and accountability in the face of rampant impunity and executive lawlessness. We must not allow disrespect of court orders and impunity push us into hopelessness. We must stand up and continue the struggle. A luta continua!"

Politics

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# Abia Has Resources, What It Lacks Is Responsible Leadership—Anosike

**As political activities ahead of the 2027 governorship election gather momentum in Abia State, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Dr. Kelechi Anosike, has outlined an ambitious welfare-focused agenda, promising improved salaries, healthcare, pension reforms and people-centred governance, while accusing the current administration of poor resource management. SEYE OLUMIDE reports.**

THE PDP governorship candidate for the 2027 elections in Abia State, Dr. Kelechi Anosike, has faulted the management of the state's resources, arguing that the challenges confronting workers, pensioners and ordinary citizens are not the result of poverty but a consequence of poor governance and misplaced priorities.

Anosike maintained that Abia possesses enough financial and human resources to provide quality infrastructure, pay competitive wages, clear pension liabilities and improve the welfare of citizens if managed by a government that places people at the centre of development.

The PDP standard bearer, who spoke on his vision for the state ahead of the 2027 governorship election, promised to pursue a welfare-driven administration that would focus on improving the living conditions of workers, retirees and vulnerable citizens while also delivering sustainable development projects.

According to him, governance should not be reduced to media campaigns, publicity stunts or what he described as propaganda-driven narratives on social media. Rather, he said the true measure of leadership lies in how government policies impact the daily lives of ordinary people.

He criticised the current administration of Governor Alex Otti, alleging that there is a growing disconnect between official narratives and the realities faced by many residents across the state.

Anosike said his administration would immediately embark on reforms aimed at restoring confidence in the public service, which he described as the backbone of effective governance.

As part of his proposed intervention, the PDP candidate pledged to implement the 90,000 national minimum wage for civil servants upon assumption of office in May 2027.

He explained that workers deserve remuneration that reflects current economic realities, stressing that the rising cost of living has significantly eroded the purchasing power of civil servants across the country.

Beyond salary adjustments, Anosike promised to introduce a comprehensive welfare package that would cater to the health, professional development and overall wellbeing of workers.

"I have always believed that the government exists to improve the lives of its people. As governor, one of my earliest decisions will be the implementation of the 90,000 minimum wage. But salary alone is not enough. We shall create a welfare system that protects workers, rewards productivity and restores dignity to public service," he said.

The PDP candidate argued that no government can achieve meaningful development while neglecting the welfare of its workforce, noting that a motivated and adequately compensated civil service remains critical to policy implementation and service delivery.

He expressed concern over what he described as the poor earnings of workers in Abia when compared with their counterparts in neighbouring states. According to him, the wage disparity has placed many families under severe financial pressure and contributed to declining morale within the public service.

"It is unacceptable that a worker in Abia earns significantly less than workers performing similar duties in neighbouring states. In places like Imo, Ebonyi and Enugu, governments have made deliberate efforts to improve workers' welfare. Abia workers deserve no less.

"We understand their pains and frustrations. That is why we are inviting them to become partners in a collective effort to rebuild the state and create a future where hard work is rewarded and public service is respected once again," he said.

Anosike further disclosed plans to establish a robust healthcare programme for civil servants under what he called the Civil Service Care Programme.

Under the initiative, every civil servant would enjoy access to health insurance coverage funded by the government, thereby reducing the financial burden associated with medical treatment.

He noted that many workers currently spend a substantial portion of their income on healthcare expenses, leaving them vulnerable to economic hardship whenever serious health challenges arise.

"Healthcare should never be a luxury reserved for a privileged few. Every worker who dedicates his or her time to serving the state deserves access to quality medical care. Through our Civil Service Care Programme, we shall provide free health insurance for civil servants because a healthy workforce is essential for effective governance," he stated.

> *Our philosophy is simple: development must be people-centred. We shall build roads, schools and other critical infrastructure, but we shall also invest in human lives. Infrastructure is important, but the people come first.*

The governorship hopeful also dismissed claims that the state lacks the financial capacity to fund improved wages and welfare programmes.

He insisted that Abia's challenge is not revenue generation but the management and deployment of available resources.

According to him, prudent financial management, elimination of waste and proper prioritisation of government spending would free up resources needed to address workers' welfare, pension obligations and developmental needs.

"Abia is not poor. What we are witnessing is a crisis of management. The resources required to improve workers' welfare, settle pension arrears and execute development projects are available. What is needed is leadership that understands priorities and places people first," he said.

Anosike stressed that while infrastructure remains important, governments must avoid pursuing physical projects at the expense of citizens' wellbeing.

He argued that roads, bridges and public buildings have little value when the people they are meant to serve are burdened by poverty, ill health and economic hardship.

"Our philosophy is simple: development must be people-centred. We shall build roads, schools and other critical infrastructure, but we shall also invest in human lives. Infrastructure is important, but the people come first. Abians must be alive, healthy and economically empowered to enjoy the benefits of development," he said.

The PDP candidate also devoted considerable attention to the plight of pensioners, describing their condition as one of the most troubling indicators of governance failure.

He lamented that many retirees who dedicated decades of service to the state now live in uncertainty due to unpaid pensions, inadequate healthcare and declining living standards.

To address the situation, Anosike unveiled plans for a dedicated PensionPlus Programme that would focus on clearing outstanding pension arrears while extending healthcare coverage to retired workers.

He assured pensioners that they would not be abandoned under his administration.

"Our senior citizens deserve honour, not neglect. These are men and women who spent the most productive years of their lives serving Abia State. We shall systematically clear outstanding pension arrears and provide free health insurance for pensioners so they can live their retirement years with dignity and peace of mind," he pledged.

Providing further details of his agenda, Anosike revealed that many of the proposed reforms targeting workers and pensioners would commence within the first 100 days of his administration.

He said the measures would mark a clear departure from what he described as years of inadequate attention to the welfare of public servants.

The PDP flag bearer also announced plans to modernise the state civil service through extensive training and capacity-building programmes.

Towards that, he proposed the establishment of a modern Abia Civil Service College and Executive Lounge that would serve as a centre for professional development, leadership training, policy education and innovation.

According to him, strengthening the knowledge and competence of civil servants is essential to building an efficient and responsive government.

The institution, he said, would help prepare workers for emerging governance challenges while creating opportunities for career advancement and continuous learning.

"We intend to build a civil service that is modern, professional and globally competitive. The proposed Civil Service College will provide the platform for training, innovation and leadership development, while also creating a conducive environment that recognises the contributions of hardworking public servants," he explained.

Anosike reiterated his commitment to transparency, accountability and inclusive governance, insisting that the future of Abia depends on a government that prioritises people over politics.

He assured workers and pensioners that a PDP administration under his leadership would focus on restoring hope, improving welfare and rebuilding public trust in government.

"To every civil servant and pensioner in Abia State, our message is clear: better days are ahead. Dignity will be restored, justice will be served, welfare will improve and the government will once again become a partner in the pursuit of a better life for all Abians," he said.



# Politics




# 2027: Setback For Obi/Kwankwaso Ticket As Court Reverses Initial Order On NDC Registration

## • Party Vows To Appeal Ruling • No Judge Can Deregister Hopes Of Nigerians — Obi Media Reach

From **Ameh Ochojila** and **John Akubo** (Abuja)

THE fate of all candidates for the 2027 general elections nominated on the platform of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) now hangs in the balance as a Federal High Court sitting in Lokoja on Friday withdrew the legal recognition earlier granted to the party, effectively removing it from the register of recognised political parties in Nigeria.

The court, in a ruling delivered by Justice Isah Dashen in Suit No. FHC/LKJ/CS/49/2025, set aside its December 10, 2025 judgment, which had ordered the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to recognise and register the NDC.

The court upheld an application by the Peace Movement Party (PMP), which argued that it was a necessary party in the suit.

The judge further held that failure to include the PMP amounted to a denial of fair hearing and rendered the previous judgment invalid.

Justice Dashen ordered that the parties return to the position they were in before the December 10, 2025 judgment, pending the fresh determination of the substantive case.

The judge also held that some material facts were not brought before it during the earlier proceedings, a development that contributed to its decision to set aside the judgment.

Reacting to the judgment, the NDC and the Peter Obi Media Reach (POMR) described it as a temporary legal hurdle and not the end of what they described as a growing national movement for political change.

NDC National Chairman, Sen. Moses Cleopas Zuwoghe, said the party had directed its team of lawyers to challenge the order at the Court of Appeal.

In a statement on Friday, Zuwoghe assured the public and candidates of the party in the forthcoming 2027 elections that "our party is on course," stressing that "the NDC has not been deregistered."

The statement read in part: "The public knows that by December 2025, the Nigeria Democratic Congress as an association complained of INEC's refusal to register us as a political party, whereupon we proceeded to the Federal High Court. The Federal High Court upheld our constitutional right to freedom of association under the Constitution and compelled INEC to register us, which INEC did.

"Since then, we have started political activities, embarked on the registration of members, held congresses from ward to national levels, held conventions and concluded primaries to all offices following INEC's timetable. We have been fully participating in all INEC activities without let or hindrance.

"NDC also fielded candidates and fully participated in the just-concluded bye-elections in Nasarawa and Enugu states.

"Candidates for the House of Assembly, House of Representatives, Senate, Governorship, Presidential, and Vice-Presidential positions have been duly nominated, and we are in the process of formally submitting them to INEC in accordance with INEC's timetable.

"The association that filed the complaint is unknown to us. The Peace Movement Party (PMP) is not a registered political party in Nigeria. They claimed, in a motion (not even a substantive suit or appeal), that the court should set aside its earlier judgment on the purported ground that, in 2015, they had sought registration as a political party with the victory sign as their symbol and were denied.

"It is important to note that they are not an association applying for registration now under the exercise that started last year. They are also not a registered political party in Nigeria participating in the political process now, as we are.

"Furthermore, the court, having delivered a final judgment in our suit against INEC, had become functus officio. The court had also dealt with all related issues concerning associations claiming they wanted to use the same symbol and colours. The court, in its judgment, overruled INEC when those issues were raised, and there is no appeal against that judgment.

"Therefore, we are surprised that, on an application by an association claiming that it wanted to register as a political party with the victory sign in 2015, an association that is not a registered political party and is not seeking registration now to participate in the current political process, His Lordship came to the conclusion that they have locus standi, and furthermore, that he has jurisdiction to do what he did.

"Accordingly, we have been informed that His Lordship made an order setting aside the court's earlier decision of December 2025.

"There was no order directing our deregistration. However, we are dissatisfied with the decision that has been made, and we have instructed our team of lawyers to immediately proceed to the Court of Appeal to challenge the jurisdiction and propriety of His Lordship's order.

"We assure the general public and particularly our candidates at all levels that our party is on course. The NDC has not been deregistered, and we are challenging today's order at the Court of Appeal as soon as possible. We have no doubt that justice will be done."

The party condemned what it described as efforts by those who seek to shrink the democratic space and stifle opposition voices and alternatives.

"Nigerians have a right to a full range of opinions, ideas and alternatives; and political platforms and candidates should be allowed to participate in the 2027 general election process, which has already gone midway.

"It is too late for anyone to attempt to use the judiciary to derail or narrow Nigeria's multiparty democratic space. If the said association (Peace Movement Party) were a party affected by the judgment on our initial suit, the only option open to it was to appeal the verdict, an option which it did not take. Even at that, the window open for such appeal has since closed and any such appeal by now has become statute-barred.

"To now try to upturn that verdict through the back door, via a motion, is not only unheard-of, but also illegal and an outright abuse of court process."

On its part, the POMR in a statement on Friday by its spokesman, Idris Zekeri Jnr., insisted that the court's decision would neither weaken the support base of the movement nor derail the quest for what he called "a New Nigeria."

Zekeri said those celebrating the judgment as a political knockout blow were mistaken.

"What happened today is a legal development, not a political verdict," he said. "It is a procedural setback, not a rejection of the vision, values and aspirations that have drawn millions of Nigerians to the NDC and to the leadership of Mr. Peter Obi."

The POMR spokesman disclosed that the movement's legal team had already commenced a review of the judgment and was preparing immediate appellate action aimed at overturning the decision.

According to him, the court ruling cannot erase the widespread dissatisfaction among Nigerians over economic hardship, insecurity, unemployment, corruption and what he described as deepening governance failures.

Zekeri argued that the movement for change transcends the fate of any single political platform.

"The NDC was born out of the yearning of Nigerians for competent, accountable and people-oriented leadership. That yearning did not begin with a certificate of registration and it cannot be extinguished by the withdrawal of one," he said.

He maintained that millions of Nigerians had invested their hopes not in a political certificate, but in the broader objective of national transformation. Those hopes, he stressed, remain intact.

"The movement remains alive. The mission remains alive. The destination remains unchanged," he said.

Friday's judgment came exactly 10 days after the Court of Appeal in Abuja ordered a stay of execution of the judgment of the Federal High Court, Abuja, ordering INEC to deregister the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Action Peoples Party (APP), Action Alliance (AA), Accord Party (AP), and Zenith Labour Party (ZLP).

In a unanimous decision, a three-member panel of the appellate court led by Justice Abubakar Mohammed, accused Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court in Abuja of flouting an order it made on May 22, which directed him to suspend proceedings before him.

The appellate court had held that Justice Lifu's action amounted to an affront and judicial rascality on the hierarchy of courts.

It held that the lower court's action was "the highest form of judicial impertinence," stressing that the Supreme Court previously held that a judge who acted in such manner "is unfit for the bench as it amounts to judicial rascality."

Recently, Human rights lawyer, Femi Falana (SAN) called on the National Judicial Council (NJC) and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) to investigate what he described as conflicting court rulings that could undermine preparations for the 2027 general elections.

In a statement entitled 'Nigerian Judges and Lawyers Should Be Prevented From Sabotaging the 2027 Election,' Falana had expressed concern over recent judgments delivered by judges of the Federal High Court on the powers of INEC regarding election timelines.

The senior advocate recalled that Justice Mohammed Umar of the Federal High Court invalidated INEC's timeline for the conduct of party primaries and nomination of candidates ahead of the 2027 elections.

The court also nullified INEC's May 10 deadline, directing political parties to submit their membership registers and databases as part of the requirements for participation in the polls.

According to him, the court held that the timeframe announced by INEC for political parties to conduct primaries and submit, withdraw, or replace candidates "is inconsistent with the provisions of the Electoral Act, 2026."

The suit was filed by the Youth Party against INEC

He further noted that INEC had appealed the ruling and filed a motion for a stay of execution pending the Court of Appeal's determination of the appeal.

Falana said the situation became more complicated after another judge of the Federal High Court, Justice James Omotosho, ruled in a separate suit filed by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) that INEC possesses the constitutional authority to fix timelines for political party primaries and other electoral activities ahead of the 2027 elections.

He argued that the two judgments created uncertainty within the political system.

The legal luminary urged NJC and NBA to urgently investigate the circumstances surrounding the judgments in Youth Party vs. INEC and SDP vs. INEC, warning that failure to address the issue could threaten the credibility of the 2027 elections.

He stressed that judges and lawyers must avoid actions capable of undermining the credibility of future elections, warning that legal disputes should not become tools for disrupting democratic processes.

Drawing parallels with Nigeria's political history, Falana warned that failure to address the situation could reopen painful memories of 1993, when conflicting court orders became part of the legal crisis surrounding the annulment of the June 12 presidential election.

"Unless the judges and lawyers involved are called to order, the 2027 election may be sabotaged by judges and lawyers," he warned.

# Governor Aliyu, Fractured Opposition And 2027 Elections In Sokoto

By **Karen Ibrahim**

DEMOCRATIC governance is fundamentally a two-way street, requiring both a focused ruling party and a disciplined opposition to thrive. It relies as much on the effectiveness of opposition parties as it does on the performance of the administration in power. When democracy functions effectively, the citizens are presented with alternative choices, competing ideas and constructive policy debates. While the incumbent administration in power is constitutionally mandated to execute the manifesto on which it was elected, opposition parties carry an equally vital responsibility of scrutinising government actions, offering policy alternatives and positioning themselves as a credible option to the electorate. This dynamic ensures that citizens are never short of meaningful political choices and the government in power doesn't become arrogant.

Unfortunately, the political realities ahead of the 2027 Sokoto State governorship election reveal a deeply uneven environment. Rather than a competitive arena, the state's political space is defined by a visible imbalance. On one hand is the Governor Ahmed Aliyu administration supported by a unified party structure that is also delivering several ongoing developmental projects. On the other is an opposition burdened by internal paralysis. The inability of the major opposition parties—specifically the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the African Democratic Congress (ADC)—to effectively hold the Aliyu administration accountable points to a broader weakness: an excessive focus on winning elections, but lacks the capacity required for governance. Since the 2023 polls, internal divisions have prevented these parties from offering any oversight, leaving Governor Aliyu to serve as its own opposition.

In recent months, public discussion across Sokoto State has increasingly focused on the irreconcilable crises affecting these opposition elements, creating a growing perception that they are tragically unprepared for the 2027 elections. They already faced an uphill battle because of political realignments in the state. After prolonged hesitation, the immediate past governor, Senator Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, resigned from the PDP and moved to the ADC. Aware of the electoral challenge posed by the political structure of Governor Aliyu and Senator Aliyu Wamakko, Tambuwal chose not to seek for another term in the Senate. The persistence of these crises further confirms his declining political influence.

Much of this paralysis stems from an unprecedented wave of legal disputes over internal party nominations, leaving the electoral future of the parties uncertain. Within both the PDP and ADC, factional struggles have generated lawsuits challenging the validity of recently concluded congresses. These legal conflicts mirror earlier primary election disputes where courts were eventually required to determine authentic candidates. The ADC in particular has faced instability arising from conflicting judicial outcomes, ranging from a Federal High Court order directing the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to deregister the party alongside others, to a Court of Appeal ruling staying the execution of that judgment amid the continuing leadership and primaries disputes.

As a result of these legal battles, both the PDP and ADC face the risk of failing to field valid candidates for the elections in Sokoto State. While Nigeria's electoral system provides safeguards and INEC has established timelines, the opportunity and time to resolve the conflict continues to narrow. Even if these parties overcome their legal hurdles before the regulatory deadlines, the prolonged disputes have already done an inculpable damage to them and squandered their resources, such that they can't effectively compete.

To remain electorally viable and have the confidence of the people, political parties must maintain effective leadership structures, respect internal democratic processes and commit to collective decision-making. As the crises within the PDP and ADC have demonstrated, when these problems —alongside adherence to their party constitutions—are weakened, healthy competition can quickly deteriorate into factional conflict. A party's strength ultimately depends on the willingness of competing interests to compromise and accept democratic outcomes. Political parties naturally contain differing opinions, where diverse interests intersect, but they are expected to manage these differences. When disagreements become prolonged, they actually confirm and reinforce instability.

These tensions expose the deeper weakness of these parties which distract them from their primary responsibilities of presenting alternative policies and engaging citizens on major governance issues. Political parties that are unable to effectively manage their own internal affairs may struggle with the more demanding responsibility of governing a state of nearly six million people. This challenge, combined with the disastrous eight years legacy of the Tambuwal administration, has further weakened the opposition's credibility. How can these parties expect to win when their energy is devoted to internal battles rather than grassroots mobilisation and strategic planning? The disputes have generated uncertainty among supporters and voters, consuming political capital that may prove difficult to recover. By remaining trapped in prolonged litigation, the opposition appears to have surrendered the political momentum, just as it had abandoned its role as an effective watchdog.

For Governor Aliyu, however, his greatest political advantage does not arise solely from the difficulties facing his opponents, but from the sterling performance of his administration. From the beginning, the governor recognised that delivering campaign promises, effective governance and visible improvements in the lives of the people provide the strongest basis for public support. While the opposition's disputes have effectively sidelined them, Aliyu has continued implementing policies and projects without the burden of internal party conflict. This stability is reinforced by the cohesion of the ruling APC in the state, anchored on the combined alliance of the governor and Wamakko. That alignment has provided the administration with the stability necessary to remain focused on governance.

The argument for Aliyu's re-election is rooted in infrastructure development and fiscal investments. Since assuming office, the governor has anchored his administration around his Nine-Point Smart Agenda, a framework designed to translate policy into visible progress. Supporters argue that the scale of construction projects across the state offers direct evidence of governance that citizens can see and experience. In politics, infrastructure often serves as one of the most visible measures through which voters assess performance. Recent fiscal allocations further demonstrate the scale of the governor's development effort.

Security is another area where Aliyu's leadership has continued to attract public support. While parts of eastern Sokoto, including Sabon Birni and Isa, have been faced with serious banditry challenges, the state government has devoted substantial resources to addressing them. The administration has procured over 180 Buffalo patrol vehicles, thousands of motorcycles and other tactical equipment for security personnel. These investments, alongside support for local vigilante groups, are increasingly producing results. Supported by coordinated military operations and security efforts, criminal elements operating in these communities continue to face pressure. As citizens witness efforts to restore safety to vulnerable communities and farmlands, many are appreciative of the administration's security agenda.



# How Oborevwori's Governance Model Is Driving Delta's Transformation

By **Festus Ahon**

IN contemporary governance, the true measure of leadership lies not merely in promises made but in the ability to translate vision into measurable progress. Across Delta State, Governor Sheriff Oborevwori is steadily shaping a governance model anchored on three interrelated pillars of security, servant leadership and strategic infrastructure development. Together, these pillars are driving a transformation that is redefining governance and development across the state.

At a time when many parts of Nigeria continue to grapple with insecurity, economic uncertainty and infrastructural deficits, Delta State is increasingly emerging as a model of stability, inclusiveness and sustainable growth. The Oborevwori administration's commitment to ensuring peace, promoting people-centred governance and expanding critical infrastructure has become the defining feature of its implementation of the M.O.R.E Agenda.

Recent events across the state have offered a compelling glimpse into this governance philosophy. From convening a landmark maiden security summit in Asaba to celebrating his 63rd birthday with a thanksgiving service and advancing transformative road projects in both upland and riverine communities, Governor Oborevwori has demonstrated how these three pillars work together to drive meaningful development.

The connection between security and development has remained a recurring theme in the governor's public engagements. This was evident at the Delta State Security Summit 2026, where stakeholders from across the state gathered under the theme, 'Security: A Collective Responsibility.'

The summit came at a time when security concerns remain a major national issue, with terrorism, kidnapping, cultism, cybercrime and communal conflicts posing threats to communities and economic activities. Rather than treating Oborevwori used the occasion to advocate a broader, community-driven approach. His message was simple but profound: peace and security are everybody's business.

Addressing traditional rulers, community leaders, security chiefs, local government chairmen, youth groups, women organisations and civil society representatives, the governor stressed that sustainable security can only be achieved through collective vigilance, trust and cooperation.

His position reflects a growing understanding that modern security challenges cannot be solved by government alone. Communities often possess critical information capable of preventing crimes before they occur. By encouraging residents to report suspicious activities and work closely with security agencies, the administration is attempting to build a culture of proactive intelligence gathering.

Beyond rhetoric, the government has backed its commitment with concrete investments. The restructuring of Operation Delta Sweep, the state's joint security outfit, and plans to establish divisional police headquarters in all 25 local government areas for State Police, demonstrate a deliberate effort to strengthen security infrastructure.

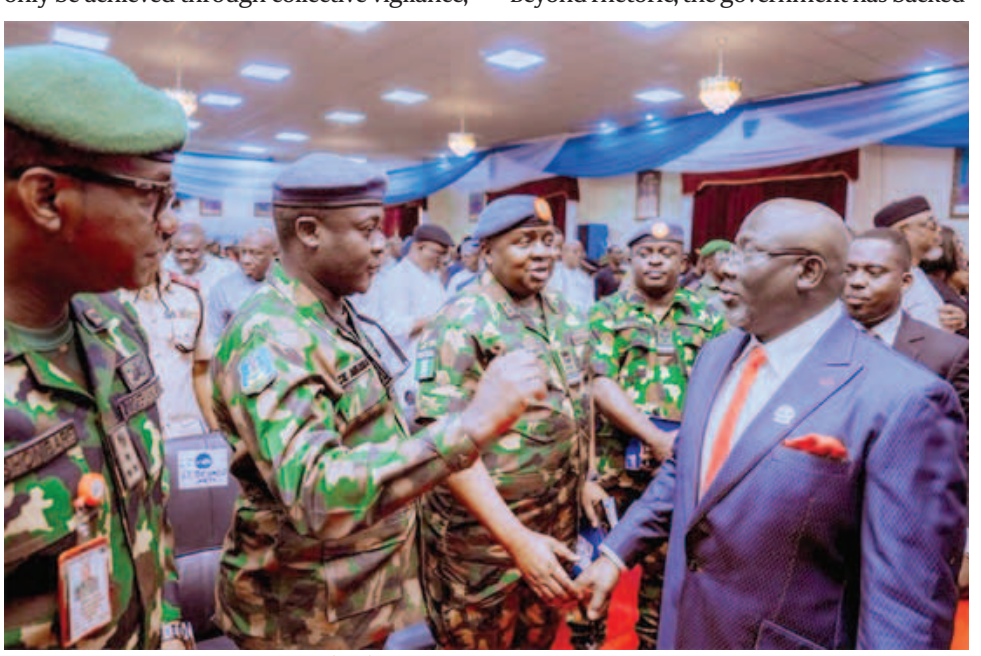
The establishment of the Delta State Security Trust Fund further underscores the administration's strategy of fostering collaboration between government and the private sector in supporting security operations.

For many observers, the summit highlighted a leadership style that prioritises prevention over reaction. The emphasis on partnership, dialogue and community participation reflects a recognition that security is not merely about deploying personnel but about building resilient communities capable of resisting criminal infiltration.

The significance of peace in Delta State becomes even more apparent when viewed against the backdrop of ongoing development projects across the state. Infrastructure thrives where peace exists and investors are more willing to commit resources where security is assured.

This linkage between security and development has become increasingly visible under the Oborevwori administration. While the governor's public responsibilities often dominate headlines, another aspect of his leadership emerged during the celebration of his 63rd birthday. Rather than hosting an elaborate social gathering, he chose to mark the occasion with a thanksgiving service at the Government House Chapel in Asaba.

The decision was symbolic. At a time when public office holders are frequently criticised for extravagance, Oborevwori used the opportunity to express gratitude to God for preserving his life and guiding him in leadership. His message focused not on personal achievements but on service, humility and the need for divine wisdom.



Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori (right), exchanging warm pleasantries with a cross-section of Security Chiefs during the maiden Delta State Security Summit held at Government House, Asaba on Wednesday. PHOTO: BRIPIN ENARUSAI

# How Nasarawa Set The Stage For Energy Transition, Carbon Market – Governor Sule

*Governor Abdullahi Audu Sule, an engineer by profession, is on his final lap in office as the Chief Executive Officer of Nasarawa State. In this exclusive with* ***LEO SOBECHI****, he explains how the state was able to escape the insecurity that usually trail mining activities. "We insist that big time miners must process their products in the state," he stated, stressing that the Federal Government deserves credit for putting in place legislations that ensure host community involvement in the exploitation and exploration of rare-earth mineral.*

**At the beginning, you held a lot of summits trying to market Nasarawa State. As of today, with increasing emphasis on energy transition and sustainability, how do you feel?**

WELL, I feel great; I feel satisfied; I feel fulfilled. I'm happy with the way things are going. But just to correct the impression, when you say we had so many summits, we had only three in totality. We had our very first summit, which we termed Diamond in the Rough. And that's the one I believe you are talking about.

It was a summit to discover Nasarawa State, because at the time, the state was being seen only as a civil service state; as if we had no resources, we had no competencies, we had no capacities. So, that's why we called it Diamond in the Rough. Come and discover this diamond, so we'll be able to bring it out and wash it. That was in 2022.

By 2024, two years later, we had the next summit, which is Industrial Renaissance. Now that we have entered into all the MOUs, let us practicalise all these MOUs; let us make sure that they are working. I recall that we had the last one in the month of May.

And that one was actually talking about four steps, sustainability. What that means is to ensure that everything we have done so far could be sustained. So, in totality, we have only three summits. And the three summits, each one of them is significant in its own right. And if you ask me, I would say we have done the best we could. And I'm happy and I'm satisfied.

**With this new emphasis on the environmental sustainability, especially with the ongoing London Climate Action Week (LCAW) holding in London, where focus is trained on energy transition and demand for lithium and other solid minerals are increasing; how do you feel as the leader of a state that is strategically located and endowed with a lot of minerals buried underground?**

Well, first and foremost, London has always been the centre for this kind of event, because London has been the one on the issue of climate change. London has been at the centre on the issue of new sources of energy, especially clean energy. Therefore, it is in order that this is being held in London again.

I attended only one of them, in the years when I was in African Petroleum at the Canary Wharf in London. And it's also the same thing; that time, it was more about carbon credit, what and what do you do as an oil company? Because I was the managing director of one of the oil companies in Nigeria at that time, so we were examining what to do in order to achieve successes in that area.

So, I'm happy that you say, how do we feel now, considering the new sources of energy and Nasarawa State being so lucky that it is sitting on, at least, the seven critical minerals that are highly sought, not only in Nigeria, but worldwide. And I'm happy you mentioned one of them, which happens to be lithium. And Nasarawa also has taken the lead when it comes to that.

So, I feel happy and I'm sure most of the companies that have already invested in Nasarawa in the area of lithium processing, lithium mining, lithium exploration, lithium exploitation, are also going to be part of this summit, because they look forward to situations like that to see how they can improve.

I'm also very sure that I'm going to hear more from them by the time the summit is concluded. So, I feel happy also that the world is taking this area of new energy seriously, because the world has already been polluted by so much of the carbon concerns that we have. I think it's in a very good hand and I think it is going in the right direction.

**Now, assuming you are to market Nasarawa afresh based on background knowledge of what exists here, what specific things will you put out to the world?**

I will tell them one; we have a state with great potential, just like I said in Lagos. We have a state actually that is very lucky among so many states that almost 90 per cent of the state, unlike so many states actually that have very sandy area and the rest of that, now nearly 90 per cent of Nasarawa State is available for agriculture.

You can actually go and plant yam this year, cassava the next year, rice the next year and the rest of that, and they will all give you very good yield. So, that's one huge advantage Nasarawa State has that so many states don't have.

Secondly, the amount of minerals present in the state. I just told you that we are lucky we have all the seven critical metals in Nasarawa State and only two of them are not in commercial quantity. So, there is great potential for those who are interested in mining. I will tell them that Nasarawa State has the best proximity to the federal capital, so the opportunities for real estate development are huge and they are there. The opportunities are huge for investment in the area of logistics, transportation, and they are available. Those are the kinds of things that I can say.

**Has the state government taken a geo-mapping of strategic location of different minerals in the state?**

We have done more than just taking a map. A thorough exploration has been done and this one is not only for Nasarawa State. To be fair to the Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals, they have done a complete survey of the entire Nigeria. And they already know which minerals are sited at every location.

Now for the part of Nasarawa, we have gone deeper to know that if a certain mineral is found, is it in commercial quantity? This is because if it is not in commercial quantity, it may not be attractive to some investors.

So, we have taken that step to go further in that direction, because most of these sites where the minerals are, some people already obtained licences from the Ministry of Solid Minerals. What we do, therefore, is to ensure, one, the kind of licence that is being obtained, whether it's just exploration or it's mining licence. And then, from there, we carry out further checks to know the quantity of whatever mineral is found. Unless we do that, we will not be able to attract investment. That's why I said we have taken the steps beyond getting a map. We have taken the step of survey. We have also taken the step of a total exploration to ensure whether the material we have is in commercial quantity.

> *How did we do that? We came out actually with a law. We started with an Executive Order, but now it is a law, which stipulates that when you are mining in commercial quantity, you must also process in Nasarawa State. So, that birthed the marriage that we are seeing between the communities and the investors. Actually, investors even want communities' participation, because the surest security they have is, when the communities take ownership of the sites.*

**One other observation is that these rare-earth minerals breed insecurity wherever they exist, like a chicken and egg. To what extent has this insecurity obviated your vision or direction about the expropriation or appropriation of these minerals?**

I think, first, is the fact that the reason it's bringing insecurity is because on one hand, we are lucky that most of our minerals are what is called surface minerals. Any minerals that you don't have to go more than 10 metres to actually mine and bring out, is usually called like surface minerals.

Good examples of them are the gemstones that we have; cobalt, aquamarine, and the rest of that here in Nasarawa State. So, that's the reason you have this type of insecurity. But one of the biggest reasons for the insecurity is the fact that when you do not have a major owner of the site, it becomes more like free for all. Then you have the insecurity, because everybody is just coming to see what they can get.

Besides, in situations like that, you don't know what kind of people you are going to have. As such, insecurity arises because people are fighting on and for the sites. That's what led into so many crises of insecurity, so many other sites.

The second part is a lot of investors will not go in if there are no infrastructures in the area. So, what we do in our own case is to ensure that some of these places that we have solid minerals or certain minerals in commercial quantity, we try to construct at least a major road to that area.

So, it will help to ensure that the investors will be happy to go there. Security also will have access to the area in case of any problem. We have encouraged partnerships between the communities and the investors, with the state government coming in as well.

How did we do that? We came out actually with a law. We started with an Executive Order, but now it is a law, which stipulates that when you are mining in commercial quantity, you must also process in Nasarawa State. So, that birthed the marriage that we are seeing between the communities and the investors. Actually, investors even want communities' participation, because the biggest security they have is when the communities take ownership of the site. Once the communities believe that the project is theirs, then automatically you have some level of security of the investment. That's what we have done in our own case.

**To follow-up on that, recalling what happened in the Niger Delta, has there been any concerted effort to train some of these artisanal or small-holder miners?**

It is not artisanal miners that we are training. But for Niger Delta, you have asked the right question, because my background is oil and gas, and my background is actually E&P (Exploration and Production). So that's where Niger Delta comes in. And in fact, I was in Niger Delta because I worked for one of the companies at Onne in Port Harcourt, where we had our site, and then we have our plant at Trans-Amadi. Then, I was living at the Amadi flats in that area.

That gave me the opportunity to understand what you are saying concerning the Niger Delta crisis, which we avoided this time around. That's why we said that it has to be different. For instance, in the Niger Delta, in the early 1960s, the entire Nigeria was one oil block and it was given to one oil company called Shell. Shell had the right to just go anywhere, explore, sometimes without the consent of the communities. And those are the kinds of things that resulted in militancy and Nigeria took correction from that.

As far as solid minerals are concerned, you cannot even get the licence until you have the consent of the community. That is one. So, it's not Nasarawa State, but Nigeria, took that decision, and the credit goes to Nigeria, the Federal Government, for coming up with that. But in Nasarawa State, because of the Land Use Act, since you can't go to the mineral sites without going through the land, and the land belongs to the state, we now brought in the state, thereby making a tripartite.



Sule

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# Editorial

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# Lessons In Leadership As Oloyede Exits JAMB

THE tenure of the Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Prof Ishaq Oloyede, ends on July 31, 2026. He departs the agency having demonstrated what Nigeria's public service can achieve whenever it is led by genuine conviction. Marked by fiscal discipline, transparency, technological reform, and integrity, his tenure, over two terms of five years each, has drawn considerable commendation, understandably, as the nation reaped the benefits of an institutional leader who understood that public office equals public trust. Now is the time to defend his standard and ensure it is not swallowed up in mediocrity.

Oloyede's tenure is reminiscent of the First Advent. Christ walks into the temple, an institution in Jerusalem, and uncovers an entrenched network of illicit commercial enterprise. He makes a whip of cords and drives out the unscrupulous merchants, insisting the institution must live up to its reputation for integrity. Oloyede never had to physically trounce his predecessors, but he achieved no less when, in his first full year alone, he remitted N7.8 billion into federal coffers. Put in proper perspective, the agency, in its four decades of existence since 1978, had only managed to remit a cumulative total of less than N50 million into the treasury.

He followed up on the financial 'miracle' with N8 billion in 2018, N5 billion in 2019, and N7 billion in 2020. Thus, the Registrar punctured the myth that JAMB was just another of many Nigerian institutions that needed to be bottle-fed with yearly allocations but never grow past the cradle into accountability. As the curtain is drawn, he scores a total contribution of over N20 billion in operating surplus remitted to the government. Meanwhile, recall that one of Oloyede's predecessors faced prosecution for the alleged misappropriation of over N900 million in public funds.

The Oloyede years become even more interesting when one considers that the surplus — against the prevalent methodology for boosting revenue — did not come by heaping extra burdens on ordinary Nigerians, such as an increase in examination fees. Having argued that charging N5,000 for the application fee was unnecessary, he initiated a process that reduced the cost to N3,500. As such, he took the path less trodden by many Nigerian leaders: eliminating leakages, enforcing financial discipline, and holding every naira of public revenue to account.

Prof Oloyede understood the delicate balance between integrity and technology. Rather than treating technology as an end in itself, he embraced it as a means of protecting credibility. He introduced and sustained the expansion of computer-based testing, transforming the examination environment and making large-scale malpractice significantly harder. In 2025, the board's advanced anomaly detection tools exposed and thwarted attempts by fraudsters, including 4,251 cases of finger-blending and 190 artificial intelligence-assisted cheating.

He demonstrated a feature of principled leadership when, in the 2025 UTME, a technical glitch compromised the integrity of results. He was unlike many leaders who grandstand, deflect, or make excuses. Oloyede, in tears, admitted the error publicly and took steps to correct it. This is "a clear demonstration of accountability, honesty, and courage — values that are rare but deeply needed in today's public service," writes the Association of African Universities in a commendation. The Association added: "In openly taking responsibility and showing empathy…you have not only elevated the standard of public leadership in Nigeria but have also restored confidence in institutional integrity across Africa." Millions of young Nigerians have passed through JAMB's gateway into higher education. The fairness of this passage, its transparency, and resistance to manipulation speak volumes about whether the country's education system is in consonance with merit or remains a conduit for privilege and corruption. President Tinubu was therefore right when he observed, in his tribute, that Oloyede "pioneered and sustained a series of reforms and technological innovations that have made the admission process in Nigeria transparent and credible…and demonstrated an uncommon commitment to financial integrity and accountability in public service."

Prof Oloyede has proven that if JAMB can be turned around, then a major cause of institutional failure in Nigeria is inept leadership. Some agencies, like the Nigerian Customs Service, the Federal Inland Revenue Service, and a few others, have, at various points, demonstrated similar possibilities. Oloyede's tenure adds to that body of evidence that public service in Nigeria is not impervious to integrity when integrity is actually present. Ministries, departments, and agencies that have persuaded themselves otherwise have a lesson to borrow from. Laudable as they are, Oloyede's achievements will not be sustained automatically. If there is to be no regression to the shadows of fraud of the past in JAMB, it will be because the incoming Registrar, Prof Segun Aina, consciously treats his mandate as a civic obligation, and that he has the continued support of the Federal Government and the majority of the citizenry. The 40-year-old professor of computer engineering at Obafemi Awolowo University, a specialist in digital systems, examination integrity, and public-sector reform, must acknowledge that Oloyede's standard is now the minimum. There should never be a descent below transparency in financial reporting, prompt publication of results, aggressive anti-malpractice enforcement, and genuine care for the welfare of staff.

Prof Oloyede will be remembered as having left behind both a rebuke and a template. His example reproves leaders who see office as an opportunity for self-enrichment. He affirms that all heads of MDAs can and should leave footprints of integrity. If an institution as large, as historically compromised, and as politically exposed as JAMB can be turned around, then heads of the Universal Basic Education Commission, the National Universities Commission, the West African Examinations Council, the National Health Insurance Authority, and every other agency that touches the lives of ordinary Nigerians must study and replicate the model.

Nations get the institutions they are willing to defend. The incoming registrar, the supervising ministry, the National Assembly, and the public that depends on JAMB must hold the institution and its new leadership to the standard set by Prof Ishaq Oloyede. An outstanding record has been achieved. As July 31, 2026, closes in, this record must not be allowed to fade into the background noise of encomiums that Nigeria performs over departing officials. It is time to remember and, with remembrance, recommit to what is right.

## LETTER

# Sanitising The Nigerian National Honours

SIR: The Nigerian National Honours Award was established by the National Honours Act, No. 5 of1964. The Act empowers the President and C-in-C of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to establish by warrant, the Nigeria Order of Dignity, to honour deserving citizens, who have contributed significantly to the development and progress of the country in various fields of human endeavours. Therefore, for any person to be eligible for the award, he or she must have maintained a consistently high moral standard, proven integrity and impeccable character. In addition, a person conferred with the honour is expected to serve as a role model and source of inspiration to others. At the same time, awardees that are convicted of any criminal offence are expected to be stripped of the honour conferred on them.

In light of the above, I make bold, to state that it is high-time the National Assembly sets theball in motion, to amend the National Honours Act in its entirety; ensuring that the bar is raised for both the nomination and selection processes. Moreso, names of nominees and prospective awardees should be published early enough, for public information and criticism, as this was the order in the past. Doing this will go a long way to restore lost public confidence, as far as the national honour is concerned. It has become very disheartening that none of the holders of the prestigious honours, who are responsible for Nigeria'spresent socio-political and economic woes has been stripped of the honours conferred on them, to serve as detriment to others. In fact, we need to have a **"National Black Book Or A Hall Of Shame"**, where names of saboteurs and unpatriotic citizens shall be registered, for reference purposes.

The "non-statutory" tradition of conferring automatic honours on public office-holders,simply because of the position they hold in government, needs to be stopped, because most of these "accidental leaders/beneficiaries of the honours" are usually found to be guilty of massive corruption and incessant breach of public trust.Thus, it has become a national embarrassment as these corrupt persons are being dragged to court for prosecution by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Based onthis ugly trend, only the most outstanding public office-holders, who must have served conscientiously, meritoriously and patriotically, should always be selected for the honours, afterleaving office. For instance, a former accountant-general of the federation, Mr. ChukwunyereAnamekweNwabuoku has just been sentenced to 72 years imprisonment on 23rd May 2026, as a result of the monumental fraud of N868m he committed, whilstin office.

In the same vein, a former minister of aviation, is still being probed over a N2 billion fraud purportedly expended on a rented Ethiopian airlines plane, which was used for a 3-day show and painted for unveiling in Abuja as "Nigeria Air"in the twilight of late President Muhammadu Buhari's administration. He holds a CON. Same goes for Saleh Mamman (Nigeria's former minister of power and steel), who has just beensentenced to 75 years imprisonment for stealing the sum of N33.8 billion; a former governor of Taraba State, is also being probed for alleged diversion of N27 billion local government funds. He holds a CON; while a former minister of justice, a former governor of Delta State and a former governor of Kogi State are also still being probed by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC);yet, they have also emerged as the governorship and senatorialcandidates for both African Democratic Congress (ADC) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) ahead of the 2027 general elections; and they are still bearing the insignia of the national honour as CON, respectively. It is the same story with a former GMD of NNPCL, who holds OFR; Godwin Emefiele (former CBN governor), who holds CFR; Mrs Dieziani Allison-Madueke (Nigeria's former minister of petroleumresources), who holds a CON; and many other political appointees, who continue to manoeuvre their ways through the judiciary, to evade being convicted.

Moreover, a former minister for humanitarian affairs, disaster management and social development) was removed from office over the transfer of N585.2 million, meant for some vulnerable groups into a private account. Her predecessor is also being probed for the misappropriation of the sums of N746.7 million and 1.3 million dollars. Alongside former national coordinator/CEO of the National SocialInvestment Programme Agency who was also removed from office over a fraud of N44.8 billion.Therefore, as the list of corrupt government officials (both past and present) has beenconstantly rising and constituting serious national embarrassment, it is high-time theconferment of the national honours on serving public office-holders are stopped, in order to preserve the sanctity of the award.

The list of other corrupt top government functionaries (past and present), cutting across the executive,legislative, judiciary, military/paramilitary and MDAs with various range ofcorruption cases has been mind-blowing and very perplexing. This endless ugly trend,calls for immediate action by the Nigerian government, to urgently sanitize the honours for overall national interest; and strictly "recognizing only men and women with high moral standard, proven integrity and impeccable character." Thus, the clause on"conviction" needs to be redefined, as this is giving many corrupt individuals, who should have been jailed and stripped of the national honours, a hiding place.

• *Comrade Ganiyu Abdullahi is a concerned patriot (leadership-compendium@gmail.com)*



# Opinion

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## Nigeria's Elections: A Word From Babatunde Jose

By Banji Ojewale

ISMAIL Babatunde Jose, described as the "legendary doyen of Nigerian journalism" (*The Guardian* of UK) and "the grandfather of Nigerian journalism" (British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC), was responsible for the emergence of a galaxy of talent in the industry in his generation. He toiled on the raw aptitude of these young persons coming under his care and, with strategic precision, dropped himself into them, as it were, seeking those who would collect the baton and perpetuate his tradition of unyielding enterprise. They would continue the race resolutely and relentlessly, and refuse to let down cheering crowds and a mentor given to nothing but to see you turn in your best for the community of news consumers.

Jose reached to the belly of the sky to pluck the stars he bred at the Daily Times of Nigeria Group, DTN, where he sat atop an empire, dispensing power like the potentates in Greek mythology did on Mount Olympus. Many have framed him in their narratives as an imperial operator in his roles as editor, editor-in-chief and managing director and chairman at DTN.

This perspective can be questioned and impeached, along with other dark rulings on Jose's era, if we juxtapose them with what DTN harvested under him. His reign marked the golden age of that media leviathan, boasting such greats as Peter Enahoro (Peter Pan), Sam Amuka-Pemu (Sad Sam), Alade Odunewu (Allah-de), Abiodun Aloba (Ebenezer Williams), Henry Odukomaiya, Tony Momoh, Segun Osoba,, Gbolabo Ogunsanwo, Doyin Abiola, Stanley Macebuh, Dele Giwa etc. all of whom, following the Midas touch picked from Jose's DTN, excelled right there at Daily Times or moved on to replicate the success story nationwide and beyond Africa…*The Punch, The Guardian, Vanguard, National Concord, The Herald, The Sketch, Newswatch, New African, Africa Now* etc. One of them, Osoba, has been a two-time elected state governor, where, again, the verdict of history is that he hit several feats of firsts.

How did Jose get it so tight right? So neatly knit? So coldly calculating he envisaged a future without him, but yet what he taught would exert a commanding presence in his absence. What was the trick?

The answer is in the process of recruiting your potential workforce. If you're ruthlessly fastidious at that initial stage of (s)electing men and women of character, you can't have anoutcome of flotsam and jetsam. And Ismail Babatunde Jose was merciless at interview sessions for those he wanted at DTN!

Let's recall a classic case of how, for instance, he discovered Osoba, considered Nigeria's reportorial paragon. I turn to the book, Segun Osoba: The Newspaper Years, by Mike Awoyinfa and Dimgba Igwe.

The duo quotes Jose: "We invited these young men for an interview…I intervened…to ask my own set of questions aimed at testing their love for journalism…I asked…"If you are making love with your wife and you hear a loud bang outside followed by a scream, what would you do? Another answer I got was:" Óh, I would disengage. Then I would take a shower." But Osoba said: "I won't shower. I would just put on my pants and trousers and go."

Another question was what the reporter about to go for an urgent news assignment would do if suddenly his pregnant wife showed signs she was at brink of delivering. One young man said he'd get a cab and take her to the hospital, and after child birth, head for the reportorial work. Jose told the aspiring newsman that since he wasn't a nurse, he didn't need to wait at the hospital.

Jose concludes: "I was that harsh in my assessment of people's attitude to work…the love for work transcends personal conveniences…" Well, the man's inflexible stance in getting principled and selfless personnel to run DTN with him engendered the idyllic tale of Jose and his administration.

What he teaches the Nigerian electorate this dancing and singing season of elections and campaigns is that we shall not get the right persons in power and authority if we continue to hum the hurting 'take-a-bow' music the legislators have been dishing the nation.

Every vote-chasing citizen and public office seeker must satisfy Jose's 'harsh' litmus posers, in a manner of speaking, before accessing our mandate to rule.

Will they love their country more than their micro-dot family constituency? Will their love for the work we vote for them to undertake "transcend personal conveniences?"Will they be ready to 'disengage', dismount, discontinue, and decouple in the ardor of personal pleasure to make room for what gives the people pleasure? Will they oblige the desire of the masses to have their children share the same classrooms with those of the leaders? Will the president, governor, lawmaker, minister, commissioner etc. create the time to forsake the luxury of state-provided accommodation for a weekend at the home of Citizen XYZ and his family over there in the hinterland, where life is playing back the history of the Dark Ages? What will be the response to the people's plea that no public officer, elected or appointed, should spend their vacation outside Nigeria?

How about healthcare? Will those intending to rule us settle for indigenous medicare? Will they seek the solutions to our challenges from here and not abroad? Will they, empathically, come to the level of those under them? When they go commiserating with grieving communities after bloody kidnap and mass slaughter, will they reflect bereavement and genuine condolences in their apparel? Or it will be the immodest agbada suggesting a cavalier and fleeting trip with no emotional depth? One disciplined and visionary man looking for men and women of integrity to join him found an unseen future from the seen present, one man who understood that "the love for work transcends personal conveniences," one man who was "harsh in my assessment of people's attitude to work," has the annals inking him as a titan in his quest and career.

If we want Nigeria's elections to produce performing personalities, we must hurl them hard questions along those proposed here, before voting them into power. But we can't do that dining and dancing and wining with them!

• ***Ojewale is an author at Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.***

## Tinubu's Exit Benefits Scheme: New Social Contract For Workers

By Omolola Oloworaran

THINK of the teacher who spent three decades shaping young minds, the nurse who worked through countless difficult nights, the civil servant who gave a lifetime to public service. For each of them, retirement should arrive as a season of dignity, security and peace of mind, not as a descent into uncertainty. Nations are judged, in the end, not by how they treat their strongest citizens, but by how they honour those who have spent their working years in service and now depend on society's promise of care in old age.

It is against this backdrop that the Federal Government's recent approval of an Exit Benefits Scheme for retiring Federal Civil Servants stands as one of the most significant social protection measures introduced in recent years.

For the first time since the introduction of the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS), retiring Federal Government workers will receive an additional retirement benefit equivalent to 100 per cent of their total annual emoluments upon retirement, alongside their accrued pension savings and retirement benefits under the CPS. Effective from 1 January 2026, the scheme applies to officers in treasury funded Ministries, Extra Ministerial Departments and Agencies who have completed at least ten years of service.

**This is a landmark intervention.**

It strengthens retirement security, improves retirement outcomes and reinforces the fundamental objective of every pension system: ensuring that workers who have devoted their productive years to service can retire with confidence and dignity.

Importantly, this approval also settles, once and for all, a misconception that has persisted since the introduction of the CPS in 2004. The CPS was never designed to prevent employers from providing additional retirement benefits to their employees. Rather, it established a sustainable minimum framework upon which employers could build more generous retirement arrangements.

The Pension Reform Act expressly permits employers to establish additional benefit schemes for their workforce. What the Federal Government has now done is demonstrate leadership by showing how that provision can be used to strengthen worker welfare and retirement security.

Just as importantly, this is a promise built to be kept. To safeguard the funds and guarantee transparency, a dedicated Exit Benefits Scheme Account is being maintained with the Central Bank of Nigeria, ring fenced for this single purpose and managed by the National Pension Commission as the sole repository of the funds. The Office of the Accountant General of the Federation will transfer approved funds into that account for onward disbursement through retirees' Pension Fund Administrators, who are directed to pay beneficiaries within ten working days. This architecture matters. It ensures the benefit is not left to the shifting pressures of the budget cycle, and that the retiring officer can plan with confidence, knowing the framework that protects their entitlement is institutional and accountable.

This is why the significance of the Exit Benefits Scheme extends far beyond the Federal Civil Service. It establishes an important national precedent. It sends a clear message that retirement protection should not end with monthly pensions alone, and it affirms that employers can and should do more to support workers who have spent decades contributing to organisational success and national development.

For this reason, state governments across Nigeria should carefully study this initiative and consider adopting similar arrangements for their workers. Many states have made remarkable progress in implementing the Contributory Pension Scheme. But retirement security is not merely about compliance with minimum statutory requirements. It is about creating outcomes that genuinely improve the quality of life of retirees. A retiring worker in Enugu, Kano, Lagos, Rivers, Abia or Yobe deserves the same opportunity to transition into retirement with dignity and financial security.

Likewise, Nigeria's private sector should view this development not as a cost, but as an investment in people. The most successful organisations in the world recognise that workforce welfare does not end at retirement. Competitive retirement packages have become an important tool for attracting talent, retaining institutional knowledge and building organisational loyalty. Workers who know that their employers genuinely care about their future tend to be more productive, more committed and more invested in the success of the enterprise. Additional retirement benefits should therefore become a central part of corporate Nigeria's human capital strategy.

**At its core, this is not simply a pension issue.**

It is a social security issue. It is a human dignity issue. It is a nation building issue.

Every society eventually makes a choice about how it treats those who have spent decades building it. Some leave retirees to navigate old age alone. Others deliberately create systems that ensure retirement is not accompanied by anxiety, hardship and financial vulnerability. The Federal Government has chosen the latter path.

In recent months, a series of decisions has demonstrated a clear commitment to strengthening the welfare of workers and retirees. The approval and disbursement of 758 billion to clear all outstanding pension liabilities, some dating back to 2007. The introduction of Pension Boost 1.0, which raised aggregate monthly pension payments under the CPS by more than 40 per cent, easing the pressure of inflation on hundreds of thousands of retirees. The restoration of zero waiting time for the payment of accrued pension rights, ending the multiple-month delays that had long confronted many retiring Federal Government employees.. And now the Exit Benefits Scheme. Each of these points in a single direction.

They reflect a government that recognises that economic reform must ultimately improve the lives of ordinary Nigerians. At a time when many workers and retirees are navigating the pressures of a changing economic environment, such measures offer reassurance that government remains attentive to their welfare and determined to strengthen the social safety net.

History will likely record that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration did not merely preserve Nigeria's pension system; it actively sought to strengthen it. Indeed, a compelling case is emerging that President Tinubu is determined to cement his legacy as the most worker friendly and retiree focused President in Nigeria's history.

Not through rhetoric, but through tangible action

Through policies that put real resources behind the welfare of workers. Through decisions that honour years of service. Through interventions that recognise that retirement security is not a privilege, but an obligation owed to those who have built the nation.

The introduction of the Exit Benefits Scheme therefore deserves recognition not simply as a pension policy, but as a statement of national values. It reminds us that the true measure of progress is not only how much wealth a nation creates, but how faithfully it protects the people who helped create it. The task before us is now clear. The Federal Government has led. State governments must follow. The private sector must seize the opportunity

Together, we must keep building a Nigeria where every worker can look toward retirement not with fear, but with hope. Because after a lifetime of service, dignity should never be negotiable.

• *Omolola Oloworaran is the Director General of the National Pension Commission (PenCom), Nigeria's pension regulator.*




# Beyond The Warehouse: How Abiodun's Health Revolution Is Transforming Ogun

By **Kayode Akinmade**

**WHEN** Governor Dapo Abiodun commissioned the new Pharma-Grade Warehouse of the Ogun State Drugs and Health Commodities Management Agency last week, the event represented far more than the unveiling of another public facility. It underscored the steady transformation of Ogun State's healthcare system—one increasingly attracting recognition from independent institutions, including the World Bank and the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF).

At the commissioning, Governor Abiodun described the warehouse as a critical component of his administration's strategy to strengthen healthcare delivery through efficient storage and distribution of essential medicines. He disclosed that more than 30,000 residents living with HIV currently receive free antiretroviral therapy, counselling and support services across health facilities in the state, while investments in tuberculosis and malaria control continue to expand.

The governor noted that the facility, regarded as the largest and best-equipped pharmaceutical warehouse of its kind in Nigeria, will serve all 20 local councils, ensuring a more reliable supply chain for critical health commodities.

**Building A Stronger Health Workforce**

**INFRASTRUCTURE** alone does not deliver healthcare; skilled personnel do. Recognising this, the Abiodun administration has pursued an aggressive workforce expansion programme alongside its investment in physical infrastructure.

In 2023, the Ogun State Hospitals Management Board confirmed the appointment of 321 health workers recruited over a two-year period to strengthen staffing across secondary healthcare facilities. The recruits included 174 senior staff and 147 junior staff members who successfully completed probation and performance evaluations.

The recruitment drive has since expanded through partnerships with development agencies. Under the World Bank-supported IMPACT Project, the state recruited more than 400 community health workers across all 20 local councils to address staffing shortages at the primary healthcare level—the first point of contact for most residents.

The Ministry of Health and the Hospitals Management Board have also continued recruiting doctors, pharmacists, dentists, physiotherapists, laboratory scientists, nurses, radiographers, HIV/AIDS specialists and ambulance personnel to support the growing network of health facilities and emergency services.

According to the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Tomi Coker, continuous recruitment and training of healthcare professionals remain central to the administration's strategy of delivering efficient, patient-centred care, particularly at the primary healthcare level.

**Health As A Pillar Of Economic Growth**

**THE** healthcare transformation is unfolding alongside broader economic gains recorded by the state.

Ogun's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew from approximately N2.9 trillion in 2019 to about N7.3 trillion in 2024, while Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) increased from 50.6 billion in 2020 to nearly 192 billion in 2024. The state is targeting N250 billion in IGR in 2025. Reflecting these priorities, the 2025 Budget of Hope and Prosperity allocated substantial capital expenditure to infrastructure, education and healthcare.

Government officials argue that these developments are interconnected. More than 1,700 kilometres of roads constructed or rehabilitated since 2019 have improved access to healthcare facilities, particularly in rural communities, while also facilitating emergency response services.

At the same time, industrial growth through initiatives such as the Ogun-Guangdong Free Trade Zone, the Remo Economic Industrial Cluster, and investments facilitated by OGUNINVEST has expanded the state's revenue base.

According to official figures, over $2 billion in investments and more than 40,000 jobs have been generated through these initiatives, providing resources that support healthcare infrastructure, personnel recruitment and service delivery.

The Ogun State Health Insurance Scheme further complements these efforts by offering premium exemptions for pregnant women, children under five, and residents above 70 years of age, while maintaining affordable premiums for enrolled workers.

**Independent Validation Of Reforms**

**PERHAPS** the most significant aspect of Ogun's healthcare story is the level of external validation it has received.

In December 2025, Ogun State won $400,000 at the third edition of the Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge Award organised by the Nigeria Governors' Forum, emerging as the first runner-up in the South-West for the second consecutive year. The award assesses measurable indicators such as innovation, accountability, political commitment, and improvements in maternal, newborn, and child health outcomes.

A month later, during a visit to the state, a World Bank Vice President commended Ogun's investments in primary healthcare and highlighted the role of strengthened PHCs in improving health outcomes and system resilience.

Additionally, 20 primary healthcare centres in Ogun received merit awards under the Nigerian Hypertension Control Initiative for achieving impressive blood pressure control rates over a six-month assessment period.

These recognitions are based on documented outcomes and performance indicators, providing evidence that extends beyond routine political accolades.

**Standing Out In The South-West**

**WITHIN** the South-West region, Ogun's repeated high ranking in the Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge has positioned it among the better-performing healthcare systems despite operating alongside Lagos, the nation's commercial hub and most resource-rich state.

The state's performance is further reflected in the 2025 State Performance Index published by Phillips Consulting, which ranked Ogun second only to Lagos among Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

*Akinmade is Special Adviser on Media and Strategy to Ogun State Government.*

Read the remaining part of this article on www-guardian.ng

# Energy In Nigeria: Tinubu's Reforms And The Push From Potential To Reality

By **Olu Verheijen**

**NIGERIA** has never lacked potential. We have oil. We have gas. We have sunlight, water, land, talent and scale. What we have lacked is conversion—the discipline to turn resources into results.

Reserves into production. Production into revenue. Gas into power. Power into productivity. Refining into supply security. And reform into confidence.

That is the work President Bola Ahmed Tinubu mandated us to do: to move Nigeria's energy sector from promise to performance.

Energy is not simply a sector. It is the foundation of national competitiveness. When energy works, factories run, farms process, transport gets cheaper, and government can invest in its people. When energy fails, every Nigerian pays—in diesel costs, food prices, lost jobs and pressure on the naira. That is why energy reform is economic reform.

When we came into office, the sector was under severe strain. Subsidies had become fiscally unsustainable. Foreign-exchange distortions had weakened investment. Production was below potential. Power-sector debt was strangling the gas-to-power chain. The country had resources, but the system was not converting them into national value. So our first task was to stop the bleeding and rebuild the foundations.

First, we restored fiscal credibility. Removing the fuel subsidy and reforming the exchange rate were hard decisions—but necessary. The results are visible. Total federation revenue rose to about 21 trillion in 2024, up from roughly 12 trillion in 2023—nearly doubling in a single year. And despite deregulation, we have avoided the chronic nationwide petrol queues that once defined scarcity.

Local production of petrol has moved from effectively zero in 2023 to about 48 million litres per day. For the first time in a generation, the majority of the petrol Nigerians consume is now refined here at home, not imported.

And this is where energy reform meets the strength of the naira. For decades, every cargo of imported petrol was a standing demand for scarce dollars; a structural drain that weakened our currency. As local refining has risen, that drain has eased: petrol imports fell from about 2.3 trillion in the first quarter of 2025 to under 90 billion a year later.

Fewer dollars spent on fuel means less pressure on the naira. Energy security and currency stability are not separate goals. They are the same goal.

Second, we restored production and investor confidence. Crude oil and condensate production averaged 1.64 million barrels per day in 2025 — up by roughly 400,000 barrels a day since 2023, and the highest onshore level in two decades.

Over four billion dollars in international oil company divestments were concluded, deepening indigenous participation onshore while the majors refocus on deepwater and integrated gas. Pipeline uptime is now consistently high, and illegal refining sharply reduced.

Every additional barrel matters — for revenue, for jobs and for the strength of the federation.

Third, we brought capital back. Capital is not moved by speeches. It is moved by clarity, competitiveness and confidence. Through targeted presidential directives we improved the environment for deepwater, non-associated gas and midstream infrastructure, and we attacked the cost of doing business. Contracting that once took 36 months now takes around 14 and we are driving towards a target of six.



Verheijen

The market responded. Nigeria's share of African upstream Final Investment Decisions rose from about four per cent in the years to 2023 to roughly 40 per cent across 2024 and 2025—with about 10 billion dollars committed and a visible pipeline of some 50 billion ahead.

Stalled projects are moving again—Bonga North, Ubeta and HI gas developments and new non-associated gas developments that anchor long-term supply to our LNG exports. When Nigeria improves the rules of the game, capital returns to the field.

Fourth, we repositioned gas as the foundation for industrialisation. For Nigeria, gas is not merely a transition fuel. It is a development fuel central to power, fertiliser, petrochemicals, clean cooking, CNG transport, LNG exports and manufacturing.

Our proven reserves now stand at over 215 trillion cubic feet of gas, and gross gas production has risen from about 6.83 billion standard cubic feet per day in 2023 to about 7.63 billion today.

But the goal is not simply to produce more gas. It is to ensure Nigerian gas becomes Nigerian power, Nigerian products, Nigerian jobs and Nigerian exports. A nation does not grow wealthy by owning resources. It grows wealthy by converting them into value.

Fifth, we are restoring financial viability to the gas-to-power chain. For years the power sector was constrained by accumulated arrears, weak payment discipline and tariff distortions. The Presidential Power Sector Debt Reduction Programme was built to address this directly—a Federal Executive Council-approved bond programme of up to 4 trillion to settle verified generation- and gas-company arrears.

Under it, generation companies have signed full and final settlement agreements worth about 2.28 trillion, and the 501 billion Series 1 bond was issued and oversubscribed, with payments to generation and gas companies now underway. A second series of 729 billion will follow to complete the first phase.

This is not a bailout. It is a strategic reset—one that clears verified arrears, restores liquidity and gives operators the footing to invest with confidence. Government obligations must be honoured if private capital is to return.

That reset is matched by reforms on the ground. The national metering rate has risen to about 57 per cent, with hundreds of thousands of new metres deployed each year.

Two distinct programmes—the Presidential Metering Initiative and a separate World Bank-supported programme—are together set to deploy several million additional metres in the years ahead. Metering protects consumers, reduces estimated billing and builds the commercial discipline investment requires.

Tariff reform is being implemented pragmatically. About 45 per cent of the market is now on cost-reflective tariffs linked to service quality, while the subsidised segment is redesigned to better protect vulnerable households, already reducing the projected subsidy burden by over a trillion naira.

Ladies and gentlemen — this is the wider point.

When we speak of energy reform, we are not speaking only of oil companies, power plants or investors. We are speaking of the price of food, the cost of transport, the survival of small businesses, the strength of the naira and jobs for young Nigerians. Energy reform is not an elite conversation. It is a national development conversation.

*Verheijen, Special Adviser to President Bola Tinubu on Oil and Gas, delivered this Keynote Address at the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce Energy Day 2026 held recently under the theme, 'Energy in Nigeria, From Potential to Reality,' which was attended by captains of industry, investors, regulators and development partners.*

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50th YEARS



THE OFFICE OF THE HONORARY CONSUL OF MEXICO IN LAGOS

*warmly felicitates with*

# MRS. FAVOUR OTUNOLA

Wife of the Honorary Consul of Mexico in Lagos

on the occasion of your birthday.
As you celebrate this significant milestone, we commend your grace, poise, qualities and steadfast support that have endeared you to many and impacted those around you.

We wish you good health, happiness, peace, and God's abundant blessings in the years ahead.

**Happy 50th Birthday !**

# Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by Shaibu Husseini

**New Theme For African Indigenous Language Film Festival**

A NEW theme has been announced for the third edition of the African Indigenous Language Film Festival (AILFF). Festival founder and director, Osezua Steph-Imobio, disclosed that the initial theme which is 'Threads of Culture: Weaving Inclusion Through Filmmaking' has been replaced with 'Digital Bridges, Ancestral Voices: Reclaiming African Screens with Indigenous Tongues.' The organising committee said the change followed a strategic review of the festival's programme and objectives to better reflect current realities in the global film industry. The committee described the new theme as a call to action for African filmmakers to embrace innovation while keeping indigenous languages and stories visible, relevant, and competitive in the digital age. Scheduled for July 22to 25, 2026 in Parakou, Benin Republic, AILFF 2026 as Osezua disclosed "will put strong emphasis on AI and filmmaking," adding that workshops will cover AI applications in scriptwriting, production, post-production, marketing, distribution, and film monetization. The festival which is being held for the first time outside Nigeria will also feature practical sessions on translation, subtitling, dubbing, and content localization to help indigenous-language films break language barriers and reach international markets. Other highlights include drone piloting workshops, film screenings, cultural tours, networking events, and industry engagements. Osezua also disclosed that AILFF 2026 has already attracted delegates from Nigeria, Benin Republic, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa, The Gambia, and Pakistan, underscoring its growing international profile. More information on the festival can be sourced at www.ailff.com



Israel Kashim Audu

Osezua Steph-Imobio

Nnamdi Ndu

**Winners Emerge For Young And Future Pitcher Competition**

THE 2026 edition of the Young Pitcher Competition and the Future Pitcher Competition have reached their exciting conclusion, marking another year of outstanding talent emerging from the Pitcher Festival's youth development programmes. The Young Pitcher Academy brought together early-career professionals for an intensive creative learning experience, culminating in the Young Pitcher Competition where participants applied their sharpened skills to real-world briefs. Alongside this, the Future Pitcher Student Academy guided university-level creatives through hands-on training, mentorship, and collaborative challenges, all leading up to the Future Pitcher Competition — a platform designed to introduce fresh voices to the realities of strategic and creative problem-solving. This year's Future Pitcher Competition winners will now advance their professional journey with an industry placement at Out There Media, a leading global mobile advertising and data monetisation firm headquartered in Austria. Winners of the Young Pitcher Digital category are Chisom Aniebue & Olatunde Mustapha, Pulse Marketing Nigeria (Gold), Fiona Achieng Odhiambo & Andrew Cobblah, Innova DDB Ghana (Silver), and Favour Oluleke & Stanley Igboanugo, QVT Media, Nigeria (Bronze). The gold winners of the Young Pitcher film category is David Chikere & Morayo Olaleye, SO&U Nigeria, while the gold winner for Young Pitcher Media category is Gift Ayelu & Blessing Adenuga, QVT Media. The gold winner for the Young Pitcher Print category is Gabriel Atitebi & Leo Inomakora, The Hook Creative Agency, Nigeria, while the gold winner for the Young Pitcher PR category is Eniola Ajayi & Kesioluwa Orukotan, QVT Media Nigeria. Favour Mbagwu and Kehinde Olatunji, both of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism won gold in the Future Pitcher competition. Jack Amaso, Lecturer, Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Lagos got the special recognition award for emerging lecturer of the year, while the school of the year award went to Department of Language & Communication Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. More information on the winners can be sourced at www.pitcherfestival.com

**NFVCB Receives KADIFF Delegation Ahead Of August 2026 Festival**

OFFICIALS of the Kaduna International Film Festival (KADIFF), led by its Founder and Executive Director, Mr. Israel Kashim Audu, have restated that the 9th edition of the Kaduna International Film Festival will hold in Kaduna as from August 25 to 29, 2026. Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the festival, Audu, restated this during a courtesy visit to the Executive Director of the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) Dr. Shaibu Husseini. Audu stated that the purpose of the visit was to formally brief the Board on preparations for the forthcoming Kaduna International Film Festival scheduled to hold in Kaduna in August 2026, and to solicit the Board's support towards a successful outing. Audu outlined the festival's objectives, programming plans, and the role KADIFF intends to play in expanding opportunities for filmmakers, particularly emerging talents in Northern Nigeria and across the country. The NFVCB Executive Director commended Audu and the entire KADIFF team for their consistency and commitment to building a credible and sustainable platform for Nigerian cinema. According to the ED "the emergence and growth of regional festivals like KADIFF is essential to decentralizing the film industry, broadening access for practitioners outside the traditional hubs, and projecting authentic Nigerian stories to local and global audiences. The Board notes the value of KADIFF's mandate and will engage further to explore areas of collaboration and support as we approach the August edition". Preparations leading to the actualization of the 2026 edition started with the official unveiling of the nominations which according to the KADIFF festival director is made up of films that celebrate outstanding achievements in African and international cinema. More information on the nomination can be sourced at www.kadunainternationalfilmfestival.com

## Trino Motion Pictures Marks 10 Years, Appoints Richard Aseme To Advisory Board

TRINO Motion Pictures, an award-winning Lagos-based production and distribution studio, marks its 10th anniversary this month and announces the appointment of Richard Aseme, former Co-Head of EMEA at Paramount Pictures, to its Advisory Board.

The milestone and appointment together mark a new chapter for the outfit, as it moves into its second decade with an expanded international growth strategy spanning distribution, co-production, and strategic partnerships across Europe and Africa.

**A Decade Of Growth, Storytelling And Global Reach**

FOUNDED in 2016 by Babatunwa Aderinokun & Uche Okocha, the company has grown from a fledgling production outfit into one of Nigeria's leading film production, international sales, content acquisition, marketing, and distribution company. Over the past decade, Trino has built a catalogue of 16 titles, including eight feature films spanning psychological thrillers, comedies, rom-coms, and horror, among them *Sylvia, Three Thieves, The Razz Guy, The One for Sarah, KM17, The Weekend, Love Lockdown,* and *Grandpa Must Obey*, alongside a slate of acclaimed short films anchored by the historical drama The Encounter.

The studio's breakout title, *The Weekend,* made history in 2024 as the first independently produced Nigerian film selected for the Tribeca Film Festival in New York, going on to screen at the BFI London Film Festival, Screamfest, and the NollywoodWeek Film Festival in Paris.

The film went on to earn a record 16 nominations and multiple wins at the 2024 Africa Movie Academy Awards, including Best Film, Best Nigerian Film, Best Screenplay and Best Cinematography, while The Encounter won an Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Award and Sylvia secured further AMVCA nominations.

Trino's films have reached more than 75 territories worldwide, with English and French language distribution across cinemas, in-flight entertainment, and major global platforms including Netflix, Prime Video, Canal+, Kava, HBO Max, and Circuit TV, alongside continuous broadcast on DSTV. The Weekend's HBO Max deal brought the film to subscribers across Central and Eastern Europe, while a Canal+ acquisition extended its reach to more than 60 French-speaking territories across Africa, Europe, and French overseas territories.



Richard Aseme, former Co-Head of EMEA at Paramount Pictures, newly appointed Advisory Board member

"Ten years ago, we said we wanted to take African stories to the world," said Uche Okocha, Managing Director of Trino Motion Pictures. "This anniversary is a celebration of everyone who believed in and helped shape that vision before the evidence was there: our creative collaborators, our partners, colleagues, friends, family and the audiences . The next decade is about building the partnerships, distribution networks, and industry infrastructure that allow even more African stories to travel globally."

**Looking Ahead: Positioning For The Next Decade**

AS it enters its second decade, Trino is making deliberate investments in the infrastructure required to scale its international footprint across distribution, co-production, content acquisition, and strategic partnerships. The company is deepening its presence across European markets while building the financing, distribution, and visibility frameworks that will define its next phase of growth.

Richard Aseme Joins the Advisory Board

Supporting this ambition is the appointment of Richard Aseme to Trino's Advisory Board. A former Co-Head of EMEA at Paramount Pictures with over two decades of experience in global film distribution, Aseme also brings deep expertise in investment and emerging technology, currently heading global fintech venture investments at DCG. A voting member of BAFTA and a graduate of Oxford University and UCLA Anderson School of Management, his appointment reflects Trino's intent to build a studio that competes not just within Nollywood, but within the global independent film industry.

## Ajoyo Sets New Guinness World Record With Adire Cultural Milestone



CEO/ Co-Founder, Ruby Agwu (left); Co-Founder, Olusola Ogundare; Co-Founder, Lanre Ogundare and Executive Director, Olabukola Olajuwon showcasing the official Guinness World Records™ certificate awarded to Ajoyo NG Integrated Services Limited for achieving the most photos of people wearing Adire patterned clothing uploaded to Instagram in one hour (652 photos) in Lagos, Nigeria.

Ajoyo NG Integrated Services Limited has officially secured a prestigious Guinness World Records™ title, making history with a groundbreaking digital campaign celebrating Nigerian heritage.

The organisation successfully achieved the record for the "most photos of people wearing Adire patterned clothing uploaded to Instagram in one hour," reaching a verified total of 652 uploads. The historic event took place on March 14, 2026, bringing together fashion enthusiasts, cultural advocates and the digital community to showcase the beauty and global appeal of the traditional Yoruba textile.

The milestone will be formally commemorated along with their one year anniversary, marking a double celebration of cultural impact and organisational growth, with a celebratory gathering recognising the dedication of the team, partners and thousands of participants who contributed to this global feat.

Speaking on the achievement, Chief Executive Officer of Ajoyo, Ruby Agwu, stated: "This milestone is more than just a world record; it is a global celebration of our cultural identity. By combining our rich Adire textile heritage with modern digital strategy, we have created a historic moment that amplifies African fashion on the world stage."

Olabukola said with hundreds of participants mobilised within a strict 60-minute window, the initiative demonstrated the power of community, digital execution and cultural pride.

"The official Guinness World Records™ certificate stands as a testament to the team's meticulous planning, seamless logistics, and creative vision.

"With this title, Ajoyo NG Integrated Services Limited cements its position as a pioneer in innovative cultural promotion, setting a new benchmark for how African traditions can be creatively spotlighted in the digital era," he said.

# In Retirement, Academy Press Celebrates Ladipo's Outstanding Achievements

## • 'Yearly Turnover Of N6 Billion Is A Milestone'

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

AFTER nearly three decades of excellent and active service at Academy Press Plc, one of Nigeria's oldest and most respected printing companies, veteran industry executive, Gbenga Ladipo, has officially retired, leaving behind an uncommon legacy of growth and record-breaking performance.

Ladipo exits the company with an unprecedented achievement, the highest yearly turnover in Academy Press' history, recording over N6 billion in revenue from its initial N500million value. The milestone stands as a testament to his strategic leadership, financial expertise, and unwavering commitment to corporate excellence.

His remarkable career trajectory reflects a strong foundation in accounting and finance. Before joining Academy Press in 1998, Ladipo built an impressive professional portfolio with Deloitte (formerly Akintola Williams Deloitte) and Coca-Cola, where he established a reputation for delivering exceptional results and driving organisational growth.

Throughout his tenure at Academy Press, Ladipo steered the company through some of the most challenging periods in Nigeria's economic landscape. From economic downturns and industry disruptions to the rapid technological evolution that transformed the printing sector, he was widely regarded as a calm and dependable leader whose resilience helped sustain the company's competitiveness and growth.

His departure has been met with deep admiration and emotion among employees, many of whom commended his leadership style, mentorship, and vision for the company's continued success.

The affection and respect he earned over the years were evident during his send-off celebration held at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, where friends, colleagues, shareholders, business partners, and vendors gathered to honour Ladipo's outstanding contributions to Academy Press.

Among the guests at the ceremony were Mr. Femi Akingbe, Dr. Olukayode Olusunmade, Mr. Samuel Adedoyin, Mr. Olatunji Johnson, Mr. David Pritchard and Mrs. Folashade Omo-Eboh.

For many in the room, Ladipo was not merely the executive who led Academy Press for two decades as managing director; he was the quiet centre of gravity in difficult times—the man who did not need to raise his voice to command respect, and who, in the words of several speakers, carried other people's burdens as if they were his own.

The tributes captured the arc of a career that began when Ladipo left Akintola Williams Deloitte about 28 years ago to join Academy Press and head its Accounts Department. From there, he rose to Finance and Admin Director, and eventually to the top job, where he spent 20 years steering one of Nigeria's most recognisable printing companies through economic uncertainty, industry shifts and major corporate milestones.



*The tributes captured the arc of a career that began when Ladipo left Akintola Williams Deloitte about 28 years ago to join Academy Press and head its Accounts Department. From there, he rose to Finance and Admin Director, and eventually to the top job, where he spent 20 years steering one of Nigeria's most recognisable printing companies through economic uncertainty, industry shifts and major corporate milestones.*

A Senior Manager at the Academy Press, Yemi Adepoju, recalled working closely with Ladipo for almost 25 years and painted a portrait of a leader who solved problems without theatrics. He remembered periods when the company faced turbulence and daily operational strain, and how Ladipo responded not with panic, but with practical calm.

Even in moments of pressure, he said, Ladipo never barked orders. Instead, he asked questions, invited people to think, and made them feel responsible and supported at the same time. In one memorable example, Adepoju recounted how Ladipo backed the team during a demanding 2023 budget-related job, negotiated extra time, and returned from a trip to go straight to the factory floor, staying close to operations until the crisis eased. That blend of firmness and trust, many suggested, was what made him unusual.

In his remarks, President of the Academy Press Staff Union, Solomon Olurakaye, brought the emotion of the workforce into the room when he described Ladipo as a father figure. Workers, he said, never felt treated like mere staff. They felt seen. They felt heard. They felt protected.

It was a powerful theme throughout the event: that Ladipo's greatness lay not only in delivering results, but in the way he treated people while doing so.

Former staff and now shareholder, Chief Oyewole Olaoye, perhaps summed it up best when he described Ladipo as "a steady hand"—the kind of person chosen not simply for seniority, but for stability and focus. That phrase lingered in the room because it explained so much. In corporate life, where noise often passes for leadership, Ladipo seemed to have built his reputation by doing the opposite: staying measured, staying honest, and keeping "his eyes on the ball," as Olaoye put it.

There was also laughter amid the admiration as Ladipo and his wife Funmi savoured the encomiums, adulation and best wishes.

Adepoju lightened the mood when he recalled that when Ladipo first joined the company, he had a full head of thick hair—a detail made memorable, he joked, by the turbulence of the years that followed. Looking at him now, he said with a smile, the boss seemed to have come full circle. It was the kind of teasing only familiarity can carry, and it revealed how deeply personal many of these professional relationships had become.

One of the Directors, Mrs Fatima Betara, re-echoed similar sentiment when he described Mr Ladipo as "a gentle and compassionate, yet principled and unwavering when it came to doing what was right."

She said: "You proved that humility and firmness can coexist. Your listening skills were unparalleled. When you spoke, your words were thoughtful, informed and carried the weight of wisdom.

"In the face of adversity, your calm demeanour reassured everyone around you. You inspired confidence simply by the way you carried yourself.

"You mentored generations of professionals, built enduring structures and safeguarded the heritage of a great institution.

"It is difficult to imagine this organisation without your presence, but your greatest achievement is the people you have groomed to continue the work.

"You became more than a leader; you became a trusted adviser, a big brother and someone people could turn to in difficult times.

"This is not goodbye. It is a celebration of a remarkable journey and the beginning of a well-deserved new chapter filled with peace, good health and joy."

Mrs. Kemi Ogunnubi, the current Managing Director, captured the tone of the evening when she described it as a mixture of celebration and parting. Ladipo, she said, had not just led the company; he had shaped it. That sentiment echoed through the hall as speaker after speaker praised his vision, discipline and legacy.

Ladipo reflected on the long road behind him with the gratitude of a man taking stock without exaggeration. Twenty-eight years, he said, was a long time, filled with many roads, but one for which he remained thankful because it had been "more progressive than regressive."

Even in retirement, he remained forward-looking. He expressed confidence in the team he was leaving behind and said he believed they would take the company even further.

Ladipo also used the moment to speak on the wider Nigerian printing industry, insisting that the country already has the equipment, people and resources to print both sensitive and non-sensitive materials locally. Rather than outsourcing such jobs abroad, he argued, Nigeria should be self-sustaining—and even export printing services to other African countries.

That view was fitting for a man whose career has been tied not just to one company, but to belief in the capacity of an industry.

Still, the strongest impression from the send-forth was not industrial policy or financial growth. It was character.

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**SALE OF USED OFFICE EQUIPMENT BY PUBLIC AUCTION**

**UNICEF Sokoto** is disposing of the below-listed used Assets on an "As is" basis through **LANSAR AGHAJI & CO. (Auctioneers)** by Public Auction. To be auctioned are also used office equipment, fixtures, and furniture.

| S/N | LOCATION | DESCRIPTION | SERIAL NUMBER | QUANTITY | YEAR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Sokoto | 5000 Liters Diesel Tank | NA | 1 | 2021 |
| 2 | Sokoto | 1000 Liters Diesel Tank | NA | 1 | 2012 |
| 3 | Sokoto | 4000 Liters Water Tank | NA | 1 | 2012 |
| 4 | Sokoto | 20 Liters Dispenser bottles | NA | 250 | 2012 |
| 5 | Sokoto | Air conditioner 2HP | 6715508441 | 1 | 2012 |
| 6 | Sokoto | Air conditioner 2HP | 78922111307 | 1 | 2012 |
| 7 | Sokoto | Air conditioner 2HP | 6715528007 | 1 | 2012 |
| 8 | Sokoto | CWAY Water Dispenser Machine | BYBZ720513110118 | 1 | 2015 |
| 9 | Sokoto | CWAY Water Dispenser Machine | 10040599 | 1 | 2015 |
| 10 | Sokoto | CWAY Water Dispenser Machine | BYB51132407018R0780 | 1 | 2015 |
| 11 | Sokoto | CWAY Water Dispenser Machine | NA | 1 | 2015 |
| 12 | Sokoto | Analog Land Phone | NA | 20 | 2012 |
| 13 | Sokoto | Water Treatment Plant | NA | 1 | 2016 |
| 14 | Sokoto | 45KVA soundproof Perkins engine | DK81809U415693Y | 1 | 2012 |
| 15 | Sokoto | Xerox Versa link 7030 | 970E03322 | 1 | 2012 |
| 16 | Sokoto | HP Colour LaserJet Enterprise M750DN Printer | CNFTLDD035 | 1 | 2012 |
| 17 | Sokoto | HP Digital Sender 8500 | PC1SLWXQ | 1 | 2012 |
| 18 | Sokoto | Adjustable Computer Desk | NA | 1 | 2012 |
| 19 | Sokoto | Adjustable Computer Desk | NA | 1 | 2012 |
| 20 | Sokoto | Adjustable Computer Desk | NA | 1 | 2012 |
| 21 | Sokoto | Chairs Office | NA | 20 | 2023 |
| 22 | Sokoto | Doors | NA | 4 | 2012 |
| 23 | Sokoto | Television 85inch | NA | 1 | 2018 |

All items for sale will be on display from 11:30 AM to 13:00 PM at the address below for inspection. The public auction will start at 2.30 PM on the dates shown below:

**Public Display of items:** Saturday 11th July 2026.
**Inspection of items:** 9:00 am - 12:00 NOON
**Start of Public Auction:** 12.30 PM and adjourns at 5:00 PM on Saturday, 11th July 2026.
**Location:** UNICEF SOKOTO FIELD OFFICE. No. 2 Rahamanniyya Street off Sama Road, Sokoto.

**Conditions of Sales:**

- UNICEF will not provide any assistance (Manpower or Mechanical) for any of the items purchased.
- Successful bidders will be required to make full payment immediately by Bank Transfer. Cheques are not accepted.
- Interested buyers are hereby informed that the Items were imported duty-free. Therefore, they are expected to pay the applicable customs duty before the release of the item to the successful buyer, where applicable.
- All Items purchased (except vehicles) must be removed from UN premises immediately after receipt of payment by the auctioneer and document handover of the items to the successful buyer.
- Return of bought items is not allowed.

LICENCED AUCTIONEER:
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# IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT OF NIGERIA
# IN THE BENIN JUDICIAL DIVISION
# HOLDEN AT BENIN

## SUIT NO. FHC/B/CS/4/2024
## MOTION NO. FHC/B/M/366/2024

**BETWEEN:**

1. **ISHAYA FELIX**
2. **ADAMU JOHN CLETUS**
3. **OJIGBO PETER**
4. **PRINCE CHARLES IDUGBOWA EWEKA**
**(For themselves and as representing the concerned members of the Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria (ISPON).**

**.... JUDGMENT CREDITORS/ RESPONDENTS**

**AND**

1. **MR. KAIZER EBIWARI**
**(For himself as President of the Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria (ISPON).**
2. **THE REGISTRAR, INSTITUTE OF SAFETY PROFESSIONALS OF NIGERIA**
3. **INSTITUTE OF SAFETY PROFESSIONALS OF NIGERIA (ISPON)**

**.... JUDGMENT DEBTORS/ RESPONDENTS**

**IN RE:**

**MRS. WILLIAMS ESTHER SAMUEL PHD**
**The Registrar, Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria (ISPON)**

**ENGR. TIMOTHY IWUAGWU**
**(President, Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria (ISPON)**

**..... AFFECTED PARTIES/ APPLICANTS**

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
NAME ...
RANK ...
SIGN ...
DATE ...
FEDERAL HIGH COURT
BENIN

FEDERAL HIGH COURT REGISTRY'S OFFICE Date ... BENIN CITY

### ENROLMENT OF O R D E R

**UPON A MOTION ON NOTICE** dated 8th of July, 2025 and filed the 9th of July, 2025, praying this Honourable Court for the following Orders:

1. AN ORDER extending the time within which the Affected Parties/Applicants may apply to set aside the judgment of this Honourable Court delivered on the 26th day of September, 2024.

2. AN ORDER setting aside the judgment of this Honourable Court delivered on the 26th day of September, 2024 for non-service on the Affected Parties/Applicants.

3. AN ORDER nullifying the Annual General Meeting/Election conducted pursuant to the Judgment of 26th day of September, 2024.

**ALTERNATIVELY**

4. AN ORDER setting aside the judgment of this Honourable Court delivered on the 26th day of September, 2024 in that same was obtained by misrepresentation and deceit.

5. AN ORDER nullifying the Annual General Meeting/Election conducted pursuant to the Judgment of 26th September, 2024.

And for such further order or other Orders as this Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances of this case.

**AND AFTER READING THE AFFIDAVIT** in support of the Motion on Notice sworn to by Mrs. Williams Esther Samuel PhD, Female, No. 46 Ikotun/Isolo Road, Egbe Town, Bolorunpelu Bus-stop, Ikotun-Lagos, Christian, Citizen of Nigeria and filed at the Court Registry; and the Counteraffidavits of the Judgment Creditors and Judgment Debtors.

**AND AFTER HEARING** Omokaro Carrington with K. C. Okorie for the 1st and 2nd Affected Parties/Applicants move in terms of motion paper; AND Osarobo Onaghise, of counsel for the Judgment Creditors/Respondents; AND Chief Okey Obikeze with J. A. Umweni, (Esq.), counsel for the Judgment Debtors/Respondents opposing the application.

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. **That** the Judgment of this Court delivered on the 26th day of September, 2024, is hereby set aside for the reasons of deceit, suppression of materials facts and abuse of Court-process, fundamental questions which robbed this Court of the requisite jurisdiction; for want of legitimate adjudication.

2. **That** in consequence, by this Order all actions carried out by or purporting to have been carried out by, or on behalf of the Institute (ISPON), pursuant to the Judgment of this Court in this matter, delivered on the 26th day of September, 2024 and the enrolment of Order therewith are hereby nullified and set aside. For the avoidance of doubt, this shall include the Annual General Meeting/Election conducted pursuant to the said Judgment.

**ISSUED AT BENIN CITY**, under the seal of the Court and the hand of the Presiding Judge, this 9th day of June, 2026.

**HON. JUSTICE (PROF.) CHUKA A. OBIOZOR**
**JUDGE**

**OYIBO LOVETY**
**REGISTRAR**

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
NAME ...
RANK ...
SIGN ...
DATE ...
FEDERAL HIGH COURT
BENIN

FEDERAL HIGH COURT REGISTRY'S OFFICE Date ... BENIN CITY

**HON. JUSTICE (PROF.) CHUKA A. OBIOZOR**
**JUDGE**

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
NAME ...
RANK ...
SIGN ...
DATE ...
FEDERAL HIGH COURT
BENIN

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In view of the current legal position as reflected in the said Enrolled Order, members of the public are advised to exercise due diligence in all dealings relating to the Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria (ISPON.

Following the Enrolled Order of the Federal High Court of Nigeria, Benin Judicial Division, delivered on 9th June 2026, the Governing Board of the Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria (ISPON), under the leadership of its National President, Engr. Timothy Iwuagwu, hereby issues this Public Advisory for the information and guidance of all members of the Institute, Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, employers, regulatory bodies, financial institutions, law enforcement and corporate organisations, training providers and the general public.

Accordingly, every certificate, membership certificate, licence, accreditation, approval, official correspondence, letterhead, identity card, receipt, circular, appointment letter, training notice, publication or any other document whatsoever bearing the name, logo or identity of the Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria (ISPON) should first be verified through the National Secretariat of the Institute before any reliance is placed upon it.

This Public Advisory is issued solely in the interest of protecting members of the Institute and the general public and to encourage proper verification of all documents, transactions and representations concerning the Institute in light of the current legal position established by the Enrolled Order of the Federal High.

This Advisory equally extends to any authority, representation or act purportedly exercised or undertaken pursuant to the Judgment of 26th September 2024 by or through Mr. Stephen Udezi, Mr. Benson Adam Otite, Mr. Ben Modebe, or any other person claiming authority solely by virtue of the said Judgment, having regard to the Enrolled Order of the Federal High Court.

**IF IN DOUBT, CONTACT:**
**INSTITUTE OF SAFETY PROFESSIONALS OF NIGERIA (ISPON),**
National Secretariat,
Dominic Aigbogun House,
No. 46 Ikotun-Isolo Road,
Egbe Town, Lagos State, Nigeria.
Website: www.isponact.com.ng
Telephone: +234 0806 031 4610, +234 08033780702, +234 08110141960

# At Showbiz Summit, Stakeholders Urged To Focus On Intellectual Property, Business Sustainability Ideas

By Daniel Anazia

AS Africa's creative economy continues to expand, industry stakeholders are shifting attention from talent discovery to structures that guarantee long-term success. This is the fulcrum of the conversation at the ongoing Showbiz101 2026 Conference and Music Creation Camp in Lagos.

The conference, which began on Tuesday, June 23, and is expected to climax on Tuesday, June 30, is currently holding at the Alliance Française (Mike Adenuga Centre), Ikoyi. It serves as a platform to accelerate music collaborations, masterclasses, and global networking. It convenes creatives, executives, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders with a renewed focus on intellectual property protection, business, governance, and sustainable wealth creation.

Organised by bridgeAFRIC in partnership with Qtaby Events, the weeklong programme is being held under the theme Connecting African Creatives Globally, and it is bringing together artistes, producers, managers, publishers, executives, investors and other industry stakeholders from across Africa and the diaspora.

Away from the traditional conference format dominated by panel discussions and keynote conversations, this year's edition of the conference is centred on an intensive seven-day Intellectual Property (IP) Boot Camp designed to equip creatives with the knowledge and structures required for long-term success.

The new approach comes at a time when African music, film, and digital content continue to enjoy unprecedented international visibility. However, industry experts have repeatedly raised concerns about the gap between global success and sustainable wealth creation for many creators.

Speaking at the opening session, Victoria Remi Nkong, visionary founder/president of bridgeAFRIC and founder/CEO of Qtaby Events, organisers cum promoters of the Showbiz101 Conference, said that while African creatives are gaining global recognition, the next phase of industry growth must be driven by stronger business structures capable of protecting and monetising creative assets.

"The future of the creative economy will not be determined by talent alone. It will be defined by how effectively creators own, manage, distribute, and commercialise their intellectual property," she said.

Nkong noted that the area of focus reflects a growing recognition that creative excellence alone is no longer enough, stressing that in an industry where intellectual property remains one of the most valuable assets, creators must also develop the business knowledge required to protect, monetise and scale their work.

"Despite the global rise of Afrobeats, most African creatives still lack access to mentorship and practical education on how to structure their career professionally, also the right network to help them break into new territories. Showbiz101 was established to address challenges facing creatives, including limited access to mentorship, professional development, and international industry networks," she added.



# Social Media Abuzz As Bukky Wright Drops *The Return Of Omotara Johnson*

By Daniel Anazia

VETERAN Nollywood actress Oluwabukola Sekinat Ajoke Wright, known professionally as Bukky Wright, has set social media abuzz with the release of the official trailer for her highly anticipated thriller, *The Return of Omotara Johnson*, a big-budget production already generating excitement ahead of its July 5 premiere at the Monarchy Event Center, Lekki, Lagos.

Released on Thursday, June 25, the trailer offers audiences a gripping first look at a story driven by revenge, power, and long-buried conflicts. The project marked Bukky Wright's return to the producers' chair, as her last major self-produced movie was the Yoruba drama titled, *Ale Eru Jeje* (2017).

The first part, *Omotara Johnson*, which was released in 2008, rapidly cemented its status as a classic of Yoruba cinema. The film centered on a woman whose unyielding ambition and complex personal choices spiraled into a gripping saga of betrayal, heartbreak, and vengeance.

This long-awaited sequel revisits that iconic narrative, delving deep into the enduring consequences of Omotara's (portrayed by Bukky Wright) past and the ways in which her history continues to dictate her future.



Bukky Wright

In the new offering, Wright takes center stage as the formidable Omotara Johnson, a woman returning with a singular mission: to confront and wage war against Tunde Bamgbopa, a character whose fate has quickly become a major talking point among fans.

Shot across some of Lagos' most iconic locations, including the Lekki-Ikoyi Bridge, an airport tarmac, and several luxury residences, the film combines cinematic visuals with high-stakes drama, signaling what could be one of Nollywood's biggest releases of the year.

The cast includes Bukky Wright, Richard Mofe-Damijo, Shaffy Bello, Toyin Abraham, Ali Nuhu, and Chidi Mokeme. Though the initial soundtrack of *Omotara Johnson* was written by renowned gospel singer Tope Alabi, the *Return of Omotara* Johnson features Ojayy Wright, a contemporary artiste alongside Alabi.

Ahead of its release, the renowned actress reintroduced 'Omotara Johnson' on her official YouTube channel. This allows the audience to refresh their memory of the original while preparing for the sequel.

The trailer's release immediately sparked conversations across social media platforms, with viewers praising the film's production quality, suspense-filled scenes, and Wright's commanding screen presence.

# Yung Bos' *Fast & Furious* Gains Momentum As Rising Afrobeats Star Climbs The Charts

By Daniel Anazia

FAST-rising afrobeats sensation, Ebosetale Gideon Solomon, popularly known as Yung Bos, is making significant strides in Nigeria's music industry as his sophomore album, *Fast & Furious*, continues to gain traction across streaming platforms, radio stations, and entertainment circles.

The Jamika Entertainment artiste has emerged as one of the young talents attracting growing attention, with the 12-track project showcasing a vibrant fusion of Afrobeats, Afropop, and R&B. Since its release, the album has enjoyed positive reviews from fans and industry stakeholders, while several tracks have become increasingly popular in clubs, campuses, and social gatherings nationwide.

*Fast & Furious* marks another important milestone in Yung Bos' musical journey, highlighting his artistic growth and evolving sound. The project builds on the foundation laid by his debut album, *Nigerian Prince*, which was released in 2022 when he was just 16 years old. The debut earned him industry recognition and award nominations, introducing him as a promising voice capable of blending contemporary music with distinct Afrocentric influences.



Yung Bos

With the latest offering, Yung Bos appears determined to cement his place among Nigeria's next generation of music stars. The album reflects greater confidence, creativity, and ambition, qualities that have resonated with listeners and contributed to its growing popularity.

Reacting to the reception of the project, the singer expressed gratitude to fans, DJs, and new listeners who have embraced the album. "I am overjoyed with all the positive feedback from fans, new listeners, and DJs. Creating this project was an exciting experience, and I'm happy that people are connecting with the music and enjoying it as much as I enjoyed making it," he said.

## TEETH 4 TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

### DSS Should Stop It

THAT operatives of the Director of State Services, DSS, Nigeria's secret police, are still wearing long overcoats like gangsters in American low budget action movies, is an embarrassment! The American secret service that the DSS obviously copied this kind of 1962 dress code from have long moved away from it and are wearing designer black suits and ties, so, why are our DSS boys still dressing like cheap street thugs just to appear tough?

T4T saw the video of some DSS operatives as they bundled politician and presidential candidate of the AAC party, Omoyole Sowore from an Abuja courthouse after a judge remanded him in prison for failure to appear before him in his ongoing case of alleged cyberbullying of president Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Monday this week. Sowore has been remanded in Kuje correctional centre till July 1.

What T4T saw that day were a bunch of tough looking street gang members, not DSS operatives, as they physically took Sowore out of the courtroom into a waiting prison transport vehicle. How can Nigerians in this hot weather wear what looked black leather overcoats, dark sunglasses and nose masks because they are DSS operatives that want to be seen as tough and stern? Nor be heat go first injure dem? And to think they are in Abuja of all places where heat *na water*!

The DSS DG *abi na Director sef* should please look into this matter. The DSS boys doing the heavy lifting like bundling the likes of Sowore and others deserve to breathe easy too. Nor *be say dem say you be DSS , den you must dress like Rambo wey dey act American action film na.*

A wicked Nigerian online was mean enough to say the overcoats and leather jackets are even *okrika* (used clothes) usually bought at every Tuesday Aswani market some metres away from this newspaper. Some people can be so mean, if you asked T4T. But of a truth, those kind of clothes are usually sold in used clothes markets and shops in Nigeria, T4T can confirm, because there was a time he wanted to travel to Europe during winter and a colleague took him to a used clothes market to shop for gloves and winter jackets. T4T saw many overcoats like the ones the DSS 'hard men' wore on Monday, on display, well washed and starched too.

Only In Nigeria That. . .

... A suspect ordered to be remanded in prison custody determines the kind of transport he wants to be taken in.

That was what happened on Monday when Omoyele Sowore, politician and presidential candidate of the AAC, bluntly refused the traditional prison transport Black Maria truck instead insisting on a Toyota Hilux van. Can someone remind Sowore that he is not a VIP on remand and even if he is, he cannot determine the kind of transport that is to take him to prison. T4T even heard him suggest in the video his personal car or an Uber, arguing that a former Governor facing prosecution in court is being brought to court in an air conditioned van.

Can someone remind Sowore and others like him that the late Obafemi Awolowo when he was facing trial for alleged treason was being brought to court and returned to prison in the same Black Maria? The numerous times the late Gani Fawehinmi, one of Nigeria and world recognised human rights activists was taken out of and brought to court, it was in that Black Maria truck! In fact, Gani made the truck popular because he was always seen waving to the crowd as he stepped into the truck, proudly.

*E reach Sowore turn, im begin fear Black Maria*. Activist *wey dey* look for comfort! He obviously did not learn from the playbook of Gani and others.

### That Yul Edochie's Father's Day Message

RECALL recently that ex-husband of wife of popular Nigerian actor, Yul Edochie, Obasi, decided to take his anger with his ex-wife, Judy Austin, a notch higher when he went on a podcast show to accuse Edochie of sleeping with her while she was still in the marriage. He did not stop there. Obsasi accused Edochie of preventing him from seeing the two kids he had with Judy Austin.

Yul watched the podcast, his face contorted in rage and fiam, he fled into the room where he kept his laptop and began to type, furiously. It was like a scene in one of his many Nollywood films(as if T4T dey dia). But anyway, read an abridged version of the rather long response Yul gave to Obasi:

"My aura gives my enemies sleepless nights. In the last four years they've told all sorts of lies against me and they all failed. Now their latest lie is that I took another man's wife. A man who left his wife in 2013, married another woman and moved on. Nobody heard his voice on social media.

"Years after, he sees the ex wife is now doing well, he comes back to attach himself to her and say his wife was taken from him. All these coordinated lies just to bring me down. I laugh. If only they know the stuff I'm made of. I'm a rock. No mortal or spirit can bring me down. They can't understand why my light is still shining bright. They can't understand why I'm still standing strong, they can't understand why my fans still love me. It's called Grace. I have God's grace."

Yul was not done yet: "Humans give birth but God chooses. I'm a chosen one. A Lion. A King. I am unstoppable. I'm a man after God's heart. Kings are not made, Kings are born. I am the great King of our time."



# Couture Men



PHOTO: Pinterest

By **Maria Diamond**

COUTURE men are no ordinary men. They are not the regular anything-fits kind of men. They are the intentional men who take their time to look-the-part of the craftsmanship they work tirelessly for on a daily basis.

The Couture concept in the fashion industry comes with high-end design and sewing processes. It is a handcrafted custom-fitted clothing designed with quality fabrics and intricate detailing.

**The Men That Wear Couture**

The kind of men that wear couture clothing are the successful hard workers who are intentional about every detail of their lifestyle which includes what they wear and how they look wearing it. Couture is about looking like hard work and that means success in all its intricacies even when it is still in the making – just look like who you want to be.

**Why Work So Hard And Look So Lazy**

Did you know that when men don't dress properly they look lazy? They are not necessarily lazy, but when you show up looking shabby, you're perceived as lazy because unkempt is a product of laziness.

**Couture Men Are Hard Workers**

The concept of hard work for men comes with a finished line to success. This is what couture clothing represents. Whether it's the kaftan suits or the tuxedos amongst others, these tailor-made collections put you in the spotlight of men who are deserving of everything good and beautiful.

**Your Go-to Nigerian Designers On Top Of The Men Couture Beat**

.Yomi Casual
.Atafo
.Ugo Monye
.Joseph Ejiro
.Kola Kuddus
.Cute-Saint



# Knorr Jollof Fest 2026 Lagos: A Celebration Of Nigeria's Signature Culinary

By **Maria Diamond**

BRINGING Nigerians together through a shared love for food, culture music and connection that builds stronger communities in shared moments; Knorr Jollof Fest 2026 again reaffirms the authenticity and supremacy of the Nigeria's signature Smokey party Jollof rice while showcasing how food inspires community, creativity, and meaningful experiences.

The festival themed 'For The Culture' was held at the Muri Okunola Park, Victoria Island Lagos last weekend and attended by men and women, young and old from all walks of life.

**What makes Party Jollof Taste better?**

For decades Nigerians have debated on why party jollof always tastes better than the regular home-made jollof rice. Some would argue that it is due to the quantity which makes the rice burn while cooking and the 'Smokey' signature taste comes from the burnt. Others argue that the unique taste is from the firewood which is the traditional stove for cooking large party rice. Some others say it's the varieties of ingredients put in party jollof rice which is not readily available at home. At the 2026 Knorr Jollof, these arguments and speculations were put to rest with the launch of Knorr Smokey Party Jollof Seasoning.

**Every Home Deserves the Taste of Party Jollof Rice**

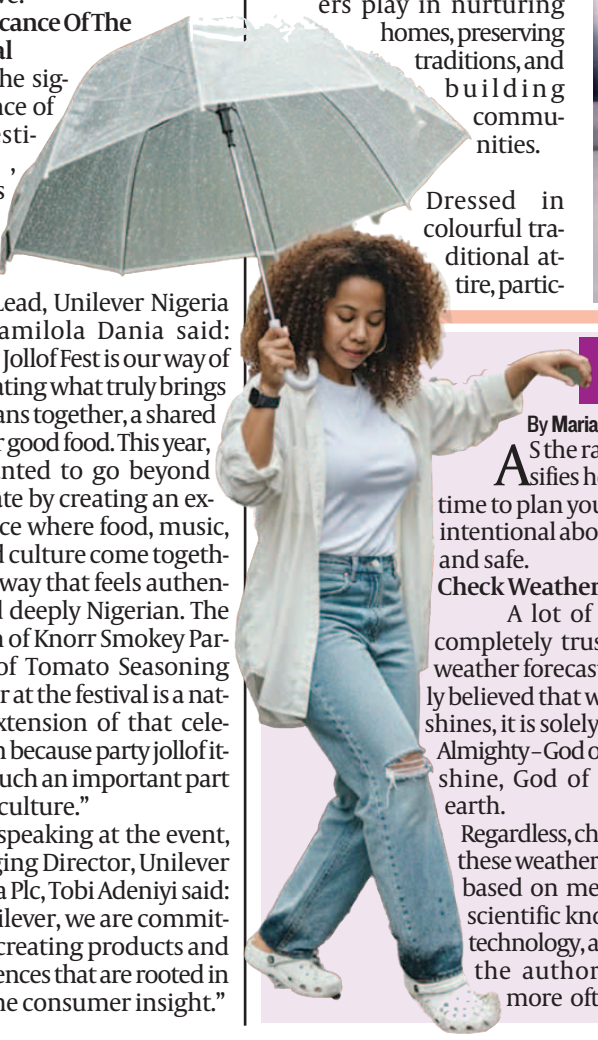
To avail every home the iconic taste of party jollof without necessarily having to wait till the next party, Knorr launched its new Knorr Smokey Party Jollof Seasoning, during the Lagos edition of Knorr Jollof Fest 2026.

Developed with insights from experienced Nigerian party caterers and chefs, Knorr Smokey Party Jollof Seasoning was created to help consumers recreate the rich, smokey taste that has traditionally been associated with professionally prepared party jollof. Made with sundried tomatoes, thyme, bay leaves and a carefully curated blend of ingredients, the seasoning delivers the balanced flavour profile that consumers know and love.

**Significance Of The Festival**

On the significance of the festival, Foods Demand Creation Lead, Unilever Nigeria Plc, Damilola Dania said: "Knorr Jollof Fest is our way of celebrating what truly brings Nigerians together, a shared love for good food. This year, we wanted to go beyond the plate by creating an experience where food, music, art and culture come together in a way that feels authentic and deeply Nigerian. The launch of Knorr Smokey Party Jollof Tomato Seasoning Powder at the festival is a natural extension of that celebration because party jollof itself is such an important part of our culture."

Also speaking at the event, Managing Director, Unilever Nigeria Plc, Tobi Adeniyi said: "At Unilever, we are committed to creating products and experiences that are rooted in genuine consumer insight."



# Culture Alive As Enugwu-Ukwu Women In Lagos Celebrate Motherhood

By **Daniel Anazia**

CULTURE, tradition, and the cherished values of motherhood took centre stage as the Women Wing of the Enugwu-Ukwu Community Development Union (ECDU), Lagos Branch, hosted its maiden "Celebration of Motherhood", a colourful event designed to honour women and preserve the rich heritage of the Enugwu-Ukwu people.

The landmark gathering brought together men, women, families, community leaders, and cultural enthusiasts in a vibrant display of unity, identity, and appreciation for the critical role mothers play in nurturing homes, preserving traditions, and building communities.

Dressed in colourful traditional attire, participants showcased the beauty of Igbo culture through music, dance, and cultural displays that celebrated the enduring influence of women in society.

There were presentations by the women on the importance of love in the family. Also, there was a pep talk on the role of women in the home. To support the women, the men of the town and the men's wing came out in their numbers. Some supported the presentation of the delicacies with generous cash donations.

Highlights of the event were the presentation of the town's different delicacies dubbed 'Cherished Mama's Pot', such as Ukwa, Fiofio, Akidi, Ukpaka Igbagboka, and Abacha, among others, prepared by the ancient mothers, a symbolic cultural initiative aimed at reconnecting younger generations with the values, wisdom, and culinary heritage passed down by mothers over the years.



# On And About Rainy Season

By **Maria Diamond**

AS the rainy season intensifies here in Nigeria, it is time to plan your outings and be intentional about keeping warm and safe.

**Check Weather Forecast Daily**

A lot of Nigerians don't completely trust the efficacy of weather forecasting. It is generally believed that whether it rains or shines, it is solely a decision by the Almighty–God of the rain and sunshine, God of the heaven and earth.

Regardless, check the forecast as these weather scientists predict based on meteorological and scientific knowledge through technology, and because God is the author of knowledge, more often than not, the weather forecasts are usually correct.

**Dress Up As Desired But Take an Umbrella**

If the forecast says rain or scattered thunderstorms take a big umbrella. If you're not mobile, you may want to consider throwing a raincoat in a bag just in case it gets heavier than predicted. If it says light shower, a small umbrella should do.

**Don't Drive Into The Storm**

Driving in a heavy downpour comes with a lot of caution and concentration. If your destination is a flood-prone area, you may want to avoid driving into it when it's raining cats and dogs. More importantly, if you spot a heavy flood ahead of you, regardless of how big, strong and reliable you think your vehicle is, don't get tempted for a showoff as the flood ahead might be bigger and deeper than what it looks. Just wait it out or return to anywhere that keeps you and your vehicle safe.

www.guardian.ng **NewsExtra**

# Bayelsa To Establish Waterways Agency

• Diri Warns Against Illegal, Unregulated Black Sand Mining

BAYELSA State would soon establish an agency to regulate activities that result in erosion and other environmental menace on its waterways.

This followed the recent Supreme Court judgment affirming the rights of Bayelsa and Lagos states over the control and management of above the surface activities on their waterways.

A statement by the Chief Press Secretary, Daniel Alabrah, said Governor, Douye Diri, disclosed this on Wednesday, during the 189th meeting of the state executive council in Government House, Yenagoa.

Diri said both states successfully challenged the Federal Government at the apex court over the control of their waterways, resulting in the landmark judgment.

According to him, the state's Attorney-General was studying the judgment and would provide the legal framework for the establishment of a state waterways agency.

He said: "Our government joined hands with that of Lagos State and we were in court with the Federal Government over the control of our waterways. At the end of the day, that partnership yielded results as the Supreme Court gave judgement in favour of both states.

"I have directed the Attorney-General to study the judgement and we shall now set up our own waterways agency so that activities taking place on our waterways, including the



Diri

transportation of black sand and other resources, will be properly regulated under the authority of the Bayelsa State Government."

Meanwhile, the governor warned against illegal and unregulated black sand mining activities in the state, stressing that while the government supports youth employment and economic opportunities, all resource extraction must be carried out legally and sustainably.

He noted that black sand is a valuable natural resource deposited in Bayelsa and must be managed responsibly to avoid repeating the environmental devastation caused by decades of oil and gas exploration.

"There is no government, particularly the government of Bayelsa, that is doing so much to engage our youths and create opportunities for them to work that will at the same time prevent them from earning a living. We want our youths to work, but we want them to engage in legitimate activities," he stated.

He expressed concern that indiscriminate mining of black sand could lead to severe environmental consequences, including erosion, environmental degradation and the destruction of coastal ecosystems.

"We are already suffering from the challenges of oil and gas exploitation, environmental pollution, environmental degradation and the loss of aquatic resources. We do not want a repeat of that experience through the unregulated mining of black sand."

He stated that some operators, including foreigners, had been extracting and transporting black sand from the state's waterways and coastal areas without the necessary authorisation from either the federal or state governments.

"Initially, some of these operators were not even engaging with government authorities. They were taking black sand from the high seas and transporting it without proper certification, authorisation or regulation. Such activities cannot be allowed to continue."

He directed the Ministry of Environment to intensify engagement with mining operators and explore opportunities for value addition within the state rather than allowing raw materials to be extracted and exported without tangible benefits to the Bayelsa people.

**ShortStory**

# The 24-Hour Marriage! (2)

By **Segun Durowaiye (08055356855)**

Continued from GUARDIAN WEEKEND, June 20-21, 2026

DIRAN Thompson continued, to the shock and dismay of his new wife. "I repeat, I dated about 70 girls during my university days! Can you beat that! It was great fun, darling! Wow, now I'll try to remember the names of some of these girls and ladies I dated in my university days – Esther, Ronke, Stella, Blessing, Zainab, Molade, Kudi, Iyabo etc.

Oh, God I know I won't be able to remember all their names! Sade darling, I must be sincere with you, all these charming and delectable girls and ladies I dated wanted to marry me. That revelation is part two. The part three was during my service year, after university. At the camp, I actually can't remember all the female Corp members I dated. I was called the 'Big Bomb' during my service year! All the 'babes' swooned and fainted at my feet begging for love! I gave 'it' to them the way they'd never forget! My 'sugarstick' did the magic for me during my service year. It was even through the connection of one of my former 'babes' during my service year that I got this present mouth-watering job offer.

Now the part four – I had worked in two different financial institutions before getting this plum job and, oh boy, I slept with all the female officers. My secretaries either satisfy my ever ready libido or get the sack letter. Sade darling, there are lots of things you must know about office romance…"

It gives me great joy making love right there in my office with female staff. No woman in my former place of work could ever escape from my turgid member. At times, I did take these adventurous ladies in my working place to exquisite brothels to ease my sexual appetite. Honey, what do you think of me as a man? I'm feeling horny at the moment, the time is almost 12 a.m. let's get down and enjoy conjugal bliss…"

For the past 30 minutes when Diran was talking, really lost in romantic reverie, his new wife Sade was shocked, surprised and really flabbergasted! The anger in her had erupted. She was so dumbfounded and greatly embarrassed by her husband's confession. She sighed and sighed with unalloyed perplexity. Then she replied him unconsciously, not minding the weight and enormity of her words:

"To be honest with you, Diran, you're not the only one with such a 'sweet' past love life. I swear by God, I started engaging in the act of love-making at a very early stage, when I was in my primary school, to be specific when I was in Primary Six.

All my age-groups did the 'act' with me. I think I can remember close to 10 different wayward and irresponsible adults that did it with me. It was real fun. That was part one. The part two was when I got admission into the secondary school. Throughout my stay in the secondary school I couldn't remember all the names of young men I had it with. They were just too many. At a stage in my secondary school days all the male teachers had it with me. Let me tell you darling, some male teachers were damn wayward, spoilt and corrupt…"

To be concluded.

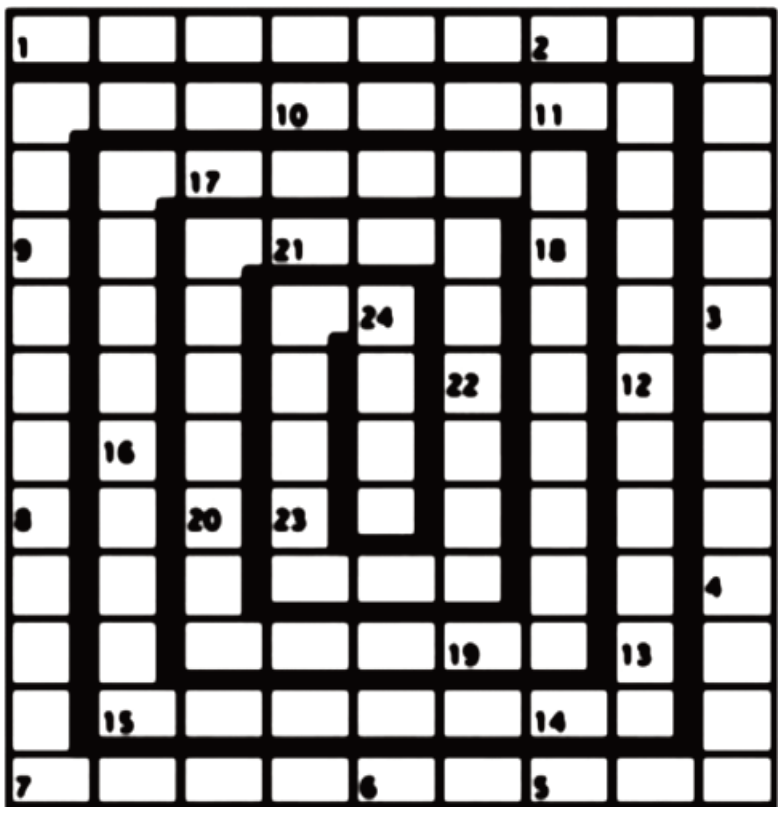
Interested sponsor/sponsors for this SHORT STORY column should please contact:

# Overlapping Word Game

with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
olulana3@yahoo.com

## Solution

1 Nasarawa
2 Wastage
3 Engage
4 German
5 Nest
6 Strain
7 Inert
8 Tremor
9 Orphan
10 Navel
11 Elaborate
12 Rated
13 Dish
14 Shuffle
15 Legible
16 Blemish
17 Shrink
18 Knapsack
19 Kinetic
20 Icicle
21 Eleven
22 Entrust
23 Topple
24 Leap



## Overlapping Word Game

1 Local council in Kano State, (8).
2 Having natural ability, (8).
3 Authoritative command, (5).
4 Defender of public rights, (7).
5 Short time away, (4).
6 Seize legally, (6).
7 Try hard, (6).
8 Something true, (6).
9 Somebody powerful, (6).
10 Physical world, (6).
11 Tube for discharging urine, (7).
12 Object-locating system, (5).
13 Capital of Italy, (4).
14 Say something, (7).
15 Initial military attack, (5).
16 Local council in Kano State, (6).
17 Citizen of India, (6).
18 Local council in Imo State, (8).
19 Local council I in Akwa Ibom State, (6).
20 Dangerous, (7).
21 Experienced adviser, (6).
22 Art of public speaking, (7).
23 Late Super Eagles' Striker, (6).
24 Small cut on the skin, (4).

## Word Search

**Local Govt. Areas in Kogi State**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ida | Ankpa | Kabbabamu |
| Ibaji | Omala | Mapo Muro |
| Kogi | Dekina | Ogamalefa |
| Adavi | Ogori | East Yagba |
| Okehi | Lokoja | West Yagba |
| Okene | Ajaokuta | Olamaboro |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | M | W | B | I | V | A | D | A | G | H |
| L | A | E | A | S | T | Y | A | G | B | A |
| A | E | S | R | U | I | O | D | O | V | T |
| F | N | T | M | M | J | G | R | H | B | U |
| E | E | Y | A | A | A | O | I | G | O | K |
| L | K | A | P | B | B | R | D | A | K | O |
| A | O | G | O | A | I | I | E | N | E | A |
| M | M | B | M | B | D | F | K | K | H | J |
| A | A | A | U | B | A | H | I | P | I | A |
| G | L | O | R | A | I | A | N | K | P | A |
| O | A | L | O | K | O | J | A | J | B | I |

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

## Birthdays

**OSOBA,** Olusegun, journalist, administrator, politician and former Governor of Ogun State will be 85 on July 15, 2026.

Born in Osogbo on July 15, 1941, he was educated at the University of Lagos and Indiana University Bloomington. He joined the *Daily Times* in 1964 as a trainee reporter. Later, he became Editor of *The Times* in 1968.

He later went to serve as Deputy Editor of *Sunday Times* and *Daily Times* before the 1975 equity purchase by the Federal Government.

In 1975, he served briefly as Editor of *The Daily Times* for a few months after his promotion'

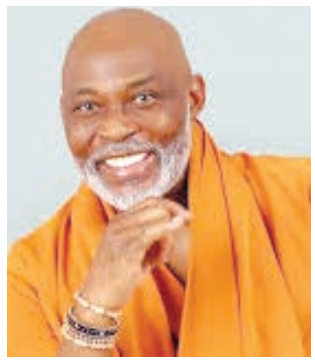
He joined the *Nigerian Herald* and was there from 1976-78 before becoming the Managing Director of the *Sketch Publishing* Company. He was the Managing Director of *The Daily Times* between 1984 and 1989.

He stepped into politics after leaving *Daily Times* in 1989. A year earlier; he was a member of the Constituent Assembly. During the Third Republic, he contested and won the Ogun State governorship seat in 1991.

In 1999, he was elected governor under the platform of the Alliance for Democracy (AD). He is at present one of the leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC).



Osoba



Mofe-Damijo

**MOFE-DAMIJO,** Richard Eyimofe Evans, actor, writer, producer, lawyer, and former Commissioner for Culture and Tourism in Delta State, will be 65 years on July 6, 2026.

Born on July 6, 1961 in Aladja community of Udu Kingdom, Delta State, he attended Midwest College, Warri and Anglican Grammar School and was a member of the Drama Club. He enrolled into the University of Benin to continue his education and studied Theatre Arts.

In 1997, Mofe-Damijo returned to the university to study law at the University of Lagos and graduated in 2004.

After graduation, Mofe-Damijo took part in the soap opera Ripples, but gained more popularity as villain Segun Kadiri in rival soap Checkmate. Before then, he had a stint as a writer with *Concord Newspapers*; *Metro Magazine*, and Quality. Out of Bounds was the first film for which he received a writer/producer credit.

In 2005, at the maiden edition of the African Movie Academy Awards, Mofe-Damijo won the award for Best Actor in a Leading Role.

On January 5, 2017, he hosted the 2016 GLO-CAF Awards alongside Nigerian journalist Mimi Fawaz. On December 8, 2021, he won an award in Ghana, a Black Star Honor at the Rhymes on Da Runway in Gold coast, Ghana.

He received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 12th Africa Movie Academy Awards in 2016.

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

## Events




Past League of Muslims School Proprietors (LEAMSP) Examinations Council (LEC) Registrar, Alhaji Raji Yekini (middle) and others when Yekini received the LEC Administrative Recognition Award for his dedicated service, administrative excellence and invaluable contributions to the growth, structure and credibility of LEC Examinations Council in Lagos.



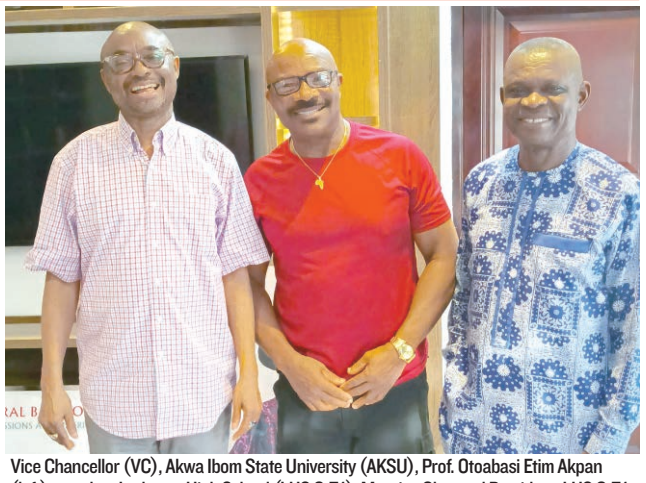
Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori (fourth left); his wife, Deaconess Tobore Oborevwori (fourth right); Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Delta State, Chief Solomon Arenyeka (third right), and other dignitaries during a special thanksgiving service to mark the governor's 63rd birthday at the Government House Chapel, Asaba..on Friday.



Media/Publicity Director, Dekina Old Boys' Association (DOBA), Lagos Chapter, John Omachonu (left); Welfare Director, Yahaya Kashim (second left); Chairman, Solomon Musa Ochidi (third left); General Secretary, Samuel Momoh (middle); grand patron, Simon Ilabija Okpanachi (third right); a member, Thomas Yakubu (second right), and Director, Samson Friday, during the association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos.



Hussey College Warri Old Students celebrating the life of the late Princess Francisca Sulaya, mother of Mr. Amanozi Abdulai, the General Secretary of Hussey College Warri Old Students Association, Lagos Branch in Lagos.



Vice Chancellor (VC), Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU), Prof. Otoabasi Etim Akpan (left); member, Lutheran High School (LHS G-74), Maurice Obot and President, LHS G-74, Idoreyin Udi during a visit to the VC's Liaison Office in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State...



Consultant, Mind Builders High School, Dr Ibukun Oluderu; Chairman Mind Builders Education Trust Board of Directors, Bosun Falore; Celebrant and Education Director, Mind Builders School, Lagos; Mrs Bolajoko Falore, and Director, TAQWA School, Lagos, Mrs Mariam Alimi, at the 70th Birthday Symposium of Mrs Bolajoko Falore held recently at the Exclusive Hall of Mind Builders School, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos.

## The Genius Chess TV Quiz Show Lands In Abuja, Empowers Next Generation Of Strategic Thinkers

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

ABUJA is set to become the centre of intellectual excellence and youth development, as it hosts the Season 3 Abuja Edition of The Genius Chess TV Quiz Show, one of Nigeria's fastest-growing educational entertainment platforms dedicated to promoting chess, creativity, and intellectual development among children.

As part of its expansion, the Genius Chess TV Quiz Show successfully concluded the Season 3 Port Harcourt Edition on June 12, 2026. It was followed by the Season 3 Lagos Edition held from June 18 to June 22, 2026. Attention has now turned to Abuja, where the Season 3 Abuja Edition will hold on June 29 and 30, 2026.

The Founder of The Genius Chess TV Quiz Show, Onyedinma Ikechukwu, popularly known as Mr. Tender Chess, reflected on the remarkable growth of the initiative since its inception in 2023. He said the programme has successfully conducted four episodes across two seasons and is currently in its third season, which is witnessing an ambitious expansion into major Nigerian cities, including Port Harcourt, Lagos, and Abuja.

He said: "Chess is more than a game. It is a powerful educational tool that teaches discipline, patience, creativity, strategic thinking, and effective decision-making. These qualities are essential for raising future leaders and innovators capable of making meaningful contributions to their communities and the world.

The Abuja edition is expected to attract participants, parents, educators, chess enthusiasts, and stakeholders who share a common vision of empowering young people through intellectual development and healthy competition.




Kids competing in Chess TV quiz competition

## Rotary To Commission Peace Institute Building Donated To Olabisi Onabanjo Varsity

COME Tuesday, June 30, 2026, Rotary International District 9111, under the purposeful leadership of District Governor, Prince Henry Akinyele, will officially dedicate the Rotary Peace Institute building donated to the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State.

The event will also feature the graduation ceremony of participants from Cohort 3 and Cohort 4 of the Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, Faculty of Arts, Olabisi Onabanjo University.

Rotary District 9111 Governor, Prince Henry Akinyele, said: "The event represents the fulfillment of a promise made less than a year ago when Rotary District 9111 broke ground for the construction of the Peace Institute Building."

The groundbreaking ceremony, held in September 2025, was celebrated as a significant milestone in Rotary's commitment to fostering peace, promoting dialogue, and empowering future leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to address conflict and security challenges.

Built through the collaboration between Rotary District 9111 and Olabisi Onabanjo University, the institute serves as a centre of excellence for peace education, research, conflict prevention, and community development throughout Nigeria and the West African Region.

## Pheoby Unveils Premium Healthcare Destination In Lagos

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

THE CGE Healthcare has launched its new flagship state-of-the-art healthcare facility in Lagos, introducing a new standard of aesthetic medicine and patient care built around clinical excellence, body security, and premium aftercare.

The event, held at the facility centre in 9A Oladimeji Alo Lekki Phase 1, brought together healthcare professionals, industry leaders, celebrities, business executives, media representatives, family and friends to celebrate a new era of patient-centered care and medical excellence.

The launch featured the facility tour, complementary consultation, goodwill messages, and a ceremonial ribbon-cutting led by the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of CGE Healthcare, Dr. Chidinma Akpa Pheoby (Dr. Dinma). Guests were given an exclusive look at the facility's advanced medical infrastructure, modern treatment suites, and patient-focused recovery spaces designed to meet global standards.

Speaking during the launch, the founder, who is an aesthetic surgeon and healthcare entrepreneur, emphasised the vision behind the facility and its broader impact on healthcare delivery.

He stated: "CGE Healthcare was built on one simple belief: everyone deserves to feel safe, confident, and cared for. Every detail of this facility was intentionally designed to deliver excellence, compassion, and a patient experience that inspires trust. This is more than a clinic; it is a new home for confidence."

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IbruCentre

# From The Rector

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

## Providing Stability In Unstable Times: A Task For Fatherhood

By **Stephen Wolemonwu**

*"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord…" Psalm 78:4.*

**Introduction**

WE live in a time of great instability. In a world marked by instability — economic uncertainty, moral confusion, and cultural decay — fathers and mentors are called to be stabilisers in their homes and environment. Psalm 78:4 reminds us that the antidote to societal collapse is generational faithfulness. Fathers must become storytellers of God's mighty acts, ensuring that their children inherit not fear, but faith.

Economies rise and fall, morals are shifting, families are breaking down, and truth is often traded for lies. In such a world, children are growing up confused, fearful and uncertain about the future.

But God has given fathers a sacred assignment: to be anchors of stability in their homes. Psalm 78:4 declares: "We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord…" This is not just a suggestion — it is a divine mandate. Fathers must ensure that the next generation knows the faithfulness of God.

**Fathers As Custodians Of Memory**

"We will not hide them…" Fathers are custodians of memory. Silence about God's works is a form of hiding. If we do not speak, our children will not know.

**Illustration:** Israelite fathers told the story of the Exodus — how God parted the Red Sea — so their children would never forget that God delivers.

**Application:** Fathers, today, must recount their own testimonies: how God provided, healed, protected or saved. Your story is your child's inheritance.

**Fathers As Teachers Of Truth**

"…But tell to the coming generation…" Teaching is not optional; it is generational stewardship. Fathers must actively teach truth in a world full of lies.

**Illustration:** A father explaining why honesty matters, even when corruption seems normal, is shaping his child's worldview.

**Application:** Lead family devotions, explain scripture and correct false cultural narratives. Do not outsource this responsibility to schools or even the church — the home is the first pulpit.

**Fathers As Stabilisers Of Faith**

"…The glorious deeds of the Lord…" Children gain stability when they see God's faithfulness in their father's life. Fathers must model reliance on God, not fear.

Note; fathers who prays with their children during financial hardship teaches them that stability comes from God, not wealth. The fact is obvious, in unstable times, fathers must demonstrate faith in action —praying openly, trusting God visibly, and showing peace in crisis.

**Fathers As Prophets To The Next Generation**

Fathers must declare destiny and hope, not despair. Testimonies are prophetic — they shape the future by reminding children of God's past. Jacob blessed his sons, speaking words that shaped the destiny of tribes. In the same way fathers must speak blessings over their children. Affirm their identity in Christ. Declare that they will stand firm in faith, even when society decays.

**Contemporary Approach**

- **Digital Age:** Teach discernment; remind children that God's truth outlasts trending lies.
- **Economic Instability:** Share testimonies of provision; model contentment and trust.
- **Moral Decay:** Stand firm as examples of integrity, showing that righteousness is possible in a corrupt world.
- **Family Life:** Make storytelling of God's deeds a tradition — bedtime stories, family devotions, testimonies at meals.

**Conclusion**

Psalm 78:4 is a call for fathers to be living bridges between past faithfulness and future hope. In unstable times, stability is not found in politics, wealth or culture; it is found in fathers who refuse to hide God's deeds, but boldly declare them to their children.

I, therefore, charge us finally: Fathers, your testimony is your child's inheritance. Your voice is their anchor. Your faith is their stability.

**Closing Appeal**

Fathers, recommit yourself today to being storytellers of God's faithfulness. Make your home a sanctuary of truth and stability. Let your children hear, see and feel the reality of God through your life.

**Closing Prayer**

"Lord, raise fathers who will not hide Your works from their children. Empower them to be anchors of stability in unstable times. May their testimonies become the inheritance of generations, yet unborn. In Jesus' name, Amen."



Stephen Wolemonwu

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

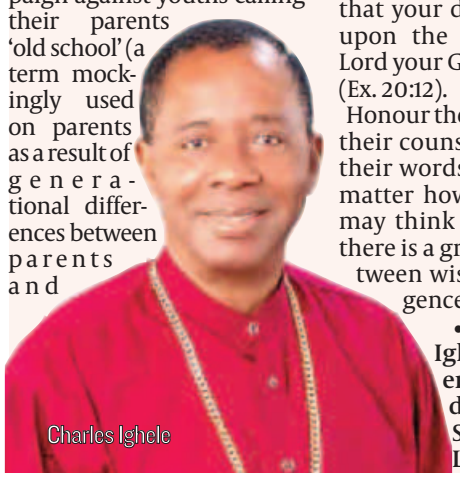
## Respecting The Elderly

By **Charles Ighele**

GOD created the world in a hierarchical system, with honour and respect being given to elders, but families are leaving this order as constructed by God and following their own devices. I know of many families where the title of family leader is given to the wealthiest no matter how rascally he/she is. This is not how God created it to be.

God specifically gave this commandment to His children saying; "You shall rise before the gray headed and honour the presence of an old man…," (Lev. 19:32). In accordance with God's commandments, I believe the older generation must be respected, irrespective of their financial status, educational status or level of exposure.

Years ago, I started a campaign against youths calling their parents 'old school' (a term mockingly used on parents as a result of generational differences between parents and their children). Derogatory terms like that do not convey honour and respect.



Charles Ighele

I am not disputing the fact that as a youth you may know more about current affairs, technology, the internet and other ground breaking discoveries; but one thing you must realise is that your parents know more when it comes to Life. Why, you may wonder? Simply because they have passed through the road you are passing right now.

God does not expect us to honour our elders based on their position or wealth; rather, it is based on the fact that they are older than we are.

It is, therefore, no a coincidence that the only commandment that comes with a promise is related to the honour and respect we give to those older than we are; "Honour your father and mother that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you," (Ex. 20:12).

Honour them by listening to their counsel, by respecting their words and wisdom no matter how intelligent you may think you are because there is a great difference between wisdom and intelligence. Love you!

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

## Foursquare Gospel Church Celebrates Fathers In Grand Style

By **Chris Irekamba**

**• Tasks Men To Lead By Example, Lay Good Foundations For Children**

THE Foursquare Gospel Church, Ajao Estate, Lagos, last Sunday, celebrated Father's Day in a grand style with mothers showering their husbands with precious gifts in appreciation of fatherhood. The church in a like manner surprised every attendee with a gift too.

In his sermon, titled, "Who Is A Faithful Father?" the Preacher, Brother Ademola Idowu, who is also the President of the Council of Foursquare Men Fellowshjp (CFMF), described God as the faithful father, who has given birth to faithful fathers.

He added that by virtue of Jesus being the son of the father, automatically every Christian has become children of God.

Idowu called on fathers to know the Lord, walk in the light and not in darkness, saying most fathers claim to know Him, but are, indeed, far from him. He urged fathers to do away with spiritual liturgy and be awaken to the reality of God.

"We will be doing ourselves a lot of disservice if we are just religious without knowing the Lord, word of God is Jesus himself. He tells us what to do; He obeys the father and he lives and fellowships with the Father. One of the indicators that you are a faithful father is that you are walking in the light just as God is the light," he said, urging Christian fathers not to compromise their faith for any reason.

Appreciating the roles of fathers in the family, the Senior Pastor of the church, Rev'd Igbafe Edwin, observed that they have more responsibilities to shoulder and encouraged them to fulfill those responsibilities as true children of God.

He enjoined them to lay good foundations for their families and live by example.

Edwin said: "We believe that God is going to help fathers and at the same time, they should take up the responsibilities in their homes as leaders, not only as heads. Fathers are ministers and priests in their families and should see themselves as such in their homes and deal with their children and wives in the fear of God and lead them to the Lord."

Calling on fathers to avoid stress, Pastor Omotola Bantale enjoined them to emulate Jesus Christ and pray always, saying stress kills fathers.

"As faithful fathers you should pray when you are stressful, pray when there is pleasure and tell God to help you."



Senior Pastor, Foursquare Gospel Church, Ajao Estate, Rev'd Igbafe Edwin (middle) flanked by his right, Pastor Omotola Bantale and his left, the preacher, Brother Ademola Idowu with other elders and fathers, cutting the cake to mark Father's Day celebration at the Foursquare Gospel Church, Ajao Estate, Lagos... last Sunday

# God Will Deal With Your Enemies

*Text: Psalm 37:5-6: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday," (Psalm 37:5-6 KJV).*

## Living Waters

By Pastor Lazarus Muoka

Founder/General Overseer

The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries Worldwide

For more messages and testimonie vist: wwww.tlccrm.org 08056889396



LIFE is full of battles. As long as we live in this world, we shall encounter opposition, persecution, hatred and various forms of enemies. Some enemies are visible, while others are unseen. There are people who oppose the progress of God's children, and there are spiritual forces that fight against the fulfillment of God's purpose in the lives of believers. However, one comforting truth remains unchanged: God is able to deal with every enemy that rises against His children. Those who trust in Him, need not live in fear. For the Lord, Himself, is their defender.

David knew what it meant to be surrounded by enemies. King Saul sought to kill him, and many others conspired against him. Yet, David learned to place his confidence in God rather than in his own strength. He declared in Psalm 27:1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (KJV). David understood that victory belongs to the Lord and that God is more than sufficient to deal with every adversary.

Many times, when people rise against us, our natural inclination is to seek revenge. Human nature desires to retaliate and pay back evil for evil. But the word of God teaches otherwise. Romans 12:19 says: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," (KJV). God has not assigned His children the responsibility of taking revenge. He has reserved that responsibility for Himself. When we leave our battles in His hands, He fights for us in ways that no human power can.

The children of Israel experienced the mighty hand of God against their enemies when Pharaoh pursued them to the Red Sea. They were trapped between the sea and the Egyptian army. Humanly speaking, there was no escape. Fear gripped the people, but Moses encouraged them with these words in Exodus 14:13-14: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace," (KJV). God opened the Red Sea for His people and drowned their enemies. The same God who fought for Israel is still alive today. He has not changed, and His power has not diminished.

Sometimes the enemy may appear stronger than us, but no enemy is stronger than God. Goliath seemed invincible in the eyes of men, but David approached him in the name of the Lord. He said in 1 Samuel 17:45: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied," (KJV). Goliath fell, not because David possessed superior weapons, but because God fought for him. No matter how formidable your enemies may appear, God is able to bring them down.

Believers should remember that our greatest enemies are not flesh and blood. Ephesians 6:12 says: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," (KJV). Therefore, our confidence should not be in human wisdom or physical strength, but in the power of God. Through prayer, faith and obedience, we gain victory over the forces of darkness.

Another important truth is that God sometimes permits opposition in order to strengthen our faith and draw us closer to Him. Joseph suffered betrayal from his brothers, slavery and imprisonment; yet, God turned the evil plans of men into blessings. Joseph eventually testified in Genesis 50:20: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive," (KJV). What the enemy intended for destruction, God transformed into promotion and deliverance. He is still able to do the same today.

The believer must avoid hatred and bitterness. Although, God will deal with our enemies, He commands us to love and forgive. Jesus said in Matthew 5:44: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you," (KJV). This command may not be easy, but it demonstrates the character of Christ. We can forgive because we trust God to execute perfect justice. God's judgment is always righteous, whereas human revenge is often driven by anger and pride.

King Hezekiah faced a powerful enemy in Sennacherib, King of Assyria. Humanly speaking, Jerusalem had no hope. But Hezekiah turned to God in prayer, and God answered. In one night, the angel of the Lord destroyed the Assyrian army. 2Kings 19:35 says: "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses," (KJV). This account reminds us that one act of God can accomplish what human efforts cannot achieve in a lifetime.

Perhaps your enemies have mocked you, hindered your progress, spoken falsely against you, or tried to destroy your peace. Do not despair. The Lord sees everything. Nothing escapes His attention. Isaiah 54:17 gives this glorious promise: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord," (KJV). Weapons may be formed, but they shall not prosper against those who belong to God.

Nevertheless, there is one enemy that every man must confront — the enemy of sin. Sin separates man from God and ultimately leads to eternal destruction. Satan is the enemy of souls, and his mission is to deceive and destroy. Jesus declared in John 10:10: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," (KJV). Through His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ conquered Satan and provided salvation for all who believe in Him.

Colossians 2:14-15 says concerning Christ: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it," (KJV). At Calvary, the greatest victory was won. Through Christ, believers have authority over the powers of darkness and assurance of eternal life.

Therefore, whatever enemies may surround you, refuse to give in to fear. Trust in the Lord and commit your cause into His hands. Continue to walk in righteousness, pray without ceasing, and wait patiently for His intervention. Psalm 34:19 says: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all," (KJV).

God has never failed those who trust Him. He fought for Moses, David, Joseph, Hezekiah and countless others, and He will fight for you. Leave vengeance in His hands, maintain a forgiving spirit and remain steadfast in faith. In His own time and according to His perfect wisdom, God will deal with your enemies and bring you into victory.

May we all be able to say with confidence the words of Psalm 118:6: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (KJV). Amen!

## Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

# 'Chosen People Are Unstoppable'

MY name is Brother Olumide and I thank God for making me a member of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries. Since I became a Chosen member, God has been helping us and has not put us to shame. Moreover, it is good to always obey the instruction of our G.O. He encouraged us to go to Abuja Crusade held on May 25 and 26, 2026.

On that fateful week, as we set out to go for the crusade, God was leading us as a shepherd would lead his sheep. Our vehicles consisted of long and small buses, and we were made up of evangelists, intercessors and other workers. As we cruise from state to state, people were hailing and cheering us along the way, from Lagos to Oyo to Osun, among other states. In fact, it was Holy Ghost journey because we were singing and praising our God. As we were doing that, there was joy and gladness everywhere.

Suddenly, we entered Edo State, getting to a place called Akongba, we saw that the road was barricaded. The Evangelists leader and I went down and pleaded with them to remove the barricade so that we could pass, but they said no that we had to go to the station to call the Commander-in-Charge of that unit. We did as instructed and tabled our request, but they said no, that it was the order from the top. The officers said, for them to remove the barricade, we have to call the governor of Edo State. We pleaded with them to allow our big buses to pass because we were on convoy, they insisted that we should go and pass another route.

As we left the station for the check point our buses were barricaded, lo and behold, we saw a team of Nigerian soldiers before we could reach there; they were many. They were in buses, jeeps and armoured vehicles, among others. They met the man supervising the barricade and told him to remove it, but he insisted, they forced him to frog jump and while doing that, the soldiers dismantled the barricades and ushered us through. Immediately, we zoomed off with our buses. Praise the Lord! God of Chosen rules in the kingdom of men and in heaven.

I pray that God that called our pastor will continue to be with him in all affairs of life in Jesus' name… amen!




Sister Caroline, who suffered glaucoma for three months, testifies how God healed her at The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries, headquarters in Ijesha, Lagos …recently

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# Be A Tool In God's Hand (1)

SPECIAL tasks demand appropriate and trained hands to accomplish them. The Lord has called us to the task of saving, converting and conserving souls. We need special grace to carry out this special task. Prepared and equipped workers perform higher tasks. Our task is spiritual; therefore, we must be spiritual to qualify and be engaged to do it. We must be prepared, committed, diligent, sanctified, self-denying, self-effacing, focused and consistent.

It is not God's will that any disciple—Christian worker or minister—will be a vessel of dishonour. The actions of Aaron, Korah, Dathan, Abiram and Achan in the Bible that made them vessels of dishonour were contrary to the will of God. If we desire to serve God who is holy, righteous, just and impartial; we must manifest the same traits and "depart from iniquity." Although, we have the liberty to choose between right and wrong, good and evil since we are free moral agents, opting for sin is choosing wrongly because it makes you a vessel of dishonour.

There is need for self-purging if our work for the Lord will be gracious, approved and profitable. Those who purge themselves based on the knowledge of the standard of God's word are the people who will always be ready "for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Such profitable vessels must "flee…youthful lusts" that defame lives, ruin ministries and render an individual unqualified for service to God.

The appropriate action for such a disciple to take is to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Besides, "foolish and unlearned" questions that do not align with our calling should be avoided because they do not produce righteousness, but "gender strifes." The Christian worker is forbidden from the life of strife; rather, he or she is called to be meek, gentle, compassionate and loving in attitude.

A race is set before us as believers, and to win at last, we must run with holiness. God has not left us in the dark concerning the Christian virtue of holiness that He desires to see in us. He has given us the definition, explanation, description and directions as to how we are to possess this experience. Before anyone can reach sinners with the grace of God, they must first come out of sin. This implies that we must "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

The call to run the race with holiness is not something unattainable. Many other people have accomplished the same thing. These are the personalities, men and women, described as a "great cloud of witnesses." They all had the life of purity and righteousness, indicating its possibility in all ages. However, those who rush into the service of the Lord, without obeying or submitting to this directive will not receive the grace to carry out the work of God.

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor W. F. Kumuyi



The challenge to be washed in the blood of the Lamb and be holy is "for our profit." It helps us to follow peace with everyone, including those who are not friendly to us. By so doing, we will be able to run the race before us consciously, with our focus on the finishing line to obtain the crown. However, we must strive for the prize with mastery and not mediocrity.

• **Further reading (King James Version): 2 Timothy 2:19-26. 2 Corinthians 6:16,17; 7:1; Hebrews 12:1,2,10,14; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Colossians 1:21-23,28,29; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; 2 Peter 3:11-14. 2 Timothy 2:20; John 10:12,13; Isaiah 56:10,11; Ezekiel 34:1,2,4; pJeremiah 23:13,14,4; Jonah 1:1-3; 2:7-10; 3:1-3; Acts 9:26-28; James 5:19,20. 2 Timothy 2:19-21; Matthew 9:36-38; 10:6-8; Luke 10:1,2; Mark 6:12,13; Jeremiah 5:24; 8:20-22; 12:5; 50:6; Luke 19:10,13; John 4:34-38.**

# That Christ Be Formed In You (3)

By **Abel Ukachi Amadi**

*Key verse: Galatians 4:19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," (KJV).*

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: Galatians 4:8-20

GOD'S desire for us as believers is that we will be transformed into the image of Christ. God invites us to surrender our old ways, receive a new heart, and experience true transformation through His spirit and renewing our minds. God's goal for every believer in Christ is transformation.

Transformation is necessary because we did not enter this world with a godly nature and character. It is a process, which we undergo, so that, Christ will be formed in us. Transformation is God's way of forming Himself inside of us. We are all called to be like Jesus and that was why Apostle Paul challenged the Galatians to grow up in their faith and be like Jesus. You can grow your faith by nurturing it with spiritual nutrients. You nurture your faith by attending Bible studies; studying your Bible, pray and fast. The early church was not sustained by excitement, but by devotion. They gave themselves continually to doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer. These were not occasional practices; they were the pillars upon which they built their lives. They carried a sacred consciousness of God, and they never lost sight of what mattered most.

Becoming like Christ should be the focus of all believers. We should not be satisfied with just our new birth or born again experience, but we must grow to become like Christ. When we become like Christ, we will manifest Godly character. Godly character is consistently doing what is right in God's sight, reflecting His moral nature in your thoughts, words, and actions. It is defined by integrity, a clear conscience and a life motivated by love and respect for both God and others, regardless of the situation. Godly character is something that all devoted Christ followers pursue and desire to be deepened in on a daily basis. When we reflect Godly character, it gives us influence over people who are drawn by the way we act. Character is influence. The world around us wants to see Christ revealed in our actions, conduct and conversations. The disciples of Jesus were first called Christians because they behaved like Christ (Acts 11:26). We are not different from the people of the world if we don't showcase Christ living inside of us.

God's purpose for every believer is to be transformed into the image and character of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). Paul was eager to see his beloved spiritual children advancing in that purpose, "growing in every way more and more like Christ (Ephesians 4:15). Paul would never cease caring and travailing in anguish until the life of Christ was formed in them. No one is born a full-grown Christian. They are born babies. Then they are to grow up, spiritually. The Bible says: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," (1 Peter 2:2). While people are babies spiritually, somebody has to feed them. This is one place where prayer comes in. Older believers need to hold them up in prayer as they are learning to walk. The goal of all spiritual formation is the transformation of the disciple into the likeness of Christ. The earnest desire of every true believer is to be Christ-like. Christ is formed in us when He is revealed in us, living in us and formed in us. It is the progressive workings of the Holy Spirit, so that our outer conduct can and should become a natural expression or outflow of the character and teaching of Jesus.

• **Today's nugget: Christ revealed in us, living in us and formed in us. Prayer: Lord help me to express Christ in my character. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com**



Amadi

**, Dr Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.**

# Adoration (68)

**8The Benefits Of Adoration (Cont)**

THE cedars of Lebanon grew to 120 feet in height and up to 30 feet in circumference; thus, they were solid, strong, and immovable. The Psalmist saw believers as upright, strong and unmoved by the winds of circumstance. Those who place their faith firmly in God can have this strength and vitality.

See the example of Caleb, a courageous and loyal colleague of Joshua (Num 14:6,24) who was an outstanding commander in the invasion of Canaan (Jos 15:14). Caleb was not so much a man of great faith as a man of faith in a great God! Read Joshua 14:6-15—Caleb inherits Hebron: "I was 40 years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart…. 9: So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God'….10: And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. 'As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in,'" (Joshua 14:7,9-11).

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus Prof. Mercy Olumide



In Jos 14:6-12, Caleb was faithful from the start. As one of the original spies sent into the Promised Land (Numbers 13:30-33), he saw great cities and giants, yet he knew God would help the people conquer the land. Because of his faith, God promised him a personal inheritance of land (Numbers 14:24; Deuteronomy 1:34-66). Here, 45 years later, the land was given to him. His faith was still unwavering. Although his inherited land still had giants, Caleb knew the Lord would help him conquer them. Like Caleb, we must be faithful to God, not only at the start of our walk with him, but through our entire lives. We must never allow ourselves to rest on our past accomplishments or reputations.

"Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord, God of Israel," (Jos 14:14).

14:14 "Caleb … wholly followed the Lord." Caleb remained faithful to God and received fully his promised inheritance (vv. 9-14). His life illustrates the believer's faithfulness and acceptance of the promise of the Father under the new covenant—i.e., the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). After repentance and acceptance of God's new covenant terms, believers must go on to receive whatever spiritual gifts God wishes to bestow (cf. Rom 12:6-8, 1Cor 12:4-31)

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# **Falore:** Girl-child Education Critical To Sustainable National Development

*For five of her seven decades of life, Mrs Bolajoko Morolake Falore has lived and breathed education. Setting sail with a Teacher's Grade II Certificate in hand, Falore, midstream, metamorphosed into a consummate professional who taught primary and secondary school pupils (both public and private) and later adult learners while serving as an inspector of education in Lagos State. In the course of her teaching odyssey, she earned master's degrees from two reputable Nigerian universities and went on to establish and administer the Mind Builders Schools for nearly three decades. The President of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP), Lagos Chapter, who turned 70 on Tuesday, June 23, offered an incisive appraisal of government education policies over the years. In this interview with* ***ENO-ABASI SUNDAY****, she confronts the challenges and prospects of national education, decries the canker-worms of examination malpractice and rising student indiscipline, and underscores the necessity of a sound foundation for educators. The former Chairman of the Ikeja Chapter of the National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS), Lagos State, also makes a compelling case for prioritising girl-child education, emphasising women's vital roles as mothers, foundational home teachers and, by extension, nation builders.*

**Having progressed from classroom teacher to education inspector and school administrator in the past five decades, what insights can you share on the challenges and prospects of Nigeria's education sector?**

FIRST and foremost, I give glory to God Almighty for granting me the opportunity to serve Nigeria in virtually every sphere of the education system.

One of the most significant challenges facing education in Nigeria is inadequate funding. No matter how lofty the ideals or policies of government and other stakeholders are, education cannot effectively fulfil its purpose, transforming society through the transmission of knowledge, values, and culture, if it is poorly funded.

Private schools, in particular, require adequate tuition income to attract and retain qualified teachers who are capable of delivering quality education. The salaries demanded by even relatively inexperienced teachers today often exceed what many schools can sustainably afford. At the same time, parents are understandably reluctant to accept increases in school fees, even when such increases are necessary to meet rising personnel costs and investments in modern educational facilities.

As a result, many schools resort to bank loans to finance their operations and development projects. Unfortunately, the high cost of borrowing in Nigeria often makes this option unsustainable.

Another challenge is the mismatch between educational curricula and workplace realities. Many graduates leave school without the practical skills required by employers, contributing to unemployment and underemployment. The education sector itself is affected, as teacher-training programmes do not always adequately prepare graduates for the demands of contemporary classrooms.

To address this challenge, educational institutions must invest continuously in professional development and in-service training for teachers. However, this also requires substantial financial resources.

In addition, examination malpractice, cultism, and bullying have become persistent concerns within our educational institutions. These issues, once associated primarily with higher levels of education, are increasingly being observed even at the primary school level.

Despite these challenges, there are encouraging prospects for education in Nigeria. The increasing adoption of educational technology, digital learning resources, and artificial intelligence has significantly enhanced teaching and learning. Learners now have access to a wealth of information and virtual experiences that enrich the educational process.

Furthermore, the curriculum has increasingly incorporated entrepreneurship and practical skills acquisition, helping students become more self-reliant and capable of creating employment opportunities for themselves and others.

**You began your journey with a Grade II Teachers' Certificate, once regarded as the gold standard of teacher education in Nigeria. How did that foundational training shape your approach to teaching differently from the training teachers receive today?**

Thank you for that question. Those of us who passed through the Grade II Teachers' colleges genuinely embraced teaching as a calling. The training was rigorous, comprehensive, and highly practical. We were trained to teach all subjects at the primary school level and were equipped with a deep understanding of child development and classroom pedagogy.

It is unfortunate that this model of teacher preparation no longer exists. Today, the National Certificate in Education (NCE) serves as the minimum teaching qualification. While the NCE adequately prepares teachers for subject specialisation, particularly at the secondary school level, it does not always provide the broad-based preparation required for primary education.

*It is encouraging that conversations are ongoing regarding greater female representation in politics and public service. I look forward to a time when Nigeria will produce a female president and many more female governors. Ultimately, investing in the education of girls is one of the most effective ways of securing the future prosperity and stability of any nation*

As a result, many schools now rely heavily on specialist subject teachers. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this, it sometimes affects continuity and commitment, as some teachers move frequently from one school to another.

Our training instilled thoroughness, discipline, and attention to detail. We were taught not merely to teach subjects but to understand the child and apply appropriate teaching methods to meet individual learning needs.

More importantly, we entered the profession out of passion rather than convenience. We taught because we believed in shaping future generations. Today, some individuals enter teaching as a temporary option while pursuing other career ambitions.

The values and professional standards I acquired through Grade II Teacher training have remained with me throughout my career. They have influenced not only my effectiveness as a classroom teacher but also my leadership as an education administrator and proprietor of Mind Builders Schools.

**You are a good example of why the girl-child should be educated. How important is it for Nigeria to prioritise girl-child education in the interest of national development?**

I remain eternally grateful to my parents, who never discriminated against the girl-child, and I believe Nigeria must continue to prioritise girl-child education if we are to achieve sustainable national development and global relevance. It is heartwarming that the days when educating girls was considered less important than educating boys are gradually disappearing.

Girl-child education is a catalyst for national development. As the popular saying goes, 'If you educate a boy, you educate an individual; if you educate a girl, you educate a nation.'

The government's investment in quality girls' schools, such as Queens College, Yaba, where I had the privilege of teaching in the 1980s, has contributed significantly to changing societal attitudes.

Educated women contribute significantly to poverty reduction by supporting their families economically; they help improve family health outcomes, reduce the incidence of early marriages, and contribute to more informed parenting.

Education also creates opportunities for women to participate more actively in leadership and governance. It is encouraging that conversations are ongoing regarding greater female representation in politics and public service. I look forward to a time when Nigeria will produce a female president and many more female governors. Ultimately, investing in the education of girls is one of the most effective ways of securing the future prosperity and stability of any nation.

**At a time when many schools have become "miracle centres," where examination success is facilitated by school owners and administrators rather than earned through hard work, what steps would you recommend to ensure that students graduate with marketable skills and strong character?**

Examination malpractice is not only a violation of educational regulations; it is a crime against humanity. It undermines the integrity of education and destroys the future of the students involved. Beneficiaries of such practices often lack the competence required for higher education, professional practice, and leadership responsibilities.

At Mind Builders Schools, we operate a strict zero-tolerance policy towards examination malpractice. Both staff and students understand that academic dishonesty is unacceptable under any circumstances.

Our philosophy is simple: students should be taught to acquire and apply knowledge, not merely to pass examinations. To achieve this, we have invested heavily in educational technology, digital learning tools, and robotics education. These investments are aimed at exposing our learners to practical and relevant knowledge that builds competence and confidence.

**In a country where teaching is often regarded as a "last-resort profession," what has enabled you to remain passionate and committed to education for over fifty years?**

Teaching was never a last-resort profession for me. It was a deliberate choice that I embraced wholeheartedly from the very beginning. That conviction motivated me to pursue every level of professional training available to educators and to continuously invest in my personal development. Much of what I know about teaching, educational leadership, and school administration has been acquired through extensive reading, professional study, and lifelong learning.

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



*Teaching was never a last-resort profession for me. It was a deliberate choice that I embraced wholeheartedly from the very beginning. That conviction motivated me to pursue every level of professional training available to educators and to continuously invest in my personal development. Much of what I know about teaching, educational leadership, and school administration has been acquired through extensive reading, professional study, and lifelong learning*

# A Decade On The Throne, Adeboruwa Recounts Achievements, Eyes More Developmental Strides

*As he marks his 10th year anniversary on the throne amid numerous developmental milestones that have improved the lives of his people, the Adeboruwa of Igbogbo Kingdom, Oba Semiudeen Orimadegun Kasali is unrelenting in his efforts to lift lives in the kingdom as he has announced plans to launch a foundation that would support education and other areas of community development, **SULIYAT TELLA** writes.*

BEFORE he became the Adeboruwa of Igbogbo Kingdom, Oba Semiudeen Orimadegun Kasali's life followed a different path. His career was built around interpreting laws, representing the state and resolving legal matters, not sitting on a traditional stool.

For years, he worked as a lawyer and public servant. He worked at the law firm of Pinheiro & Oguntade and later joined the Lagos State Civil Service, where he served as a Chief State Counsel at the Ministry of Justice. The palace was not a destination he had planned for himself.

"I never had any inclination. When it happened, I wholeheartedly received it as God's calling," he said.

Ten years after ascending the throne of Igbogbo Kingdom, Lagos State, Oba Kasali is reflecting on a journey that took him from the courtroom to the palace and placed him at the centre of conversations about the relevance of traditional institutions in modern Nigeria.

Born on October 28, 1968, in Okobaba area of Ebute Metta, Lagos, to the family of late Paa Idowu Kasali and late Alhaja Sidiqat Kasali, Oba Kasali spent his early years away from the palace.

He attended United Native African Primary School, Odunfa Street, Ebute Metta, before proceeding to Denton Grammar School, Ebute Metta. After his secondary education, he attended St Gregory's College, Obalende, Lagos, for his A-Level studies.

In the 1990/91 academic session, he gained admission to study Law at the University of Ibadan. After graduating, he proceeded to the Nigerian Law School and became one of the first sets of students called to the Bar at the Abuja campus in 1997/1998.

His legal career began at Pinheiro & Oguntade, where he worked briefly before proceeding to Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, for his Master's degree in Law.

In 2000/2001, he joined the Lagos State government through the State Civil Service Commission and was deployed as a State Counsel to the Ministry of Justice.

Despite his professional background, becoming a traditional ruler was not a path he had envisaged. Although he was born into a royal lineage through his mother, who belonged to the Emugoriade branch of the Ijaolu Royal Family, Oba Kasali said he did not know he could one day occupy the throne.

"Along the line, I got to know that I come from a royal background. My late mother belongs to the Emugoriade royal family, a branch of Ijaolu Royal Family," he said.

When the opportunity came, he saw it as a responsibility rather than attainment of a personal ambition.

His emergence as monarch, however, was not without challenges. Like many traditional institutions where succession can generate competing interests, the process generated disagreements and legal disputes.

"It took the intervention of the state government through the relevant ministry in charge of chieftaincy affairs. Certain meetings were called before conclusions were eventually made," he said.

According to him, Igbogbo had experienced a prolonged traditional leadership crisis in the past, with consequences for the community.

"We have had an experience like that before. For almost 19 years, there was a struggle. So many lives were lost. Properties were damaged. Development was at a standstill," he said.

That history, he explained, influenced his decision to prioritise dialogue and mediation.

"As a legal person, I consider it one of those things that will happen. It is even better if you want to go through the constitutionally approved measure rather than going through any other means that will create chaos within the community," he said.



According to Oba Kasali, his legal background has remained useful in navigating the responsibilities of the throne.

He described his years as a lawyer and public servant as part of the experiences that prepared him for traditional leadership, particularly in managing disputes and balancing different interests.

He recalled how his university education exposed him to courses in philosophy and religious studies, courses he did not realise would later become useful in his role as a traditional ruler.

Beyond his personal transition, one of the issues the monarch has continued to raise is the place of traditional institutions in Nigeria's current governance structure.

Across the country, traditional rulers remain important figures within their communities, serving as cultural custodians, mediators and links between residents and government. However, their constitutional roles remain limited.

Oba Kasali believes traditional institutions require clearer recognition and defined responsibilities.

"The general body of traditional institutions in Nigeria resolved that government should give us a constitutional role," he said.

However, he added that the conversation should not only be about granting roles, but also defining what those roles should be.

According to him, traditional rulers already contribute in areas such as conflict resolution, security and community engagement.

"We are still playing that mediatory role in the palace. We are still serious stakeholders in the security architecture within our various domains," he said.

He argued that strengthening traditional institutions would require both legal recognition and responsible conduct from those who occupy royal stools.

For him, the dignity of the institution depends partly on the actions of the individuals who represent it.

"My own advice with regards to that is for my fellow Obas to look inward and see what they can do on their part to safeguard the sacredness of that position," he said.

He identified two principles he believes are important for traditional rulers: contentment and comportment.

"I believe that if you comport yourself as a royal father, you get due regards for that position. And when you are content with whatever you have, you will not get yourself involved in something that will tarnish the image of that stool," he said.

Since ascending the throne in July 2016, Oba Kasali has built relationships with other traditional rulers within Ikorodu Division, a relationship he described as important in learning and navigating the responsibilities of leadership.

Among the monarchs he has interacted with are the Ayangburen of Ikorodu; Oba (Dr.) Kabiru Adewale Shotobi, the Ranodu of Imota; His Royal Majesty, Oba Mudashiru Ajibade Bakare-Agoro, the Obateru of Egbin Kingdom; His Royal Majesty, Oba (Dr.) Adeoriyomi Oluwasesan Abdul-Akeem Oyebo (Ademoyebo III), and the Sekumade of Ipakodo, Oba Bashir Aremu Sotonwa, among others.

The monarch said interactions with traditional rulers who have spent several years on their thrones have provided him with lessons in managing the expectations that come with the institution.

He recalled receiving guidance from older monarchs, including the late Awujale of Ijebuland, Oba Sikiru Kayode Adetona, whom he visited after his emergence as Adeboruwa of Igbogbo.

> *I cannot lay claim to everything that is happening in Igbogbo. It is a manifestation of God-answered prayers at this particular period in the history of the town. …The improvement we are seeing today is because of the collaborative efforts of the Igbogbo Development Association and the community leaders, including the youth.*

Those encounters, he said, shaped his understanding of patience, humility and the responsibility attached to traditional leadership.

Within Igbogbo, Oba Kasali has also relied on the support of community leaders, political figures and development stakeholders in pursuing projects and initiatives for the town.

He acknowledged the contributions of elders and leaders, including Chief Olorunfunmi Bashorun and Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe, as well as other stakeholders who have supported efforts aimed at strengthening the community.

Oba Kasali said that when he assumed the throne, one of the major concerns before the community was infrastructure, particularly the state of roads.

He stated that over the years, interventions from government and elected representatives have contributed to improvements in the area.

He specifically highlighted the roles of Senator Tokunbo Abiru, House of Representatives member, Babajimi Benson; and member of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Aro Moshood Abiodun, in attracting development initiatives to Igbogbo.

The monarch also recognised the contributions of former and present chairmen of Igbogbo/Bayeku Local Council Development Area, Sesan Daini and Olalekan Hamed Aroyewun respectively in supporting local development efforts.

According to him, the progress recorded in Igbogbo has been a result of cooperation between the traditional institution, government, community associations and residents.

"The result of that is what we are seeing across the town – the improvement in the road network, the educational sector and the health sector.

"I cannot lay claim to everything that is happening in Igbogbo. It is a manifestation of God-answered prayers at this particular period in the history of the town," he said.

Beyond physical infrastructure, Oba Kasali said efforts had been made to improve government presence and accessibility within the community. One of such interventions, he said, was the facilitation of an immigration office in Igbogbo, which he described as part of efforts to bring government services closer to residents.

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

# Dr. Seyefar Clement: SMEs growth in Nigeria requires not just capital availability but a mindset shift

STAYING In touch with World SMEs Day celebration this June, Dr. Seyefar Clement, international finance expert, principal lecturer at the University of Bedfordshire and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) discusses the critical role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to the Nigerian economy and the multidimensional approaches required to shape their growth. With over a decade experience advising SMEs in Nigeria and United Kingdom, Dr. Clement shares with *The Guardian* the importance of strengthening SMEs in Nigeria through targeted interventions, effective and transparent funding programmes and financial literacy.

**In the interest of our readers who may not be very familiar with the idea of SMEs, what is the simplest understanding of it and why is it important in an economy?**

SMEs, which stands for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, are businesses that are larger than micro-enterprises but smaller than large corporations. They can be found in virtually every sector of the economy, including retail, agriculture, manufacturing, technology, logistics, and professional services.

SMEs are the backbone of any economy because they create jobs, stimulate innovation, support local communities, and contribute significantly to economic growth. In Nigeria, their importance is even more pronounced. According to recent estimates, MSMEs account for approximately 96% of businesses in the country and remain a critical driver of employment and economic activity.

Their success has a direct impact on the wellbeing of millions of Nigerians. When SMEs grow, they create more jobs, generate income, increase tax revenues, and contribute to poverty reduction. Conversely, when they struggle, the effects are felt across households, communities, and the wider economy. This is why supporting SMEs through targeted initiatives, improved access to funding, and better financial literacy is essential for Nigeria's long-term economic development.

**What are the key challenges do you think SMEs in Nigeria are facing today and why?**
A number of challenges certainly exist for SMEs in Nigeria. It is important to identify them because Nigerians are naturally entrepreneurial and have the capacity to drive significant economic growth if some of these barriers can be addressed.

One of the biggest challenges is access to finance. Despite the critical role SMEs play in the economy, many still struggle to access affordable funding. This is due to several factors. First, there is limited financial literacy. Some SME owners lack the knowledge required to secure funding, manage it effectively, and deploy it in ways that support sustainable business growth.

There is also the issue of limited funding and support reaching SMEs at the scale required. While government has established agencies and programmes to support small businesses, funding constraints and implementation challenges often limit their impact. In addition, Nigeria's credit information infrastructure for small businesses remains relatively underdeveloped. Unlike large corporations, many SMEs do not have readily available financial records or established credit histories, making it difficult for lenders to assess their creditworthiness and extend credit with confidence.

Another challenge is the politicisation of some SME support programmes. In some cases, funding is influenced by political considerations rather than business viability. This can create a situation where beneficiaries view the funds as a gift rather than capital intended to support enterprise development and economic growth.

That said, it is not always the government's fault. The sustainability of SME financing programmes also depends on the repayment behaviour and performance of the businesses that receive support. A useful way to think about this is to imagine a refillable water dispenser. To continue drawing water, the bottle must be replaced when it is empty. In the same way, when SME loans are repaid, those funds can be recycled to support new businesses. However, when repayment rates are poor or businesses fail, the pool of available capital shrinks, limiting the ability of government and financial institutions to support future entrepreneurs.

Beyond finance, SMEs also face challenges relating to inadequate infrastructure, rising operating costs, inflation, and economic uncertainty. Addressing these issues is critical because MSMEs account for approximately 96% of businesses in Nigeria and remain a major driver of employment and economic growth.

**We have seen several private-sector initiatives in Nigeria, such as the Tony Elumelu Foundation and similar programmes, providing grants and support to entrepreneurs. What do you make of the impact of these private-sector-driven interventions?**

These avenues are definitely helpful. They serve as additional sources of capital for new and existing SMEs. There are a number of individuals and organisations making similar contributions. For example, the Kestin Pondi Foundation reportedly commits significant resources each year to support SMEs and entrepreneurs.

These platforms demonstrate how individuals and private institutions can help bridge the funding gap facing small businesses. Importantly, they do not simply provide money; they also invest time and resources in assessing applicants and evaluating the viability of their business ideas. This helps ensure that support is directed towards individuals who are genuinely committed to building sustainable businesses.

However, one of the limitations of some of these interventions is that the support is not always end-to-end. Unlike programmes such the Tony Elumelu Foundation, which combine funding with training, mentoring, networking, and ongoing support, many initiatives focus primarily on disbursing capital. To improve the chances of success, grant providers should consider offering more structured mentorship, business development support, and post-funding monitoring. Access to capital is important, but entrepreneurs are far more likely to succeed when funding is complemented by guidance, accountability, and continuous support.

In the past year, we have seen the institutionalization of regional development commissions by the Federal Government. Do you think these agencies are positioned to support and stimulate SME growth in ways the country hasn't been able to do so far?

From what I have gathered about these commissions so far, I believe they have the mandate to support SMEs and are well positioned to do so. In fact, the South East Development Commission (SEDC) has already launched initiatives aimed at supporting startups and entrepreneurship, while its counterpart in the South West has announced plans and investments geared towards driving regional development, including improvements to transportation infrastructure. The South South Development Commission, on the other hand, is still in its early stages following its inauguration and has yet to fully commence operations. However, I am hopeful that it will become fully functional soon and play a significant role in supporting SMEs and driving economic development across the South South region.

I mention these examples because SME growth should be viewed as more than simply injecting capital into businesses. Access to finance is important, but it is only one part of the equation. SMEs also need reliable infrastructure, efficient transportation networks, access to markets, stable power supply, and a business environment that enables growth. Support for SMEs should therefore encompass all the factors that contribute to enterprise development, and the regional development commissions have the potential to complement government efforts in this regard.

That said, these commissions must also invest in reorienting mindsets, particularly among beneficiaries of SME funding programmes. There needs to be a shift in how such support is perceived. In some cases, grants or funding are viewed as "free money" or as a reward for the effort involved in applying, rather than as capital intended to build sustainable businesses and create economic value.

The second challenge is ensuring that these programmes are not used as a vehicle for political patronage. Funding should be allocated on the basis of merit, viability, and potential impact, rather than political affiliation or support. Capital provided to individuals who see it as free money is unlikely to generate the desired economic outcomes. More importantly, it diverts scarce resources away from entrepreneurs who could have used that support to build successful businesses, create jobs, and contribute meaningfully to economic growth.

Ultimately, the success of these commissions will depend not only on the amount of funding they provide but also on the quality of their governance, the transparency of their programmes, and their ability to create an environment in which businesses can thrive and grow sustainably.

**Given the challenges facing SMEs, what do you consider to be the key catalysts for stimulating SME growth in Nigeria today?**
I will mention three key elements.

First, government support and catalytic funding are critical. As I mentioned earlier, we have agencies that have been established to provide the technical and financial support SMEs need to grow, but many of them are not adequately funded. If we are serious about stimulating SME growth, these institutions must be properly resourced and empowered to fulfil their mandates.

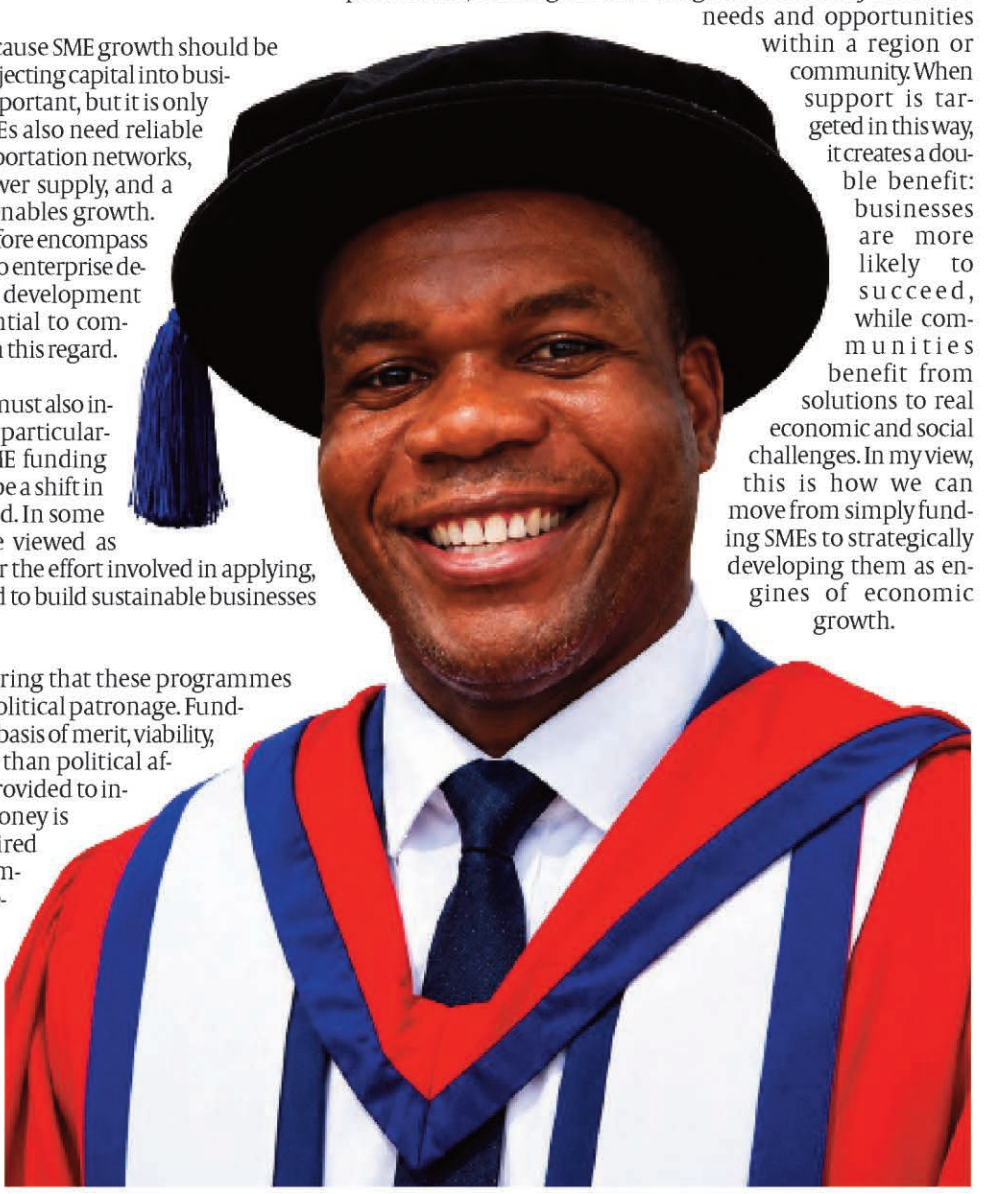
Second, financial literacy is crucial. Business owners need to understand the fundamentals of running a business, including financial management, record-keeping, cash flow planning, and how to present a compelling case when seeking funding. This would help bridge the trust gap that often exists between SMEs and financial institutions, particularly banks, which remain one of the most important sources of financing for businesses.

The third catalyst is the introduction of a more effective structure for financing, monitoring, and measuring the impact of SME support programmes, whether they are driven by government or the private sector. Loans and grants should not simply be disbursed; they should be structured in a way that maximises their impact and increases the likelihood of business success.

Specifically, capital support should be more targeted. What often happens is that once a particular type of business is seen as profitable, everyone rushes into that space without first asking what problem the business is solving. Meanwhile, there are significant gaps and unmet needs in the market that present opportunities for innovation and sustainable growth.

Take the Niger Delta region as an example. Would it be more beneficial to fund yet another payment technology startup in an already crowded market, or to support a business that addresses a pressing regional challenge? There may be greater value in prioritising SMEs developing solutions in areas such as agritech, environmental sustainability, fisheries, and climate resilience. For instance, innovative technologies that help fishermen monitor fish migration patterns or optimise their fishing operations could create both commercial value and social impact.

The point is not that these are the only sectors deserving support. Rather, funding should be aligned with clearly identified needs and opportunities within a region or community. When support is targeted in this way, it creates a double benefit: businesses are more likely to succeed, while communities benefit from solutions to real economic and social challenges. In my view, this is how we can move from simply funding SMEs to strategically developing them as engines of economic growth.



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## SPECIAL FOCUS ON VISION-DRIVEN PROFESSIONALS ADDING VALUE TO NIGERIA'S ECONOMY - Part I

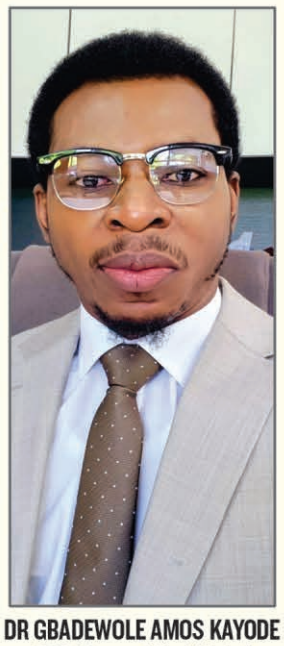
*Professionals and entrepreneurs, with their specialized knowledge, skills and vision, are uniquely positioned to be to be the torchbearers of innovation and enterprise required for national growth and development. As one of the biggest economies in Africa, Nigeria is not just endowed with natural resources, her human resources are among the best in the world, and they have continued to make exploits in different fields.*

*Over the years, these visionary professionals and entrepreneurs have navigated Nigeria's complex and challenging business environment to achieve remarkable success, setting new benchmarks and driving progress across various sectors. Their resilience and innovative spirit have yielded impressive results, bolstering organisational growth and fuelling national development.*

*In recognition of the outstanding contributions of these productive and excelling individuals in the private and public sectors towards the collective pursuit of the country's goal of national development, The Guardian is publishing Part 1 of the special report titled: Vision-Driven Professionals Adding Value to Nigeria's Economy, to celebrate their impact and remarkable achievements.*



**DR THOMAS OGUNGBANGBE**
Chairman. CITA Energies



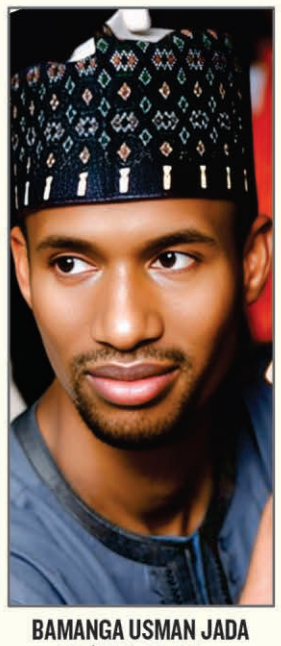
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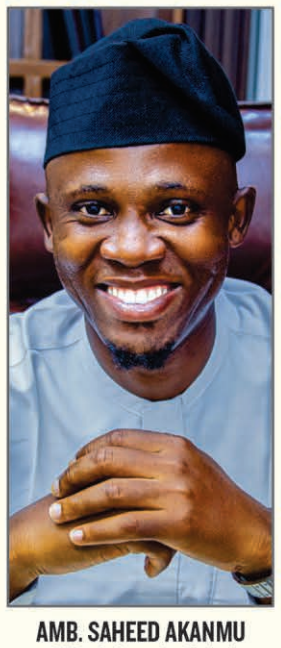
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## SPECIAL FOCUS ON 50 VISION DRIVEN PROFESSIONALS ADDING VALUE TO NIGERIA'S ECONOMY

# THE ARCHITECT OF URBAN EXCELLENCE: How Mrs. Erejuwa Gbadebo is Setting New Global Standards for the Nigerian Skyline

*Transformation in a city as vibrant as Lagos is rarely accidental; it is the product of a deliberate, vision-led approach to urban excellence. At the vanguard of this evolution is Mrs. Erejuwa Gbadebo, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Eko Development Company FZE. With a career spanning over 39 years of international experience, Mrs. Gbadebo has become a central figure in reshaping the Nigerian real estate landscape through the landmark Azuri Towers project in Eko Atlantic City. Her journey is one defined by professional mastery, strategic foresight, and an unwavering commitment to delivering projects that compete with the finest developments globally.*



### A Foundation of Global Professionalism

The depth of Mrs. Gbadebo's expertise is anchored in a rigorous academic and professional pedigree that bridges the gap between international standards and local execution. A Chartered Architect and Chartered Surveyor, she holds prestigious memberships in the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS). Her influence on the global stage was particularly notable during her five-year tenure on the RIBA Validation Panel, where she played a vital role in upholding the quality of architectural education in the United Kingdom by promoting innovation and contemporary relevance in teaching.

Mrs. Gbadebo's leadership style is informed by a career of significant administrative and operational milestones. She spent over five years as the CEO of Broll Property Service Ltd, where she was responsible for a diverse portfolio including six retail malls, three schools, and over twenty commercial buildings across Nigeria. Her experience as the founding CEO of Cluttons International Ltd and her current leadership at Eko Development Company highlight a career dedicated to solidifying industry standards. This seasoned perspective, supported by an MBA from Henley Management College and degrees from the University of Jos, allows her to navigate the intricacies of the real estate market with both technical precision and strategic foresight.

### Beyond Concrete: A Vision for Impact

For Mrs. Gbadebo, the motivation behind her work is not merely the completion of physical structures but the creation of a lasting legacy that improves the quality of life. She believes that real estate goes far beyond construction; it is about creating environments that stimulate economic activity and foster sustainable growth. Leading Eko Development Company has provided her with a unique platform to contribute to Nigeria's urban landscape with innovative, world-class developments designed to meet the evolving needs of modern cities.

This philosophy is the heartbeat of Azuri Towers. Comprising Azuri One, Azuri Two, and the Azuri Office Tower, the project was envisioned as a benchmark for modern luxury living in Nigeria. By combining architectural excellence with world-class amenities, the development provides an integrated environment where people can live, work, and thrive. Mrs. Gbadeboemphasises that the true success of such a project is measured by the opportunities it creates for others and its contribution to Nigeria's long-term prosperity.

### Azuri Towers: A Paradigm of Success

The market's reception of Azuri Towers has been a clear validation of the strategy and integrity of the project.Azuri One is completely sold out, and Azuri Two is already more than 60% sold. A particularly telling sign of the project's success is the high number of repeat buyers, indicating a profound level of investor confidence in the quality and long-term value that Eko Development Company delivers. By successfully executing a project of this scale, Mrs. Gbadebo is proving that Nigerian companies are capable of exceeding global standards.

Beyond its residential appeal, Azuri Towers serves as a significant economic driver. It attracts substantial local and international investment, reinforcing Lagos' status as a premier destination for business. The development has created a ripple effect of opportunity, generating employment across sectors such as construction, engineering, professional services, operations, and facility management. This integration ensures continuous economic activity, which is essential for the sustainable development of the city.

### Resilience and Strategic Innovation

Navigating the Nigerian real estate market requires a unique blend of patience and ingenuity, particularly when faced with infrastructure gaps and rising construction costs. Mrs. Gbadebo's approach involves strategic foresight and prudent planning. A significant advantage for Eko Development Company is its location within the Eko Atlantic Free Trade Zone, which provides access to world-class infrastructure and a business-friendly environment that supports sustainable growth.

Furthermore, the project is built with a focus on long-term resilience. Situated within Eko Atlantic, the towers are protected by the Great Wall of Lagos, a massive engineering project designed to prevent coastal erosion and flooding. Internally, the towers feature energy-efficient lighting, water-saving technologies, and smart building solutions, ensuring that the development remains environmentally responsible and operationally efficient for generations to come.

### Empowering the Future of Leadership

Mrs. Erejuwa Gbadebo's impact extends into the corporate boardroom, where she serves as an Independent Non-Executive Director of Berger Paints Nigeria Plc. She is particularly passionate about encouraging young professionals to pursue ambitious goals with integrity. As a prominent female leader, she is driven by the responsibility to demonstrate that excellence and innovation can break barriers and redefine expectations.

Her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is centered on creating genuine value. She emphasises that leadership is not defined by gender but by vision, competence, and character. She encourages future leaders to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth and to remain focused on making a meaningful difference in the lives of others. Through the success of Azuri Towers, Mrs. Erejuwa Gbadebo and Eko Development Company are not just changing the skyline; they are setting a new global standard for what Nigerian enterprises can achieve on the world stage.

EKO DEVELOPMENT

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# DR GBADEWOLE AMOS KAYODE: The Housing Access Advocate Bridging Capital, Technology and Suburban Expansion with Crown Allied's Solutions

IF real estate is about location, Dr Gbadewole Amos Kayode has undisputed mastery of the map. As Chief Executive Officer of Crown Allied Global Realty Limited, trading as Crown Luxury Properties, he operates where demand meets foresight. Though Nigeria anchors his work, his influence now extends into other African territories and the American market. He approaches each project with a rare mix of data, instinct and hands-on execution and that combination has made Crown Luxury Properties a name that resonates beyond borders without losing its local edge. It is not surprising that this outstanding professional with patriotic vision is now counted among the disruptors reshaping Nigeria's real estate sector.

Just as a castle's height is determined by the strength of its base, Dr Gbadewole's towering figure in real estate rests on academic rigour and disciplined adherence to standards. As the Real Estate Developers Association of Nigeria (REDAN) FCT Abuja Vice Chairman, he brings data-led scrutiny to policy, pushes for codes that shield buyers and unlock investment, and judges every proposal by market realities. He demands transparent approvals and a sector that rewards execution over promises.

That mandate carries into national housing finance. Serving on the five-man Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria - REDAN ad-hoc committee, he aligns capital with development timelines. The work is hands-on, recalibrating disbursement flows, stress-testing mortgage products against real project cycles and designing frameworks that can replicate beyond Abuja. Colleagues value how he trades rhetoric for verifiable outcomes. For him sector progress is not a talking point but engineering: each standard refined and each delivery made bankable.

Committed to anchoring innovation in strong corporate governance, Dr Gbadewole builds every decision on tested frameworks and formal training. His academic record is deliberate rather than ornamental. After a Bachelor's degree from the University of Ilorin he pursued an MBA in Finance at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology LAUTECH, then qualified as a chartered banker. That technical base is reinforced by a Fellowship with the Institute of Public Management and Politics in Accra Ghana, giving him perspective on how policy and capital intersect across West Africa.

That blend of scholarship and practice translates directly into how he builds. Colleagues describe his energy as focused rather than reactive, with a habit of stress-testing assumptions before capital is deployed. He reads financial models with a banker's eye and governance structures with a public policy lens, then executes with the speed of an entrepreneur. The result is a profile that carries weight in boardrooms and on sites: a voice that moves conversations from ambition to delivery because the credentials backing it are verifiable.

In line with Gbadewole's commitment to excellence, each project at Crown Allied Global Realty Limited begins at the intersection of design, engineering and software, so infrastructure anticipates how people actually live rather than reacting to it later. Architects shape form while engineers resolve structure, and IT specialists weave in systems that learn, adapt and protect. Because those teams work from a single brief instead of fragmented drawings, homes arrive with security protocols, energy management and responsive controls already calibrated. That integration cuts delivery time and reduces failures, which means the housing feels intuitive on day one and stays serviceable years on.

That discipline made scale possible. With offices across Abuja, Lagos, Ogun, Osun and Oyo, plus outposts in Accra, Kigali and Texas, the company now exports a model instead of a fixed template. Local codes, climate and materials change from site to site, yet the underlying system logic remains constant. Dr Gbadewole describes this as portability of standards: the remote-access backbone that lets an owner in Lagos monitor a unit in Abuja also supports a client in Kigali tracking construction abroad. In that way Crown Allied extends beyond geography, and the market has come to treat its method for making buildings responsive as currency.

Crown Allied's design choices carry the weight of its CEO's own story. Dr. Gbadewole traces his focus on accessible ownership to years in a cramped apartment and the scramble for housing during NYSC. That strain shaped his brief to architects and engineers: deliver units young buyers can actually move into, not just tour. "The joy of seeing people become landlords, especially young people, is what drives me," he said. You see that motive in the product spread. By sitting estates on fiber routes, rail lines and airport corridors, the company puts first-time buyers within reach of work and transit without forcing a choice between cost and location. The outcome is a set of projects that treat ownership as present, not postponed.

Its portfolio now spans tens of estates and developments, each tuned to a distinct income band without diluting the core system. In Abuja, the base for Crown Allied's head office, the company has clustered projects across Guzape, Asokoro Extension, Asokoro, Airport Road, Idu, Karu, and Kabusa. That belt includes Billionaire Classic City in Guzape with 7-bedroom mansions and 5-bedroom duplexes, Crown Hills City in Asokoro, Crown Aviation City in Kyami District, and Solar City in Apo. Mid-tier options sit alongside them: Crown Smart City in Karsana with its Phase 3 and Annex, Crown Metro City by the Idu Train Station, and Crown Victory Court in Wassa. "We have our housing estates in different locations in Abuja: Guzape, Kasana, Asokoro Extension, Asokoro, Airport Road, Idu, Karu, Kabusa," Dr. Gbadewole noted. "These locations have different providers of fiber optics which feeds directly into the remote-access backbone residents use to monitor power, security and water from anywhere."

Lagos carries the scale. Crown Sunrise City in Ikorodu covers 400 acres with about 2,800 housing units, while Crown Legacy City in Epe faces the newly-approved Lekki International Airport and runs in two phases. Crown Waterfront Estate in Ibeku-Lekki adds another corridor. Internet delivery there is handled by multiple providers, a deliberate choice to avoid single-point failure. "In Lagos we have different companies that provide internet for our estates in Lagos. We have estates in Ikorodu, about 2,800 housing units that is Crown Sunrise City, in Epe; Crown Legacy City Phase 1 facing the ongoing New Lekki International Airport and Phase 2," Amos said. The spread is deliberate. "We have different products which reach different classes of people," he explained.

Beyond Lagos and Abuja, Crown Allied is anchoring new urban nodes. In Ibadan, the 600-unit Sabo Ultra-Modern Shopping Center is rising alongside ELITE City Terraces and Apartments in Agodi GRA. Osun State holds Crown Heritage City in Abeere, Osogbo, while Ogun State has active work in Mowe and Ofada. The footprint now crosses borders to Accra, Ghana and Kigali, Rwanda, replicating the same system logic adapted to local codes, climate and materials. "We have projects in the capital of Oyo State Nigeria, Ibadan," he added, pointing to how the model exports portability of standards rather than a rigid template. From Guzape to Kigali, the result is the same: security protocols, energy management and responsive controls set before handover, not after.

Crown Luxury Properties is pushing past the baseline of shelter, its charismatic professional emphasized, because buyers measure value in how homes perform over time. "We prioritize quality and affordability, ensuring that our developments meet the diverse needs of our clients," he said. That stance translated into a flexible payment structure designed to match real income cycles rather than force artificial deadlines. By aligning installments with cash flow, the company lowers the entry threshold for first-time owners while keeping material and finish standards intact, and the approach reframes ownership from a distant goal to an immediate option.

Dr. Gbadewole then shifted attention to what sustains scale once projects multiply. Artificial Intelligence, he revealed, has become a central focus aimed at streamlining operations and sharpening efficiency across design, procurement and site management. "We are seriously walking towards AI to ease our operations as a company," he noted, underscoring Crown Luxury Properties' commitment to innovation and excellence. The logic is straightforward: when scheduling conflicts, supply gaps and client queries run through predictive systems, risks surface early and corrections happen before they compound. In that sense AI functions as an operating layer, not a showcase feature, and it tightens the link between blueprint and delivery.

On results, Crown Allied Global Realty's Founder spoke plainly about momentum and responsibility. "Crown Allied Global Reality Limited is extremely proud to be the industry leader in development and construction and we remain committed to delivering our highly anticipated upcoming projects within the stated timeframes," he said. He credited year-on-year profit to shareholder diligence, management discipline and a skilled workforce, while pointing to digital innovation and future-forward concepts as the engine for continued growth. Beyond company performance, Dr. Gbadewole Amos Kayode argued that public policy could widen impact. He advocated legislation that attracts foreign direct investment, boosts economic buoyancy and revenue, and reduces the housing deficit. To achieve that, he suggested government extend social amenities into suburban areas, make affordable land available to developers, and empower the Federal Mortgage Bank so mortgage access reaches more Nigerians.



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# DR THOMAS OGUNGBANGBE: The Aviation Fuel Reformer

## Advancing Nigeria's Energy Security with Integrity

CITA ENERGIES
...doing it better

Leadership in the global energy sector requires more than just technical expertise; it demands a fusion of scientific precision, strategic foresight, and unyielding integrity. Dr. Thomas O. Ogungbangbe, the Chairman of CITA Energies, embodies this rare combination. As the pioneer Chairman of the Aviation Fuel Marketers Association of Nigeria (AFMAN) and a co-founder of the Joint Users Hydrant Installation (JUHI-2), he has spent decades reshaping the aviation fuel landscape in Nigeria and across the West African sub-region. His career is a testament to the idea that deep academic roots, when paired with high-level corporate experience, can create a visionary leader capable of navigating the most complex industrial terrains.

The journey into the heights of the energy industry for Dr. Ogungbangbe began with a rigorous academic foundation. A scientist by training, he earned his Bachelor and Master's degrees from the University of Ilorin before advancing his studies with a Master of Philosophy and a Doctoral degree in Marketing Strategy from Babcock University in Nigeria. His doctoral research was particularly insightful, focusing on the business performance and marketing strategies of domestic airlines in Nigeria. This academic focus gave him a unique, data-driven perspective on the very industry he would eventually serve as a primary energy provider, allowing him to understand the nuances of fuel consumption from the customer's point of view.

Beyond his formal degrees, Dr. Ogungbangbe has consistently sought out the world's most prestigious professional development opportunities to refine his leadership and technical skills. He is an IATA-certified Jet fuel airfield inspector and has participated in specialised international trainings on Jet fuel hosted by the Energy Institute, ASTM, API, and IATA. His commitment to global best practices led him to the University of Guadalajara in Mexico and the Imperial College of Technology in the UK, where he graduated as a Fellow of LEAD-Leadership on Environment and Development. Furthermore, his status as an alumnus of the Harvard Business School and the Said Business School at the University of Oxford places him among a global elite of corporate strategists who bring a world-class standard of governance to the Nigerian downstream sector.

Before he founded CITA Energies, Dr. Ogungbangbe built an impressive resume within some of the most prominent oil and gas entities in the world. He served as the General Manager of Aviation Business at MRS Oil & Gas and was later seconded to Chevron Oil Nigeria Plc as the Aviation Marketing Manager for West Africa. His ascent continued as he became the Group Aviation Manager for West and Central Africa, based in Lagos, where he acted as the central focal point for all aviation fuel operations for the Corlay/MRS Group. His role as a co-founder of SO Aviation, formerly known as Aviation Air & Land Services, saw him serving as both Operations and Marketing Director at different stages of the company's development. Even earlier in his career, he made significant contributions at National Oil & Chemical Marketing Plc—now Conoil Plc—where he served as the Aviation Commercial Manager, eventually rising to the roles of Aviation Operations Manager and Divisional Business Manager for Conoil Aviation Service.

Throughout these diverse roles, Dr. Ogungbangbe became known as a reformer who prioritised transparency and efficiency. He was a leading advocate for critical industry reforms, specifically championing issues such as Discharge by Meter and Loss Prevention. These initiatives were aimed at bringing a higher level of accountability to the fuel supply chain, ensuring that stakeholders received exactly what they paid for and that waste was minimised. This focus on integrity and operational excellence would later become the bedrock upon which he built CITA Energies.

The inspiration behind his transition from a corporate executive to an entrepreneurial leader was rooted in a desire to impact national development. Dr. Ogungbangbe has always been fascinated by industries that sit at the heart of economic growth. He believes that every business, every community, and every industry depends on energy in one form or another, making the sector vital to Nigeria's future. For him, building CITA Energies was not just about establishing a successful business; it was about creating a vehicle that could provide reliable energy solutions to power the nation's progress.

Looking back on his career, he considers the growth of CITA Energies from a conceptual idea into a nationwide powerhouse as his most significant professional achievement. The company has earned a sterling reputation for reliability and professionalism, a feat he attributes to a commitment to the long game. He maintains that sustainable success takes time and that there are no shortcuts to building an enduring institution. This perspective has fostered a corporate culture at CITA Energies defined by consistency, discipline, and the resilience to stay focused even during the most difficult economic periods.

The strategic vision for CITA Energies over the next five to ten years is one of aggressive but calculated expansion. Dr. Ogungbangbe intends to strengthen the company's position within the downstream sector while expanding its operational footprint across the energy value chain. This includes significant investments in infrastructure and a deep embrace of innovation to stay ahead of a rapidly changing market. He recognises that the energy landscape is dynamic and that companies failing to evolve risk being left behind. To mitigate this, CITA is investing heavily in its people, technology, and systems to ensure it remains agile and responsive to shifting market demands.

Integrity is the non-negotiable core value that guides every operation at CITA Energies. Dr. Ogungbangbe believes in doing business the right way, keeping commitments to partners, and building lasting trust with customers and regulators. This ethical framework is supported by a commitment to excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement. His leadership style reflects these values, as he emphasises that no strategy can succeed without a high-quality team to execute it. He is a strong proponent of empowering his employees, listening to diverse perspectives, and leading by example.

Addressing the broader challenges of the energy industry, Dr. Ogungbangbe points to energy security as a paramount concern both locally and globally. He identifies infrastructure gaps, financing constraints, and policy uncertainty as the primary hurdles that must be overcome. In his view, these systemic issues can only be solved through robust collaboration between the government and the private sector. He argues that the private sector must be the major driver of growth, bringing the necessary investment and innovation, while the government focuses on creating an enabling environment through consistent and long-term policies.

Sustainability has also become a central pillar of his leadership philosophy. Dr. Ogungbangbe rejects the notion that business growth and environmental responsibility are competing objectives. He asserts that in the modern world, a successful business must achieve both to remain relevant. At CITA Energies, this translates into a commitment to operating responsibly, maintaining high safety standards, and ensuring that the company's growth contributes positively to the communities it serves. This balanced approach ensures that CITA remains a responsible corporate citizen while pursuing its ambitious expansion goals.

For the next generation of professionals and entrepreneurs, Dr. Ogungbangbe offers advice grounded in his own experiences of building a career from the ground up. He emphasises the importance of continuous learning, noting that in an evolving industry, knowledge is one of a professional's greatest assets. He also stresses that while technical skills may open doors, it is character and integrity that determine how far a leader can go. Finally, he encourages aspiring entrepreneurs to be patient and resilient, reminding them that success rarely happens overnight and that every setback is a lesson that moves them closer to their ultimate goals.

The legacy Dr. Thomas Ogungbangbe is building at CITA Energies is one of institutional strength and national service. By combining his background as a scientist with the strategic insights gained from the world's leading business schools, he has created a model for leadership in the Nigerian energy sector. As CITA Energies continues to expand its reach and invest in the infrastructure necessary for Nigeria's energy security, his vision remains clear: to build a reliable, innovative, and integrity-driven organisation that powers the future of West African commerce. Through his work with AFMAN, JUHI-2, and CITA, he continues to be a pivotal figure in ensuring that the energy sector remains a robust engine for national prosperity.



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# Building Bridges, Empowering People, Attracting Investment: The RosaLyn Dressman Story

IN today's interconnected world, transformative leadership is measured not only by personal success, but by the ability to connect people, ideas, institutions, and opportunities across borders. Few Nigerians exemplify this more than Dr. RosaLyn Dressman, a distinguished diaspora development strategist, institution builder, and public sector leader whose career has been dedicated to empowering people, strengthening systems, and fostering sustainable development between Europe and Nigeria.




Over the past decade and beyond, Dr. Dressman has emerged as one of the leading voices in diaspora engagement, migration management, human capital development, and economic transformation. Her journey reflects a deep commitment to creating opportunities, mobilising talent, and leveraging international experience to drive meaningful impact both in Europe and Nigeria.

Armed with multiple academic and professional qualifications across diverse disciplines, Dr. Dressman has successfully navigated complex environments in public administration, social development, workforce integration, international cooperation, and institutional leadership. Her multidisciplinary expertise has positioned her as a respected professional capable of bridging policy, people, and progress.

A significant chapter of her professional journey was shaped in Germany, where she worked with Scienomics and gained extensive experience in workforce integration, labour market participation, skills development, and social innovation. Her work contributed to initiatives aimed at improving employability, promoting inclusion, and creating pathways for individuals to participate meaningfully in economic life.

Her passion for people-centred development found further expression through her work in Migration Management for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Germany's largest federal state. In this role, she contributed to programmes that facilitated the successful settlement and integration of more than 350 migrant families. She also championed initiatives that connected migrant youths with employment opportunities while supporting educational adaptations that accommodated individuals entering the labour market later in life.

These interventions not only improved economic participation but also strengthened social cohesion and integration within diverse communities. Through her work, Dr. Dressman demonstrated that migration, when effectively managed, can become a powerful tool for development, inclusion, and economic growth. Her commitment to empowering Africans abroad led her to become President of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation Germany (NIDO Germany), one of the most influential diaspora platforms connecting Nigerian professionals overseas with development opportunities at home. Under her leadership, NIDO Germany strengthened engagement between the Nigerian diaspora and institutions across Nigeria, promoting knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, investment promotion, professional networking, and skills development.

Dr. Dressman consistently advocated for a broader understanding of diaspora contributions, one that extends beyond remittances to include intellectual capital, innovation, technology transfer, and institutional support. Her leadership helped position diaspora expertise as a strategic asset for national development.

Beyond NIDO Germany, she further expanded her impact through AfricanTide, where she served as President for over a decade. Under her leadership, the organisation became a platform for integration, professional development, mentorship, and workforce inclusion. Through strategic partnerships and targeted programmes, AfricanTide successfully facilitated employment opportunities for more than 300 African professionals across various sectors in Germany and also in Nigeria.

For many beneficiaries, these opportunities represented far more than jobs. They provided pathways to economic stability, professional advancement, and social integration. Through AfricanTide, Dr. Dressman demonstrated her belief that empowering people through employment and skills development remains one of the most sustainable pathways to social and economic transformation.

Her outstanding contributions have earned her multiple recognitions and awards, celebrating her dedication to leadership, community development, diaspora engagement, and social impact. Yet, despite these achievements, she remains focused on creating value through service, collaboration, and institution building.

*The ongoing development of the Bayelsa Electricity Regulatory Framework, License and Market Entry Regulations, and Consumer Protection Framework reflects the state's commitment to creating a transparent, investor-friendly, and commercially viable electricity ecosystem. According to its visionary Director General, Bayelsa presents unique opportunities for investors seeking to participate in Nigeria's evolving subnational electricity market. "Bayelsa is open for business. We are building a modern electricity market founded on regulatory certainty, investor confidence, consumer protection, and sustainable growth. We invite local and international investors, energy developers, renewable energy companies, infrastructure financiers, and technology providers to partner with us in unlocking the enormous opportunities within Bayelsa State's electricity sector."*

Recognising her commitment to development and economic diplomacy, the Bayelsa State Government appointed her as Investment Ambassador and subsequently as Diaspora Focal Officer. In these capacities, she worked to strengthen the relationship between Bayelsa State and its diaspora community, facilitating partnerships, promoting investment opportunities, and encouraging greater diaspora participation in the state's development agenda.

Today, Dr. Dressman brings her wealth of international experience to one of the most strategic sectors of Nigeria's economy as Director General of the Bayelsa State Electricity Regulatory Agency (BYERA). Her appointment comes at a pivotal moment in Nigeria's electricity sector reforms, where state governments are increasingly assuming responsibility for developing efficient, sustainable, and investor-friendly electricity markets. Under her leadership, BYERA has made significant progress in laying the regulatory foundation for the growth and transformation of Bayelsa State's electricity sector.

Among the agency's landmark achievements are the development of the Bayelsa Electricity Regulatory Framework, the License and Market Entry Regulations, and the ongoing Consumer Protection Framework. These critical instruments are designed to provide regulatory certainty, encourage private sector participation, protect consumers, and establish a transparent electricity market capable of attracting long-term investment.

For this resourceful professional, these reforms are not merely regulatory exercises; they are essential building blocks for economic growth, industrialisation, job creation, and improved quality of life for citizens. She believes that access to reliable electricity is one of the most powerful enablers of economic transformation. Without energy, businesses struggle to grow, industries cannot thrive, and communities are unable to reach their full potential.

### Positioning Bayelsa as Nigeria's Emerging Electricity Investment Frontier

For Dr. RosaLyn Dressman, the future of Bayelsa's economy is closely linked to the development of a vibrant and competitive electricity market capable of attracting private capital, driving industrialisation, and improving the quality of life for citizens.

As Director General of BYERA, she is leading efforts to establish the regulatory foundations required for sustainable investment in electricity generation, distribution, renewable energy, mini-grids, embedded generation, energy services, and innovative power solutions.

The ongoing development of the Bayelsa Electricity Regulatory Framework, License and Market Entry Regulations, and Consumer Protection Framework reflects the state's commitment to creating a transparent, investor-friendly, and commercially viable electricity ecosystem. According to its visionary Director General, Bayelsa presents unique opportunities for investors seeking to participate in Nigeria's evolving subnational electricity market. "Bayelsa is open for business. We are building a modern electricity market founded on regulatory certainty, investor confidence, consumer protection, and sustainable growth. We invite local and international investors, energy developers, renewable energy companies, infrastructure financiers, and technology providers to partner with us in unlocking the enormous opportunities within Bayelsa State's electricity sector."

With abundant natural resources, significant gas reserves, increasing energy demand, and strong government commitment to power sector reform, Bayelsa is strategically positioned to become a leading hub for electricity investment and energy innovation in Nigeria.

Focused and hardworking, she believes that the state's energy transition agenda presents opportunities not only for large-scale investors, but also for renewable energy developers, mini-grid operators, technology innovators, equipment manufacturers, and development finance institutions seeking impactful investments in Africa's energy future.

"Our vision is simple: reliable electricity for every community, increased energy access for businesses, enhanced economic productivity, and a thriving electricity market that attracts investment while delivering value to consumers."

As Nigeria's electricity sector enters a new era of decentralised regulation and state-led market development, Bayelsa is positioning itself to become a model for sustainable electricity sector growth, and Dr. RosaLyn Dressman is at the forefront of that transformation. This vision reflects the defining thread that has run throughout her career: building bridges between continents, institutions, communities, and opportunities. From supporting migrant families in Germany to empowering African professionals, mobilising diaspora expertise, promoting investment, and advancing energy sector reforms in Nigeria, she has consistently demonstrated that sustainable development is achieved when people are empowered, institutions are strengthened, and opportunities are shared.

At a time when Nigeria seeks innovative solutions to complex economic challenges, Dr. RosaLyn Dressman stands as a compelling example of visionary leadership, one that combines global experience with local commitment, strategic thinking with practical action, and personal achievement with public service. Her professional progression is a story of impact: building bridges, empowering people, attracting investment, and contributing to a more prosperous future for Nigeria, Africa, and the global communities she continues to serve.

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# OLADAYO WILLIAMS: Engineering Capital, Law and Policy into Bankable Gas Infrastructure Outcomes at Tetracore

IN Nigeria's evolving energy landscape, the ability to translate commercial ambition into functioning infrastructure has become a defining measure of leadership. Oladayo Williams, a commercial lawyer and energy strategist, has spent fifteen years operating at that intersection of law, capital and execution. His work across oil, gas and power transactions reflects a practical view of Africa's gas transition: one measured not only by policy declarations, but by bankable contracts, installed assets and infrastructure that delivers value.

As Managing Director of subsidiaries within Tetracore Energy Group, Williams oversees capital-intensive projects valued at more than $150 million. These include CNG daughter stations serving industries beyond pipeline reach, Autogas projects supporting transport fleets, mini-LNG hubs designed to extend gas access, and embedded gas-to-power solutions for industrial clusters. Across these deployments, his role combines commercial structuring, regulatory navigation and execution oversight, widening access to reliable energy in Nigeria's manufacturing corridors.

Williams's commercial record is marked by disciplined transaction execution. He has led due diligence on multimillion-dollar offshore gas-gathering systems aimed at unlocking stranded reserves and has closed a $10+ million CNG mother-daughter network within seven months, from concept to commissioning. He has also structured $15+ million solar-hybrid independent power projects through blended-finance models involving development finance institutions and private equity. In each case, the emphasis has been on terms that meet lender requirements while preserving the sponsor's capacity to deliver.

Williams applies the same discipline to Tetracore's contract management. He places strong legal standards at the center of each project, using key agreements to protect investor capital and support reliable delivery on site. He also leads his team in planning supplier selection, onboard contractors, track project milestones and coordinate partners from early design through full operation. This approach has supported Tetracore's growth as the leading Nigerian gas trading company and a notable industry leader in the midstream-downstream gas distribution sector with completed projects across Lagos state, Ogun State, Benin and Ghana, as well as Autogas Logistics and mobile refueling units serving industrial fleets in West and Southern Nigeria, including port operations and Dangote Cement's Ibese operations.

The group's project pipeline further illustrates the connection between transaction design and infrastructure delivery. Phase I of the 100MW Atakobo Independent Power Project has advanced from concept to 20MW undersigned power purchase agreements, supported by 80 kilometers of 33kV lines evacuating power along the Ijebu Ode–Ijebu-Itele corridor. A $400 million Tier III data centre at Atakobo Energy Park, developed with Huawei and Insprive Technologies, is powered by an on-site gas-fired plant, reducing exposure to grid volatility and strengthening the case for embedded generation for anchor commercial tenants. Future developments include a 5,000-barrels-per-day gas-to-liquids plant and a 1,200-tones-per-day ammonia-urea fertilizer complex in Koko, Delta State, both intended to convert domestic gas into higher-value fuels and fertilizer rather than export raw molecules. Licenses secured at the Investment Summit 2026 to gene-extendsnd distribute electricity in Nasarawa State extend this infrastructure footprint. Today, Tetracore manages throughput exceeding 120MMscfd across piped natural gas, CNG, power generation and industrial infrastructure in Nigeria and Ghana.

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Williams has played a central role in shaping the commercial and execution frameworks that support this scale. His influence also extends into policy and sector discourse. As Deputy Chairman of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Power Sector Group, Williams contributes to discussions on tariff reform, grid decentralization and gas-to-power frameworks. At platforms such as Africa Energy Week, the Gas Investment Forum and the Nigeria Energy Conference, he has argued for gas as a credible transition fuel and for clearer standards that reduce friction among investors, offtakers and regulators. Through his "Deal-Flow" column in Energy Frontier Magazine, he examines transaction structures and identifies bottlenecks that can delay project delivery, offering practical insight for sector participants.

Williams carries that same delivery instinct into his entrepreneurial work. As co-founder of Munitel Logistics, he has worked to close the gas logistics gap in Nigeria—accelerating adoption and utilization at scale. Munitel Foods, his most recent venture, which he also co-founded, has a wider aim: the energy-food-water nexus that sits at the heart of Africa's long-term resource security. Anchored to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), it is a structural bet on integrated sustainability—the recognition that no African economy stabilizes its energy without also securing its food and water systems. For Williams, this is not diversification. It is the same problem, approached from a different entry point.

Williams's work is grounded in training across law, commerce and energy management. His legal background and master's degree in Oil and Gas Energy Management are complemented by executive coursework in energy finance and project management. His membership of the Association of International Energy Negotiators is reflected in an approach to risk allocation that seeks to protect sponsor control while maintaining lender confidence.

What distinguishes Oladayo Williams is the consistency with which he links legal structure to commercial consequence. In a sector where ambition is often constrained by execution gaps, his work demonstrates the value of disciplined contracting, credible financing and operational follow-through. By aligning capital, policy and delivery, he has helped convert strategic intent into infrastructure that supports domestic value retention and industrial productivity. For Nigeria's gas sector, that emphasis on execution may be as important as the assets themselves.




Quote this:
" Williams's commercial record is marked by disciplined transaction execution. He has led due diligence on multimillion-dollar offshore gas-gathering systems aimed at unlocking stranded reserves and has closed a $10+ million CNG mother-daughter network within seven months, from concept to commissioning. He has also structured $15+ million solar-hybrid independent power projects through blended-finance models involving development finance institutions and private equity. In each case, the emphasis has been on terms that meet lender requirements while preserving the sponsor's capacity to deliver."



The Guardian Conscience, Nurtured by Truth
SPECIAL FOCUS ON VISION-DRIVEN PROFESSIONALS ADDING-VALUE TO NIGERIA'S ECONOMY

# AMB. SAHEED AKANMU: The Strategist Redefining Industry Standards at Ashmark Global Through Integrity, Excellence and Innovation

**AMB. Saheed Olatokunbo Akanmu** does not simply build structures, he engineers possibilities. In boardrooms and on construction sites alike, his presence signals a shift from blueprint to bold execution. As a Nigerian entrepreneur, architect and infrastructure specialist, he is carving a reputation for translating technical precision into projects that reshape skylines and strengthen the backbone of industry across the country. Passionate about creating value with competence and integrity, he belongs to that rare cadre of visionary professionals in Nigeria today who speak the language of design as fluently as they speak the language of development.

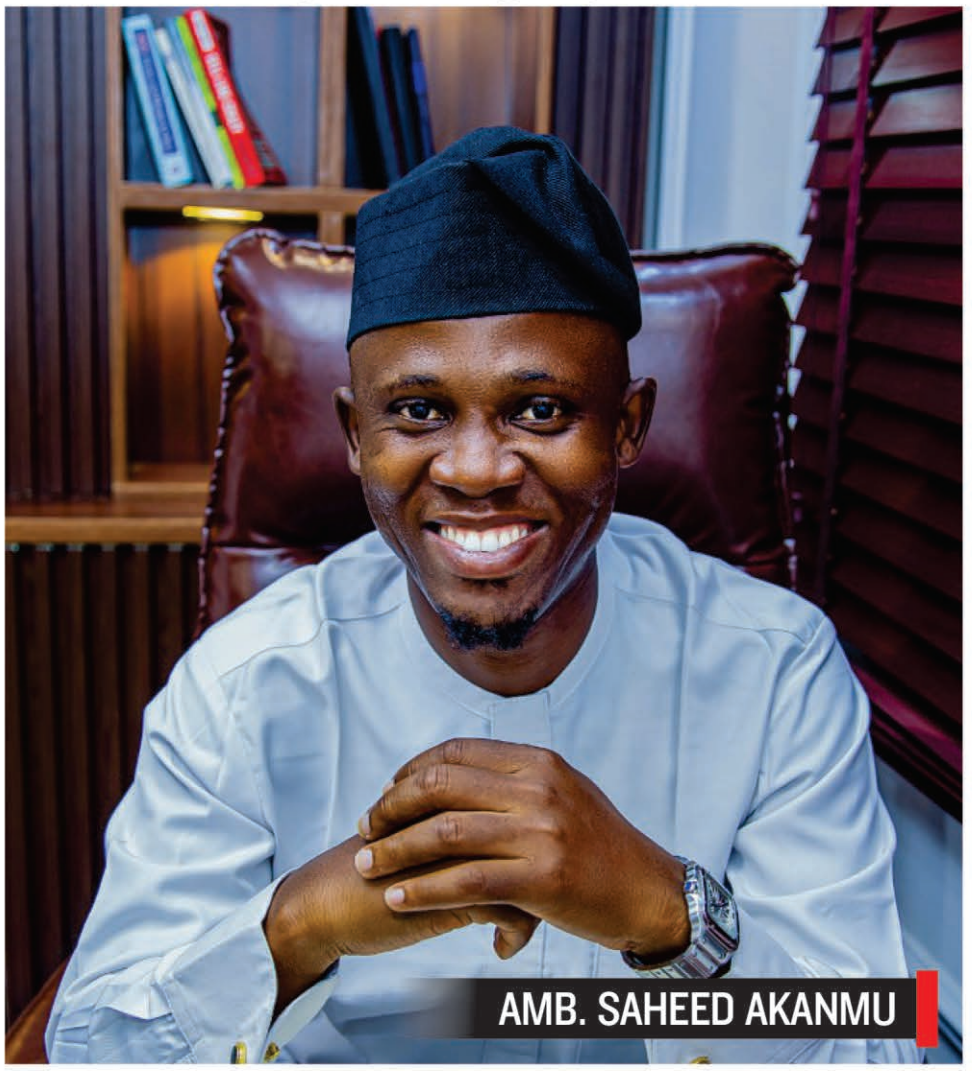
Ashmark Global Resources Limited emerged under Akanmu's founding vision and now operates as a multidisciplinary force led by him as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. The company now operates at the intersection of civil engineering, architectural design, project management and energy infrastructure, delivering works that meet rigorous safety benchmarks and exacting standards. Under his direction, Ashmark has moved beyond routine contracting to become a dependable partner for high-impact industrial and public works, earning recognition for reliability where timelines are tight and specifications unforgiving.

What distinguishes Akanmu is the synthesis of technical mastery and strategic foresight. His background in architecture informs a design sensibility that prioritises function and durability, while his enterprise acumen ensures each project aligns with broader economic objectives. By bridging indigenous capacity with corporate discipline, he represents a new generation of Nigerian professionals who view infrastructure not merely as construction, but as the scaffolding for enterprise growth and national progress.

Academically grounded and technically proficient, Akanmu holds a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology and a Master's Degree in Architectural Science from Caleb University. That dual foundation shows in the scale of work he tackles. His expertise is visible across several landmark national infrastructure projects: the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, Sokoto-Badagry Super Highway, and the Sagamu-Papalanto-Ilaro reinforced concrete road. Beyond highways and concrete, he is forging a footprint in energy systems, with developments spanning CNG, LNG, PMS, and AGO value chains. Each project reinforces the same thesis that infrastructure should not only connect places, it should upgrade the economy that moves through them. His deepening involvement in energy and industrial builds reflects a clear bias toward cleaner, more efficient systems that strengthen Nigeria's physical and economic backbone for the long term.

The scope of his work extends well beyond site and structure. Akanmu understands that delivery means nothing without access, and access means nothing without systems. That logic shaped BuildingMarts-NG, a procurement platform that connects contractors and developers with quality construction materials and tools. He also co-founded Marc and Nita Limited, a business growth consultancy that equips organisations with insights designed to scale, not just survive. In both ventures, technical precision meets commercial discipline. Materials reach sites faster. Strategies translate into execution. The result is an ecosystem where construction, supply, and advisory reinforce one another instead of operating in silos.

Influence for the Ashmark Global Resources' CEO is not confined to boardrooms or building sites. For over three years he served as Editor-in-Chief of JustU Magazine, shaping conversations at the intersection of enterprise, design, and public interest. He also sits as Director at Waves Solutions, where his focus is enterprise scaling and operational transformation. Whether editing a story, auditing a process, or reviewing a blueprint, he applies the same standard: clarity, durability, impact. It is this fusion of technical depth, commercial foresight and editorial discipline that places him among an exceptional class of architects of national progress who are redefining how Nigeria builds, supplies and thinks about development.


AMB. SAHEED AKANMU

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In spite of numerous operational challenges, Ashmark Global Resources Limited has steadied its operations, scaled its capacity and is redefining what execution means in Nigeria's construction and engineering space. What began as a technically sound outfit is now a fast-growing company delivering civil engineering, infrastructure development, architectural design, building construction, interior finishing, real estate, building materials supply, and oil & gas infrastructure solutions. The breadth is deliberate. Each service line feeds the next. Roads require drainage. Buildings require materials. Energy projects require planning discipline. By integrating design, construction, procurement, and advisory under one roof, Ashmark Global shortens delivery cycles and tightens quality control for government agencies, corporate organisations, and private clients nationwide.

That integrated model is translating into scale. Ashmark Global's portfolio now spans road and drainage infrastructure, energy infrastructure development, bitumen production and supply, architectural and structural design, building construction and development, interior decoration and finishing works, project planning and management, building materials procurement and supply, real estate development and advisory, and site survey with technical consultancy. Complexity does not stall the company. It sharpens it. Its growing reputation as a trusted subcontractor on large-scale developments comes from a record of partnering with multinational firms and government agencies without losing sight of timelines, specifications, or budgets. The work is technical, but the outcome is economic: projects that hold up, systems that function and communities that benefit long after handover.

The engine behind that momentum is Akanmu's professional competence and integrity. His training in architecture and architectural science provides the rigour that guides every blueprint and every bill of quantities. His experience across national infrastructure and energy value chains supplies the foresight needed to anticipate risk before it becomes cost. More than technical skill, it is the consistency of his standards that defines Ashmark Global's culture. Clarity in planning. Durability in materials. Impact in delivery. Those principles move through the company from site survey to finishing works, from procurement to project management. As Ashmark Global expands, it carries the same bias toward precision and accountability — the same qualities that place him among an exceptional class of professionals of national progress.

When asked what has fuelled Ashmark Global's rise, Saheed Akanmu pointed directly to the people behind the projects. "The Ashmark Global Resources' corporate vision is being driven by a group of experienced professionals, brilliant thinkers and savvy strategists that work round the clock to unleash the best out of every projects," he said. That team, he explained, operates from a single premise: delivery is not a chance outcome but the product of deliberate systems. From site survey to handover, each phase is mapped against quality benchmarks, risk controls and client objectives so execution stays predictable even when conditions shift.

He tied that discipline to a purpose that has guided the company since inception. "At Ashmark Global, we are driven by a clear purpose to solve complex construction and facility challenges through quality, innovation and professionalism. Since our establishment, we have remained committed to delivering projects safely, on time and within budget, while maintaining the highest standards of excellence," Akanmu continued. "Driven by integrity, professionalism and a commitment to excellence, we focus on delivering projects that meet industry standards, adhere to timelines, and exceed client expectations. Our approach combines technical expertise with innovative construction methods to create durable, functional and visually appealing structures." It is this alignment of values and method that has allowed the company to build lasting relationships while turning complex briefs into finished assets that hold up long after the final inspection.

Focused on building his professional reputation on rigour and accountability, his leadership and industry impact have earned him significant national and international recognition. In 2025, he was named among the Top 100 CEOs in Nigeria by The Guardian, an honour reserved for business leaders demonstrating exceptional vision and measurable impact. The listing cited Ashmark Global's consistent delivery on complex infrastructure and its capacity to coordinate design, procurement and execution under one roof without diluting standards. That same year, he received the Golden Role Model Award from the Nigerian Youth Advocacy for Good Governance Initiative, which highlighted his influence in leadership, entrepreneurship, and youth development beyond the construction yard.

Further affirming his growing relevance, Amb. Saheed Akanmu was honoured as a TIME 100 Change and Impact Maker class of 2026 by 40-Under-40 Nigeria, a distinction celebrating individuals shaping the future through innovation, leadership and societal impact. The recognition pointed to how Ashmark Global's integrated model shortens delivery cycles for public and private clients while embedding technical consultancy into every project phase. He is also a recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters and an Associate Fellow of the British American Institute, awards that acknowledge his contributions to construction practice, entrepreneurship and national development.

Beyond boardrooms and project sites, he channels that credibility into advocacy. He serves as a Youth Advocacy Ambassador, championing skills development and opportunity creation for young Nigerians. That commitment earned him an Excellence Award from the National Association of Northern Nigerian Students as an Icon of Societal Development.

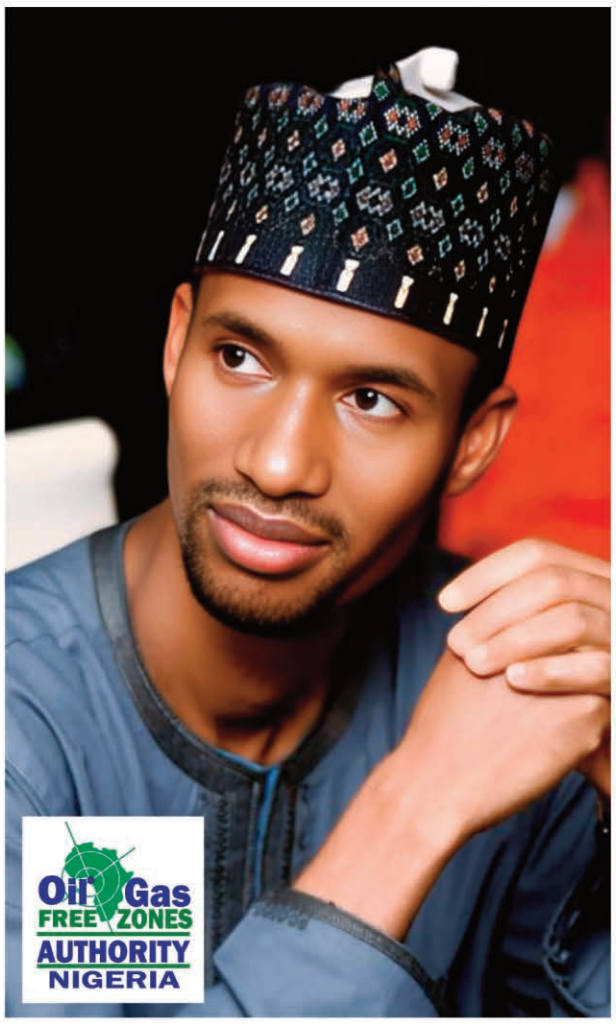
For Akanmu, lasting value is the metric that matters most. A longstanding member of Rotary International, his commitment to service took root during his university years as International Service Director, where he led initiatives such as the Against HIV and AIDS Programme. That early exposure to community health and mobilisation shaped how he approaches development today. He continues to back charitable causes, youth empowerment programmes, and community-driven projects across Nigeria, often linking Ashmark Global's technical capacity to initiatives that need planning rigour more than donations.

That ethic also anchors the philosophy guiding his work: integrity, innovation, excellence and service. Amb. Saheed Akanmu is intent on building sustainable systems that strengthen industries, empower people and contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's long-term development. Through infrastructure that endures, enterprises that widen access and human capital development that transfers skill, he is positioning Ashmark Global as both contractor and catalyst.

TheGuardian SPECIAL FOCUS ON VISION-DRIVEN PROFESSIONALS ADDING-VALUE TO NIGERIA'S ECONOMY

# Oil and Gas Free Zones Authority: (OGFZA): Powering Nigeria's Ascent as a Global Energy Powerhouse

UNDER the visionary leadership of Bamanga Usman Jada, the Oil and Gas Free Zones Authority (OGFZA) is undergoing a historic transformation, cementing Nigeria's position as a premier destination for global energy investments. Driven by a strategic 7-Point Roadmap—focusing on Efficiency and Trust, Infrastructure Excellence, Regulatory Modernization, Local Content Empowerment, Sustainability, Investor-focus, and Welfare—OGFZA is currently the engine room for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's ambition to build a $1 trillion economy.



Bamanga Usman Jada,
MD/CEO OIL AND GAS FREE ZONES AUTHORITY

Recognized as one of the Vision-Driven Professionals Adding-Value to Nigeria's Economy by the Guardian, he bears his mind on some of the remarkable achievement achieved so far under his leadership at OGFZA.

**A Track Record of Massive Investment and Job Creation**

Since its inception, OGFZA has successfully attracted over $34 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Nigeria. However, Jada emphasizes that the Authority's success is not just about attraction, but investment retention. By fostering a conducive environment for the "Ease of Doing Business," OGFZA ensures that once investors arrive, they expand. A prime example is the APM Terminals in Onne, which recently executed a $150 million facility upgrade.

This single investment is projected to add 125,000 jobs at full capacity while drastically reducing customs clearing times, thereby boosting Nigeria's export base and strengthening the Naira through increased forex earnings. To date, OGFZA has facilitated over 3 million direct and indirect jobs, significantly impacting national employment and skill development.

**Pioneering the Gas Revolution**

Recognizing that Nigeria is primarily a "gas country" with over 110 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves, OGFZA is at the forefront of the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) initiative. This shift is designed to provide cleaner energy and reduce energy costs for Nigerians by 60% to 70% compared to conventional fuels. Strategically, OGFZA has partnered with Portland Gas to establish a refueling and conversion center in Onne. By converting heavy trucks from "dirty fuel" to CNG, the Authority is making a massive dent in carbon emissions—one truck conversion is equivalent to removing 15 to 20 smaller vehicles' emissions—aligning Nigeria with global climate change mitigation efforts.

**Industrial Landmarks: Refining and Renewable Energy**

The Oil and Gas Free Zones host some of Africa's most ambitious industrial projects. The Dangote Refinery, an OGFZA licensee, has already transformed Nigeria from a fuel importer to a refining powerhouse with a current capacity of approximately 700,000 barrels per day. Plans are already underway to scale this to 1.4 million barrels per day, which would make it the largest refinery in the world. Furthermore, OGFZA is leading the transition to "Green Energy." Key milestones include:

**LPG Hub:** Groundbreaking of a 50,000 metric ton LPG warehouse in Onne to aggregate gas for import and export.

**Hydrogen Leadership:** A 20,000 metric ton green and blue hydrogen facility in the Liberty Oil and Gas Free Zone (Akwa Ibom) and a massive 420,000 metric ton project by APPL Ltd, which will turn Nigeria into Africa's hydrogen hub.

**Solar Power:** Licensees are already adopting renewable energy, such as a 5MW solar power facility recently developed within the zones.

**Excellence in Regulation and Local Content**

OGFZA's "Nigerian-first" approach is yielding remarkable results. Despite a zero expatriate quota policy, the Authority has overseen a shift where the top management of major multinationals are now Nigerians. Today, over 90% of the workforce in these zones are Nigerian citizens, and hi-tech services like "Christmas tree" manufacturing and pipe cutting, which were previously outsourced to countries like Brazil, are now performed locally in Onne. This excellence has not gone unnoticed. OGFZA was the first energy-specific free zone in the world, a model since copied by world powers including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa. It has been recognized by the Financial Times of the UK as the best energy-free zone in Africa and consistently scores 100% in Ease of Doing Business assessments by PEBEC.

**A Bold Vision for the Future**

Looking ahead, Bamanga Usman Jada is committed to inclusive and sustainable industrialization. By partnering with the Financial Intelligence Unit to ensure "responsible and responsive" investment, OGFZA is ensuring that every dollar entering the zones is legitimate and contributes to technology transfer and infrastructure development. As Nigeria continues to streamline its currency and improve critical infrastructure like the East-West Road, OGFZA stands ready to welcome the world. Under Jada's leadership, the Authority is not just regulating a sector; it is building a prosperous, self-sufficient, and technologically advanced Nigeria

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# Why Nigeria's Cassava Boom Needs Industrial Leap

By **Oska Seyi Aiyeleso**

NIGERIA does not have a cassava production problem. For decades, we have been the world's largest producer of cassava. Every year, millions of tonnes are harvested across the country. Yet despite this abundance, Nigeria continues to import many of the starches, sweeteners, flours and industrial derivatives that our manufacturers require. That contradiction should concern all of us.

As we mark World Cassava Day 2026, the most important question is no longer whether Nigeria can grow cassava at scale. We already can. The real question is whether we can convert our production advantage into industrial advantage.

Around the world, countries that transformed agricultural abundance into economic prosperity followed a similar path. They moved beyond producing raw commodities and built industries around them.

Thailand is one of the most frequently cited examples in the cassava sector. Its success was not driven simply by growing more cassava. It was driven by investments in processing, product development, export markets and industrial applications. The lesson is straightforward: production creates supply, but industrialization creates value.

Nigeria has been standing at a similar crossroad for several decades now.

For many years, cassava has played a vital role in food security and rural livelihoods. Millions of farmers depend on it. Communities across the country depend on it. Yet only a small proportion of the crop is converted into the higher value industrial products that drive manufacturing growth and generate stronger economic returns.

I say this from experience leading both a large-scale cassava farming operation and a cassava processing business. Our work is guided by a conviction championed by our Chairman, Niyi John Olajide, that agriculture can serve as a platform for industrial development when production, processing and market demand are connected within a single value chain.

That belief has shaped the investments Cavista Holdings has made through Agbeyewa Farms and Matna Foods.

Together, we are working to strengthen the link between farms, factories and markets because sustainable growth occurs when all three operate as part of the same system.

Building those connections is not easy.

Industrialisation requires reliable feedstock supply, modern processing infrastructure, efficient logistics, quality systems, access to finance and long-term investment. It requires coordination across stakeholders who often operate independently. Most importantly, it requires patience and disciplined execution.

The good news is that momentum is building. The challenge is that industrial demand is not expanding fast enough. In our daily operations, we receive requests from thousands of farmers seeking markets for their cassava.

***Aiyeleso is the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Agbeyewa Farms and Matna Foods Limited***

# Ellah Lakes Strengthens Integrated Agribusiness Platform With PKO Mill, Piggery Milestones

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

AN indigenous agribusiness company, Ellah Lakes Plc says it has acquired the first set of expellers and presses for its Palm Kernel Oil ("PKO") Mill, marking an important step in the development of its palm kernel processing capacity.

While announcing its key operational milestones across its processing and livestock businesses, the firm said the installation is expected to be completed by the end of Q3 2026, after which it plans to commence the production of Palm Kernel Oil and Palm Kernel Cake ("PKC").

According to a statement signed by its Head of Operations, Geraldine Ofoluwa, the milestone supports the Company's broader diversification strategy and further strengthens its integrated agro-industrial platform.

She added that the addition of PKO and PKC production will enable Ellah Lakes capture further value from its oil palm operations, expand its product base and deepen its participation across the agricultural value chain.

"In addition, Ellah Lakes has surpassed 1,000 pigs on its farm, reflecting continued progress in the scaling of its livestock operations. This achievement positions the Company as one of the leading piggery operators in Edo State and reinforces livestock as an important vertical within Ellah Lakes' integrated agribusiness model.

"The livestock business supports revenue diversification and near-to medium-term cash flow generation as the Company's plantation assets continue to mature. Ellah Lakes has also commenced the sale of gilts, creating an additional revenue line and supporting the development of a broader livestock value chain."

She stressed that as part of the next phase of growth, the firm plans to proceed with the installation of its abattoir and cold chain facility. "This is expected to support the Company's longer-term strategy of scaling its piggery operations, improving processing capacity and enhancing market access for livestock products."

# AATF Targets 1,000 Processors As Cassava Bread Initiative Expands

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

THE African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) has intensified efforts to deepen the adoption of cassava flour in bread production, with plans to train 1,000 cassava processors under its Cassava Mechanisation and Agro-Processing Project.

The initiative, implemented in partnership with master bakers and other stakeholders, is designed to support Nigeria's 20 per cent cassava flour substitution policy in bread making while boosting local value addition and reducing dependence on imported wheat.

Already, more than 500 processors have benefited from the training programme, which equips participants with the technical skills required to produce high-quality cassava flour and a variety of cassava-based baked products.

Speaking during a training session held in Fasola, Oyo State, AATF Project Coordinator, Mr. Samuel Ogunleye, said the organisation was committed to strengthening the capacity of processors to meet the growing demand for cassava flour in the baking industry.

According to him, processor training remains one of the critical components of the project, as it provides the foundation for a sustainable cassava value chain capable of supporting large-scale flour substitution.

"We have trained over 500 processors so far, and our target is to reach 1,000 before the end of the project. The objective is to ensure that processors are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to produce quality cassava flour that meets industry standards," Ogunleye said.

## Abiodun Hints On Revival Of Gas Project, Unveils Vision For Ogun Waterside

From **Azeez Olorunlomeru**, Abeokuta

OGUN State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, has signalled a major economic transformation for Ogun Waterside Local Council, announcing that the long-abandoned Olokola Liquefied Natural Gas (OKLNG) project is set for revival while reaffirming his administration's commitment to positioning the coastal axis as Nigeria's next industrial and maritime hub.

The governor made the announcement on Friday during the commissioning of the reconstructed Gao-Ibiade Road, describing the project as a strategic investment aimed at preparing the area for the anticipated surge in industrial, commercial and maritime activities.

Abiodun disclosed that the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) has informed the Ogun State government of its decision to revive the multi-billion-dollar OKLNG project, one of Nigeria's most ambitious gas development initiatives that has remained dormant for years.

He also reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the proposed Ogun Deep Sea Port, assuring residents that the project remains on course and that concrete steps are being taken to actualise what he described as one of Africa's most strategic maritime infrastructure projects.

The governor further revealed that the premium-grade crude oil discovered in the area has significantly strengthened Ogun Waterside's investment prospects, with plans for a refinery, deep seaport, naval base and dockyard expected to transform the area into a major oil, gas and logistics hub.

According to him, the reconstruction of the Gao-Ibiade Road forms part of the critical infrastructure required to support the expected economic expansion.

He noted that improved road connectivity would facilitate investments and open up the coastal communities.

"We are preparing for the imminent explosion of economic activities that is about to happen in this local council. Ogun Waterside is a jewel that must be fully tapped," the governor said.

Abiodun noted that although his administration has recorded significant infrastructural development across Ogun State over the past seven years.

# Minister Launches Screening Campaign To Check Nigeria's High Child Mortality Rate

By **Gbenga Salau**

THE Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate on Friday, in Lagos, launched the one million newborn screening campaign, themed 'Every Baby Deserves a Healthy Start in Life: Advancing Early Detection' to be executed by ISN Medical and its partner, Revvity.

Pate stated that the initiative is timely and firmly grounded in evidence and fully aligned with the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare's health sector reform agenda.

The minister, represented the Director, Child Health of the ministry, Dr. Amina Mohammed, said the data and outcomes generated through newborn screening will strengthen Nigeria's evidence base and directly support the implementation of the Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative (HSRII) by improving child survival indicators, strengthening health information systems and promoting data-driven decision-making.

"It also complements the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) by demonstrating the principles of one plan, one budget, one report, one conversation and one voice, ensuring that newborn screening becomes an integrated component of national maternal, newborn and child health programming rather than a stand-alone intervention.

"Furthermore, this initiative strongly supports the Maternal and Neonatal Mortality Reduction Innovation Initiative (MAMII) by enabling early identification and management of congenital conditions that contribute to neonatal morbidity and mortality, thereby improving newborn survival and long-term developmental outcomes.

"These alignments present a unique opportunity for partners to work collaboratively with the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to institutionalise newborn screening as an essential component of quality newborn care and accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage," he said.

Pate called on development partners, donors, professional associations, academic institutions and implementing partners to align their technical and financial support with the priorities of the ministry.

"By working through the ministry's coordination mechanisms through the Child Health Division, we can avoid fragmentation, maximise available resources and build a sustainable national newborn screening programme that reaches every child, everywhere.




Special Adviser to Ogun State Governor on Water Resources, Damilola Otubanjo (left); Ojotumoro of Abi Igi, Oba Segun Ogunye; Speaker of Ogun State House of Assembly, Oludaisi Elemide; Ogun State Governor, Prince dapo Abiodun; Deputy Governor of Ogun State, Engr. Noimot Salako-Oyedele; and Orimolusi of Ijebu Igbo, Oba Lawrence Jaiyeoba during the commissioning of Gao Junction to Ibi Ade road in Ogun Waterside Local Council ... on Friday.

## Arewa Group Accuses EFCC Of Promoting Prejudicing Narratives Against Ex-AGF, Malami

From **Tunde Omolehin**, Sokoto

THE Arewa Youth Progressive Alliance (AYPA) has accused the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of promoting a narrative capable of prejudicing the ongoing trial of former Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN).

In a statement by its spokesperson, Adam Umar Adam, the group expressed concern over what it described as an orchestrated campaign to influence public perception through selective reporting rather than evidence properly tested before the court.

According to AYPA, critical facts that emerged during the court proceedings have been deliberately ignored in favour of sensational reports aimed at portraying the former minister as guilty in the court of public opinion.

The group's reaction followed the testimony of the fifth prosecution witness, a compliance officer with Jaiz Bank, during which several media organisations reported alleged multi-million naira transactions linked to Alkausar Farms.

AYPA said the reports created the impression that fresh incriminating evidence had been established against Malami and his co-defendants while omitting key revelations made during cross-examination.

"Curiously, the same reports deliberately ignored the most important revelations that emerged during cross-examination," the group stated.

It noted that the witness admitted under cross-examination that she was not the account officer responsible for the account in question.

## ICPC Pushes Anti-corruption Education In Legal Curriculum Against Ethical Violation

From **Murtala Adewale**, Kano

THE Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has pushed for integration of anti-corruption education in legal curriculum to instill integrity and ethical standards in legal practices.

Besides, ICPC has vowed to strengthen the "catch them young" anti-Corruption campaign to reshape the minds of future lawyers in Nigeria. The commission warned against the misuse of legal knowledge to create confusion, frustrate justice or shield corrupt practices.

The Chairman of the Commission, Dr. Musa Aliyu, made the submission on Friday at the end of a two-day workshop on institutionalising anti-corruption education in legal studies in Nigeria.

The ICPC Chairman expressed concern over the growing public distrust in the legal profession, appealing to law teachers to join the commission's anti-graft war through legal education.

Aliyu observed that many individuals involved in corruption and financial crimes were once students who passed through Nigeria's educational institutions, stressing that the problem of corruption must be tackled long before it reaches the courtroom.

According to him, classrooms and faculties of law provide the most fertile ground for nurturing integrity among future judges, prosecutors and legal practitioners who will serve as custodians of justice.

"Corruption is rarely defeated in court after the damage has been done and public trust has been broken. Prevention through character formation and ethical education remains the most effective strategy," he said.

The ICPC Chairman noted that while a corrupt engineer may construct a weak bridge, a corrupt lawyer undermines the very mechanisms established to remedy injustice and protect society.

He stressed that legal curricula are not neutral instruments but powerful tools that transmit values, whether intentionally or otherwise.

He further explained that the anti-corruption agency's mandate extends beyond prosecution but includes prevention and public education, adding that no commission can manufacture integrity without the support of lecturers and educational institutions.

## MAN Seeks Renewable Energy Solutions To Cut Manufacturers' Power Costs

By **Moyosore Salami**

THE Director-General of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Segun Ajayi-Kadir, has called for increased adoption of renewable energy solutions to address unreliable electricity supply and rising self-generation costs confronting manufacturers.

Ajayi-Kadir said affordable and reliable energy was indispensable to industrial development and economic transformation, but manufacturers had continued to bear the burden of inadequate public power supply.

"In Nigeria, however, manufacturers continue to grapple with the twin challenge of unreliable public electricity supply and the escalating cost of self-generation through diesel, gas and other alternative energy sources," he said.

He said the persistent energy deficit had weakeneZd manufacturers' competitiveness, discouraged investment, raised production costs and constrained the growth and resilience of the sector.

## REDAN Seeks Criminal Prosecution Over Building Collapses, Faults Regulatory Lapses

By **Suliyat Tella**

THE Chairman of the Real Estate Developers Association of Nigeria (REDAN), Lagos Chapter, Dr. Tony Aspire Kolawole, has attributed the recurring incidents of building collapse across the country to regulatory compromise, weak enforcement of building standards and institutional failure, urging governments to prosecute offenders rather than merely demolish defective structures.

Kolawole's intervention follows the collapse of a five-storey building in Rivers State on June 24 and a three-storey building in the Alakija area of Lagos on June 25, incidents that have renewed concerns over compliance with building regulations and public safety.

In a statement on Thursday, the REDAN Lagos Chairman described the two incidents as avoidable tragedies, arguing that they reflected systemic failures in the country's building control regime rather than unavoidable accidents.

According to him, persistent disregard for professional standards, the use of substandard materials, compromised approval processes and inadequate regulatory oversight have continued to expose Nigerians to preventable disasters.

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**BLESSING:** I, formerly known as John Aniebietabasi Isaiah Blessing now wish to be addressed as John Aniebietabasi Isaiah. All formal documents remain valid . General public take note

**BODUNRIN:** I, formerly known as Bolanle Idowu Bodunrin, now wish to be addressed as Bolanle Bodunrin Fowobaje. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CHUKWUMA :** I, formerly known as Miss. Chukwuma Chinonso Maureen now wish to be addressed as, Mrs. Edebor Chinonso Maureen. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME:** I, Anomo Abraham Eniolanimi(JNR) and Anomo Delight Eniolanimi is the same person as Anomo Delight Damilare . All former documents remain valid general public take note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME:** I, Mrs. Rachel Kehinde Olawanle Padgett is the same person as Mrs. Rachel Olawanle Padgett now Mrs. Rachel Kehinde Olawanle Padgett. All documents remain valid. public note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME:** That, Ifigiew Frank Udugbai and Ifijen Frank Udugbai is one now addressed as Ifijen Frank. My DOB is 15-02-1970 not 01-01-1940 and 21-01-1970. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME/DOB:** My name was wrongly captured in my BVN as Ezinne Amaechi Nnaoma. My correct name is Nnaoma Favour Ezinne, DOB is 14/07/2001. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My correct name is Patience James Oden but was wrongly captured by Access Bank as Patience James Okon. General Public, take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly written as Emmanuel C. Christian in my GCE December 1988 result instead of Emmanuel Chidiebere Christian. Former documents valid. General public note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly written as Oluwajomiloju Ponmile Olowokudejo Instated of Oluwajomiloju Daniel Olowokudejo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly written as Pamilerin Samuel Olowokudejo Instated of Samuel Oluwapamilerin Olowokudejo . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly written in my passport with my first name Michael appearing as my surname and my surname Osagiede appearing as my first name. I wish to be addressed as Mr Michael Olabisi Osagiede. All documents remain valid. Public take note.

**CORRECTION OF NAME:** My name was wrongly captured as Akinmolujoye Adenike instead of Akinmolujoye Adenike Justina. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**DAVID:** I, formerly known as Mrs. David Ruby Okubo, now wish to be known as Miss. Kingson Ruby Okubo. All former documents remain valid. NYSC .General public take note.

**EDET:** I, formerly known as Edet Obon James now wish to be addressed as Bright Obon James. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**EZEILO:** I, formerly known as Nelly Ifeoma Ezeilo, Now wish to be addressed as Nwobia Nelly Ifeoma. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**EZIEBUO :** I, formerly known as Eziebuo Pamela Chinecherem now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Nwankwo Pamela Chinecherem. All former documents remains valid. General public take note .

**GIMA :** I, formerly known as Miss. Gima Blessing now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Alabi Blessing. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**IBINATU :** I , formerly known as Ibinatu Purity now wish to be addressed as Obinatu Adadimma. All former documents remain valid . General public take note.

**IBRAHIM:** I , formerly known as Ibrahim Adeola Sikrullah now wish to be addressed as Adewola Adebiyi. All former documents remain valid . General public take note

**IMAYOMOLUESE :** I, formerly known as Iyoha Imayomoluese now wish to be addressed as Aliedo Angela. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**IORAPINE:** Formerly known as Doofan Barbara Iorapine, now wish to be addressed as Doofan Barbara Mbah . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**IREGBEYEN :** I, formerly known as Iregbeyen Lami now wish to be addressed as Otaigbe Lami. My DOB is 05-11-1967 not 23-04-1967. All former documents remain valid. Public note.

**IZUKA:** I, formerly Ifeoma Precious Izuka, now wish to be addressed as Ifeoma Precious Max-Mbacha. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**MARY:** I, formerly known as Uche Mary Gift now wish to be known as Ederowoh Mary Okeoghene. All former documents remain valid. Public note

**NWAIGBO :** I, formerly known as Miss. Juliet Ogechi Nwaigbo now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Juliet Ogechi Chidozie-Anyanwu. All Former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

**OKEOGHENE:** I, formerly known as Miss Unuata, Okeoghene Anita now wish to be known as Mrs. Makinde, Okeoghene Anita. All former documents remain valid. Public notice

**OKWUM:** I, Formerly Okwum Ijeoma Roseline now wish to be addressed as Okwum Ndieze Ijeoma Roseline . All formal documents remain valid . General public take note .

**OLUKANNI:** I, formerly Miss Olukanni Abisola Eniola now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Okafor Abisola Eniola. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**OLUKEMI:** I, formerly known as Ogunjimi Olukemi Opeyemi now wish to be addressed as Ogunjimi Oluwakemi Opeyemi. All former documents remain valid. Public take note.

**REJOICE:** I, formerly known as Eboh Osemuahu Rejoice now wish to be addressed as Eboh Osemuahu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**SULAIMON:** I, formerly known as Sulaimon Kafilat Yetunde now wish to be addressed as Olanrewaju Kafilat Yetunde . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**TEMITOPE :** I, formerly known as Oyenyi Temitope now wish to be addressed as Oyeniyi Temitope Babatunde. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**UGOCHUKWU:** I, formerly Ugochukwu Chinonyerem Frances now wish to be known as Mbadiwe Chinonyerem Frances. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**UGWU:** I, formerly known as Boma Ikechukwu Ugwu, now wish to be known as Boma Ike. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**UGWU:** I, formerly known as Chibundum Joshua Ugwu, now wish to be known as Chibundum Joshua Ike. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**UGWU:** I, formerly known as Chibunnam Daniel Ugwu, now wish to be known as Chibunnam Daniel Ike. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**UGWU:** I, formerly known as Ikechukwu Emmanuel Ugwu, now wish to be known as Ikechukwu Emmanuel Ike. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**UKPEBOR :** I formerly known as Miss Ukpebor Ofure now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Eriofoloh Peace Ofure. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

**WONDER:** I, formerly known as Wonder Elizabeth now wish to be addressed as Evanbor Elizabeth. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**WORUSAH :** I, formerly known as Miss. Blessing Chika Worusah now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Blessing Chika Wemedo. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

# News

## ITF To Launch Business Incubation Programme For SUPA Artisans

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi**, Jos

THE Industrial Training Fund (ITF) is set to launch the Business Incubation Programme for Artisans under the Skill-Up Artisans (SUPA) Programme. The programme is a transformative initiative designed to support graduates of the SUPA Programme in establishing and growing sustainable businesses across Nigeria.

The initiative represents a major step in the Federal Government's commitment to skills development, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship promotion and inclusive economic growth.

It is specifically designed to bridge the gap between skills acquisition and enterprise development by providing selected artisans with the tools, training, mentorship, business support services and market access required to build successful and sustainable businesses.

A statement on Friday by the Director, Press and Public Relations Unit of ITF, Mr. Thomas Ngor, said under this initiative, beneficiaries will undergo comprehensive entrepreneurship and business management training, including the internationally recognised Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Programme.

## BOA Rolls Out Roadmap To Modernise Agric-finance, Deepen Grassroots Inclusion

From **Joke Falaju**, Abuja

THE Bank of Agriculture has rolled out a strategic roadmap aimed at modernising the bank's operations, expanding grassroots financial inclusion and supporting Nigeria's agricultural transformation.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of BOA, Mr. Ayodeji Oludare Sotinrin, revealed that the bank will be rolling out the operational upgrades and high-level partnerships to optimise the delivery of agricultural intervention programmes and empower smallholder farmers across the country.

He stated that being the apex agricultural development finance institution, BOA plays the statutory role in safeguarding and deploying subsidised government funds, adding that through the provision of single-digit interest loans.

## FG Moves To Crash Device Costs Via Indigenous Assembly Plants

By **Oludare Richards**

IN a bold bid to democratise internet access, the Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Chief Idris Ibikunle Olorunnimbe, has issued a direct challenge to global device manufacturers, promising to personally secure presidential waivers for companies that commit to setting up local production plants in Nigeria.

Speaking at the Digital Africa Summit Roundtable in Shanghai, China on June 24, 2026, Olorunnimbe emphasised that the country can no longer rely on imports to solve its digital access gap.

He made a sweeping, time-bound offer to tech executives, saying: "If any manufacturer in this room or any manufacturer listening to these proceedings, will commit to building a factory in Nigeria, and to beginning construction between now and November, I will take that commitment to the President myself and seek the waivers and the support you need to make it happen."

This aggressive push comes at a time when device cost, rather than network coverage, has emerged as the single largest barrier keeping millions of Nigerians offline.

Despite boasting over 170 million mobile connections and more than 150 million mobile internet users, a significant portion of the population remains structurally excluded from the digital economy because they cannot afford a modern smartphone.

By localising the production of hardware, the regulatory agency aims to shield consumers from the constant price shocks caused by foreign-exchange fluctuations.

## Aree Stool: Stakeholders Warned Against Flouting Court Judgment

From **Timothy Agbor**, Osogbo

PRINCE Muritala Oyelakin and stakeholders in Iree, a major town located in Boripe Local Council in Osun State have been warned against disregarding a valid judgment of the court over Aree of Iree stool.

Recall that Justice M. O. Awe of an Osun State High Court sitting in Osogbo, in a judgment delivered over the illegal emergence of Prince Muritala Oyelakin, unequivocally declared that the stool of Aree remains vacant and no one should parade himself as the Aree of Iree.

Justice Awe, while delivering the judgment on May 14, 2024, had ordered the Osun State Governor against installing Oyelakin and releasing staff of authority of the town to him.

The court had also barred Oyelakin from parading himself as the Aree until the substantive matter presently in court is done with.

Following the order, the state governor had shelved plans of installing Oyelakin till date.

However, in defiance to the judgment, it was alleged that Oyelakin had been parading himself as the traditional ruler of the town and appointing chiefs.

Meanwhile, reacting to some remarks by some stakeholders who were alluding that there is someone presently occupying the exalted throne of Aree, a Prince from Olubonku ruling House of Iree, Prince Ali Afolabi, warned Oyelakin against flouting the orders of the court.

Afolabi said it would be embarrassing for the respected town of Iree if stakeholders continue to flagrantly disregard valid pronouncements of courts even when the state government who are joined in the case and ordered not to install Oyelakin had retrained itself by not presenting staff of office to him.

## Zulum Shuts Bama IDP Camp, Returns 3,000 Households To Borno Communities

From **Njadvara Musa**, Maiduguri

BORNO State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum has ordered the immediate closure of the Bama Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Bama, which has the largest displacement facility outside Maiduguri, the state capital.

The governor revealed that no fewer than 3,000 households have returned to their liberated and safe communities in the state.

Zulum stated this on Friday in Gwoza town shortly after an assessment visit to Government Secondary School IDP camp in the Bama township located along the Gwoza-Bama Road.

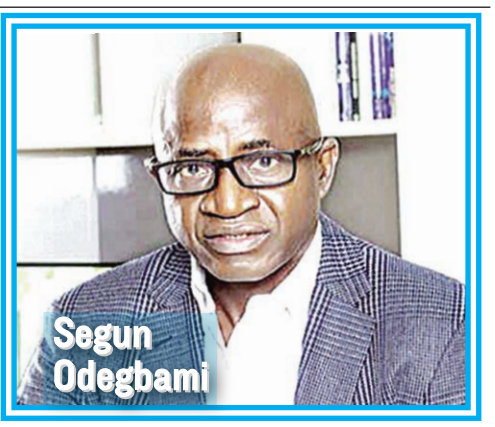
He said: profiled all of them and Insha Allah, in the next two or three weeks this camp will also be closed," he said.

According to him, the return has been made possible by the relative peace now prevailing in most communities hitherto occupied by Boko Haram insurgents.

"In the past seven years, Borno State government has successfully resettled several communities in Bama Local Council."

# Sports

## The World Cup - So Far, So Dramatic




A NEW Super Eagles!

I am missing Nigeria at the ongoing World Cup.

If Nigeria had managed, somehow, to qualify and to be participating, the Super Eagles, under Eric Chelle, and with the increasing number of gifted Nigerian players caught in Eric's scouting web around Europe these past few months, would have been one of the teams to beat in this World Cup.

I am truly excited about the emerging new Eagles after the World Cup. Their prospects in Africa and in the world in the next decade are very high and promise great excitement and success! Watch out!

World Cup unites the world.

Meanwhile, in the past two weeks, the 2026 FIFA World Cup has provided a healthy feast, a soothing and healing balm for a world that was miserably embroiled in many self-inflicted conflicts amongst nations and peoples, before then.

Then came the World Cup.

At a point, many of us wondered if the global event would even take place at all.

Since the kick-off on June 11, however, the world has set aside many of its problems and embraced the single human activity that has defied divisions and differences, and continues to bring humanity together in true celebration of friendship.

In the terraces of stadia scattered across North America, in local bars, fun parks and on the streets of host cities, those following the FIFA World Cup matches have seen more than enough evidence to conclude that Sport, indeed, has the power to unite people like no other activity. Even political 'enemies' have mellowed down their rhetorics and actions, in order to be accommodate the prevailing spirit of healthy competition being demonstrated by countries on the field of 'battle'.

Football has become the essential reminder that the earth can be a beautiful place to live in peace and harmony with one another if humanity will only imbibe the lessons derivable from the impact of 'the beautiful game'.

I have read in some media reports that Scottish fans went on a drinking binge on the night their team was humbled by Brazil. They still happily emptied all the beer in the bars around Boston where their team played. That is the spirit encapsulated in the Olympic charter, one that acknowledges and celebrates participation either in blissful victory or in painful defeat!

Aside that, the matches of the World Cup have been unpredictable and dramatic.

The best teams!

African teams have put up a mixed bag of performances. They have also confirmed that African teams can no longer be under-rated. Winning the World Cup is definitely now within sight and touching distance.

The performances of Morocco, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt and Cape Verde have been impressive. Ghana showed awesome discipline and fighting spirit against England. DR Congo have been super athletes, running and fighting with determination. Senegal were in a most difficult group and could not fly!

On the whole, as the last matches of the Group stage are to be concluded this weekend, a few teams have stood out, albeit it temporarily, to me - France, Argentina, Holland, Mexico.

Where would I wager my bet?

The frontline of France appears to me to be a little bit sharper, faster and more inventive than all the others. With Mbape and Tembele, the French look unstoppable by most defenses.

Lionel Messi.

Can a tree make a forest? In his case he can.

Messi is a god! He is the only player in the world now who plays completely freely, without guidance and as economically as he chooses on the field. He walks and struts as he pleases, with an occasional sudden burst of dangerous speed on the field as he pleases. Planning to mark him has been a challenge for opposing managers.

Messi is treated with reverence on the field by his team.

I also think that his presence makes the entire Argentine team to play with bewildering ease, with calmness and confidence bordering on arrogance. They play as if they are ordained champions already.

## NPFL Issues Tough Warning To Newly Promoted Clubs

From **Ernest Nzor**, Abuja

THE Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), on Friday, warned newly promoted clubs that failure to meet the league's licensing and infrastructure requirements could bar them from playing at home or even jeopardize their participation in the top flight.

The NPFL recalled that some clubs were relocated from their home venues last season after failing to meet the required standards.

The Chief Operating Officer of the NPFL, Davidson Owumi, disclosed this in Abuja, during an orientation and induction programme organised for the owners and general managers of the four newly promoted clubs ahead of the 2026/27 NPFL season.

He said the programme was designed to acquaint the clubs with the league's operational procedures and club licensing requirements before the new season begins.

According to him, the early engagement provides clubs with enough time to address any shortcomings before the commencement of the season.

"The purpose is orientation and induction, to ensure they are acquainted with the basics of what we do in the NPFL and to break down the club licensing process so everyone understands what is expected.

"We still have plenty of time before the league starts. This is the appropriate time to acquaint them with what they will be facing. Those who cannot meet the requirements will know early enough."

Owumi added that the league had yet to assess the newly promoted clubs for specific deficiencies, explaining that the current exercise was focused on education rather than evaluation.

"We are just interacting with them for the first time. We have not tested them in any way. After this education, if they are unable to meet the requirements in the coming weeks, then we will know those that are deficient."

The NPFL chief stressed that the league would continue to enforce strict compliance with infrastructure standards, including stadium, security and medical requirements.

"Any club that does not meet the standard requirements will be moved from its home ground. We have always enforced these rules because professional football demands the right infrastructure." Owumi said.

Speaking on behalf of one of the promoted clubs, Chairman of Sporting Lagos, Godwin Enakhena, described the orientation as timely and beneficial, saying it exposed participants to important aspects of the league's operations that many may not have been aware of.

# Business

## Day Echono Tutored Academics On Effective Governance Structures In Universities

THURSDAY, June 18, will remain etched in the memory of many who gathered at the Abuja Leadership Centre of Excellence, Yakubu Gowon University (formerly the University of Abuja). It was the day the Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Architect Sonny S. T. Echono, transformed a hall filled with professors, academics, university administrators, students and education stakeholders into a classroom.

For nearly two hours, the accomplished administrator, scholar and public servant held his audience spellbound as he delivered a public lecture based on his doctoral thesis titled, 'Leadership Selection Process and Governance of Federal Universities in Nigeria (1993–2024).'

What unfolded was not merely an academic presentation. It was an intellectual excursion into the evolution, decline, challenges and prospects of university governance in Nigeria. By the time he concluded, many in attendance had been reminded that learning never truly ends, regardless of one's title or status.

Drawing from an extensive three-year study covering 20 federal universities across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, Echono carefully traced the history of leadership selection in Nigerian universities from the post-independence era to the present day. He contrasted the ideals that once guided the appointment of vice chancellors with contemporary realities where nepotism, political patronage, ethnicity, religious considerations, cronyism and sectional interests increasingly influence leadership choices.

Quoting extensively from scholarly authorities and empirical evidence, he noted that Nigeria inherited one of Africa's most robust university systems at independence in 1960. However, decades of systemic challenges have gradually eroded that enviable position.

According to him, the decline in tertiary education has been driven by several factors, including poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, brain drain, insufficient capacity development for academic staff, incessant industrial disputes, institutional corruption, politicisation of university administration, weak governance structures, poor internally generated revenue, insecurity and the limited autonomy enjoyed by institutions.

Standing before a packed audience comprising scholars, students, policy experts, education administrators, researchers, development practitioners and members of the media, Echono lamented that despite possessing one of the world's largest youth populations, Nigeria currently ranks 23rd in Africa and 191st globally in educational advancement.

The youthful population, which should ordinarily constitute a strategic advantage for national development, has unfortunately not translated into corresponding gains in human capital development and educational competitiveness. In his assessment, the underperformance of Nigerian universities is attributable, in large measure, to ineffective and inefficient governance structures.

At the heart of his lecture was a compelling argument for a more transparent, merit-driven and accountable process for selecting university leaders. Echono recalled that Nigeria once deliberately appointed vice chancellors outside their states of origin as a means of promoting national integration, broadening perspectives and reducing ethnic considerations.

That noble tradition, he observed, has gradually been eroded by an increasing preference for local affiliations, ethnic considerations and political connections. As a result, the once broad and competitive talent pool available to universities has been significantly narrowed, depriving institutions of the best minds regardless of origin. According to him, this trend has not only weakened the quality of leadership and decision-making within the university system but has also undermined institutional governance, excellence and the meritocratic ideals upon which great universities are built.

He further argued that universities where leadership appointments are conducted in a transparent, competitive and merit-driven manner are better positioned to realise their academic mandate, command public trust and nurture a culture of excellence. Such institutions, he noted, are able to attract and retain the best talents, promote accountability and sustain high standards in teaching, research and community service.

The Executive Secretary averred that leaders who emerge through credible and fair selection processes are more likely to provide visionary leadership, encourage groundbreaking research, foster innovation, strengthen scholarly collaboration and build productive partnerships across disciplines and institutions. They are also better equipped to ensure prudent financial management, enhance institutional stability and create an environment where academic excellence can flourish.


Echono

To support his position, he cited examples from the National Research Fund (NRF) grant cycles. The Federal Universities of Technology in Minna and Owerri secured first and second positions respectively in the 2025 NRF awards with 18 and 11 grants, while the Federal University of Technology, Akure, recorded 12 awards in the 2024 cycle. Such achievements, he argued, underscore the transformative impact of effective institutional leadership.

**When A Professor Became A Student Again**

Perhaps one of the most memorable moments of the event occurred midway through the lecture. As this writer became increasingly convinced that the presentation deserved wider public dissemination, a comment from within the audience further reinforced that conviction.

"This is material for a convocation lecture," someone remarked. Curious, he sought out the speaker, who turned out to be Prof. Olympus Ejue of the Theatre Arts Department.

Prof. Ejue was unequivocal in his assessment: "Most of the things he has said in this lecture should be presented as a convocation lecture where all of us can gather and learn from it. This is more or less a select audience, and many more people need to benefit from the ideas he has propounded.

"Even many professors know very little about university administration. With this kind of lecture, I will go back and study it carefully. It will certainly help me as I aspire to other leadership positions within the university system. It is a very rich lecture."

His sentiments resonated across the hall. Repeated bursts of applause punctuated the lecture, reflecting the audience's appreciation of both the substance and delivery of the presentation.

*Eniola Olakunri, a public sector analyst and CEO of Write Affairs, wrote from Abuja.*

TheGuardianSports

www.guardian.ng

# This Miracle Can 'Flow' In Glasgow – Onyali

By Gowon Akpodonor

FORMER Africa Queen of the track, Olympian Mary Onyali, believes one of the home-based athletes called to camp by the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) for the 2026 Commonwealth Games, Miracle Oluebube Ezechukwu, has what it takes to deliver at the big stage when the battle for medals begin in Glasgow, if she is given the chance to do so.

Ezechukwu was among the Invited Junior Athletes (IJA) team that dazzled Nigerians at the last National Sports Festival held in Abeokuta, Ogun State in 2025.

And at the third combined African U18/U20 Championships also held in Abeokuta, Ezechukwu was part of Team Nigeria that had a clean sweep in the girls' 100m U-18 final. She blazed to gold in 11.88secs, followed by captain of the IJA Team at the 22nd National Sports Festival, Rosemary Nwankwo (11.96secs), while Miriam Jegede got the bronze (12.20secs).

The duo of Miracle Ezechukwu and Rosemary Nwankwo hail from Anambra State. Nwankwo comes from a village called Mbaukwu, the same village where Mary Onyali was born.

Both Miracle and Rosemary began their athletics career in 2019 in Ilorin as part of Team Anambra to that year's edition of the National Youth Games in Kwara State.

Since then, Ezechukwu, who represents N-Youth Sports Academy in Abuja, has won many accolades for the country, including being part of Team Nigeria to the World Relays in Botswana, Rwanda, where they won three tickets to next year's World Championships. She was also part of Team Nigeria to the last African Senior Athletics Championships in Accra, Ghana, where the teenage sprinter had a massive breakthrough on the senior stage by winning her 100m Heat, and advancing directly to her first-ever senior championship semifinal.

She contributed heavily to Team Nigeria's medal haul in Accra, helping the Women's 4x100m relay to win gold.

Before then, the Nigerian teenage sprint sensation secured the Nigerian U-20 national title in the women's 200m with a staggering 22.77s in Jos, Plateau State.

And at the just concluded 2026 Commonwealth Games National Trials at YABATECH, Lagos, Ezechukwu finished second in the women's 100m race, running a massive Personal Best (PB) of 11.15 seconds, behind US-based Blessing Ogundiran, who took the national title and gold in 11.12 seconds.

For legendary Mary Onyali, Miracle Ezechukwu will be one of Nigeria and African stars to watch out for at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, if she has the chance to do so.

Speaking with *The Guardian*, on Friday, Onyali said: "If she is entered to run in the open 100m or 200m, I believe Miracle will greatly improve on her time. My advice to her has been to stay humble, hungry and patient because with hard work and consistency like she has been, the sky is the starting point for Miracle."

On the just concluded Commonwealth Games National Trials in Lagos, Onyali hailed the National Sports Commission (NSC), AFN and the Elite Podium Board over the successful conduct of the event at YABATECH.

Onyali, who is one of Nigeria and Africa's most celebrated track and field icons, said the partnership between the NSC, AFN and the Elite Podium Board headed by Yusuf Ali was central to the success of the trials.

"The coordinated and cordial relationship between these three entities — the NSC, AFN and the Elite Podium Board, made the difference.

"On the athletes' part, they came prepared and hungry to prove their worth," she said.

Onyali, however, urged the athletes not to lose focus after the trials, insisting that the real assignment lies ahead in Glasgow, where Nigeria will be aiming to improve on its previous Commonwealth Games gold-medal haul.




Miracle celebrates at YABATECH after finishing second in the 100m race

# Olopade: 'Results Of Our Hardwork Will Show At C'wealth Games'

By Gowon Akpodonor

DIRECTOR General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Bukola Olopade, says a lot of hard work has been put in place by Team Nigeria for the 2026 Commonwealth Games, and that the result will show in Glasgow, Scotland. The Games will hold between July 21 and August 2.

To ensure Nigeria attain more greatness in sports, the NSC leadership led by the duo of its chairman Shehu Dikko and the DG, Olopade, seem to be leading the legacy reforms at all fronts, including the Nigeria Professional League, podium finish, athletes' welfare, governance, school sports, infrastructure, sponsorship and policy reforms.

Olopade told *The Guardian* at the just concluded Commonwealth Games National Trials held at YABATECH, Lagos, that a lot of hardwork has been put in place to ensure Team Nigeria record its best ever outing in the history of the Games.

According to him, the NSC is very intentional about using the Commonwealth Games to set new standards for the country's participation in future international multi-sports competitions both in podium performance and athletes welfare.

"Everything we need for our athletes to be in the best frame of mind for the Commonwealth Games has been put in place. From the apparel that they will be donning to the team's pre-competition preparations and welfare package, we have been able to sort everything out with the full support of Mr President, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR," Olopade said.

"The athletes are in high spirits in their camp in Abuja. Their Track and field counterparts are joining them after this National Trials. We are also very excited to announce that the fear of not having our best athletes for the Games has been allayed with the good news we have gotten from the America Embassy.

"We are therefore expecting the likes of Samuel Ogazi, kanyinsola Ajayi and other of our top athletes based in America to arrive at the team's camp in Abuja by this weekend," he stated.

Olopade further revealed that the NSC is targeting 16 Gold medals in Glasgow, which will be a new Commonwealth Games record for Nigeria with the current best record being 12 Gold medals that was won in Birmingham in 2022.

The country's contingents for the Games are expected to depart for a training camp in Aberdeen on July 2, ahead of the start of the Games in Glasgow on July 23, 2026.



Olopade

# Why Has Trump Stayed Away From the World Cup?

By Dan Roan

UNITED States President Donald Trump was expected by many to regularly feature at the World Cup. But he is yet to attend a single match, despite the United States team winning two of their three group games and qualifying for the knockout stages.

So is it a surprise? Why may he have stayed away? And will he appear before the final? *BBC Sport* takes a closer look.

*"My fellow Americans, citizens of the world, the United States is honoured to play host to this magnificent celebration. The World Cup has captured the imagination of our country, as has the game itself in the last few years. . .So I welcome all who have come from all countries and all continents and all who will watch these games in the United States for the next 30 days."*

Those were the words of President Bill Clinton on June 17, 1994, at Soldier Field in Chicago when attending the opening match of the first World Cup to be held in the United States.

The day is remembered more for Diana Ross' missed 'penalty kick' during the pre-match festivities than Clinton's address, but his presence now seems more notable.

Because 32 years on, the country is once again staging the event, and yet, with the halfway point of the tournament passed, the current president has stayed away.

Earlier this month, Trump hailed the number of tickets sold by Fifa, labelling it "the most successful World Cup they've ever had", and reinforcing the widely held view that he would be a highly visible and enthusiastic presence.

After all, in the build-up, the tournament had seemed very important to him. He even referenced it, external in an address at a rally staged on the eve of his presidential inauguration early last year.

And Trump then played a central role at the draw in Washington DC in December, where he was awarded Fifa's inaugural Peace Prize by the governing body's president Gianni Infantino.

The two men have forged a close relationship in recent years, with Infantino welcomed to both the Oval Office and Trump's Florida residence Mar-a-Lago.

Trump has also been a regular presence at several other major sports events in the US during his second term, from the Super Bowl, and last summer's Club World Cup final, to the opening day of golf's Ryder Cup at Bethpage.

**Culled from *BBCSports***

## Saturday FIFA World Cup Fixtures

**Group H**
Cape Verde Vs Saudi Arabia 01:00
Uruguay Vs Spain 01:00
**Group G**
Egypt Vs Iran 04:00
New Zealand Vs Belgium 04:00
**Group L**
Croatia Vs Ghana 22:00
Panama Vs England 22:00
**Sunday June 28**
**Group K**
Colombia Vs Portugal 00:30
Congo DR Vs Uzbekistan 00:30
**Group J**
Algeria Vs Austria 03:00
Jordan Vs Argentina 03:00
**Last 32**
South Africa Vs Canada 20:00

# Sanwo-Olu Sets Up 13 Sub-committees For EKO 2026 National Intermediate Games




Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu receives some players. He wants a smooth hosting of EKO 2026 National Intermediate Games

By Gowon Akpodonor

TO ensure a smooth operation of the maiden National Intermediate Games, tagged Eko 2026, the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, on Friday set up 13 sub-committees, with a challenge to all members to do everything possible to deliver the best-ever Games in October this year.

Speaking at the inaugural meeting of the Local Organising Committee (LOC) held at the Conference Room of the Chief of Staff, Governor's Office, Alausa, Ikeja, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, Sam Egube, who is the Chairman of the LOC, charged all members of the various committees to focus on how to host a Game that will be enjoyable, just as he urged members of the LOC and chairmen of the various committees to be transparent in their dealings.

"We are one big family," Egube said. "To host a Game of this magnitude requires wisdom, maturity and we should submit to the will of the majority."

Egube, a former Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget in Lagos State. Added: "One of the objectives of this Games is sports development, but you can't talk about sports development without people's development. We must organise ourselves in a way that those coming to participate in the Games will see that Lagos is truly number one when it comes to hosting National sporting events."

Co-chairman of Lagos 2026 National Intermediate Games, Lekan Fatodu, who is the Chairman of Lagos Sports Commission, revealed that between 13,000 to 15,000 athletes are expected to participate in the Games.

"It is the first time in 14 years that Lagos is hosting another major sporting event after EKO 2024 National Sports Festival, and we must brace up to give it the best it deserves," Fatodu stated.

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# INSIDE STUFF WITH MARTINS OLOJA



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# Senator Faduyile's Election: Lessons From Team Aiyedatiwa

*There comes a time*
*When we heed a certain call*
*When the world must come together as one…*
*We can go on*
*Pretending day by day*
*That someone somewhere will soon make a change*
*We are all a part of God's great big family*
*And the truth, you know love is all we need…*
*There is a choice we are making…*
(From '*We are the world*' song by U.S.A for Africa 1985)

PERMIT me today to borrow from the brilliance of the 1985 iconic songwriters **Lionel Richie** & **Michael Jackson,** the brains behind the song, '*we are the world*' for suffering Africans in Ethiopia at the time. And here is why I need to use parts of the lyrics to appeal to our people to borrow from the political decisions of Ondo State party leaders who just did something remarkable: organised election of a technocrat, a professor of medicine to spend barely a year at the Senate. I believe that **Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa** of Ondo state, I confirmed led the party to support election of that significant technocrat felt we can't continue "to pretend day by day that someone somewhere will soon make a change". Yes, "there comes a time", when leaders "should heed certain calls" that the **wards** even in our politics of consensus must "come together as one" to elect or select our best to represent us. I believe that sometimes such decisions may not be popular with the traditional bigots. But leaders should note that most significant decisions are unpopular at inception. I think our leaders should always support our best to represent the rest. That is why I would like to recommend to political leaders the **Team Aiyedatiwa's** model that led to the election of **Professor Dayo Faduyile** to the Senate the other day.

Here is what I mean: **Senator Dayo Faduyile,** Professor of Medicine at LASUTH and former NMA President, embodies the technocrat model Nigeria's 21st century senate needs. **A new kind of senator takes the oath:** On Wednesday, June 24, 2026, Senate President Godswill Akpabio administered the Oath of Allegiance and Oath of Office to four new senators following bye-elections. Among them: **Senator Dayo Faduyile, APC, Ondo South.** He polled 68,474 votes to succeed **Jimoh Ibrahim,** PhD, now Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. But Faduyile is not a career politician. He is **Adedayo Faduyile,** MBBS, MBA, MSc, FWACP, FCP (ECSA), Professor in the Department of Pathology and Forensic Medicine at the Lagos State University College of Medicine and Honorary Consultant at LASUTH. He is a former National President of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA). He is Chairman of the Governing Council and Pro-Chancellor of the Federal University of Education, Kontagora.

His arrival in the Red Chamber is more than a political win. It is a test case: Can a proven technocrat, with 40+ academic publications and a record of policy advocacy, translate expertise into law? If the 10th and 11th Senate are to be "purpose-driven" for a 21st-century Nigeria, Faduyile's model matters.

**The making of a scholar-clinician**

Faduyile's CV reads like a diagnostic chart of Nigeria's human capital. MBBS from UNILAG in 1996. Residency in Anatomical and Molecular Pathology at LUTH, 2002–2007, serving as Chief Resident. MSc Cell Biology & Genetics, UNILAG, 2008. Diploma in Forensic Human Identification from the Royal College of Physicians, UK, 2015. Fellow of the College of Pathologists of East, Central and Southern Africa, 2016.

Since 2007 he has taught pathology and forensic medicine at LASU College of Medicine (LASUCOM) while consulting at LASU Teaching Hospital (LASUTH). He has over 40 peer-reviewed publications. That is not résumé padding. It is 27 years of daily exposure to what kills Nigerians: misdiagnosis, poor cancer screening, forensic gaps in criminal justice, and a health system that bleeds doctors.



Aiyedatiwa

**The unionist-policy maker**

As NMA President 2018–2020, Faduyile did not just issue communiqués. He "successfully engaged with the presidency and National Assembly to influence critical health legislation". He flagged that "over 48 doctors have been kidnapped in two years". He warned that "unqualified foreign-trained doctors causing havoc in Nigeria". He pushed back on treating doctors "like civil servants" and argued for a **National Health Service Commission.**

That is legislative temperament: data, advocacy, and institutional memory. The Senate does not need more lawyers who quote statutes. It needs members who have written the policy briefs others now debate.

**The administrator**

Faduyile was Special Adviser on Health to the Ondo State Government of Governor Rotimi Akeredolu. He is Pro-Chancellor, Federal University of Education, Kontagora. He understands budgets, subvention, and the politics of appointments. Akpabio told new senators to "familiarise themselves with the provisions of the 1999 Constitution and the Senate Standing Orders 2023". Faduyile already speaks that language.

**Why the 21st century senate needs technocrats**

Nigeria's challenges are technical before they are political. Power, health, education, AI, climate, and forensic security require senators who can read a white paper, not just a party manifesto.

**Evidence-based lawmaking**

During COVID-19, Faduyile as NMA President explained why asymptomatic patients were a problem for hospitals. He balanced public panic with medical fact: "Asking for appropriate protective equipment as prerequisite… does not constitute professional malpractice": A Senate with Faduyiles will not pass **Infectious Disease Bills** without public hearings. It will demand epidemiology, not emotion.

**Sector-specific insight**

Nigeria "needs between 3,000 to 4,000 medical schools to address the deficit". That line did not come from a lobbyist. It came from a professor who trains doctors. When the Health Committee debates the Medical and Dental Council Act, Faduyile can explain why foreign-trained doctors fail licensing exams. When Appropriations Committees debate teaching hospital funding, he knows LASUTH's MRI broke down for 11 months and why.

**Credibility with professionals**

The NMA Ondo State called his election "a victory for the medical profession and for quality representation". Technocrats rebuild trust between the National Assembly and professional bodies. ASUU, NBA, ICAN, and NSE will talk to a Senate that has their colleagues inside.



Faduyile

**Global competitiveness**

Akpabio called the Senate "the most elite club in the world". Elite is not about 'agbada'. It is about capacity. The US Senate has physicians, engineers, astronauts. Singapore's parliament has professors. Nigeria's Senate needs members who can argue genomics with WHO and fintech with the IMF.

**What he brings to the Red Chamber: health security as national security**

As NMA President, he linked doctor kidnappings to national stability. In the Senate, he can sponsor a **Health Worker Protection and Retention Bill:** special insurance, hazard allowance tied to inflation, and a **National Health Service Commission** to remove doctors from civil service bureaucracy. That is how you keep 300,000 doctors instead of exporting them.

**Forensic medicine and justice reform:** Faduyile is a forensic pathologist trained in the UK and US. Nigeria's criminal justice system convicts on confession, not forensics. A **Forensic Services Agency Act** would standardise autopsies, DNA, and crime scene management. His 2014 training at the Academy of Forensic Medical Sciences, London gives him standing to write it.

**Education and research funding:** As Pro-Chancellor of Federal University of Education, (FUE) Kontagora, he knows TETFund gaps. He can push for 1% of Consolidated Revenue to Research & Innovation modelled on Brazil. His 40+ publications mean he won't let "research" become a budget line for SUVs for the federal legislators.

**Diaspora brain linkage, not just brain drain:** He highlighted "high-level diplomatic experience" from engaging the presidency and NASS. Nigeria's Senate needs a **Diaspora Professional Practice Act:** allowing Nigerian doctors abroad to do three-month rotations at home without losing foreign licences. Faduyile has the network to draft it. **Fiscal prudence from clinical logic**

A pathologist learns triage: do the most good with limited resources. That mindset is missing in appropriation. Faduyile's MBA from FUTA plus medical training means he can read both a balance sheet and a blood sheet. He will ask: Why is N21bn spent on a Presidential Clinic when LASUTH needs a PET scan?

**The risk: Will the system change him or will he change the system?**

The Senate can socialise technocrats into politics. Committees can become sinecures. Oversight too can become oversight-seeing. Faduyile's test is simple: If he were to be there for four years, would Nigerians point to a _Faduyile Act the way they point to the **Mohammed VI Complex** in Morocco? The President of the Senate, Akpabio reminded new senators they "now represent the Federal Republic of Nigeria, not your respective political parties". For Faduyile, that is literal. A virus does not ask if you are APC or PDP. A stroke does not check your ward.

**The blueprint:** five ways the senate can replicate the Faduyile model

1. **Professional constituencies:** Reserve 10% of Senate seats for election by professional bodies: NMA, NBA, COREN, ICAN. Let engineers vote for engineers.
2. **Sabbatical senators:** Allow professors to take 4-year leave from universities to serve, with job guarantees. LASUTH will take Faduyile back in 2028. That reduces fear of loss.
3. **Technical hearing rule:** Any bill on health, tech, or science must have a public hearing chaired by a senator with relevant expertise.
4. **Publication disclosure:** Like assets, senators should publish Open Researcher and Contributor iD (ORCID ID), a free, unique 16-digit digital identifier that permanently distinguishes you from other reeseachers across the globe. Faduyile has 40+ papers. Let voters see who reads and who doesn't.
5. **Outcome KPIs:** Akpabio should assign Faduyile to chair a Senate Delivery Unit tracking three health Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): maternal mortality, doctor-to-patient ratio, and local vaccine production. Report quarterly.

**Anger, expertise, and the purpose-driven senate we need.**

Nigeria missed the 2026 World Cup because we normalised failure. We cannot miss the 21st century because we normalised an amateur and mediocre legislature. Senator Dayo Faduyile is not a saviour. He is a signal. The NMA said, "we have no doubt that you will bring the same dedication, professionalism, and passion for excellence that defined your tenure in the NMA to the Senate". That is the standard.

A purpose-driven Senate is not one that shouts "aye" louder. It is one that can model a health budget, sequence a genome, audit a forensic lab, and still explain it in **Ikoya Ward** in Okitipupa, Ondo State. Faduyile campaigned on "grassroots connection and high-level diplomatic experience". That duality is the job. If he succeeds, the Senate of 2027 with more Faduyiles should look like a faculty meeting: physicians, engineers, economists, data scientists, soldiers. If he fails, we will know why: the chamber has a way of turning professors into politicians and doctors into patients of the system.

But for now, his swearing-in is a prescription. Nigeria's diagnosis is clear: **shortage of expertise in power.** The treatment: elect more Faduyiles. I hope the political parties are reading this for the purpose of voter education.

The 21st-century Senate will not be built by anger alone. But without the disciplined anger of technocrats who are offended by waste, decay, and death-by-policy, it will not be built at all. Senator Faduyile, Professor of Pathology, has taken the oath. The next oath is ours: to demand that he, and those like him, dissect the laws of Nigeria with the same rigour he uses on tissue samples. Behold, the country is on the table. And the prognosis depends on the surgeon.

Senator Faduyile's swearing-in is a rare chance to test a thesis: that Nigeria's biggest deficits aren't money or manpower, but expertise in the room where laws are made. If he brings to the senate the same rigour that he brought to pathology and the NMA, then the Red Chamber just got a pathologist for the body politic. The real work starts when voters start asking every aspirant: Show me your ORCID, not just your poster.

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